

1. Purpose

This document explains how Affinity Education Group (**Affinity**) staff and representatives are expected to behave and conduct themselves while at work, at a work-related event, or in situations where the individual can be identified or linked to Affinity (e.g. on social media platforms or wearing Affinity uniform or Affinity branded items in public), to create a safe, respectful and professional environment for children, families and colleagues.

This Code of Conduct sets clear expectations for how we communicate, behave and support one another in everyday interactions, and when representing Affinity in any setting.

It also explains how we respond when expectations are not met, to ensure the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children, families and staff, in line with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations and the National Quality Standard.

2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees, contractors, students, volunteers and any other person representing Affinity.

It applies to all interactions with children, families, colleagues and the community in Affinity centres, workplaces and any other setting where a person is acting on behalf of Affinity. This includes communication in person, by phone, in writing and online, as well as when attending events, training or community activities.

This Code of Conduct sets the standard of behaviour expected at Affinity and supports all other policies and procedures. All staff and representatives are expected to understand and comply with this Code of Conduct and apply it consistently in their actions, decisions and interactions at all times.

3. Guiding principles

At Affinity, child safety is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to protecting the safety, rights and wellbeing of all children and maintaining a culture where harm or abuse is not accepted.

This Paramountcy Principle means the safety, rights and best interests of children are always the highest priority and guide all actions, decisions and interactions.

The Affinity Way and our values guide how this Code of Conduct is applied in everyday practice.

- **Being Completely Connected** – We communicate openly, listen respectfully and work together to build positive relationships with children, families, colleagues and our community.
- **Having Serious Fun** – We create positive, welcoming and inclusive environments where people feel valued, supported and included.
- **Living the Team Spirit** – We work together with trust, respect and shared responsibility because children benefit when we support one another and work as a team.
- **Going Above and Beyond** – We take pride in our work, show initiative and act in the best interests of children, families and colleagues.
- **Creating Shining Stars** – We support learning and growth by encouraging others, sharing knowledge and helping people reach their potential.
- **Delivering Outstanding Professionalism** – We act with integrity, protect privacy and confidentiality, take responsibility for our actions and maintain professional standards in everything we do.

These principles underpin all expectations described in this Code of Conduct and guide how we interact with children, families, colleagues and the community.

4. Expected behaviour

The following expectations describe how staff and representatives are expected to behave in all interactions. These expectations reflect the guiding principles and apply whenever a person is acting on behalf of Affinity, including at events, training, in the community and online.

4.1. Acting professionally

We are expected to act in a professional, responsible and ethical way at all times.

This means:

Accountable (Owner)	Chief Financial Officer	Accountable (Expert)	Head of Human Resources
Responsible	All staff, students, volunteers, families	Document Version	V13
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- behaving in a way that reflects positively on Affinity at all times, including when representing Affinity outside the workplace, following all relevant laws, policies and procedures;
- using good judgement in all situations, including when unsure or under pressure;
- maintaining appropriate personal presentation and conduct;
- fulfilling role responsibilities in their entirety; and
- showing commitment to producing the highest quality of work.

4.2. Working respectfully with others

We treat all people fairly, respectfully and without discrimination.

This means:

- treating children, families, colleagues and visitors with dignity and respect;
- valuing different perspectives, backgrounds and experiences;
- maintaining appropriate professional boundaries at all times; and
- not engaging in behaviour that causes harm, fear or distress.

4.3. Communicating appropriately

We communicate in a way that is clear, respectful and constructive.

This means:

- speaking politely and respectfully, even when there is disagreement;
- sharing information honestly and in a timely way;
- raising concerns through appropriate channels; and
- using appropriate language and behaviour in all forms of communication, including online.

4.4. Supporting a safe environment

We all have a responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy environment for children, colleagues and the community.

This means:

- following all safety and child protection requirements;
- taking action when a safety concern is identified;
- reporting concerns, risks or incidents as soon as possible;
- being fit for work and able to perform duties safely;
- meeting your duty of care obligations by taking reasonable steps to protect your own health, safety and wellbeing, and that of children, colleagues and visitors;
- wearing the required uniform and personal protective equipment for the work being undertaken; and
- not carrying or using personal devices, including mobile phones and smartwatches, while working directly with children, unless their use has been authorised for work purposes.

4.5. Protecting privacy and confidentiality

We respect and protect personal and sensitive information at all times.

This means:

- only accessing or sharing information when it is required for work purposes;
- handling information carefully and securely;
- not discussing or sharing information inappropriately, including on social media; and
- following all privacy and confidentiality requirements.

4.6. Acting with integrity and accountability

We act honestly, fairly and in the best interests of children and the organisation.

This means:

- taking responsibility for our actions and decisions;
- being truthful and transparent in all interactions;
- using good judgement when making decisions and acting in line with this Code of Conduct, Affinity values and the best interests of children;
- avoiding actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and raising any conflicts that arise;

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- being punctual, reliable and accountable for the responsibilities of our role;
- using Affinity resources, systems and information appropriately and for their intended purpose;
- reporting concerns about conduct, safety or compliance within required timeframes; and
- notifying Affinity of any change that may affect our suitability, qualifications, registrations or ability to perform our role.

Notification requirements

Staff and representatives must notify Affinity in writing within 24 hours of:

- any change in Working With Children Check (WWCC) status;
- any change to qualifications required for the role;
- being charged with, or convicted of, an offence;
- receiving an adverse notice from a State, Territory or Commonwealth regulator, including an invitation to show cause or other action that may result in:
 - being placed on a prohibited persons register;
 - exclusion from the workplace or sector; or
 - suspension from the workplace or sector; and
- for Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs), any change to teacher registration status.

Additional expectations for managers and leaders

Managers and employees in leadership roles are expected to:

- model the behaviours outlined in this Code of Conduct;
- address conduct that does not meet expected standards;
- support employees to understand and comply with policies, procedures and workplace expectations;
- promote a respectful, safe and professional workplace culture; and
- maintain confidentiality when managing employee information and workplace matters.

5. Unacceptable behaviour

Behaviour that does not meet this Code of Conduct is not accepted.

Unacceptable behaviour includes any actions that place others at risk, cause harm, or fail to meet the expected standards of safety, respect and professionalism. Unacceptable behaviour also includes any conduct that reflects negatively on Affinity, its leadership, employees or other representatives or is inconsistent with terms of employment or commonly understood principles underpinning employment relationships.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- **acting in a way that is unsafe, harmful, abusive or neglectful towards a child**, or failing to act on concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing;
- **engaging in bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation**, including sexual harassment, or behaviour that does not support an inclusive workplace;
- **acting in an aggressive, threatening or intimidating way**, or using inappropriate, offensive or disrespectful language or behaviour, including when communicating with colleagues, families or the community
- **breaching professional boundaries with children, families or colleagues**, including behaviour that is inconsistent with expectations set out in Affinity policies and procedures
- **not following lawful directions, policies or procedures**, including those related to safety, supervision and professional conduct
- **misusing confidential or personal information**, or failing to protect privacy
- **using Affinity systems, resources or technology inappropriately**, including inappropriate use of devices, systems or social media
- **being unfit for work**, including being affected by drugs or alcohol in a way that impacts safety or performance
- **engaging in unlawful, dishonest, inappropriate or unethical conduct**, or behaviour that may damage the reputation of Affinity

Any behaviour that compromises the safety, rights or dignity of children is a serious breach of this Code of Conduct.

All staff and representatives are required to comply with this Code of Conduct and are expected to speak up about behaviour that does not meet these expectations.

Breaches are managed in a timely, fair and consistent way. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, this may include support, corrective action, or formal disciplinary action.

Serious breaches may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and may be referred to external authorities when required.

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6. Raising concerns and speaking up

Concerns are raised in a timely, respectful and constructive way so they can be understood and addressed. Speaking up supports a safe and professional environment and helps protect the safety and wellbeing of children, families and staff.

Concerns are raised with a manager or Centre Manager in the first instance. This supports open communication and early resolution. Where this is not appropriate, concerns are raised through other available reporting channels in line with Affinity processes.

All concerns are taken seriously and managed in a fair, respectful and confidential way, in line with organisational requirements.

Staff and representatives are expected to speak up if they observe behaviour that does not meet this Code of Conduct, or if they have concerns about safety, wellbeing or professional conduct.

Support is available when raising concerns including access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and individuals are treated respectfully throughout the process.

7. When expectations are not met

When behaviour does not meet this Code of Conduct, it is addressed in a timely, fair and respectful way. The focus is on understanding what has occurred, maintaining a safe and professional environment, and supporting appropriate behaviour moving forward.

When concerns arise, they are discussed with those involved to clarify expectations and identify appropriate actions. This may include providing guidance, setting clear boundaries, or outlining expectations for future conduct.

When behaviour continues to not meet expectations, or where the behaviour is more serious, further action is taken in line with Affinity processes to address the concern and ensure safety and professional standards are maintained.

When behaviour places the safety, wellbeing or dignity of any person at risk, immediate action is taken to ensure safety and manage the situation appropriately.

In all situations, responses are guided by the Paramountcy Principle, ensuring the safety, rights and best interests of children remain the highest priority.

8. Related policy and procedure

This Code of Conduct is the overarching behavioural standard for all staff and representatives. The policies and procedures below provide additional guidance on key conduct expectations, reporting obligations and workplace requirements. Staff and representatives are expected to comply with all relevant Affinity policies, procedures and supporting documents.

Conduct area	Related policies and procedures
Child safety and interactions with children	POL2-P5 Child Safety and Protection Procedure POL3-P1 Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy and Procedure POL5-P1 Interactions with Children Policy and Procedure POL QA5 Relationships with Children Policy
Respectful behaviour and workplace conduct	POL HR1 Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy POL HR7 Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy POL4-P15 Grievance and Conflict Resolution Procedure
Privacy, confidentiality and information management	POL6-P5 Confidentiality and Privacy Procedure POL7-P11 Record Management and Archiving Procedure
Digital technology, systems and communication	POL HR4 Social Media and External Communication Policy POL2-P33 Safe Use of Digital Technologies - Electronic Devices POL7-P7 Use and Care of IT Resources Procedure
Safety, wellbeing and fitness for work	POL QA2 Health and Safety Policy POL HR6 Management of Drugs and Alcohol Policy POL4-P17 Injury Management and Return to Work Procedure
Employment obligations and professional responsibilities	POL4-P9 Recruitment and Onboarding Policy and Procedure POL4-P13 Employee Consultation Procedure POL4-P4 Educator Dress Code Procedure POL7-P16 Suitability, Criminal Record and Background Checks Procedure POL HR16 Centre Support Dress Code
Reporting concerns and responding to breaches	POL4-P14 Corrective Action and Discipline Procedure

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[POL6-P6 Complaints Policy and Procedure](#)
[POL7-P19 Whistleblower Policy](#)
[POL7-P9 Allegations Handling Procedure](#)

9. Version history

The version history table below records updates to this document, including approval dates and a summary of changes made.

Version Control	Date	Author	Description of Change
1.0	Oct 2013	AEG	Update to reflect ECSNR NQS
1.1	Oct 2014	AEG	Revision
1.2	April 2015	AEG	Add conflict of interest
1.3	May 2016	AEG	Add legislation
1.4	June 2016	AEG	Revision and formatting
10.16	Oct 2016	AEG	Merge centre based and CSO
4.17	Apr 2017	AEG	Added value strategies
10.17	Oct 2017	AEG	Minor amendment
2.18	Feb 2018	AEG	NQS update
10.18	Oct 2018	AEG	Minor amendment
5.19	May 2019	AEG	Minor amendment
8.19	Aug 2019	AEG	Minor amendment
10.19	Oct 2019	AEG	Minor amendment
10.20	Oct 2020	AEG	Scheduled review
10.21	Oct 2021	AEG	Scheduled review
12.22	Dec 2022	AEG	Scheduled review
7.23	July 2023	AEG	Expanded personal device use and child safety
8.23	Aug 2023	AEG	Family values and personal topics
11.23	Nov 2023	AEG	RACI table and reference added
10.24	Oct 2024	AEG	Scheduled review
11.24	Nov 2024	AEG	Added gift declaration form
V11.1	Apr 2026	AEG	Added NSW reform information
V13	Sept 2026	AEG	Scheduled review. Document updated to the refreshed structure. Clarified behavioural expectations, reporting obligations, leadership accountabilities and pathways for raising concerns. Improved alignment with child safety requirements and The Affinity Way values.

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