



The Missionary Sisters of Service Community Policy: Code of Conduct

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Key Definitions

The MSS Community:	The MSS Community is defined as the Missionary Sisters of Service and their entities (namely the Stewardship Council, the Business Finance and Property Committee, and Highways and Byways Ltd), partners, staff and volunteers
The MSS:	Herein known as The Missionary Sisters of Service Properties Held in Trust - the legal entity of the MSS Community
SC:	Stewardship Council, the title given to the body of Trustees of The MSS.

1. CONTEXT

The Missionary Sisters of Service (MSS) Community places great importance on appropriate and fair dealing with all people. All those involved with The MSS Community are asked to prioritise the safety of vulnerable members of our society, including children.

All members of The MSS Community are asked to maximise service delivery and avoid waste and extravagance in the use of funds and resources. Staff are encouraged, where possible, to identify improvements to administrative systems and procedures to achieve optimal effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness.

To obtain a full understanding of their role and the expectations attendant on that, all staff are expected to participate in an induction program at the commencement of their time with the organisation.

Volunteers are also requested to participate in an orientation to the organisation, which will be arranged as needed.

1.1 Working with Colleagues

Personnel must treat colleagues with respect and, where necessary, seek the professional opinions of colleagues in their area of expertise and acknowledge their contribution. Staff must also respect and value diversity within the workplace, so all staff feel welcome and valued for their unique identity.

Discussion around work issues is to be conducted in a respectful manner and with the relevant personnel. Criticism or correction should be done in a confidential and private manner.

Management and staff must treat all colleagues fairly, involve them in decisions that affect them and provide equal opportunity to develop their skills. Concerns must be discussed in a manner that encourages, through modelling, the application of collaborative problem-solving processes.

1.2 Working with Children

This document should be read in conjunction with *The MSS Community Safeguarding Policy* which exists to provide specific information in relation to the code of conduct expected by all members of the MSS Community.

Personnel must not:

- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometimes, for example, while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including for reasons of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside an MSS Community event without the MSS Reporting Officer's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact (that is, contact that is not pre-arranged), such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
- have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with e-newsletters)
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to report immediately any breach of this code to the appropriate authority as outlined in *The MSS Safeguarding Policy*.

1.3 Working with Funding Bodies and Other Agencies

All MSS Community personnel must, at all times, act in a professional manner towards funding bodies and other agencies with whom The MSS Community works.

1.4 General Expectations of Sisters, Employees, Contractors, Volunteers

All personnel are expected to:

- Perform duties diligently, impartially and responsively, to the best of their ability
- Comply with directions given by a person delegated and authorised to do so
- Be aware of MSS Community Policies and Procedures relevant to their role and complete the Induction Program
- Be self-directed in personal and professional development and as requested, be actively involved in a supervision process
- Prioritise child safety in accordance with *The MSS Community Safeguarding Policy*
- Observe relevant occupational health and safety requirements and act to remove, or bring to the attention of their manager, any situation that is, or may be, a health or safety hazard
- Avoid activities outside working hours that diminish public confidence in The MSS Community or affect their ability to perform their duties.

1.5 Discrimination or Harassment

The MSS Community will not tolerate any discrimination or harassment by any personnel against any other person in any situation related to the organisation.

1.6 Consumption of Alcohol or Illicit Drugs while at Work

The consumption of alcohol or improper use of drugs or other substances must not adversely affect work performance or official conduct. On occasion, MSS Community Management may sanction or provide alcohol for approved functions. Illicit drugs are prohibited in the workplace and at MSS Community activities.

1.7 Understanding Unethical Conduct

Unethical conduct will not be tolerated. Unethical conduct includes the violation of any law, regulation or rule covering MSS Community operations. It also includes conduct that might endanger the health and safety of others.

In particular, the following behaviours will not be tolerated and may result in dismissal:

- purchasing, supplying and/or using illicit drugs
- purchasing and/or supplying stolen property, or property that is reasonably suspected of being stolen,
- engaging in any form of sexual harassment towards staff or volunteers,
- assaulting any member of staff, volunteer or program participants,
- any financial misappropriation.

1.8 Reporting Unethical Conduct

The MSS Community is a values-based organisation. Our expectation is that all personnel will behave ethically. If anyone witnesses unethical conduct, they have an obligation, on behalf of the organisation, to report such conduct. The MSS Community does not tolerate taking of reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct.

Personnel are encouraged to continue to raise appropriate matters at any time with their supervisor. As an alternative, they may make a disclosure of improper conduct or detrimental action by contacting the Complaints Officer.

Personnel must comply promptly with all lawful directions given by management. If there are grounds for complaint arising out of such directions, whether ethical or otherwise, they should discuss and attempt to resolve the matter with their supervisor. If still dissatisfied, they may lodge a personal grievance to have the matter resolved. They must continue to carry out any lawful directions given until the matter is resolved.

Personnel are protected against discrimination or victimisation for reporting unethical behaviour or wrongdoing, provided the claim is reasonable and the matter has been reported to an appropriate person. This may be the Congregation Leader/Stewardship Council member or supervisor.

If personnel have a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination, they may approach the nominated contact person as detailed in *The MSS Community Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy*.

In relation to the reporting of unethical conduct as it pertains to the safety of children and adults at risk, The MSS Community may direct their concern to the Reporting Officer and refer to *The MSS Community Safeguarding Policy*.

If a complaint is found to be vexatious or malicious, legal or other appropriate action may be taken against the complainant.

1.9 Criminal Offences

All personnel will be required to undergo a Police Check and/or Working with Children Check prior to commencement of engagement in any MSS Community ministry or workplace.

If staff are charged with any criminal offence, they must immediately advise their supervisor and/or the Congregational Leader.

1.10 Official Resources

All personnel must use only the facilities and other resources of the organisation to carry out the functions of the organisation and must maintain them properly. This includes appropriate use of the internet and e-mail on systems provided by The MSS Community and any social media platforms which are accessed through the organisation's internet connection

The MSS Community retains the copyright of work produced by staff during employment unless the Congregational Leader grants specific approval by prior arrangement.

2. USE AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION

2.1 Public Comments

Public comment includes public speaking engagements, comments on radio, television and any social media platforms, expressing views in letters to the newspapers or in books, journals or notices where it might be expected that the publication or circulation of the comment will spread to the community at large.

Comments made on behalf of The MSS Community should be authorised by the Congregational Leader or delegated authority. Individuals should refrain from public comment that is critical of the MSS Community operation or management.

Personnel must obtain prior approval from the Congregational Leader or delegated authority before addressing or chairing seminars organised by professional conference organisers where the invitation is based upon their position in the organisation. Any fee received for any seminar participation in their professional capacity will be paid to The MSS Community unless specifically exempted in writing from this requirement by the Congregational Leader.

2.2 Official Information

All information concerning participants, parents, carers and other service providers disclosed in the course of service delivery is confidential and cannot be disclosed to any third party, except where:

- with the participant's written permission (or where the participant cannot give permission, the permission of the appropriate carer), referrals are to be made and other professional consultation is sought

- failure to disclose information would breach the terms of the worker's employment (such exception must be notified to the participant)
- there is a statutory requirement or court order (e.g. threat of harm to self or another and crimes against children).

Confidential information may only be used for proper purposes in delivery of MSS Community services. Within the organisation, it should only be disclosed to colleagues on a need-to-know basis.

Personnel must act and advise with honesty and integrity in all aspects of their duties. If it is believed that an aspect of The MSS Community policy or administration may have unforeseen consequences or otherwise requires review, personnel should bring the concern to the attention of their supervisor or the Congregational Leader.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Personnel must disclose potential conflicts of interest to management when dealing in the course of official duties with relatives, close friends or business acquaintances. In particular, they should be aware of conflicts that could arise on committees or boards of management of other organisations whose operations compete or overlap with those of the MSS Community.

In exercising any financial delegation, it is imperative that personnel can demonstrate that they placed the organisation's interest before their own. Where those interests are, or appear to be, in conflict, they should notify the Congregation Leader or delegated authorised person prior to discharging their financial delegation.

It is not possible to define all potential areas of conflict of interest. If in doubt as to whether a conflict exists, personnel should raise the issue with their supervisor or the Congregational Leader.

Personnel must not use their position to obtain a private benefit for themselves or for someone else. Family or other personal or working relationships should not improperly influence their decisions.

4. FINANCIAL PROBITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Personnel have an obligation to ensure they are financially responsible in the execution of their responsibilities. All personnel need to ensure that in all financial matters there is full accountability and responsibility in spending.

Personnel who have specific financial responsibilities must observe the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements and be familiar with and adhere to MSS Community policies.

4.1 Assets – Physical and Intellectual

Personnel may only use the facilities and other resources of The MSS Community to carry out the functions of the organisation. It is an expectation that all assets will be cared for and maintained properly.

The MSS Community retains the copyright of work produced by Personnel during employment/engagement. Personnel will only retain the copyright of the work on written approval of the Congregation Leader and if it can be demonstrated that the staff member or volunteer did not use MSS Community time, name, information and/or resources in producing the work.

5. EMPLOYMENT AFTER LEAVING MISSIONARY SISTERS OF SERVICE

Once personnel have left The MSS Community for other employment, they must not use confidential information obtained during employment with The MSS Community to advantage their prospective employer or disadvantage The MSS Community in commercial or other relationships with the other employer.