

## Professional Ethics and Code of Conduct

<b>Policy Number</b>	CAL POL-007	<b>Version</b>	4
<b>Classification</b>	Governance	<b>Issue Date</b>	13/05/2025

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy provides the ethical framework to ensure that the mission, values and vision of Caringa Australia Limited (the organisation) are supported by the daily operations and activities of all members of the organisation.
- 1.2. Caringa recognises the importance of a work environment which actively promotes best practice. This policy describes standards of behaviour and conduct expected from all Caringa workers in their dealings with clients, suppliers, colleagues and the general public.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1. Professional ethics and the code of conduct applies to all Caringa workers. All workers are expected to observe the highest standards of ethics, integrity and behaviour during the course of their employment with Caringa including:
  - in all locations where you are working or are perceived to be associated with Caringa Australia Ltd
  - on all social media platforms as described in **CAL POL – 026 Social Media Policy**
  - in your representation of our clients, your colleagues and the organisation
- 2.2. For the purpose of this policy the collective term ‘workers’ is used to describe; all full time, part time and casual employees, volunteers, contractors, and members of the Board of Directors.
- 2.3. This policy is effective from the date of issue above and is available for viewing in Donesafe and Caringa website and server.

### 3. Policy Statement

- 3.1. This policy is supported by other Caringa policies, procedures and work instructions relating to minimum standards of behaviour and conduct, including but not limited to;
  - CAL POL – 005 Conflict of Interest
  - CAL POL – 006 Child Safe Policy
- 3.2. Caringa is committed to complying with all relevant legislative, regulatory and contractual laws and guidelines, including but not limited to;
  - National Disability Insurance Scheme (Code of Conduct) Rules (Cth) 2018 & Amendment 2023
  - National Disability Insurance Scheme (Quality and Safeguards Commission) Rules (Cth) 2018
  - National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)
  - National Board’s Codes and Guidelines – relevant to individual health practitioners in the application of their discipline’s registration standards, more information found at [Codes and Guidelines](#)
- 3.3. Caringa workers who hold a qualification in an allied health domain are further bound by the codes and guidelines relevant to their field of registration. The Allied Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (APHRA) provides links to each National Board’s codes and guidelines which can be found at; <https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registration-Standards/codes-guidelines.aspx>
- 3.4. Employee files will securely retain current registrations when applicable.

## 4. Definitions

**4.1** The term **Professional Ethics** and the term **Code of Conduct** are often considered to mean the same thing. Whilst they are interrelated they each have specific meanings. **Examples provided in 4.2.**

- **Professional Ethics** - governs decision-making
- **Code of Conduct** - governs actions

**4.2 Example** of how Professional Ethics and Code of Conduct interact.

**Scenario** – Joe who is a client has diabetes, he asks his support worker Sally to cut his toenails for him. Sally knows that this is out of her permissible area of practice, she is aware that it is best practice for a qualified podiatrist to provide this service to people with diabetes.

- *Sally informs Joe that she cannot do this and the reasons why* (**Professional Ethics maintained**)
- *Sally reports Joe's needs to the team leader* (**Code of Conduct maintained**)

## 5. Operation

### 5.1 Daily interactions

When dealing with one another, Board members, clients, external stakeholders and other agency representatives, Caringa workers will be respectful, honest and courteous. Workers will give accurate information, prompt attention, and observe fairness and equity in their dealings with others.

### 5.2 Working with Clients & Colleagues

Caringa workers will:

- a) act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions
- b) always treat clients and colleagues with respect, and be mindful of their rights to privacy and confidentiality
- c) always show respect for people's cultural or religious sensitivities or requirements, and ensure the responsiveness of the service to their particular needs and circumstances
- d) ensure clients are provided with, and understand, all information relevant to their situation, options available to them and conditions of use for the service
- e) ensure clients have access to independent advocacy or support, if they require, in making any decisions
- f) ensure that colleagues have access to additional supports immediately after a difficult situation has been reported
- g) be aware of personal boundaries and never enter into a sexual relationship with a client, take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct
- h) not accept money or other gifts from clients and/or their families or advocates
- i) provide supports and services in a safe, competent manner, with care and skill
- j) only provide supports and services commensurate with your level of qualification
- k) act with integrity, honesty and transparency
- l) promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with disability
- m) take all reasonable steps as described in **CAL POL – 020 Bullying, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Free Workplace Policy & CAL POL – 006 Child Safe Policy & CAL POL – 010 Incident Management Policy** to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against, exploitation, neglect and abuse of, people with disability
- n) immediately report any instance where you have observed, or been told about, a colleague being subjected to bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct. Your report can be made to any team leader or senior manager including the People and Culture manager as directed in **CAL POL – 020 Bullying, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Free Workplace Policy**

### **5.3 Standards in the workplace**

All workers are required to:

- a) attend work in the times agreed with supervisors and rostering team; notify supervisors and other stakeholders (rosters, if outside business hours) of their absences; report and account for all leave taken; record attendance and obtain approval before changing their work times
- b) comply with the requirements of their position description and duties associated with the relevant shift, paying appropriate attention to quality and detail in their work
- c) provide accurate and honest information to their supervisors about work completed and challenges experienced in completing work
- d) follow instructions that are reasonable and lawful and within their capability, training and qualification
- e) report any suspected corrupt or fraudulent practices of others. Any worker making a report will be protected from reprisal in line with relevant whistle blower legislation as described in **CAL POL – 038 Whistle-blower Protection Policy**
- f) observe the requirements for conditions of employment and safety as described in **CAL POL - 028 Workplace Health and Safety Policy**
- g) never perform work in circumstances where there is a risk to your safety or which may compromise the health or safety of others. Report any risks and hazards as soon as possible
- h) perform their duties unaffected by alcohol or the use of drugs other than those prescribed for them by a medical practitioner. Prescribed medications may carry a warning that the medication “could impair” the user. Consistent with **CAL POL – 041 Drug and Alcohol Policy**, workers have a positive duty to notify their manager or the People and Culture team of the use of this medication
- i) maintain a harmonious, co-operative and productive workplace, respectful of diversity
- j) ensure they do not use their position to exert inappropriate influence over others

### **5.4 Work participation**

All workers will:

- a) share a commitment and demonstrate the values and objectives of Caringa Australia Limited
- b) work within priorities identified by managers and senior staff
- c) actively participate in planning and consultative processes where appropriate and contribute to the development of the organisation
- d) use the specified communication channels for reporting and direction
- e) provide and receive constructive feedback and criticism
- f) in accordance with the requirements of their role: diligently maintain all written records and logs, complete notes in a timely manner, compile reports as required and secure all written documentation in the designated electronic storage location.

### **5.5 Teamwork**

All workers will:

- a) work together towards agreed work objectives and goals, and communicate regularly with one another about progress
- b) work together to look for ways to improve work methods and to solve workplace and service related problems
- c) give support and guidance to each other, ensure appropriate training and development and recognise each other’s results and achievements

### **5.6 Leadership**

Managers and Team Leaders will:

- a) Exercise their leadership of other workers in an exemplary and ethical manner, and considerate of power imbalances within professional relationships
- b) ensure team members are familiar with the Code and that they have sufficient skills, knowledge and ability to meet the requirements
- c) ensure any updated information regarding provision of care and services is communicated to team members promptly and effectively
- d) lead by example and not condone, permit, or fail to report any suspected breaches of this policy
- e) In the event of a suspected breach, maintain confidentiality and limit information sharing during grievances and disputes
- f) ensure support is available to all parties during an investigation process

### **5.7 Maintain currency of skills, qualifications, licences and probity clearances**

All workers are to:

- a) maintain industry currency and professional knowledge
- b) maintain any relevant - registrations to practice e.g. allied health professionals with APHRA, certificates of competency e.g. First Aid Certificate, probity clearances e.g. Working with Children Check (WWCC) & NDIS Worker check
- c) immediately inform your Manager or the people and culture team if you have had any restriction placed on your driver's licence or if you have neglected to renew this

### **5.8 Use of resources**

All workers will:

- a) ensure they have the necessary delegation prior to authorising expenditure or using organisational resources
- b) only use organisational materials, facilities, funds, people and equipment for authorised purposes and take responsible steps to prevent misuse by others
- c) conserve and efficiently use resources through recycling, energy saving and waste minimisation
- d) securely store resources when in transit or when taken offsite e.g. when working from home Caringa owned laptops must be password protected, remain closed when not in use and stored in a secure setting

### **5.9 Information protection**

All workers will:

- a) observe the organisation's policies regarding privacy and confidentiality when disclosing sensitive or confidential information, and provide access to information when required by law or to assist colleagues within Caringa in their duties
- b) not misuse information obtained or created at work for any reason including: for financial reward or gain, for any other employment, whether concurrent or subsequent to employment at Caringa, for taking advantage of another person, or to contribute to rumours or create innuendo
- c) protect the organisation's intellectual property and not share or divulge to another party assets that rightfully belong to Caringa. The term 'intellectual property' refers to creations of the mind, this includes but is not limited to: creations such as logo, branding, design, literary and artistic works, advertising and marketing materials, training materials and original computer application.
- d) seek permission in writing from senior management to use anything that has been by Caringa or is in the process of development by the organisation. This includes anything that was designed by a Caringa worker during their employment with the organisation for use by the organisation.

- e) observe Caringa policies - **CAL POL – 030 Cyber Security Policy** and **CAL POL – 039 Privacy Policy**, regarding information management and follow specified practices in the collection, storage and disposal of files and other records

## 6. Support

- 6.1** Caringa workers experiencing any negative events or feelings are encouraged to access the Employee Assistance Program by contacting - acacia EAP on 1300 364 273. This is a confidential counselling service and Caringa receives no feedback from these sessions
- 6.2** Caringa will consider the support to be provided to a worker who has been subject to an allegation of breaching this policy. Such support may include a change of duties and /or locations, time to attend counselling or other assistances as deemed appropriate.
- 6.3** Throughout any process resulting from a complaint involving a breach of this policy, Caringa workers – those who notified of the breach and those accused of the breach - have the right to be accompanied by a support person. The person nominated is there to provide the worker with support only, they do not take part in any of the conversations and they are bound by **CAL FOR – 179 Confidentiality Agreement for Individuals**
- 6.4** All workers when commencing with Caringa will be issued a copy of this policy and required to acknowledge their agreement. This policy will be included for discussion in the induction of all new workers
- 6.5** This policy will be re-issued, with the requirement of acknowledgement for all workers at each annual performance review

## 7. Maintaining Compliance

- 7.1** Caringa workers must be truthful in all declarations they make. They must comply with all laws, policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and contractual obligations. Compliance with all lawful and reasonable directions from Caringa is essential
- 7.2** Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination of employment
- 7.3** If you become aware of a breach of this policy immediately report to your manager/team leader. If you are not comfortable reporting the breach to your direct manager, please refer your report directly to the People and Culture team. You may do this in writing in accordance with **CAL POL - 008 Complaints, Grievance and Appeals Policy** (section 5.3) or by email or phone call direct to the people and culture team who will support you further.

## 8. Other Related Documents

### 8.1 Legislation & Related Documents

- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Code of Conduct) Rules (Cth) 2018 & Amendment 2023
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules (Cth) 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Quality and Safeguards Commission) Rules 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Protection and Disclosure of Information—Commissioner) Rules 2018
- NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission registration requirements
- Disability Services and Inclusion (Complaints and Incidents Management) Rules 2023 (Cth)

- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)
- The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)

## 8.2 Caringa Australia Ltd Policy, Procedure, and Work Instruction Documents

- CAL POL – 005 Conflict of Interest
- CAL POL – 006 Child Safe Policy
- CAL POL – 008 Complaints, Grievance and Appeals Policy
- CAL POL – 010 Incident Management
- CAL POL – 017 Individual Outcomes
- CAL POL – 039 Privacy Policy
- CAL POL – 020 Bullying, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Free Workplace Policy
- CAL POL – 038 Whistle-blower Protection Policy
- CAL POL – 028 Workplace Health and Safety Policy
- CAL POL – 026 Social Media Policy
- CAL POL – 041 Drug and Alcohol Policy
- CAL POL – 001 Service Management Policy

## 8.3 Caringa Australia Ltd Forms and Related documents

- CAL FOR – 179 Confidentiality Agreement for Individuals
- CAL FOR – 218 Discussion Record Form
- CAL FOR – 228 Investigation Report
- CAL DOC – 009 Protection of Rights, Detection and Reporting Abuse
- CEL DOC – 031 Code of Conduct for Parents Carers and Guardians
- CAL FOR – 075 Employee Confidentiality Agreement
- CAL FOR – 208 Performance Discussion Record
- CAL FOR – 236 Declaration of Gifts and Benefits
- FEE0111 Caringa Feedback Form – on Donesafe and Website
- Complaints Register – Donesafe

## 9. Document Control and Review

Owner	People and Culture Manager
Approval	Board of Directors
Approval date	28/02/2025

Review of this document will occur in consultation with the relevant stakeholders when legislative changes are made or when changes are made to the way in which Caringa Australia Ltd implements document control and record management arrangements.

Reviews must occur every **2 years** or earlier if required, to ensure ongoing effectiveness and relevance.

Version	Date Issued	Action/Amendment Description	Updated by
4	13/05/2025	Policy transferred to new template/New sections added for Support and Maintaining compliance/more legislation, Caringa policies & forms added/the requirement for this policy to be acknowledged and accepted prior to commencement of employment and annually at performance review	People and Culture Team