

CENTER FOR CHILDHOOD DEAFNESS AND HEARING LOSS

POLICY: 5241

Adopted: March 6, 2015

SUBJECT: **Ethical Conduct**

Approved by:


Sidney Weddele-Wallace, Chair, CDHL Board of Trustees

Purpose: To provide direction to Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss (CDHL) employees in making ethical choices, acting in a manner that demonstrates high ethical standards and complying with the provisions of the Ethics in Public Service Act ("Ethics Act").

Ensuring ethical conduct in the workplace requires that we all know what ethical conduct is and then fully embrace this conduct in every aspect of our work. Agency employees are expected to conduct themselves and their business affairs in a manner consistent with the agency's values and ethical standards, as well with the Ethics Act.

Policy Statement: This policy implements the requirements of state ethics laws, fosters an environment where employees understand they hold a public trust, and informs employees about their ethical responsibilities. The ethics laws are designed to protect state employees from conflicts of interest or from engaging in activities where their interests or loyalties could be divided or questioned.

CDHL employees are to be familiar with state ethics laws, rules and other related policies and act in a way that is consistent with the law, rules and policies.

Compliance with the ethics requirements is an individual responsibility. Maintaining a working knowledge of the requirements will help ensure proper and ethical actions by employees.

Employees are to base their conduct on these core ethical principles:

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| Objectivity | Employees must place the public's interest before any private interest or outside obligation. |
| Selflessness | Employees should not take actions or make decisions in the performance of their position in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their families, or their friends. |
| Stewardship | Employees have a duty to preserve public resources and funds against misuse and abuse. |

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Transparency Employees must practice open and accountable government. They should be as open as possible about their decisions and actions, while protecting truly confidential information.

Integrity Employees should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

All CDHL employees are expected to maintain high professional and ethical standards at all times. Specific expectations, roles and responsibilities are as follows:

1. The agency head is responsible for and shall exercise personal leadership in establishing, maintaining, and carrying out the agency's ethics program. He or she shall make available to the ethics program sufficient resources to enable the agency to administer its program in a positive and effective manner.
2. The Human Resources Manager is designated as the agency's ethics advisor who coordinates and manages the agency's ethics program. The ethics advisor is the agency's liaison to the State's Executive Ethics Board.
3. All agency employees are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Ethics Act (RCW 42.52) and rules (WAC 292-110), applicable agency policies and procedures and for making choices that exemplify an adherence to the highest ethical standards.
4. Employees are to avoid actions that create even the appearance of using their position for personal gain or private advantage for themselves or another person.
5. Employees should notify their supervisor of any actual or potential violations of this policy. When in doubt, employees should consult with their designated ethics advisor and/or the Human Resources office.
6. Violations of the State's Ethics Act and/or this policy may lead to corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
7. The Executive Ethics Board has the authority and responsibility for investigating alleged violations of the Ethics Act and may take administrative action against an agency employee, including imposing a civil penalty for violations. Anyone may file an ethics complaint against a state employee or officer. Complaint forms are available on the Executive Ethics Board website. Complaints may be filed anonymously or the complainant may choose to remain confidential. Ethics complaints may be filed directly with the Board at the following address:

Executive Ethics Board
PO Box 40149
Olympia, WA 98504

8. The agency will take reasonable steps to achieve compliance with applicable laws and rules by monitoring and auditing systems designed to detect unethical conduct and by publicizing a reporting system for employees and other agents to use to report ethical violations.

Response and Prevention: After a violation has been reported, the agency will take all reasonable steps to respond to the violation and to prevent further similar offenses.

General Expectations: The Ethics in Public Service Act, RCW 42.52, applies to all state employees and officers. Each agency employee is expected to read and understand this Act. Each agency employee is expected to know and understand the agency's policies regarding certain sections of the Act, as these policies may be stricter than the Act and the employee must comply with the stricter limitations.

Detailed information on issues related to state ethics, including interpretations and clarifying examples of the Ethics Act and rules are available at the Executive Ethics Board website: www.ethics.wa.gov.

1. Employees shall not:
 - a. Have a financial or other interest or engage in any business, including personal business, or professional activity that conflicts with their official duties.
 - b. Use their position to secure a special privilege for themselves, their family, friends, or any other person. A "person" is also considered to be an outside business or organization.
 - c. Receive any compensation (including gift cards) from any sources, except the state, for performing or not performing their official duties.
 - d. Accept any gifts, except as allowed under RCW 42.52.140 and 150. Gifts include food and beverages in most situations.
 - e. Disclose confidential information to unauthorized person, use confidential information for personal benefit or to benefit another, or withhold disclosure of information that can and/or should be disclosed.
 - f. Use of state resources for personal benefit or to benefit another except as allowed under agency policies and WAC 292-110-010.
 - g. Use state resources to campaign for the election of a person or ballot initiative or to lobby an elected representative.
 - h. Assist another person in a transaction involving the state if they have participated in the transaction or the transaction was part of their job responsibilities.
2. There are post-employment restrictions placed on former employees. Should you leave state service, refer to RCW 42.52.080 to determine if any of these

restrictions apply to your situation *before* accepting a post-state employment job. The Executive Ethics Board has jurisdiction over former employees regarding this section of the Act.

Formal Advisory Opinions: The Executive Ethics Board has the authority and responsibility to render formal advisory opinions. The service is available to any person who has a question about a matter over which the Board has jurisdiction.

Formal advisory opinions are usually used for general advice concerning a specific individual's present or proposed activities or financial transactions. Such questions should be directed to this agency's designated ethics advisor or to the Director of the Executive Ethics Board.

Legal References: Chapter 42.52 RCW
WAC 292-110-010