Code of Conduct
The Education Review Office Code of Conduct

Ko te tamaiti te pūtak e te kaupapa | The child – the heart of the matter

As ERO staff we have powers, responsibilities and discretion to administer public resources. Therefore we must act in ways that reassure the public and government that we are carrying out our functions responsibly and effectively and are worthy of their continuing trust and confidence. We are all expected to publicly demonstrate a high standard of efficiency (with due consideration to sustainability) in the management of resources and a commitment to achieving ERO’s outcomes and specific output targets.

We are obliged to serve the aims and objectives of the government of the day. We should ensure that our personal interests or activities do not interfere with, or appear to interfere with, this obligation.

This Code of Conduct applies to all ERO employees.

The Code sets out the standards of integrity and conduct expected of us all as ERO employees and the standards of behaviour expected of us in our day to day work. The Code does not provide detailed explanations of appropriate behaviour in every situation. ERO has policies to guide our behaviour and practice and these include disciplinary procedures that may need to be implemented in the event of a breach of this Code.

The State Services Commission website helpdesk: codeofconduct@ssc.govt.nz is another avenue of support if we are unsure or want independent guidance.

The Code:
- incorporates and builds on the minimum requirements and expectations of public service employers and employees set out in the State Services Commission’s Standards of Integrity and Conduct;
- reflects the legislation applying to ERO and employees;
- outlines general principles that should be applied with judgement, and with a regard for:
  – the spirit of service to the public;
  – the obligations ERO has as a government department; and
  – the role of ERO as a government department in supporting parliamentary democracy; and
- has elements that are specific to the work of a review officer.

ERO’s Code of Conduct incorporates the four elements of the Standards of Integrity and Conduct.

WE MUST BE FAIR, IMPARTIAL, RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTWORTHY.
**FAIR** *WE MUST:* treat everyone fairly and with respect, be professional and responsive; work to make our services accessible and effective; strive to make a difference to the well-being of New Zealand and all its people.

**IMPARTIAL** *WE MUST:* maintain the political neutrality required to enable us to work with current and future governments; carry out the functions of our organisation, unaffected by our personal beliefs; support our organisation in providing robust and unbiased advice; and respect the authority of the government of the day.

**We must treat everyone fairly and with respect**

Treating people fairly means that we do not show any favouritism, bias or self interest in our work. We are required to administer the law and to give effect to government policy fairly and reasonably, with respect for the people we serve.

Our decisions must be based on accurate and relevant information, observing the principles of natural justice.

We must treat everyone with respect – the public we serve and the colleagues we work with.

**We must be professional and responsive**

Being professional requires us to act with personal integrity at all times, to be committed to ERO’s responsibilities, and to be aware of the constitutional framework within which we operate.

**We must obey any lawful and reasonable instructions given and work as directed.**

We are never justified in ignoring operational procedures, interpreting government policy or exercising our decision-making responsibilities to suit our personal beliefs.

**We must support ERO in providing robust and unbiased advice**

ERO’s focus is on providing for the well-being of New Zealanders through promoting high quality education.

**We must maintain the political neutrality required to enable us to work with current and future governments**

Our responsibility to the government is to work in a politically neutral manner. Our commitment to Ministers must be unaffected by any party-political concerns.

We must also act in a way that ensures we are able to establish professional and impartial relationships with future Ministers.

We must avoid making public comment that might be, or perceived to be, critical of government policy.

As a general rule, we are free to belong to any lawful organisation. Our rights to participate in social campaigns and the activities of political parties, unions and professional associations are not precluded because we work in ERO. But we need to be aware always of the perceptions others may have of our ability to be politically impartial in the way we do our work. When expressing views on behalf of such groups, we must ensure that we will not be seen as speaking on behalf of ERO.

As always, it is a matter of judgement. The State Services Commission has published ‘fact sheets’ as a guide on political neutrality.

**We must carry out the functions of our organisation, unaffected by our personal beliefs**

The work we do should not be influenced by bias, personal beliefs or commitments. Personal interests can include our interest or involvement in party political, religious or philosophical matters. If our interests or beliefs could affect our work in any way, we should discuss this with our manager.

We must be objective in the way we manage our work, ensuring we are fair, consistent and transparent in what we do. Our obligations to the public mean that we should report any serious integrity concerns.

**We must work to make our services accessible and effective**

Being accessible requires us to take personal responsibility for responding in a way that is helpful to those using our services and that takes account of particular interests, sensitivities and backgrounds of people using those services.

**We must strive to make a difference to the well-being of New Zealanders**

**We must respect the authority of the government of the day**

It is generally unacceptable for us in our personal capacity to comment on matters of government policy if we:

- use or reveal any information gained in the course of our work where this is not already known by, or readily available to, the general public;
- purport to express or imply an organisational view;
- act in a way that constitutes a personal attack on a Minister, work colleagues or other State servants; or
- criticise in such strong or persistent terms that our ability to give full effect to the executive government responsibilities of our organisation in an impartial way is called into question.

We must not make public comment on behalf of ERO, except in accordance with ERO’s policies.
RESPONSIBLE WE MUST: act lawfully and objectively; use ERO’s resources carefully and only for intended purposes; treat information with care and use it only for proper purposes; work to improve the performance and efficiency of our organisation.

TRUSTWORTHY WE MUST: be honest; work to the best of our abilities; ensure our actions are not affected by our personal interests or relationships; not use our position for personal gain; decline gifts or benefits that place us under any obligation or perceived influence; and avoid any activities that may harm the reputation of ERO or of the State Services.

ERO’s process for responding to complaints about aspects of school or early childhood education reviews is available to the public on request and on our website: www.ero.govt.nz
Rationale

The Code of Conduct reinforces high standards of performance by:

• making explicit the principles which should guide review officers in the performance of their duties;
• maintaining the confidence in the reputation and authority of ERO with those people with whom review officers come into contact professionally;
• indicating to outside groups that they can have confidence in the quality of service provided by ERO as a corporate body, independently of the individuals providing the service; and
• providing legal protection for review officers, whereby ERO acknowledges responsibility for actions taken and statements made, in the course of review officers’ professional duties, provided that these are consistent with ERO policy and procedures.

Review Officers

Review Officers accept that they must be able to justify their actions and decisions in the light of current legislation, educational knowledge and standards of practice.

Review officers must:

• perform their professional duties in accordance with the law, ERO standard procedures, recognised standards of agreed practice and educational knowledge;
• base conclusions on data that can be verified as being accurate, valid and reliable;
• prepare reports and recommendations which are based on appropriate analysis of relevant and reliable data; and
• maintain a high level of professional competence through ongoing development of their knowledge and skills.

Impartiality

• Review officers have a duty to apply objective consideration and judgement to their work at all times. They will remain free of any conflicting interest or improper influence and should avoid any situation which may be construed as constituting a conflict of interest or which may impair objectivity.
• Review officers must be impartial when undertaking reviews and will interpret and present evidence fairly. They will resist any pressures that would influence their impartiality.
• Their oral and written reports will be open, direct and honest. They will not knowingly prepare or certify as true any statement that is false, incorrect or misleading.
• Review officers will recognise and communicate any professional or personal limitations or other constraints that would preclude responsible judgement and successful performance of reviews.

Conduct During a Review

• Review officers have legal powers of entry and inspection and are entitled to receive such information as they consider necessary for the purpose of review.
• Review officers receive information on the basis that it will be used without prejudice only for the purpose of review.
• Review officers respect the confidentiality of information acquired in the course of their duties.
• Review officers handle the disclosure of any information lawfully.
• Review officers have a responsibility to respect the powers vested in them by legislation.
• Review officers listen to individuals or groups and value and respect their integrity.
• Review officers identify themselves to the participants in a review, by showing their certificate of designation.
STATE SERVICES COMMISSION
Standards of Integrity and Conduct

A code of conduct issued by the State Services Commissioner under section 57 of the State Sector Act 1988.

We must be fair, impartial, responsible, and trustworthy

The State Services is made up of many organisations with powers to carry out the work of New Zealand's democratically elected governments.

Whether we work in a department or in a Crown entity, we must act with a spirit of service to the community and meet the same high standards of integrity and conduct in everything we do.

We must comply with the standards of integrity and conduct set out in this code. As part of complying with this code, our organisations must maintain policies and procedures that are consistent with it.

FAIR
We must:
• treat everyone fairly and with respect
• be professional and responsive
• work to make government services accessible and effective
• strive to make a difference to the well-being of New Zealand and all its people.

IMPARTIAL
We must:
• maintain the political neutrality required to enable us to work with current and future governments
• carry out the functions of our organisation, unaffected by our personal beliefs
• support our organisation to provide robust and unbiased advice
• respect the authority of the government of the day.

RESPONSIBLE
We must:
• act lawfully and objectivel
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• use our organisation's resources carefully and only for intended purposes
• treat information with care and use it only for proper purposes
• work to improve the performance and efficiency of our organisation.

TRUSTWORTHY
We must:
• be honest
• work to the best of our abilities
• ensure our actions are not affected by our personal interests or relationships
• never misuse our position for personal gain
• decline gifts or benefits that place us under any obligation or perceived influence
• avoid any activities, work or non-work, that may harm the reputation of our organisation or of the State Services.

TE KOMIHANA O NGÄ TARI KÄWANATANGA
Ngä Paerewa mõ te Ngäkau Tapatahi me te Whanonga

He tikanga kawe i tukuna e te Kai-kömihana o Ngä Tari Känawanatanga i raro i te Ture Rängai Känawanatanga, wänanga 57.

Ko tã tåtau me tika, me tõkeke, me takohanga me matatika hoki.

He maha ngä tari whakahaere o te Kämihana o Ngä Tari Känawanatanga, me ö rätau mana ki te mahi i ngä mai a ngä käwanatanga pöti o Aotearoa.

Ahakoa tåtau ka mahi i roto i tëtahi tari, hinonga Karauna ränëi, i roto i a tåtau mahi me ö ü ki te wairua ratonga ki te haporî me te whakatutuki i ngä paerewa o te ngäkau tapatahi me te whanonga i roto i ã tåtau mahi katoa. Me ü tåtau ki ngä paerewa o te ngäkau tapatahi me te whanonga i roto i tënei tikanga. Mö te ü ki tënei tikanga, me pümäu ö tåtau tari whakahaere ki ngä kaupapa me ngä tikanga whakahaere e hängai ana ki têr."\n
TIKA
Ko tã tåtau:
• kia tika, me te whakaro nui hoki ki ngä tängata katoa
• me ngaio me whai urupare hoki
• me mahi nga whai wahi mai me te whai take anö o ngä ratonga käwanatanga
• me whakapau kaha ki te whakarerêkê i te orangä o Aotearoa me öna tängata katoa.

TÖKEE
Ko tã tåtau:
• me noho këpapa tonu i roto i ngä take tõrangapu kia pai ai te mahi tahi me ngä käwanatanga o te rä me örä e whai mai.
• me whakahaere i ngä mahi a ö tåtau tari whakahaere, ahakoa ö tåtau ake whakamonpo
• me tautoko i tõ tåtau tari whakahaere ki te whakarato i ngä tohutoho whai take, tõkeke hoki
• me whakaro nui ki te mana o te käwanatanga o te rä.

TAKOHANGA
Ko tã tåtau:
• me hängai å tåtau mahi a te ture, me te tõkeke hoki
• me åta whakamahi i ngä räuemi å te tari whakahaere, ka mutu mö ngä
• kaupapa tõtika anake
• kia tika te tiaki i ngä pärongo me te whakamahi anö mö ngä kaupapa e
• hängai anä
• me mahi ki te whakapakari i te mahinga me te kaha o te tari whakahaere.

MATATIKA
Ko tã tåtau:
• me pono
• me mahi ki te taumata o ö tåtau kaha
• kia kaua e på mai öu åke haihia, hononga hoki ki roto i ö mahi
• kia kaua e whakaae atu ki ngä takoha, olaohia ränëi e bere i a tåtau, e riro ki ngä haihia ränëi tëtahi
• kia kaua e euru ki ngä kaupapa e tukino ai i te mana o te tari whakahaere, o Te Kämihana o Ngä Tari Känawanatanga ränëi, ahakoa mahi, mahi ränëi i te waho i te tari.