

Code of Conduct for Employees of DDLETB

Introduction

Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) was established in July 2013 through the merger of two Vocational and Educational Committees (VECs): County Dublin VEC and Dun Laoghaire VEC. This was followed by the incorporation of three SOLAS (formerly FAS) Training Centres in Baldoye, Loughlinstown and Tallaght to DDLETB in January 2014.

Our vision is to actively lead the provision of high quality education and training. DDLETB’s mission is to provide a wide range of education and training programmes, services and supports to children, young people and adults across the DDLETB region.

Purpose and Scope

The provisions of the Code apply to all staff employed by DDLETB in their performance of their duties on a day to day basis.

The Code has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice for Governance of ETBs CL 18/2015 and the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies published by the Department of Finance in August 2016.

The provisions of the Code do not override existing statutory requirements and other obligations imposed by the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013, the Companies Acts, Ethics legislation, Standards in Public Office legislation and any other relevant legislation (e.g. Equality legislation, Employment legislation).

The Code of Conduct sets down the general principles and standards, which govern the professional activities and conduct of the Chief Executive (CE) and staff of DDLETB, thereby fulfilling the requirements for integrity, loyalty, confidentiality and fairness as well as maintaining a high level of public confidence in the ETB as a public body and employer.

The provisions of the Code of Conduct are ancillary to the requirements set out in the *Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs* and forms part of the Terms and Conditions of Employment for all staff members.

Staff are obliged to comply with policies and procedures, staff regulations, work rules and any standards and codes of practice adopted by DDLETB. This code of conduct is binding on all staff (including those on leave, career breaks etc.).

For the purpose of clarity, where the distinction is not clearly made, the term staff refers to staff of the DDLETB and the Chief Executive. It also includes staff working in DDLETB through an agency.

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Objectives

The objectives of the code of conduct are as follows:

1. To set out an agreed set of ethical principles by which DDLETB conducts its business
2. To promote and maintain confidence and trust in the ETB
3. To prevent the development or acceptance of unethical practices.

General Principles

The Code of Conduct relates both to internal and external activities of the ETB. Wherever we operate, we must ensure that our business is conducted and managed effectively, efficiently and objectively in the public interest, in a manner consistent with the highest professional standards of accountability and responsibility and in accordance with the law.

DDLETB is committed to conducting its activity in accordance with its statutory remit and all relevant legislation in observance of the fundamental principles of Integrity, Loyalty and Fairness.

1. **Integrity** [not place ourselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our duties.]

(i) *Conflict of Interests*

Management and Staff should not be involved in outside employment/business interests in conflict, or in potential conflict, with the work or business of DDLETB.

Where such a conflict arises, disclosure should immediately be made by management or staff of outside employment/business interests in conflict, or in potential conflict, with the business of the ETB.

All such interests of parent, grand-parent, brother, sister, spouse, civil partner, children or step children, a body corporate with which the member is associated, or any other connected persons so far as they are known must also be disclosed.

Anyone who has disclosed an interest should:

- not influence nor seek to influence a decision to be made in relation to the matter
- not make any recommendations in relation to the matter, contract, agreement or arrangement
- absent himself/herself from meetings or part of meetings during which the matter is being discussed
- take no part in any deliberation relating to the matter
- not vote on a decision relating to the matter
- not retain information or materials with respect to the matter.

The staff and CE have a duty of confidentiality on the matter which survives termination of employment or appointment.

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(ii) Reporting

DDLETB shall ensure that its annual report and financial statements accurately reflect its work and business performance and are not misleading or designed to be misleading.

(iii) Procurement

The conduct of purchasing goods/services should be in accordance with best business practice. Orders and contracts must be awarded impartially and on merit through fair completion in accordance with the ETB's procedure rules and such other procedure rules and legal provisions as apply. Staff whose work involves the procurement, appointment of contractors must disclose any former or current private or official relationship with relevant contractors to the Director of Organisation Support and Development. When a conflict of interest is disclosed, the ETB reserves the right to remove the staff member from any areas of direct or indirect involvement in the matter concerned.

(iv) Gifts and hospitality

Giving or receiving corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgement on business transactions should be avoided.

As such, gifts and hospitality are neither sought nor encouraged by the ETB and in case of acceptance of same the following applies:

- the acceptance and receipt of hospitality and gifts from an applicant for a contract or for funding is prohibited
- the offer or giving of hospitality and gifts by an applicant for a contract or for funding may disqualify the application.

The ETB does not provide corporate gifts, hospitality (other than normal business courtesy), preferential treatment or benefits to suppliers or to any party with which it conducts business.

Exceptionally ETB schools/centres may organise raffles for teachers and students/pupils to encourage participation in studies. On such occasion the ETB will be mindful of fairness and equal opportunity and the value should not be excessive (prizes should not exceed €50).

(v) Expenses

All staff shall ensure a culture of claiming expenses only as appropriate to business needs and in accordance with good practice in the public sector generally (Ref: ETB Claiming payment and expenses policy).

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(vi) *Confidential disclosures*

The ETB is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability, and expects staff who become aware of activities which they believe are irregular, improper or otherwise to report the matter, acting in accordance with their rights under the Protected Disclosures Act, 2014 and the ETB Whistleblowing Policy

2. Information

The management and staff of the ETB support the provision of access to general information relating to the ETB’s activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public.

DDLETB respects the confidentiality of sensitive information it holds. This constitutes material such as:

- Commercial sensitive information (including, but not limited to, future plans or details of major organisational or other changes such as restructuring);
- personal information and
- information received in confidence by the ETB.

The ETB observes appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest.

The ETB complies with relevant statutory provisions (e.g. data protection and Freedom of Information legislation).

3. Obligations

DDLETB is committed to

- Fulfilling all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed by the Education and Training Board Act, 2013 and other relevant legislation.
- Complying with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure.
- Introducing controls to prevent fraud including adequate controls to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures in relation to claiming of expenses for business travel.
- Ensuring that all employees co-operate with internal audits in the internal audit process.
- Conforming to procedures laid down by the ETB in relation to conflict of interest situations, including in regard to acceptance of positions following employment and/or engagement by the ETB that may give rise to the potential for conflicts of interest and to confidentiality concerns.
- Acknowledging the duty of all to conform to the highest standards of business ethics.

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- Promoting the development of a culture of ‘speaking up’ whereby employees can raise concerns regarding serious wrongdoing in the workplace without fear of reprisal. To this aim, DDLETB will ensure that employees have an opportunity to raise any concerns they may have about possible irregularities concerning the organisation’s duties and obligations or matters presenting a risk for the organisation. Employees’ concerns will be dealt with confidentially and anyone reporting potential irregularities or wrongdoing will not be subjected to victimisation in any form.

4. Loyalty

The CE and staff of DDLETB acknowledge their responsibility to be loyal to the ETB and fully committed to all its work and business activities, while mindful that the ETB must, at all times, take into account the interests of its learners and funders including tax payers..

5. Fairness

DDLETB is committed to fairness and due process in the conduct of its activities and especially undertakes to:

- Comply with employment equality and equal status legislation
- Commit to fairness in all business dealings
- Value learners/customers and treat all learners/customers equally.

6. Work/External Environment

DDLETB is committed to

- Placing the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of employees.
- Ensuring that community concerns are fully considered.
- Minimising any detrimental impact of the operations on the environment.

Responsibilities and circulation of information

The Code of Conduct for DDLETB will be circulated to all employees for their retention.

This code will be reviewed every two to three years or more frequently if required

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**Private and Confidential
 Employee Declaration of Interests**

NAME: _____

Grade/Job Title: _____

Department/Section _____

		Yes	No	<i>If yes, please provide more information on the personal interest</i>
1	Do you have any personal interests which you consider gives rise to or may create a conflict with the ETB's interests?			
2	Do you or any person living with you or any member of your family or a close personal friend have any interest in a business or contract which is or may become a business relationship with the ETB?			
3	Do you have any financial interests which could conflict with the ETB's interests?			
4	Do you have any other interests which you wish to declare?			

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Once completed, please pass this form to CE/Director of Organisation Support and Development for recording and retention.

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