



Global Code of Conduct

Introduction

Employees and volunteers play an important role in ensuring VSO remains true to its values and respected and credible. This Code sets out the standards and expectations of employees and volunteers in terms of professional ethics, integrity, acting as a representative and safeguarding, which support our vision, mission and values. This Code of Conduct overarches all of VSO's policies and procedures which guide conduct and behaviour, all of which are underpinned by VSO's People First principles.

This Code of Conduct applies to employees, workers, volunteers, consultants and agency workers.

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, VSO policies, employment or placement terms and conditions may result in action under VSO's disciplinary procedure for employees or a volunteer status review.

Mission, Vision and Values

VSO's vision is: A fair world for everyone.

VSO's mission is: We bring people together to address marginalisation and poverty.

VSO's values are: Collaboration, Knowledge, Inclusion and Integrity.

1. Professional ethics and integrity

It is expected that VSO employees and volunteers will:

- Establish, maintain and develop relationships based on trust and respect.
- Exhibit and defend professional and personal integrity and honesty at all times.
- Demonstrate sensitivity for the customs, practices, culture and personal beliefs of others.
- Promote and adhere to VSO policies and practices that promote equality of opportunity, diversity and social inclusion and support human rights and dignity.
- Comply with VSO's data protection and confidentiality requirements. Any breach is considered a disciplinary offence and appropriate action will be taken.
- Support and challenge others if they suspect unlawful or unethical conduct or behaviour.
- Promptly report any concerns about bribery or corruption.
- Promptly report security or safety concerns.
- Dress appropriately at all times both within the workplace and when representing the organisation

2. Acting as a representative of VSO

It is expected that VSO employees and volunteers will:

- Always act in a way which supports and upholds the reputation of VSO and behave as a role models to others.
- Be mindful of their responsibilities as professional people towards the wider community.
- Comply with prevailing laws and not encourage, assist or collude with others who may be engaged in unlawful conduct.
- When involved in local political, religious, or community leadership activities, commit to ensure that VSO's mission and objectives in the country are not compromised.

- Display a neutral, non-partisan attitude and approach towards political matters during their work for VSO.
- Ensure they hold the correct visa and right to work in country in compliance with country law.

3. Safeguarding

It is expected that VSO employees and volunteers will abide by VSO's Global Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy including:

- Not to harm, children, young people, vulnerable adults or anyone they come into contact with during the course of their engagement with VSO, through action or omission.
- Not to expose others to the risk of discrimination, neglect, harm or abuse.
- Not purchase, or coerce, sex acts.
- Work in accordance with health, safety and security guidelines and avoid behaviour that creates unnecessary risk to themselves or others.

It is expected that VSO employees and volunteers **will**:

- Read, understand and adhere to VSO's Global Safeguarding Policy and VSO's Global Code of Conduct.
- Strive to promote a zero tolerance approach to discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse in all working environments.
- Strive to develop relationships with all stakeholders which are based on equality, trust, respect and honesty.
- Place the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable people above all other considerations.
- Report any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child or vulnerable person.
- Report any concerns they may have about the behaviour of a VSO representative in relation to safeguarding.
- In a one-to-one situation with a child or young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows the contact is taking place and why. If possible, ensure another adult is in sight and that the child or young person knows another adult is around.

It is expected that VSO employees and volunteers **will not**:

- Sexually harass, assault or abuse another person.
- Physically harass, assault or abuse another person.
- Emotionally abuse another person, such as engaging in behaviour intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade.
- Condone, or participate in behaviour which is abusive, discriminatory, illegal, or unsafe.
- Develop, encourage or fail to take action of relationships with children or other vulnerable people which could in any way be deemed sexual, exploitative or abusive. • Act in ways that may be violent, inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Agree with a child to keep a secret which has implications for their safety or the safety of other young people.

4. Conflict of interest

In the course of their work it is essential that employees and volunteers avoid any suggestion of bias or favouritism in any of their dealings with partners, primary actors, service providers, suppliers, or other employees, volunteers and stakeholders. Any potential conflicts (direct or indirect) must be declared in line with the Criminal Practices Policy. Conflicts could include, but are not limited to:

- Interests of immediate relatives and extended relatives, friends and acquaintances.
- Any work, paid or unpaid, outside VSO.

- Being a member of an elected body.
- Shareholdings (if this could have an influence on the decision making of a company).
- Relationships with service providers and suppliers, other employees or candidates for employment with VSO.

Offers of Gifts, inducements and hospitality

Any money, gift or favour received by an employee or volunteer from a person or organisation holding or seeking to obtain a contract from VSO will be deemed by VSO to have been received corruptly unless the employee or volunteer proves the contrary. VSO expects all staff and volunteers to abide by the Global Criminal Practices policy, and where necessary to abide by local legislation to ensure transparency and ethical practice. Any breach of this policy will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter and/or a criminal offence.

Relationship conflicts

Where a personal relationship exists, has existed or develops between employees or volunteers where one party has a management or supervisory responsibility over the other, the existence or former existence of the relationship should be disclosed to the relevant senior manager.

Managers who have, or have had, a personal relationship with an employee or volunteer should not be involved in any recruitment, selection, performance review, promotion or other processes which could be perceived to give unfair advantage or disadvantage to the other person with whom they have or have had such a relationship. It is the responsibility of employees and volunteers involved in recruitment and selection to declare any relationship.

5. Duty to report

- Report immediately any breaches of this Code to a line manager, either through the established reporting mechanisms or, if not appropriate, to another senior member of staff or the People Group.
- All suspected breaches of the Code will be investigated in line with the appropriate policy. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct there will be a disciplinary or status review process.

AGREEMENT

I have read, understood and agree to abide by VSO’s Global Code of Conduct.

Name:

Role:

Signature:

Date:

Date of last review: June 2020

Date of next review: November 2020