Code of Conduct

Believing the best is possible and loving what you do...
Catherine McAuley RSM, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, gives further expression to the values upon which we base our healing Ministry.

**Mercy - the spirit of responding to one another**

- Working in unity and being open to and respectful of the ideas and contributions of others.

- Sharing information, knowledge, and expertise with other Mater employees and striving to impart knowledge to, and to learn from, others.

  *Let us rejoice when good is done, no matter by whom it is accomplished.*

  *Show your instructions in actions as much as you can.*

**Dignity - the spirit of humanity**

- Treating each other with courtesy and respect, valuing each person as an equal, regardless of their position within the organisation or the area within which they work.
Code of Conduct

● Recognising the diverse needs of each individual and not unlawfully or unfairly discriminating against any individual on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion, marital status, sexual preference, and so on.

It is better to relieve a hundred imposters, if there be such, than to suffer one really distressed person to be sent away empty.

God knows I would rather be cold and hungry than that the poor should be deprived of anything in my power to give.

Care - the spirit of compassion

● Recognising each individual’s value and contribution, and treating them with sensitivity and care.

There are things the poor prize more highly than gold though they cost the donor nothing: the kind word, the gentle, compassionate look, and the patient hearing of sorrows.

Commitment - the spirit of integrity

● Committing to Mater’s mission and values, demonstrating honesty, integrity, and humanity in all that we do.

No virtue is perfect without prudence.

Quality - the spirit of professionalism

● Working to the best of our ability, and aiming to achieve high standards of practice and continuous improvement.

● Maintaining our knowledge and skills to ensure that we can perform our roles with a degree of competence commensurate with our role.

● Encouraging an environment where people own up to mistakes, enabling us, as individuals and as an organisation, to learn and grow from our experiences.

The great adage: “never too old to learn” is a great comfort to me.

Never command anything which you yourself have not practised.
In addition to observing Mater’s philosophy, mission, and values, staff must ensure their behaviour is respectful, lawful, diligent, professional, ethical, and responsible with respect to the stewardship of resources.

Since very little good can be accomplished without money, we must look after it in small as well as in great matters.

Respectful

Employees will, at all times, be courteous, objective, and helpful when dealing with others. They shall treat members of the public and other employees honestly, fairly, responsibly, and compassionately.

Employees will behave in a way that upholds Mater’s commitment to respecting the dignity, rights, and views of others. Employees must not denigrate any person’s cultural, religious, and/or other beliefs, nor engage in any form of bullying, mistreatment, coercion, harassment (including sexual and racial harassment), or any other unethical or unlawful behaviour. (Refer to Mater’s Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy for more information)

Diligence and Professional Standards

Employees shall exercise due diligence, care and attention in their positions. They have a personal responsibility to keep their skills and knowledge current, including identifying appropriate professional development opportunities.

Employees should maintain dress or uniform standards that are in line with community standards, acceptable to Mater’s culturally diverse clientele, and consistent with their role and function.

Employees are expected to observe the standards that apply to their profession.

Lawful Behaviour

Employees must uphold the laws of Queensland and Australia, and shall not be a party to any breach, evasion or subversion of the law. Employees who believe another employee or other person may be guilty of serious misconduct, including, but not limited to, fraud or other unlawful behaviour, must notify their manager or other appropriate person of their suspicions.
Responsible Stewardship of Resources

Employees shall demonstrate responsible stewardship of resources and avoid unnecessary waste or extravagance. Mater resources, whether staff, property, equipment, or facilities, shall be allocated only to official Mater business (this may include approved study programs).

Employees should notify their manager if they suspect inappropriate use of resources.

Human resource management decisions, particularly in relation to recruitment, promotion, and access to training and career development opportunities, must be consistent with Mater’s policies and procedures, particularly in respect of equity, natural justice, consistency, and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

Ethical Standards

Employees must observe appropriate ethical standards in their dealings with staff, patients, families, and members of the public. These standards include:

- Research ethics
- Confidentiality
- Fairness
- Avoidance of conflicts of interest
- Fidelity

Research and Clinical Treatment Ethics

Research and clinical activities must be conducted within the Catholic Church’s ethical guidelines and must not breach professional research ethics. (Refer to Catholic Healthcare Australia’s Code of Ethical Standards).

Confidentiality

Employees must not disclose confidential information at any time, unless that disclosure is required under law or with the express permission of the Chief Executive Officer. Employees must ensure that they have the authority to disclose official information.

Normally, disclosure is authorised only where such disclosure is part of the employee’s official duties or is prescribed under statute or otherwise required at law.

Sensitive documents must be stored appropriately, preferably in a locked environment. Any personal matters should be discussed discreetly so as to protect confidentiality. Names and other personal details must not be disclosed in any public forum, conference, etc., and personal information regarding any staff member or patient should not be accessed unless this is required in the course of an employee’s professional duties. (Refer also to Mater’s Confidentiality Policy)
Code of Conduct

Fairness

Employees, particularly managers, have a responsibility to behave in a way which:

- Sets a good example for others;
- Maintains open, honest communication;
- Ensures staff are treated fairly, equitably, and consistently; and
- Ensures staff understand what is expected (performance standards) and how feedback will be provided.

Employees should not use their positions to exercise improper influence, including political influence, for personal advantage either for themselves or for another. Activities that are party-political and/or are performed on behalf of a professional body must be conducted in a clearly private capacity.

Employees shall not seek or encourage others to give them benefits in return for any decision taken in the course of their employment. (For the purposes of the Code of Conduct, benefits shall include any gifts, remuneration, employment, allowances, subsidies, free goods or services, entertainment, or incentives of any kind.)

Approval must be obtained from an authorised person before employees divulge, publicise, or otherwise release any material in any form which may constitute intellectual property. Unless expressly agreed otherwise, all intellectual property related to the employee’s work at Mater belongs to Mater Health Services.

Avoidance of conflicts of interest

Employees are responsible for avoiding conflicts of interest and, where a personal interest exists, must openly disclose that interest to their superior officer.

Employees must ensure that, in making recruitment and selection decisions, the merit principle is upheld and that any situations which could give rise to charges of nepotism are avoided. (See also, Recruitment and Selection Policy 12.1).

Employee Fidelity

Employees have a responsibility to act in the best interests of Mater Health Services and to uphold its mission, philosophy, and values. Staff shall not engage in behaviour that could bring Mater into disrepute.

Staff should not allow their personal relationships to affect their work performance adversely. Fraternisation, particularly intimate relationships between managers/supervisors, subordinates, patients and patient’s relatives, is discouraged. In the event of this occurring, discreet steps should be taken to secure the transfer of one of the parties to another unit or department. If transfer
of personnel is not achievable in the short term, steps should be taken to secure an “arms length” arrangement in respect of decisions about the subordinate’s promotion, higher class duties, rostering, professional development planning and development opportunities, e.g., conference leave. In the longer term, transfer of one of the parties is strongly recommended.

Mater employees who are concurrently employed elsewhere must ensure that other employment does not compromise their effectiveness and efficiency at work and should minimise any potential for conflicts of interest.

**Employee Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of all Mater employees to familiarise themselves and comply with this Code of Conduct.

Failure to observe the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

**Sources:**
- Mater Public Hospitals
- Code of Conduct 2002
- Mater Values Statement.

**References:**
- Anti Discrimination Act 1991,
- Mater Philosophy,
- Mission and Core Values.

**Contact Officers:**
- Director - Human Resources,
- Executive Director - Mission Services

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