

**EMPLOYEE CONDUCT – CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN
EMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS**

HR C3

INTENT

To provide employees with guidelines to support them to avoid situations of conflict of interest and possible breach of the Code of Ethics.

POLICY

Staff of Sunshine Coast Community Services Society is expected to avoid situations which could result in a conflict of interest or result in a public perception that a conflict exists, as well as any action that would compromise or undermine the trust which the public, clients and funders place in the organization.

DEFINITION

A conflict of interest is any situation in which an employee, either for himself/herself or some other person(s), attempts to promote a private or personal interest which results in an interference with the objective exercise of the employee's duties in his/her job and/or a gain or an advantage by virtue of the employee's position. Sunshine Coast Community Services Society recognizes the right of staff to be involved in activities as citizens of the community; however staff will keep separate and distinct the role of private citizen from their responsibilities as staff members.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles shall guide actions and decisions regarding conflict of interest in employment situations:

1. The employer and employee must act in the best interests of the client.
2. The employee must not participate in decisions from which the employee could benefit personally.
3. The employee must regard benefits accruing to an immediate relative or business partner as if the employee were to benefit.
4. The employee must not refer clients from the employee's job to the employee's private business.
5. The employee must not use paid time or the employer's property without payment for personal benefit or to pursue the employee's private business.
6. The employee must not use the employee's position, or information obtained in the job to provide an unfair advantage in the employee's private business.

PROCEDURE

Employees must declare potential or actual conflict of interest situations or any potential or actual financial transactions with a client to the Executive Director who will document the discussion, steps taken and decisions. Decisions may be appealed via complaint procedures (reference policy HR C5).

1. Outside Employment

Staff may engage in remunerative self-employment or other employment, or receive remuneration from the public outside their position provided that these activities do not:

1. Interfere with the performance of their duties as an employee.
2. Bring Sunshine Coast Community Services Society into disrepute.
3. Appear to be an official act or to represent the organization's opinion or policy.

2. Gifts

Staff will not accept compensation or rewards from individuals or agencies because of the position they occupy in the organization. Money or other substantial gifts offered should be firmly but kindly refused. If a question arises regarding the appropriateness of a gift it shall be discussed with the supervisor (see also HR C1 Code of Ethics).

3. Personal Affairs of Clients

Employees shall not become involved in the personal affairs of a resident/client relating to legal, financial, or property matters. Exceptions to this policy may be made by the Executive Director or supervisor for employees who are immediate family of residents or clients. Employees or relatives of employees may not: 1) sign "Consent for Treatment" forms on behalf of residents admitted to hospital; 2) witness the signing of wills or other legal documents except as designated by employer's policy; 3) handle or manage a resident/client's monies or assets apart from minimal personal needs funds or belongings.

4. Private/Family Relations

Staff who are direct relatives of or share the same household with clients receiving services at Sunshine Coast Community Services Society may not engage in activities that would have a detrimental effect on the clients and/or business of Sunshine Coast Community Services Society. Friendships outside of work between staff and clients may compromise the impartiality, competency and/or quality of services. In such cases, the staff will be expected to remove themselves from the professional relationship to protect the best interests of the clients and the Society. This restriction may be waived provided that sufficient safeguards are in place to ensure the best interests of clients and/or Sunshine Coast Community Services Society are not compromised.

5. Personal Fund-raising

Any fund-raising activities, unrelated to their employment, conducted by staff will be pre-authorized by the Executive Director or Program Director.

Any breaches of this policy are considered serious and will result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including termination of employment.

EFFECTIVE: December 1, 2015	APPROVED BY: Executive Director	
REPLACES: April 1, 2014	MONITORING: Executive Director	FREQUENCY: Annually