



MPUMALANGA REGIONAL
TRAINING
TRUST

Empowerment Through Training

CODE OF ETHICS

Policy No.: HRM: 07

Effective Date: 29-03-2021

Revised Date: 30-03-2023

Electronic File:

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As a public entity reporting through the Board of Directors to the MEC for Education in the Mpumalanga Province, Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust (MRTT) is mandated to develop the human resource base of the Mpumalanga Province through the provision of experiential, practical, technical, hospitality, tourism, entrepreneurship and life skills training. The main focus is to empower learners, primarily from disadvantaged communities especially the youth, industry workers and government employees, to participate in the broader economic sphere of the province.

2. PREAMBLE

- 2.1 Ethics involve applying moral standards of what is good, right and fair. These standards are supported by MRTT's core values that shape the decisions and actions of individuals within the organization in the pursuit of fulfilling its mandate. In simple terms it is about "doing the right thing". The following phrase is oftentimes seen in literature on the topic of ethics: "*The law sets minimum standards of behavior while ethics sets maximum standards*". The Law tries to create a private space where individuals can live according to their own ethical beliefs or morality. Some business ethics are imposed by law such as the "Public Finance Management Act" (PFMA) or the Basic Conditions of Employment yet there are also decisions that do not fall within the ambit of the law, in which the employee must make their own ethical or moral judgments. These decisions may include the way we treat our colleagues or other stakeholders, receiving gifts and other incentives that may cloud the decisions made by and employee.

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CODE OF ETHICS?

- 3.1 This Code of Ethics aims to give guidance and guidelines on ethical behavior to the employees of MRTT. This ethics code applies to all employees at the Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust including full time employees and fixed term contract employees. MRTT strives to employ ethical people who have their own personal standards, as such a written code is not always necessary but it can still be helpful. Life is full of grey areas where right and wrong aren't so clearly defined. For these reasons, we advise employees to read this document carefully and consult with your manager or the Human Resources department (HR), if you have doubts or questions.

4. WHAT IS MEANT BY A CODE OF ETHICS?

- 4.1 Ethics is the system of accepted rules with regard to behavior, based on what is considered right and wrong. In essence, the Code of Ethics is value based and not rules based. As this Code of Ethics applies to employees at the workplace, the ethics are based on the field of business ethics. The code should guide the employees in how MRTT operates, how business decisions are made and how people are treated. Determining what to do when an ethical dilemma arises among different interest groups such as customers can be extremely tricky, and as such

business ethics are complex, this code gives some guidance when faced with such situations. (Ethical dilemmas will be explained a bit later).

5. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 5.1 **“Basic Conditions of Employment Act”** means the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 1997 (Act No 75 of 1997) as amended from time to time.
- 5.2 **“Board of Directors”** means the elected governing body or board appointed in terms of the company’s Act that meets at regular intervals to set policies for corporate management and provides oversight. In this instance the Board of Directors for Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust.
- 5.3 **“Code of Ethics”** means the code or a set of conventions or moral principles as set out in this document that guide behaviour in the MRTT workplace.
- 5.4 **“Company”** means Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust (MRTT).
- 5.5 **“Employee”** means any person appointed on a permanent or fixed term basis by MRTT, excluding an independent contractor/consultants, and who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration.
- 5.6 **“Fixed term contract”** means employees appointed to alleviate temporary workloads for a clearly defined fixed period or task.
- 5.7 **“Government Employees”** means people in the employment of the Government of South Africa. **“HR”** Means the Human Resource department of Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust reporting in the Corporate Services Program.
- 5.8 **“Human Resource Base”** means the population in Mpumalanga that are or can be employed
- 5.9 **“Industry Workers”** means employees working in a certain industry
- 5.10 **“MEC”** means a Member of the Executive Committee
- 5.11 **“PFMA”** means the Public Finance Management Act, No. 29 of 1999
- 5.12 **“Public Entity”** means a national or provincial public entity
- 5.13 **“Stakeholders”** means any party that has an interest in MRTT and can either affect or be affected by our business.
- 5.14 **“Values”** means company values that are the beliefs, philosophies, and principles that drives a business.

6. THE COMPONENTS OF THE CODE OF ETHICS:

6.1 It is important to first mention the Values of MRTT and its meaning in the context of ethics. All employees should strive to always do their work according to the values of MRTT which are:

- Accountability
- Commitment
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Professionalism

a) *Accountability*

The employees of MRTT fulfill their duties in line with the values of accountability which refers to answerability, responsibility, liability, and the expectation of account-giving. Employees strive to work according to morally based obligations and duties to others and to larger ethical and moral codes, standards and traditions.

b) *Commitment*

The employees of MRTT are committed to their work and display a drive to reach company goals by doing what needs to be done until the goal is achieved. Commitment ethic is a deeply held belief that, once you have agreed to do something, you must do it until it is finished or completed.

c) *Innovation*

MRTT understands that innovation often brings important consequences for people and communities. In line with our mandate, we strive to be innovative yet responsible to the people we serve.

d) *Integrity*

MRTT employees act with integrity which means understanding, accepting, and choosing to conduct ones' work in accordance with one's principles, which will include honesty, fairness, and decency. MRTT employees will consistently demonstrate good character by being free of corruption and insincerity.

e) *Professionalism*

The employees at MRTT at all times strive to display professionalism in their conduct, behavior and attitude and will present themselves and MRTT in a positive way.

7. THE 8 PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS

We base our code of ethics on 8 common principles of ethics;

- Commitment to excellence
- Honesty
- Respect for others.
- Integrity and Conflict of Interest.
- Justice and fairness.
- Lawfulness.
- Competence and accountability.
- Loyalty and Teamwork.

Here is a more detailed overview of the principles of our code of ethics:

a) *Commitment to excellence.*

Pursue excellence all the time in all things. Ethical employees pursue excellence in performing their duties, are well-informed and prepared, and constantly endeavour to increase their proficiency in all areas of responsibility.

b) *Honesty.*

Be honest in all communications and actions. Do not purposely mislead or deceive others by misrepresentations, overstatements, partial truths, or selective omissions. Keep promises and fulfil commitments. Ethical employees can be trusted because they make every reasonable effort to fulfil the letter and spirit of their promises and commitments. They do not interpret agreements in an unreasonably technical or legalistic manner in order to rationalize non-compliance or create justifications for escaping their commitments.

c) *Respect for others*

MRTT employees will at all times treat every person with respect. Employees will demonstrate respect for human dignity, autonomy, privacy, rights, and interests of all those who have a stake in their decisions. MRTT employees will be courteous and treat all people with equal respect and dignity regardless of their gender, race or

national origin and will strive to treat others the way they would like to be treated. Be kind, polite and understanding, demonstrate a genuine concern for the well-being of others. Ethical employees are caring, compassionate, benevolent and kind.

d) *Integrity and conflict of interest*

Maintain personal integrity and be principled, honourable, and trustworthy. Integrity refers to a wholeness of character, demonstrated by consistency between thoughts, words and actions. Maintaining integrity often requires moral courage, the inner strength to do the right thing even when it may cost more than one wants to pay. An employee of MRTT lives by ethical principles despite great pressure to do otherwise. Conflict of interest may occur whenever your interest in a particular subject leads you to actions, activities or relationships that undermine MRTT. This includes situations like using your position for your own personal gain or exploiting company resources to support a personal money-making business.

e) *Justice and Fairness*

Employees shall at all times be fair and just in their behavior. Employees in a position of authority shall be fair and objective when making decisions that can impact other employees or stakeholders. Employees will not show favoritism toward specific employees and are transparent. Employees do not exercise power arbitrarily nor do they use overreaching or indecent means to gain or maintain any advantage nor take undue advantage of another's mistakes or difficulties. Ethical employees manifest a commitment to justice, the equal treatment of individuals, tolerance for and acceptance of diversity.

f) *Lawfulness*

All employees of MRTT are obliged to follow the laws of South Africa. Laws pertaining to the procurement processes should be followed at all times and all employees should familiarize themselves with the acts pertaining to the sphere MRTT is operating in. In the context of ethics, being lawful may require employees to seek clarity from the legal department on issues pertaining to contracts and agreements. Employees may not expose, disclose or endanger information of customers, employees, stakeholders or our business. Following laws regarding fraud, bribery, corruption and any kind of assault is a given. If you're not sure what the law is in a specific instance, don't hesitate to ask HR, your supervisor / manager or the legal office.

g) Competence and accountability

MRTT employees are accountable. Ethical employees acknowledge and accept personal accountability for the ethical quality of their decisions and omissions to themselves, their colleagues, MRTT, and their communities.

h) Loyalty and Teamwork

Working well with others is an advantage, rather than an obligation. Employees will certainly get to work autonomously and be focused on their own projects and responsibilities. But MRTT employees are also encouraged to collaborate with and help others.

Ethical employees are generous with their expertise and knowledge and are open to learning and evolving. Ethical employees justify trust by being loyal to MRTT and the people they work with. Ethical employees place a high value on protecting and advancing the lawful and legitimate interests of MRTT and their colleagues. They do not, however, put their loyalty above other ethical principles or use loyalty to others as an excuse for unprincipled conduct.

8. HOW TO MAKE ETHICAL DECISIONS WHEN FACED WITH AN ETHICAL DILEMMA

8.1 An ethical dilemma refers to a conflict between alternatives where, no matter what a person does, some ethical principle will be compromised. Analyzing the options and their consequences provides the basic elements for ethical decision-making. Determining what to do when an ethical dilemma arises among different interest groups such as customers can be extremely difficult. Employees may find it difficult to make a decision in some instances. The following decision process can help in guiding one through the choppy waters of ethical decision making.

Step 1: Define the ethical problem

Gather all facts and define the ethical problem. By defining the problem, you will have a clearer understanding of finding a solution. Consider the difference between what you expect or desire and the current reality. Identify all effected parties.

Step 2: Seek out relevant assistance, guidance and support

Once the problem is defined, it is critical to search out resources that may be of assistance in making the decision. Resources can include people (i.e., a mentor, colleagues, or friends and family) as well professional guidelines and organizational policies and codes.

Step 3: Identify available alternative solutions to the problem

The key to this step is to not limit yourself to obvious alternatives or merely what has worked in the past. Be open to new and better alternatives. Consider as many as solutions as possible.

Step 4: Evaluate the identified alternatives

Evaluate each alternative, identify the likely positive and negative consequence of each. As you consider positive and negative consequences, you must be careful to differentiate between what you know for a fact and what you believe might be the case. Consulting resources, including written guidelines and standards, can help you ascertain which consequences are of greater (and lesser) importance.

Supplement the facts you have with realistic assumptions and informed beliefs. Nonetheless, keep in mind that the more the evaluation is fact-based, the more confident you can be that the expected outcome will occur.

When evaluating the possible solutions, consider the “disclosure rule” – will you be comfortable with your parents, siblings or family knowing what you plan to implement.

Step 5: Make the decision

When acting alone, this is the natural next step after selecting the best alternative. When you are working in a team environment, this is where a proposal is made to the team, complete with a clear definition of the problem, a clear list of the alternatives that were considered and a clear rationale for the proposed solution.

Step 6: Implement the decision

While this might seem obvious, it is necessary to make the point that deciding on the best alternative is not the same as doing something. The action itself is the first real, tangible step in changing the situation. It is not enough to think about it or talk about it or even decide to do it. A decision only counts when it is implemented.

Step 7: Evaluate the decision

Every decision is intended to fix a problem. The final test of any decision is whether or not the problem was fixed. Did it go away? Did it change appreciably? Is it better now, or worse, or the same? What new problems did the solution create?

9. CONCLUSION

Rules and procedures influences individual behavior but ethics are what changes the culture within Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust. Adherence to the Code of Ethics by all employees is an important way that MRTT can gain confidence and support from all stakeholders.

10. POLICY REVIEW

The Code of Ethics shall be reviewed every two years or as and when required to determine the adequacy and effectiveness for the current circumstances and ensure the code is up to date with industry best practices.

CODE OF ETHICS	
DATE REVIEWED	29 MARCH 2021
NEXT DATE OF REVIEW	30 MARCH 2023

11. POLICY APPROVAL

POLICY APPROVED BY:		SIGNATURE
ACTING CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD: Ms T Mawelele	DATE: 29-03-2021	