

CONFLICT OF INTEREST/CODE OF ETHICS

A “conflict of interest” is defined as *a conflict, or appearance of conflict between the private interests and the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust. Persons in a position of trust include but are not limited to Partners for Kids and Families (PFKF) employees, interns, volunteers and members of the Board of Trustees (also referred to as “PFKF representatives”).*

The organization adheres to the highest legal and ethical standards applicable in our business. PFKF’s business is conducted in the strict observance of both the letter and spirit of all applicable laws. The integrity of each PFKF representative is of utmost importance.

An organization's reputation for integrity is its most valuable asset and is directly related to the conduct of its officers and other PFKF representatives. Therefore, PFKF representatives must not use their positions with the organization, or any of the youth and families it serves, systems partners, or business associates for private, financial, or political gain, to advance personal interests, to obtain favors or benefits for themselves, members of their families or any other individuals, corporations or business entities, or to interfere with the performance of PFKF representatives’ responsibilities to the organization.

PFKF representatives shall conduct their personal affairs in such a fashion that their duties and responsibilities to the organization are not jeopardized and/or legal questions do not arise with respect to their association or work with the organization.

Although it is not possible to specify every action that might create a conflict of interest, there are certain situations which require disclosure should they arise. Those situations include the following:

- A member of the Board of Trustees is related to or otherwise involved with another member of the Board of Trustees.
- A member of the Board of Trustees is related to a staff member.
- A staff member in a supervisory capacity is related to or lives in the same household as another staff member they supervise
- A PFKF representative receives payment, goods, services from PFKF for any subcontracts, goods, or services, such as consultant, laundry, maintenance, construction, or remodeling
- A member of the Board of Trustees or staff member is a member of the governing body or staff member of a funder/contributor to PFKF.

In addition, the following are also noted:

- A PFKF employee may not also be a member of PFKF’s Board of Trustees. PFKF’s Executive Director will maintain an ex-officio, non-voting seat on the Board of Trustees.
- PFKF representatives are prohibited from participating in the selection, award, or administration of any procurement transactions where federal or state funds are used, and none of the following has a financial interest in said transaction: PFKF representatives; any members of their immediate family; any member of their household; an organization in which any of the above is an officer, director, or employee; a person or organization

with whom any of the above is negotiating or has any arrangement concerning prospective employment.

Code of ethics

PFKF representatives will observe the following code of ethics:

- Maintain as the primary focus the welfare, well-being, and needs of the youth and families served through PFKF
- Treat all youth, families, and colleagues with dignity and respect.
- Address barriers which interfere with youth and families' well-being and timely access to assistance and advocating on their behalf to address their needs
- Carry out their responsibilities to PFKF, youth and families, and community in an ethical, honest, and trustworthy manner.
- Encourage and support ethical practices among co-workers, colleagues, and system partners
- Practice within their area of education, training, and competence.
- Be truthful and not engage in false, misleading communication when making representations to the public regarding qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, or results to be achieved
- Have a knowledge base of their youth and families' cultures and demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to their cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups (courtesy of National Association of Social Workers code of ethics).
- Set clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries with youth and families. PFKF representatives should not engage in any form of contact or interaction with youth or family member when there is a possibility of psychological harm or exploitation to the youth/family because of the contact or interaction (*courtesy of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics*).
- Avoid dual relationships with youth and families especially when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the youth and family. Dual relationships occur when PFKF representatives relate to youth and families in more than one relationship (for example, both professionally and socially). In circumstances in which dual relationships are unavoidable, PFKF representatives are responsible for setting clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries. (*courtesy of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics*)

- Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of our youth and families, for both those presently served through PFKF and those who have been transitioned from our agency. Private information will only be disclosed with a signed authorization for release of information and/or in accordance with relevant federal and state laws.
- Inform youth and families of limits to confidentiality and privacy, specifically to prevent serious, imminent, and foreseeable harm to an identifiable person. PFKF representatives are also mandated reporters of suspected abuse and neglect. Any PFKF representative who has reasonable cause to believe a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect must report this information to the State Central Registry.

In addition, PFKF representatives are prohibited from:

- Discriminating based on including but not limited to a person's race, creed, national origin, age, religion, physical ability, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, marital status, pregnancy status, or other legally protected class.
- Acting directly or indirectly to coerce, manipulate, mislead, or fraudulently influence any persons engaged in the performance of any audit or review of PFKF's financial statements or PFKF's performance in any aspect of its operations which could result in rendering the audit results false or materially misleading.
- Soliciting youth and families served by PFKF (both past and present) for testimonial endorsement. This also includes the solicitation of consent to use a youth or family member's prior statement.
- Witnessing any legal document (including but not limited to power of attorney, advanced directives). They may serve as a witness for any PFKF approved forms or documents for a youth and their family presently enrolled with PFKF.
- Engaging in unwanted, and/or inappropriate touching/contact or having a sexual relationship or engaging in sexual activity with
 - a child, youth, or young adult who is currently or has been enrolled with PFKF
 - relatives or individuals of a child, youth, or young adult whom they maintain a close personal relationship who are currently enrolled with PFKF
 - those who they supervise or others whom they exercise professional authority.
- Engaging in unauthorized financial transactions with youth and families served through PFKF (including but not limited to borrowing or lending money)
- Soliciting or accepting a private payment or compensation for providing services to youth and families who are eligible for those services through PFKF, NJ Department of Children and Families, or other recognized entity.

- Using PFKF's name, property, facilities, equipment, or resources to intervene directly or indirectly in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. PFKF representatives can engage in political activity as individual, private citizens but must distinguish between personal conduct and activity on behalf of PFKF.

If an employee has a question whether an action or proposed course of action would create a conflict of interest/ethical conflict or becomes aware of an actual conflict of interest/ethical conflict, the employee should bring this to the attention of the Corporate Compliance Officer, their supervisor, or another member of Management. If necessary, the Executive Director may be brought into the discussion if they are not already involved. If a PFKF representative other than the Corporate Compliance Officer receives the report, they must then provide the report to the Corporate Compliance Officer. Concerns may also be submitted through a third-party company which administers an anonymous and confidential reporting service. Reports can be submitted 24 hours a day by any PFKF representative using a secure on-line form or toll-free number (1-833-480-0010). The information conveyed is then made available to the Corporate Compliance Officer and/or Executive Director.

If there is a perceived or actual conflict of interest/ethical conflict with a Board member, the Board member must notify the Executive Director and/or Board President.

If it is determined that a conflict exists, there will be either voluntary or mandated non-participation by the person in the situation where the conflict exists.

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