

## CODE OF CONDUCT & BEHAVIOUR AT WORK POLICY

### 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Oxfam India is committed to creating and maintaining an environment, which is professional, responsive, safe and free of any form of unlawful or inappropriate behavior. The Code of Conduct is to set down the general principles and standards, which govern the professional activities and conduct of staff, consultant, vendors, partners and Board members of Oxfam India, thereby maintaining a high level of professionalism.

Oxfam India staff are required to maintain the highest standards of integrity, objectivity and accountability in the performance of their duties to a standard of conduct that supports the organization's mission, vision and values and that does not knowingly violate OXFAM policy. This involves ensuring that their conduct:

- Is never influenced by personal gain or advantage that results in a risk or detriment to Oxfam India
- Does not give rise to suspicion of improper motives
- Is in keeping with Oxfam India's policies and procedures

Examples of prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Falsification of a resume, employment application, attendance records, or other organizational records.
- Fraud or embezzlement.
- Accepting gifts or money for personal use.
- Misappropriation of organizational or intellectual property or other confidential information.
- Violation of professional and ethical standards applicable to a position in organization.
- Possession of firearms or any other weapons on organization premises at any time.
- Participation in terrorist groups or activities as defined by federal regulations.
- Negligently disregarding safety rules or common safety practices.
- Any form of discrimination or conduct within the workplace that can reasonably be considered as harassment, whether based on race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, citizenship, national origin or ancestry, disability or veteran status
- Display of violent behavior and/or physically assaulting any individual while representing OXFAM.
- Insubordination (unwillingness to carry out a directive from a manager or supervisor and disrespectful behavior toward a manager/supervisor/any other colleague).
- Other serious offenses that, in the judgment of OXFAM's senior management staff, cause a disruption of the organization.
- Any violation of OXFAM's policies as expressly stated in Employee Handbook

- 1.2 Hence, all employees and those of Partner organizations who are in a relationship with Oxfam India have an obligation to ensure their personal conduct and behavior is at all times professional and lawful and does not reflect adversely on the reputation of the organization. A duty of mutual trust and confidence is implied in all contracts of employment and staff is required to adhere to Oxfam India's Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is designed for the guidance and protection of staff, but a breach may well result in disciplinary action, even dismissal and in cases so requiring, criminal prosecution.
- Our expected standards of behavior are based on Oxfam India's values and

aimed at creating a positive work place culture. If in doubt about obligations under the Code of Conduct, staff should seek advice from their Line Managers or the Human Resources team.

## 2. Purpose:

The purpose of the policy is to set minimum standards by which all staff is expected to abide. These standards are spelt out below:

## 3. Commitment:

- To adhere to this Policy in every way.
- Ensuring regular attendance and punctuality at work. Absenteeism and tardiness disrupts work flow and causes undue hardship for other employees.
- Maintaining regular work hours and informing their supervisors in case of unplanned absence from work.
- Keeping their appearance and presentation clean, tidy and appropriate for the work place.
- Performing their duties to the best of their ability with care, competence and efficiency.

## 4. Harassment and Discrimination

OXFAM ensures equal employment opportunity without discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law.

“Harassment” for the purpose of this policy refers to a wide spectrum of offensive behaviour aimed at bothering, continually causing worry to another person, in the course of his/her employment/consultancy in a mala fide manner.

An employee under this policy is guilty of harassment as defined above of another person if:

- He/she him/(her)self or through some other person threatens or does any act which is intended to substantially harm the person threatened or any other person with respect to his/her physical or mental health, stress, dignity or safety
- He/she him/(her)self or through some other person causes or threatens to cause bodily injury in the future to the person threatened or to any other person;
- To cause or threaten to cause physical damage to the property of another person;
- To subject the person threatened or any other person to physical confinement or restraint and/or
- The employee or through some other person by words or conduct places the person receiving the threat in reasonable fear that the threat will be carried out.

**Categories of harassment in the course of employment/consultancy may include:**

- **Bullying:** Physical and psychological harassing behaviour perpetrated against another person, by one or more employees directly or through others, through: deliberately wrongly blaming for mistakes, making unreasonable demands, excessively harsh criticism, breaking rules arbitrarily, threatening job loss, causing delay in legal dues.
- **Psychological/Group psychological harassment:** This humiliating or abusive behaviour lowers another person’s self-esteem or causes him/her torment. This can take the form of verbal comments, actions or gestures. Falling into this category are harassment's such as workplace mobbing, and gang

stalking which is a form of community mobbing and organized stalking combined.

- **Caste Based Harassment:** The targeting of persons because of their caste. The harassments include words, deeds, and actions that are specifically designed to make the target feel degraded due to their caste.
- **Religious harassment:** Verbal, psychological or physical harassment is used against targets because they choose to practice a specific religion.
- **Stalking:** The unauthorized following and surveillance of an individual, to the extent that the person's privacy is unacceptably intruded upon, and the victim fears for his safety. A person who, without lawful authority, willfully or maliciously engages in a course of conduct that would cause a reasonable person to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated or harassed, and that actually causes the victim to feel terrorized,
- **Hate speech:** comments provably false or irrelevant which have the effect of stirring up hate towards a particular group
- **Sexual harassment:** According to The Supreme Court definition, sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexually determined behaviour, such as:
  - Physical contact and advances
  - A demand or request for sexual favors
  - Sexually colored remarks
  - Showing pornography
  - Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

\*(It includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour through action, speech, phone calls, text messages and e-mails (whether directly or by implication as).

Any case of Sexual Harassment of women will be dealt under **Annexure 5 - Policy against Sexual Harassment for Women at Workplace** adopted by OXFAM India.

**Other cases related to Harassment including Sexual Harassment of men will be dealt under [the ANNEXURE 8 - GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL AND DISCIPLINARY POLICY](#).**

## 5. Equality and Diversity:

Ensuring we create a more equal, just, and sustainable workplace. As part of Oxfam India, it is expected that staff will demonstrate this by accepting that:

- We are an equal opportunities employer and respect diversity at the workplace.
- We refrain from making any comments or remarks on any employee's caste, creed, sexuality, gender different ability, community or family status.
- We make available all employment opportunities to staff without prejudice including to those employees with disabilities or life threatening illness (cancer, heart diseases, HIV/AIDS).
- We speak in the language that is understood by most of the team members
- We are aware of the Policy against Sexual Harassment for Women at Workplace and adhere to its provisions.

## 6. Mutual Respect:

- We respect the dignity, rights and views of other including different values, beliefs, cultures and religion.
- We value the contribution of the people we work with and encourage contributions from all team members

- We do not use verbally abusive language, gestures or bullying and coercive behavior.
- We do not show violent behavior at work or deliberately causing physical injury to other employees, partners and/or organization's property.
- We will not possess sale and usage of alcohol, illegal drugs or intoxicants and other addictive substances while at work or work related business.

## 7. Integrity:

We maintain the highest moral, ethical, and legal standards and abide by following:

- Disclose and take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest in line with the organization's Conflict of Interest policy.
- Provide correct and true information in response to a request for information.
- Avoid improper use of roles, duties, status, power or authority, in order to gain, or seek to gain personally or professionally, a benefit or advantage for self or for any other person.
- Not engage in misappropriation of funds, unfair dealings, or fraud of any nature
- Avoid misuse of official infrastructure for personal benefit.
- Avoid any fraud with the intent to cheat, trick, steal, deceive or lie, which is dishonest and in most cases criminal.

Intentional acts of fraud are subject to strict disciplinary action, including dismissal and possible civil/criminal action against the concerned defaulter.

## 8. Transparency, Bribery and Corruption:

Oxfam India seeks to discharge its functions in a transparent manner. As part of Oxfam India employees are expected to demonstrate this through:

- Reporting official misconduct, including fraud and corruption. This includes reporting suspected wrongful acts as laid out in the Whistle Blowing policy.
- Declining acceptance of gifts, lavish entertainment or other benefits from partners, or competitors. Acceptance of small gifts, not valued higher than INR 1000/- such as pens, desk dairies, calendars, etc. may be accepted.
- It is unacceptable to directly or indirectly offer, pay, solicit or accept any kind of inducements or bribes. Any attempted transaction of this nature should be immediately be reported to the Line manager/HR Manager/Director Operation/CEO.

## 9. Declaration of Interest

No Oxfam India staff member will be involved in the award of any contract, project, and employment or will promote any company or person if they have any financial or personal interest, in such activity. Staff are required to declare such interest to his/her supervisor and HR in writing for determining whether there is a potential clash of interest or not.

## 10. Political Affiliation

- 10.1** In order to preserve Oxfam India reputation as a non-party organization, staff must seek the relevant Director's permission before agreeing to undertake any political activity. Written approval must be obtained from the Director (who will have been briefed by the appropriate Manager) before any member of staff agrees to their name being put forward for adoption as a prospective candidate for election to either a local or national political forum, or if they accept a formal office which may be seen by Oxfam India to be controversial. (For example Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary or agent in any party). Senior Leadership Team will determine which posts would be controversial in the national context.

- 10.2** Any time - off approved in support of pre-election activity will normally be taken as unpaid leave.
- 10.3** Any staff member elected or appointed to political office may be required to resign immediately from Oxfam India. This will depend upon the profile of the post in the local or national context and the time commitment required carrying out the duties of the office. Specific ruling on the above will be given at the time that approval to stand is granted by Senior Leadership Team
- 10.4** Oxfam India's name must not be used by anyone in seeking political office.

## **11. Religious affiliation**

No Oxfam India staff member should be involved in supporting any particular religious group or community and should behave in an impartial and non-partisan way under all circumstances.

## **12. Confidentiality & Integrity of Information including financial information**

- 12.1** Staff is required to use Oxfam India information in a responsible manner and not disclose any confidential information without prior permission from their respective Managers (ILT and SLT level).
- 12.2** Before making any statement, or broadcast, or publishing any article disclosing details of their experience with Oxfam, staff in Oxfam India across the country should contact the Oxfam India Media Team in New Delhi. This remains effective even after staff have demitted employment with Oxfam India.
- 12.3** Oxfam India will not disseminate outside the organization any information relating to staff without their prior consent unless required doing so by law. Staff should not keep unsubstantiated personal comments on files.

## **13. Intellectual Property**

Intellectual property is a generic term that includes inventions, creative writings and designs. If these items are created as part of a staff member's normal course of employment, then, as a rule, they belong to Oxfam India. Legal advice should be sought to obtain the correct interpretation of intellectual property, before any exceptions are agreed.

## **14. Right of Search**

Entering OXFAM's property constitutes consent to searches and inspections. If an individual is suspected of violating this policy, he or she may be asked to submit to a search or inspection at any time. Oxfam India retains the right to search members of staff, where reasonable grounds exist. This would normally be undertaken in the presence of another staff member of the same sex as the person being searched and a witness, who will be nominated by the person being searched. There will be no infringement of civil liberties. If the staff member refuses to be searched, management reserves the right to refer the matter to the police. If the result of the search yields evidence to support the manager's suspicions, relevant disciplinary procedures will be instituted.

Searches can also be conducted of lockers, desks, workstations, vehicles, and equipment

## **15. Assault/Threatening Behavior**

Physical or verbal assault by a staff member on any person on Oxfam India premises, or with people in the workplace and people associated professionally with Oxfam India, whilst carrying out Oxfam India business will be construed as gross misconduct necessitating appropriate disciplinary action, leading to dismissal if warranted.

## **16. Indulging in Unlawful Activities**

- 16.1** While on Oxfam India work, staff will not be allowed on the premises whilst under the influence of alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs, or any other addictive substances. In States where consumption of alcohol is prohibited by law, Staff will follow such legal provisions.
- 16.2** Being in possession of or using illegal substances whilst on Oxfam India premises or carrying out Oxfam India business will be dealt with according to existing provisions of the law
- 16.3** Gambling is not permitted as per Indian law and staff indulging in such activity will be proceeded against as per law.

## **17. Personal Conduct**

Personal Conduct of staff should not bring disrepute to the organization and all staff are requested to keep this in mind.

## **18. Staff facing Criminal Charges**

Oxfam India requires staff who are facing any criminal charges, to inform their line manager of these without delay, regardless of whether the staff member feels the matter is relevant or not. The manager will then take advice from HR as to how to proceed in each case. Failure to inform the manager will invite disciplinary proceedings.

## **19. Personal Gifts (including money) and Hospitality**

In line with the Code of Conduct, Staff will not use their employment with Oxfam India to obtain personal gain and not be obligated to anyone with whom Oxfam India does business, e.g. government personnel, beneficiaries, donors, suppliers etc.

Staff may only be permitted to keep small non-valuable items such as pens, diaries, calendars, etc. up to a maximum value of INR 1000/-

## **20. Personal Legal Liability**

In normal circumstances, Oxfam India cannot indemnify staff for the personal consequences of committing criminal, negligent, irresponsible or malicious actions. However, if civil action is taken against Oxfam India staff personally because of their work for Oxfam India, and staff have properly carried out their duties and have observed Oxfam India's policies and procedures, then Oxfam India would support them and they should not suffer financially on Oxfam India's account.

## **21. Employment or Business outside Oxfam India**

Staff will not be allowed to take up any other paid employment, even if part time, whilst in employment with Oxfam India

## **22. Security**

- 22.1** Staff is required to comply with Oxfam India Security Policy and any local security guidelines and be pro-active in informing management of any necessary changes to such guidelines. Staff are responsible for reporting any actions or behavior that breaches policy or jeopardizes team security.
- 22.2** Oxfam India has a responsibility for all individuals on Oxfam India premises. All visitors to Oxfam India premises must be issued a visitors' pass and preferably accompanied by a staff member at all times in adherence to Oxfam India's security procedures.

- 22.3** Only in exceptional circumstances may children be brought onto the premises with the line manager's permission, and staff member permitted to bring them must accompany them, who should remain with them and supervise them at all times.

## **23. Use of Oxfam India Facilities and Resources**

- 23.1** Staff must ensure that they use Oxfam India funds and resources entrusted to them in a responsible manner and strive to ensure value for money. They must account for all money and property for which they are given responsibility in the course of their employment.
- 23.2** Animals (domestic or wild) may not be brought into Oxfam India premises, with the exception of guide dogs required by visually impaired staff.

## **24. Use of Oxfam India Time**

- 24.1** Apart from authorized leave and sickness absence taken in accordance with agreed procedures, staff should spend all of their Oxfam India working time carrying out the duties for which they were employed.
- 24.2** All absence should be approved by the appropriate level authorized to do so and must be informed simultaneously to HR.
- 24.3** In exceptional circumstances such as public transport strikes, adverse weather conditions, petrol shortages, security issues etc., staff will make every effort to get to work and to consider all possible alternative means of travelling to work but if this is not possible, staff may have to avail 'work from home' status and should be approved by line manager.

## **25. Use of Stationery and Equipment**

Stationery must be used responsibly and prints taken only when essential. As an environmentally conscious organization, all Staff must strive to be responsible in their use of stationery. Oxfam India stationery or equipment must not be removed from offices unless it is for Oxfam India business.

## **26. Private Correspondence**

Normally, private correspondence should not be addressed to Oxfam India (unless working on a contract with relocated status). Personal outgoing couriers/emails should have the correct payment attached. Oxfam India will not be held responsible for non-delivery of any letters sent through the Oxfam India mail system or for the opening in error of such letters.

## **27. Use of Information Technology Equipment and Facilities**

Staff is required to follow the IT policy guidelines.