

# AEIOU Foundation: Code of Conduct

Acting with integrity,  
knowing our values, and  
understanding our code



June 2020

# Code of Conduct

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# Code of Conduct



## Message from leadership

AEIOU's objective is to work as one team and partner with our families to provide excellence in early intervention therapy and education for the vulnerable children in our care.

Our Code of Conduct provides us with the resources and the information we need to operate our service responsibly, make ethical decisions and hold ourselves and how AEIOU conducts itself to high standards.

Our Code of Conduct applies to the AEIOU Foundation (AEIOU) Board of Directors and sub committees, workers, students and volunteers, contractors, consultants and all AEIOU clients, all operations of AEIOU and those who interact with AEIOU. This policy applies to all locations from which AEIOU operates.

We encourage you to use our Code as the compass to guide your actions.

Whilst the Code is an effective resource, it does not cover every circumstance you may face on the job, so it is important to utilise your good judgment in everything you do and ask for guidance if you are unsure on the right course of action.

Thank you for doing your part to uphold our values and fulfill the obligations of our Code of Conduct. We are proud to lead an organisation that has an amazing team which truly cares for the children we enrol and shows support and respect for each other.



**Shane Klintworth**  
General Manager



**Alan Smith**  
Chief Executive Officer

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## Our story

The establishment of AEIOU Foundation was inspired by the experiences of James and Louise Morton, after their son was diagnosed with autism. Their experience with autism began shortly after Andrew's first birthday. It was at this time his behaviour changed; he would cry continuously and at times, his behaviour escalated to severe head banging. He did not try to attempt baby talk and was silent except for the word 'mum'.

Andrew was diagnosed with autistic disorder at the age of two, and Louise and James sought the best possible educational program to support his needs. They discovered an early intervention pilot program run by Education Queensland. After securing a placement, within a short period of time, Andrew's behaviour improved, and by learning to communicate with pictures, he became less frustrated. Within 18 months in the program, Andrew began to put sentences together, he learned the alphabet and could count to 20. He played with his siblings and loved parks, McDonalds and indoor playgrounds just like other children. Andrew started at a regular kindergarten and enjoyed the experience. To further his educational development, Andrew still engaged in ongoing therapy with his early intervention team.

However, in 2003, the early intervention centre was closed. There was no other service of its kind offered anywhere in Queensland and as a result the Mortons were forced to continue Andrew's therapy in their own home. Dissatisfied with the fact that Andrew, and thousands of children like

him, had no opportunity to attend an early intervention facility that was dedicated solely to children with autism, they decided to develop a service that would provide the same level of care to children like Andrew.

In November 2003, James and Louise, together with Andrew's therapist Rebecca Allen, developed the concept for AEIOU.

In February 2005, the first AEIOU centre was opened in Moorooka, Queensland. The centre was dedicated solely to an intensive early intervention learning program for children with an autism diagnosis.

Today, AEIOU operates from nine locations across Queensland and one in South Australia. It is managed by a Board of Directors and the service is delivered by a transdisciplinary team.

## Mission

To enhance the lives of children with autism and their families and benefit the community through early intervention learning, along with practical and caring support.

## Vision

To be recognised as the leading provider of quality early intervention for children with autism and to ensure every child is given the best opportunity to reach their full potential in life.



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## Know your responsibilities

To be successful at AEIOU, and to operate and maintain our reputation as a profit-for-purpose organisation that puts first the needs of the vulnerable children in our care, we must each learn, abide and comply with:

- > Organisational policies and procedures
- > NDIS Code of Conduct
- > Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics
- > National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- > AEIOU Behaviour Framework
- > United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- > United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Young Children

Living and complying with the Code of Conduct creates a safe environment where we can be proud of our best efforts, work together to overcome the challenges and celebrate the achievements of ourselves and the children. This is because we commit to operate with integrity within frameworks that are fair, equitable and legal.

You have a responsibility to lead by example and reinforce the principles of our Code of Conduct and Values throughout the organisation and all levels of our workforce. Speaking up when something does not seem right shows the courage and integrity to do the right thing by the vulnerable children in our care.

### *Integrity tip: Ask yourself these questions*

1. Does it reflect the AEIOU values – Support, Teamwork, Excellence, Passion (STEP)?
2. Does it conform to the NDIS Code of Conduct?
3. Is it good for AEIOU, my co-workers and the children?
4. Would I be okay if everyone knew about it?
5. What would happen if it appears in the news?
6. What would happen if everyone were to behave like this?

If you can answer 'yes' to all of these questions, it is most likely safe to move forward, but a 'no' or 'not sure' to any of them would beg you to stop and reconsider. It is always appropriate in any situation for you to stop and ask for help.

## Where to go for guidance and to raise concerns

For further information on organisational policies and procedures, you can find these on G-Drive in Common > QA > Policies Procedures Forms. Alternatively, you can ask your manager or contact Rosemarie MacInnes – Risk and Compliance Officer on [rosemarie.macinnes@aeiou.org.au](mailto:rosemarie.macinnes@aeiou.org.au).

Do you have a question, problem or concern? In most cases, your manager should be your first point of contact. He or she is likely in the best position to understand your concern and take the appropriate action.

If you feel uncomfortable speaking with your manager, or if you have already shared a concern and feel it's not being addressed appropriately, AEIOU supports the disclosure by individuals of concerns or misconduct within AEIOU so that appropriate action can be undertaken. AEIOU will treat all information disclosed in a confidential manner (as far as circumstances may permit), conduct a fair and objective investigation and take appropriate steps or notify relevant authorities.

AEIOU is committed to ensuring that all disclosures are managed properly and those who report concerns or misconduct in our workplace are protected from reprisals.

An employee who makes a disclosure is not subject to any civil or criminal liability or any liability arising by way of administrative process, including disciplinary action for speaking up. However, it is an offence to intentionally give false or misleading information. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action for intentionally giving false or misleading information.

You can **speak up**:

- > verbally or in writing
- > on a confidential or non-confidential basis
- > to an Authorised Disclosure Officer (below)
- > to AEIOU's external reporting authority – Stopline

### *Authorised disclosure officers:*

Laura Dodd – Director, People and Performance  
e [laura.dodd@aeiou.org.au](mailto:laura.dodd@aeiou.org.au)  
t 07 3320 7515

Shane Klintworth – General Manager, Corporate Services and Operations  
e [shane.klintworth@aeiou.org.au](mailto:shane.klintworth@aeiou.org.au)  
t 07 3320 7599

Alan Smith – Chief Executive Officer  
e [alan.smith@aeiou.org.au](mailto:alan.smith@aeiou.org.au)  
t 07 3320 7525

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## Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If any employee directs or approves breaches of the Code, or has knowledge of such breaches and does not act to correct them, they will be held accountable through disciplinary action which may include termination of employment.

## How to live by our values and conduct every day?

### STEP values

One of our guiding principles of AEIOU's Code of Conduct is by upholding our commitment to our values.

**Support** - through expert guidance, we show commitment to each member of the Foundation's family. Support is:

- > demonstrating a positive professional attitude in all things we do
- > being compassionate, supportive and empathetic to colleagues, families and children
- > communicating openly with honesty and respect and within a timely manner
- > being sensitive to the needs of those around us
- > demonstrating our decisions and thought processes are always client focused.

**Teamwork** - through a collaborative and inclusive team, we work together to create brighter futures. Teamwork is:

- > being respectful and considerate of others and cultures at all times
- > communicating clearly and acting decisively
- > acting and working positively together
- > being self-aware in how our behaviour impacts those around us
- > listening carefully to others – showing that we respect and value their input
- > showing commitment and belief in a 'one team' culture.

**Excellence** - driven to be the best, we are leaders in the delivery of quality, evidence-based early intervention. Excellence is:

- > learning from our mistakes
- > participating in continuous improvement
- > taking responsibility for our personal development and learning



- > communicating ideas in a positive way
- > taking pride in our work and focusing on delivering the right outcomes
- > having the courage to welcome change
- > always implementing the early intervention program to the best of our abilities
- > considering a variety of perspectives
- > taking accountability for our decisions and actions.

**Passion** - inspired by the difference we make in young lives, we love what we do. Passion is:

- > bringing our best self to work every day
- > being willing to go the extra mile for our children and families
- > listening carefully and working as partners
- > keeping our promises
- > being committed to our children's success
- > being open to new ideas and challenges
- > ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for all
- > working with our families in tailoring services to meet their needs
- > following through on all commitments.

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## NDIS Code of Conduct

Our second guiding principle on how AEIOU conducts its service is through the NDIS Code of Conduct. The code has been derived from the UN convention on the rights of persons with disability to promote health, safety, well-being and rights of people with disabilities.

### **Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions.**

This includes:

- > working closely with families to understand their child's strengths, interests and needs, and support them in their caring role
- > involving children in decisions that affect them in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development
- > paying attention to the signs children give that communicate their feelings, ideas and wishes including non-verbal indications
- > communicating in a form, language and manner that enables children to understand the information and make known their will and preferences

- > having an inclusive attitude and take into account the expressed values and beliefs of children (including children with a disability) such as those relating to culture, faith, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexuality and age, as well as disability
- > offering culturally sensitive activities and responding to needs related to gender.

**Respect the privacy of people with disability.** This includes:

- > delivering services in a dignified way that maintains the confidentiality of personal information.

**Provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner, with care and skill.** This includes:

- > having the qualifications where required for the role and maintain the expertise and competence necessary for supports and services delivered
- > being honest about qualifications, ability and limitations to provide particular supports and services
- > providing services consistent with relevant professional codes
- > commitment to providing training and professional development so that staff are able to deliver supports and services for which they do not have the necessary training, competence and qualifications
- > not threatening or taking adverse action against any worker who makes a complaint
- > complying with work, health and safety requirements
- > not providing services or supports while under the influence of drugs or alcohol or are taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs that may affect their ability to support children in their care
- > ensuring appropriate, respectful, legible and accurate records are kept.

**Act with integrity, honesty and transparency.** This includes:

- > immediately disclosing if you have not obtained the required worker screening check, failed a worker screening clearance, been subject to an employment proceeding related to work with a child or person with disability in which the findings were substantiated; and/or been subject to a finding of professional misconduct and disclosure if any legal action has been taken against you.
- > providing accurate information relating to service provision

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- > not making claims about the efficacy of treatments or supports that cannot be substantiated independently
- > declaring and avoiding any real or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact on their delivery of supports and services such as personal relationships with a child in AEIOU, their family, friends or carers
- > declaring and avoiding any real or perceived conflicts of interest where financial or commercial interest in an organisation or company providing (or seeking to provide) products, services or supports to AEIOU, or where the worker's beliefs and values may impact on the delivery of supports or services
- > avoid giving, asking for or accepting inducements or gifts (this includes, but is not limited to: additional fees, money, goods, food, favours or services of any kind) that may influence decision-making and service provision
- > avoid giving, asking for, or accepting any inducements or gifts from other service providers or organisations in exchange for referrals, favourable decisions or any other market benefits, particularly where it might impact on the integrity of the information provided to support participant choice
- > not participating in or promoting sharp practices (unfair treatment or taking advantage of people) including providing services or expending funds contrary to a person with disability's approved plan
- > not engaging in high-pressure sales.

**Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with disability.** This includes:

- > demonstrating a positive commitment and attitude towards a culture where feedback, compliments and complaints are valued
- > supporting and assisting people to access our Feedback, Complaints and Resolution processes
- > providing a safe and respectful environment without fear of negative consequence for people to make a complaint
- > being alert to complaints and assisting staff handling complaints to resolve matters promptly
- > contributing to improvement suggestions to management where appropriate
- > implementing changes and continuous improvements as directed by management.

**Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against, and exploitation, neglect and abuse of the child including sexual misconduct.**

This includes:

- > not committing or participating in any form of violence, abuse, neglect, sexual misconduct and exploitation of children or people with disability
- > maintaining professional boundaries for relationships with the families of children who are AEIOU clients
- > taking appropriate steps within their sphere of control to avert such situations, and taking prompt action when a worker is suspected of engaging in these practices, including reporting to the NDIS Commission, the police, child protection health and safety authorities, or education standards boards of the relevant state.
- > be aware of, and abide by AEIOU complaint procedures, any State or Territory mandatory reporting requirements and fully cooperate with AEIOU and external body investigations of alleged incidents of violence, abuse, neglect, sexual misconduct and exploitation
- > contribute to the reduction and elimination of unreasonable restrictive practices
- > promptly taking steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to children in AEIOU's care
- > never threatening or taking adverse action against someone who proposes to make a complaint, has made a complaint or is involved in a reportable incident
- > complying with reasonable directions on the implementation of any changes to the way services are delivered to improve supports and services as a result of a complaint or incident
- > supporting family members so they feel safe to make a complaint without fear of retribution or loss of services (including facilitating access to independent advocacy support, or trauma support, if desired).



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## Business principles

Our third guiding principles are following all organisational policies and procedures, with specific attention to:

### Privacy and confidentiality

We respect the privacy of our colleagues, children, families and others with whom we provide service or conduct business and we handle their personal information with utmost care.

Personal information is any type of information that could potentially be used to identify someone, either directly or indirectly, such as name, employee identification number, children's progress notes, mobile number or email address.

The Privacy Act Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (Privacy Act) explains the type of information AEIOU may collect, why this information is needed, how it used, and how it is safeguarded. Our Privacy Notice Policy also describes AEIOU's processes, and explains how to make a complaint or provide feedback in regard to the management of private or personal information. For further information about privacy and confidentiality, please speak to your manager or AEIOU's Privacy Officer via [info@aeiou.org.au](mailto:info@aeiou.org.au).

### Work health and safety

At AEIOU, we look out for each other and follow safe work procedures in promoting a culture of wellbeing and safety. Every one of us are important, and together we have a responsibility to:

- > adhere to safety instructions
- > report all incidents and injuries immediately
- > meaningfully connect with your work colleagues and encourage those who may be struggling, to seek support through AEIOU's Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- > assist those you work with to follow health and safety procedures and instructions
- > ensure you are aware of the emergency evacuation procedures
- > complete all WHS training requirements
- > meet obligations to children's health and wellbeing.

AEIOU empowers every employee to take immediate action for safety regardless of role title or responsibility. If you see a situation that puts others and our children at risk, take action and report it immediately.



## Quality standards and continuous improvement

We demonstrate continuous improvement through our company value – Excellence. At AEIOU, we collaborate, respectfully challenge, explore and learn how we can improve on what we already do, every day.

AEIOU encourages all employees to meet or exceed our internal standards, in addition to the standards set by legislation, regulations and our industry.

## Quality, risk and compliance management system

AEIOU defines quality, risk and compliance as behaviours, actions or events that have the potential to impact our ability to provide service, deliver on our promise and achieve our vision and objectives. Our approach is embedded in our Quality Management Policy, and quality objectives, which include:

- > customer focus to meet our customer requirements and strive to exceed their expectations
- > leadership at all levels that establish unity of purpose and direction and create conditions in which people are engaged in achieving our objectives
- > engagement of our people so they are empowered and engaged at all levels throughout the organisation, which enhances our capability to create and deliver value

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- > process approach so we can deliver predictable results more effectively and efficiently because activities are understood and managed as interrelated processes that function as a coherent system
- > improvement focus which is ongoing
- > evidence-based decision making so that decisions produce desired results because they are based on the analysis and evaluation of meaningful data and information
- > relationship management so our successes can be sustained with relevant interested parties, such as families, children, key workers and teams around the child, funding providers and other suppliers or providers that are connected to us in some way.

We demonstrate our commitment to our quality system so that our processes enable us to be successful. We:

- > understand our purpose, vision, strategies and plans to achieve them
- > understand the needs and expectations of our interested parties
- > lead effective governance and organisational structure with clear roles, responsibilities and authorities
- > plan to address risks, opportunities and change
- > support our operations with resources, provide opportunities for learning and communicate with each other
- > create, review and control our documentation and ensure information is secure
- > focus on the needs and requirements of services to deliver what we say we will do, safely and with integrity and take steps to ensure we stay on track
- > reflect on our performance outcomes, evaluation and review how we do things to see if or how we can make things better
- > listen to feedback, compliments and are responsive to complaints or incidents
- > strive for customer satisfaction and improvement.

The AEIOU leadership team will, with their teams, work together to regularly review, identify and mitigate key service risks.

## Conflict of interest

All employees are responsible for disclosing any personal conflicts of interest to their direct manager. Disclosure of any relevant interests identifiable at the time of appointment to AEIOU that may be, or have the potential to be, or perceived to be, in conflict with the organisation, its business, or operations or services, must be disclosed, in writing, at the time of appointment to AEIOU (or as soon as practicable thereafter) and as they arise. Some examples include:

- > directly working with immediate family members
- > performing work for another organisation that is in direct competition with AEIOU
- > offering employment or entering into a contract for service with a family member.

## Fair treatment of employees

At AEIOU, we value an inclusive culture and workforce that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and vilification. We base employment practices on the Fair Work Act 2009 and merit, qualifications, skills and achievement. As an organisation, we do not tolerate inappropriate conduct that is based on discrimination, harassment and bullying. If any employee would like to guidance on staff grievances, please refer to PR06.12 Staff Grievances (including discrimination, harassment, bullying, sexual misconduct, victimisation).

