



CODE OF CONDUCT

MISSION STATEMENT

Guided by Catholic values and teachings, we serve and offer bilingual (English/French) services to children, youth, and families within the Hamilton community to protect their safety and well-being, strengthen families and nurture lifelong relationships.

OUR SHARED VISION

Child and youth safety, well-being and resilience, thriving families, and community partners working together.

INTRODUCTION

We endeavor to conduct ourselves in the workplace and in our service with faith-inspired care, compassion, and community.

In this Code of Conduct we find pride of purpose and acknowledge our unique position in our community. We undertake to safeguard the public trust and confidence which are vested in our service and to discharge our responsibilities and duties in a manner that inspires respect, and which adheres to the highest standards of conduct.

To this end, we adopt the Code of Conduct as set out in this document. The Code of Conduct identifies and establishes contemporary standards or principles of conduct that govern the actions of individuals associated with the Society. It is important that we acquaint ourselves with the tenets of the Code and recognize that our continued employment and relationship with the Society is dependent upon upholding these principles and expectations for conduct. In order to uphold the mission, values and goals of the Society, we seek knowledge of what is and what should be; and we actively pursue our understanding of right and wrong within a framework of conscience, duty, accountability, honour and equity. We seek to uphold this Code of Conduct in spirit as well as in letter; that it focuses our critical thinking on the impact of our decisions and actions in each situation we encounter.

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton employees, members of the Board of Directors, volunteers, students, foster care providers and other contractors engaged by the Society must confirm they have read and understood this Code of Conduct and that as a condition of employment or association with the Society, they will adhere to this Code of Conduct.

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INTERPRETATION

For the purposes of the Code of Conduct, the "Society" means the Board of Directors, all employees, and where applicable, foster care providers, students, and volunteers.

PRINCIPLE I: QUALITY OF SERVICE

Drawing on the heritage of our Catholic faith, our vocation as an agency is to offer the highest quality of service in which children and youth are helped to live safely and thrive, families are empowered to flourish, and the bonds of community are strengthened through compassion and justice. While acknowledging the differences which may exist among our respective roles, positions, and responsibilities, we hold each to make a substantial contribution to the work of the Society. Therefore, as representatives of the Society, we undertake to perform our respective duties with competence, conscientiousness, and integrity within an inclusive, equitable framework.

We uphold the values of partnership and empowerment for both our colleagues and those to whom we provide service and undertake to act in a manner that delivers strength based, equity focused, faith inspired services.

EXPECTATIONS FOR CONDUCT:

1. We will make every effort to fulfill the requirements of our respective positions such that our service to the Society and service recipients is timely and effective and meets the standards of performance established by the Society.
2. We will undertake to remain current and competent in our respective areas of knowledge and skill, engaging in a culture where we are always learning, collaborating, and embracing ways to improve.
3. We will seek from each other, and will provide to each other, consultation and assistance respectfully and in the spirit of partnership to create a caring, compassionate, and spirited community in our workplace and in service to children, youth and families.
4. In matters outside our immediate competence and experience we will seek the assistance of our colleagues and/or direction from our superiors in a timely manner.

PRINCIPLE II: ADMINISTRATION OF SERVICE

We undertake both collectively and individually, to uphold and comply with all laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures that impact on our responsibilities and on the mandate of the Society.

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EXPECTATIONS FOR CONDUCT:

1. The Society, as the corporate body, reserves to itself the right to make rules, policies, and procedures necessary to govern its business and the actions of its staff and to ensure the proper discharge of its authority and mandate.
2. The Society, as the corporate body, will comply with all laws, rules and regulations as applicable for all levels of government and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. Further, it will uphold the terms and conditions of employment and the applicable Collective Agreement.
3. We will undertake to acquaint ourselves with all laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures which impact on our specific responsibilities. The Society will make these documents available to staff, students, and volunteers. We will undertake to make decisions which are consistent with these and then to act in a manner which affords them consistent and meaningful effect. Further, where we are members of a professional governing body (Ontario College of Social Workers, and Social Services Workers, Law Society of Upper Canada, Certified Management Accountants of Ontario, Certified General Accountants of Ontario, Human Resources Professional Association of Ontario etc.) we will as individual members acquaint ourselves and keep current with all laws, rules, regulations policies and procedures which impact our specific responsibilities.
4. We recognize the inherent value of critical reflection and experience which enable us to learn and grow, and which balance the opportunity to act with the obligation to act in an effective, equitable and responsible manner. To these ends, we hold the establishment of rules, policies, and procedures to be dynamic, sensitive to error, and responsive to change. We undertake to review and revise, as required, our rules, policies, and procedures to ensure that we actualize our full potential to provide service.

PRINCIPLE III: INTEGRITY

Our agency services are inspired by the rich tradition of Catholic moral and social teaching which are founded on the virtues of faith, hope and charity. We are therefore dedicated to, and accept responsibility for, the discharge of our duties with the highest degree of ethical awareness and professional integrity.

EXPECTATIONS FOR CONDUCT:

1. We will always honour and respect the sacred dignity, integrity, and the rights of other persons in our workplace, and in the children, youth, and families that we serve.
2. We will foster a culture of care, compassion, and community in our workplace in which priority is given to nurturing healthy relationships with one another and hope and healing for the children, youth, and families that we serve.

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3. We acknowledge that dishonourable conduct on the part of a representative of the Society will reflect adversely upon the integrity of the Society as a whole and may impair the fundamental relationship of trust, which is an essential component of the Society's relationships with those receiving services from the Society, its associates, its founders, the community, and with each other as colleagues.
4. We will not use our professional and/or work relationship to further our own personal, religious, political, sexual, or business interests.
5. Any work produced by us in the course of our duties with the Society shall be considered the exclusive intellectual property of the Society unless there is a written agreement stating otherwise between the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton and our self.
6. We are encouraged to participate in the community through involvement with non-profit/community organizations and professional associations. Society time and resources shall only be utilized with the prior agreement of management. We may reach positions in non-profit associations or professional associations where we may be viewed as spokespersons for the group; we must ensure that we are not acting as a spokesperson for the Society.
7. We are entrusted with the care, management and cost-effective use of Society property, funds, equipment, supplies or services. These items shall not be used for personal benefit. We shall ensure that equipment assigned to us is maintained in good condition and secured appropriately. Technological equipment shall be used in accordance with the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's Information Systems policies and procedures.
8. We maintain financial records, expense documents, invoices, vouchers, payroll records and other financial documents with accuracy and punctuality. We shall not manipulate, falsify, alter or amend documents, information or records for fraudulent purposes.

PRINCIPLE IV: FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, WORKPLACE VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARRASMENT

We recognize and will uphold the inherent dignity, worth and rights of each individual. We undertake to pursue equity and freedom from discrimination and harassment; and to pursue the removal of all systemic barriers to equity.

EXPECTATIONS FOR CONDUCT:

1. We will neither tolerate nor condone any actions, behaviours, or attitudes in the work environment that discriminate on the grounds protected by the *Ontario Human Rights Code*:
 - Age
 - Ancestry, colour, race
 - Citizenship
 - Ethnic origin

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- Place of origin
 - Creed
 - Disability
 - Family status
 - Marital status (including single status)
 - Gender identity, gender expression
 - Receipt of public assistance (in housing only)
 - Record of offences (in employment only)
 - Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)
 - Sexual orientation.
2. We will neither tolerate nor condone any actions, behaviours, or attitudes in the work environment which constitute sexual harassment or the threat thereof.
 3. We will neither tolerate nor condone nor ignore any bullying or demeaning actions, behaviours, or attitudes in the work environment that create an unsafe, intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, or which interfere unreasonably with the ability of an individual to perform their duties.

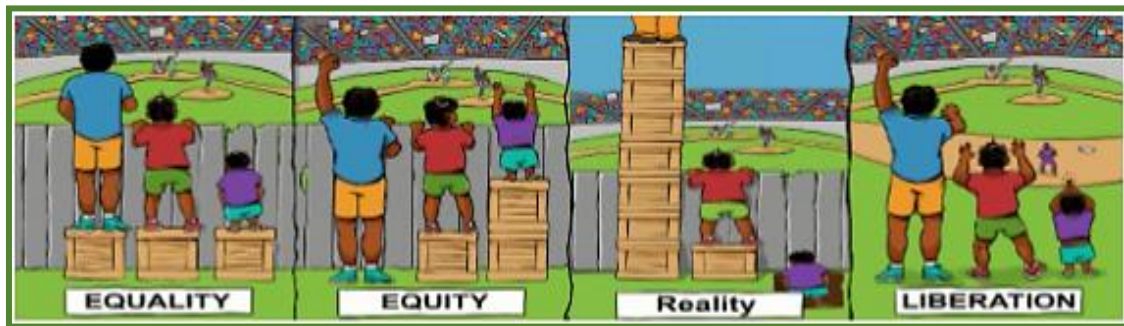
The *Occupation Health and Safety Act* defines workplace harassment as engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Workplace harassment can involve unwelcome words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, or demeaning to a worker or group of workers, in a workplace. It can also include behaviour that intimidates, isolates, or even discriminates against the targeted individual(s).

This may include:

- making remarks, jokes or innuendos that demean, ridicule, intimidate, or offend;
 - displaying or circulating offensive pictures or materials in print or electronic form;
 - bullying;
 - repeated offensive or intimidating phone calls or e-mails; or
 - workplace sexual harassment.
4. We will undertake to uphold all relevant federal, provincial, and municipal laws, and all policies and procedures that exist to protect the human rights of individuals.
 5. Every person has the right to protection and remedy, through relevant law, policies, and procedures established externally and internally to address matters arising from discrimination and/or harassment, without reprisal or threat of reprisal.

PRINCIPLE V: EQUITY

The Society follows Catholic social teaching in promoting unity in diversity, the common good, and positive social change. We are actively committed to equity, inclusion, and empowerment of all our staff and service recipients. Equity is defined as the provision of opportunities for equality for all. Equity of treatment is not the same as equal treatment. Equity includes acknowledging historical and present systemic discrimination against equity seeking groups and removing barriers, eliminating discrimination, and remedying the impact of past discrimination.



The Society acknowledges the historic and present impact of colonial practices, particularly for Indigenous Peoples and African Canadians that have contributed to the oppression of children, youth, and families; we also acknowledge the impact of our own practices on maintaining systemic barriers within the organization for these communities. As an agency we must do better and be held accountable for the results and work we do.

We are committed to actively and continuously working towards cultivating a culture of inclusion, identifying, and eliminating all forms of discrimination and systemic barriers, particularly for those who have suffered in the past because of race, colour, religion, place of origin, ancestry, creed, family status, marital status, citizenship, disability/differently abled, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and/or age.

EXPECTATIONS FOR CONDUCT:

1. In the spirit of our Catholic heritage and identity, we will demonstrate a commitment to actively and continuously working towards cultivating a culture of inclusion, identifying and eliminating all forms of discrimination and systemic barriers, particularly for those who have suffered in the past because of race, colour, religion, place of origin, ancestry, creed, family status, marital status, citizenship, disability/differently abled, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and/or age.
2. We will undertake to uphold all relevant federal, provincial, and municipal legislation and all policies and procedures that exist to protect equal opportunity.

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3. We will continue to make training a priority that names and addresses oppression (anti-racism, anti-oppression, anti-Indigenous racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, classism, and a range of other oppressions) in order that participants demonstrate a greater personal commitment to equity and inclusion through behaviours and language. Individuals employed by or associated with the Society will complete such continuous professional education as provided by the Society.
4. We believe it is important to be better than our past to ensure our work does not create generational harm. We will embrace unique perspectives, values, and traditions. We will listen, learn, and engage authentically with all of our staff members and community stakeholders in a culturally responsive and safe manner.
5. We will remove barriers that cause overrepresentation and create inequity of outcomes for service users, particularly for Indigenous, Black/African Canadian, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, Francophone, Immigrants and Newcomers communities.
6. We will ensure that all leadership and decision-making at every level within the organization will be centered through a critical equity, anti-racism analysis that is informed by Catholic values and teachings.
7. We will achieve Service Excellence through acknowledging and dismantling any inequities within our service delivery framework paying specific attention to our policies, practices, and programs.
8. We will ensure that diverse communities are fully represented, authentically engaged through collaboration and that the voices of children, youth and families are listened to and central to our partnerships.
9. We will implement the recommendations presented through the Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action and the One Vision One Voice Race Equity Framework.
10. We will ensure that a critical analysis of data and disaggregated data will be utilized to inform all organizational systems, service provisions, programs, procedures, and practices.

PRINCIPLE VI: QUALITY OF COMMUNICATION

We uphold the principle of open communication within the Society within the limits of Part X of the *Child and Youth Family Services Act* and other relevant legislation, and the creation of a positive working environment where staff relationships are based on mutual respect and trust and the flow of timely, accurate and candid information supports the achievement of the Society goals and the strengthening of Society values.

EXPECTATIONS FOR CONDUCT:

1. We will communicate with one another and our service recipients kindly and respectfully at all times.

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2. We will address communication, behaviours or attitudes which are rude, provocative, disruptive, discriminatory, or racist.
3. We shall not publicly speak on behalf of the Society in the traditional media or on social media platforms, unless specifically designated to do so as the Society spokesperson.
4. We undertake to distinguish clearly between our opinions as individuals and our statements as representatives of the Society. When called upon by the Society to assist in conveying information to the public, we will undertake to do so in an informed manner which encourages public respect for the Society, and which does not infringe upon the rights of those receiving services from the Society.

PRINCIPLE VII: DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

We undertake to hold in strict confidence all information concerning the business and affairs of the Society and service recipients and will disclose such information only if authorized to do so by the Society, or the individual receiving service from the Society, or as required by law.

EXPECTATIONS FOR CONDUCT:

1. When disclosure of confidential information is required by law or by court order, the information disclosed shall be limited to only that required, as stipulated by Part X of the *Child and Youth Family Services Act*, or any other applicable Act or legislation.
2. The (fiduciary) relationship of trust, that is a fundamental component of the Society's work, prevents representatives of the Society from using any information for their benefit, or for the benefit of a third party, without prior full disclosure to the Society and with authorization of the Society. Further, no information shall be used to the detriment of the Society or its work.
3. We will continue to uphold those principles of confidentiality as expressed in the Society's policies and procedures.

PRINCIPLE VIII: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

As representatives of the Society, we undertake not to act in a manner where there is, or is likely to be, a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

EXPECTATIONS FOR CONDUCT:

1. A conflicting interest is one which would be likely to affect adversely the judgment of a representative of the Society when acting on behalf of the Society. We acknowledge that the presence of a conflict of interest or the presence of compromising or competing influences may seriously prejudice our ability to act freely and fairly in the fulfillment of our duties and responsibilities as employees or individuals associated with the Society.

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2. We will disclose through appropriate channels, fully and without delay, any actual or possible conflict of interest.
3. We will disclose through appropriate channels, fully and without delay, any errors or omissions in the performance of our duties and responsibilities which may affect adversely the business of the Society, or which may, attract legal liability or adverse publicity.
4. We will not use information obtained in the course of our employment by the Society to further our own personal, professional, or business interests.
5. We shall not personally make any decision or participate in the process to hire, transfer, promote, demote, discipline, or terminate any family members, friends, or business associates. The Society does not allow individuals to be supervised by family members or appointed to positions where job responsibilities are incompatible with that of family members.
6. We may not solicit or accept any inappropriate gift, benefit, money, favours or other assistance from any person or business that is associated with the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton. Inappropriate gifts may be returned to the individual or donated to a charity and the donor notified. We may keep a gift where the gift is nominal (usually less than \$30), an infrequent occurrence and not an attempt to seek an unfair advantage. If we receive a gift, we should report the receipt of the gift to our supervisor.
7. Employees may hold outside or secondary jobs or engage in self-employment activities on their own time, using their own resources, and in a manner not adversely affecting their performance of duties with the Society. Outside employment must not interfere with an individual's regular duties or involve the use of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's supplies, equipment, and resources. Employees shall not engage in outside employment that may be an actual or apparent conflict of interest. Any employee that wishes to work part-time, or for any amount of time after their regularly scheduled work hours with the Society should discuss the matter with their supervisor prior to accepting the secondary employment. The employee may be required to disclose information pertaining to the proposed secondary employment to allow a full review by the Society to ensure that there is no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

Ontario Human Rights Code
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Child, Youth, and Family Services Act
Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's Equity Statement
Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's Equity Placemat
Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's Strategy Map 2021-23
Halton Children's Aid Society's Code of Conduct (with permission)

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WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN FACED WITH AN ETHICAL DILEMMA?

The Code of Conduct addresses the most common ethical issues we might encounter; however, it does not provide an answer for every situation. When we are faced with an ethical dilemma, we should reference available resources such as the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's policies and procedures, legislation and professional standards.

The Code of Conduct makes ethics and integrity part of the way we think about completing our work. When making decisions we ask ourselves the following questions:

- Do I think my actions comply with legislated standards?
- Do I think my actions comply with the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's policies and procedures?
- Would I make the same decision if my colleagues, the public or the media were watching me?
- Do I feel confident that my actions are not advancing my own private interests?
- Does it feel like the right thing to do?
- Do I think my actions are guided by the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's commitment to Catholic moral values and social teachings?
- Do they reflect faith-inspired care, compassion, and community?
- Will a decision or action I am taking advance or create barriers to equity for marginalized groups and those overrepresented in the child welfare system?
- What impact could my decision or actions have on those with marginalized identities and in what ways? Examples of marginalized identities are: race, colour, religion, place of origin, ancestry, creed, family status, marital status, citizenship, disability/differently abled, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and/or age.

If we cannot answer yes to all of the questions above, we should not proceed with the action in question. If we have additional questions, we should seek guidance from our Supervisor, Director, Human Resources Department, Board Chair, or professional association.

Questions may also be directed to the Human Resources email box HR@hamiltonccas.on.ca.

WHAT DO I DO IF I WOULD LIKE TO REPORT A CONCERN?

The Society encourages employees, volunteers, student interns, foster care providers, board members and contractors to share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, this will be the person to whom you report to. However, if you do not feel comfortable speaking to that person, you can bring forward complaints or concerns to the Director of Human Resources at any time. The Society will make all reasonable efforts to keep reports confidential in accordance with the Confidentiality of Reports provision below.

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If we become aware of a breach or possible breach of the Code of Conduct, we must take the following action:

- where the individual who may have breached the Code of Conduct is an employee, volunteer, student intern, or foster care provider, report the circumstances to that individual's supervisor (the Resources Supervisor in the case of a foster care provider) or the Director of Human Resources;
- where the individual who may have breached the Code of Conduct is a contractor, report the circumstances to the Director of Human Resources;
- where the individual who may have breached the Code of Conduct is a Director, report the circumstances to the Executive Director;
- where the individual who may have breached the Code of Conduct is the Executive Director, report the circumstances to the Board Chair;
- where the individual who may have breached the Code of Conduct is a member of the Board of Directors, report the circumstances to the Board Chair.
- where the individual who may have breached the Code of Conduct is the Board Chair, report the circumstances to one of the Executive Director, Board Vice Chair, or Board Governance Committee Chair.
- where the Board as a whole may have breached the Code of Conduct, report to the Executive Director.

Confidentiality of Reports

Reports of violations or suspected violations of the Code of Conduct will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Information obtained about an incident or a complaint under this Code of Conduct, including identifying information about any individuals involved, will not be disclosed unless the disclosure is necessary for the purpose of conducting an adequate investigation, e.g., disclosure to individuals involved in the concern, such as the complainant and respondent and under some circumstances, a witness, or is otherwise required by law.

The Society will not tolerate any attempts made to identify an individual who reports in good faith on a confidential or anonymous basis.

Concerns of Reprisal

No individual shall be disciplined for making a report in good faith about a violation of this Code of Conduct. The Society will take all reasonable steps to ensure that individuals who bring forward complaints or assist in an investigation are not targets of reprisal. The Society will not tolerate any reprisal against an individual who has made such a complaint or participated in an investigation. Reprisal is strictly prohibited and will result in appropriate disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment.

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Opportunity to Respond

Where it has been alleged that an individual has breached, or may breach, the Code of Conduct, the individual in question will be given the opportunity to respond.

Discipline and/or Discharge

Where allegations have been substantiated, individuals may be subject to discipline or discharge, as outlined in applicable Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's policies and procedures and the CUPE Local 1797 Collective Agreement.

I, _____ understand and agree to abide by the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton's Code of Conduct.

Signature

Date

Witness Name (please print)

Date

Witness Signature