

Code of Ethics and Personal Conduct

It is important for everyone who works with children and young people to be aware of their duties and responsibilities. The Code of Ethics and Personal Conduct applies to all employees and volunteers of Æskulýðsvettvangurinn - the Icelandic Youth Forum – and its member organisations.

Communications

- 1 Employees and volunteers that work with children and young people must be qualified to do so.
- 2 The well-being of children and young people shall always be promoted, and all youth work should be guided by what is best for the participants.
- 3 Always promote healthy, constructive, safe and high-quality work with children and young people.
- 4 Employees and volunteers are role models for participants and should set a good example of behaviour both at work and outside of it.
- 5 All consumption of tobacco, nicotine products, alcohol or other habit-forming substances is prohibited in work with children and young people.
- 6 Employees and volunteers should strive to have good communications with colleagues and guardians of the participants.
- 7 Employees and volunteers must exercise diligence and conscientiousness and show care, honesty and respect for everyone they work with and for. Keep in mind that words and actions must always be compatible with the work, environment, place and time.
- 8 Employees and volunteers shall never discriminate against children and young people based on nationality, origin, race, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, age, religion, disability, economic status, descent or other status.
- 9 Employees and volunteers shall keep strict confidentiality and discretion regarding everything they become aware of in the course of their work. However, confidentiality does not apply when employees or volunteers become aware of a child living in unacceptable situation such as under neglect, a child is being harassed or subjected to any form of violence or is putting their health and development at serious risk. In such cases the provisions of chapter IV of the Child Protection Act no. 80/2002 apply.
- 10 The health and safety of participants must never be endangered. Always exercise the utmost care and caution in work with children and young people. Keep children from getting into situations beyond their control.
- 11 Bullying and violence is never tolerated. Employees and volunteers must strive to prevent and uproot any form of violence, such as mental, physical, sexual or electronic violence.
- 12 Always keep in mind that the boundaries of individuals are different and should always be respected. Avoid any contact that could be misunderstood or misinterpreted in communications with children, young people and colleagues.
- 13 Employees and volunteers should show care and kindness towards participants in youth work but keep a professional distance outside the time of the activities and avoid any type of close contact with participants. Employees and volunteers should never initiate communications with participants unless it is in connection with the participation of a child or a young person in the youth work.
- 14 Employees and volunteers must show responsibility in electronic communications and internet use. It is not allowed to engage in electronic communications with participants that are younger than 18 years old without the knowledge and consent of their guardians and it should only be with regards to the participation of the individual in youth work. All communication must go through recognised means of communications.
- 15 Employees, board members and volunteers as well as others that hold a position of power must always be aware of their responsibility and the advantage their position creates for them.
- 16 Employees and volunteers should never abuse their position in any way, such as in a physical, mental or sexual way, when it comes to communications with participants or co-workers.
- 17 All sexual flirtation and language as well as any companionship of a person in a position of power with a participant that is younger than 18 years old is forbidden.
- 18 A person in a position of power must avoid sexual flirtation and language as well as relationships with participants of age, co-workers or anyone that the person is in a position of power towards. In the event of a mutually agreed relationship of people of age, it is the responsibility of the person in a position of power to notify management of the relationship.
- 19 Employees and volunteers should avoid a situation where they are alone with a participant.
- 20 When taking photographs of children and young people as participants their right to privacy must be respected. Never take or publish inappropriate pictures of children and young people. Photographs of participants that are taken by employees and volunteers are never for personal use.

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Management and responsibilities

- 1 Employees and volunteers that work with children and young people must be qualified to do so. A consent for obtaining information from the criminal record must always be sought from those who intend to work with children and young people.
- 2 Board members, employees and volunteers shall perform their duties with diligence, conscientiousness, devotion and honesty and be mindful of objectivity and righteousness.
- 3 The interests of the organisation should always be kept in mind and everyone must safeguard its goals and honour. Board members, employees and volunteers must treat the organisation, co-workers, associates and participants with respect, fairness and confidentiality in all communications.
- 4 Board members, employees and volunteers must be respectful of everyone they work with and for, and all discrimination based on nationality, origin, race, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, age, religion, disability, economic status, descent or other status is forbidden.
- 5 Board members, employees and volunteers must strive to create a positive culture at work. Moderation and fairness should be maintained in communications and comments about others. No one should engage in gossip or spreading slander. Sexual harassment, bullying or other forms of violence are not tolerated.
- 6 The health and safety of employees and volunteers must never be endangered. Always exercise the utmost care and caution and avoid projects and situations that are beyond the control of people.
- 7 All work must be done in an open, informed, transparent and democratic manner. Always provide truthful and correct information.
- 8 Board members, employees and volunteers must never use their position in any way for their own benefit. Any possibility of a conflict of interest must be disclosed and all information of possible personal interests must be provided in such cases. The managing director and the board of the organisation will assess whether there is a conflict of interests.
- 9 Board members, employees and volunteers must not sit at both ends of the table in cases that involve the interests of the organisation. They must avoid any situations where their impartiality is questioned. This applies for example to organisational nominations of people for popular positions or negotiates with employers, contractors or other service providers.
- 10 Board members, employees and volunteers should refrain from taking on assignments that do not conform with their duties or functions or do contravene them and are likely to question their impartiality. In case of doubt the approval of the managing director or the board of the organisation must be sought.
- 11 Board members, employees and volunteers should never accept gifts if their value exceeds what can be considered normal.
- 12 When hiring employees, one must be careful not to abuse one's power to employ relatives or friends. In the event of such a conflict of interest, one must transfer the employment affairs to a supervisor or another qualified employee.
- 13 Board members, employees and volunteers must keep strict confidentiality and discretion regarding everything they become aware of in their work. However, confidentiality never applies when it comes to the provisions of chapter IV of the Child Protection Act no. 80/2002.
- 14 Board members, employees and volunteers are not permitted to use confidential information they acquire in their work for their own benefit or interests.
- 15 Board members, employees and volunteers must always take good care of the funds and other valuables that are entrusted to them. In disposition of funds the interests of the organisation must always be considered. The organisation can never be placed under an obligation that goes beyond the bylaws of the organisation. Funds and assets must never be used except in benefit of the organisation or projects that are in accordance with its policy.
- 16 Information on income and its use shall be presented in a simple and clear way and the information shall be accessible to members of the organisation. All financial statements must be properly recorded and audited.
- 17 Grants should never be obtained illegally or deceptively.
- 18 Anyone who communicates with the media must show honesty and transparency in their communication without disclosing confidential information. Emphasis is placed on providing as accurate information as possible. Do not assert more than is needed and acknowledge when knowledge is limited and obtain further information or refer inquiries elsewhere.

Violations of the codes can result in termination within the member organisations of Æskulýðsvettvangurinn, temporarily or in full.