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Responsible Officer:	Maxine Brockfield	Approving Committee:	Board of Management
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CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

<u>Policy Statement</u>	<u>Purpose & Scope</u>	<u>Definitions & Abbreviations</u>
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Policy Statement

UMHCS vision, mission and philosophy (values) guide or organisational behaviour. Our code of conduct prescribes specific behaviours relevant to our role at UMHCS. Specifically, UMHCS embraces the following four ethical principles in all its operations:

- We act with integrity, honesty and with a strong sense of social responsibility, according to the principles of social justice. We provide relevant and timely services and seek to match services to diverse need. Our clients views are valued and used to improve service quality. Our services are administered fairly, professionally and impartially according to the Public Administration Act 2004.
- We support the rights of the individual and the wider community by maintaining privacy and confidentiality, according to the Health Privacy Principles, and supporting peoples' rights to personal security
- We uphold the values of excellence, as well as efficient and effective service through adherence to legal and organisational requirements, policies and principles and by being responsive and accountable to the community.
- We demonstrate our commitment to high quality health care by behaving according to the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors (2007), setting and maintaining standards of excellence of health care service delivery and setting an example to all with whom we deal.
- We maintain public trust by being honest, open and transparent in all dealings and by acting in the public interest. We avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest and report improper conduct, corruption, fraud and maladministration at work.
- We work to clear objectives in a transparent manner achieving results through the best use of UMHCS financial and physical resources and by working effectively with people. We always anticipate and accept the consequences of actions we take or decisions we make.

Policy Applies To

BOM, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and Subcontracts, and Students

Purpose & Scope

Our customers- clients, staff, visitors, the community and other service providers, recognise UMHCS ethical principles and code of conduct in everything we do.

Definitions & Abbreviations

Legislation, Acts & Standards

References

- Public Sector Standards Commissioner- Ethics Resource Kit 2006
- Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors 2007

Key Aligned Documents

Governance

Version Control and Change History		
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CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

<u>Description</u>	<u>Purpose and Scope</u>	<u>Definitions & Abbreviations</u>	<u>Procedure Standards</u>
<u>Legislation, Acts & Standards</u>	<u>Key Aligned Documents</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Governance</u>

Description

Our code of ethics are the values and principles that underpin everything we do (Refer to UMHCS Vision, Mission and Philosophy). Our code of conduct articulates the desired and specific behaviours expected of and by all staff, volunteers and board of management.

Procedure Applies To

BOM, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and Subcontractors and Students

Purpose and Scope

Ethical values, principles and behaviours underpin our organisational culture and processes.

Definitions & Abbreviations

Procedure Standards

Current Staff

- Staff are required to familiarise themselves and act in accord with the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is binding on UMHCS employers and a contravention of it may constitute misconduct. The code is available in the following areas: Staff Intranet, Staff Handbook, Volunteer Manual, Contract Agreements.
- Staff position descriptions will refer to UMHCS Code of Ethics and Conduct
- The Community Health and Service Development Committee is responsible for the establishment, maintenance and review of the ethics system
- Ethics updates are available to service coordinators and teams on request
- The Victorian Public Sector Standards Commissioner Ethics Resource Kit is available in UMHCS library.

Pre-Employment

UMHCS will utilise the remedial counselling procedure to deal with false, incorrect or misleading information provided in relation to applications for employment.

Orientation

Service coordinators will ensure UMHCS Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy and Procedure is discussed and understood during orientation.

Contractors and Consultants

Contractors or consultants engaged in or by UMHCS (including contractors or consultants engaged through an employment agency) are to comply with this Code of Conduct and relevant policies and procedures, where the contractors or consultants:

- Supervise UMHCS staff
- Undertake work that is of a similar nature to the work undertaken by UMHCS employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors at a premise or location generally regarded as a public sector workplace; and
- Use or have access to UMHCS resources or information that are not normally accessible or available to the public.

Professional Codes of Conduct

Certain professions have professional codes of conduct that establish specific behaviours relevant to that profession. This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with any professional code of conduct. Relevant employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors need to be aware of their professional code of conduct as well as the provisions of this Code.

Demonstrate Responsiveness

We will demonstrate responsiveness by:

- Providing frank, impartial and timely advice to the Government
- Providing high quality services to the Victorian community; and
- Identifying and promoting best practice

Advising Government

UMHCS officials will provide government with advice in a frank, impartial and timely manner, and with an understanding of its implications on the broader policy direction of the Government. Relevant information is not withheld from the Government.

Remaining apolitical

We will conduct ourselves in an apolitical manner. UMHCS will implement and administer the policies and programs of the elected government. We will avoid in the course of our work, any participation in activities which support a political party or independent candidates including attendance at fund raising or similar events.

During caretaker periods (which is governed by caretaker conventions relating to the period of the election campaign and sometimes the period immediately after the election) we will maintain the neutrality of the public sector and comply with relevant policies and protocols issued by UMHCS. We will not use our position to support particular issues, parties or candidates in an election campaign.

Services to the community

We will continue to provide services to the community in an equitable, prompt and professional manner acting within the level of our authority and in accordance with the relevant policies.

Contributing to the improvement

UMHCS is committed to continuous improvement and adopts a best practice approach to the performance of everyday work. We identify and actively promote appropriate strategies, methods and processes that lead to improved performance.

Demonstrate Integrity

We will demonstrate integrity by:

- Being honest, open and transparent in our dealings; and
- Using powers responsibly; and
- Reporting improper conduct; and
- Avoiding any real or apparent conflicts of interest; and
- Striving to earn and sustain public trust of a high level

Honesty at work

We will act honestly in the performance of our duties. We will be open and transparent when making decisions. We will give honest advice based on available facts and data and ensure the advice is up to date.

Using powers at work

We will use our power in a responsible way. We will not use our power to provide a private benefit to ourselves, our family, friends or associates. We will exercise power in a way that is fair and reasonable, and family or other personal relationships do not improperly influence our decisions. We respect the rights and dignity of those affected by our decisions and actions.

Financial probity

We will observe the highest standards of integrity in financial matters and comply with the requirements of relevant financial management legislation, policies and procedures. We will maintain a strict separation between work-related and personal financial matters and only use or authorise the use of public resources or facilities for work-related purposes.

Official Information

UMHCS employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors with access to official information will ensure it is only used for official purposes and in an approved manner. Official and personal information is handled according to relevant legislation and public sector body policies and procedures.

We will only disclose official information or documents acquired in the course of public employment when required to do so by law, in the legitimate course of duty, when called to give evidence in court or when proper authority has been given. In such cases comments are confined to factual information only.

Public comment

UMHCS employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors will only make public comment when specifically authorised to do so in relation to our duties, a public sector body, or government policies and programs. Such comment is restricted to factual information and avoids the expression of personal opinion. Public comment includes providing information or comment to any media (electronic and print), the internet and speaking engagements (Refer to UMHCS Policies and Procedures)

When making a comment in a private capacity, UMHCS will ensure comments are not related to any government activity that they are involved in or connected with as a public employee and make it clear they are expressing their own view. They ensure personal comments do not compromise their capacity to perform their public sector role in an unbiased manner, and that comments are not seen or perceived to be an official comment.

Reporting unethical behaviour

We will comply with legislation, policies and lawful instructions in the performance of our work. We will report to our service coordinators workplace behaviour that violates any law, rule or regulation or represents corrupt conduct, mismanagement of public resources, or is a danger to public health or safety or

to the environment. UMHCS 'Whistle blower Policy and Procedure' informs staff of their rights and responsibilities under 'whistle-blower' and similar legislation.

Conflict of interest

UMHCS employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontracts declare and avoid conflicts of interest to help maintain community trust and confidence. A conflict of interest can be actual, potential or perceived. This relates to circumstances where the employee is or could be directly influenced or where it is perceived the employee might be influenced.

We will ensure personal or financial interests do not influence or interfere with the performance of their role and seek to ensure the interests of family members, friends, or associates do not influence or could be perceived to influence our performance in the job.

If an employee is unsure about a possible conflict of interest they should seek advice from their manager.

Other employment

UMHCS employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors will only engage in other employment where the activity does not conflict with their role as a public sector employee. Employment includes a second job, conducting a business, trade or profession, or active involvement with other organisations (paid employment or voluntary work). Managers or supervisors can assist public sector employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontracts to determine if such activities will cause an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

UMHCS employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors are required to seek approval to engage in other paid employment. Other public sector employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontracts comply with any policies of their public sector employer in relation to engaging in other employment.

Public trust

We will seek to build and maintain a high level of trust with the Government, community and other public sector employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors and behave in a manner that does not bring ourselves or the public sector into disrepute.

We will avoid conduct in our private life that may adversely affect our standing as a public official or which may bring UMHCS into disrepute.

Criminal offence

We will advise our manager if we are charged with a criminal offence, which is punishable by imprisonment or, if found guilty, could reasonably be seen to affect our ability to meet inherent requirements of the work we are engaged to perform.

Drugs and Alcohol

We will carry out our work safely and avoid conduct that puts ourselves or others at risk. This includes the misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances when at work or when engaged in work related activities.

The misuse of alcohol, prescribed drugs, illegal drugs and other substances is an issue for everyone at UMHCS as it impacts on both work and personal life and in some cases the reputation of UMHCS.

Staff who are on medication that could affect their work performance or the safety of themselves or others inform their manager or supervisor to ensure any necessary precautions or adjustments to work can be put in place.

Demonstrate impartiality

We will demonstrate impartiality by:

- Making decisions and providing advice on merit and without bias, caprice, favouritism or self-interest; and
- Acting fairly by objectively considering all relevant facts and fair criteria; and
- Implementing Government policies and programs equitably

Decisions and advice

We will make decisions and provide advice that is free of prejudice or favouritism and is based on sound judgement. Before making a decision or providing advice, we will consider relevant information and the impact on the Government, community and other public sector employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors. Our decisions are not affected by personal influences.

Gifts and benefits

We will not- for themselves or others- seek or accept gifts or benefits that could be reasonably perceived as influencing us. Public sector employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors comply with any policies of their public sector employer in relation to accepting, declaring and/or recording the receipt of gifts or benefits.

Employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors who are unsure about accepting a gift or benefit seek advice from their manager.

Acting fairly

We will deal with issues consistently, fairly and in a timely manner. We will use fair criteria, and consider all relevant information in dealing with issues. Being fair means being just and working within commonly accepted rules.

Implementing government policies and programs

UMHCS will implement government policies and programs fairly and without bias. Our decisions and actions are consistent with relevant policies and are based on merit and careful consideration of the relevant facts. We will seek to achieve equitable outcomes within the extent of our authority.

Demonstrate Accountability

We will demonstrate accountability by:

- Working to clear objectives in a transparent manner; and
- Accepting responsibility for our decisions and actions; and
- Seeing to achieve best use of resources; and
- Submitting ourselves to appropriate scrutiny

Working to clear objectives

We understand the objectives of our role. Managers and service coordinators will provide encouragement, support and a clear sense of direction and purpose. Staff who are unclear about their goals discuss this with their manager or supervisor.

Being responsible for decisions and actions

We will make decisions and take actions within the scope of our authority that are lawful and consistent with relevant legislation and government policy. We will consider any impact of our decisions or actions on the Government, community and other public sector employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors.

Work resources

We will use work resources and equipment efficiently and only for appropriate purposes as authorised by UMHCS.

We will seek to achieve value for money and use resources in the most effective way possible. We will identify opportunities for improvement to achieve best possible efficiency and responsiveness.

Work resources include physical, financial, technological and intellectual property. Intellectual property includes copyright, trade marks, registered designs, patents (including patented business systems), semiconductors, circuit layout rights, and trade, business or company names, and all other proprietary rights, and any rights to the registration of such rights, including proprietary rights developed or created by employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors in the course of their employment. UMHCS retains ownership of all these work resources.

Open to scrutiny

We will implement government policy in an open and transparent manner. We will maintain accurate and reliable records as required by relevant legislation, policies and procedures. Records are kept in such a way as to ensure their security and reliability and are made available to appropriate scrutiny when required.

Ability to meet essential requirements

Staff will notify their service coordinator of any loss, suspension of, or change to a registration, accreditation, licence or other qualification that affects their ability to meet relevant essential requirements or to perform their duties.

Compliance with legislation

UMHCS will ensure staff are aware of and comply with all legislation relevant to the performance of their duties.

Demonstrate respect

We will demonstrate respect for colleagues, other public officials and members of the Victorian community by:

- Treating them fairly and objectively; and
- Ensuring freedom from discrimination, harassment and bullying; and
- Using their views to improve outcomes on an ongoing basis

Fair and objective treatment

We will promote an environment that encourages respect. UMHCS staff will be fair, objective and courteous in their dealings with the Government, community and other public sector employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors.

Privacy and confidentiality

We understand the importance of privacy and confidentiality. Confidential information requires special treatment and protection. Those people who provide confidential information to public sector employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors with access to confidential information ensure it remains confidential, at all times act in accordance with legislation and policies relating to dealing with private information.

Maintaining confidentiality

We will receive and manage information in such a manner that its confidentiality will be maintained and that it will not be used to advantage a prospective employer or business, or disadvantage the Victorian Government.

Equity and diversity

We will follow the spirit as well as the letter of the law relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation. We will create an environment that is free of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Valuing and promoting diversity is an important element of demonstrating respect.

Improving Outcomes

We will be conscientious and efficient in their work. We will use our knowledge and expertise to deliver a high quality service, as well as identifying opportunities to improve our service outcomes. We will contribute both individually and as part of a team and engage constructively with our colleagues on work related matters. We will share information with team members to support delivery of the best and most appropriate service outcomes.

Demonstrate leadership

We will demonstrate leadership by actively implementing, promoting and supporting these values.

Leading by example

We will model behaviours based on the public sector values and at all times act in an ethical manner. Leadership is about positive influence, inspiring and empowering others.

- Providing sound advice, delivering high quality services and encouraging best practice demonstrates responsiveness.
- Being honest, using powers correctly, identifying and dealing with inappropriate conduct, avoiding conflicts of interest and developing and maintaining public trust demonstrates integrity.
- Making decisions that are free of bias, considering all relevant facts and ensuring policies and programs are implemented fairly demonstrates impartiality.
- Being transparent, responsible, using resources efficiently and inviting scrutiny, demonstrates accountability
- Treating others fairly, eliminating discrimination, harassment and bullying, and focusing on improving outcomes demonstrates respect.

Managing staff

UMHCS managers and service coordinators will apply the public sector employment principles. We will provide a safe, encouraging and supportive work environment that recognises and values diversity, abilities and contributions. We will give employees, volunteers students, BOM && subcontractors a clear sense of direction and purpose.

We will set realistic goals, timelines and workloads, and provide adequate resources and appropriate information complete work. We trust people to manage their work autonomously but also provide them with support when needed. We will address any performance issues promptly, directly and confidentially with the staff member concerned.

We will treat staff fairly and consistently when making selection decisions and allocating work. We will assess performance and provide constructive feedback and development opportunities. We will consult genuinely with staff, and adhere to industrial and legal obligations. We will understand and respond to legitimate concerns, and encourage work arrangements that enable staff to achieve a work-life balance.

Supporting others

We will work co-operatively with colleagues and other public sector body employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors. We will support and learn from them and accept differences in personal style. We will respect, and seek when necessary, the professional opinions of colleagues in their area of competence, and acknowledge their contribution. We will provide other public sector employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors with support and guidance.

Demonstrate a commitment to human rights

We will respect and promote the human rights set out in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities* by

- Making decisions and providing advice consistent with human rights; and
- Actively implementing, promoting and supporting human rights

Understanding human rights

We will understand human rights as these apply to our work.

Making decisions and providing advice consistent with human rights

We will ensure our own decisions, advice and policy development properly considers the human rights set out in the Charter, and respects the human rights of others.

Implementing human rights

We will deliver services and programs and act in a manner that is consistent with the Charter.

Protecting human rights

We will seek to protect the human rights of colleagues, other public officials and members of the Victorian community by raising concerns regarding circumstances that could breach those rights, and reporting any suspected breaches in accordance with procedures established by UMHCS.

Legislation, Acts & Standards

Key Aligned Documents

References

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