



## **AHASA** **Allied Healthcare Association of South Africa** **ETHICS CODE**

### **Preamble**

This Code applies to AHASA members. It is designed to be a useful guide for AHASA members as they carry out their ethical responsibilities.

AHASA is committed to ethical practices. The level of trust AHASA members seek, as we serve the health profession, means we have taken on a special obligation to operate ethically. We strive to be an Association representing member agencies who consistently maintain high ethical and professional standards, thereby ensuring that the acronym AHASA is synonymous with quality care rendered by all its members.

The value of member reputation depends on the ethical conduct of everyone affiliated with AHASA. Each of us sets an example for everyone else through our pursuit of excellence, guided by powerful standards of professionalism, performance and ethical conduct.

The AHASA Code of Ethics is our ethical roadmap. It makes clear for all which core values and guiding business principles direct our business.

As members of AHASA, we are committed to upholding and promoting the following core values:

- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Respect
- Transparency
- Responsibility

These values are at the core of our approach and define everything we do. They act as a promise to all our stakeholders that we will do what we say in an ethical and responsible way.

Our core values are powerful, yet we may require more guidance on how to live them in our businesses. For this reason, AHASA provides guiding principles in relation to each core value.

### ➤ **Integrity**

Conducting business with integrity requires that we commit ourselves to the highest ethical standards in our conduct. In this way we build trust, which is necessary for our profession to thrive. Integrity goes beyond complying with the law and policies, to having strong moral principles.

Because we value integrity, we commit to:

- Speaking the truth and acting with honesty in all our actions;
- Honouring our commitments and delivering on our promises;
- Being service orientated;



- Combating dishonest and criminal activities such as drug abuse, theft, fraud and corruption; and
- Treating staff, clients and other stakeholders with dignity and care.

### ➤ **Professionalism**

Being professional requires that we deliver superior services and comply with the highest standards of service excellence. Because we value professionalism, we commit to:

- Conducting our business according to appropriate and accepted professional and industry standards;
- Promoting inter-agency and inter-personal co-operation;
- Placing competent, qualified and registered staff;
- Placing staff only in positions for which they are qualified;
- Providing orientation to all new staff members;
- Promoting staff punctuality and reliability;
- Ensuring adherence to a professional dress code;
- Seeking long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with our clients;
- Determining our clients' needs; and
- Treating all clients objectively, politely and without unmerited prejudice

### ➤ **Respect**

Conducting business with respect requires that we have high regard for the dignity and rights of all people. Because we value respect, we commit to:

- Treating clients, staff and all other stakeholders with dignity;
- Valuing each individual's culture and beliefs;
- Upholding the human rights of all staff, clients and other stakeholders;
- Refraining from arbitrary or unjustified discrimination against anyone; and
- Recognising the interests of those to whom we market our services.

### ➤ **Transparency**

Conducting business in a transparent manner requires that we are open and clear in our communication and business practices.

Because we value transparency, we commit to:

- Disclosing information relevant to our stakeholders timeously and accurately;
- Making information about our business operations accessible;
- Making ourselves accessible to our clients and staff; and
- Providing feedback where feedback is required.

### ➤ **Responsibility**

Being responsible requires taking ownership of, and being accountable for, our acts and omissions.

Because we value responsibility, we commit to:

- Exercising our obligations with due care, diligence and the required skill;
- Holding ourselves accountable for the conduct and appearance of our staff;



- Investigating complaints received about our services and our staff;
- Supporting the growth and development of our staff;
- Practising good governance in our business operations;
- Paying our staff on time;
- Having Agency-specific Codes of Ethics and relevant policies, such as recruitment and disciplinary policies;
- Upholding all laws of the country, regulations and industry standards;
- Having annual Professional Indemnity Insurance; and
- Contributing to the growth and development of South Africa by paying our due taxes.

AHASA is a values-based association and we will not seek to write rules for all conceivable behaviour. Instead, member agencies are required to reflect, in the absence of direct policy guidance, on the spirit of our core values and what they embody.

### **Implementation of the Code of Ethics**

A member commits to the Code of Ethics by signing a pledge.

Health Agencies have to:

- Adhere to the Code;
- Make it public that they have committed to the AHASA Code of Ethics (for example, on their website or in their newsletters or other forms of communication);
- Communicate effectively the Code of Ethics to their clients, staff and other stakeholders; and
- Promote visibly responsible business conduct, and convince other agencies also to commit to the Code of Ethics.

### **How will the Code be managed?**

The Code of Ethics provides a standard for business conduct. It communicates members' moral stance on unethical practices that might occur in the industry from time to time.

AHASA requires adherence to the Code of Ethics from all its members. Transgression of the Code will lead to the institution of disciplinary measures against the transgressor(s).

AHASA will engage with the offending Health Agency at the highest level to discuss steps that the Health Agency will take to prevent recurrence of unethical events.

However, AHASA retains the right to bar from membership or expel from the Association any member who continues to transgress the Code of Ethics, or who has been convicted in a court of law of an action that does not comply with the law or Code.

### **Guidelines for the identification of breaches**

To enable AHASA and its members to determine whether a breach of the principles in this Code has occurred, the following questions should be asked in relation to the alleged unethical event:

- Was there a transgression of a policy, procedure or standard?
- Was there a transgression of a law or regulation?
- Was there a transgression of an AHASA core value or any principle in the Code of Ethics?



If the answer to any one of these three questions is **yes**, then a breach of the Code has occurred and disciplinary measures will follow.

**Members and stakeholders are encouraged to report observed cases of misconduct to AHASA at [info@ahasa.org](mailto:info@ahasa.org)**

In all cases, the identities of the parties involved will remain strictly confidential. Any person making a report will be informed of this confidentiality assurance.

The following are examples of the types of misconduct that should be reported to AHASA:

- All criminal or suspicious activities involving an agency;
- All witnessed or suspected cases of malpractice;
- All cases where the law of the country, or the regulations of the industry, or the AHASA Code of Ethics have been transgressed; and
- All cases where the conduct of a member agency can cause reputational damage to the industry.

Ethics is about living and growing our core values, it is what responsible persons and health agencies do.



## **AHASA Member Code of Ethics Pledge**

As a registered member of AHASA in good standing, I pledge to uphold and promote the AHASA Code of Ethics in all business activities.

I will serve my clients with integrity, respect and professionalism in a transparent and responsible manner.  
I will only place competent, qualified and registered (if applicable) staff with knowledge and expertise appropriate to the client's needs.

I promise to uphold both the letter and the spirit of laws, regulations and contracts governing my own conduct, that of my clients and of the societies in which we all operate.  
I pledge that considerations of personal benefit will never override my focus on the interests of clients or their stakeholders.

My personal behaviour will exemplify the values I publicly espouse in making this pledge. I will be equally vigilant in ensuring the professional behaviour of my assignees and other member health agencies, and will report any violation of this shared Code of Ethics.

I understand and accept that there is a consequence for misconduct, up to and including membership revocation.

As a member of AHASA, I freely and fully assume the responsibilities this Code of Ethics entrusts to me, and I am solemnly mindful that these responsibilities are a part of my obligations as an AHASA member.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

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



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