

Guideline title: Staff Code of Conduct

Approved by CEO: 

Date approved: December 2009

Date of next review: December 2014

Responsible department: People and Performance

Statement of intent:

The purpose of this guideline is to assist all Bayside staff in the maintenance of ethical standards of professional integrity and conduct, thus ensuring their actions reflect favourably on both them and the Council.

Guideline objectives:

1. To ensure compliance by Council with all statutory obligations in particular the Conduct Principles contained in the *Victorian Local Government Act 1989*. Section 95 (clauses 1a – d).
2. That staff embrace the agreed corporate values of - respect, creativity, accountability, adaptability, achievement and connected
3. To ensure that Council services are provided and decisions made with impartiality.
4. To ensure appropriate standards are observed should staff have any interests or activities that conflict with their Council duties and responsibilities.

Guideline statement:

***Victorian Local Government Act 1989* Conduct Principles**

These principles require Council staff in the conduct of their employment to:

- Act impartially;
- Act with integrity including avoiding conflicts of interest;
- Accept accountability for results; and
- Provide responsive service.

Staff Values and Behaviours (Working Together at Bayside).

During 2006 staff through project and focus groups collaborated to produce a shared set of corporate values and behaviours for Bayside. These are:

- Respect
- Creativity
- Accountability
- Adaptability
- Achievement
- Connected

Respect

Respect at Bayside means that we are confident in the right to have our thoughts, feelings, words and actions respected, and we are committed to providing every person with trust, integrity and worth.

It is:

- Constructive feedback
- Open discussion
- Fair delegation
- Valuing and respecting diversity.

The way we work is to:

- Treat everyone we meet, including those with whom we work, with the same respect and trust that we would expect as individuals for ourselves. (Refer to the Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation Guideline).
- Respect the opinions of our fellow staff even if they differ from our own.
- Treat people with kindness and courtesy.
- Ensure that before we make decisions that affect other people, we will consult with them and ask for their opinions and take them into consideration.
- Let someone know when they have done a good job.
- Let people know well in advance if we cannot attend meetings or training sessions. (Refer to the Bayside Meeting Protocols).
- Be supportive of each other.
- Respect confidentiality (Refer to the Bayside Information Privacy Policy)

Creativity

Creativity at Bayside means that we are original, progressive and innovative in our thinking, expression, processes and achievements.

It is:

- Being open minded
- Willing to take risks
- Lateral thinking to find solutions
- Accepting new suggestions

The way we work is to:

- Be open to new ideas.
- Continually seek new ways to improve what we do.
- Strive to have the ability to see a new vision.
- Think beyond tradition.
- Participate in cross-organisational teams to make a contribution to the organisation.
- Seek alternative solutions

Accountability

Accountability at Bayside means we are mutually accountable and take responsibility for our actions, behaviours and results.

It is:

- Meeting promises/commitments
- Managing expectations
- Admitting mistakes
- Providing leadership

The way we work is to:

- Ensure excellence in the standard of service that we provide. (Refer to the Bayside Customer Service Charter).
- Ensure any project or task that we are responsible for will be kept within appropriate timeframes and within budget.
- Undertake to answer and follow through emails and telephone calls promptly and politely. (Refer to the Bayside Customer Service Charter)
- Carry out our daily tasks in a way that reflects positively on Bayside.
- Dress appropriately for our job (Refer to the Bayside Dress Code and Uniform Guideline)
- Personally adopt time management skills that result in us attending work on time and keeping scheduled appointments.

- Ensure that we do not engage in conduct that may now or in the future compromise our employment with Council, or Council's reputation.
- Ensure that only authorised public statements are issued to the media. (Refer to the Dealing with the Media Guideline).
- Ensure that we all abide by Council policies, guidelines and protocols.
- Observe private information protocols (Refer to the Bayside Information Privacy Policy).

Adaptability

Adaptability at Bayside means that we are ready to learn, increase our knowledge and adjust ourselves to changing conditions while remaining flexible and open.

It is:

- Embracing change
- Recognising opportunity and responsibility
- Skilling people for change
- Finding alternative solutions

The way we work is to:

- Give people every opportunity to expand their knowledge, skills and opportunities. (Refer to the Bayside Education Training and Development Guideline and the Bayside Staff Core Competencies Guideline).
- Provide a supportive environment for growth and development.
- Allow people to learn from their mistakes.
- Share information with each other. (For example, intranet, 4U and other informal opportunities).
- Participate in the development of the service plan for our department. (Refer to the service plan for your department).
- Develop an awareness of the Council Plan commitments.
- Participate in training and development opportunities such as the Corporate Training Program.

Achievement

Achievement at Bayside means that we are motivated to succeed through service by making a contribution to our community using our unique skills and abilities, and being recognised for what we have achieved.

It is:

- Encouraging
- Supporting
- Celebrating success
- Acknowledgement, recognition and reward

The way we work is to:

- Motivate, support and encourage each other in achieving common goals.
- Willingly share information and expertise with our colleagues and with other teams.
- Work as part of a team, and be willing to pitch in and help.
- Actively participate in the performance planning process and seek and receive constructive feedback from managers and colleagues. (Refer to the Bayside Staff Performance Plan Guidelines).
- Provide feedback in a constructive way.

Connected

Being connected at Bayside means we are engaged in enriching and empowering relationships as a demonstration of our commitment to a supportive, inclusive and collaborative working environment.

It is:

- Community involvement
- Inclusiveness
- Listening and encouraging
- Team spirit

The way we work is to:

- Always welcome the opinions of the community.
- Accept the differences in members of the team and the community and welcome their contributions. (Refer to the Bayside Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation Guideline, Bayside Disability Action Plan and Bayside Cultural Diversity Strategy).
- Acknowledge a job well done.
- As members of a team, actively contribute to its success and support each other.

- Share our expertise with each other.
- Listen to each other.
- Display discretion.
- Discuss issues in an open and constructive way.
- Trust each other.

Gifts, favours and hospitality

Staff are prohibited from seeking or encouraging gifts, payments, hospitality or favours in relation to any action undertaken by that staff member in relation to their employment;

Staff holding positions linked to a decision currently under consideration, such as issuing a permit, appeals related to parking fines, or similar, must not accept the offer of gifts, favours or hospitality under any circumstances. This also applies when it is anticipated that a permit may be issued, or when a permit has been issued within the past month.

Staff who hold a financial delegation, or are involved in any procurement function including tender evaluation or management of contracts, must not accept the offer of gifts, favours or hospitality.

1. Any gift offered should be politely refused and the person offering the gift thanked for their kind thought. The exception being a modest gift, offered in the circumstances outlined below
2. If a staff member is offered money they must refuse or return it, whatever the circumstances;
3. Any gifts left for a staff member in their absence are to be passed to that staff member's Manager who will deal with the gift in the appropriate manner;
4. Examples of the types of gifts and hospitality a staff member could be offered and how they are categorised include;

Modest gifts

Include those of a promotional or advertising nature generally given to a wide range of people i.e. diaries, pens, coffee mugs, diary or a conference satchel, up to the value of \$15.00. These gifts do not need to be declared.

Modest gifts can also include for example a bunch of flowers or a box of chocolates not exceeding \$15.00 in value. Gifts of this nature must be declared using the Staff Gift Declaration Form. Circumstances where a modest gift may be received include at Christmas i.e. a box of chocolates given to a direct carer by a client for assistance provided during the year, or gift given to a child care worker by a child in their care.

A modest gift should not be offered or accepted on a regular basis, as it reflects a change in the nature and intent behind the giving and receipt of the gift.

When are to submit the completed Staff Gift Declaration Form to their manager / supervisor who will forward it to the Governance Manager for recording on the Corporate Gift Register.

Significant gifts

Staff offered a significant gift, with an estimated value in excess of \$15.00, must politely decline the offer.

Please refer to the Conflict of Interest section of this Guideline for advice in relation to receipt of gifts with a total value of \$200 or more over a five year period.

Raffles / door prizes

Complimentary raffles, door prizes or similar won at functions when the staff member is representing the organisation are to be declared using the Staff Gift Declaration Form. The Manager will assess the circumstances and determine if the staff member can retain the prize, or if it should be handed over to the organisation.

Hospitality

1. Staff are to check all offers of hospitality with their Manager before accepting the invitation. However as a guide, modest acts of hospitality linked to attendance at a seminar, forum or workshop, and in accordance with commonly accepted business practice, are permitted. Hospitality of this nature does not need to be declared.
2. Should a staff member be invited to a meal at a restaurant or similar by a service provider for the purpose of transacting work related business, the staff member should first discuss their attendance with their manager and if approval is given to attend they must cover the cost of their own meal.
3. Significant acts of hospitality that are not permitted include corporate guest packages to major events such as the theatre or sporting events.
4. Staff attending functions/events should remember that they are still representing the organisation and are expected to behave in an appropriate manner.
5. Staff are expected to make their own arrangements for transport to

and from the function/event. Council will not cover the cost of taxis. Staff must observe the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Fleet Policy and Safe Driving Guideline in relation to the use of Council vehicles.

6. Hospitality offered by an organisation or individual that coincides with a decision before Council that the staff member is aware of, or should reasonably be expected to be aware of, must never be accepted.

Hospitality extended to staff in a client's home

From time to time staff working in clients' homes may be offered light refreshments, food or beverages of modest amounts during the course of their duties. While this is generally acceptable, staff should never accept any alcohol or substantial hospitality.

Material and equipment

1. No Council materials should be used for non-Council purposes.
2. Council equipment is not to be used for private purposes at work, the exception being minimal use of the Council telephone or email systems.
3. Council equipment is not to be removed from Council premises unless prior management approval is given. Exceptions include items such as Council supplied mobile telephones. Please refer to the Mobile Communications Guideline, and motor vehicles with approved private use, please refer to the Motor Vehicle Fleet Policy.

Contracting with Council

No staff member is to enter into any contract (other than an employment contract), or financial arrangement with Council either directly or through a firm in which the staff member has an interest.

Outside employment

1. Staff are discouraged from employment outside their Council duties.
2. Staff engaged in outside employment must register the details of such employment through their Manager. Details will be maintained on their personnel files
3. No staff member may engage in outside employment that may now or in the future compromise his or her employment with Council.

Conflicts of interest

1. Where staff become aware of an action or activity within Bayside that may have implications for an asset or matter in which they have a conflict of interest, they are required to advise their manager and complete a Conflict of Interest Declaration. The *Victorian Local Government Act 1989* Section 80B requires staff to declare any Conflict of Interest and the nature of the interest in relation to their delegated functions.
2. In accordance with the *Victorian Local Government Act 1989* Section 78C, staff in receipt of a gift or gifts with a total value exceeding \$200 in the five years preceding a decision, or the exercise of a power, duty or function, are to complete a Council Staff Declaration of Conflict of Interest.
3. All senior staff (those on individual employment contracts) are required to disclose details of any personal pecuniary interest they may hold in relation to any matter they may be called upon to report or make a decision on.
4. Council requires all senior staff to submit a pecuniary interest return within 30 days of their appointment and thereafter annually within 30 days of 30 June. Please refer to the Governance Manager for further details.
5. Staff involved in the tendering process are expected to remain at 'arms length' from potential service providers. Care should be taken in discussions with existing contractors. Material relevant to the process that could prejudice or influence the outcome must be regarded as 'commercial in confidence'.
6. Staff should always draw a clear distinction between their role at work and their outside interests. Staff should not seek to influence a decision in respect of their outside interests, through their Council position. If in doubt staff should seek advice from their manager.

Political opinions and activities

It is acknowledged that all staff will have their own political leanings. However staff are expected to maintain total political neutrality at all times while undertaking their duties.

Media statements

The Mayor and Chief Executive Officer shall issue all public statements on behalf of Bayside City Council. Staff should not make statements to the media (unless specifically authorised to do so), but refer the inquiry to either their Group Manager or the Manager Communications and Engagement who in turn will speak to the Chief Executive Officer.

Protocol for staff attendance at Council meetings and meetings with Councillors

Council meetings are the highest form of decision making. As these meetings are also the most visible level of Council decision making it is important that the formality of Council decision making and the public image of the Council is appropriately respected.

1. The organisation and its staff have a responsibility to ensure that Council and all relevant officers are provided with high quality advice and are in possession of the full facts available on any issue.
2. The organisation and its staff shall support and give effect to all lawful decisions and policies of Council and will not be publicly critical of the same either directly or indirectly.
3. When a staff member is invited by the Chief Executive Officer or chairperson of the meeting to address councillors at a Council meeting they may then respond.

Accountability for results

1. Staff via their annual Staff Performance Plan, Position Description and various organisational policies and guidelines, understand the objectives of their role. Staff are accountable for their performance and the results they achieve in their role.
2. Managers and supervisors provide guidance, encouragement, training opportunities and support to staff to assist them in meeting these objectives.

Provide responsive service

Staff are to deliver high quality customer service in accordance with the provisions of the Customer Service Charter and the Customer Focus Guide.

Charter of Human Rights

Staff are to deliver Council services and programs and act in a manner that is consistent with the Charter.

Breaches of this guideline

1. A breach of this guideline by a staff member may result in disciplinary action being taken.
2. If a staff member makes a genuine mistake, for instance

misinterprets the value of a gift or intent of an offer and only later realises that accepting the gift was inappropriate, management will assess the situation.

3. Any decision to implement disciplinary action will be based on a full assessment of the circumstances.

Related policies, procedures, guidelines and forms:

- *Local Government Act 1989*
- Disciplinary Guideline
- Corporate Gift Register
- Motor Vehicle Fleet Policy
- Mobile Communications Guideline
- Safe Driving Guideline
- Council Staff Declaration Of Conflict Of Interest
- Performance Plan Guideline
- Dealing with the Media Guideline
- Human Rights Charter Guideline
- Customer Service Charter
- Customer Focus Guide
- Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, Harassment, and Victimisation Guideline
- Information Privacy Policy
- Meeting Protocols
- Dress Code and Uniform Guideline
- Education Training and Development Guideline
- Staff Core Competencies Guideline
- Staff Performance Plan Guidelines
- Staff Gift Declaration Form