



CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

This Code of Conduct statement has been developed to assist staff engaged by Axess Ability under-take their work responsibilities legally, ethically and in a manner that conforms with the vision, mission and values of our organization.

The Code applies to all persons engaged by Axess Ability in any capacity, including permanent, casual, contracted persons and volunteers.

This Code is written in conjunction with the Axess Ability s Policy and Procedures Manual. The Policy and Procedures Manual explains the underpinning policies and rationale for our practices and procedures and the ways in which our responsibilities are to be carried out. While the Code of Conduct does not provide answers to all legal and ethical questions that may arise, it does provide the framework for determining appropriate conduct in a variety of situations. If and when situations are encountered where there are concerns about issues of legality, ethics or conduct, all persons are obliged to discuss these issues with the Partners'. As individuals, we are ultimately responsible for our own professional and personal behavior. Each section of the Code therefore concludes with a statement written in the first person that details the commitment of each member of the Axess Ability team to legal, ethical behavior that conforms with the values of our organization. All staff members are required to sign a copy of the Code to formally acknowledge that they have received the document, they understand its content and they agree to comply with its requirements.

Overview of Professional Commitment

In carrying out my duties and responsibilities I will:

- uphold the vision, mission and values of our organization;
- familiarize myself and comply with all laws relevant to my area of responsibility;
- act in a manner that will not bring the organization into disrepute;
- ensure that my work is performed efficiently, effectively, impartially and with integrity;
- provide honest, accurate and responsible advice and information;
- ensure that my decisions are made fairly and based on the best possible information available;
- ensure that at all times I remain accountable for, and strive to improve, my professional competencies and quality of work;
- work in a cooperative and positive manner with my colleagues;
- ensure that Axess Ability's resources are not used improperly; and
- always act respectfully towards, and in the best interests of, those people who are users of our services.

Compliance with Legal Requirements

All persons engaged by Axess Ability are bound by legislation relevant to the provision of services to the Victorian Disability Act 2006. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Disability Service Standards
- N.D.I.S Act 2013
- Information Privacy Act 2002
- Australian Privacy Act 2001

Axess Ability is committed to upholding the principles, provisions and requirements of all relevant legislation concerning the provision of care and services for people in its care.

Commitment I agree to familiarize myself and comply with legislation and relevant standards of service provision relevant to my areas of responsibility.

Suitability of Persons

Legislation requires that the persons engaged in managing and delivering care services must be assessed and approved as 'suitable'.

Commitment I acknowledge the need to assess my suitability as a person to be involved in the provision of care and services to the Axess Ability target group.

In particular, I acknowledge the need to establish that I:

- am 'safe' to have direct contact with people in need of care;
- understand and am committed to the principles for administering the legislation relevant to the care I provide;
- am able to provide care in a way that meets the standards of care defined by the legislation;
- understand the policies, practices and procedures implemented by Axess Ability to ensure that the care provided meets the standard of care requirements; and
- will complete any training reasonably required to be able to properly provide this care.

For the purposes of establishing my suitability,

I agree to:

- provide written consent for criminal record checks to be conducted every three years;
- provide substantial proof of my identity such as original copies of my birth certificate, passport or driver's license, and, where relevant, proof of a change of my surname such as marriage or divorce certificate, that can be sighted and copied by Axess Ability;
- immediately disclose any changes to my criminal or other histories such as a new charge or conviction, to the Partners'
- immediately disclose changes to address and contact details to the Partners';
- provide original copies of my driver's license, car registration, comprehensive car insurance, and current first aid certificate when these expire and are renewed, that can be sighted and copied by Axess Ability;
- provide evidence of training or qualifications if requested by Axess Ability.

Meeting the Standards of Care

All persons engaged by Axess Ability are directed to provide daily care and services to our clients in accordance with the legislative standards and as directed in the Axess Ability Policy and Procedures Manual.

Commitment

I am committed to playing my part in ensuring that our services meet the relevant standards. In fulfilling this commitment, I agree to:

- provide daily care and services to people strictly in accordance with the legislated standards;
- support my colleagues in meeting these standards;
- avail myself of supervision, training and support in relation to how daily care and services can be provided in ways that conform with the relevant Victorian Disability Standards;
- play my part in providing the best possible care and performing my duties in ways that are responsible, transparent and accountable.

In keeping with the relevant standards and within the areas of my responsibility as detailed within the Axess Ability Policy and Procedures Manual, I agree to:

- respect people's dignity and rights at all times;
- meet people's needs for physical care including adequate food, clothing and shelter;
- provide emotional care that allows people to experience being cared about and valued in ways that contribute to their positive self-regard;
- cater for people's needs relating to their culture and ethnic background;
- meet people's material needs relating to their vocational, physical and mental stimulation, recreation and general living;
- provide people with positive guidance when necessary to change inappropriate behavior, excluding whatsoever techniques for managing behavior that include corporal punishment or punishment that humiliates, frightens or threatens them in a way that is likely to cause emotional or physical harm;
- provide opportunities for people to participate in positive social and recreational activities appropriate to their developmental level and age;
- encourage and assist people to maintain family and other personal relationships for purposes of, and to the extent determined by, each person's support plan; and
- if the person has a disability, provide care and help appropriate to their level of need and in the least restrictive manner possible.

Reporting Matters of Concern

Commitment

I agree to:

- report matters of concern in accordance with the legal requirements (including EEO and OH&S) and fully support the rights and responsibility of other persons engaged by Axess Ability to do so;
- not act nor behave in a way that deliberately discourages other persons from reporting matters of concern or that alienates or vilifies colleagues who may have reported matters of concern; and
- play my part in promoting an environment in which my colleagues and I feel encouraged and supported in reporting matters of concern.

I acknowledge the commitment of Axess Ability to support those who report matters of concern and will, if required, avail myself of this support.

I agree to:

- faithfully and honestly report any matters of concern that I am aware of or reasonably suspect;
 - not falsely report matters of concern for vexatious purposes; and
 - fully, openly and honestly cooperate with any authorized investigation of a reported matter of concern.
- I will adhere to the guidelines detailed within Axess Ability Policy and Procedures Manual for reporting any matter of concern related to people in receipt of our services. In conformance with these guidelines, I will honestly and openly provide all information required to the best of my knowledge.

Confidentiality

Commitment

In keeping with legislative requirements, I accept that I must not access, use or disclose any official information (such as information contained on a case file) without proper authorization or lawful reason. I accept that official information must only be used for work related purposes and not for personal benefit. I will ensure confidential information is not, and cannot, be accessed by unauthorized people. I will only discuss sensitive information, both within and outside of the organization, with people who are authorized to have access to the information. If I am unsure about who has proper authority, I will discuss the matter with the Partners'. I will not discuss confidential details in public places or forums. I will maintain the secure storage of data such as files and I will report all unauthorized access to the Partners'.

Discrimination and Harassment

In keeping with legal requirements and values of Axess Ability, all persons engaged by Axess Ability are required to value diversity and to refrain from all actions and behavior that constitute harassment or discrimination.

Commitment

In keeping with legal requirements and the values of Axess Ability, I agree to value diversity. I will not harass nor discriminate against my colleagues, users of our services or members of the public on the grounds of:

- sex;
- marital status;

- pregnancy;
- age;
- race;
- ethnic or national origin;
- political or religious conviction;
- physical or intellectual disability; or
- sexual preference.

I am aware that such harassment and discrimination may be un-lawful and I expose myself to prosecution in the event of these behaviors or actions occurring.

Conflicts of Interest-including financial and other Private Interests

A conflict of interest exists when it is likely that a person could be influenced, or could appear to be influenced, by a personal interest in carrying out their responsibilities when engaged by Axess Ability. A conflict of interest that leads to biased decision making may constitute corrupt conduct.

Axess Ability requires that all persons within the organization avoid having any financial or other interests that may cause a conflict between personal interest and work responsibilities, whether real or apparent.

Commitment

I recognize that I am required and committed, to avoid conflicts of interest that interfere, or appear to interfere, with my capacity to impartially perform my work responsibilities and duties with integrity.

In particular, I will not use my position to gain any advantage for myself, members of my family, associates, friends or the like.

I understand that some interests that may give rise to a conflict of interest include:

- personal beliefs or attitudes that influence the impartiality and objectivity of advice that I may give;
- personal relationships with users of our services or their close associates that go beyond the level of a professional working relationship;
- other employment that compromises my integrity and/or the integrity of the organization; and
- Financial interests in a matter involving the organization, such as a contract for the supply of goods or services, having friends or relatives with such an interest. Because I may be the only person aware of the potential for a conflict of interest, it is my responsibility to avoid any financial or other interest that could compromise the impartial performance of my responsibilities. Where an unavoidable conflict of interest arises, or has the potential to arise, I am aware that I must advise the Partners' in writing as soon as possible. I will not solicit or accept gifts for my family or myself where the gift implies that I should favor a user of the service or other person, or where it may appear that I could favor a user of the service or other person in any way. However, I may accept token gifts such as chocolates, flowers or mementos that are offered as an expression of appreciation, provided the gift is less than approximately \$20.00 in value. Whenever I am unsure about whether I should accept a gift or benefit, I will consult with Partners' at Axess Ability. Axess Ability may allow me to accept a token gift or benefit provided they are satisfied that I, the client or the organization will not be, or appear to be, compromised in the process. Where I, am offered a substantial gift or benefit, I will immediately inform Axess Ability.

Professional Relationships

Axess Ability requires that persons engaged by the organization always act in the best interests of people and their families, who are and have been users of our services.

As such it is expected that all persons conduct their relationships with people, their families and external organizations in a professional and ethical manner.

Commitment

I recognize my responsibility to maintain a professional relationship with all people and their families, who are and have been users of our services.

I therefore will not engage in any abusive or exploitive behavior with these people. I recognize that I have a responsibility to maintain professional relationships with organizations outside Axess Ability that I may have cause to deal with in the delivery of care. I therefore will conduct myself in a professional manner at all times when liaising with such organizations and will not engage in abusive behavior.

I will not approach referring or funding bodies without specific authorization from Axess Ability.

I commit to treating all people and members of their families in a respectful and caring manner that acknowledges their human rights, cultural background, gender and stage of personal development.

Where a person with whom I have a pre-existing familial or personal relationship comes into contact with the organization, I will immediately disclose this information to the Partners' and I will not be involved in any casework decisions relating to the person.

Public Comment and Community Participation

Axess Ability respects the rights of persons engaged by the organization to make public comment and enter public debate on political and social issues as private individuals.

As persons engaged by Axess Ability however, persons must not make statements on behalf of the organization without prior approval by the Partners' and must, at all times, respect the rights to privacy held by users of our service.

In addition, Axess Ability respects the rights of persons engaged by the organization to participate, as private individuals, in party political activities, community organizations, charities and professional associations, unless this participation results or has the potential to result in a conflict of interest.

Commitment

I understand that although I have a right as a private individual to make public comment and enter public debate on political and social issues, I must not make statements on behalf of the organization without prior approval from the Partners' and I must, at all times, respect the rights to privacy held by current and former users of our service.

To avoid the misunderstanding that any comment made in a private capacity is an official comment on behalf of the organization, I will preface my remarks with a statement that the comments are made in a private capacity and do not represent the official view of Axess Ability. I will confine my public comments to factual information and, as far as possible will not express an opinion on official policy or practice unless required to do so by the 30 circumstances of a particular situation (e.g. a court of law). I accept that approval is required from the Partners' before I make any comment or provide any information to the media on matters concerning Axess Ability.

Because I understand that users of our service, both past and present, and their families have a right to privacy, I will not discuss matters with the media that may adversely affect them.

I will ensure any participation in any party- political activities does not conflict with my responsibilities to serve the organization in a politically neutral manner. I accept that this is important because of the need to maintain confidence in the impartiality of the actions I take and the decisions I make.

I recognize that I am free to participate as a volunteer in community organizations, charities and professional associations, subject to the requirements of this Code of Conduct.

Compliance with Policies and Procedures

Policy directions, practice guidelines and operational procedures are documented and regularly updated within the Policy and Procedure Manual and/or are issued to specific work groups.

Commitment

I will inform myself about and comply with all policy directions, practice guidelines and operational procedures relevant to my areas of responsibility, as documented within the Policy and Procedures Manual or as issued.

I will give effect to all lawful policy, practice and procedural directions, whether or not I personally agree with or approve of them. Where I strongly hold a genuine moral objection, I may request to be relieved of responsibility for the implementation of the policy, practice or procedural direction.

If I have a strong objection to any policy, practice or procedure, I have the right to express my objection either verbally or in writing to the Partners'.

I will always act in accordance with my legal duty of care to users of our service.

Administration and Training Requirements

Axess Ability requires staff to provide regular reports to the organization concerning the progress of clients.

Axess Ability requires staff to undergo specific training in order to provide the best service on behalf of the organization, and to facilitate the personal development of those in our care.

Commitment

I agree to:

- facilitate individual client support plans in consultation with the relevant Support Planner;
- maintain accurate documentation in relation to each client;
- provide documentation to Axess Ability at any time that the organization requests this information;
- utilize the individual planning format and associated client information documentation as outlined by Axess Ability in the Policy and Procedure Manual or Program guidelines;
- develop, implement and maintain an individual plan for each person receiving a service in consultation with other stakeholders utilizing the format provided; as required
- participate in performance review processes and competency assessment of my skills.

With regard to training I agree to:

- maintain a current knowledge of best practice within the discipline for which my services have been engaged (Support Worker);
- attend support and supervision meetings where practical (Support Workers);
- attend any other training as deemed appropriate by the organization for the development of my skills and knowledge.

Guide to Ethical Decision Making

Axess Ability requires all persons engaged by the organization to act ethically at all times.

Ethical behavior means acting in line with the principles outlined in the Policy.

Commitment

I recognize that I am required, and am committed, to act ethically at all times. In keeping with the principles outlined in the policy, when making a decision that requires ethical consideration, I will consider the following:

- the lawfulness of the decision or conduct I am contemplating;
- the consistency of my decision or actions with the vision, mission and values of Axess Ability;
- the consistency of my decision or actions with the spirit, intent, provision and requirements of legislation concerning the delivery of services to Axess Ability, particularly the people with a disability, as defined by the relevant Victorian state legislation;
- the impact of my decisions or actions on both the immediate and longer term safety and well-being of Axess Ability clients and their families; my colleagues, the organization and other parties;

- any conflict of interest or personal gain at organizational expense that may arise from the decisions or my conduct; and
- the capacity of the decision or conduct to be justified and withstand public scrutiny.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

I understand that breaches of the Code of Conduct may be dealt with through Conduct Management processes by the organization and if serious and in breach of relevant legislation by cessation of the engagement of my services by the organization. Where a criminal breach occurs, the matter will be referred to police for investigation and, subject to the outcomes of this investigation, prosecution.

Commitment

I recognize that if I have any doubt as to the appropriate course of action to be taken in any circumstances, I have a responsibility to discuss the matter with the Partners.

I understand that this Code of Conduct will be periodically reviewed. I will remain informed of any alterations that are made to take into account changed circumstances or new situations.

I agree to review and sign the Code of Conduct every two years or as requested to do so by the organization.

REFERENCES

Forms	
References & Work Instructions	
Relevant Policies	
Relevant Standards	DHHS Standards: QIP Standards:
Contact Person	Nigel Head (Owner/Partner) – 0481056715 Michelle Scarlett (Owner/Partner) – 0481066538

APPROVAL AND REVISION HISTORY

FORM No	Approved/Amended/Rescinded	Date	Name	Position
V0002	Approved	16/4/14	Michelle Scarlett	Partner
V0002	Amended	14/3/18	Michelle Scarlett	Partner

Code of Conduct and Ethics

Acknowledgement of Receipt & Statement of Agreement

I hereby acknowledge that on _____ I received a copy of the Code of Conduct and Ethics for persons engaged in the delivery of services by Axess Ability.

I have read this Code of Conduct, I understand its contents and have had the opportunity to clarify any issues with the Partners’.

I agree to abide by this Code and the principles set out within.

I understand that breaches of this Code of Conduct may be dealt with through a cessation of further engagement of my services. Where a criminal breach occurs, I expose myself to criminal prosecution.

I understand that a signed copy of this statement of commitment will be placed on my file.

Employee Name (Print).....

Position:

Signature.....

Received by Partner:

Name (Print).....

Signature.....

Date.....

Employee Copy /Employer Copy