



Code of Conduct for ACE Members

Purpose

The ACE Members' Code of Conduct establishes clear standards of professionalism, ethics, and behavior expected from all members of the Association. Its purpose is to ensure that members uphold ACE's mission and values, maintain the trust of the public and the community, and contribute positively to ACE's advocacy efforts. This Code provides guidance to maintain high standards and protect the integrity and reputation of ACE.

Scope

This Code applies to **all ACE members**, including individuals and organizations, across all membership categories. It governs member conduct in all ACE-related activities and interactions, whether at ACE events, in professional practice, or in public forums where members represent or associate themselves with ACE. Compliance with this Code is a condition of membership in ACE.

Professional Responsibilities and Expectations

ACE members are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism, integrity, and respect at all times. Key responsibilities and expected behaviors include:

- **Compliance and Integrity:** Abide by all ACE policies, bylaws, and any applicable laws and regulations governing their professional activities. Members shall conduct business honestly, ethically, and in good faith, avoiding any fraudulent or deceptive practices.
- **Respect and Collegiality:** Treat fellow members, colleagues, ACE staff, and the public with respect, courtesy, and fairness. Harassment, discrimination, or abusive behavior of any kind is strictly prohibited. Members should foster an inclusive environment and constructive dialogue.
- **Upholding ACE's Reputation:** Refrain from any actions or communications that slander, defame, or harm the Association or its reputation. No member shall engage in conduct that, in the reasonable opinion of ACE, would disparage or impair the reputation of ACE. This includes refraining from public statements or social media posts that are malicious or intended to undermine ACE, its leadership, or its mission.

- **Support for ACE Initiatives:** Maintain a supportive stance toward ACE's public advocacy efforts and mission-driven initiatives. Members may voice dissenting opinions through appropriate internal channels, but should not publicly oppose or subvert ACE's official positions in a manner that could harm the Association's advocacy work. When speaking in public, members should be clear if opinions are personal and not made on ACE's behalf (unless authorized).
- **Professional Competence:** Strive for excellence and continual improvement in their professional practice. Members should maintain the highest standards of competence and ethics in their field, serving as role models that reflect positively on ACE and the profession.

Compliance with Regulatory and Licensing Bodies

Members must **maintain good standing with all relevant regulatory and licensing authorities** related to their profession or business operations. This includes:

- Ensuring all required certifications, licenses, or registrations (for example, childcare facility licenses or professional credentials) remain current and in good standing.
- Adhering to the ethical codes and standards of any regulatory body or professional association applicable to the member's field of practice.
- Promptly reporting to ACE any change in status regarding their professional license or any disciplinary action by a licensing/regulatory body. Being in good standing professionally is a reflection on ACE's credibility; loss of a required license or serious professional misconduct may be grounds for review of ACE membership status.
- Complying with all applicable laws and regulations in the conduct of their business or professional activities. Members must refrain from any illegal or unethical activities that could reflect adversely on the Association.

Alignment with ACE's Advocacy Goals and Mission

Members are expected to understand and support ACE's mission and advocacy goals. ACE's mission is to advance the interests of [the field served by ACE] and to advocate for high standards and positive policies in this field. Accordingly, members should:

- Act in ways that **align with the mission and values** of ACE in their professional practice and public engagement. This means contributing to the improvement of the profession/industry and supporting initiatives that benefit the community ACE serves.

- Serve as ambassadors for ACE's causes, promoting awareness and understanding of ACE's advocacy positions in their communities and networks, consistent with their comfort and expertise.
- Avoid actions that conflict with or undermine ACE's objectives. If a member finds themselves in disagreement with an ACE policy or advocacy stance, they should handle it constructively—such as by providing feedback through ACE's channels—rather than publicly working against ACE's efforts.
- Ensure that any use of the ACE name, logo, or affiliation (for instance, in marketing materials or public profiles) is in accordance with ACE guidelines and is not presented in a manner that misrepresents ACE's views or implies ACE endorsement of personal positions without authorization.

Confidentiality (*if applicable*)

In general, most ACE member activities are public or shared within the membership. However, if a member is entrusted with **confidential information** or privileged communications from ACE (for example, access to member-only resources, internal discussion forums, or draft policy strategies not yet public), that member is expected to preserve such confidentiality. This means:

- Not sharing ACE's confidential or proprietary information with non-members or unauthorized persons without proper permission. Confidential information could include things like ACE's member contact lists, internal deliberations, or any material explicitly marked or understood to be confidential.
- Handling sensitive information (including personal data of other members) in compliance with privacy laws and ACE's privacy policies.
- Using information obtained through ACE membership solely for its intended purpose (e.g. professional collaboration, advocacy) and not for personal gain or competitive advantage outside the scope of ACE's activities.

Members should err on the side of caution and consult ACE leadership if unsure whether certain information is confidential. Maintaining trust includes respecting any confidentiality of internal matters.

Consequences of Violations

Adherence to this Code of Conduct is a condition of continuing membership in ACE. Alleged violations will be taken seriously and reviewed by the ACE Board of Directors or an authorized ethics committee. Consequences for confirmed violations may include:

- **Educative or Corrective Actions:** For minor or first-time issues, a private warning, guidance, or mandatory training/remediation may be issued to help the member correct their behavior.
- **Formal Warning or Probation:** The member may receive a written reprimand and be placed on a probationary period during which specific conditions must be met to remain a member in good standing.
- **Suspension of Membership:** For more serious misconduct, the member's privileges may be suspended for a defined period. This can include loss of access to ACE events or resources during the suspension.
- **Loss of Good Standing / Expulsion:** In cases of severe or repeat misconduct or any action intentionally harmful to the organization, the Board of Directors may declare a member "not in good standing," leading to expulsion from ACE. According to ACE's bylaws, a member who has intentionally acted to harm the organization (as determined by a two-thirds vote of the Board) will lose good standing and be expelled from membership. An expelled member loses all membership rights and benefits, including the right to vote at ACE meetings. Expulsion may be immediate upon the required Board vote, following any notice or hearing process outlined in ACE policy.
- **Additional Actions:** Depending on the violation, ACE may also remove the member from any ACE offices or committee positions they hold. If the conduct violates laws or professional regulations, ACE may report it to the appropriate authorities or bodies.

All disciplinary actions will follow the procedures set out in ACE's bylaws and policies to ensure fairness, due process, and an opportunity for the member to respond. Members subject to expulsion, for instance, will be given notice and a chance to present a defense in accordance with ACE's expulsion process.

By enforcing this Code, ACE maintains its integrity and ensures a safe, respectful, and principled environment for all members.

Acknowledgment and Agreement

By purchasing an ACE membership, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the ACE Members' Code of Conduct. I understand that compliance with this Code is a condition of my membership in ACE, and I pledge to conduct myself in accordance with the principles and expectations set forth above.