

# CENTRE OF ABILITIES CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document herein referred to as the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct outlines a set of prescribed behaviours, standard social norms, regulations and responsibilities of all workers and volunteers of CENTRE OF ABILITIES. It also enjoins workers and volunteers to conduct themselves in a specific manner that seeks to uphold their integrity, that of other colleagues and CENTRE OF ABILITIES, contrary to which punitive measures shall be imposed.

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is intended to guide workers and volunteers, officials and all stakeholders of CENTRE OF ABILITIES to comply with applicable laws, rules and regulations as well as the organization's policies and standards. These guiding principles are designed to serve as a touchstone for decision making and conduct across the organisation.

This Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is binding on all workers and volunteers, officials and stakeholders of the CENTRE OF ABILITIES Support programme. An infringement of any of the principles in the Ethics and Professional Conduct shall be referred to an appropriate disciplinary authority for due process as captured in the Code of Conduct.

## 2. OUR VALUES

- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Confidentiality
- Customer Orientation
- Collaboration
- Compliance with relevant laws and guiding principles

## 3. CODE OF ETHICS

### 3.1 Conflict of Interest

CENTRE OF ABILITIES's reputation depends on the actions and conduct of our workers, volunteers and officials. CENTRE OF ABILITIES expects workers, volunteers and officials to avoid relationships and activities that impede or appear to impede their ability to conduct themselves in a fair and objective manner. Workers and volunteers are expected not to unduly use their position for personal benefit or to benefit relatives or close associates. Individuals who have questions or require clarification about a potential conflict of interest or who become aware of an actual or potential conflict should discuss the matter with their supervisor or the HR Manager. A conflict of interest can arise:

- When workers, volunteers or an official takes action or has interests that might make it difficult for him/her to perform work objectively and effectively.
- When workers, volunteers or official (or their family member) receives improper personal benefits as a result of his or her position in the organisation.
- Business dealings that appear to create a conflict between the interest of CENTRE OF ABILITIES and the workers and volunteers.

### 3.2 Anti-Bribery and Corruption

Our integrity is essential for maintaining trustworthiness and a positive reputation. CENTRE OF ABILITIES's work is aimed at creating international awareness and recognition about Ghana. We conduct our work ethically and comply with a host of anti-bribery and corruption laws/policies.

CENTRE OF ABILITIES has a no bribe policy. Bribery is offering, giving, asking for or receiving anything with the intention of getting the recipient to do something improper or in respect to a public official, attempting to influence them to our advantage. All workers and volunteers of CENTRE OF ABILITIES shall:

- Not bribe or receive a bribe;
- Make facilitation payments in relation to work unless it is deemed to be necessary to protect against physical injury or unlawful loss of freedom and same must be reported to management.

### 3.3 Anti-Money Laundering

We do business with only reputable partners, stakeholders and third parties involved in legitimate business activities using funds derived from legitimate sources. Our organisation complies with all anti-money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism laws. We do not engage in money laundering activities and do not encourage our workers and volunteers, officials and stakeholders to participate in same. We do not participate in or facilitate transactions that involve proceeds that we know or suspect are from criminal activities, such as terrorism, narcotics, tax evasion and fraud.

### 3.4 Business Entertainment and Courtesies

We are committed to building good relationships with our beneficiaries and stakeholders. We also have an obligation to comply with our code of conduct and use good judgement when giving or receiving gifts.

- Workers, volunteers and officials are expected not to offer, demand for or accept gifts or other benefits from beneficiaries, donors and stakeholders.
- Workers and volunteers must not place himself/herself in a position to derive any direct or indirect benefit or interest from any of CENTRE OF ABILITIES's beneficiaries, donors and stakeholders where the workers and volunteers can influence decisions.
- In all matters/ business activities, use good judgement to determine whether what is proposed could be seen to be inconsistent with our principles and compromise our integrity.

### 3.5 Harassment

Harassment involves a pattern of abusive and degrading conduct (such as, among other things, verbal abuse, sexually explicit or derogatory comments or images, mimicry, unwanted touching or offensive gestures or jokes) that someone did not solicit or invite and which the harassed person reasonably regards as undesirable or offensive. Harassment may also take the form of bullying such as when an individual or group seeks to intimidate, degrade, humiliate or undermine co-workers and other individuals.

Harassment of any form is unacceptable.

- Workers, volunteers and officials must treat each other with dignity and respect
- Help maintain a non-discriminatory workplace
- Avoid or disapprove of actions or behaviours that contribute to discrimination or harassment of others.
- Workers and volunteers are not to solicit funds or favours from clients as this amounts to harassment under this code

CENTRE OF ABILITIES encourages all workers and volunteers to promptly report all cases of harassment to the HR department for further action.

### 3.6 Integrity

CENTRE OF ABILITIES is committed to promoting the highest standards of integrity, hence conducts its affairs in an ethical and professional manner.

Workers, volunteers and officials are therefore expected to exhibit integrity and observe the highest ethical standards of business conduct in their dealings with clients and all other stakeholders.

All workers and volunteers must at all times provide accurate, verifiable and credible information to beneficiaries, donors and stakeholders.

### 3.7 Diversity and Inclusion

CENTRE OF ABILITIES believes in diversity and strives to nurture a respectful and inclusive environment that promotes peaceful co-existence. CENTRE OF ABILITIES therefore upholds the following principles:

Respect for diversity and personal views Equal opportunities to all persons.

- Application of policies and regulations in a fair manner without discrimination to race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnicity and/or cultural background, age, education sex, gender, marital status, academic status, social status, pregnancy and physical abilities, etc.

### 3.8 Mutual Trust and Respect

CENTRE OF ABILITIES commits to ensuring that all beneficiaries, workers and volunteers work in an environment of respect and mutual trust. Workers and volunteers are expected to promote respect amongst themselves and extend same courtesy to clients and stakeholders.

### 3.9 Open Door Policy

CENTRE OF ABILITIES is committed to a culture of openness and accountability where beneficiaries, workers and volunteers can speak freely, raise concerns, share ideas and provide feedback on all matters that affect them.

All beneficiaries, workers and volunteers are encouraged to contact their supervisor if they need guidance, want to provide feedback, raise a concern or report cases of misconduct/violation of our work ethics. Workers and volunteers also have the option of talking to the HR Manager if they do not feel comfortable talking to their supervisor.

All officials and management are committed to keep workers and volunteers' information and data confidential. Retaliation against workers and volunteers who raise concerns is strictly prohibited.

## **4. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

### **4.1 The Work Environment**

CENTRE OF ABILITIES is committed to building and maintaining a positive, safe, diverse and inclusive working environment. Our greatest asset are our people. We endeavour to provide a work environment where beneficiaries, workers and volunteers are respected, treated equally, appreciated for their efforts and provided with opportunities for personal and professional growth.

We also endeavour to create a healthy work life balance giving our workers and volunteers and officials the opportunity to have personal time and time for their families.

### **4.2 Appearance and Conduct**

In correlation with our principles, CENTRE OF ABILITIES expects all workers and volunteers and officials to be:

- Professional
- Honest
- Diligent
- Neat
- Pleasant
- Hardworking
- Friendly

### **4.3 Punctuality and Absenteeism**

Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers are expected be regular and punctual at work. Absenteeism and tardiness burdens other workers and volunteers. Undue and frequent tardiness and absenteeism will not be tolerated and may attract disciplinary action.

Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers who are unable to report to work due to illness or an emergency should notify their supervisor as soon as possible to enable them arrange for coverage of their duties and help others continue to work in their absence. Workers and volunteers who do not report to work and fails to notify their supervisor will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **4.4 Protection of Assets**

In the course of engagement, certain assets including laptops, tablets, physical, office and field items, intellectual and electronic or digital properties, etc. will be entrusted to beneficiaries, workers and volunteers and officials for professional use. Every asset assigned to workers and volunteers remains the property of CENTRE OF ABILITIES.

- Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers are expected to protect all assets that they come across or are entrusted to them in the course of duty as well as ensure that they use the assets with due care at all times.
- Theft, carelessness and waste have a direct impact on the organization's operational expenses and are prohibited.
- Any suspected incident of fraud or theft should be reported immediately for investigation.
- Unauthorized use or distribution of the organization's assets is prohibited and could also be illegal and result in civil or criminal penalties.
- All beneficiaries, workers and volunteers must return CENTRE OF ABILITIES's assets after completion of their service.

#### 4.5 Protection of Data and Information

The CENTRE OF ABILITIES 's work involves interacting, providing training and advice from Programme beneficiaries and other persons who participate in our Programmes. Strict data confidentiality and protection will be upheld at all times, except where its disclosure is specifically authorized by the organisation or permitted under rules of professional responsibility to which we are subject, or required by law. All workers and volunteers and officials are expected:

- Not to disclose information, identity or personal data of Programme beneficiaries, visitors and other stakeholders collected in the course of duty.
- Not to leave documents containing sensitive information where an unauthorized person might read them, including unattended desks or copy machines;
- To properly return, destroy or dispose of confidential or proprietary information when it is no longer of use.
- To keep confidential information in protected places (such as secured offices, locked drawers and password protected computer systems).
- Not to discuss or use caution when discussing sensitive information on a cell phone or with a co-worker in public places or in open areas within the organisation, such as the breakroom or restrooms.

#### 4.6 Internet Use at Work and Social Media

Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers may use the internet when appropriate to access information needed to conduct organisational activities. The use of the internet must not disrupt or injure the CENTRE OF ABILITIES's electronic devices and must not interfere with workers and volunteers' productivity.

Access to social media is generally not restricted, however beneficiaries, workers and volunteers are only to use social media during their free time or when it is required during training Programmes. CENTRE OF ABILITIES expects that beneficiaries, workers and volunteers will be responsible when using social media, ensuring that they protect their own and the organisation's reputation, in addition to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the organisation and its stakeholders.

Any discussion of the organisation's confidential information or that of its stakeholders on social media is prohibited unless express permission has been sought and granted by Management.

#### 4.7 Cell Phone Use at Work

Personal cell phone usage during work hours is discouraged, except in extreme cases such as an emergency. Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers must endeavour to avoid excessive use of mobile phones during work and training hours.

#### 4.8 Engagement with the Media

The establishment of healthy relations with the media is an important medium for us to create awareness of the abilities and strengths of CENTRE OF ABILITIES. Only authorised professionals who have been assigned the responsibility to speak or interact with the media will do so on behalf of the CENTRE OF ABILITIES.

All beneficiaries, workers, volunteers and officials are prohibited from contacting, interacting with the media on CENTRE OF ABILITIES's behalf unless such responsibility has been assigned by Management.

#### 4.9 Personal Behaviour

All beneficiaries, workers, volunteers and officials are expected to act in pursuance with CENTRE OF ABILITIES values, while interacting with friends and others outside. Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers and officials are expected to avoid any activity (work-related or private) which could reflect badly on the organisation or jeopardise its relationships with beneficiaries, workers, volunteers, stakeholders, donors or the general public. Whether any such activity constitutes misconduct will depend on the circumstances of the case.

#### 4.10 Quality of Service

We take pride in the quality of service and promote quality at every stage of our operations. Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers are highly trained and guarantee quality delivery of service by all standards.

#### 4.11 Health and Safe

The health and safety of all beneficiaries, workers and volunteers is of utmost concern to CENTRE OF ABILITIES. It is our policy to maintain a healthy and safe environment in all our work premises, dangerous, abusive or violent behaviour or the threat of such behaviour is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

- Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers are expected to be conscious in their daily activities, taking due care of themselves and their colleagues.
- Report all health and safety issues immediately when noticed.
- Our Environment, Health, Safety Policy provides detailed information on our commitments and expectations.

#### 4.12 Alcohol and Other Prohibited Substances

The manufacturing, distribution, possession, sale, consumption or purchase of controlled substances of abuse on work premises is not permitted.



Being under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol or substances of abuse is strictly prohibited in the workplace or at work-related events or anywhere that beneficiaries, workers and volunteers' conduct may affect the reputation of CENTRE OF ABILITIES or the safety and well-being of our people.

#### 4.13 Workplace Violence

We aim to provide a safe community for all beneficiaries, workers and volunteers. The organisation will not tolerate any form of work place violence committed by or against workers and volunteers, clients or other stakeholders.

Workers and volunteers are expected to act with integrity, maintain a professional work environment and comply with organisational policies. Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers are prohibited from:

- Causing physical injury to another person
- Making threatening remarks
- Displaying aggressive or hostile behaviour that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress
- Intentionally damaging a person's property or the organisations property.
- Possessing a weapon while on assigned work premises property or while conducting business on behalf of CENTRE OF ABILITIES.

CENTRE OF ABILITIES takes inappropriate conduct seriously, any beneficiaries, workers and volunteers deemed to have committed such acts will be subjected to disciplinary action.

#### 4.14 Dress Code

CENTRE OF ABILITIES aims to provide a consistent professional appearance at all times. Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers must maintain an appropriate standard of dressing and personal appearance at work at all times.

- i. Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers must always present a clean and professional appearance (be well-groomed and wear clean and ironed clothing in a presentable fashion).
- ii. Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers are expected to dress in CENTRE OF ABILITIES prescribed attire or in casual, formal attire or unless the day's tasks require otherwise.
- iii. When beneficiaries, workers and volunteers are required to wear the CENTRE OF ABILITIES prescribed attire, they must ensure that they do so during work hours, unless advised otherwise by their supervisor. The prescribed attire issued must not be altered in any way without the organisation's permission.

**Clothing of this nature will not be permitted it is your only material or accessory:**

- Dirty/torn clothing
- Very short miniskirts
- Hoodies (unless as part of a uniform)
- Hats (unless as part of a uniform)
- Low cut T-shirts, blouses and transparent clothing
- Sports clothing, for example tracksuits and sports shirts

- Clothing that displays slogans or symbols that could cause offence or damage to the organisation's reputation
- Clothing or jewellery that could present a health and safety risk.

#### 4.14.1 Dress Code Violations

Supervisors and the HR department are responsible for ensuring that beneficiaries, workers and volunteers always present themselves professionally. Supervisors are expected to inform beneficiaries, workers and volunteers when they are violating the dress code.

Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers who violate the dress code will immediately correct their outfit; this may include having to leave work to change clothes. Repeated violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### 5. MISCONDUCT

Misconduct is a breach of CENTRE OF ABILITIES's rules which would not normally result in dismissal for a first offence. The severity and frequency of the breach will be taken into account when determining the level of warning. The following list, which is neither exhaustive nor exclusive, gives some of the offences CENTRE OF ABILITIES deems as misconduct. Beneficiaries, workers, volunteers and officials who deviates from these rules and standards will be subject to disciplinary action.

S/n	Misconduct
1	Persistent minor breaches of CENTRE OF ABILITIES rules
2	Unauthorized absences from work, which have no underlying chronic medical condition and are not disability related
3	Excessive late attendance and/or tardiness
4	Leaving the workplace without permission from Supervisor
5	Not returning to work following a break/lunch period
6	Absenteeism
7	Quarrelsome at work place
8	Carelessness causing minor damage to CENTRE OF ABILITIES property
9	Malingering and feigning illness
10	Loitering during work hours
11	Smoking in restricted areas
12	Failure to follow safety procedure
13	Unnecessary wastage of documents and materials
14	Abuse of CENTRE OF ABILITIES's property
15	Negligence in the care of work tools, equipment and apparatus
16	Failure to keep work place clean and tidy
17	Obstructing other beneficiaries, workers and volunteers from work
18	Bullying or harassment
19	Unlawful discrimination
20	A serious act of insubordination
21	Willfully ignoring responsibilities or reasonable instructions on a repeated basis
22	Serious neglect of duties
23	Undue influence on a minor

## 6. REPORTING ETHICS AND CONDUCT VIOLATION

CENTRE OF ABILITIES is committed to ensuring compliance with CENTRE OF ABILITIES's policies and applicable local and international standards.

- i. CENTRE OF ABILITIES encourages beneficiaries, workers and volunteers to ask questions, seek advice about concerns and report all misconduct, violation or suspected wrongdoings.
- ii. Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers who have job related concerns or witness suspected misconduct or violations should first report the issue to their immediate supervisor. If the beneficiaries, workers and volunteers and supervisor are unable to resolve the matter, the matter should be reported to the HR Manager.
- iii. If beneficiaries, workers and volunteers do not feel comfortable reporting their concerns to their supervisor, they should report to the HR Manager.
- iv. In all cases, supervising or managers who receive a report of suspected wrongdoing must take prompt and decisive action and must either seek guidance from the HR department/Management for the investigation.
- v. Retaliation against beneficiaries, workers and volunteers who report violation or suspected wrongdoings is strictly prohibited.

## 7. DISCIPLINE

Compliance with our Code of Conduct and principles is necessary to maintain a professional, safe and healthy work environment. Violation of the code of conduct will warrant appropriate disciplinary sanctions. The following guideline will be used to administer discipline based on seriousness of the offence.

Offence	Action
<b>First offence</b>	Beneficiaries, workers, volunteers and officials will be given a documented verbal warning
<b>Second offence</b>	Written warning
<b>Third offence</b>	Suspended or terminated/dismissal from the programme

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CENTRE OF ABILITIES expects every Beneficiaries, workers and volunteers to submit a signed acknowledgement form, affirming the knowledge and understanding of and compliance with the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

## 9. GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
<b>COA</b>	Centre of Abilities
<b>COA Workers and Volunteers</b>	Centre of Abilities Workers and volunteers
<b>Officials</b>	Supervising workers and volunteers of the CENTRE OF ABILITIES Support Programmes or Administrative assistant
<b>Stakeholders</b>	Donors, General Public, Supervisory Agencies, Affiliates
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	Individual and Groups that participate and benefit from Center of Abilities Programmes and Activities

I, \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby certify that:

(Print Name Above)

- i. I have received and carefully read the CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT of CENTRE OF ABILITIES.
- ii. I understand the CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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