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Overview and Purpose

Our Code of Conduct (“**Code**”) sets out the principles and work values expected of all people employed or engaged by the Institute. Our Code provides a framework of general principles to guide our daily work and helps us think about not just what we do but how we do it. It is intended to guide everyone to identify and resolve issues of conduct that contradict our Code. Our people are expected to comply with our policies and procedures as varied from time to time at our discretion and which apply to their employment or engagement with us. Our people are expected to familiarise themselves with any new policies and procedures which may be introduced by the Institute from time to time and which may always apply and/or specifically to their local working environment.

Scope and Application to our People

This Policy applies to both salaried and non-salaried employees of Murdoch Children's Research Institute (“**MCRI**”) and includes employees of the Victorian Clinical Genetics Services (“**VCGS**”), collectively “the Institute”. It also extends to all Employees, Contractors, Volunteers, Students, Honorary and Affiliate appointments and to any other person who is notified that this Institute Policy applies to them.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Institute is committed to ensuring that all people behave in a way which promotes public confidence and trust in the organisation; we expect a standard of behaviour which:
 - Demonstrates respect for the rights of the individual;
 - Promotes and maintains confidence and trust in the work of the Institute; and
 - Reflects our Purpose, Vision, and Values.
- 1.2 The successful development of an ethical environment relies on our people being responsible for their own behaviour in accordance with our Code, our policies, our obligations under Federal and State legislation, our Awards and Enterprise Agreements (where applicable).
- 1.3 If you require guidance on any matter relating to our Code, you are advised to discuss the matter with your People Leader in the first instance and if required, approach your Group Leader, Theme Director and or People & Culture.
- 1.4 Our people and the Institute will benefit in a positive way by committing to our Code and behaving in a way that consistently demonstrates our Values and cultivates trust with each other and our stakeholders.
- 1.5 Our Code is not exhaustive and can't describe or anticipate every situation. It does not purport to set out all the relevant obligations of our people. In addition, this policy does not form part of any contract of employment, nor does it form part of any contract of service. This policy is not to be taken as making any representation or promise on which our people can or should rely.

2 Compliance

2.1 Legislative Compliance

- 2.1.1 Compliance with governing legislation, regulations and policies is paramount to the integrity of the Institute. Our people and representatives are required to comply with all applicable laws in performing their work for us.
- 2.1.2 Our Code does not seek to list all the laws that may be applicable in any given situation and recognises that not all people will have received specific training nor have been provided access to all the Acts with which we are required to comply.
- 2.1.3 Both employers and team members have obligations of performance and conduct in Common law, which include a duty of care, a duty to fulfil obligations as a team member or employer, a duty of fidelity and a duty to give good service to an employer, amongst others.
- 2.1.4 Failure to comply with these or any other law that applies to the Institute may result in serious consequences for the Institute and the involved team member.

2.2 Privacy

- 2.2.1 All people and representatives of the MCRI and VCGS are subject to strict privacy obligations regarding the use and disclosure of all personal information. Staff are responsible for ensuring they do not (during employment or after cessation of employment) use or disclose any such information.

2.3 Personal Information

- 2.3.1 The [Australian Privacy Principles](#) (the Principles) apply to the collection, use and disclosure by an Employer of the information that is stored in employee records. We comply with the provisions of the [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#) as amended from time to time, which sets out these Principles.

3 Key Accountabilities

- 3.1 **All our people:** we all have the power to create a positive workplace that fosters a culture of trust and care for one another. Each person has the responsibility to undertake their roles and responsibilities in a manner consistent with the provisions of our Code and conduct themselves professionally toward others internal or external to the Institute, whilst practising fairness and equity. We all have an obligation to report any suspected breaches of our Code to line management or a People & Culture representative and to know how and when to speak up.
- 3.2 **The Board's Audit Finance Risk Committee (AFRC):** receives reports on completed compliance training, which includes our Code. The AFRC provide the reporting channel from the People and Culture team.
- 3.3 **Executives:** have a primary responsibility to ensure appropriate conduct which ensures that our people work in an environment where they can thrive. They have a primary responsibility, as far as possible, to ensure People within their line of responsibility, create a positive and safe workplace, where their people behave in a way that promotes public confidence and enables success. They are responsible and accountable for taking ownership and leadership of activities implemented by the People & Culture team to create an equitable workplace that is safe.
- 3.4 **People Leaders:** have a primary responsibility to endorse good conduct and respond to any misconduct amongst their team in consultation with People & Culture. They

have a responsibility to helping all members of the team understand the expectations and practical application of our Code and other processes, procedures, and policies. Our people leaders demonstrate the positive behaviours described in our Code, endorse positive behaviours, and hold everyone to account for any breach. We know the standard we walk by is the standard we accept. Our people leaders foster an inclusive culture where everyone feels comfortable to speak up or ask questions without fear of retaliation. Consistent with our Code and values, our people leaders are empowered to lift the performance of their teams through regular coaching and feedback that is respectful and constructive.

3.5 Others who work with us: have the responsibility to abide by the guidelines set out in our Code.

3.6 People & Culture: have a primary responsibility to take recognisable and appropriate measures such as implementing processes, procedures, or policies, collecting and reviewing data, providing support and coaching to our people, delivering training and acting on any reports of misconduct or psychosocial hazards. The People and Culture team manage investigations and incident reporting to the Executive and Board through existing reporting channels.

4 Standards

4.1 Ethical Standards

4.1.1 Ethical standards are not usually defined in laws or regulations. This can lead, at times, to questions as to what is ethically right or wrong based on each person's subjectivity or view. One of the purposes of our Code is to provide guidance to limit the number of such situations where this challenge might arise. Our Code, however, cannot provide specific answers to all questions, so our people must accept the ultimate responsibility for their actions.

4.1.2 When our people are faced with a situation where they are unsure about the ethical position of a proposed action, they can seek advice from their immediate People Leader, Group Leader, Theme Director or People & Culture. Ethical standards also apply in respect to protection of, the Institutes' property, whether physical or intellectual.

4.2 Research Integrity

4.2.1 MCRI is committed to ensuring that all research we do is trustworthy and conducted responsibly, with integrity and respect for participants, animals & the environment.

4.2.2 All our people must adhere to the below core principles of responsible research established in the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research 2018 (the Code) and related guides.

- **Honesty, Rigour and Accountability** in the development, undertaking and reporting of research;
- **Transparency** in declaring and managing conflicts of interest and in the reporting of research methodology, data and findings;
- **Fairness** in the way we treat others;
- **Respect** for research participants, the wider community, animals and the environment;
- **Recognition** of the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be engaged in that research affects or is of particular significance to them. To value and respect the diversity, heritage, knowledge, cultural property, and connection to land of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- **Accountability** for the development, conduct and reporting of research;
- **Promotion** of responsible conduct of research and fostering of a culture of research integrity.

4.2.3 Our people must adhere to all policies and guidelines related to the integrity of our research including (but not limited to): the [MCRI authorship guide](#), and the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

4.2.4 In addressing allegations of breaches of our Code and/or research misconduct, the Institute will adhere to the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), and [the Framework for Handling and Resolving Breaches of the NHMRC Code and Scientific Misconduct at RCH and MCRI](#).

4.3 Fairness and Equity

4.3.1 Our people always deal with matters involving colleagues or stakeholders consistently, promptly, and fairly. This involves dealing with matters in an impartial, non-discriminatory manner, in line with the principles set out in this policy and the Institutes' values.

4.3.2 The principles of procedural fairness and reasonableness should be observed when exercising statutory or discretionary powers which could affect the rights, interests or legitimate expectations of individuals within or outside the Institute.

4.4 Personal and Professional Behaviour

4.4.1 Our people should perform the duties associated with their position to the best of their ability diligently, impartially and conscientiously. In the performance of their duties, our people should:

- Comply with legislative and industrial obligations and administrative policies;
- Fulfil their Equal Employment Opportunity and Environment Health and Safety obligations;
- Strive to keep up to date with advances and changes in the knowledge of their discipline and the professional and ethical standards relevant to their areas and expertise;
- Maintain adequate documentation to support decisions made;
- Treat all persons with courtesy and sensitivity to their rights and provide all necessary and appropriate assistance;
- Strive to obtain value for money spent and avoid waste and extravagance in the use of the Institutes' resources;
- Not take or seek to take improper advantage of any official information gained in the course of employment;
- Not harass, bully or discriminate against our people, the public or visitors in work practices or in the provision of services, as required by the [Bullying Policy](#), [Sex Discrimination](#), [Sexual & Sex-based Harassment Policy](#), [PSEAH Framework](#) and [Grievance Procedure](#);
- Act responsibly when becoming aware of any unethical behaviour or wrongdoing by our people. Such information should be forwarded to the Chief Operating Officer or People Leader; and
- Observe the strictest honesty and integrity and avoid any conduct that could suggest otherwise.

4.5 Accountability

4.5.1 Our people are responsible for their acts and omissions and will be held to account for them. People Leaders also have responsibility for the work-related acts and omissions of the people they supervise. In the context of our Code, it means that while exercising the level of leadership, management and supervision appropriate to each position, they will be called to account for unsatisfactory acts or omissions by their people if they are so serious, repeated or widespread that it would be reasonably expected that they should have known and acted upon them.

4.6 Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

- 4.6.1 All our people have a right to a work environment free of harassment or discrimination based on several attributes as set out in the [Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy](#) and the [Sex Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#).
- 4.6.2 Harassment, discrimination or bullying conduct may constitute a breach of a number of Federal and State laws, including the [Federal Fair Work Act 2009](#), [Age Discrimination Act 2004](#), [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#), [Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#) and [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#), and the [Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#) and the [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#).
- 4.6.3 People Leaders must ensure that the workplace is free from all forms of harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination, they should also take all necessary steps, to prevent and deal with harassment and discrimination in their workplace. We will act to address any complaints of harassment or inappropriate behaviour fairly and objectively.
- 4.6.4 All people who witness any form of violence or harassment are required to report the conduct to their People Leader or People & Culture.

4.7 Equal Employment Opportunity, Gender Equity and Diversity

- 4.7.1 The Institute values diversity in its workforce as it often brings innovation and change. It is important that all people respect, acknowledge and consider the opinions of others and encourage the sharing of ideas.
- 4.7.2 The Institute is an Equal Opportunity Employer and has adopted practices to ensure equal opportunities are extended to all staff in accordance with current legislation and Institute beliefs. Refer to the [Equal Employment Opportunity Policy](#).
- 4.7.3 People leaders have the responsibility to not discriminate or indirectly discriminate against any individual or group. Our people leaders champion diversity and inclusion, are aware of what is considered biased or discriminatory and always speak up where there is a departure from this standard.
- 4.7.4 In turn, each person is responsible for acting in a manner that supports a fair and equitable work environment.

4.8 Child Safety Standards

- 4.8.1 The Institute recognises the rights of children and young adolescents under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Our people must comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, policies and procedures to ensure the safety of children and young adolescents, including [the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005](#), [Crimes Act 1914](#), and the [Criminal Code Act 1995](#). A full list of MCRI policies and procedures that concern child safety are contained in the [Child Safety Policy](#) and [Child Safety Procedure](#).
- 4.8.2 The Institute's people must treat all children with respect, using appropriate language and behaviour, without discrimination. For a full list of expected standards of behaviour when engaged with children and adolescents, please see Appendix 1 of the [Child Safety Procedure](#).
- 4.8.3 Our people must report concerns or disclosures of child abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures outlined in the [Child Safety Policy](#) and [Child Safety Procedure](#).

4.9 Substance Abuse or Misuse

4.9.1 The use of intoxicating, addictive, or illegal drugs while working or visiting the MCRI is prohibited. Use of such substances after working hours or away from MCRI premises may also be the subject of disciplinary action if such use impairs a person's job performance or endangers the health and safety of others as per the [Alcohol and Drugs Policy](#).

4.10 Protecting our Company

4.10.1 Valuable intellectual property may be generated during activities undertaken by individuals at the Institute, and collaboratively with other organisations and agencies.

4.10.2 The Institute owns intellectual property created by our people in the course of employment or engagement as per the [Intellectual Property Policy](#). Any variation to the policy must have the appropriate approval by the Director of Innovation.

4.10.3 Our people must use our information systems only for the purpose for which they are intended and shall not allow any unauthorised person access to any of our systems for any reason. In addition, our people must not access information, which they are not authorised to access or use. Our people must take all reasonable precautions, including password maintenance and file protection measures to prevent unauthorised access.

4.11 Sharing Information

4.11.1 Public comment on issues directly affecting the Institute can only be made by authorised people or the Communications team. Authorisation to make public comment must be given by the Director, the Chief Operating Officer.

- Providing accurate and uniform information to the public is important, as it reflects on the image of the MCRI and VCGS and its people. Our people should take care when participating in activities outside work or making casual comment in social or work situations where information or actions may be perceived to be in conflict with the MCRI and its perspectives.
- Our people should seek advice from their People Leader or Communications team if they require additional advice.
- We provide our users with Internet access and electronic communications services as required for the performance and fulfilment of job responsibilities. These services are for the purpose of increasing productivity and not for non-business activities. Our people will act in accordance with the [Media Policy](#) and the [Social Media Policy](#).

4.12 Environment Health and Safety

4.12.1 Health and safety is everyone's responsibility, and we all need to look out for one another's physical and mental wellbeing. As part of our commitment to mental wellbeing we provide team members with access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in all locations.

4.12.2 We are committed to providing a safe workplace for all our people, affiliates and contractors and for ensuring the health and safety of members of the public is not adversely affected by business activities. The following is a summary of some of the duties set out in the [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 \(Vic.\)](#).

4.12.3 We are responsible for ensuring that so far as is reasonably practicable, the work environment provided and maintained is safe and without risks to health. We are responsible for ensuring that so far as is reasonably practicable, our people aren't exposed to psychosocial hazards or other risks to their health or safety arising from the conduct of the MCRI's undertaking.

4.12.4 While at work, our people must:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety;

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of persons who may be affected by the persons acts or omissions at a workplace;
- Co-operate with MCRI or VCGS with respect to any action taken by us to comply with a requirement imposed the [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 \(Vic.\)](#) or its regulations; and
- Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided at the workplace in the interests of health, safety or welfare.

4.12.5 It is the responsibility of all our people to act in accordance with the environment, health and safety legislation and our policies. Specifically, all our people are responsible for safety in their work area by:

- Following the safety and security directives set by the organisation; and
- Advising management of areas where there is a potential problem in safety and reporting suspicious occurrences.

4.12.6 Further information pertaining to Environment Health and Safety can be accessed by contacting the EHS team.

5 Breaches of our Code of Conduct

5.1 Our people should note that breaches of certain sections of our Code of Conduct may be punishable under legislation. Breaches of our Code of Conduct may also lead to disciplinary action. The process for disciplinary action is outlined in the [Performance Improvement & Unacceptable Behaviour Policy](#) and/or the relevant Enterprise Agreement.