



**The Children's Aid Society
of Haldimand & Norfolk**

CODE OF ETHICS

Approved by:
The Board of Directors
Feb. 23/06

Code of Ethics

PREAMBLE

The Children's Aid Society of Haldimand & Norfolk exists in order to administer effective protection of, and service to, children and their families. In this mandate, we find pride of purpose and acknowledge the unique position it affords us within our communities. We undertake to safeguard the public trust and confidence which are vested in our service and to discharge our responsibilities and duties in a manner which inspires respect and which adheres to the highest standards of conduct.

The need for ethics and integrity is at the foundation of all actions and decisions, regardless of whether they are individual or collective. To this end, we adopt this Code of Ethics and the Conduct that govern the actions of members of the Society. It is important and expected that we acquaint ourselves with the tenets of the Code of Ethics and acknowledge that our ongoing employment and/or relationship with the Society is dependent upon upholding the Code of Ethics. In order to uphold the values and goals of the Society, we pursue knowledge of right and wrong within a framework of conscience, duty, accountability, and honour. It is our intention that the Code of Ethics be upheld in spirit as well as in letter; that it give a critical focus to our thinking in each situation we encounter; and, that it be given effect by our actions.

INTERPRETATION

For the purposes of this Code of Ethics, the "Society" means the Board of Directors, all employees and, where applicable, foster parents, volunteers, and students.

Administration of Service

We undertake, collectively and individually, to uphold and comply with all laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures, and the principles of good governance that impact on our job responsibilities or the mission and mandate of the Society.

Conduct

- The Society will make rules, policies and procedures necessary to govern its business and the actions of its employees and to ensure the proper discharge of its mission, mandate and authority.
- The Society will comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations of the federal, provincial and local governments. It will uphold the terms and conditions of employment and the current Collective Agreement.
- We undertake to acquaint ourselves with all laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures which impact on our specific responsibilities. We undertake to make decisions, as required, which are consistent with these and to act accordingly.
- We hold the establishment of rules, policies and procedures to be dynamic, sensitive to error and responsive to change. We undertake, therefore, to review and revise, as required, our rules, policies and procedures to ensure our full potential to provide quality service.

Integrity

We are dedicated to, and accept responsibility for, the discharge of our duties with a high degree of personal and professional integrity.

Conduct

- We undertake to act with respect for the rights of others.
- We acknowledge that dishonourable conduct by any member or members of the Society will reflect adversely upon the integrity of the Society as a whole and may impair the essential relationship of trust we have with our clients, collaterals, donors, the community and with each other.

Quality of Service

While acknowledging the differences which may exist among our respective roles, positions and responsibilities, we hold each to make a substantial contribution to the work of the Society. Therefore, as members of the Society, we undertake to perform our respective duties competently, conscientiously and with integrity.

We uphold the value of good citizenship with our clients and colleagues and undertake to act in a way that respects and contributes to their growth and development.

Conduct

- We undertake to attempt to fulfill the requirements of our respective positions such that the provision of service to the Society and its clients is timely and effective and meets the standards of performance and quality established by the Society.
- We undertake to disclose, through appropriate channels, fully and without delay, any errors or omissions in the performance of our duties and responsibilities which may affect adversely the business of the Society or which may, potentially or in fact, attract legal liability.
- We undertake to remain current in our respective areas of knowledge and skill and, as applicable, to engage in continuous study, education, training and development.
- We undertake to seek from each other, and to provide to each other, consultation, support and assistance in the spirit of teamwork.
- In matters outside our immediate competence or experience, where we cannot acquire such competence or experience without undue delay or risk to our clients or to the Society itself, we undertake to seek the timely assistance of our colleagues, the valued contribution of our collaterals, direction from our supervisors and/or consultation with external resources.

Freedom from Discrimination and Harassment

We recognize the dignity and worth of every person and undertake to promote and maintain an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

Conduct

- We reject, and will neither tolerate nor condone, any actions, behaviours or attitudes which may cause discrimination or harassment on the grounds of race, creed, colour, ethnic origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, sex, sexual orientation, place of origin, marital status, family status, same-sex partnership status or disability.
- We reject, and will neither tolerate nor condone, any actions, behaviours or attitudes in the work environment which may cause sexual harassment or the threat of it.
- We reject, and will neither tolerate nor condone, any actions, behaviours or attitudes which may cause the creation of intimidating, hostile or offensive surroundings or which interfere unreasonably with the ability of an individual to perform his or her duties.
- We undertake to uphold all relevant federal, provincial and municipal laws and all Society policies and procedures that exist to protect the human rights of individuals.
- Each member of the Society has the right to protection and remedy, through relevant law, policies and procedures, established externally and internally, and without reprisal or threat of reprisal, to address matters arising from discrimination and/or harassment.

Diversity

We recognize and uphold the principle that every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, whatever their race, creed, colour, ethnic origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, sex, sexual orientation, place of origin, marital status, family status, same-sex partnership status or disability.

Conduct

- We acknowledge diversity as an integral component of our communities and undertake to provide, as appropriate, equality of opportunity, access and full participation for all individuals.
- We value and respect the diversity of our communities and amongst our clients, employees, foster parents, students and volunteers. We undertake through our actions to develop and promote harmony, positive self image, self worth and self identity.
- We reject, and will neither tolerate nor condone, any expression of bias with respect to the race, creed, colour, ethnic origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, sex, sexual orientation, place of origin, marital status, family status, same sex partnership status or disability of any individual, family or community.
- We undertake to uphold all relevant federal, provincial and municipal laws and all policies and procedures that exist to promote and support equality of opportunity.

Quality of Communication

We uphold the principle of open communication within the Society and the creation of a positive working environment where the flow of timely, accurate and direct information supports the achievement of Society goals and the strengthening of Society values.

Conduct

- We undertake to express ourselves in a way that is courteous and to reject behaviours or attitudes which are rude, provocative or disruptive. We further undertake to refrain from uninformed or inappropriate criticism with respect to the competence or conduct of fellow members of the Society and undertake to prevent ill feelings from influencing our performance or conduct toward those members.
- We undertake to distinguish clearly between our opinions as individuals and as representatives of the Society. When called upon by the Society to help in conveying information to the public, we undertake to do so in an informed way and one which encourages public respect for the Society and rights of our clients, without compromising confidentiality.

Disclosure of Information

In accordance with the Society's Confidentiality Agreement, we undertake to hold in strictest confidence information concerning the business and affairs of the Society and its clients and will disclose such information only if explicitly or implicitly authorized to do so by the Society, the client, or as required by law.

Conduct

- When the law or a court order requires the disclosure of confidential information, that disclosure will be limited to the information required.
- Trust is a fundamental component of the Society's work which prevents members of the Society from using any information for his or her benefit or to the benefit of a third party, without prior full disclosure to the Society and only with the authorization of the Society's Executive Director or designate. No information will be used to the detriment of the Society or its work.

Conflict of Interest

As members of the Society, we undertake to act in a way that does not cause, or is likely to cause, a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Conduct

- A conflicting interest is one which would likely adversely affect the judgement of a member of the Society when acting for the Society. We acknowledge that the presence of a conflict of interest, or the presence of compromising or competing influences, may prejudice our ability to act freely in the fulfilment of our duties and responsibilities as members of the Society. We undertake to disclose, fully and without delay, any actual or possible conflict of interest in accordance with Society policy.
- As members of the Society, we undertake to ensure that, if we engage in another profession, business, occupation, or volunteer role concurrently with our association with the Society, we will not allow that interest to jeopardize our integrity, independence or competence in the fulfilment of our duties and responsibilities to the Society.