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Life Choice is committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers and governing body members act ethically, responsibly and in the best interests of the organisation.

Life Choice promotes safe and ethical service delivery by setting out expectations for the conduct of all staff, volunteers and governing body members.

All governing body members, staff, volunteers and contractors are required to notify the organisation when other interests and/or commitments conflict with the best interests of the organisation. Declaration and management of conflicts of interest are specifically required for governing body members and all staff.

Principles underlying the code of ethics

- Every individual, regardless of any individual differences, has the right to reach their full potential, provided that doing so does not infringe on the rights of others.
- Every individual is protected against discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race and disability.
- Social inclusion is a human right and encourages individuals to play an active role in society. An inclusive society is based on the fundamental values of tolerance and embracing diversity.
- Every society has a responsibility to treat their members equitably and to make extra adjustments if necessary, for those who are disadvantaged.
- Life Choice recognises First Nations people and their right to self-determination.

Record of policy development		
Version	Date approved	Date for review
2020/2	Sept 2024	Sept 2024

Responsibilities and delegations	
This policy applies to	All staff, volunteers and governing body members
Policy approval	Board of Directors

Policy context – this policy relates to:	
Standards	NDIS Quality & Safety Standards
Legislation	<u>National Disability Insurance Scheme (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018</u>
References	<u>NDIS Code of Conduct</u> <u>DSC – Decoding the Code of Conduct</u> <u>NDIS – Quality Safety and You</u>
Organisation policies	Conflicts of Interest Policy Use of Equipment Policy Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

	Complaints & Feedback Policy
Forms, record keeping, other documents	Code of Conduct Agreement

Definitions

Organisational values: the guiding statement that the organisation uses to convey the culture of the organisation, to positively influence the way staff work and the decisions they make on behalf of the organisation.

Workplace ethics: the set of moral principles that guide workplace behaviour.

Privacy: the commitment and legal obligations of an organisation to keeping personal, sensitive or health-related information secure and restricted to those who require access to it for the purposes of delivering services required by their role.

Workplace confidentiality: the restriction of information acquired as part of a job within the organisation until such time as it is officially released.

Procedures

All staff, volunteers and governing body members will sign an agreement to adhere to the Code of Ethics and Conduct on joining the organisation and commit to a set of values and non-negotiables

The Code of Ethics and Conduct policy requires personnel to commit to the following values:

- Honesty and integrity:
 - act honestly at all times
 - be transparent when making decisions or giving advice
 - ensure all actions can withstand scrutiny
- Respect and courtesy
 - act fairly and equitably
 - respect others, their values and their rights
 - respect the privacy of others and maintain confidentiality of all internal matters related to Life Choice
 - create a safe work environment that is free of violence, discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Life Choice expects all team members to demonstrate a high level of professionalism as representatives of the organization, to create a great workplace culture. Our workplace culture is based on developing and maintaining relationships with co-team members, Participants and their families with the following non-negotiables:

- Mutual Respect
- Reliability
- Punctuality
- Positive Attitude
- Professionalism

The Life Choice Leadership team is excited about the journey and we promise to uphold all these behaviours. Our expectation is for these non-negotiables to be demonstrated by everyone in order to be part of the team.

Standards of work

All individuals will perform their duties at the highest level of professional conduct. They will be accountable for their work and their interactions with others.

Responsibility to Participants

The Ethics and Code of Conduct Policy requires the organisation's personnel to commit to:

- Act with integrity,
- Act honestly always.
- Be transparent when making decisions or giving advice.
- Ensure all actions can withstand scrutiny.
- Respect and courtesy
- Respect the individual's rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with laws and conventions.
- When dealing with one another, management, participants and service users, external stakeholders and other agency representatives, staff members will be respectful, honest and courteous.
- Staff members will give accurate information and prompt attention and observe fairness and equity in their dealings with others.
- Act fairly and equitably.
- Respect others, their values and their rights.
- Respect privacy and confidentiality.
- Create a safe work environment that is free of abuse, violence, discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

NDIS Code of Conduct

- act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions •
- respect the privacy of people with disability
- provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner, with care and skill
- act with integrity, honesty and transparency
- promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with disability
- take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against, and exploitation, neglect and abuse of, people with disability
- take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct

Responsibility to employers

Workers will:

- Carry out the duties and responsibilities of their role as outlined in the employment contract;
- Undertake all duties in a diligent manner;
- Adhere to the rules, policies and procedures of the organisation;

- Work within the goals and objectives of the organisation without denying participants their rights;
- Act within the law; respect the rights and legal protections of individuals
- Not act in a way that brings them or the organisation into disrepute;
- Maintain a professional relationship with participants at all times, and disclose any out of hours contact;
- Act responsibly in the spending of public monies.
- Address any behaviour that is incompatible with this code including disclosing any relationships between a colleague and a participant
- Make informed decisions and seek assistance at any time if unsure about a decision;

Responsibility to colleagues

Workers will:

- Work cooperatively as a member of the team;
- Support colleagues and respect the experience and knowledge of all colleagues;
- Discuss ethical concerns with colleagues and managers;
- Share professional information and knowledge with colleagues;
- Project a positive image of the organisation;
- Not be absent from duties without an appropriate reason;
- Adhere to the legal rights of colleagues including maintaining confidentiality, anti-discrimination legislation and workplace health and safety legislation.

Conflict of interest

Life Choice is committed to ensuring that individual interests that conflict with the interests of the organisation are identified and managed so that they do not affect the services, activities or decisions of the organisation. This is addressed in the Life Choice Conflicts of Interest Policy.

This Conflicts of Interest Policy requires that all staff, volunteers and Board members:

- act impartially and without prejudice;
- declare any potential or actual conflict of interest; and
- do not accept gifts or benefits that would influence a decision.

Confidentiality and privacy

All staff, volunteers and management must respect and keep confidential internal matters of the organisation, and respect the privacy of others.

Detailed guidance on these issues is in the Life Choice Confidentiality and Privacy policy.

Use of resources

Resources include physical, financial and technological resources as well as intellectual property.

Life Choice personnel must:

- recognise the resources that belong to the organisation;
- use all work resources efficiently and only for appropriate purposes; and
- respect and safeguard the resources.

The Use of Equipment policy provides additional guidance on using equipment for personal use.

Harassment and bullying

Harassment and bullying are unacceptable and contrary to ethical behaviour. Additionally, harassment on the basis of a person's sex, race, ethnic religious background, age, pregnancy, marital status, disability, transgender (transsexual) status or sexuality breaches anti-discrimination and human rights law.

Harassment in the workplace can take many forms. It can be obvious or subtle, direct or indirect. It includes:

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- sexual or suggestive remarks or gestures
- displaying or circulating sexually suggestive, offensive or degrading/insulting material (e.g. on walls, computer screen savers, email)
- making fun of someone, spreading rumours, and unwelcome practical jokes
- obscene or unsolicited telephone calls, letters, faxes or email messages
- invasion of personal space, unnecessary physical contact
- continually ignoring or dismissing someone's contribution
- pushing, shoving or jostling or assault
- threats, insults, name calling, inappropriate language
- creating a hostile feeling or environment, even when there are no direct attacks being made on a person
- using workplace resources to harass, threaten or abuse an intimate partner or family member within or outside the workplace.

Complaints concerning harassment or bullying should be actioned according to the Bullying & Harassment policy and the Grievance policy.

Reporting unethical behaviour

If a person believes that the behaviour of any staff member, volunteer or Board/Management Committee member is unethical they must report it to their manager. If they are not satisfied with this response they may refer to the Whistleblower protection policy.

Unethical behaviour is defined as:

- workplace behaviour that is contrary to Life Choice's codes of ethics or conduct, or other workplace policies
- workplace behaviour that violates any law, or is corrupt conduct or misconduct
- mismanagement of resources or fraudulent behaviour
- behaviour that creates a danger to public health or safety or the environment.

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