

# CODE OF BUSINESS CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES

## FÁILTE IRELAND: NATIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

### PURPOSE

Fáilte Ireland is widely regarded throughout the business communities in which it operates for its honesty, fairness and business integrity, all of which are vital to the overall success of the business. To maintain this high reputation, it is incumbent on all employees to conduct their business and personal activities in a manner that does not adversely reflect on Fáilte Ireland.

It is now common practice for larger employers to introduce a formal Code of Business Conduct that provides guidance to employees in recognising and resolving the ethical and legal issues they encounter in conducting their duties. It is also a requirement for all State Bodies, such as Fáilte Ireland, to have such a Code. This requirement is embodied in the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies*. The provisions of the Code of Conduct are ancillary to the requirements set out in the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* and forms part of the Terms and Conditions of Employment for all employees.

The purpose of this Code is to set down the general principles and standards, which govern the professional activities and conduct of management and employees, both permanent and contract, of Fáilte Ireland (collectively referred to as employees throughout) thereby maintaining a high level of public confidence in the organisation as a public body and employer.

The Code of Conduct relates both to internal and external activities of Fáilte Ireland. Wherever we operate, we must ensure that our business is conducted and managed effectively, efficiently and objectively in the public interest, in a manner consistent with the highest professional standards of accountability and responsibility and in accordance with the law.

Employees are obliged to comply with policies and procedures, employee regulations, work rules and any standards and codes of practice adopted by the organisation. This Code of Conduct is binding on all employees (including those on leave, secondment etc.). Queries or concerns regarding business conduct should be directed to the employee's Line Manager in the first instance and then to Human Resources.

### Principles of the Code

Fáilte Ireland is committed to honesty, fairness, integrity and transparency in all its dealings. Therefore, it is essential that all employees conduct themselves and are seen to conduct all activities, to the highest standard possible. The values adopted by the organisation are:

- Integrity, independence and professionalism
- Service to stakeholders
- Value for Money
- Respect and support for all colleagues, the community and the environment
- Openness to learning.

This Code has been developed to be consistent with Fáilte Ireland's mission, as set out in our *Statement of Strategy*.

## **PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE CODE**

### **Integrity, Independence and Professionalism**

We make decisions based on objective and independent evaluations, and are committed to openness, fairness and transparency in our decision-making. We develop the necessary competence and confidence in our people to enable them to carry out their jobs in a professional manner.

### **Obligations**

Employees have an obligation to attend at work as required and perform their official duties honestly and efficiently, respecting the rights of the public and their colleagues.

There are common law obligations also on all employees to properly perform the duties for which they are employed including:

- to obey the law
- to obey all lawful and reasonable instructions from the employer and to work as directed
- to be competent and efficient in the performance of assigned duties
- to refrain from conduct which might impair work performance
- to show reasonable care, and neither use nor allow the use of the employer's property, resources, funds for anything other than authorised purposes
- to incur no liability on the part of the employer without proper authorisation.

As well as being responsible for their own conduct, employees also have a duty to contribute to the smooth running of the workplace by treating their colleagues, trainees and the public with courtesy and respect. This means that Fáilte Ireland employees are expected:

- to avoid behaviour which might endanger or cause distress to their colleagues, or otherwise contribute to disruption of the workplace
- to respect the privacy of individuals when dealing with sensitive information
- not to harass, bully or otherwise intimidate colleagues or customers
- to have due regard for the safety, health and welfare of others in the use of organisation property and resources .

Employees should be aware of, and fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations of the organisation and enforce them in a fair, responsible and consistent manner, acting within the legal authority given to them.

Employees charged with the task of delivering services to customers must respect the individuals with whom they deal and ensure that the needs of the customer are met insofar as it is legally and economically possible. Employees have a duty to deal with customers with integrity, diligence and impartiality and with courtesy, consideration, fairness and promptness.

Employees should respect the principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment for all customers.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Employees are encouraged to participate actively in the communities in which they live and work. However, in engaging in outside activities, employees must avoid the risk of conflict with their official duties and comply with all Fáilte Ireland disclosure requirements.

Employees may not allow a situation to arise where there is a conflict or potential for conflict between their own interests and those of Fáilte Ireland. Employees must observe their duties and obligations to the organisation in accordance with the contract of employment and associated terms and conditions of employment. In addition, employees have common law duties of loyalty, fidelity and confidentiality to their employer. Employees must always act with personal integrity and their actions should be able to bear the closest public scrutiny.

Any employee who is involved with any outside organisation, whether economic, social, cultural or political, has the responsibility to ensure that such involvement is not prejudicial to the interests of Fáilte Ireland and that it does not create a conflict of interest or potential conflict with their employment with the organisation. Any employee becoming aware of such a conflict/potential conflict must declare this to his/her Line Manager in the first instance or Human Resources immediately, who will decide how the situation should be dealt with.

### **Disclosure of information**

Employees are prohibited from making use of, or disclosing, any confidential information gained as a result of employment with the organisation. The unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information to which they have had access may lead to disciplinary action.

If an employee leaves the employment of Fáilte Ireland (resigns, retires or terminates the contract of employment) they are obliged to protect and respect the confidentiality of the organisations information.

An employee who is convicted of a criminal offence or given the benefit of the Probation Act when charged with a criminal offence must report the fact to his / her Line Manager in circumstances where it has implications for his / her official position. In certain circumstances, this could have implications for their official position. Such information will be treated in strict confidence and no record of it will be kept unless the information is considered relevant to the official position of the employee.

### **Gifts and entertainment**

Under no circumstances may an employee solicit, either directly or indirectly, gifts, hospitality etc. for personal use, gain or benefit.

Under no circumstances may an employee accept the offer of any unsolicited gifts, including hospitality, travel, payments, services or benefits-in-kind on a scale which could affect, or be considered to affect, the ability of an employee to exercise independent judgement on Fáilte Ireland matters. However, gifts of a nominal value may be accepted provided that (a) the donor is made aware that acceptance of the gift will not influence any business relationship between the donor and Fáilte Ireland or its employees and (b) receipt of the gift is notified to the recipient's Line Manager.

### **Outside occupation**

Employees are obliged to give their full commitment to their duties and responsibilities in the organisation. In no circumstances should an employee engage in matters unconnected with his / her duties and responsibilities during Fáilte Ireland work hours.

Fáilte Ireland is dedicated to the health safety and welfare of all its employees. Under the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 the onus lies with Fáilte Ireland to ensure that all employees work within a 48-hour working week. Permission must be sought and obtained from the relevant Line Manager, before engaging in any outside work. Employees should not engage in work outside of Fáilte Ireland to the extent of impairing the employees work performance with the organisation.

There must be no conflict of interest or potential conflict between an employee's organisational work / responsibilities and his / her involvement in any employment (including self employment) outside of work.

### **Use of public resources**

Limited personal use of Fáilte Ireland facilities such as electronic mail and telephone is permissible, provided that such use does not interfere with work and is not connected with private/personal business interests.

In performing their Fáilte Ireland duties, employees must apply public resources prudently and only for the purpose for which they are intended. They must not use their position in the organisation to pursue private interest using public resources. Employees should ensure that resources provided are used economically for the purpose for which they were provided, treated with care, maintained and properly secured against theft or misuse. Public resources include material and financial resources, employee time and skills, intellectual property and official information.

### **Service to Stakeholders**

We are committed to providing an excellent service to our various stakeholders, which is courteous, helpful and timely in dealing with queries and requests. We are committed to making information readily available to our stakeholders. We respect the needs of our different stakeholders and seek to strike a balance between the high levels of environmental protection to which we are committed and the need for economic and social development.

### **Value for Money**

We are committed to working in an efficient and effective manner, and to providing real value for money to the taxpayer.

### **Respect and Support for Colleagues**

We believe that people flourish in an open and supportive workplace. We respect our colleagues as individuals with important contributions to make to our overall goals. We encourage teamwork, discussion and debate to help make the best decisions. We want to be an employer of choice where our people can achieve fulfilling careers in a workplace with a high work ethic, and without discrimination.

### **Openness to Learning**

In all of our activities we are open to new insights and greater understanding of ways to improve our organisation and ourselves. We do this by keeping abreast of new developments, which are incorporated into our working practices.

The personal interest of an employee, political or public pressure must never guide our conduct.

### **Code of Conduct Review**

Fáilte Ireland will review this Code of Conduct periodically.

As it is not possible for this Code of Conduct to provide for every situation which may arise, employees must bear in mind that it is primarily their personal responsibility to ensure that all their activities, whether covered specifically or otherwise in this Code of Conduct, are governed by the ethical considerations implicit in the Code.