

Code of Conduct



Our Purpose

a different brilliant® - understanding, engaging and celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum

Our Vision

The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum

Our Mission

We work with people of all ages on the autism spectrum, delivering evidence-informed solutions that are person-centred, family-focused & customer-driven

Our Values

We are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible

Our Work

We focus on the *strengths and interests* of people on the spectrum

We work in *partnership* with people on the spectrum, their families and their communities

We work to *understand* people on the spectrum from their perspective

Our approach is *autism-specific*

Our *research* focuses on *best practice*

We expect *positive change and progress*

Together we can achieve *positive outcomes*



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Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is Australia’s largest autism-specific service provider, with one of the biggest autism-specific school programs in the world. A not for profit organisation, we work in partnership with people of all ages on the autism spectrum, and their families to deliver evidence informed solutions that are person centred, family focused and customer driven.

Living Aspect's Values

People	Positive	Possible
• People come first	• We are optimistic	• We aspire to greater things
• We value working together	• We focus on strengths	• We encourage people to dream
• We celebrate diversity	• We have a can-do attitude	• We seek opportunities
• We revel in uniqueness	• We are encouraging	• We are future focused

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work. In the spirit of reconciliation we honour these Custodians, and pay respect to their Elders past, present and future.

Introduction

Aspect's success depends on many factors. One of the most important is the commitment of staff to Aspect's purpose, vision, mission, values and the Staff Code of Conduct that guides the behaviour of staff at work.

This Code of Conduct is an important tool to help you:

- conduct yourself both personally and professionally in a manner that upholds Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) values and reputation;
- act ethically, legally and responsibly; and
- be accountable for your actions.

The Code answers many common questions and tells you how to find more information and help. However, it does not cover every possible situation. Staff should seek guidance when they are in doubt about what to do in a given situation. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each staff member to “do the right thing”. This is something that cannot be delegated to others.

Our goal at Aspect is to go beyond formal policies and procedures so each of us takes ownership of our vision, mission, values and this Code.

We must be open to challenges about what we do in order to become the person-centred, family-focused, and customer-driven organisation we want to be, which puts the people we work with at the centre of everything we do.

We must be willing to speak up about changes we think will improve the Code, and about any behaviour that might breach the Code, even if it involves a manager.

Below: 'Connections' by artist Maria Watson-Trudgett



Who the Code applies to

This Code applies to all Aspect staff, including employees, regular or long term contractors and consultants, agency staff, volunteers and students undertaking work or professional experience.

Staff may work or otherwise be engaged with Aspect on a full time, part time, permanent, temporary or casual basis.

How the Code applies

This Code is intended to be consistent with all applicable laws and legal obligations of the states and territories Aspect works in, including industrial agreements.

In the event of any inconsistency between this Code and any applicable law or legal obligation, we will comply first with the law or legal obligation.

If you believe there are any inconsistencies in the Code or between the Code and the law, consult Aspect People who will consult with Aspect's lawyers if necessary.

In addition to this Code, it is your responsibility to be familiar with legal requirements, standards, Aspect's policies, procedures, work instructions, practices and guidelines that may be applicable to your role and the key policies referred to in this Code.

What is expected of you

All staff are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the Code and the key policies to which it refers. To assist with this all staff are required to complete the Code of Conduct online module within three months of commencing employment with Aspect, and a refresher module at least every two years or earlier in the event there are significant modifications. Except where the provisions of this Code are superseded by local laws or legal obligations, an employee who breaches this Code may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment, as well as civil or criminal charges.

Definitions used in this Code

In this Code:

"Function" refers to any occasion organised by Aspect or held in Aspect's name and may include but is not limited to dances, parties, farewells, excursions, sporting events or fixtures, cultural events and fundraising events.

"Manager" refers to any person holding a position which requires them to supervise or lead other staff; manage resources and assets; or hold a position of influence.

“Mandatory reporting” refers to the legal requirement to report suspected cases of harm, risk of harm, abuse and neglect to children and young people. The people mandated to report and the reportable abuse types varies depending on the state or territory.

“Reportable conduct” categories includes:

- any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with, or in the presence of, a child (including a child pornography offence) or adult with a disability
- any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child or adult with a disability
- any behaviour that causes emotional and/or psychological harm to a child or adult with a disability, whether or not the child consents
- failure to report or failure to protect.

“Reportable conduct” does not extend to:

- conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of the discipline, management or care of children, having regard to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the children and to any relevant codes of conduct or professional standards; or
- conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of the management, care or safeguarding of adults, having regard to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the adult and to any relevant codes of conduct or professional standards; or
- the use of physical force that, in all the circumstances is trivial or negligible, but only if the matter is to be investigated and the result of the investigation recorded under workplace employment procedures; or
- conduct that is exempted from notification by a Class or Kind Agreement.¹

“Staff” includes employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants, agents, and students undertaking work or professional experience.

“Students/ participants” refers to students attending an Aspect school and people who use Aspect services, including children, young people and adults; as well as the parents, guardians, families and persons responsible for them.

“Will” or “must” indicates that an obligation or behaviour specified in this Code is mandatory and must be complied with.

Where to find more information

Aspect’s policies and procedures are available on Aspect’s intranet. New staff are introduced to the most important policies and procedures during their induction. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly so it is important for staff to be aware of the most current versions.

¹ Class or Kind determinations, established under the Ombudsman Act allows for exemptions to notify certain reportable allegations to the Office of the Children’s Guardian. For specific information or advice refer to the Office of the Children’s Guardian.

1. Respect others

Aspect is committed to providing a respectful workplace where everyone is treated with dignity, respect, honesty and sensitivity.

Aspect staff must be respectful, professional and polite in all interactions.

Our work is governed by legislation and policies which includes (but is not limited to) Fair Work Act 2009 and all relevant state legislation relating to Work Health and Safety. Staff must also observe Aspect policies [Working at Aspect, Embracing Diversity and Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback](#) and related procedures.

Communicating professionally

All communications, written or verbal, electronic or non-electronic, must be prepared responsibly and professionally. This includes correspondence, phone conversations, e-mails, instant messages, voice mail, file notes and other informal notes or communications.

What you must do

- Be respectful, professional and polite in all communications.
- Ensure any information you communicate about Aspect, its services or Aspect students/ participants is accurate.

Comply with Aspect's [Privacy of Information and Data](#) policy and this Code in relation to privacy, confidentiality and intellectual property.

- Protect Aspect's reputation in your communications.

Refer also to [Chapter 8. Use technology responsibly](#), in this Code.

Note: If you receive any enquiries from traditional media (such as television or newspaper), you must refer them to the Aspect Communications team and not provide responses yourself. You can check what information is in the public domain by checking the Aspect website and newsletters and by consulting with Aspect's Communications team. Please refer to Aspect's [Media Procedure for Staff](#).

Respectful workplace

Aspect staff must not discriminate against harass or bully anyone, for any reason.

What you must do

If you believe you are being unlawfully discriminated against, harassed or bullied or have knowledge that another staff member, or student/ participant has been, you should:

- a) ask the person to stop or make it clear that you find the behaviour offensive or unwelcome if you feel comfortable and safe to do so. It may be useful to speak with your manager or Human Resources in the first instance to seek guidance on how to do this; or
- b) raise the issue as soon as possible with your manager, your manager's manager or Human Resources (as appropriate) in accordance with Aspect's [Managing Employee Grievances](#) procedure.

Aspect takes reports of unlawful discrimination and harassment or bullying seriously and will take appropriate disciplinary action if such conduct is found to have occurred, which may include dismissal. Please refer to Aspect's [Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Prevention in the Workplace](#) procedure.

Malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations of workplace harassment, bullying or discrimination that are unfounded, will constitute a disciplinary offence that could lead to dismissal. Refer also to [Raising Concerns and Giving Feedback](#) at the end of this Code.



2. Act professionally

Aspect staff have a responsibility to meet high standards of professional and ethical behaviour. They must establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students/ participants and always treat them with respect.

Aspect staff are required to observe and comply with legislation, industry standards, Aspect policies and best practice protocols in supporting and caring for the people who use Aspect services.

Our work is governed by Aspect policies

Safeguarding the People We Support, Positive

Behaviour Support, Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk, Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback,

Aspect Comprehensive Approach, Embracing Diversity and the related procedures and legislation.

Staff must familiarise themselves with these important references. If at any time you are not clear on the direction or actions to take, consult your manager.

What you must do

- Exercise caution to ensure any physical contact you need to have as part of the teaching, learning, supporting or providing other services is appropriate and acceptable.
- Demonstrate care and discretion when providing personal care and toileting assistance in accordance with a person's Individual Support Plan or Individual Education Plan. For example, it may be appropriate to leave a door open. See *Personal Care* procedure.
- Take care at all times to use appropriate language when speaking with students/ participants. You must always treat them with respect, dignity and without favouritism. Sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments are not acceptable.
- Do not behave in a rude or insulting manner towards students/participants. This behaviour may include verbal and non-verbal aggression; abusive, threatening, intimidating or derogatory language; physical harm or intimidation. Staff will also not use information and communication technologies such as email, mobile phones, text or instant messaging, blogs, social media sites and other websites, to engage in this type of behaviour. See *Using Email, Using the Internet* and *Social Media* procedures.
- Do not engage in any form of conduct of a sexual nature with a student/ participant. This includes conduct which is direct, such as face-to-face, or indirect, such as text, email or social media.

Professional relationships

Staff working with students/ participants hold positions of trust. This trust comes from the nature of the work Aspect does and their professional responsibilities. Relationships with students and other people who use Aspect services must be always be professional and open to scrutiny, rather than personal in nature and intention.

Staff must not, under any circumstances, engage in intimate or sexual relationships with a student or a person who uses an Aspect service regardless of the age of the student/ participant; whether the relationship is heterosexual or homosexual; consensual or non-consensual; or condoned by parents, guardians, carers or family members.

You are reminded that the law prohibits:

- sexual relations with a person under the age of consent (as prescribed by the relevant state/ territory legislation)
- sexual relations between a teacher and a student under the age of 18 years.

You must inform your manager if:

- you have a personal relationship with an Aspect student/ participant, such as a family relationship or close friendship, so any conflict of interest or potential conflict can be managed carefully.
- someone you support is being overly familiar and seeking to establish a personal relationship with you, so that a plan can be developed to manage the situation effectively and sensitively.

You should be aware of, and sensitive to, students/ participants who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people or who are from culturally diverse backgrounds where cultural practices may influence the interpretation of behaviour.

Other actions that may compromise or breach your professional relationships

The following actions may result in your professional relationship being compromised or breached. Accordingly, staff must not:

- invite students or people who use our services to your home or visit a student/ participant at their home, unless it is a scheduled and authorised service;
- attend parties or socialise with students/ participants unless it is work related or you have the express permission of your manager and of the student or person's parents, guardians, carers or families (where applicable);
- privately tutor, coach or babysit students without the express permission of your manager;
- use electronic or internet based social media platforms or online forums to communicate or otherwise connect, with students/ participants or their families, without the express permission of your manager;
- give gifts to students/ participants. You should also carefully consider your position before accepting any gift (see 7. Demonstrate personal and business integrity of this Code).

Reporting

The first step is to report to the relevant statutory authority in accordance with statutory obligations and/or Police and immediately following this, advise your manager of your Report/ concerns about another staff member engaging in reportable conduct or any allegation of reportable conduct made

to them. This includes self-disclosure if the allegation involves you (see Definitions used in this Code for definition of “reportable conduct”). Refer to [Raising concerns and Giving Feedback](#) at the end of this Code.

Aspect is a child safe organisation committed to protecting the rights and interests of children and vulnerable people by providing them with a safe environment.

3. Safeguard the people we support

Aspect staff must consider the safety, protection and wellbeing of all students/ participants of fundamental importance. They must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm and promote wellbeing of all individuals in Aspect services and provide assistance if someone is harmed.

Aspect staff must raise any concerns about harm, risk of harm, abuse or neglect of students/ participants with the relevant statutory authority and following this their manager. Aspect’s Safeguarding the People we Support and [Positive Behaviour Support](#) policies and related procedures provide guidance on decision making in this area.

What you must do

- Treat all students/ participants with respect.
- Be familiar with and observe each student/ participant’s individual behaviour support plan.
- Never impose physical punishments or other prohibited practices in the course of your professional responsibilities.
- Actively participate in training and development activities that provide knowledge and skills to support the safeguarding of the people we support.
- Work with students/ participants to develop skills, understanding and communication systems which will empower them to maintain personal safety; and enable them to communicate things that may be happening to them.

Reporting concerns

If you have witnessed, been informed, have concerns or suspect that harm, risk of harm, abuse or neglect of a student/ participant has occurred you must:

- ensure the immediate safety and welfare of the individual, including any necessary action to isolate the perpetrator from the individual. See [Response to Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation](#) procedure with particular reference to the [Safeguarding or Mandatory Reporting Concern Escalation Flowchart](#);
- raise any concerns about harm, risk of harm, abuse or neglect of students/participants with the relevant statutory authority and following this their manager;
- keep a detailed record of the concern and your actions in RiskMan or an approved Aspect Incident Report form for future reference in the event of an investigation.

4. Balance Duty of Care with Dignity of Risk

Dignity of Risk promotes each person's autonomy and self-determination to make their own choices, including the choice to take some risks in life. All people are entitled to experience and learn from life situations even if, on occasions, they may experience a degree of risk to their wellbeing.

Aspect staff have a responsibility to recognise the rights of the people we support to make informed choices and take calculated risks.

Aspect staff also have an obligation, or duty of care, to take reasonable care to avoid injury to a person when it can be reasonably foreseen that the person might be injured by an act, or omission.

Aspect's *Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk, Positive Behaviour Support, Safeguarding the People we Support, Aspect Comprehensive Approach* and *Working at Aspect* policies and related procedures guide your decision-making when negotiating the balance between your duty of care and a person's dignity of risk.

What you must do

- Encourage and support students/ participants to make the most of opportunities and activities in their local community and in the wider community that are aligned with their individual learning outcomes, personal goals or aspirations.
- Provide students/ participants with information in a format that facilitates understanding to enhance and assist with decisions and choices that suit the individual's development and maintenance of their personal, gender, sexual, cultural, religious and spiritual identity.
- Involve family members and significant people in decision-making, as appropriate. See *Supported Decision Making* procedure.
- Adhere to an individual's behaviour support plan and Aspect procedures such as *Individual Planning and Review, Restrictive and Prohibited Practices in Aspect Therapy, Adult Community Services (AACS) Aspect Employment (AE) and Aspect Support Coordination (ASC)* and *Restrictive and Prohibited Practices in Aspect Education*.
- Ensure people you support are not subjected to unlawful practices including wrongful imprisonment, assault, use of a prohibited practice or inappropriate application of a restrictive practice.

Important note: Aspect is required to report allegations of unlawful practice to the police. In some jurisdictions, individual staff can be charged by the police if they have engaged in unlawful practice.

- Speak with your supervisor or manager if, at any time, you are unsure about a student/ participant's choices and your duty of care.



5. Respect privacy and confidentiality

Aspect staff should always be guided by Aspect's [Privacy of Personal Information and Data](#) and [Safeguarding the People we Support](#) policies and exercise caution and sound judgment in handling and discussing personal information, even with other Aspect staff. This includes any information or data, written or verbal, electronic or non-electronic, formal or informal, used in any file notes, correspondence, emails, phone or face-to-face conversations, or meetings.

Aspect staff have an obligation to keep confidential the personal information of staff, students and other people who use our services.

What you must do

Personal information

Aspect staff have an obligation to:

be aware of and follow Aspect procedures [Privacy of Personal Information in Service Delivery](#); [Maintaining Privacy of Aspect Supporters and Members](#); and [Maintaining Privacy of Aspect Staff](#), where applicable;

- maintain privacy and only provide personal and confidential information to those who are authorised to have access to it, unless disclosure is required by law. Normally, disclosure of information should be limited to those who need to know in order to conduct their duties or those who can assist in carrying out Aspect's work because of their expertise;
- only use personal information for the purpose it was collected unless permission has been sought from the person concerned;
- store confidential information securely, electronically on Aspect's IT network drives or in hard copy files, to prevent unauthorised access;

take all reasonable care to protect data and information relating to student/ participants and alert your manager immediately if you become aware of or suspect any breach of data security (see [Privacy Incidents and Notifiable Data Breaches](#) procedure); and

- consult your manager if you are unsure about the disclosure of information.

Note: You cannot provide a guarantee of confidentiality in cases of mandatory reporting (refer to Aspect's [Mandatory Sharing of Personal Information](#) instruction).

Record keeping

Aspect staff have a responsibility to:

- be aware of and follow Aspect's [Records Storage and Archive Management](#) procedure;

- create and maintain full, accurate, up-to-date and honest records of their activities, decisions and other business transactions;
- capture or store records in Aspect's record systems;
- not destroy or remove records without appropriate authority; and
- maintain the confidentiality of all official information and documents which are not publicly available or which have not been published, and treat all matters discussed in staff meetings and staff communications confidentially.

Managers have a responsibility to ensure that the staff reporting to them comply with their record management obligations.

Respecting rights of inquiry, consultation and information

Aspect staff must establish relationships with parents, guardians, carers and families based on courtesy, mutual trust and open communication, and actively consider their perspectives regarding the needs and aspirations of their family member. Parents, guardians, carers or families may make inquiries or seek information about their family member. Aspect staff need to exercise sensitivity and discretion when responding to requests for information (See Aspect's [Request to Access or Correct Personal Information](#) instruction)

Aspect staff have a responsibility to:

- be mindful of the confidentiality of the information you hold;
- comply with the rights to privacy of adults who use Aspect services;
- consider the legal rights and interests with respect to differing family structures;
- use professional honesty and discretion when presenting facts about the development of children or of the people Aspect supports;
- help parents, guardians, carers and families to understand relevant Aspect policies, procedures and requirements that may affect the people Aspect is supporting and them.



6. Take care and be safe

Aspect has an obligation to provide safe work sites and working environments.

All Aspect staff must be familiar with Aspect's *Working at Aspect, Safeguarding the People we Support* and *Duty of Care, Dignity of Risk* policies and related procedures, in particular all Work Health and Safety procedures

Aspect staff have a responsibility to take care of their own health and safety, as well as that of others, at work under Work Health and Safety legislation.

What you must do

Aspect staff have a duty of care to students / participants and to other staff. That duty is to take all reasonable steps to protect them from harm that can be reasonably anticipated. It is important that in doing so, staff do not put themselves at risk and always consider their own safety.

It is everyone's responsibility to:

- be punctual and ensure you are attending to your supervisory responsibilities to students and other people using Aspect's services;
- provide adequate supervision commensurate with the maturity and ability of the students/ participants in your charge;
- provide assistance, as appropriate, to a student/ participant or other person who is injured or becomes sick at school or when participating in an Aspect service;
- immediately report to the relevant statutory authority;
- report any incident, accident or emergency situation to your manager as soon as practically possible (refer also to Aspect's *Incidents procedure*) and enter into RiskMan or fill out an Aspect approved incident report;
- report any unsafe conditions, hazards or incidents that come to your attention to help ensure premises, grounds and equipment are safe for students/ participants and staff;
- understand and comply with Aspect's procedure regarding the storage and administration of prescribed medication as set out in Aspect's *Medication Management procedure*;
- ensure your standards of dress and grooming are suitable and appropriate to the duties being undertaken; and
- be familiar with and comply with Aspect's evacuation procedures.



The duty of care applies during all activities and functions conducted or arranged by Aspect. Risks associated with any activity need to be assessed and managed before activities are undertaken. (refer also to [Chapter 3. Safeguard the people we support](#) and [Chapter 4. Balance Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk](#) in this Code)

Drugs, alcohol and tobacco

Staff are responsible for ensuring that their capacity to perform their duties is not impaired by the use of alcohol or drugs, including prescription medications, and the use of such substances does not put them or any other person at risk. You must notify your manager if you are aware that your work performance or conduct could be adversely affected as a result of the effect of a prescribed drug.

Aspect does not permit you to:

- attend work under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or restricted substances;
- smoke in any Aspect buildings, enclosed areas or on Aspect grounds. This includes all buildings, gardens, sports fields, cars and car parks unless it is a designated smoking area;
- supply, administer, purchase on behalf of or encourage the consumption of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs or restricted substances by students/participants; and
- supply or administer prescription or non-prescription drugs unless you are authorised to do so.

Exceptions may include if:

- the intake of alcohol, tobacco or tobacco products forms part of a consenting adult's (18 years and over) scheduled activity and is identified in that person's individual plan. In such cases, staff must continue to support informed decision-making and provide relevant duty of care in the circumstance; or
- the consumption of alcohol at a workplace function is approved by the appropriate manager. On such occasions, staff are required to moderate their consumption of alcohol and maintain professional behaviour and conduct in accordance with Aspect's policies procedures and this Code.

Please also refer to Aspect's [Drug, Alcohol and Smoke-free Environments](#) procedure.

Staff who are experiencing difficulties in relation to alcohol, tobacco or other drugs are encouraged to access Aspect's Employee Assistance Program for help or seek other assistance. The number for the EAP service is 1800 81 87 28. The website for EAP is www.accesseap.com.au.

7. Demonstrate personal and business integrity

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest arises when personal, social, financial or political interests or activities interfere with staff responsibilities to Aspect. Staff must refer to Aspect's *Financial Integrity* and *Working at Aspect* policies and related procedures, including *Management of Conflict of Interest* procedure, for guidance on perceived or potential conflicts of interest.

Aspect staff must avoid any activity that may result in a conflict of interest or a potential conflict and any activity that may give rise to the appearance of a conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest may involve financial or other material losses or benefits ("pecuniary interests") or favours, personal relationships and associations ("non-pecuniary interests").

A conflict of interest is not limited to your personal interests. Other sources of a conflict of interest may include the interests of members of your immediate family, relatives or friends where these interests are known; or of a business or activity that you may have an interest in.

What you must do

Aspect staff have a responsibility to:

- not take personal advantage of business opportunities or potential business opportunities that you learn about or develop in the course of your role as an Aspect staff member, whether this directly benefits you or any other person or business;
- not engage in any business transaction, such as the rental, purchase, sale, use or transfer of property or provision of service with Aspect, unless specifically permitted or approved as per the *Related Party Transactions* procedure. This also applies to family members of employees;
- not accept another role while employed by Aspect that gives rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest, such as one which interferes with or takes time away from your responsibilities to Aspect and/or competes with Aspect for referrals or business opportunities;
- not be in a position of making decisions about the recruitment, remuneration or employment of a family member with Aspect or have a family member reporting directly to them (refer to Aspect's *Recruitment* procedure in the event a family member of any staff member is being considered for a role);

Exceptions to this rule may occur where government-funded self-directed or individualised funding packages may permit the employment of family members who will be directed by a person who uses an Aspect service, in which case the conditions of the funding package will apply.

- not provide supports or services of a type that is outside your expertise or training, or that you are not qualified to provide.

Aspect staff have a responsibility to report:

- all relevant details to your manager or to Aspect Human Resources Team if you think that you may have a real, potential or perceived conflict of interest, and seek to resolve it in a mutually acceptable way.
- any situation where a colleague or a manager who has an identified conflict is unduly influencing you, or may be perceived as unduly influencing you.

Accepting Gifts

Accepting gifts and other benefits may have the potential to compromise your position by creating a sense of obligation and undermining your impartiality. It may also affect your reputation and that of Aspect and its staff. Refer to Aspect’s [Accepting or Refusing Donations or Gifts](#) work instruction

May be accepted if:	Should not be accepted if:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• it is legal and of a value of not more than AU\$50.• it is accepted on behalf of Aspect, such as prizes of significant monetary value.• it is acceptance has been approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• it is cash or cash equivalents (such as a voucher or store card).• it is worth more than AU\$50.• it is offered as a bribe or inducement to persuade you to act improperly.• it would embarrass Aspect if acceptance is disclosed publicly.

What you must do

While it may be appropriate to accept modest gifts, you should always consider the value and purpose of an offered gift or benefit before deciding whether to accept it (see guidelines below).

- Where accepting a gift or benefit is unacceptable, you should either politely refuse it or advise the contributor that you will accept it on Aspect’s behalf.
- If accepting on Aspect’s behalf, you should advise your manager who will determine how it should be treated and make a record of its receipt. Depending on the nature and value of the gift, it may be appropriate to record the gift in the Aspect asset register as a donation or other such record established for that purpose.

Security and proper use of Aspect property

Every member of staff with access to Aspect property or funds has a responsibility to manage these assets with integrity and to



avoid misuse. Fraud, theft, embezzlement or other improper means of diverting corporate assets is illegal and unethical. Preventing the theft, misuse or misappropriation of Aspect property by others should be a concern of every Aspect staff member. Staff should be familiar with Aspect's *Fraud and Corruption Prevention* procedure.

Copyright and intellectual property

Aspect's intellectual property, which includes ideas, creations, innovations and information, is highly valuable so it is important that Aspect staff respect and protect Aspect's intellectual property.

Copyright of the intellectual property that you or others create on behalf of Aspect, or that relates to our services, belongs to Aspect. This may apply even if the material was developed, in the course of your employment with Aspect, in your own time or at home. Staff should be familiar with Aspect's *Intellectual Property* procedure.

What you must do

- Not use Aspect's intellectual property, including copyright, for private purposes without obtaining written permission from your manager.
- Always seek advice from your manager about sharing or licensing Aspect's intellectual property as Aspect does not give away or assign its intellectual property without the approval of a member of the Executive.
- Protect the intellectual property of other parties by seeking permission and identifying ownership in any instance where third party materials are used.



8. Use technology responsibly

Aspect provides information technology and communications tools for staff, students/participants and people who use Aspect services for a range of educational, program and business related purposes. These resources must be used responsibly. Staff must refer to Aspect's [Working at Aspect](#) policy and related procedures

Aspect staff must exercise good judgment when using technology and follow the principles of ethical and professional behaviour.

Using Aspect's IT

What you must do

- respect and comply with the IT security systems and protocols in place across Aspect;
- not open files or follow links in emails that you were not expecting or are from unknown sources. Instead, ask the IT Team for advice;
- never use Aspect's facilities to view, upload, download or circulate any of the following materials:
 - sexually-related or pornographic messages or material;
 - violent or hate-related messages or material;
 - racist or other offensive messages aimed at a particular group or individual;
 - malicious, libelous or slanderous messages or material;
 - subversive or other messages or material related to illegal activities;
- messages that are offensive, harassing, discriminatory, defamatory, threatening, abusive or obscene; inappropriate or unethical content (see Aspect's [Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Prevention in the Workplace](#) procedure);
- report any situations you become aware of where IT and communication tools or social networking sites are used inappropriately.

Be aware that Aspect has the right to access and regularly monitor any Aspect-owned information technology and communication tools and the data contained within them. You should not have the same expectation of privacy as you might have with your personally owned IT equipment.

In the event of legal proceedings, understand that any electronic information contained within Aspect's IT systems, including emails, may form part of discovery and be admissible as evidence.

Staff should be familiar with Aspect procedures [Using the Internet](#), [Using Email](#), [Mobile Device Provision and Use](#), [Bring Your Own Smartphone - staff](#) and [Computer Hardware and Software Acquisition and Lifecycle Management](#).

Using Social Media

Aspect staff are encouraged to engage in social media but to use sound judgement when doing so. Please refer to the Aspect [Social Media](#) procedure to guide your decision making when engaging in social media in relation to your work at Aspect.

What you must do

In relation to social media you must:

- identify yourself as an Aspect staff member if you refer in any way to Aspect;
- make clear that any opinion you express about Aspect or its services is personal, and may not reflect the views of Aspect;
- not infer that you are authorised to speak on Aspect's behalf;
- alert the Aspect Communications team to any negative or disparaging posts about Aspect;
- not engage in social media conversation when the organisation is deemed to be in crisis;
- not use Aspect's logo or any trademarks Aspect may have; and
- comply with the social media platform's terms of use and endeavour to conform to the cultural and behavioural norms of the social media platform being used.

Be aware that you are personally accountable for any comments made through any social media platform or online forum relating to Aspect, its staff, students/participants or other people who use Aspect services and their families, even if those comments are made in private and using non-Aspect equipment. See also Aspect [Social Media](#) procedure and [Chapter 1. Respect others](#) in this Code.



Raising concerns and giving feedback

Aspect staff have a responsibility to raise concerns and give feedback about compliance or ethical behaviour.

If you are aware of, or suspect a possible breach of this Code, Aspect's policies or ethical behaviour, you have a responsibility to report that information to your manager, or another appropriate person, in good faith. Staff should be familiar with Aspect's *Working at Aspect, Safeguarding the People we Support, Quality Management Framework, Qualifying Disclosures – Whistleblowing procedure* and *Risk Management Framework* policies.

Who can you speak to?

Staff have several options for asking questions, raising concerns, getting guidance or reporting a possible breach of this Code. If, for any reason, you feel uncomfortable reporting issues to your manager or if you believe your manager has not appropriately addressed an issue, you have other options. You should talk to:

- a) your immediate manager;
- b) any member of management;
- c) a member of the Executive; or
- d) Aspect Human Resources.

If you are uncertain as to whether your own conduct is proper, ask for help from any of the people listed above.

What happens if you report an issue?

All reported concerns will be promptly investigated and Aspect will take corrective action if the investigation substantiates a breach, as per Aspect's *Managing Employee Grievances* and *Managing Unsatisfactory Performance and Conduct* procedures.

Staff are expected to cooperate fully with investigative efforts. This includes giving truthful, accurate and complete answers, even if those answers are uncomfortable or generate more questions. Investigations must be conducted by someone who is not involved in the concern. To the extent possible, confidentiality will be maintained, consistent with our legal and ethical responsibilities.

Aspect reserves the right to determine in its entirety the response to any breach of the Code.

Reporting and self-disclosure

You are required to report certain information to your manager about yourself or others that may impact on your eligibility to work with vulnerable people under Federal and State child protection and disability services legislation. You are required to inform your manager if:

- you are charged with or convicted of a serious offence, in Australia or overseas;
- you become the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order;
- you become aware of any fraudulent behaviour or any information that might affect Aspect's reputation;

- through your employment with Aspect, you become aware of a serious crime committed by another person (note that your manager may be required to inform the police);
- you become aware that a staff member has been charged with or convicted of an offence (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction) involving “reportable conduct”; or
- your Working with Children Check or NDIS Worker Screening check is suspended or cancelled
- you become the subject of allegations of “reportable conduct”, whether or not they relate to your employment with Aspect.

Teachers and some other staff have mandatory reporting obligations under child protection legislation in force in the state or territory in which they work. Staff should refer to Aspect’s [Prevention, Monitoring and Detection of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation](#) procedure for further information about these obligations.

Whistleblowing

For information on how you can make and how Aspect will deal with “qualifying disclosures” made in accordance with whistleblowing protection provisions go to the [Qualifying Disclosures – Whistleblowing](#) procedure on the intranet.

No retaliation

You will not be subject to embarrassment, retaliation, retribution or harassment if you report a suspected breach of Aspect’s legal or ethical responsibilities in good faith, or ask questions about these responsibilities.

“Good faith” does not mean that a reported concern must be correct, but it does require that you believe you are providing complete and truthful information when you report a concern or ask a question.

Making ethical decisions

It is not always easy to determine the ethical or right thing to do in a particular work situation. Situations may require interpretation to decide a fair and reasonable course of action.

Your manager or supervisor, any member of management, and the Aspect HR team are resources you can use for help in resolving issues. Staff are also encouraged to access Aspect’s Employee Assistance Program for free, private and confidential counselling. The number for the EAP service is 1800 818 728. The website for EAP is www.accesseap.com.au.



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