

# Code of Conduct

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Policy reference (version)	Version 2.0
Responsible person	Chris Varney, Chief Enabling Officer

## Purpose

1. This Code of Conduct (**Code**) explains the values, purpose and standards that I CAN Network expects. Compliance with this code is mandatory.
2. The Code acts as a guide as to how those covered by the Code should behave at the workplace and in interactions with employees, colleagues, volunteers, stakeholders and the general public in relation to work-related matters. As the mentoring of children is a core part of I CAN Network's organisational effort, I CAN Network is focused on the safety of children in all that it does. The Code is to be read in conjunction with the [Child Safety Policy](#) and its procedures.
3. This Code is also to be read alongside all other I CAN Network policies, available in the **I CAN Network Induction Booklet**.
4. This Code is also to be read in conjunction with applicable Commonwealth legislation, including the Disability Services and Inclusion (Complaints and Incidents Management) Rules 2023 (DSCIM), which establishes requirements for the management of complaints and incidents in disability related services.

## Scope

5. The Code applies to all employees of I CAN Network. It should be read alongside employment agreements, other I CAN policies, job outcomes descriptions, work plans/shift guides and other relevant employment documents.
6. In addition, all contractors and volunteers must comply with this Code. If I CAN Network finds that a volunteer or contractor has breached this Code, it may terminate their engagement. However, it is up to I CAN Network to exercise its discretion as to whether to apply any procedures in this Code to volunteers or contractors.
7. A reference to workers in this Code extends to employees, contractors and volunteers of I CAN Network.
8. Given I CAN Network's focus on child safety and the potential for all I CAN Network workers to engage with or have responsibility over matters affecting children, nothing in this Code should be taken to limit a worker's or I CAN Network's obligations under child safety laws, for which, refer to the [Child Safety Policy](#).

## Our Actionable Values

9. I CAN Network's organisational purpose is to prove what Autistic/neurodivergent people CAN do.
10. In pursuit of this purpose, I CAN Network embraces six Actionable Values. For more detail about each of these, see our [Actionable Values](#).
  - (a) **We enable:** We are committed to actively accommodating individual needs, embracing diversity and difference, and removing barriers to encourage participation.
  - (b) **We are open:** We listen and learn from each other. We are flexible and adapt to different circumstances.

- (c) **We are gutsy:** We are courageous and push ourselves to grow. We are wholeheartedly invested in everything that we do.
  - (d) **We are positive:** We focus on our strengths.
  - (e) **We value integrity:** We are honest, transparent, and trustworthy.
  - (f) **We build networks:** We work at a grassroots level to build effective and supportive local communities.
11. When representing I CAN Network, all workers should always seek to conduct themselves with these values in mind.

## **EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR**

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12. This Code provides the core values and general principles for how I CAN Network expects its workers to behave but does not seek to exhaustively list every possible situation or action. This Code gives an overview of the standards of conduct that I CAN Network values and promotes.
13. Workers must treat all people with whom they have contact in the course of their work with fairness, respect and courtesy. This includes children and their families or legal guardians.
14. Workers must act with integrity and honesty and be able to demonstrate this in relation to any service provided.
15. Workers must conduct themselves in accordance with the law, including applicable Commonwealth and Victorian legislation and I CAN Network's lawful instructions. This includes compliance with I CAN Network policies and procedures such as those relating to grievances, complaints and incident reporting, which supports compliance with the Disability Services and Inclusion (Complaints and Incidents Management) Rules 2023 or DSCIM
16. Workers are expected to be punctual to all rostered shifts and/or regular hours, seeking approval from their supervisor/manager should, for any reason, their hours need to be varied.
17. Workers are expected to treat colleagues and customers, including children, with respect and utilise their professional knowledge and expertise. Awareness of issues around the use of position and power should be maintained. Feedback should be provided in a confidential and private manner.
18. Workers are expected to maintain personal hygiene and present themselves in a clean, neat and professional manner.
19. Workers are to perform their duties diligently, impartially and responsively, and to the best of their ability. This includes, but it not limited to, the following:
- (a) being reasonably responsive in relation to scheduled shifts;
  - (b) alerting I CAN supervisors/customer service managers if for any reason they're suddenly unable to attend a rostered shift due to a genuine emergency or they drop out of an online mentoring session due to a technology outage;
  - (c) notifying I CAN as early as possible if they are unable to attend a confirmed shift
  - (d) following the approved tasks of their rostered shift/regular hours, and the time attributed to the completion of those tasks, and not performing tasks of their own choosing with a time allocation of their own choosing;
  - (e) utilising digital timesheets upon instruction, seeking assistance where needed and raising issues where needed, and not actively avoiding the use of digital timesheets;

- (f) delivering pre- and post-program surveys upon instruction, and not criticising or avoiding mentees' approved completion of surveys;
  - (g) entering data from paper-based pre- and post-program surveys into their online survey equivalents in a timely fashion;
  - (h) delivering the approved content in I CAN mentoring templates, and not delivering content of their own choosing;
  - (i) sharing the approved resources in I CAN post-mentoring session summaries, and not sharing resources of their own choosing;
  - (j) declaring or avoiding any conflict of interest.
20. Workers engaged on a casual basis are expected to understand that casual employment does not provide guaranteed or ongoing hours of work. Casual workers are free to accept or decline shifts that are offered to them.
21. Workers are expected to understand that I CAN Network is not obligated to offer work to casual employees and that shifts are allocated based on operational requirements, including service needs, availability, reliability, performance and suitability for the role.
22. Workers are expected to act reliably and professionally in relation to rostering arrangements. Ongoing reliability, availability and performance may be taken into consideration when allocating future shifts.
23. Workers are expected to comply with I CAN's processes for replacement or cancellation of shifts.
24. Workers are to observe relevant health, safety and environmental requirements, and act to remove or bring to the attention of their managers any situation which is, or may be, a health or safety hazard - including to the safety of children.
25. Workers should use I CAN Network's equipment, physical and digital property, and facilities for their intended purpose. This includes:
- (a) ensuring property is used with care and in accordance with instruction;
  - (b) observing [I CAN's Privacy and Health Information Policy](#), and respecting the privacy of mentees and colleagues, including I CAN's privacy;
  - (c) respecting the intellectual property contained within I CAN's resources.
26. Workers must treat I CAN Network's equipment, tools and machinery with care, in accordance with instructions and only in order to perform their duties on behalf of I CAN Network.
27. There will be occasions where workers need to decide for themselves whether an action is or is not appropriate. In these situations, workers should consider the following questions when deciding whether the action aligns with I CAN Network's expectations.
- Is the action safe? Refer to the **OH&S Policy** and the [Child Safety Policy](#).
  - Does the action align with I CAN Network's [Actionable Values](#)?
  - Does the action align with the expectations set by a parent/legal guardian, or a policy of a host school?
  - Is the action in a mentee's best interest?
  - Does the action fit within the worker's comfort level, acting reasonably and in good faith?

28. If a worker answers "no" to any of the above questions, then it is likely that the action or conduct conflicts with this Code.

### **Additional expectations for mentors and supervisors/managers**

#### *Mentors and Program Facilitators*

29. Mentors have special responsibilities to the children and young people they mentor. Employees who act as mentors are held in a position of trust in relation to their mentee. Mentors and Program Facilitators must:
- (a) avoid unsupervised discussions with mentee/s, in any form;
  - (b) take active steps to guide and assist mentees under supervision, within the boundaries of approved I CAN mentoring session templates, visuals, handouts and discussion prompts from customer service teams, and not outside of those boundaries;
  - (c) maintain a duty of care to mentees, in which they exercise reasonable care towards mentees and actively take steps to protect them from any reasonably foreseeable risks, including in the Chat function of Zoom videoconferencing; using I CAN training to address inappropriate behaviour should it occur; raising immediate risks with the supervisor and generally seeking the assistance of a supervisor, if at any point, they feel uncertain on how to proceed;
  - (d) avoid replication of work;
  - (e) avoid the use of artificial intelligence unless their supervisor/manager has approved the reasonable use of artificial intelligence for the workers' approved reasonable supports/accommodations;
  - (f) set a positive example for mentees to follow;
  - (g) keep supervised discussions with a mentee confidential (unless the communication is reportable and required to be disclosed by law, see [Child Safety Policy](#) regarding mandatory reporting and reportable conduct);
  - (h) take initiative to inform supervisors/management of issues experienced in service delivery which might not be apparent to supervisors/management because supervisors/managers work from home;
  - (i) maintain professionalism in all discussions with a mentee;
  - (j) maintain professionalism in all communications about a mentee with I CAN colleagues, including but not limited to, post-mentoring session debriefs.

#### *Supervisors and managers*

30. Employees who act as supervisors to workers also have additional expectations (on top of those outlined in cl. 24) to:
- (a) maintain records of any decisions made;
  - (b) manage and, if appropriate, challenge inappropriate behaviour;
  - (c) report any seriously inappropriate behaviour, behaviour that may be in breach of I CAN Network's policies, or unlawful behaviour to a manager or supervisor;

- (d) act consistently between employees to whom the supervisor is their direct report; and
- (e) remain responsible and accountable for the welfare of employees.

## **PROHIBITED BEHAVIOUR**

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31. I CAN Network does not tolerate conduct that is in breach of its policies. This includes, but is not limited to, the following conduct:
- (a) presenting for work under the influence of recreational and non-prescribed drugs, and alcohol;
  - (b) foul or inappropriate language;
  - (c) bullying;
  - (d) harassment, including sexual harassment;
  - (e) discrimination; or
  - (f) abuse or exploitation of others.
32. Activities of employees outside working hours must not diminish public confidence in I CAN Network, or others' ability to perform their duties.
33. Unethical conduct will not be tolerated. Without being definitive, unethical conduct can include the violation of any law, regulation or rule, professional codes or systems or policies of I CAN Network.

### **Additional prohibited conduct for mentors and supervisors/managers**

#### *Mentors and Program Facilitators*

34. Mentors hold a position of trust in relation to the children and young people they mentor. For this reason, there are additional obligations placed on mentors. Mentors and Program Facilitators must **not**:
- (a) have detailed discussions about their personal issues with mentees or involve the mentee in their personal issues;
  - (b) exchange personal contact details (e.g. phone, email, social media, etc) with mentees.
  - (c) actively encourage mentees' creation of social media accounts;
  - (d) communicate with or meet with mentees outside of hours and locations agreed and approved by I CAN Network;
  - (e) communicate or meet with a mentee outside of professional communications channels or for professional purposes approved by I CAN Network;
  - (f) enter any form of personal relationship whatsoever with a mentee (including romantic or financial) while the mentor is a worker with I CAN Network and/or while the mentee is a mentee of I CAN Network;
  - (g) physically discipline a mentee; or

- (h) conflict with the recommendations for the mentee by parents or qualified persons or professionals.

### *Supervisors and managers*

35. In addition to cl. 29, supervisors and managers must **not**:
- (a) abuse their position of power or authority, for personal gain or at all; or
  - (b) display inappropriate attention toward any worker; or
  - (c) direct reports.

### **Additional prohibited conduct for mentors and supervisors/managers, in relation to social media**

36. Workers must ensure that they do not become 'social media friends' via social media with a mentee while the mentor is a worker with I CAN Network and/or while the mentee is a mentee of I CAN Network;
37. If workers are writing comments on I CAN Network's social media platforms, comments shall be written with respect and be free of any derogatory, defamatory or racist language. Furthermore, in relation to commenting on I CAN Network social media posts:
- (a) Comments must not contain information of a sexual nature;
  - (b) Comments should not contain confidential information (for example, a mentee's health information).
38. For the avoidance of doubt, the guiding principle to all situations involving social media is that I CAN group mentoring delivery does not require the use of social media, and the delivery of supervised group mentoring must exist completely separate from social media.

### **CHILD SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY**

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39. All workers at I CAN Network, not only mentors of children, have responsibility over matters affecting children. I CAN Network expects and encourages all workers to create an environment that is safe, inclusive and enables the participation of children, their families or legal guardians. To achieve this, I CAN Network workers must:
- (a) listen and respond to the views and concerns of children;
  - (b) enable and respond to the child's method of communication (for example, speaking or non-speaking);
  - (c) promote and support the rights, dignity, wellbeing of children, as well as their diverse backgrounds and needs;
  - (d) act consistently between mentees, not displaying any favouritism within the group or paying inappropriate attention toward any mentee.
  - (e) respond to and report any child safety matters in accordance with the [Child Safety Policy](#);
  - (f) engage with children and their families or legal guardians in accordance with all I CAN Network policies (refer to **I CAN Network Induction Booklet**);

- (g) not be unnecessarily alone with a child;
- (h) not do anything that would be in breach of this Code, the [Child Safety Policy](#) or any law in relation to the safety and protection of children;
- (i) not disclose any personal or sensitive information about a child unless required to do so under the [Child Safety Policy](#) or law or with the consent of the child and their parent or legal guardian.

## REPORTING LINES

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- 40. Each employee has an individual obligation to uphold this Code.
- 41. While employees are expected to comply with any lawful and reasonable direction by a supervisor or manager, employees are also expected to exercise independent judgement as to whether that conduct might infringe the Code.

## BREACHES OF THIS CODE

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- 42. Breaches of this Code may result in I CAN Network:
  - (a) taking disciplinary action against a contravening employee, up to and including termination of employment (refer to policies, including **Disciplinary and Warning Procedures** and **Termination of Employment in Induction Booklet**); or
  - (b) terminating the engagement of a volunteer or contractor.
- 43. Any suspected or potential breach of this code, complaint, concern or incident must be reported to I CAN Network promptly and in accordance with the I CAN Network's **Grievance and Complaints Procedure** which supports compliance with the Disability Services and Inclusion (Complaints and Incidents Management) Rules 2023 or DSCIM. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may constitute a breach of this Code.