



## Conflict of Interest Policy

### **RATIONALE**

Employees of the Victorian Public Sector are required by the Public Administration Act 2004 and the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees to declare and avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest to help maintain community trust and confidence in the Public Sector. Employees of the Teaching service, employed under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 are also employees of the Victorian Public Sector.

This policy applies to all staff employed by Narre Warren North Primary School including ongoing, fixed term, part time and casual staff. This policy also applies to all members of the School Council and any sub committees.

This policy outlines the principles applying to the declaration and management of actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. A Conflict of Interest (COI) includes both financial and non-financial interests, and can include the interest of family members and close friends or associates.

### **PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

- to protect the school interest in impartial and objective decision making
- to protect the reputation of the school by maintaining ethical standards of good judgment, fairness and integrity in all dealings
- to ensure that employees always observe the highest standard of business ethics
- to avoid any activity or interest that might reflect unfavorably upon a staff member's own integrity and good name, or upon the integrity and good name of the school
- an employee or Council Member must avoid any conflict of interest, financial or otherwise, that might affect or may be seen to affect, the performance of the employee's official duties.
- to ensure that any conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest is handled by School Council to take steps to mitigate any risk.

### **GUIDELINES FOR ACTION**

1. All staff members performing Narre Warren North Primary School duties are required to act in good faith towards the school and DET.
2. Staff members must ensure there is no conflict of interest between their personal interests and their duties, obligations and responsibilities to the school. Where such a conflict occurs, the interests of the school will be balanced against the interests of the staff member. Unless exceptional circumstances exist the balance of interests will be resolved in favour of the school and within DET guidelines.
3. A conflict of interest can be financial or personal and involves the interests of a staff or School Council member, or members of their families or friends. A conflict may arise where an employee or councillor could reasonably be perceived to be influenced by the private interest



of facilitating employment for family members. A perceived conflict of interest exists where a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts could form the view that an employee's private interest could improperly influence the performance of their duties, now or in the future.

4. Of their own volition staff and Council Members must disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest to the Principal and stand down in any decision making process where they may be compromised. If the Principal discloses actual or potential conflict of interest he/she must advise School Council and stand down in any decision making process where they may be compromised. If a Council member or sub-committee member discloses actual or potential conflict of interest he/she must advise School Council and the Principal and must not be present during the discussion unless invited to do so by the person presiding at the meeting, must not be present when a vote is taken on the matter though may be included in the quorum for that meeting.
5. Failure of a staff member, Principal, Council member or Sub-committee member to disclose a potential or actual conflict of interest constitutes a breach of the school's policy and DET guidelines in relation to conflict of interest and may result in disciplinary actions. Depending on the nature and impact of the conflict of interest situation, other action may be instigated, including legal action.
6. Where any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is identified and cannot be avoided, reasonable steps should be taken to manage it. If an employee is unsure about a possible conflict of interest or how to handle a possible conflict of interest they should seek advice from their Principal/Manager.
7. It is not appropriate for peers or subordinates of an employee who is compromised to be involved in the management of the conflict of interest. Such staff are not considered to be outside the sphere of influence of the staff member concerned.
8. Confidentiality is to be maintained at all times by all persons involved and the school will seek to ensure that confidential disclosures are protected from misuse. Nothing precludes either the staff member who has disclosed the conflict of interest or the Principal/Manager to whom the disclosure was made from seeking advice from DET, Human Relations Department or the Department of Early Childhood Development legal liability branch, on any matters relating to this policy.

Ratified by School Council: 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Ratified by School Council: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Ratified by School Council: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024