



Code of Conduct for Staff of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

1. Introduction

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB) has developed this Code of Conduct for its Staff. This Code of Conduct takes account of the implications of the Ethics of Public Office Act, 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act 2001.

2. Intent

The purpose of the Code is to provide guidance to the staff of WWETB in performing their duties.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the Code are:

- To set out an agreed set of ethical principles;
- To promote and maintain confidence and trust in the staff of WWETB;
- To promote the development and acceptance of ethical practices;
- To promote the highest legal, management and ethical standards in all the activities of WWETB;
- To promote compliance with good current management practice in all the activities of WWETB.

4. General Principles

It is the policy of WWETB to maintain a high reputation for ethical behaviour and fair dealing in the conduct of its business.

It is not possible to provide for every situation in the Code of Conduct. If the Chief Executive is concerned about the probity of any particular situation he/she must consult the Chairperson of the Board. A member of staff, other than the Chief Executive, who is concerned about the probity of any particular situation must consult the Chief Executive or Director of Organisation Support and Development.

5. Availability of the Code

WWETB will:

- make available this Code of Conduct, and a policy document on disclosure of interests, to all members of staff and will make all members of staff aware of its importance and availability;
- ensure that each staff member acknowledges the receipt and understanding of same;
- provide practical guidance and direction as required on such areas as gifts and entertainment and on other ethical considerations, which arise routinely.

6. Review

WWETB will review this Code of Conduct as appropriate. Any proposed revisions to this Code must be considered and approved at a meeting of the Board.

7. Breaches of the Code

Breaches of the Code of Conduct will be dealt with by the Chief Executive or by a delegated officer as appropriate. A breach of the code by the Chief Executive will be dealt with by the Chairperson of the Board. Breaches of the Code of Conduct will also be notified to the Chairperson and to the Comptroller and Auditor General, and may be notified to the Minister for Education and Skills with the annual accounts and report. WWETB's disciplinary procedures may be invoked, if appropriate.

8. Fundamental Principles

The core values that guide us in providing our services are:

1. Respect – We treat others as we would expect to be treated ourselves, we assume positive intent, consider everyone to be of value and treat all with courtesy;
2. Accountability – We take full ownership of the delivery of the delegated responsibilities of our roles and the collective responsibility of the immediate and wider team, with a view to achieving the highest professional standards;
3. Learner Focus – Our focus is on enabling our learners to maximise their potential;
4. Quality – We strive to deliver the highest standards with a view to maximising learner potential.

Members of staff of WWETB are required to observe the following fundamental principles, as set out under the following headings:

- a) Integrity;
- b) Information;
- c) Obligations;
- d) Loyalty;
- e) Fairness;
- f) Consideration for Work/External Environment

a) Integrity

In addition, members of staff of WWETB will:

- disclose outside employment/business or other interests which objectively would be considered to be in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of WWETB;
- disclose any pecuniary interest or other beneficial interest in, or material to, any contract, agreement or arrangement, or proposed contract, agreement or arrangement, as per Section 9(7) of the ETB Act, Schedule 3, Paragraph 12(1);
- not be involved in outside employment/business or other interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of WWETB;
- refrain from giving or receiving corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgement on business transactions;
- collaborate proactively, ethically and honestly with other educational institutions, commercial and other providers of research and advisory services;
- conduct purchasing activities of goods/services in accordance with public policy, good business practice, and WWETB's purchasing regulations;
- claim expenses only as appropriate to business needs and in accordance with good practice in the public sector generally;
- engage consultancy and other services in accordance with public policy guidelines and WWETB policies;
- ensure that WWETB's accounts/reports accurately reflect its performance and are not misleading or designed to be misleading;
- avoid the use of WWETB's resources or time for personal gain, for the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with the institutions or its activities;
- acquire information or business secrets by proper means only.

b) Information

Members of the staff of WWETB will:

- provide access to general information relating to its activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public;
- respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by WWETB, having regard to paragraph 13 of Schedule 3 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. Sensitive information would constitute material such as:
 - Personal information;
 - Information received in confidence by WWETB;
 - Any commercially sensitive information or other information sensitive to the reputation of WWETB;
 - Any other material, release of which might constitute an unlawful or unethical act.
- observe appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest;
- comply with all relevant statutory provisions (e.g. Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 to 2013);
- observe the strictest confidentiality in relation to all discussions and decisions taken at meetings of the Board and in WWETB;
- continue to observe the strictest confidentiality with regard to sensitive information and to discussions and decisions taken at meetings of the Board and in WWETB when employment in WWETB has ended.

c) Obligations

Members of staff of WWETB will:

- fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on WWETB by the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 and other relevant legislation;
- comply with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure;
- ensure controls are in place to prevent fraud and to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures in relation to levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure including expenses for business travel;
- co-operate with internal audit in the internal audit process;
- conform with procedures laid down by the Board in relation to conflict of interest situations and to confidentiality concerns;
- acknowledge the duty to conform to the highest standard of ethics.

d) Loyalty

- Members of staff of WWETB will acknowledge the responsibility to be loyal to WWETB and to be fully committed to all its activities while mindful that WWETB must at all times take into account the interests of its students and funders, including tax payers.

e) Fairness

Members of staff of WWETB will:

- comply with employment equality and equal status legislation;
- commit to fairness in all business dealings;
- value WWETB's students, staff, suppliers and customers, and treat all its students, staff suppliers and customers equally.

f) Work/External Environment

Members of staff of WWETB will:

- place the highest priority on ensuring the delivery of high quality education and training to all of its students and learners;
- promote the development of a culture of 'speaking up' whereby workers can raise concerns regarding serious wrongdoing in the workplace without fear of reprisal;
- place the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of its staff and students;
- ensure that community concerns are fully considered in WWETB's activities and operations;
- minimise any detrimental impact of the WWETB's operations on the environment.

[End of Code]