

# UNDERSTANDING DET'S VALUES



RESPONSIVENESS



INTEGRITY



IMPARTIALITY



ACCOUNTABILITY



RESPECT



LEADERSHIP



HUMAN RIGHTS

CORPORATE  
GUIDE



# OUR VALUES - A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



Few jobs are more important than those in public education, early childhood development and training.

Your work provides Victorians with the foundations for a bright future, and in turn shapes the collective prosperity and potential of our state. I thank you for your commitment and contributions to this important task.

The community values and trusts our system and is right to have high expectations of us. The way we conduct ourselves, make decisions and interact with our colleagues, students and others is therefore hugely important.

DET's values, and how we live them, go to the heart of the integrity of our system.

Living the values shows us at our best and helps achieve the outcomes we seek in building the Education State: the learning, engagement and development of Victorians, the growth of their skills and the broadening of their horizons.

I ask you to take the time to read this guide and the set of practical tools designed to help you understand what the Values mean for us.

The tools can be used to apply the values to ethical dilemmas that can arise in our work.

The right thing to do is not always clear-cut and the tools are a helpful way to reflect on and guide ethical decision making.

The DET Values are drawn from the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees, which applies to all corporate and school staff as part of our employment.

We are all extremely privileged to work in a system that makes a real difference. It's up to all of us to bring out the best in ourselves and each other - and maximise the potential for Victorians.

**Gill Callister**  
Secretary



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# THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide supports you to understand and demonstrate the values expected of Victorian public sector employees.

The Department of Education and Training is committed to providing Victorian students with the best possible learning and development experience, and to making our state a smarter, fairer and more prosperous place.

This cannot be achieved without highly professional, capable and *ethical* staff.

DET's Values guide the actions we take, the decisions we make and the interactions we have in performing our public duties.

This guide will help you understand:

- the connection between DET Values and the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (the Code)
- why the Code applies to you, and why you must uphold it as part of your employment with DET
- the representative behaviours relevant to each value

The guide can be used to:

- support discussions about DET Values with colleagues
- reflect on your own performance
- support your decision making.

# DET's VALUES AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT

DET has adopted the Public Sector Values which are set out in the Code. DET's Values are Responsiveness, Integrity, Impartiality, Accountability, Respect, Leadership and Human Rights.

The Code is binding on all public sector employees. This means that we are all required to demonstrate DET Values in our work.

A serious failure to uphold the values can result in employment action.

## WHY DO WE NEED VALUES?

- Values set expected behaviours:  
DET's Values underpin the behaviours that the government and community expect of all public sector employees. DET's Values should be demonstrated in everything we do.
- Values provide guiding principles:  
DET's Values are the guiding principles for every decision we make.

- Values-driven behaviours increase trust and confidence in our work:

The public expect us to act in accordance with DET's Values. Doing so is central to building and sustaining trust in the important work we do.

- Values-driven behaviour strengthens our capabilities and improves outcomes:

When DET staff act in accordance with DET's Values, it strengthens DET's capacity to operate effectively and achieve its objectives.

# DO THE CODE AND VALUES APPLY TO ME?

The Code and values apply to *all* Victorian staff engaged by DET (including casual and part-time employees). This means that the Code and values apply to both school based and corporate employees.

The below image (figure 1) demonstrates the composition of the Victorian public sector which includes Departments such as DET.

The Code – and DET Values – apply to all staff in our organisation, including:

- The Secretary of the Department
- The Deputy Secretaries
- Executive Class Officers
- Principal Class Officers
- Teachers
- Education Support Officers
- Victorian Public Servants (VPS)
- Allied Health Professionals
- School Nurses
- Koori Education Officers
- School Council Employees



Figure 1: the composition of the Victorian public sector



## DO THE CODE AND DET VALUES APPLY TO CONTRACTORS AND CONSULTANTS?

Contractors or consultants (including those engaged through an employment agency) are required to comply with the Code and uphold DET's Values, if they:

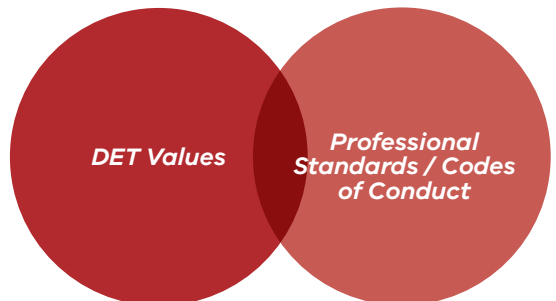
- supervise public sector employees
- undertake work that is of a public sector function at premises or location generally regarded as a public sector workplace
- use, or have access to, public sector resources or information that are not normally accessible or available to the public.

If you manage contractors or consultants then it is your responsibility to ensure they are aware of their obligations to comply with the Code and DET values.

## HOW DO DET'S VALUES AND THE CODE FIT WITH MY PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS?

Many of our staff, such as teachers, accountants, lawyers, nurses and health professionals (e.g., psychologists), are also bound by their professional standards, conduct rules or codes of practice.

DET's Values and the Code should be read in conjunction with your professional standards. They compliment each other and together guide your behaviour.





# RESPONSIVENESS

We respond in a timely way with our best work

## Definition

**Public officials should demonstrate responsiveness by:**

- providing frank, impartial and timely advice;
- providing high quality services to the Victorian community; and
- identifying and promoting best practice

## Representative Behaviours for DET

**We always:**

- care about the quality of our services and programs, and aim to be the best
- strive to provide efficient and timely service, honest advice, and information based on all available facts
- remain committed to ensuring that the public has a high quality education system that gives opportunities for all
- strive to make a difference and seek better ways to do our work
- respond promptly and get our work done well
- remain apolitical, ensuring we do not use our positions to support personal political preferences

## Conversation starters

*How do you demonstrate this value? What are the benefits?*

*How does this behaviour improve outcomes at work?*

*What behaviours represent this value when engaging with:*

- *Your team*
- *Your colleagues*
- *Managers and Executives*
- *Stakeholders*
- *Clients / end users*



# INTEGRITY

We are honest, ethical and transparent

## Definition

**Public officials should demonstrate integrity by:**

- being honest, open and transparent in their dealings; and
- using powers responsibly; and
- reporting improper conduct; and
- avoiding any real or apparent conflicts of interest; and
- striving to earn and sustain public trust of a high level

## Representative Behaviours for DET

**We always:**

- spend money wisely for its intended purpose
- ask questions, raise issues, speak up and report unethical behaviour and misconduct
- avoid or manage potential or perceived conflicts of interest
- carry out our work safely and avoid conduct that puts ourselves or others at risk
- deliver on our promises and avoid conduct in our work or personal lives that may diminish the public's trust
- act honestly, openly and consultatively in the performance of our work and use our positions fairly and responsibly

## Conversation starters

*How do you demonstrate this value? What are the benefits?*

*How does this behaviour improve outcomes at work?*

*What behaviours represent this value when engaging with:*

- Your team
- Your colleagues
- Managers and Executives
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# IMPARTIALITY

We behave in the best interests of the public by making fair and objective decisions

## Definition

**Public officials should demonstrate impartiality by:**

- making decisions and providing advice on merit and without bias, caprice, favoritism or self-interest; and
- acting fairly by objectively considering all relevant facts and fair criteria; and
- Implementing Government policies and programs equitably

## Representative Behaviours for DET

**We always:**

- make decisions based on the best available facts, evidence, information and arguments
- provide clear and proper reasons for the decisions we make
- act fairly, consistently, objectively and with equality (in all our interactions and actions)
- avoid being influenced by offers of gifts, benefits or hospitality and adhere to DET policy
- follow agreed processes and manage issues consistently, fairly and in a timely manner

## Conversation starters

*How do you demonstrate this value? What are the benefits?*

*How does this behaviour improve outcomes at work?*

*What behaviours represent this value when engaging with:*

- Your team
- Your colleagues
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# ACCOUNTABILITY

We hold ourselves and others to account for the work that we do

## Definition

**Public officials should demonstrate accountability by:**

- working to clear objectives in a transparent manner; and
- accepting responsibility for their decisions and actions; and
- seeking to achieve best use of resources; and
- submitting themselves to appropriate scrutiny

## Representative Behaviours for DET

**We always:**

- use work resources responsibly and appropriately
- engage genuinely with the community
- use, share and disclose information as intended
- consider and accept the consequences of our actions and own our decisions
- know what we need to do in our work and take responsibility to achieve it
- act and make lawful and transparent decisions within our level of authority

## Conversation starters

*How do you demonstrate this value? What are the benefits?*

*How does this behaviour improve outcomes at work?*

*What behaviours represent this value when engaging with:*

- *Your team*
- *Your colleagues*
- *Managers and Executives*
- *Stakeholders*
- *Clients / end users*



# RESPECT

We value others and accept their differences

## Definition

**Public officials should demonstrate respect for colleagues, other public officials and members of the Victorian community by:**

- treating them fairly and objectively; and
- ensuring freedom from discrimination, harassment and bullying; and
- using their views to improve outcomes on an ongoing basis

## Representative Behaviours for DET

**We always:**

- treat everyone in a considerate, fair and courteous manner
- maintain confidentiality and treat private information properly
- recognise the achievements of others and share team success
- listen and encourage everyone to explain ideas and actions
- ensure that everyone has the right tools to do their work
- collaborate and engage constructively with each other working towards a common goal

## Conversation starters

*How do you demonstrate this value? What are the benefits?*

*How does this behaviour improve outcomes at work?*

*What behaviours represent this value when engaging with:*

- *Your team*
- *Your colleagues*
- *Managers and Executives*
- *Stakeholders*
- *Clients / end users*



# LEADERSHIP

We are genuine, supportive and do the right thing

## Definition

**Public officials should demonstrate leadership by:**

- actively implementing, promoting and supporting these values

## Representative Behaviours for DET

**We always:**

- act in a genuine and authentic way, modelling DET's Values and support others to do so
- walk the talk and match our actions with our words - others can rely on us to do as we promise
- promote frank and honest discussions and have courage to challenge the status quo
- acknowledge the great ideas of others that improve the way we work
- help others to be accountable for their actions, decisions and their own development
- make choices and take actions that promote a safe working environment for everyone

## Conversation starters

*How do you demonstrate this value? What are the benefits?*

*How does this behaviour improve outcomes at work?*

*What behaviours represent this value when engaging with:*

- Your team
- Your colleagues
- Managers and Executives
- Stakeholders
- Clients / end users



# HUMAN RIGHTS

We uphold and respect the rights of others

## Definition

***Public officials should respect and promote the human rights set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities by:***

- making decisions and providing advice consistent with human rights; and
- actively implementing, promoting and supporting human rights

## Representative Behaviours for DET

***We always:***

- are inclusive and embrace equal rights for all
- make sure everyone can be involved, regardless of their circumstances, background, or personal preferences
- respect the rights of others
- report any suspected breaches of human rights
- promote the Charter of Human Rights in all our interactions and activities, with our colleagues, our students, our parents and in our communities

## Conversation starters

*How do you demonstrate this value? What are the benefits?*

*How does this behaviour improve outcomes at work?*

*What behaviours represent this value when engaging with:*

- *Your team*
- *Your colleagues*
- *Managers and Executives*
- *Stakeholders*
- *Clients / end users*



# WHAT HAVE I LEARNT?

The Code of Conduct (the Code) applies to all public sector employees, including staff working in both schools and regional or central offices.

The Code outlines the public sector values which are also DET's values.

DET's Values are:

- Responsiveness
- Integrity
- Impartiality
- Accountability
- Respect
- Leadership
- Human Rights

Both school and non-school based staff (i.e. teaching staff and Victorian Public Servants) are public sector employees.

Contractors and consultants engaged in work for the Department are required to comply with the Code and DET's Values.

My professional code of conduct and DET's Values work in partnership and are complementary.

DET's Values guide the actions we take, the decisions we make and the interactions we have with each other, children, young people and families.

DET's Values make the expectations for conduct clear to the public we serve and are central to building and sustaining trust in the important work we do.

# RESOURCES

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/Pages/Public-Sector-Values.aspx>



