



EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

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1. PURPOSE

The East Gippsland Shire Council Volunteer Code of Conduct (the Code) defines the expected standards of workplace behaviour and corporate obligations for all volunteers.

The Code ensures that all volunteers understand the behaviours and obligations expected of them by East Gippsland Shire Council (Council) and management when performing voluntary work for Council. Volunteers will recognise that the Code also meets general community expectations of volunteers in their roles as representatives of Council.

A copy of the Code is given to all new volunteers when they commence volunteer work with Council.

Any breach of the Code may contravene the terms and conditions set out in your volunteer agreement resulting in termination of this agreement with Council.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

East Gippsland Shire Council volunteers will:

- Be accountable and act responsibly in an open and transparent way in all actions taken and decisions made during their engagement with the organisation;
- Act with the utmost integrity, and honour all commitments by conducting themselves in an honest, ethical way;
- Volunteers will respect the views and contributions of others and act with courtesy and consideration during all interactions.

2.1 CONDUCT REQUIRED OF COUNCIL VOLUNTEERS

All Council volunteers are required to:

Treat all people with **courtesy and respect** by:

- recognising there are legitimate differences in opinions, race, culture, religion, political affiliation, language, sexual orientation, gender and abilities;
- treating others with dignity and attempting to ensure that neither offence nor embarrassment is caused;
- treating all people with respect, even if disagreeing with their views or decisions;
- being courteous;
- not criticising the professional competence or credibility of councillors, Council staff or fellow volunteers in the workplace or in public;
- encouraging positive working relationships;
- responding to questions and requests in a timely manner; and
- respecting the right of others to be heard (whatever their views).

Always act with **integrity and honesty** by:

- being accountable, honest, open and transparent in all dealings; and
- always acting with impartiality and in the best interests of the entire community;
- exercising reasonable care and diligence while performing your duties;

- demonstrating honest and responsible judgement on all financial and other issues relating to Council;
- not undertaking activity that would cause embarrassment to the organisation or bring it into disrepute;
- showing respect for the democratic and social purposes of local government;
- making decisions based on the best available information;
- complying with all relevant council policies, procedures and protocols and with relevant Australian, Victorian or local laws; and
- not attempting to exercise undue influence to gain or attempt to gain an advantage for themselves or any other party.

If volunteers have a concern about improper conduct, corrupt conduct or detrimental action by a councillor, staff member, contractor or volunteer, processes are available for a protected disclosure under Council's Protected Disclosure Policy (available on the website).

Refer to: Protected Disclosure Policy and Procedure

Undertake their roles and responsibilities by:

- offering relevant and impartial advice, and respecting the rights and responsibilities of Councillors and members of the community;
- respecting and publicly supporting Council's decisions, and presenting the views of Council as accurately as possible irrespective of personal points of view;
- promoting Council in a positive light when representing Council at external functions and events within or outside working hours;
- ensuring that advice and decisions are not interpreted as the advice or decision of Council if volunteers are members of other organisations in the community;
- not acting with any bias or in a way that is not in the public interest or causes harm or damage to any person, body or Council;
- complying with any lawful order or request given by any person who has the authority to do so. If volunteers have concerns about the request, they should contact their immediate Supervisor.

Maintain a **safe and healthy** workplace by:

- not committing any acts of bullying, harassment, discrimination or violence;
- reporting any acts or suspected acts of bullying, harassment, discrimination or violence witnessed to their immediate supervisor;
- immediately reporting any injury, near miss, damaged equipment or any other hazard observed in the workplace to your supervisor.

2.2 CORPORATE OBLIGATIONS

Confidential Information

While undertaking volunteering work with Council volunteers may see or have access to confidential information. Any unauthorised use or disclosure of information or data relating to the conduct of Council may adversely affect Council's reputation and legal obligations. For example:

- proposed property or other developments;
- proposed planning scheme amendments;
- proposed acquisition or sale of land by Council;
- contractual matters;
- legal matters;

- personnel matters; and
- private customer information.

Volunteers must not use or disclose confidential information gained due to their position with Council either during or after their engagement. If a recognised law enforcement agency or other government or judicial body lawfully approaches volunteers for any of the above types of information, the enquiry must be referred to the Manager Administration Services or Governance and Compliance Coordinator.

Improper or Undue Influence

Volunteers must not use their position with Council to attempt to influence councillors, the public, Council staff or representatives to gain an improper advantage, either financial or otherwise, for themselves or for any other person or group. Volunteers must not seek or accept any immediate or future bribe or incentive in return for performance of any duty or work for Council.

Refer also to the Fraud and Corruption clause in this document.

Fraud and Corruption

Volunteers must report any suspected fraud or corruption immediately. This can be done on a confidential basis to the CEO or through the provisions of Council's *Protected Disclosure Policy and Procedure*. Allegations and suspicions of fraud will be investigated and all substantiated cases will be dealt with appropriately. Mechanisms may include either disciplinary or administrative penalties appropriate to the case (having due regard for the rights of all persons, including any person reporting fraud and of any alleged perpetrator of fraud). All cases of fraud, once confirmed, will be referred to the appropriate authorities.

Refer to: Fraud and Corruption Control Policy, Protected Disclosure Policy and Procedure

Use of Council Assets

Volunteers must ensure that Council resources, including personnel and equipment, are used effectively and economically. Council will take action against any volunteer who steals, misappropriates, or converts Council, community or customer assets to private use.

Internet and Email

Some volunteers may have access to Council's internet services and email addresses. These 'tools' must only be used in a lawful manner and in compliance with all relevant policies. Volunteers are required to use information and communication technology resources in an efficient and effective manner, protect Council data and computer systems from intentional misuse and comply with required behaviours.

Refer to: Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Mobile Devices (telephones, iPads, tablets, etc.)

Any volunteer issued with (or having access to) Council-provided mobile devices is prohibited from using the service/equipment to send, access and/or distribute any material (whether text, images and sound or any combination) that is unlawful, offensive (or reasonably likely to be considered offensive), or which exposes Council to risk or harm, or may bring the organisation into disrepute.

Refer to: Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Handling and Use of Information

All volunteers must ensure they are aware of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the implications for Council. If volunteers are required to handle personal information, especially information falling within the scope of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Health Records Act 2001*, they must attend and participate in training to ensure a full understanding of the requirements set out under those Acts, associated regulations and Council policies and procedures.

Past or present volunteers must not make unauthorised use of Council's information or intellectual property. Council is the owner of any copyright associated with voluntary work that is produced through a volunteer's performance of their official duties.

Refer to: Information Privacy Policy and Guidelines, Governance and Compliance Officer

Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking

Volunteers must not consume alcohol or take unprescribed or illicit drugs on any Council property or designated workplace in any form. In special circumstances, the consumption of alcohol may be authorised in advance.

Volunteers must not present for duty, at any time, under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol to the extent that it may impair the ability to effectively and safely perform the requirements of the position.

If you are taking prescribed medication that may affect your performance it is your responsibility to inform your supervisor immediately. Your supervisor will modify any tasks you perform to mitigate risk to both yourself and others. If a modification of tasks is not possible you will be required to cease volunteering for the period during which you are under the influence of medication.

All designated Council workplaces (all buildings and worksites), including an area of up to 10 metres from them, and Council vehicles are declared "Smoke Free" zones.

Professional Dress and Appearance

You are required to ensure your appearance is neat, clean and appropriate for your area of work. A high standard of personal hygiene is expected at all times. Where a uniform is provided, it must be worn in accordance with Council requirements.

Child Safe Standards

All volunteers are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- Always upholding Council's commitment to child safety;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- treating everyone with respect;
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification);

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities);
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child;
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to or child safety concerns to your Supervisor;
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe;
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

By acknowledging this code of conduct you are acknowledging your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Council's Child Safety Officer / Supervisor. If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Care for the Environment

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining and protecting the environment. Volunteers should always consider the impact of their work activities on the environment and the local community, including the way in which waste is minimised or disposed of, chemicals are used and stored, and resources are utilised.

3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

These positions are responsible for implementation and compliance monitoring of the code of conduct in their work areas:

Party / Parties:	Roles and responsibilities:
All volunteers	Understand and adhere to the Volunteer Code of Conduct. Acknowledge understanding of the Code by signing the declaration page. Provide a reason, in writing, if the Code is not signed.
Directors / Managers / Supervisors	Ensure all volunteers are aware of and adhere to the Code. Promote or enforce the Code in their workplace.
Human Resources	Facilitate the review of the Code every two years or as required. That information on the Code is available to all volunteers via the Intranet and website.

All volunteers have an obligation to report occurrences of non-compliance with Council policy and this Code. Incidents of non-compliance should be reported immediately to the Director responsible for this policy, the Policy Owner or the Governance and Compliance team.

4. SCOPE OF POLICY

This Code applies to all volunteers working within East Gippsland Shire Council.

5. REFERENCES / ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

Health Records Act 2001

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

All East Gippsland Shire Council Policies and Procedures/Guidelines

6. PRIVACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATION

All personal information collected by East Gippsland Shire Council in connection with the Volunteers Code of Conduct will be handled in accordance with all applicable privacy legislation and will be used only for the purposes considered in this Code.

As per the Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, a fair hearing will be given to all parties in order to make fair decisions.

7. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term:	Meaning:
Code	East Gippsland Shire Council Volunteer Code of Conduct
Council	East Gippsland Shire Council

Volunteers Acknowledgement / Declaration:

I have read and understood the Volunteers Code of Conduct and the standards of behaviour expected of me by East Gippsland Shire Council.

I agree to comply with the East Gippsland Shire Council Volunteers Code of Conduct.

I understand that if at any time I have questions or concerns about the Volunteers Code of Conduct, I will raise these with my immediate Supervisor

Name (please print)	
Signature	
Date	

Please print, complete and return this form via internal mail to your supervisor