



Code of Conduct

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Contents

1.	What this policy is about and why we need it	3
2.	Who does this policy apply to	3
3.	Our policy	3
4.	Our Values and Behaviours	3
5.	Our Organisation	4
6.	Our People	5
7.	Our Ways of Working	6
9.	How we will monitor this policy	8
10.	Other documents and regulations that link to this policy	8
	Other documents and regulations that link to this policy	8
11.	When will this policy be reviewed	9
12.	Jargon Buster	9

1. What this policy is about and why we need it

Our vision is to “**be there to support people when they need us**”. To achieve this, as part of our organisational strategy to 2030 we put people first to ensure they continue to be at the heart of what we do. Additionally, we have three priority areas that all our work aligns to - Home, Support and Quality.

To deliver on this vision, it is vital to make sure that our people know what standards of behaviour, the norms and practices that are in place to ensure that we conduct ourselves to the highest standards, which uphold our values and professional conduct.

The Code of Conduct outlines how our people should conduct themselves in their work, and during activities which could impact their work.

2. Who does this policy apply to

This policy and procedure applies to all employees and board members at Acis Group (“Acis”) and its subsidiaries.

3. Our policy

Our Code of conduct captures and reinforces how we operate as an organisation and how we conduct ourselves as representatives of Acis Group. This policy sets out the expectations for Acis Group employees on how we will conduct ourselves at work, how we support and deliver for our customers, and the way in which we operate.

We will act with integrity, working within and conducting ourselves in line with upholding our values and principles, ensuring that we maintain and deliver our services with the highest standards. We recognise that our people are vital representatives of, and embody the values of Acis Group, and this policy outlines and gives guidance on the expected standards of behaviour, and course of action if such standards are not maintained.

The code of conduct is based around four key areas:

- Our Values and Behaviours
- Our Organisation
- Our People
- Our Ways of Working

4. Our Values and Behaviours

We work within and positively demonstrate our values and principles through our work and interaction with people, and ensure our actions reflect and support our values and principles.

Values

Our Values are key in guiding both our decision making in our roles, but also on how we hold ourselves to account and deliver on our services to our customers and to our colleagues.

- Positive – We are positive in our thinking and the choices we make.
- Honest – We work on a basis of trust; we are honest and behave responsibly with a shared purpose.
- Ambitious – We are ambitious and take pride in our achievements and are constantly innovating.

Principles

Our principles help guide us on how to live and deliver on our values every day. These ensure we are clear about how we approach our work to deliver our vision. Everyone working across Acis, in every role, should always strive to deliver against these.

- People First - We put our people at the heart of everything we do without a second thought.
- Do what's right – We live by our values, even though this may not always be the easiest option.
- Own it – If something needs to happen, we make sure it gets done.
- Connect – We respectfully share and listen to others' thoughts and ideas.
- Be the solution – We solve things, not create or highlight problems.

These principles give us a framework of tools, techniques and information to help us live our values and deliver our service to our customers in "The Acis Way".

The Acis Way – Own It Philosophy

The Acis Way is to put people first in everything we do, this includes having a flexible approach to working to deliver an excellent service. Our people work where our customers need us, every role is different, and it is a team approach to agree how best to serve our customers. We are one team, and we are in it to ensure we deliver a great customer experience to every one of the customers we support across the organisation.

Our "Own It" philosophy covers: Managing your own time and diaries, dress code, and etiquette in our buildings and the wider community.

5. Our Organisation

We ensure that our ways of working positively support our culture and strategic objectives, working in good faith to deliver on Acis objectives, ensuring we respect and use information and facilities responsibly.

General Responsibilities

We will fulfil our duties and obligations responsibly, always acting in good faith and in the best interests of Acis Group. We will fulfil the requirement of our role to the best of our ability and should anything limit this, it will be raised through the appropriate channels.

Together we will aim to further Acis's strategic objectives and reflect our culture.

Handling Information

We follow and uphold the legal requirements and Acis's policies, guidance processes and protocols in respect of the storage and handling of information including personal and financial information. We respond to requests for information positively and not prevent people or bodies from being provided with information they are entitled to receive. We respect confidential information we have gained through our positions at Acis, and do not use it for private interests or any personal data for which it's not intended.

Respecting Confidentiality

We process all information in accordance with legislation and Acis policies and procedures. We will not disclose any information on personal data about our customers or colleagues and will not disclose without authority any confidential or sensitive business information. This responsibility continues during and after an individual's employment at Acis, as per clauses found in their contract of employment and/or confidentiality agreement.

Without authority from Acis, information will not be passed onto the press or media or any other external recipients, any unpublished information or materials relating to Acis Group unless doing so in line with the Whistleblowing policy.

Facilities and Equipment

Acis facilities and premises are only to be used for their intended purpose in a responsible and lawful manner. This includes office premises, company vans, mobile phones, laptops and other IT facilities. Reasonable personal use of company mobiles and IT equipment is permitted but must be kept to a minimum, in line with our IT policies.

6. Our People

We treat others with dignity and respect, being considerate of others views and beliefs, supporting and celebrate diversity. We encourage and support development of ourselves and our colleagues and are committed to a continuous learning environment.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We recognise and value the importance of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion practises in our workplace and our communities, and are committed to promoting this across the group. We aim to provide an inclusive environment, wherever we are through our operations and services, treating all our people fairly, ensuring people feel valued and supported by one another.

Reputation and Respect for others

We are always professional, fair and polite in our dealings with customers. We seek and value views from our customers when making decisions that will affect them and do not allow any personal relationship to influence us in our role and responsibility.

We will not act in a way that could be regarded as bringing Acis into disrepute. This includes making derogatory comments about Acis, its employees, Board Members, customers and anyone else associated with Acis.

Performance Management and Development

All employees take part in monthly performance conversations, held with their line manager. As part of this process, all employees are encouraged to contribute to their own personal training and development needs relevant to their role to keep professional skills and knowledge up to date. All employees undertake any necessary online training and attend training and learning events, to consolidate knowledge and develop skills.

Dedication to Learning

We support all people for a strong start at Acis with an induction to our culture and role specific knowledge. We will ensure that our people have equity of opportunity in all aspects of their development and that everyone is valued and supported to develop as individuals so that we all confidently contribute to our shared purpose. We ensure everyone completes necessary training to protect themselves, our people at work and in our communities.

7. Our Ways of Working

Our professional standards and how we will work and deliver for our customers in our role, operating within financial regulations, ethics and in line with our values and ethics.

Honesty and Integrity

We only handle customer's money where necessary and ensure that a receipt is complete for every transaction. Under all circumstances we will operate in accordance with Acis financial procedures and controls to ensure appropriate handling of funds.

When dealing with customers we do not: give or loan money, receive a gift or money from a customer, nor do we invite or influence a customer to make a will or trust under which we are named as an executor, trustee or beneficiary. This does not apply if there is a family connection to a customer which has been declared, and is a private family exchange.

Openness and Accountability

Before taking on any paid or voluntary work that may interfere with their role or conflict with the terms set out in their contract of employment, employees should always consult with their immediate line manager beforehand. Any other employment, personal relationships or other appointments must be declared and must not interfere with an employee's ability to perform, or conflict with, their role.

Professionalism

We demonstrate and ensure high standards of behaviour are upheld to safeguard the reputation of Acis. Standard of behaviour we shall demonstrate are:

- Respect – Views, ideas, feelings, and opinions will be valued with everyone we deal with, treating people as individuals and respecting their right to confidentiality. Unprofessional, coercive and discourteous behaviour shall not be tolerated.
- Impartiality – Ensuring honesty, openness, and fairness in all our dealings. Everyone involved in the delivery of our services will act in an efficient and impartial manner. Where personal relationships exist that may give rise to a conflict of interest, or the appearance of any such contract, we will endeavour to adjust and make alternative arrangements to ensure impartiality where operationally practicable.
- Collaborative Working – As part of our “own it” philosophy we will connect to achieve a common goal by working efficiently with others, sharing relevant information to keep each other informed.

Ethical Behaviour

We will not offer, seek or accept bribes, inducements or any other form of influence and will make decisions which reflect the best interests of Acis, its people, or service users. Anything that may be seen to compromise our judgement or integrity, such as the acceptance of gifts, hospitality or any other benefit that place us under an obligation to individuals or an organisation should be avoided. We will not seek any preferential treatment in the provision of benefits such as housing accommodation or employment.

Any gifts or hospitality offered to us should be declined or declared through our Legal and Governance Team. Any bribe, hospitality or a gift, which is or maybe in return for expected preferential treatment, this must be declined and declared immediately to your line manager or a member of the Legal & Governance team.

Acis funds or resources should not be misused to seek preferential treatment to your own personal benefit, or the benefit of family and friends. All Acis funds and resources are to be used properly and efficiently, any procurement decisions must be guided by Acis policies and procedures and fairness in decision-making and in line with relevant legislation.

All reasonable steps should be taken to protect Acis funds, resources, property and assets from fraud, theft, damage, and misuse. Any claim for reimbursement for any expenses, should be done so in line with Acis procedures and policy.

Declaring Interests

All reasonable steps should be taken to make sure no conflict arises between your duties and relationships. Any interest which may be perceived as a conflict of duty within your role, or any relevant personal interests must be formally declared.

Any relationship to a person applying for or currently employed within Acis must not be involved in their appointment, performance management or any reward recognition. If there is any known relationship to a colleague, service user or subcontractor of Acis this must be formally declared so preferential treatment is avoided. Any known relationship to a person or organisation seeking appointment as a contractor or supplier must also be declared and as an individual are not to be involved in their appointment.

Unless specifically permitted, avoid using contractors and suppliers for private use, and not use or attempt to use your position to promote personal interests or those of any connected person, business, or other organisation for personal gain.

Fulfilling your role

It is an expectation to comply with the terms of your appointment and Acis policies and procedures. All duties of your role must be fulfilled responsibly by taking reasonable care and always acting in the best interests of Acis and that of our customers.

As an organisation Acis always aims to put the needs of the customer first, and we expect all employees to do the same in their day-to-day work, working and demonstrating our values and principles.

Safeguarding

We will consciously support and uphold our commitment to safeguarding, delivering a clear approach and behaviour to safeguarding across Acis. Through training, conscious awareness of our environment and adopting a pro-active approach, we will support and deliver on our safeguarding responsibilities.

We will create a safe environment for people to thrive through risk assessments of venues used for events or training to ensure a safe space free from risk of harm, and using different ways that we engage with customers, to identify possible safeguarding issues and act on them.

8. Breach of this code

This Code sets standards of conduct for employees to maintain the good reputation of Acis. All employees have a responsibility to promote and uphold the requirements of this code, and it is written on the assumption that employees will comply with all legal and regulatory requirements relevant to this Code and with all Acis policies, procedures, and employment contracts.

Our employees apply good judgement to actions or decisions even where the Code does not contain specific requirements. It is always important to consider how any action taken, or decision made aligns with Acis's purpose and values, and what impact it may have upon customers and reputation.

Any potential or actual breach of this code, whether directly or witnessed, should be raised with your line manager. Any breach of this code may result in disciplinary action being taken.

9. How we will monitor this policy

We will monitor this policy through the review of feedback and challenges regarding the process from our people during its delivery, as well as ensure it remains in line with current legislation.

10. Other documents and regulations that link to this policy

Other documents and regulations that link to this policy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection Act 2018 • Equality Act 2010 • Employment Rights Act 1996 • Employment Relations Act 1999 • Financial Regulations • Acis Own It Philosophy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary Policy • Grievance Policy • Absence Management Policy • Dignity at Work Policy • Learning and Development Policy • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy • Data Protection Policy • Expenses Policy • Procurement and Contract Management Policy • Safeguarding Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Group Safeguarding Policy ○ Safeguarding Children and Young People in our Education Services Policy and Procedure • Mobile Phone & Device Security Policy • Use of IT Facilities Policy
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11. When will this policy be reviewed

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

Procedures and operation within the business will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis in response to business needs, legislation and changing environments.

12. Jargon Buster

Reference	Definition
SMT	Senior Management Team (Heads of Service)
ELT	Executive Leadership Team (CEO & Directors)
JLT	Joint Leadership Team (SMT & ELT)
Customers	Tenants, learners, students, service users