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| TITLE | POLICY NUMBER | |
| Professionalism and Ethics Policy | DCS 04-02 | |
| RESPONSIBLE AREA | EFFECTIVE DATE | REVISION |
| Human Resources | 7/7/2022 | |

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The authority to mediate in the lives of families and children comes with extreme responsibility. Children, families and the Arizona public must be able to trust that DCS employees make decisions in the best interest of each child and family we serve. As such, every DCS employee must act with the utmost level of professionalism. DCS employees will follow all applicable laws, policies, and rules governing the ethical obligations of state employees, as well as any applicable professional Rules of Conduct, including those in the Arizona Administrative Code [[AAC R2-5A-501\(A\)](#)].

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to DCS full-time, part time, intermittent, and temporary employees, as well as all students, interns, and volunteers.

III. AUTHORITY

[A.R.S. 8-453](#)

Powers and duties

[A.R.S. 8-807](#)

DCS information; public record; use confidentiality; violation; classification; definition

[A.R.S. 38-421](#)

Stealing, destroying, altering or secreting public record; classification

[A.R.S. 38-504](#)

Prohibited acts

[A.R.S. 38-532](#)

Prohibited personnel practice; violation; reinstatement; exceptions; civil penalty

[AAC Title 2 Chapter 5](#)

Department of Administration – State Personnel System

[DCS 04-50](#)

Duty to Advise of Arrest, Prosecution, or Conviction

[DCS 11-05](#)

Email Etiquette

IV. DEFINITIONS

Client: a person who receives services from the Department.

Department or DCS: The Arizona Department of Child Safety

Employee: DCS full-time, part time, intermittent, and temporary employees, as well as all students, interns, and volunteers.

V. POLICY

A. Integrity

DCS expects every employee to perform their job responsibilities through ethical actions, methods, measures and principles. DCS employees will complete their duties with objectivity, impartiality, and honorable conduct. DCS employees will treat all children and their families, colleagues and members of the public in a respectful, honest and fair manner.

B. Accurate Documentation and Disclosures

1. It is a crime to steal, destroy, or falsify any record filed or deposited in a public office. Under no circumstances will a DCS employee falsely document their activities, actions, or decisions. DCS employees will make certain that all disclosures made in documents are full, fair, accurate, timely and understandable. This obligation applies to all employees with any responsibility for the preparation of such documents, including

drafting, reviewing, and signing or certifying the information contained therein.

2. DCS Employees will inform management if they learn that information in any documentation was untrue or misleading. Any employee found to be misrepresenting facts or falsifying records will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

C. Confidential Information

DCS employees will not disclose confidential and nonpublic information without proper authorization.

D. Social Media

DCS employees should consider how their personal social media use can impact the Department. DCS does not condone the following personal social media activity:

1. accessing social media for personal use during scheduled working hours;
2. using a DCS computer or Smartphone to access social media or access to improper content (such as 'adult' or 'hate' sites);
3. using without permission the DCS name, logo, or other intellectual property in blogs, discussion boards or other social media sites;
4. using a DCS email address or a username that refers to employment with DCS as stated in [DCS 11-05 Email Etiquette](#), except for professional purposes on LinkedIn;
5. discussing DCS work activities on discussion boards, chat rooms, or other social media platforms;
6. posting photos or videos that contain confidential information, including information displayed on a computer screen or printed page within a DCS office, remote office or during a DCS event;
7. posting photos or videos of DCS employees without their consent;

8. posting photos of contractors, clients, families of clients, or caregivers;
9. discussing DCS management, coworkers, contractors, clients, service providers or caregivers on discussion boards, in chat rooms, through blogs or through other social media platforms; or
10. posting personal information or about personal activities that leads DCS or others to believe that the employee is acting in a manner that will discredit or bring embarrassment to the state.

E. Media Inquiries

DCS is a high-profile department, and from time to time, reporters and other members of media may approach employees. In order to ensure that the Department speaks with one voice and provides accurate information about DCS activities, employees shall direct all media inquiries to the DCS Public Information Officer (PIO) or Communications Director. Employees may not issue a press release on DCS's behalf or be interviewed by a member of the media as a representative of DCS without first consulting with the Communications Director.

F. Misuse of Position or Title

A DCS employee may not use their official position, including information learned through their position, for their personal benefit or for the benefit of friends, relatives, or persons when acting in a non-DCS authorized capacity. This includes nonprofit organizations of which the employee is an officer or member, and persons with whom the employee has or seeks employment or business relations. An employee's position or title should not be used to coerce; to endorse any product, service or enterprise; or to give the appearance of DCS sanction.

G. Dual Relationships and Conflicts of Interest

DCS employees shall not provide preference or favoritism towards their private interests that could improperly influence or be perceived to influence, their decisions or actions during the performance of their public duties. Employees cannot foster or adopt children with whom they have or had a working relationship. They also shall not provide business or employment contracts, or work on any part of a DCS case, involving people with who are family members or friends. If an employee has a personal relationship with someone in one of these group categories, it is their responsibility to notify their supervisor. In the

event a dual relationship, the employee will consult with their supervisor or manager to resolve any real, potential or perceived conflicts.

H. Romantic and Sexual Relationships

DCS employees will not engage in any type of romantic or sexual relationship with any person who:

1. the employee supervises; or
2. is a client, caregiver or provider in an active case that the employee is associated with in a professional capacity.

This includes inappropriate telephone, virtual, email, and text message communications. If a situation arises where a real or perceived conflict exists, employees shall consult with their supervisor or manager to resolve.

I. Cooperation with Investigations

DCS employees shall cooperate fully in any Departmental investigation and any authorized investigation by an outside organization pertaining to DCS business. Failure to cooperate with any investigation may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

J. Off-Duty Personal Conduct

All DCS employees should work to preserve the Department's reputation and not bring discredit or embarrassment to the Department. Employees who engage in unprofessional, criminal conduct or other serious misconduct off-duty may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Examples of serious off-duty conduct include but are not limited to conduct that:

1. is determined to be harmful to the DCS image;
2. is inconsistent with the Department's policies;
3. impacts or disrupts business operations; or
4. jeopardizes the Department or employee's standing within the community.

As stated in the Duty to Advise of Arrests, Prosecutions, and Convictions policy ([DCS 04-50](#)), all employees must notify their supervisor by the next day, or at the first possible opportunity, of any arrest, prosecution, or conviction.

K. Personal Health

DCS employees shall not perform professional activities if they have a physical or mental health condition that will substantially worsen by performing those activities, or cause them to be unable to competently execute the duties of their work. Employees are encouraged to use the state sponsored Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if the need arises.

L. Supervision of DCS Employees

Executive leadership, administrators, managers, and supervisors will adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior. They will abide by and enforce the adherence to Federal and State laws and rules, and Department rules, policies and procedures. They will model and promote a safe working environment, where employees feel comfortable raising concerns if necessary. They will provide a positive work environment for all employees, encouraging professional growth and development. They will provide feedback, both positive and constructive, to employees on an ongoing basis.

A state employee shall not take disciplinary or punitive action against another employee that impedes or interferes with that employee's exercise of any right granted under the law or personnel rules.