

Checklist for Code of Conduct

A good Code of Conduct should cover:

- In the introduction the values and core principles of the organisation
- The introduction should also state clearly who it applies to, when and how (e.g. applies to all employees, permanent staff, consultants, part-time staff, members of board, volunteers, etc.)
- The Code of Conduct should clearly state what is acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour from all employees with colleagues and partners
- Acceptable and non-acceptable communication (avoid racist/sexist jokes, offensive comments on someone's appearance, obscenities, vulgarity, sexual innuendo, etc.)
- Mention and describe non-discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, among others
- Acceptable and non-acceptable office relationships (friendships, family connections, etc.)
- It is also very important that the code of conduct is part of the contract for each new staff member in the appropriate local language(s) and that each new employee is briefed on it and asked to sign it
- The Code of Conduct should specify and explain clearly that there is a mechanism of complaint for breaches of the code and that breaches will be investigated and sanctioned appropriately
- Disciplinary rules and penalties should also be specified
- The Code of Conduct should refer to both internal and external mechanisms for reporting and dealing with misconduct, as well as other protection measures for victims
- The Code of Conduct should be kept up to date and reviewed every few years

Checklist for Reporting/Complaint Mechanism

- There should be a step-by-step guide for reporting and processing a complaint, available to all employees
- An organisation's discrimination and harassment policy should explain how to make a complaint and identify an initial contact person.
- Cases should be treated in a strictly confidential manner
- Complaints can be resolved informally or formally. The reporting mechanism should lay out a formal resolution process.
- There should always be two possibilities for contact point. One could be a supervisor. The alternative could be a human resources manager, or a manager from another division.
- The contact person should not be the same person who is responsible for investigating or making decisions about a complaint
- There should be an investigation of the claim
- The steps of the investigation should be detailed
- Disciplinary rules and penalties should be clearly specified
- There should be an appeal procedure in case of dissatisfaction with the result of the investigation
- For severe complaints, like sexual harassment or abuse, an external consultant could be hired to investigate the case or the competent authorities should be involved
- The staff responsible for the mechanism should be trained on different forms of harassment, the reporting mechanism, mediation practices, and the type of assistance they should provide

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- The reporting mechanism should mention forms of external support (Labour Law, institutions, specialised NGOs, etc.)
- It should consider the transfers and reassignments of the victim during or after investigation to make sure that they do not suffer retaliation because they have used the complaint mechanism
- Other measures to avoid retaliation should also be specified

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