CONDITIONS OF CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT – STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

I  PURPOSE

The Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families recognizes the value of having high ethical standards, which guide the conduct of its employees. Department representatives are public servants, charged with ensuring public respect and confidence while promoting the vision and mission of the Department. The purpose of this policy is to establish ethical standards for Department employees to assure the safety of children. This policy is applicable to all Departmental employees including contracted staff, interns, casual/seasonal personnel and volunteers. Subsequent reference to the term employee in this policy shall be inclusive of these categories.

II  POLICY

Each State employee shall endeavor to pursue a course of conduct which will not raise suspicion among the public that such State employee is engaging in acts which are in violation of the public trust and which will not reflect unfavorably upon the State and its government. Behaviors which demean or offend people are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. These include, but are not limited to:

- Slurs or jokes that reflect negatively on any group or individual.
- Harassment in any form (including sexual harassment), in accordance with the State’s harassment policy.
- Displays of pictures, posters, calendars, flyers, or other material that denigrates (belittles/ridicules) or shows hostility or aversion (dislike) towards another individual or group.

A. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees of the Department have certain responsibilities to assure the safety of children and be positive role models for Delaware’s children. As such:

- Employees must be free from criminal activity or involvement in substantiated cases of abuse/neglect that may lead to harm of any child/youth.
• Employees must maintain a high standard of personal conduct both on the job and when identifying themselves as representatives of the agency.
• No employee shall engage in social relationships with clients of the Department which could compromise the staff's ability to exercise official authority appropriately or when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client, whether such contact is consensual or forced. This includes current clients, clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship.
• No employee shall have physical contact with clients beyond that which is routinely required by specific job duties.
• No employee shall use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about clients, the clients' relatives or other individuals with whom the client maintains a close personal relationship.
• No employee shall impose their personal values on clients.
• All employees shall treat colleagues with respect.
• All employees shall avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, political beliefs, religion, mental or physical disability.

B. DUTY TO REPORT

Each employee shall immediately inform their Supervisor/Manager of the following:
• Criminal convictions, arrests, investigations or indictment of themselves or of any investigation of child abuse/neglect or entry onto the Child Protection Registry subsequent to initial employment (reference DSCYF Policy 313).
• Any incident which could be interpreted as social contact with current clients, clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship, which could compromise their ability to exercise their authority.
• Any corrupt or unethical behavior which could affect a client or the integrity of the organization.
• When they are referred a client to whom they are related or socially acquainted.
• Any relationship with former clients.
• When they (or their family) are a victim of a crime allegedly committed by a youth served by the Department.

Failure to immediately notify their Supervisor/Manager of any of the above could result in discipline up to and including dismissal.

Affirmative Action complaints should be immediately reported to the Department’s Affirmative Action Officer.
C. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Department management also has responsibilities regarding implementation of this policy. They are:

- To ensure that there is no discrimination in personnel actions because of characteristics of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, gender, gender identity, physical handicap or political belief.
- To ensure that employees have the right to due process.
- To ensure equal enforcement of all employment/personnel practices.
- To ensure adherence to the Merit Rules and Collective Bargaining Agreements.

The Department is committed to the equal enforcement of all employment/personnel practices as specified by State and Federal laws, regulations and policies.