



Policy Number	9.2.2 - A	Policy Name	Code of Conduct Policy
Effective Date		Reference to	Child Welfare Policy Manual – Subsection 9.2.2

Code of Conduct

The Akoma Family Centre is committed to high ethical standards of conduct. The code of professional conduct has been developed to guide and assist employees of the Akoma Family Centre in performing their work responsibilities legally, ethically, and without discrimination. This code also coincides with the Akoma Family Centre’s vision and values.

This document should be read in conjunction with Akoma Family Centre policies, Residential Child-Caring Facility policies and the Collective Agreement of CUPE, Local 3306. This code applies to all personnel involved with the Akoma Family Centre including:

- **All employees**
- **Student placements**
- **Volunteers**
- **Any other person(s) connected with the Akoma Family Centre for intervention planning and delivering services to the residents entrusted to our care.**

This code of professional conduct is a living document. It has been developed after reviewing the standards of other professions and programs. This document will be reviewed every year as per the Residential Child-Caring Facility Policies.

The Code of Conduct does not provide the answers to every question that may arise. It does provide the framework for determining appropriate behavior and conduct across a variety of situations.

Context and Assumptions for Integrating the Code of Conduct

Context

The code of conduct is a guide to the culture of the Akoma Family Centre. The culture is developed by combining practice expectations of the professions represented at the Akoma Family Centre.

When working with a code of conduct it takes time for employees, students and volunteers to truly understand its depth. With time, people become clear on what an expectation is, what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, when working as a paid employee, student or voluntary capacity with the Akoma Family Centre. These understandings usually come through example, discussion, supervision, collegial debate and deferring to professional ethical codes, law and legislation.

Assumptions

Throughout the document there are references to the terms “appropriate”, “acceptable”, “competent”, and other words holding different meanings in different cultures. Throughout collegial discussion, employees have agreed that these words cannot be rigidly defined. However, it is understood that these words may be unclear and confusing. As a result, it has been agreed that when in doubt collegial discussion or supervision is necessary. It has also been agreed that the process of asking, how does my interpretation align with the Akoma Family Centre’s vision and motto should bring clarity to uncertainty.

Definition

For this document, a client is a child, youth, family member, or legal guardian of children and youth who are:

- A resident of the Akoma Family Centre.
- A child or youth in care of the Department of Community Services.
- Someone who at one time lived in our programs or was in care of the Department of Community Services or a Children’s Aid Society.
- A child or youth living in foster care.

Professional Responsibility

The Akoma Family Centre will always endorse initiatives protecting the clients we serve. We have the responsibility to maintain the best interests of the client as the primary obligation. We also have the responsibility to:

- Maintain professional boundaries and objectivity to help ensure that our personal values, biases, vulnerabilities and judgments do not interfere with relationships between residents and their families.
- Never discriminate based on race, ethnic origin, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, abilities, socio-economic status, political affiliation or national ancestry. All employees should challenge themselves to be anti-biased and ethical in all practices.
- Carry out all duties with integrity and objectivity.
- Maintain an acceptable level of emotional and physical health and well-being to provide a competent level of service. Anyone whose health deteriorates will take time away to heal. Anyone who does not recognize their symptoms can be asked by the Akoma Family Centre to do so.
- Ensure the body and mind have had appropriate rest before coming to work. Therefore, employees must have at least 8 hours of rest between volunteer or other paid work.
- Maintain and increase their level of knowledge, attitude and skill through opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- Share in the maintenance and ethics of our professionals and respect the integrity of a multi-disciplinary approach.
- Never exploit the relationship with a client for personal benefit, gain or gratification.
- Never harass or bully any person.
- Never be involved with hate crimes.
- Identify and remove ourselves from any consideration or situation which may predispose objectivity and/or effectiveness resulting in conflict of interest.
- Act with the knowledge that parents and guardians, except as limited by law, retain primary responsibility for their youth. We will support parents and guardians to exercise their rights and responsibilities towards their youth and promote family relationships.
- Work toward bridging any conflicts that may arise between parents/guardians and employees. Concerns with generally accepted professional and/or developmental practices or issues will be clarified through respectful education and communication.
- Maintain the confidentiality policy of the Akoma Family Centre.
- Identify any potential breach of this conduct policy. If resolution is not found, advise the employee that the process for bringing forward concerns regarding conduct will be followed and then do so.

Responsibility to Residents

The Akoma Family Centre is designed to protect resident's health and support their need for fresh air, play, sensory stimulation and proper nourishment. The issues present in the lives of many of our residents contribute to the creation of an environment where there is a high risk of allegations. The Akoma Family Centre recommends employees avoid knowingly placing themselves and/or the residents in situations, which could lead to allegations. In addition, no employee is to engage in the following with a resident:

- Socializing outside the context of the program.
- Knowingly giving out personal telephone numbers, addresses or e-mail information
- Taking to personal homes or personal events
- Co-habituating
- Entering a romantic friendship
- Entering a friendship
- Loaning a personal vehicle or allowing a client to drive a personal vehicle
- Borrowing from, loaning, or giving money to a client.
- Accepting gifts outside the context of the program.
- Personal chores for money or as a personal favor (i.e. cleaning cars).
- Buying items owned by the client. (Excluding entrepreneurial, program sponsored initiatives).
- Buying from, selling to, or exchange of cigarettes, drugs, alcohol or sex to children and youth

- Request favors asked of the client, for the sole benefit of employees is not permitted. (i.e. “Would you go to the store and get me some pop?”).
- Making sarcastic obscene remarks or telling stories with sexual or violent overtones is inappropriate.
- The use of profanity is to be voided.
- Employees are not to engage in activities such as horseplay, arm wrestling and play fighting with residents. This behavior could be misinterpreted by the resident and cause fear, agitation or harm.
- Any intentional use of physical pain, direct or indirect, to control residents is unacceptable.
- Exposing a resident to pornographic materials, films or any sexuality is cause for termination.
- Efforts are to be made to ensure that the media, books, internet, videos, games, posters, music, magazines, television, etc., that residents are exposed to present healthy relationships. Employees cannot rent or take residents to violent or sexually explicit movies.
- All relevant employees and supervisors must be alerted immediately when residents have indicated suicidal ideation or planning.

The Akoma Family Centre employees shall not interfere with the relationship a resident has with an outside professional unless discussed with the Akoma Family Centre’s management and all are convinced the best interests and well-being of a resident requires such intervention.

Any prior relationships with residents could be deemed a conflict of interest and its implications will be assessed accordingly on an individual basis. It is the employee’s responsibility to bring this matter to the attention of the Akoma Family Centre’s management where the client is involved. (Example: a family member is being considered for residency).

Any employee, past or present, who involves themselves in unethical behavior could result in discipline, dismissal or impact future employment opportunities.

Professional Conduct

- All residents and employees of the Akoma Family Centre are to be treated with respect and dignity at all times.
- Employees will demonstrate exemplary behavior physically, emotionally and ethically, as we are role models for residents, their families, and our colleagues.
- Personal beliefs, values, politics or social attitudes that are not congruent with those of the Akoma Family Centre are not to be discussed with, or in front of, residents (i.e. weekend drinking parties).
- Employees must always be aware of their perceived authority by residents. They must be aware of their relative position of power and promote self-empowerment with the residents.
- Employees involved in activities which contradict the philosophical premises and professional practices of the Akoma Family Centre, whether criminal charges are laid, may be subject to disciplinary action or termination. (i.e. involvement with cults or hate based crimes).

Dress Code

Employees are expected to follow an appropriate dress code while at work at the Akoma Family Centre. Clothing advertising drugs, alcohol, violence, sexism, and racism is inappropriate.

The Akoma Family Centre believes that a resident’s performance, achievement and preparation for a lifetime of success may be positively affected by the professional appearance of staff members who work with them. Dress (including: accessories, body adornments and grooming), conduct, interpersonal development, staff actions and demeanor will be reflected in the conduct of residents, and the Akoma Family Centre expects its employees to set an example. It is the policy of the Akoma Family Centre that each employee’s dress, grooming and personal hygiene should be appropriate to their work situation. This may differ from work area to work area and job description.



The Akoma Family Centre also wants to ensure that their employees work in a harassment and violence free environment. We believe that appropriate dress on the part of their employees contributes to a harassment free workplace. This policy is intended to describe guidelines on what is considered appropriate dress for the workplace. These guidelines are not intended to be all-inclusive, but should help set the general parameters for appropriate attire and allow employees to use good judgement and common sense about items not specifically addressed.

All employees must exercise good judgement in their choice of appropriate attire for work and work related activities by always appearing in a manner:

- That is appropriate for the situation;
- That provides positive role modeling for residents;
- That promotes a healthy, working environment that is free from unnecessary disruptions; and
- That will invoke a positive impression upon residents, parents and the community.

All employees should adhere to the following dress code. Employees should not wear:

- Suggestive attire, shorts or skirts (based on the no shorter than two (2) inches above the knee), spaghetti strap tank tops or low cut and revealing clothing.
- Soiled, stained, odorous or wet clothing.
- Clothing with slogans/beer advertisements, drug references or other insignia on them.
- Visible thongs, panties or underwear.
- Inappropriate swim wear (not revealing).

In addition, employees hair should be clean, combed and tidy and any tattoos should be covered, if they are deemed inappropriate.

We must remember that we are working with impressionable children/youth. An employee who is found in violation of this policy will be spoken to and may be asked to go home and change by a management member.

Drug and Alcohol Use

The Akoma Family Centre first and foremost ensures the safety and wellbeing of all residents and employees. All employees are expected to arrive for their shift in good physical and mental condition; to be able to perform their duties in a safe and therapeutic manner.

The consumption of alcoholic beverages, drugs, or the residual effects of such, on a shift, will not be tolerated. This includes prescription medications that can impair professional judgement. An employee is expected to be aware of such effects and use good judgement.

If an employee shows up to work and appears under the influence, or demonstrating residual effects of such, will be asked to leave the Akoma premises immediately. The staff person that notices the concerning behavior or signs of usage will contact the on-call Manager. The on-call Manager will assess the situation and respond accordingly. A Supervisor will then follow-up and request a meeting with the employee. The employee that noticed the concern may also be called in to meet with the Supervisor.

Calling In Sick Protocol

Employees are required to call in a minimum of 4 hours prior to the commencement of their shift to report an absence. During the hours of 7:00am-10:00pm, the on-call Manager is contacted to report the absence. The on-call Manager is listed on the Staff Schedule Care Welcome Page or can be obtained by contacting the Staff Cell phone # 902-718-6817. If you are unable to reach the on-call Manager directly, please leave a voice message and your call will be returned within 15 minutes. During the hours of 10:00pm-7:00am, call the Staff Cell at # 902-718-6817 to report the absence. The Senior Staff on shift will be responsible to fill the absence. They are to contact the part-time and then casual employees immediately by telephone call, leaving a message if they receive no direct response.



The process to determine who to contact is as follows:

1. As per the collective agreement (3.04b), begin with the Part-Time employees. Their scheduled hours for the two week pay period (week 1 and 2) are to be added up, to ensure they do not exceed 80 hours in total. If they are at their maximum hours or decline the shift, then casuals are to be contact. There is no ranking as to which casuals are called. Please keep a record of who you have contacted and their response, and fill out the tracking form located in the duo-tang on the units.
2. In the event you are not able to fill the shift, in accordance with our collective agreement (18.06), the junior employee shall be required to stay, up to a maximum of a 16-hour shift and the on-call Manager notified.
3. If a sick call is received during the hours of 10:00pm-7:00am, a staff person must notify the on-call manager at 7:00am, or as soon as possible thereafter.
4. Staff are employed by the Akoma Family Centre, and therefore may be assigned, as needed, to work in the building that they are not typically scheduled in. This will be assigned by the on-call manager and relayed to the staff involved. Whenever possible please ensure that a Full-Time /Part-Time employee are assigned to each building.

Requests for Leave

Any requests for leave or shift exchanges require 48 hours notice, per the collective agreement (17.04), through SSC or via email to both Youth Care Supervisors and the Operations Manager. In addition, only two staff are permitted to be off on vacation or lieu on any given day, apart from Christmas, Boxing and New Year's Day.

Preparation for Work

The Akoma Family Center is committed to providing services that enhance the health and well-being of children, youth and families. Some of the ways in which we do this is through, core programming, structured activities, outdoor play, therapeutic play etc. To ensure that our residents can participate in all activities and programming, we have created a policy on coming to work prepared.

Please ensure that you:

- 1) Clock-in and out for your shifts on time.
- 2) Come to work prepared to participate in all planned programming, which includes but is not limited to, having a swimsuit, change of clothes, and appropriate footwear accessible always.
- 3) Have your vehicle with you while at work, with gas, valid inspection, insurance and other required documents.
- 4) Have organized and arranged yourself and your staff team, according to the dynamics of the day. This may require staff to switch buildings if it is in the best interests of the children. This includes:
 - Ensuring that staff are organized according to gender requirements for the residents (ex- that a female staff is working with a female resident at bath time) when possible.
 - Ensuring that there is always a full-time staff member in each building when possible to ensure consistency and safety unless otherwise designated by Management. There may be times that a casual or Part-Time YCW may be designated to replace a Full-Time YCW dependent upon their level of experience, relationship with the child, and safety concerns. Any changes to this effect must be approved through the On-Call Manager.
- 5) Due to the ever-changing dynamics of Akoma (new admissions, discharges, medication changes and other important information) it is an expectation that you have read all required emails, and other necessary documentation, such as logs, shift change forms, intervention plans during your shifts, to ensure you are up to date. Also, please ensure that you receive or ask for any pertinent information needed at the start of your shift during shift changes so that you are prepared to come onto the floor.

Worker's Compensation (WCB)

The Workers' Compensation Act requires employers to provide the Worker's Compensation Board of NS (WCB) with a fully completed Employers Report of Injury within 5 (five) business days of becoming aware of a workplace injury. Any injuries sustained during your shift are to be immediately reported to the on-call manager. The on-call manager will assess the situation and determine the course of action. You may be required to leave work to seek medical attention.

Even if you do not miss time from work, or see a healthcare provider because of a work-related injury, make sure that a report of the injury is filed. The WCB forms are available on-line at www.wcb.ns.ca, click on "Forms", then "Workers" and "WCB Injury Report". Fill in the form as best you can and send it to the WCB, even if your employer does not sign it. This will at least get the claim process started.

Note: If a healthcare provider files a WCB form on your behalf, you still need to submit the WCB Injury Report form in its entirety.

Workplace Communication

Written and verbal communications are essential to carry out our professional duties and we will ensure that the content and style of all communication are honest, clear, direct and complete. This will enhance the quality of our services to the residents, their families and the community.

Cell Phone, Email and Social Media Use

This protocol about cellular phone usage applies to any device that makes or receives phone calls, leaves messages, sends text messages, surfs the internet or downloads and allows for the reading of and responding to email whether the device is company supplied or personally owned.

Cell Phones at Work

The Akoma Family Centre is aware that employees utilize their personal or company supplied cellular phones for business purposes. At the same time, cell phones are a distraction in the workplace. To ensure the effectiveness of meetings, client/staff and staff/staff relationships, employees are asked to leave cell phones at their desk. On the unusual occasion of an emergency or anticipated emergency that requires immediate attention, the cell phone may be carried on shift or to the meeting on vibrate mode only. The children need and deserve your full attention!

Due to programming demands, the need for an Akoma Staff cell phone is required. The senior staff on each shift is responsible for responding to calls from the staff cell phone in a timely manner. This staff is to ensure the phone is properly charged and stored at the end of each shift. Senior Staff are responsible for ensuring there are adequate minutes left on the phone. When running low, they are asked to contact either the Operations Manager or the Administrative Assistant to top up the minutes. In the event minutes run out unexpectedly, staff are expected to purchase a Bell phone card up to the value of \$25.00, then add the minutes to the phone.

Personal Cell Phone Usage while Driving

Nova Scotia Provincial Law dictates that driving while using a hand-held device is illegal and a finable offence. Employees of the Akoma Family Centre are prohibited from using their cell phones while driving on Akoma Family Centre business unless they use a hands-free device. If using the hand-free device, be cognizant of the passengers in the vehicle to ensure privacy and confidentiality is maintained. Employees who violate this may be subject to disciplinary actions, up to, and including, termination of employment.

Email and Internet

The Akoma Family Centre will provide voicemail and email service to employees of the Akoma Family Centre. The Akoma Family Centre is legally responsible for all internal and external communication and, therefore, has the responsibility to set policy and monitor compliance with the policy. The policy will define boundaries of proper conduct and clarify the expectations of privacy for users of the voicemail and email systems. Voicemail and email use shall be in accordance with the underlying values and philosophy of the Akoma Family Centre and such use is as a business tool to enhance work performance and to facilitate easier communication in the job. Inappropriate use of voicemail or email, will result in the suspension or termination of such privileges and disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The Akoma Family Centre retains the property rights of the system and all matters sent over the system or placed in its storage (including the absolute right to review, audit and disclose any such property in its sole discretion, with or without notice). Neither the computer or voicemail should be used to communicate any improper matters, such as, but no limited to: discriminatory, derogatory, obscene or any otherwise unlawful or inappropriate material. Use of voicemail and email is for



official business use and must be primarily in support of your job duties, education and research. Personal use shall not interfere with the employee's job duties. Confidentiality is assured for emails internal to the Akoma Family Centre; however, emails sent over the internet do not have this level of security and therefore, should not be used for transmitting confidential information.

Employees shall not use the email system for mass mailing of business, other than that of the Akoma Family Centre. Employees shall not do anything to reduce the integrity of the network security such as giving out passwords or allowing others access to your email. The email system is not to be made available for use by third parties (including suppliers, customers or the public) without prior authorization.

The Akoma Family Centre may monitor voicemail message and email message usage on a periodic basis, checking for breaches of system security, violations of law or infringement of company rules or policies. Such monitoring may occur electronically or manually without the knowledge of the affected personnel. Managements may inspect the contents of email messages disclosed by such monitoring or any follow-up investigation if such inspection serves an organization purpose.

Social Media

Employees are asked not to post anything that is covered under our confidentiality policy or other internal or Residential Child Caring Facility Policies on any form of social media. This includes any information on the residents, including pictures of them. If it comes to Management attention that this policy has been breached, discipline may occur.

If employees identify that they work at the Akoma Family Centre on their social media, then they need to ensure that the content is appropriate and does not breach any Akoma or Child Caring Facility policies, as this can be a reflection on not only the employee, but also the Akoma Family Centre. If it comes to Management attention that there is inappropriate content on your social media, you will be asked to remove Akoma Family Centre as your employer.

Due to the professional relationship between the Management Team and the other employees, including Youth Care Workers, and other support staff, managers are advised to not have employees on any of their social media platforms.

A signed copy of this shall remain on the employees' personnel files, indicating that they have been reviewed, understand and agree to comply with this protocol.

Use of Walkie Talkies

To assist with staff communication and utilization in crisis situations while on shift, the Akoma Family Centre has provided each building with 2 walkie talkies. Staff are to be mindful that others can hear conversations over the walkie talkie. Keep the communication professional.

Please ensure the following are :

1. Set to *Channel 1* and the volume is turned up.
2. It is on your person during your entire shift while on site.
3. Turned off and charged nightly and recorded as such on the shift checklist.

Note: Both Supervisors, Clinical Social Worker and the Main Office staff have a walkie talkie.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The Akoma Family Centre has a legal and ethical responsibility to protect the privacy of clients, residents, families, staff and affiliates and its operations. The Akoma Family Centre expects staff/affiliates to keep information that they learn or have access to because of their employment/affiliation, in the strictest confidence. All staff are expected to be professional and maintain confidentiality at all times, whether dealing with actual records, projects, or conversations and abide by the obligations of the confidentiality agreement. This policy applies to all employees involved in the organization whether they are in a worker or management role, paid, voluntary or as a student. It covers both during and after employment and/ or when business with the Akoma Family Centre has been completed or terminated. This policy applies whether information is verbal, written, electronic or

in any other format.

Types of information to be protected:

Resident/Staff Information

Personal information, personal health information residents, their families or staff must not be accessed, removed, discussed with or disclosed to unauthorized persons, either within or outside of the institution, without the proper consent of the Executive Director. No individual may disclose to a third party, including his/her own family, information learned from client files, meetings or any other confidential sources during his/ her work. No individual may access confidential information they do not have a need to know to carry out their job duties. Employees may not access, release or discuss the personal, employment, human resources and compensation information of other employees without proper consent unless the employee must do so to carry out specific job functions.

Confidential Business Information

Business information that is not publicly disclosed that must be protected includes but is not limited to:

- Ongoing negotiations (labour contracts, leases, and purchases)
- Confidential commercial or financial information
- Pending litigation and /or investigations
- Information that is propriety such as in a grant proposal for program funding.

This information may not be accessed, removed, altered or disclosed unless the Executive Director gives authorization.

It is the responsibility of every staff/affiliate:

- To become familiar with and follow the Akoma Family Centre policies and procedures regarding the collection, use, disclosure, storage, and destruction of confidential information.
- To review the Privacy and Confidentiality policy and sign the agreement prior to commencing work or providing services to the Akoma Family Centre.
- To divulge, copy, transmit, or release confidential information only as authorized and needed to provide care or perform their duties.
- To safeguard passwords and /or any user codes that access computer systems and programs.
- To identify confidential information as such when sending emails or fax transmissions and to provide direction to the recipient if they receive a transmission in error.
- To discuss confidential information only with those who require this information to provide care or perform their duties and make every effort to discuss confidential information out of range of others who should not have access to this information.
- To continue to respect and maintain the terms of the Privacy and Confidentiality Agreement after an individual's employment/affiliation with the Akoma Family Centre ends.
- To collect, access, and use confidential information only as authorized and required to provide care or perform their assigned duties.
- To report to the supervisor if suspected breaches of confidentiality, or practices within the organization that compromise confidential information. If the supervisor is the individual suspected of the breach, staff may contact the Executive Director.
- To dispose of confidential documents by utilizing the designated shredder and disposal system in the main office.
- To store confidential resident, staff or business information on a password protected computer, or secure filing cabinet in a secure room.
- To only collect confidential information, which is appropriate and relevant to the purpose, it was collected for.
- To ensure doors to offices and files containing confidential information are locked when you are not there.
- To ensure all requests from any member of the media (newspaper, radio, television, internet, etc.) are to be directed to the Executive Director of the Akoma Family Centre
- To ensure that you do not share the passwords, you use to access email, data basis, websites and other electronic resources with unauthorized personnel
- To ensure that when away from your computer your logout or protect information.
- To not engage in, "loose" talk among the staff and management regarding personal and employment information

regarding the residents and other staff.

- To make sure Authorization for Release of Information Forms are completed and placed in the appropriate files.
- To not share information acquired in the course of your work with others who do not need to have the information.

New Employee/Employee Procedure

1. The Youth Care Supervisor must review specific information or procedures related to confidentiality with new staff.
2. The Youth Care Supervisor must ensure that new staff signs the Privacy and Confidentiality Agreement.
3. The Youth Care Supervisor must review the confidentiality policy with the staff every year during their yearly evaluation.
4. The Youth Care Supervisor must investigate all allegations of breaches of confidentiality.

External Communications

The employees of the Akoma Family Centre are not authorized to speak to the media with respect to the Akoma Family Centre and its affairs or business. The Executive Director and the designated board representative will be the only person permitted to speak on issues.

The External Communications Protocol ensures that the information contained in all communication with the public is consistent, accurate, fair and timely.

Definitions:

- Employee - a regular, term or casual staff of the Akoma Family Centre
- Board Member - a Board Member of the Akoma Family Centre
- AFC - Akoma Family Centre

Objectives:

To ensure that the information contained in all communication with the public is consistent, accurate, fair and timely, it is the policy of the AFC that:

AFC will comply with all laws and regulations regarding public disclosure of material information (including material facts and material changes), financial results in operations;

AFC is committed to the fair disclosure of information about AKC and to the avoidance of selective disclosure that would advantage or disadvantage any employee or board member.

All disclosure to the media will be communicated by the Board President, the Executive Director or their designate(s).

No employee or Board member of the AFC is authorized to communicate any business or financial information about the AFC or its residents, except through public disclosure sanctioned by **the AFC Board**, or the Executive Director.

Exceptions to Selective Disclosure Restrictions

There are of course, circumstances where the AFC will disclose material non-public information solely in the necessary course of business to person's subject to duties of trust or confidence not to disclose the information or to make use of it. In these circumstances, which involve disclosure to a person who has agreed to receive information in confidence subject to a written or oral agreement, disclosure can be made. This includes disclosure to, including but not limited to, legal counsel, investment bankers, lenders, accountants/book-keepers, school, physicians, social workers, psychologists and government departments. The AFC will, in these circumstances, ensure that those receiving the information understand they cannot pass the information onto anyone else.

Conflict of Interest

It is the employee's professional obligation to avoid situations that could potentially lead to or create a conflict of interest.

Employees will sign and adhere to the Akoma Family Centre's Conflict of Interest **protocol**. Employees are expected to reveal any personal, family or business interests that they have, that, by creating a divided loyalty, could influence their judgment and hence the wisdom of decisions.

Definition:

A conflict of interest exists wherever an individual could benefit, dis-proportionally from others, directly or indirectly, from access to information or from a decision over which they might have influence, or, where someone might reasonably perceive there to be such a benefit and influence.

Examples of possible conflict of interest situations, with respect to our organization include:

- an employee has a personal or business relationship with the organization as a supplier of goods or services or as a landlord or tenant
- an employee has a personal or financial relationship with a client of the organization outside of the workplace
- The organization is employing someone who is directly related to an employee

Conflicts of interest (real and perceived) are unavoidable and should not prevent an individual from serving, as a director or staff member unless the extent of the interest is so significant that the potential for divided loyalty is present in a large number of situations.

Procedure for Handling a Conflict of Interest

- Employees have a duty to disclose any personal, family, or business interests that may, in the eyes of another person, influence their judgment.
- Employees have a duty to disclose specific conflicts of interests where that interest may, in their judgment, affect the reputation or credibility of the organization, and to disclose the procedure for operating in the presence of such conflicts.
- Employees have a duty to exempt themselves from participating in any discussion and voting on matters where they have, or may be perceived as having, a conflict of interest. Such exemptions should be recorded in minutes of meetings.
- Any business relationship between an individual (or a company where the individual is an owner or in a position of authority) and the organization, outside of their relationship as an employee, must be formalized in writing and approved by the Executive Director.

Harassment

The Akoma Family Centre is committed to providing an environment without intimidation, aggression, coercion, and victimization. We understand the detrimental impact of harassment on performance and personal development.

Any evidence of the following, may result in termination of employment:

- Physical, sexual or emotional abuse, including harassment of residents or employees (notwithstanding the possibility of criminal charges)
- Humiliate, ridicule, hurt, intimidate, threaten, scare or put in danger any resident or employee
- Insult, slander, degrade, diminish self-respect, scorn, exclude or provoke any resident or employee

Personal Pets

It is the Akoma Family Centre's policy to provide a safe and healthy environment for all residents, employees and visitors. In accordance with this, animals are prohibited from all Akoma facilities and premises, except for authorized service animals and working animals as defined below.

Definitions:



Service Animals - animals (primarily dogs) used to guide or aid persons with disabilities in the activities of independent living. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines service animals as any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. If an animal meets this broad definition, it is considered a service animal.

Working Animals - animals engaged in authorized service to the corporation (e.g., guard dogs, pest control animals, police dogs).

Rationale:

The Akoma Family Centre is committed to providing a professional and conducive work environment, as such this protocol responds to concerns for the health and safety of all persons and animals. Further, it limits potential distractions and disturbances in the workplace. In addition, due to liability reasons and for the protection of our residents, staff and the pet itself, we prohibit all animals on Akoma grounds except for Service Animals and Working Animals.

Resident Pets at Akoma

In accordance with the above-mentioned protocol, residents are also prohibited from having personal pets at Akoma. This includes pets coming from previous placements and/or the desire to purchase or adopt a pet while residing at Akoma.

Pornography

Pornography shall not be viewed at the Akoma Family Centre at any time. Any Akoma Family Centre employee involved in viewing or utilizing computer technology to access, display, distribute, forward or store information that is offensive, pornographic, obscene, or abusive, while at work, is unacceptable and cause for termination of employment. In addition, exposing a resident to pornographic materials, films or any abusive sexuality, is unacceptable and cause for termination of employment.

The Akoma Family Centre will cooperate with law enforcement agencies to prosecute anyone using its facilities unlawfully.

Employment and Personal References for Residents

Employees are not to give resident references for gaining employment without a process of collaboration that involves the resident, Youth Care Worker and Supervisors.

Youth Care Worker may collaborate with service providers outside of the Akoma Family Centre in relation to issues surrounding future placement of a resident in their care, only after the appropriate releases have been signed by the resident, Social Worker and/or legal guardian, giving permission for Youth Care Workers to release confidential information.

Reporting Violations of the Code of Conduct

Akoma Family Centre's employees have been given a sacred trust to work with residents and their families. Therefore, it is each employee's obligation to report unethical behavior, specifically, actions in violation of the Code of Conduct. Please see *Appendix I* for the process to follow to raise such concerns.

APPENDIX I: PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING CODE OF CONDUCT CONCERNS

Source of Concern

Professional External to Akoma Family Centre

It is the obligation of each employee to report unbecoming or unethical behavior of professionals outside of the Akoma Family Centre to their Supervisor immediately. It is the Supervisor's responsibility to bring the issue to the Executive Director for discussion and planning regarding action(s) required.

Employees of the Akoma Family Centre

It is the responsibility of every employee to bring forward concerns regarding the unbecoming conduct or unethical behaviour of any employee of the Akoma Family Centre to their supervisor. Unbecoming conduct or unethical behaviour is defined, at a minimum, as the specific behaviors outlined in the Code of Conduct. Given our commitment to individual context and circumstances, there will not be any standardized responses for concerns regarding behaviour, which may contradict the Code of Conduct. Responses are based on a full review of all relevant information and the employees professional development plan and are provided by the appropriate supervisor. Supervisors have an obligation to follow the full extent of this process. If there are concerns that a supervisor has not followed this process, please contact Executive Director.

Process for Review:

Unbecoming Conduct or Unethical Behaviour of Colleagues, Student Placements, or any Employee of the Akoma Family Centre

1. The employee who has a concern regarding a potential breach of the Code of Conduct will bring forward the matter to their Supervisor. This must be done in written form, either at this point in the process, or at the time of Step #2. Based on the outcome of the full process, this document may or may not be placed on the employee's personnel file.
2. The Supervisor will schedule a formal meeting with the employee who brought forward a concern about the conduct of another employee in order to gather information related to the context of the concern, the relationship between the employees involved, and to fully discuss the implications of maintaining confidentiality of the source of information. If not done so already, the concern will be documented in writing.
3. The Supervisor will schedule a formal meeting with the employee about whom a concern has been raised and seek information related to the context of the concern, the relationship between the employees involved, and the individual's professional development plan.
4. The Supervisor will meet with any other relevant persons related to the concern.
5. The Supervisor will meet with the Executive Director to review the information gathered.
6. The course of employee discipline will be evaluated based on the details and circumstances of individual context and professional development plan of the employee. Confidentially regarding the response to the concern will be maintained by the Supervisor.
7. A written account of the concern, the discussions/meetings held for clarification, and the forthcoming response will be prepared by the Supervisor and reviewed with the employee and signed by both parties. This document will be retained in the employee's personnel file and it does not constitute a "written warning" consistent with the Akoma Family Centre's Progressive Discipline Policy.

Note: To report unethical behaviour and/or submit a complaint with respect to an employee, colleague or student placement that falls outside of the Code of Conduct, staff should refer to the Akoma Family Centre's Employee Complaint Policy.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

There are two performance areas that require progressive discipline:

1. Incompetence: where an employee lacks the skills and/or abilities needed for the job
2. Misconduct: unacceptable, unlawful and/or improper behavior; where an employee knowingly breaches Akoma or Provincial policies and/or guidelines

Progressive Discipline: Incompetence

If an employee lacks the skills or knowledge required to perform their job, their supervisor will follow the progressive discipline process below:

- Step 1. When the behaviour is identified by and/or to the Supervisor, the Supervisor will address the concern with the employee. At this time, the expectations will be clarified, and documentation in the form of a supervision note will be placed on the employee's supervision file.
- Step 2. In the event the behaviour continues from Step 1, the Supervisor will provide training, education, and supervision. This will include a written developmental plan, devised jointly by the employee and their supervisor, to address the concerns in a timely fashion. The employee is then provided with a coaching letter that will be placed on their supervision file, and given an opportunity to create change.
- Step 3. In the event the behaviour does not change, the supervisor will meet with the employee and give them written documentation in the form of a discipline letter (i.e. written warnings, suspension letters) indicating what will occur if the work performance does not improve. A copy of this letter, along with copies of supporting supervision notes will be given to the Union Secretary.
- Step 4. In the event the behaviour continues, the management team will meet and decide the next steps to be taken. This could include the employee being terminated, probation period extended, or continued work on the employee's developmental plan.

Note: Based upon the severity of the behaviour, the Supervisor may omit any steps to address the concerns, as needed.

Progressive Discipline: Misconduct

When dealing with misconduct, the Supervisor will determine if the employee's misconduct is **Minor** or **Severe** to implement the appropriate discipline process. The supervisor of the employee in question will consider factors such as:

- Seriousness and/or frequency of the problem
- Employee's work history
- Effect on the organization

Once a decision has been reached, the Supervisor will follow the process as stated below. The length of time will vary on circumstances surrounding misconduct. Refer to the Collective Agreement (Article 13 – Discharge, Suspension and Discipline) for further information.

Minor

In the event the behaviour is deemed as **Minor**, the Supervisor will follow the process below:

- Step 1. When the behaviour is identified to the Supervisor, the Supervisor will provide training, education, and supervision. This will include a written developmental plan, devised jointly by the employee and their Supervisor, to address the concerns in a timely fashion. The employee is then provided with a coaching letter that will be placed on their supervision file and given an opportunity to create change.
- Step 2. In the event the behaviour does not change; the supervisor will meet with the employee and give them written documentation in the form of a discipline letter (ie. written warnings, suspension letters) indicating what will occur if the work performance does not improve. A copy of this letter, along with copies of supporting supervision notes will be given to the Union Secretary.



Step 3. In the event the behavior continues; the management team will meet and decide the next steps to be taken. This could include the employee being terminated, probation period extended, or continued work on your developmental plan.

Note: Based upon the severity of the behaviour, the Supervisor may omit any steps to address the concerns, as needed.

Severe

In the event the behaviour is deemed as **Severe**, the Supervisor may terminate the employment of the employee from their position.

Prepared by:		Date:	
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