

# UNICEF Manuals: *Policies and Procedures*



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Book I: Human Resources Manual

**e-Handbook Flag:**

**Chapter 01: Duties, Obligations, Privileges and Conduct**

**Section 4: Standards of Conduct**

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## **General Provisions**

1.4.1 Staff shall conduct themselves at all times in a manner befitting their status as international civil servants. They shall not engage in any activity that is incompatible - whether real or perceived - with the proper discharge of their duties with UNICEF. They shall avoid any action and in particular any kind of public pronouncement which may adversely reflect on their status, or on the integrity, independence and impartiality which are required by that status. While they are not expected to give up their national sentiments or their political and religious convictions, they shall at all times bear in mind the reserve and tact incumbent upon them by reason of their international status ([see UN Staff Regulation 1.4](#)).

1.4.2 In addition to the UN Staff Regulations, staff shall also be guided by the principles contained in the Report on the Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service ([see Annex 1.E](#)). Originally prepared in 1954, its applicability has been reconfirmed on several occasions by the organizations of the UN Common System. The full Report is given to all newly-recruited staff, and is available through Personnel Services Section (PSS), DHR. UNICEF's own document, Guiding Principles ([see Annex 1.B](#)), which was issued in 1996, complements the Report on the Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service and provides the foundation for the conduct of staff members.

## **Responsibility for Actions of Family Members**

1.4.3 Staff members may be held responsible for the conduct of any dependents and should impress upon members of their family the necessity of maintaining a high standard of conduct ([see paragraph 53 of Report on the Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service, Annex 1.E](#)).

## **Confidentiality**

1.4.4 Staff members shall exercise the utmost discretion in regard to all matters of official business. They shall not communicate to any person any information known to them by reason of their official position which has not been made public, except in the course of their duties or by authorization of the Executive Director. Nor shall they at any time use such information to private advantage. These obligations do not cease upon separation from UNICEF ([see UN Staff Regulation 1.5](#)).

### **Anonymous Letters and Other Unacceptable Communications**

1.4.5 UNICEF staff may express their views on issues relevant to their conditions of service with the organization through various consultative, grievance and appeal mechanisms, fora including work unit meetings, performance discussions and general staff meetings, as well as in-house media including letters to the UNICEF Staff News or electronic mail and bulletin boards.

1.4.6 While staff are not expected to give up, for example, their personal views, political opinions or national characteristics, it is incumbent on them to exercise judgement and restraint in expressing their views, and not resort to confrontational or subversive means of communicating, including but not limited to:

- a) the writing of anonymous letters;
- b) displaying posters, graphics or signs which could be offensive to others;
- c) defacing or damaging public or private property; or
- d) any other forms of unacceptable communication.

1.4.7 With regard to anonymous letters, while no account will be taken of their content, attempts will be made to identify their authors and if proven, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

### **Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment**

1.4.8 Within the context of the Report on the Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service and Article 8 of the UN Charter, every staff member has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, free from abuse or harassment. Sexual harassment, in any of its many forms, is unacceptable behaviour in any setting and will not be tolerated in UNICEF. Conduct which constitutes sexual harassment will, therefore, be dealt with seriously and, if proven, will lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Detailed guidelines for identifying and dealing with sexual harassment are contained in [Chapter 17 of this Manual](#).

1.4.9 UNICEF, as an employer, is responsible for providing a work environment free of all forms of discrimination, bias, harassment or any other unprofessional conduct which is offensive or unwelcome to staff. All persons employed by UNICEF have the right to work

in an environment free from harassment in any of its forms.

1.4.10 While Heads of Office/Divisions have ultimate responsibility in this regard, managers and supervisors are responsible for maintaining a harmonious work environment and must take prompt action to deal with any incidents, whether reported or observed, of unacceptable behaviour, including sexual harassment. Non-action would in itself constitute an omission. They should familiarize themselves with UNICEF's policies on Sexual Harassment ([see Chapter 17 of this Manual](#)) and have a good understanding of the issues surrounding sexual harassment, particularly in recognizing in others, but more so in themselves, behaviour which constitutes sexual harassment.

### **Adherence to Policies and Decisions of the Organization**

1.4.11 In the formulation of policies, UNICEF affords its staff, through appropriate consultative mechanisms, opportunity to contribute their views, information and experience for consideration.

1.4.12 Once a decision has been taken, it is the duty of staff to carry it out. This may not be subject to dispute ([see paragraphs 15 and 16 of Annex 1.E, Report on the Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service](#)).

### **Other Important Areas of Conduct**

1.4.13 In addition to those described above, the Report on the Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service also provides insight into several other patterns of behaviour to which staff should be constantly attentive in both their professional and personal lives. Some of these are listed below with reference to the appropriate paragraph in the Report ([Annex 1.E](#)):

Area of Conduct	Paragraph	Area of Conduct	Paragraph
Civil obligations of staff	32	Outside activities	50
Court orders -	55	Political activities	33
admissibility	54	Political affiliations	49
Speculation in	40	Prejudice or Bias	5
currencies	53	Private life of staff	53
Discrediting UNICEF	43	Public image	40
Family members'	18	Religion	5
conduct	28	Respect for local	40
zGifts from	8	culture,customs	47
Governments	7	Rivalry amongst UN	29
Government - relations	32	agencies	12
Government - lobbying	6	Staff representatives'	14

for staff Impartiality Independence Legal obligations of staff Loyalty Misrepresentation	25	conduct Supervisors' responsibilities Supervisors' conduct Tolerance	11
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