



# Policy: Appropriate Workplace Behaviour

Version No.	Approval Date	Next Review Date	Document Owner	Authorising Group
10.0	May 2025	May 2028	GM People, Governance and Community (P&C)	ELT

## Review History

Version No.	Version Date	Summary of Changes	Author
1.0	October 2001	Initial Release	
2.0 – 7.0	2004 – 2016	Various Updates	CEO
8.0	November 2017	Updates as required by format & content	Chief People and Culture
9.0	February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replaces Code of Conduct</li> <li>Language structure simplified to improve comprehension of 'do' and 'do not' behaviours</li> <li>Clause system for easier reference</li> </ul>	People and Culture External Consultant (Kathy Sinclair)
10.0	May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>minor updates to formatting</li> <li>Review of Target Audience</li> <li>Minor updates</li> </ul>	EA to CEO Manager GQR Manager People and Culture

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## 1. Target Audience

All IPC Health Staff, including permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time, casual, and contract. All Visiting Practitioners, Volunteers and Community Members, Students and Researchers.

## 2. Definitions

Bullying	Repeated, unreasonable behaviour, directed towards a person or a group of people that creates a risk to health and safety, and includes behaviour by verbal, written, cyber or electronic means. Bullying behaviour may not be intentional.
Discrimination	<p>Discrimination is treating a person or group of people less favourably than another person or group because of an aspect of themselves which is protected by law. Discrimination may be direct or indirect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct discrimination occurs when you treat, or propose to treat, someone with a protected personal characteristic unfavourably because of that personal characteristic.</li> <li>- Indirect discrimination occurs when you impose an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that disadvantages a person or group because of a protected characteristic.</li> </ul> <p>Discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics is unlawful under the Equal Opportunity Act (Vic) 2010. If you engage in behaviour that constitutes discrimination, you not only put IPC Health at risk of liability, but also expose yourself to possible legal action.</p> <p>Characteristics protected by law are explained in more depth in the Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity Policy, and are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) age;</li> <li>b) breastfeeding;</li> <li>c) employment activity;</li> <li>d) gender identity;</li> <li>e) disability;</li> <li>f) industrial activity;</li> <li>g) lawful sexual activity;</li> <li>h) marital status;</li> <li>i) parental status or status as a carer;</li> <li>j) physical features;</li> <li>k) political belief or activity;</li> <li>l) pregnancy;</li> <li>m) race;</li> <li>n) religious belief or activity;</li> <li>o) sex;</li> <li>p) sexual orientation;</li> <li>q) (pa) an expunged homosexual conviction;</li> <li>r) personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes.</li> </ol>
Grooming	Grooming is when a person builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.
Sexual Harassment	Unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated, and which a reasonable person having regard to all the circumstances would have anticipated as likely to cause offence, humiliate or intimidate.

Sexual Assault	A range of unwanted sexual behaviours, which constitute a crime, whereby a person is forced, coerced or tricked into sexual acts without their consent, including when they have withdrawn their consent.
Stalking	Stalking involves a persistent course of conduct or actions by a person which are intended to maintain contact with or exercise power and control over another person.
Victimisation	Victimisation is any unfavourable treatment of a person who has been involved, directly or otherwise, with a complaint of any kind, including but not limited to complaints regarding harmful or unlawful behaviour.
Vilification	Vilification is any form of public conduct that that could incite or encourage hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule towards a person or group of people because of an attribute they possess (whether this is a protected attribute at law, or not).

### 3. Policy statement

IPC Health employs and develops a workforce characterised by collegiality, professionalism, flexibility and forward thinking. Our workforce is committed to providing and enabling the best possible care for our community. This informs the way we expect all staff members to perform their roles.

IPC Health is committed to providing an inclusive, respectful and safe workplace where staff are enabled to do their jobs well. Expectations of staff are set out clearly in this and other policies.

As an IPC Health staff member, you are expected to comply with:

- all relevant legislation, regulations, codes, standards and agreements;
- IPC Health’s policies, procedures and processes, including, but not limited to, this Policy; and
- your terms and conditions of employment.

The examples provided in each section of this Policy are intended as indicative, not comprehensive.

### 4. Policy principles

#### 4.1 Respect

1.1. When working with others, and while engaged in work-related activities such as conferences and work-sponsored social occasions, you must treat everyone including clients, other staff, and members of the IPC Health community with respect. You are expected to:

- Have regard for the rights and dignity of others at all times.
- Be courteous, honest and fair when dealing with others and when making decisions that impact others.
- Treat all people equitably, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, marital status, age, political conviction or other attributes as protected by law.
- Use appropriate language at all times.
- Respect, and seek as required, the professional opinions of colleagues in their areas of competence and acknowledge their contribution.

1.2. You are also expected to use respectful language towards others in any communications related to your employment, including conversations on social media. This requirement exists regardless of:

- whether or not the communication took place within working hours;
- whether or not the communication took place on IPC Health premises or using IPC Health equipment or networks; and
- whether or not you purport to speak on behalf of IPC Health.

## 4.2 Professionalism

1.1. You are expected to conduct yourself professionally at all times in your role at IPC Health. This means that you will:

- Dress in neat and clean attire appropriate to your work area at all times. Your dress and personal safety attire must be professional and respectful of diverse client cultural beliefs.
- Observe appropriate hygiene and personal presentation standards to facilitate comfort and safety.
- Attend work punctually in line with the requirements of your role.
- Carry out your duties with diligence and competence.
- Conduct yourself professionally in all interactions and when clients are within hearing of any conversation.
- Meet agreed performance standards following adequate training and complete any required staff training in a timely fashion.
- Continually endeavour to improve your performance.
- Conduct yourself appropriately and speak positively in a manner that is consistent with the organisation's philosophy, values and operations, when representing the organisation in public forums.
- Follow any reasonable direction given to you by your Manager with respect to your work.
- Protect the privacy of others and maintain appropriate confidentiality regarding personal and health information.

1.2. In order to uphold professionalism, you must not:

- Fail to notify your Manager of your inability to attend work or complete assigned work in a timely manner.
- Inappropriately disclose confidential or private information that you can access as part of your role.
- Fail to notify your Manager of any existing or emerging situation that may affect your eligibility or ability to carry out the inherent requirements of your job e.g. relevant injury or condition, use of a substance, use of medication, relevant arrest or criminal conviction etc.
- Engage in unreasonable use of the internet, make or take personal calls, or attend to personal matters that impacts on service delivery.
- Conduct personal calls in areas where there is potential for clients to overhear conversations.

## 4.3 Honesty and Integrity

1.1. You are expected to behave honestly and with integrity at all times. This means that you will:

- Behave ethically and take action to prevent unethical practices.
- Conduct all financial transactions involving IPC Health funds to which you are a party with transparency and integrity.
- Report suspected breaches of integrity by others where these may occur.
- Maintain strict standards of integrity in respect to your own work, including, where relevant, respecting the privacy, confidentiality and intellectual property of others.
- Maintain the integrity and security of confidential documents or information in your possession, or for which you are responsible, in line with the Privacy and Confidentiality of Client Information Policy.

1.2. In order to behave with honesty and integrity, you must not:

- Make false or misleading statements to IPC Health during recruitment or during the course of your employment or fail to disclose a relevant matter.

- Accept gifts or favours that may be construed as influencing your decisions on behalf of IPC Health.
- Use your position to pursue or coerce personal, sexual or financial relationships with other staff, clients, or members of the IPC Health community.
- Defraud, or attempt to defraud, IPC Health in any way.
- Induce or attempt to induce another employee to act in a manner contrary to their employment obligations.
- Use confidential information gained through your position for the purpose of securing a private benefit for yourself or for any other person.
- Use confidential information with the intention to cause harm or detriment to IPC Health or any other person or body.
- Disclose any information discussed during a confidential session of an IPC Health meeting.

#### 4.4 Conflict of Interest

1.1. You must take reasonable steps to avoid any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest and act in the best interests of IPC Health. You are expected to:

- At all times, perform your duties in the interests of achieving IPC Health's mission and strategic objectives.
- Disclose actual and/or potential conflict of interest and agree on a mitigation strategy with your Manager, which may include withdrawing yourself from the situation giving rise to the conflict.
- Declare all private paid outside work, including directorships and board memberships.
- Declare all commercial, personal or familial relationships that may constitute an actual or potential conflict of interest.
- Only accept gifts, benefits and hospitality in accordance with the protocols established in the Conflict of Interest Procedure, and declare all gifts received. Where any doubt exists regarding the acceptance of any gift, advice should be obtained from your Manager.
- Build and maintain a relationship of trust with clients, which respects the inherent power imbalance in the relationship and is mindful of the inevitable conflict of interest that is created when the relationship crosses inappropriate boundaries.

1.2. In order to avoid negative impact from a conflict of interest, you must not:

- Accept cash gifts from a client, agent, contractor or supplier to the organisation, at any time or for any reason.
- In most instances, accept non-cash gifts or benefits from a client, agent, contractor or supplier to the organisation (excluding promotional items or samples) as these may, or may be perceived to, influence you in your official capacity.
- There may be occasions when refusing a small gift would offend or upset the giver. On these occasions you should:
  - Indicate that you are accepting the gift on behalf of the other members of your team; and
  - Report the receipt of the gift to your Manager to determine how it may be best used.
- Enter into financial transactions of a personal or commercial undertaking with clients.
- Engage in any behaviours or actions that may damage the trust relationship with a client. In particular, you must not engage in a personal relationship with a client during the course of your professional relationship with them. Various professional boards set standards of behaviour for health professionals in their relationships with clients. These standards apply during the course of the professional relationship and, in many instances, continue once that relationship has ceased.
- Solicit or accept outside work within the area of professional expertise for which IPC Health employs you, without declaring this to your Manager.

- Directly or indirectly use IPC Health funds, resources or assets to engage in any external work activity that undermines your work performance or increases cost to IPC Health.
- Unreasonably use IPC Health's resources to benefit a third party without prior written authority of the organisation, an example is using IPC Health materials to print promotional brochures for your private practice business.
- Treat, manage, assess the performance of, or supervise a person with whom you have, or have had, a close personal or familial relationship (including a sexual relationship) unless you have declared the connection and received permission to do so.

## 4.5 Health and Safety

1.1. You must at all times prioritise the health and safety of all members of the IPC Health community. This means you must:

- Comply with occupational health and safety legislation and IPC Health's health and safety policies and procedures.
- Ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that best practice occupational health and safety processes are adopted in all your IPC Health activities.
- Take care not to put yourself or others in the IPC Health community at risk through unsafe practices.
- If you observe a hazard that may create a health and safety risk, take appropriate steps to mitigate or report the hazard.
- Inform your Manager of any injury or health issues that may affect your ability to carry out the inherent requirements of your job. This includes informing your Manager if you are taking medication that could affect your performance or the safety of yourself or others, to ensure any necessary precautions or adjustments to work can be put in place.

1.2. In order to protect the health and safety of yourself and other members of the IPC Health community, you must not:

- Arrive for work impaired by alcohol or illegal drugs or become impaired by the use of any substance (including through the use of prescription medication) whilst at work.
- Consume alcohol or illegal drugs while working. This does not include partaking in alcohol consumption within moderation during approved conferences or events.
- Fail to declare a medical condition or immunisation status that may impact on your employment.
- Fail to observe any safety protocols that apply to your work area.
- Fail to obey the directions of any designated Chief Wardens in an emergency or emergency drill situation.
- Fail to properly use any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) issued to you.
- Engage in IPC Health activities while impaired by any substance.

## 4.6 Personal Conduct

1.1. IPC Health is committed to preventing harmful and unlawful personal behaviours (such as bullying, discrimination, sexual or other harassment, vilification, victimisation and child safety breaches) in the workplace. Any incident of these behaviours will not be tolerated, condoned or ignored.

1.2. In addition to inducing workplace disciplinary action, sexual assault, some forms of sexual harassment, serious workplace bullying, and occupational violence (assault) are all crimes. Engaging in this conduct may render you personally liable for both criminal and civil law consequences.

1.3. You are expected to:

- Treat other people reasonably, fairly and appropriately at all times in your role at IPC Health.

- Take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying, discrimination, sexual or other harassment, vilification and victimisation.
- Identify harmful behaviours and, where appropriate, use IPC Health or external mechanisms to stop any further incidences of this behaviour.
- Report or discuss harmful behaviour.
- Behave in accordance with the principles expressed in the Diversity, and Equal Opportunity Policy.
- Encourage those who have experienced any form of harmful or inappropriate behaviour to use internal or external mechanisms to address the behaviours.
- Participate in workplace training that addresses the prevention of bullying and inappropriate behaviours.
- Cooperate with workplace investigations into allegations of harmful or unlawful behaviours.

1.4. Managers are additionally expected to:

- Identify, prevent and eliminate harmful behaviours in the workplace to the fullest extent possible.
- Encourage all employees to behave in accordance with IPC Health values and the principles expressed in the Diversity and Equal Opportunity Policy.
- Provide leadership and role modelling in relation to appropriate and professional behaviour in the workplace.
- Provide information, training and induction into appropriate behaviour.
- Investigate and respond promptly and sensitively to all situations where harmful behaviour is exhibited or alleged to have occurred, in accordance with the mechanisms outlined in the Harmful and Unlawful Behaviours Procedure.

1.5. At no time may any IPC Health employee:

- Bully others.
- Sexually harass or assault others.
- Physically or verbally harass or assault others.
- Behave in discriminatory ways with respect to attributes protected by law.
- Commit or threaten any acts of violence.
- Act aggressively or in an intimidating manner to others.
- Speak loudly and aggressively to others.
- Victimise others.
- Vilify anyone.
- Stalk, or assist another person to stalk, anyone.
- Make a false claim of any of these behaviours against another person.

## 4.7 Obligations to Children

- 1.1. IPC Health's Child Safe Policy sets the minimum expected conduct for engaging in child-related work including holding a valid Working With Children Check at all times as required by your role.
- 1.2. IPC Health is committed to zero tolerance of child abuse and will take all concerns and allegations of abuse and safety concerns very seriously.
- 1.3. You are expected to act appropriately at all times when dealing with children and young people under the age of 18. This means that you must:
  - Remain committed to the safety and well-being of all children accessing our services and ensure that at all times, the welfare of children in our care will always be given a high priority.
  - Be familiar with, and abide by, all expectations laid out in the Child Safe Policy.

- Maintain a current Working With Children Check.
- Understand and follow all reporting requirements if you have a reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse.
- Take steps to minimise any exposure to harm for children and young people.
- Create and support an environment where it is safe for children to express their cultural, religious, gender and sexual identity.

1.4. You must not at any time:

- Engage in any behaviour with a child which constitutes abuse, including verbal abuse.
- Ignore or minimise an account of abuse by a child.
- Commit or coerce another person to commit an act or acts of grooming or online grooming.
- Possess, control, produce, distribute, obtain or transmit child exploitation material.
- Develop inappropriate or 'special' relationships with children in your care
- Have personal/ online contact with a child or their family outside of a valid organisational context, unless transparent to the organisation and part of an approved program.
- Discriminate against or denigrate any child because of their age, gender, gender identity, race, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or disability
- Question a child's self-identification or self-expression related to their gender, race, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or disability.
- Express inappropriate or disrespectful personal views on cultures, ethnicity, sexuality or disability in the presence of children.

## 4.8 Resource and Media Use

1.1. You are expected to use all IPC Health resources, including Information Communication & Technology (ICT) resources, appropriately and avoid waste where possible. This means you must:

- Safeguard, properly use, protect and care for IPC Health resources at all times.
- Comply with the organisation's Information Communication & Technology (ICT) Policies Use IPC Health resources only for IPC Health business (occasional reasonable personal use is permitted)

1.2. To ensure IPC Health resources are not misused, you must not:

- Steal or intentionally damage equipment, stock, cash, files or other property belonging to IPC Health.
- Use any IPC Health owned or managed resources to engage in any activity that is illegal under state, federal or international law.
- Use any IPC Health owned or managed resource for the purpose of creating, accessing or transmitting or otherwise dealing with content which may reasonably be regarded as objectionable, obscene or offensive, or may otherwise expose IPC Health to legal liability.
- Unreasonably use IPC Health IT facilities and services for your own private gain, unless you have been given specific permission to do so.

1.3. When using social media, including personal social media accounts that contain content which means they can reasonably be associated with your employment status at IPC Health (even if you do not identify this in your profile), you must:

- At all times, behave in a way that upholds the integrity and good reputation of IPC Health.
- Behave appropriately, lawfully and respectfully to others.

1.4. When using social media or otherwise engaging in public discussion, you must not:

- Make statements on social media or other forums in which you claim to speak on behalf of IPC Health, or could be construed as speaking on behalf of IPC Health, unless it is your job to do so or you are authorised to do so.
- Post comments or images that are, or could be perceived to be unreasonable criticisms of IPC Health's clients or other stakeholders
- Disclose confidential client information or internal policies, procedures and other operational information not available via public sources
- Disparage the organisation's employees, customers and other stakeholders

## **5. Associated frameworks, policies, procedures and guidelines**

Harmful and Unlawful Behaviours Procedure  
Conflict of Interest Procedure  
Gifts and Benefits Policy and Procedure  
Diversity Policy  
Equal Opportunity Policy  
Performance and Development Policy  
Discipline Procedure  
Child Safe Policy  
Social Media Policy  
ICT Governance Policy  
ICT Hardware, Software & Business Systems  
ICT Knowledge & Information Management  
ICT Usage of Assets and Emerging Trends Policy  
Occupational Health and Safety Policy  
Fraud and Corruption Policy and Procedure

## **6. Associated standards**

Child Safe Standards (Victoria)

## **7. Associated legislation**

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)  
Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)  
Fair Work Regulations 2009  
Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)  
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)