



association for persons with special needs

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Introduction

- 1 This Policy* is adapted from the guidelines provided by National Council of Social Service. It reflects current knowledge on governance principles and guidelines for non-profit social service sector in the area of conflict of interest, both locally and internationally. It is meant to help APSN adopt good practices for better governance, accountability and transparency.
- 2 The Conflict of Interest Policy must be read by **all** Board members, staff and volunteers upon hiring, appointment or election to Association for Persons with Special Needs (“APSN”) as an acknowledgement of having understood the policy and that he/she will fully disclose to the Board of APSN when a conflict of interest situation arises.

Definition of Conflict of Interest

- 3 Conflict of interest arises whenever the personal or professional interests of a board member, staff or volunteer are potentially interfering with the performance of their official duties to the organisations they serve in.
- 4 When actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest arises, the integrity, fairness and accountability of the VWO could be affected.

Conflict of Interest Situations

- 5 Conflict of interests situations include but not limited to the following:
 - 5.1 Contract with vendors
Where Board members, staff or volunteers have personal interest in business transactions or contracts that APSN may enter into, our policy is to require a declaration of such interest as soon as possible followed by abstention from discussion and decision-making on the matter (including voting on the transaction or contract). All such discussion and evaluation by the Board or relevant approving authority (e.g. Chief Executive Officer, School Principals and Centre Heads) in arriving at the final decision on the transaction/contract should always be well documented.
 - 5.2 Vested interest in other organisations that have dealings/ relationship with APSN
Where Board members, staff or volunteers who have vested interest in other organisations that have dealings/relationship with APSN, and when matters involving the interests of both APSN and the other organisation are discussed, such members, staff or volunteers are required to make a declaration of such interest and if necessary, followed by abstention from discussion and decision-making on such matters.



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5.3 Joint Ventures

Approval of the Board should be sought before APSN enters into any joint venture with external parties. Where Board members, staff or volunteers have interest in such ventures, such members, staff or volunteers are required to make a declaration of such interest and if necessary, followed by abstention from discussion and decision-making on the matter.

5.4 Recruitment of staff with close relationship

Recruitment of staff with close relationship (i.e. those who are more than just mere acquaintances) with current Board members, staff or volunteers should go through the established human resource procedures for recruitment. The Board member, staff or volunteer should make a declaration of such relationships and should refrain from influencing decision on the recruitment.

5.5 Remuneration

Board members and volunteers should serve without remuneration for their voluntary service to APSN so as to maintain the integrity of serving for public trust and community good instead of personal gain. However, APSN may reimburse Board members or volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses directly related to the service.

5.6 Paid staff on the Board

Paid staff, including the executive head and senior staff employed by APSN, should not serve as a member of the Board as it can pose issues of conflict of interest and role conflicts, and may raise doubts on the integrity of Board decisions. The executive head and senior staff can attend Board meetings, ex-officio, to provide information and facilitate necessary discussion but should not take part in the decision-making of the Board.

5.7 Others

5.7.1 A Board member's organisation receives grant funding from the organisation he/she is serving.

5.7.2 Prohibition on gifts, entertainment and other favours from any persons or entities which do or seek business with APSN.

How to Deal With Conflict of Interest

6 Apart from this written Policy on conflict of interest, APSN requires Board members, staff and volunteers to adopt two other measures aimed at safeguarding the Association's integrity and accountability. These are:



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- 6.1 Establish disclosure as a normal practice. Disclosure can be carried out in three ways. In the first way, Board members, staff and volunteers shall be asked to disclose any general information about themselves that leads to actual or potential conflicts, at the start of their term of office. In the second way, as and when actual conflicts occur the Board member, staff and volunteer makes a declaration of his/her interest for that specific instance either verbally or in written and excuses himself/ herself from decision making. In the third way, Board members, staff and volunteers shall be required to sign the Disclosure Form on the anniversary of their joining the Association or at the beginning of each calendar year.
- 6.2 Board members must lead by example an attitude and act of personal integrity. As the Board holds the ultimate responsibility and is always accountable to public trust, Board members should uphold and maintain a standard of conduct such as the avoidance of conflict of interest to fulfill public trust responsibilities.

Disclosure Policy and Procedure

- 7 Transactions with parties with whom a conflicting interest exists may be undertaken only if all of the following are observed:
- a. The conflicting interest is fully disclosed;
 - b. The person with the conflict of interest is excluded from the discussion and approval of such transaction;
 - c. A competitive bid or comparable valuation exists; and
 - d. The Board has determined that the transaction is in the best interest of APSN.
- 8 Disclosure involving Board members should be made to the President (or if he/she is the one with the conflict, then to the Vice Presidents) who shall bring these matters to the Board.
- 9 The Board shall determine whether a conflict exists and in the case of an existing conflict, whether the contemplated transaction may be authorised as just, fair and reasonable to APSN. The decision of the Board on these matters will rest in their sole discretion, and their concern must be the welfare of APSN and the advancement of its purpose.
- 10 All decisions made by the Board on such matters shall be minuted and filed.
- 11 This policy document must be read and understood by all Board members, staff and volunteers upon the start of office.
- 12 Any disclosure of interest made by Board members, staff and volunteers where they may be involved in a potentially conflicting situation(s), must be recorded, filed and updated appropriately by all specified parties.

End of Policy



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CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

With regard to my service as _____ (e.g. President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Members, Teacher, Instructor, etc.) of the Association for Persons with Special Needs ("APSN"), I have the following potential conflict of interest to report: *(please tick Yes/No)*

Potential Conflict of Interest	Yes	No
I am affiliated ¹ to another Social Services Organisation (SSO).		
I am affiliated to a vendor, supplier, or any other party providing or bidding for providing services, having a direct or indirect interest in any business transaction(s), agreement, and investment with APSN.		
I have business dealings or transaction with a vendor, supplier or any other party which could result in benefit to me.		
I or person(s) I have affiliation with have interest in purchasing services from APSN.		
I am affiliated to a staff of APSN.		
Affiliated person(s) involved is a party to or have an interest in any pending legal proceedings involving APSN.		

Others: _____

If **Yes**, please elaborate on the potential conflict arising from the above situation with regards to the transaction concerned (e.g. nature of service/transaction, if affiliated person involved, the identity of the affiliated person and your relationship with that person):

¹ Affiliated refers to the following: Spouse, domestic partner, child, mother, father, brother or sister or close associates; any corporation, business or non-profit organisation of which you are serve as staff, officer, board member, partner, participate in management or are employed by; any trust or other estate in which you have a substantial interest or as to which you serve as a trustee or in a similar capacity.



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CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

Period of Disclosure: _____

1. I hereby confirm that I have read and understood the Conflict of Interest Policy of the Association for Persons with Special Needs and that the disclosure made above is complete and correct to the best of my information and belief.
2. I shall not be participating in the discussion of and decision making on this matter. I agree that if I become aware of any information that might indicate that this disclosure is inaccurate or that I have not complied with the conflict of interest policy, I will notify the President or Vice-President of the Board immediately.

Declarant's Name & Designation

Declarant's Signature

Date

Sighted by:

CEO/School Principal/Centre Director/HQ Heads
Name & Signature

Date