

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this code is to outline conduct and behaviour expected from Cahoots Staff and Volunteers (collectively referred to as Team Members).

This code applies to all Team Members.

For the purpose of this code, the terms 'Staff' or 'Volunteers' shall be used in reference to all people conducting work for or representing or representing Cahoots.

The Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct must be signed by Staff and Volunteers on commencing with Cahoots.

Definitions

Bullying means repeatedly and intentionally using words or actions against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing.

Conflict of Interest occurs when an individual's personal interests – family, friendships, financial, or social factors – could compromise his or her judgment, decisions, or actions in the workplace.

Harassment means treating a person less favourably on the basis of certain personal characteristics, such as race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, breastfeeding, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

Fit for work means that a Team Member is in a physical, mental and emotional state that enables them to perform their assigned tasks in a manner that does not compromise or risk the wellbeing of themselves or others.

NDIS Code of Conduct (Workers) requires workers and providers delivering NDIS supports to:

- act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with relevant 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 might have an impact on the quality and safety of supports provided to people with disability.
- take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, and abuse.
- take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual misconduct.
- not charge or represent higher prices for the supply of goods for NDIS participants without a reasonable justification.

Professional boundaries are limits which protect the space between a worker's professional power and their client's vulnerability. This also extends to personal boundaries between staff members, Board members and staff, and external stakeholders that may influence staff or client's sense of safety or personal welfare.

Sexual Harassment means any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour where a reasonable person would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated. It has nothing to do with mutual attraction or consensual behaviour.

Cahoots Values

Cahoots values underpin the Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct and guides expected conduct, actions, and decisions.

Respect: We treat people as they want to be treated, offering acceptance, care, and support to everyone.

Trust: We are a reliable team, committed to providing safe, quality services.

Inspire: We believe every person has the ability to reach their full potential, we will provide them with encouragement and support.

Celebrate: We acknowledge and rejoice the efforts and achievement of the children and young people we work with, volunteers, supporters, and staff.

Collaborate: We believe that community engagement is vital to create meaningful and accessible opportunities for all people.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Responsibilities of Team Members

Team Members are required to read, understand, and abide by this Code of Conduct. Should a Team Member require clarity to expected behaviours or actions, they should seek advice from their Supervisor.

Team Members:

- Are responsible for their behaviour and are to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.
- Must present fit for work. In particular, whilst on Cahoots duties, Team Members:
 - Cannot be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
 - Cannot be carrying physical injuries that could aggravate the injury or restrict their ability to perform their duties.
 - Cannot have symptoms of infectious disease (fever, cough, vomiting etc).
- Are to lead by example whilst representing Cahoots, demonstrating behaviours that reflect Cahoots Values of Respect, Trust, Inspire, Collaborate and Celebrate.
- Must comply with the law, the NDIS Code of Conduct (Workers) and where required, their respective professional Code of Conduct and Professional and Ethical standards.
- Must disclose, and take reasonable steps to avoid, any conflict of interest (real, perceived, or apparent) in connection with their work at Cahoots.
- Must behave with honesty, integrity, competence, care, diligence, respect and in an ethical manner with participants, their support networks, staff, volunteers, and the community.
- Must treat everyone with respect, dignity, and courtesy, without bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment.
- Must treat and communicate with all individuals equally, in a manner that is non-discriminatory, respectful, sensitive, and inclusive.

- Must maintain professional boundaries that uphold Cahoots reputation and best interests. Relationships (romantic or otherwise) between Team Members and participants (and their support networks) are unacceptable. This includes friendship, socialising, social relationships via social networking sites or electronic means, or entering any other relationships apart from a professional one.
- Must comply with Cahoots privacy and consent policies and procedures. All information about participants and organisational business is strictly confidential and should not be used for any purpose other than the provision of services.
- Must comply with any lawful or reasonable direction given by a person with the authority to give direction and provide an honest, competent, and accountable service.
- Are to behave in a way that upholds the values, integrity, and reputation of Cahoots. This is inclusive of but not limited to:
 - Not consuming alcohol, smoking and/or taking illicit drugs while on duty or in uniform if after work hours.
 - Dressing in a clean, tidy, and professional manner, appropriate for the work being undertaken and according to their position.
 - Using organisational property and money efficiently, carefully, and honestly with due authorisation and without misappropriation.
- Cannot provide media comment or any form of communication on behalf of Cahoots in an official capacity, without approval from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO and Board Chair are the primary media spokespersons for Cahoots. All contact with media must be approved or delegated by the CEO. Refer to Cahoots Communication and Social Media Policy and Crisis Response Policy.

Should a Team Member have the need to act in a manner inconsistent with the above, they should discuss the issue with their Supervisor.

Any arrangements made to act inconsistently with the above responsibilities should be confirmed in writing, signed by the CEO, and placed on the Team Members file.

2. Breach of Code of Conduct

This Code requires Team Members to behave at all times in a way that upholds Cahoots values, ethics, integrity, and good reputation.

Team Members may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment or volunteer/student agreement, if they breach any of the following:

- Refused or neglected to comply with Cahoots policies and procedures.
- Brought Cahoots into disrepute through misrepresentation in discussions with parties outside the organisation.
- Failed to abide by the NDIS Code of Conduct (Workers) and where applicable, the Code of Conduct, professional and ethical standards laid down by his/her professional organisation.
- Persistently and wilfully acted in a manner harmful to the interests of Cahoots.
- Repeatedly failed to abide by the Cahoots Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct does not cover issues of physical or sexual assault, or any other form of abuse, which are potentially criminal matters and will be referred to the police and CEO immediately, as per the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and the organisational risk notification matrix.

3. Managing Complaints

Code of Conduct Complaints

Complaints made by Team Members will be managed in accordance with the Cahoots Employee and Volunteer Grievance Procedure.

The CEO or Board Chair will expeditiously and fairly deal with any allegations of misconduct or unacceptable behaviour, whether or not, there has been a written formal complaint.

Hearsay Complaints

Knowledge of grievances and/or complaints obtained from secondary sources should be reported to an appropriate person such as the CEO or Board Chair. Where such knowledge is the outcome of support information contact, the source of information will be treated as confidential as far as practicable.

Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Complaints

If a Team Member believes they have been subjected to bullying, harassment and/or sexual harassment, they should take direct action, such as making their unease and/or disapproval known to the respondent immediately and/or filing a complaint with the CEO or Board Chair as soon as possible. A written record of the date, time and nature of the incident(s), and the names of any witnesses, should be retained.

4. Dress Code

All Team Members should present a professional appearance and dress appropriately for the work they are undertaking.

- Clothing with offensive or inappropriate designs or logos is not permitted.
- Clothing should be modest and respectful.
- Hair should be fully tied back to reduce the risk of scalp and neck injuries that can be sustained if hair is unexpectedly pulled or becomes entrapped.
- Footwear must be appropriate to the activity with enclosed shoes i.e., sneakers being the preferred footwear.
- Fingernails must be clean and short as long fingernails, either natural or artificial, can puncture gloves easily, increase the risk of tears or scratches to participant's skin and may limit the worker's performance in hand hygiene practices.
- Artificial nails (including shellac, signature nail systems and acrylic nails) are not permitted on any service where participants require assistance with personal care. It is well established that workers who wear artificial nails are more likely to harbour pathogens on their fingertips than are those who have natural nails, both before and after hand washing.
- Jewellery should be in good taste and kept to a minimum and pose no risk to the wearer, if caught, grabbed, or pulled.

Clothing and grooming styles dictated by religion or culture will be treated respectfully. Should a Team Member need to dress in a manner inconsistent with this Dress Code, they should discuss the matter with their Supervisor.

Occupational Health and Safety

Clothing and accessories must be appropriate for the activities planned to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience. It is the responsibility of Team Members, and ultimately Supervisor discretion, to encourage appropriate clothing choices depending upon the situation and/or activity itinerary. E.g; Ten Pin Bowling = sock. Going to the beach = hat, sunscreen, T-shirt. Horse riding = long pants, enclosed shoes, helmet.

In the event clothing or grooming style presents a potential risk to Team Members, participants, or others, this will be identified by the Supervisor and discussed with the relevant parties.

Situation Appropriateness

Clothing must be appropriate for the situation and location of activities. If there is a need to change attire, time and facilities must be allocated. E.g; Sarongs at the beach are OK but not in a restaurant. Fancy dress items in a concert are OK but not in a shopping centre.

Costumes and Dress up

Costumes and dress up clothes are to be confined to on camp use only, at the appropriate times and at the discretion of Facilitators.

Costumes or dress up clothes are not to be worn in a way which is considered harmful to Cahoots reputation or disempowering any person.

Costumes and dress up clothes must not be of a derogatory or questionable nature and must be appropriate to the event or situation.

Any acting or skit roles during Cahoots activities must also not be of a derogatory or questionable nature, and must be appropriate to the groups age, situation, and environment.

Acknowledgement

- I acknowledge I have received, read, and understand the Cahoots Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct and have had the opportunity to clarify any issues with my Supervisor.
- I agree to abide by the Cahoots Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct.
- I agree to abide by Cahoots organisational policies and procedures, all Federal, State, and local laws, rules, and regulations for the duration of my association with Cahoots.
- I agree to commit to the NDIS Code of Conduct.
- I acknowledge I will not at any time knowingly disclose any confidential information of Cahoots to any third party or entity.
- I acknowledge all information concerning Cahoots services, either created by myself or others, at any time, are confidential to Cahoots and remain the property of Cahoots.
- I acknowledge that during my employment or at any time afterward, I am not permitted to make use of any Cahoots services for my personal benefit, or the personal benefit of other persons, without first obtaining written permission from the CEO.
- I understand that breaching the Cahoots Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action.

Team Member's Full Name:			
Team Member's Signature:		Date:	

Communication

This code will be communicated to staff and volunteers at induction/onboarding.

Code Review

This code will be reviewed every two years in consultation with staff and volunteers. This code is not intended to be a static document and Cahoots commits to its ongoing development as part of continuous quality improvements, and as policy and legislation changes dictate.

References and Related Documents

- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators
- NDIS Code of Conduct (Workers)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Cahoots Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy
- Cahoots Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Procedure
- Cahoots Discipline and Termination Procedure
- Cahoots Employee and Volunteer Grievance Procedure

Versions

No.	Approval Date	Description of Amendment
1.0	30/10/2009	Policy created (LS)
2.0	16/06/2011	Reviewed (LS)
3.0	27/06/2013	Reviewed (LS)
4.0	14/11/2016	Reviewed (LS)
5.0	17/07/2018	Reviewed (ES)
6.0	10/07/2019	Reviewed and updated (JK CEO)
7.0	11/08/2020	Reviewed and updated (JK CEO)
8.0	02/03/2022	Reviewed and updated (JM WC & TB QSL)
9.0	30/05/2023	Updated, NDIS Quality Standards
10.0	26/02/2026	Updated

Owner	Approver	Next Review
Operations Manager	CEO	February 2028