



CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT – SANKARA EYE FOUNDATION

Background

A Code of Ethical Conduct is a tool to help create and maintain a culture of integrity. It is a set of rules that clearly and concisely outline the types of behaviors that are expected in the workplace. A Code of Ethical Conduct helps to create a safe, secure and healthy work environment in which people are respected and valued as equal team members in the delivery of care.

Without exception, this Code applies equally to everyone at all levels in the organization. We also expect our collaborators and partners to know and honor this Code.

The Governing Body Medical Administration at Sankara Eye Foundation India along with the Human Resource team has overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Code of Ethical Conduct within the Hospital.

Annually, all individuals subject to this policy will acknowledge their understanding of the Code and acknowledge that they are not in breach of its principles and terms.

All individuals subject to this policy have an obligation to and are required to report violations or suspected violations of the Code of Ethical Conduct, including unethical or illegal conduct. Violation may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge or loss of privileges. Acts of retaliation or consequence targeted at any member of the Hospital who reports violations of this Code will not be tolerated. Such action will result in disciplinary action.

Sankara Values for Medical Administration (Covers all Medical & Allied Health Personnel)

MISSION

To provide unmatched eye care through a strong service oriented team

VISION

To work towards freedom from preventable and curable blindness





VALUES (as relevant to the Medical Administration)

- **Compassion & respect for others:** Towards a healthy work and learning environment, we demonstrate respect and appreciation for their patients, colleagues, students, family members and others they interact with in their role at Sankara. Open hearted interactions, wider perception, empathy would be our core ethos at Sankara.
- **Social responsibility:** Community eye care is our core DNA. Through “Gift of Vision” and “Rainbow” , we focus towards health education, awareness, screening and treatment of eye ailments towards our Vision. All our programs help achieve a healthy balance between patient satisfaction . Patient profitability and improving people’s quality of life at the best combination of environmental, social and economic benefits.
- **Pursuit of Excellence:** All across Sankara must be accountable for their own actions in the workplace, research and learning environments. We would strategise & ensure we grow as one of the best eye care institutions in the world and the hub of eye care knowledge.
- **Quality & Efficiency:** Sankara has determined the boundaries and applicability of the quality management system. Hospital has applied all the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 within its quality management system. This QMS is being monitored for continual improvement and its effectiveness in accordance with the requirements of NABH.
- **Innovation & Leadership:** Sankara’s vision to be achieved would need constant reinvention, innovation & breakthrough thinking. This would help us take the lead in eliminating blindness with the community for the good of society.
- **Integrity:** All members of Sankara are required to conduct themselves honestly and with integrity in their daily work, whether in clinical care , education , research or administration.





Expectations of Professional Standards:

1. Licensing, Certification and Accreditation:

- To ensure that appropriate credentials are commensurate to the professional roleplay.
- To ensure that any aspect of patient care is based on the privileging done.
- Adhering to periodic training on both competency and knowledge of safety practice. Continue to be updated to share knowledge and apply to the domain based on recent evidence based care.
- Collaborate with other professional societies and disciplines on the professional's role through workshops, partnerships etc.
- Work with the Human Resource team to ensure that the personal file is updated with documents & certificates as needed by statutory and accreditation agencies.

2. Professional Conduct:

- Undertaking education, teaching and training responsibilities as per requirement and / or roster;
- Providing honest assessment of the performance of colleagues & students at appraisals formal & informal;
- Maintaining trust with patients through your interaction with them and not sharing their personal information;
- Putting patients first while putting aside your own personal views & beliefs;
- Responding appropriately to situations in which a complaint is made about treatment provided by you, or treatment that is unsuccessful;
- Dealing appropriately with the next of kin of deceased patients & counseling those who have a very poor prognosis;
- Ensuring that all alternative treatment options are made available to the patient to take an informed call;
- Ensuring that your professional position is not abused through improper dealings with patients, attenders, colleagues & students;
- Ensuring that your health does not put patients at risk and ensuring, through reporting, that other colleagues do not place patients at risk through their health, behavior, conduct or performance;
- Reporting adverse events relating to the professional performance or conduct of colleagues.
- Respond constructively to assessments and appraisals of your professional competence and performance;





3. **Medical Records:**

- Ensure that the institution has and enforces clear policy prohibiting access to patients' medical records by unauthorized staff. Make the medical record available:
 - a) As requested or authorized by the patient (or the patient's authorized representative)
 - b) To the succeeding physician or other authorized person when the physician discontinues his or her practice (whether through departure, sale of the practice, retirement, or death)
 - c) As otherwise required by law

4. **Payment of professional services:**

- Health care professionals should not recommend, provide, or charge for unnecessary investigations or surgeries.
- They should not solicit favours or payments from patients and or attenders.
- No payments should be collected from Laboratories , Imaging centre and pharmaceutical companies or their representatives for advises that could benefit them.
- One must not charge a markup or commission, or profit on services rendered by other health care professionals.
- Professionals individually and collectively should promote access to health care for individual patients, in part through being prudent stewards of resources.

5. **Abuse of professional position:**

Should not abuse your patient's trust. Following are considered to be abuse of position:

- Use your position to establish improper personal relationships with patients or their attenders , students and colleagues;
- Put pressure on your patients or students or subordinates to give or lend money or to provide other benefits to you or other people;
- Improperly disclose or misuse confidential information about patients , colleagues or the institution;
- Should disclose any pecuniary interests you may have in giving a referral to a patient.

6. **Highest quality assurance in patient care:**

- **Educating Patients:** Patient centered care is important , this needs to include patients as active members of the health care team with knowledge of what is important for the care of their condition.
- **Adherence to quality standards like:** The ability to consistently provide products and services that meet
 - Patient needs,





- statutory and regulatory requirements;
- addressing risks and opportunities associated with its context and objectives;
- **Continuous Quality Improvement:** Work through SanQALP (Sankara Quality Assurance Learning Programme) to ensure a pursuit of excellence by improvement in process.

7. **Consent, communication and decision making:**

- Provide information to enable the patient to make voluntary, well-informed decisions about care.
- Enable the patient adequate time to understand , clarify and decide.
- Respect the physical and informational privacy of patients. Avoid sharing information and data of patient where their identity may be exposed.
- Document the informed consent conversation and the patient’s (or attenders) decision in the medical record in some manner.

8. **Interprofessional relationships:** Health care professionals earn and maintain the trust of their patients and the public by upholding norms of fidelity to patients, on which the professional identity rests.

Working with Colleagues:

- Treat your colleagues fairly and without discrimination. Allow your views of a colleague’s lifestyle, culture, beliefs, race, color, gender, sexuality, religion or age to prejudice your professional relationship with the colleague.
- Ensure that students or practitioners under supervision are not abused or harassed.
- Respect the views of other colleagues even if they differ from your own.
- Do not make any patient doubt the knowledge or skills of colleagues by making unnecessary or unsustainable comments about them;

Working in teams:

- Work constructively and respect the skills and contribution of all team members;
- Ensure optimal communication with other members of the healthcare team;
- Endeavor to resolve disagreements within the team. If you believe that the decision would harm the patient, tell someone who can take action. If necessary, and as a last resort, take action yourself to protect the patient’s safety or health.

If you are a team leader:

- Take responsibility for ensuring that the team provides care which is safe, effective and efficient;





- Do your best to make sure that the whole team understands the need to provide a polite, responsive and accessible service and to treat patient information as confidential;
- Make sure that colleagues understand their role and responsibilities in the team;
- Make sure that a cohesive approach is taken when there is an error.

Arranging cover:

- You should be satisfied that when you are off duty, suitable arrangements are made for the patient's medical care.
- If you are a faculty, then ensure that your academic calendar is covered by a colleague.
- These arrangements should include effective handover procedures and clear communication between professionals.

9. Teaching, Learning and Evaluation:

- Teaching and method of instructions are based on recent advancements and pedagogy.
- To encourage learning environment, faculty to exhibit openness and commitment towards teaching and learning.
- Designing a systematic framework for evaluation and assessment to avoid unfair means of evaluation or assessment and ensure transparent and objective evaluation is a mandate.
- To develop faculty competencies for evaluation and using feedback to improve faculty's and student's academic performance.

10. Research:

- Sankara is committed to the highest ethical standards in continuance of mission of teaching, research and community service. Sankara's standards and procedures provide guidance for application of ethical values and responsible research.
- Sankara follows a policy of Zero Tolerance to plagiarism in academic work. Faculty and mentors to create awareness among students and researchers to avoid plagiarism.
- If any member suspects with appropriate proof that a case of plagiarism has happened in any document, he/ she will report to Sankara Academy of Vision there by SAV takes further proceedings after proper inquiry and verification of proof.
- All principal investigators are expected to be certified in the Good Clinical Practices.
- Publication of Research will comply with the policy of the organization.





REPORTING OPTIONS:

1. **DIRECT COMMUNICATION** When you encounter an incident where a member is not adhering to the Code of Ethical Conduct, you are encouraged to speak directly, respectfully and privately to that person to advise that his/her behavior is inappropriate and unwelcome.
2. **SEEK ASSISTANCE** If you do not feel comfortable speaking with the person directly or if you are unable to resolve the issue and/ or behavior persists, you have the option to work together with your reporting authority to prepare a report that documents the following information:
 - a. The date and time of the questionable action
 - b. The name of any other persons involved in or who witnessed the action
 - c. The circumstances that precipitated the situation
 - d. A description of the questionable action
 - e. The consequence, if any, of the action as it relates to patient care, staff or Hospital operations
 - f. Any action taken including the date, time, location, action and name(s) of those intervening
 - g. Your reporting manager will consult with the Governing Body Medical Admin etc to conduct an investigation that involves all appropriate parties.
3. **CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS REPORTING** All individuals subject to this policy are able to anonymously and confidentially submit reports concerning incidents of suspected wrongdoing or unethical activities. This can be done through the google form attached. Your email ID will not be collected. We request that the information be as complete as possible to enable a fair examination of the case.

Link for reporting: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1qevlQrmoi4XX1LOnUzyu2YaCEZn0p4xD-IgdhJftDtM/edit>





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References:

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4. <http://www.adkhospital.mv/en/page/policies/code-of-professional-conduct-policy>
5. https://www.apollohospitals.com/apollo_pdf/code_of_conduct.pdf
6. <https://www.ama-assn.org/about/publications-newsletters/ama-principles-medical-ethics>

UNIT OF



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ANNEXURE – A

To,
Sankara Eye Hospitals,
Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Medical Trust,
Coimbatore.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Dear Sir,

I have received and read Sankara Eye Foundation India's Code of Ethics. I understand the standards and policies contained in the Code and understand that there may be additional policies or laws specific to my job. I agree to comply with the Code.

If I have questions concerning the interpretation/application of the Code, any Company policies, and legal requirements applicable to my job, I know I can consult the Company Secretary, and that my questions or report to these sources will be maintained confidential.

I agree to report any violation of the Code immediately as it comes to my knowledge, to the Company Secretary and to help in any investigation made pursuant to the Code and I understand that the report or the information made by me in this concern shall be maintained confidential.

Name : _____

Designation: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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