

**NORTHERN TERRITORY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOL
ORGANISATIONS INCORPORATED**

Member Code of Conduct

1. INTENT

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- All Affiliate and Associate Members.
- All Executive Members.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to:

- Outline the high standards of honesty, integrity, and ethical behaviour expected of Members in carrying out their responsibilities under the *Associations Act Northern Territory 2003* and NT COGSO Constitution.
 - Guide Members in maintaining the confidence of Members through ethical practices and adherence to their obligations.
-

3. REQUIREMENTS

Members must:

(a) Act with honesty and integrity:

- Be open and transparent in all dealings.
- Avoid situations that may create a conflict of interest.
- Declare any conflict of interest that arises.
- Strive to earn and retain the trust of Members.

(b) Act in good faith:

- Be accountable for their actions.
- Take responsibility for their decisions.
- Make decisions in the best interests of Members.
- Refrain from activities that could bring disrepute to themselves or the organisation.

(c) Act fairly and impartially:

- Avoid bias, discrimination, or self-interest.

- Treat others with respect, demonstrating professionalism and courtesy at all times.

(d) Use information appropriately:

- Ensure that information obtained during their duties is kept confidential and used solely for proper purposes.

(e) Use their position responsibly:

- Not use their position for personal gain or to benefit family Members or associates.
- Ensure no detriment is caused to the organisation.
- Refuse gifts or favours that may cast doubt on their impartiality.

(f) Act in a financially responsible manner:

- Monitor and participate during financial reporting.
- Be accountable for the organisation's resources used in fulfilling functions.

4. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Members must adhere to the following ethical principles:

- **Act in the best interest of all Members** and be guided by the organisation's objectives.
 - **Adhere to the roles and responsibilities** outlined in the *Associations Act Northern Territory 2003* and the NT COGSO Constitution.
 - **Respect the integrity** of each Member and treat all others with respect, fostering an environment that encourages diverse opinions.
 - **Promote a positive environment** where individual contributions are valued.
 - **Uphold democratic principles** and accept the consensus of the Full Council or Executive Committee.
 - **Respect the confidentiality** of Affiliate and Associate Member matters.
 - **Familiarise themselves with relevant policies** and act accordingly.
 - **Maintain the highest standards of integrity** and avoid disclosing confidential information.
 - **Limit discussions** at meetings to relevant matters affecting Members as a whole.
 - **Utilise proper communication channels** for concerns or questions.
 - **Declare any conflict of interest.**
 - **Refrain from accepting payments** or financial benefits related to NT COGSO involvement.
-

Part One: Respect and Integrity

Decision Making

Decisions must be fair, justifiable, and based on relevant information. They should consider the current and future needs of school communities, including academic, social, environmental, and economic factors, ensuring Members are not exposed to avoidable risks. All decisions should be clear and easily understood by affiliate Members.

Legislative Requirements

Members must comply with all legislative requirements, including those related to workplace relations, occupational health and safety, anti-discrimination, and freedom of information.

Protecting Confidentiality

Members must respect confidentiality, especially in sensitive matters concerning staff, students, or parents. Such discussions should remain within meetings.

Integrity in Practice

Members must act with openness and honesty, complying with legislative, industrial, and administrative requirements.

Reporting Misconduct

Members are held to a high standard of integrity, free from misconduct, corruption, or illegal activities. Any inappropriate behaviour should be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Internet and Email Use

Members should be aware that personal internet and email use may reflect on the organisation.

Intellectual Freedom

Members are free to engage in public debate and express opinions on education policy. However, only the President, or a nominee approved by the President, may speak publicly on behalf of NT COGSO.

Political Activity

Members are free to engage in political activity as part of their personal lives, but should be mindful that this could create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest with their responsibilities. In such cases, Members should consult with the President.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when the personal or financial interests of a Member appear to conflict with their duties. Members should remain vigilant for any actual or potential conflicts of interest and report them to the President immediately.

Merit and Equity

When recruiting, the Executive Committee Members must adhere to the merit principle, selecting candidates based on skills, experience, and personal qualities relevant to the role.

Part Two: Respect in Practice

Respect in Practice refers to how we treat others. Executive Members should always consider the impact of their actions and decisions.

Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity is a valuable asset, and the Executive must work inclusively, respecting the history, culture, and uniqueness of the various groups within our Members.

Discrimination

Members must not discriminate on the grounds of age, gender, race, disability, sexuality, marital status, pregnancy, or any other grounds covered by anti-discrimination legislation.

Environment

Members should respect and protect the environment in which they meet and work.

Equity

Equity involves fairness and justice, ensuring that each person's circumstances are considered to provide equal opportunities for all.

Privacy of Personal Information

Personal information must be kept private, and Members are expected to set high standards in handling personal data, meeting all legal obligations.

Part Four: Service to Community

Service to the Community involves consistently delivering the highest standard of service to Members.

Service Awareness

The Executive must share the work of NT COGSO with Members, aligning decisions with Full Council mandates and the organisation's strategic goals.

Complaints Handling

Complaints must be managed fairly and with respect, ensuring that Members receive a high standard of service and confidentiality.

Responsive, Timely, and Effective Services

Members should respond promptly and professionally to requests from Full Council and Regional Councils.

Breach of Code of Conduct

In the event of a breach of this Code of Conduct the Rules under the Constitution will apply.