



VILLAGE OF PINEHURST
STANDARD PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: Ethics Policy	Effective Date: August 1, 2013
Department: Administration	Policy No.: AD - 150
Prepared by: Administration	Revised: November 1, 2015
Approved by: Village Manager	# of Pages: 7

I. PURPOSE

This purpose of this Ethics Policy is to establish a policy to promote and demand the highest standards of ethics from the Village of Pinehurst workforce and to provide guidance on specific ethical topics.

The foundation of government depends upon public trust and confidence. It is the responsibility of government officials and employees to perform their job in a manner that fosters this public trust by providing quality service, selfless loyalty, and fair dealing. Municipal government requires its workforce to be respectful, impartial and accountable to its citizens and avoid conflicts of interest or use of position for personal gain.

To ensure Village of Pinehurst citizens can have complete confidence in the integrity of Village government, each Village employee and volunteer shall respect and adhere to these standards of ethical conduct.

II. DEFINITIONS

As used in this code of ethics, the following terms have the meanings indicated unless the context clearly requires a different meaning or a different definition is adopted for a particular provision.

1. Citizen - Any member of the general public not employed by the Village of Pinehurst.
2. Employee - Any paid or reserve employee of the Village who is not an elected official.
3. Gift – Anything that has monetary value (e.g. gratuity, discount, entertainment, hospitality) given by or received from a prohibited source.

4. Harassment - Includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, derogatory comments, cartoons, pranks and other verbal, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, disability, religion, sex, national origin, age, veteran's status or other protected characteristic.
5. Outside employment – Any employment external to the Village, including self-employment
6. Supervisor - Any employee who has been granted, by the Village, authority to oversee the activities of other employees.
7. Volunteer - Any individual appointed by the Village Council to serve on a board, commission, or committee.

III. **POLICY**

This policy applies to all individuals employed by the Village of Pinehurst and volunteers (as defined above), unless otherwise addressed by a more restrictive federal, state, or departmental policy.

Standards of Conduct

These standards are established pursuant to the Village of Pinehurst's Employee Handbook and should be referred to for any applicable employee guidelines. Employees should also rely on ethics policies of their individual professional organization when applicable.

1. **Conflicts of Interest** Village employees and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any conduct that could reflect unfavorably upon the Village of Pinehurst. Employees and volunteers must avoid any action that may result in or create the impression of using public office or position for private gain, giving preferential treatment to any person, or losing impartiality in conducting Village business.

Conflicts of interest involve:

- (a) **Gifts, gratuities, and rebates.** Employees and volunteers are expected to make decisions which are in the best interests of the Village. To prevent a potential or perceived conflict of interest, no employee, volunteer, nor members of their family, may solicit or accept any gift, favor, or thing of value that may tend to influence the workforce in the discharge of official duties or influence an employee or volunteer to grant an improper favor, service, or thing of value. This is not intended to prevent a gift to an employee who would be permitted to accept such gift under G.S. 138A-32, or the gift and receipt of honorariums for participating in meetings, advertising items or souvenirs of nominal value, or meals furnished at banquets.

Employees and volunteers, or their family members, should not offer or accept any kickbacks, rebates, cash or anything of value to or from any representative of a vendor, customer or potential customer, supplier, financial institution or similar entity. Such practices are not only unethical but are, in many cases, illegal and considered taxable income. If a rebate is issued by a vendor, it should be used to offset the cost of future Village purchases from that vendor.

If a gift is received and impossible to return, the gift should be given to the Human Resources office for disposal as anonymous door prizes at an employee picnic, party, or other employee function; provided, however, on occasion, citizens make gifts to groups of employees in gratitude for service. Such gifts are not deemed to be of the nature that would impact or appear to impact discretion and may be accepted by such groups of employees so long as they are collectively shared. The appropriate Department Head shall file, within ten (10) days of receipt of any such group gift, a written statement with the Human Resources Director identifying the gift and donor.

- (b) Extraneous Fees. Village employees or volunteers will not accept any extraneous fee for work performed on behalf of the Village.
- (c) Outside Employment. Employees may not engage in other outside employment that interferes with proper and effective job performance as a Village employee or that may be considered a conflict of interest, or may subject the Village, in the opinion of the Village Manager, to any form of public criticism or embarrassment. Employees may not use their jobs with the Village to further their interests on the second job. No employee shall engage in any business other than his/her regular duties during working hours.

Upon notification to, at the discretion of, and with written approval of the Department Head, an employee may engage in other outside employment. Employees are required to complete an "OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT REQUEST" form and secure the appropriate approvals prior to beginning supplemental employment. Police officers are required to complete a "SECONDARY POLICE EMPLOYMENT" form and secure the appropriate approvals prior to beginning supplemental employment.

- (d) Impartiality. Every employee and volunteer shall perform his/her duties with impartiality and without prejudice or bias for the benefit of all citizens of the Village of Pinehurst. No Village employee or volunteer may grant or make available to any person any consideration, treatment, advantage or favor beyond that which is the general practice to grant or make available to all citizens. Village employees and volunteers must refrain from securing special privilege or exemption for themselves or their relatives beyond that which would be available to all citizens.

Village employees and volunteers may not exercise discretion relative to any matter that affects, or that would lead a reasonable person to infer that it affects, a personal interest, defined as any financial, ownership or employment interest, without disclosing the personal interest before the exercise, when possible, to his or her immediate supervisor.

Employees and volunteers are expected to maintain impartial relationships with all vendors and suppliers. Care must be exercised to avoid even the appearance of special influence being exerted on behalf of a vendor or supplier due to personal relationships.

2. **Misuse of Public Assets** Certain employees and volunteers of the Village of Pinehurst are charged with the receipt, safekeeping, transfer or disbursement of public money in the course of their duty. No concise written policy can cover every ethical or legal issue that may arise. A good foundation for ethical behavior consists of individual conscience, common sense, good judgment, and compliance with governmental laws and regulations.
 - (a) **Public Equipment**. All Village owned property and assets are to be used solely for the benefit of the public. No Village employee or volunteer shall request, use or permit the use of any publicly owned property, vehicle, equipment, labor, service, or supplies (new, surplus, scrap, or obsolete) for the personal convenience or advantage of the employee, volunteer, or any other person except for that use which is generally available to the public. Improper or unauthorized use of publicly owned property or removal of equipment, tools, supplies or materials, is not only an ethical violation but may also be a violation of the law.
 - (b) **Public Funds**. No Village employee or volunteer without authority of law, shall appropriate any portion of monies designated to be paid to the Village of Pinehurst or on behalf of the Village of Pinehurst to his own use or to the use of another. Nor shall any Village employee or volunteer knowingly alter, falsify, conceal, destroy, obliterate, or make a false entry or erasure in an account with the intent to defraud or deceive the Village of Pinehurst.
 - (c) **Payroll**. No Village employee shall attempt to defraud the Village of Pinehurst by making false entries to payroll time sheets, cards, or request compensation for time not worked.
 - (d) **Technology Resources**. Employees agree to adhere to the Village's Electronic Communication and Use Policy as it relates to technology resources.
3. **Confidential Information** Members of the public have a right to security and privacy, and information obtained about them must not be improperly divulged. Whenever an employee or volunteer sees, hears, or learns information which

is of a confidential nature, it will be kept secret, unless the performance of duty or legal provision requires otherwise.

The Village of Pinehurst recognizes and makes every effort to comply with federal and state laws. There may be times where certain records or information may need to remain confidential, such as Police, medical, and personnel information, in accordance with federal or state laws.

NC General Statute 133.32 provides that, during a person's employment or service with the Village and for two years thereafter, no Village employee may disclose or use confidential information without appropriate authorization.

Each employee and volunteer is required to adhere to the following:

- (a) A Village employee or volunteer shall not use his/her position to obtain official information about any person or entity for any purpose other than the performance of official duties.
 - (b) No employee or volunteer shall, without proper authorization, disclose confidential information concerning the property, government, or affairs of the Village.
 - (c) Employees or volunteers must not use privileged information for their own financial advantage or to provide friends and acquaintances with financial advantages or with information that could be used for financial advantage.
 - (d) Each employee and volunteer is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that he or she releases only information that should be made available to the general public.
4. **Harassment** It is the Village's policy that employees and volunteers have the right to be free from harassment on the job from co-workers, managers, and others because of the individual's race, color, sex, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, or other protected class. Harassment, of any employee or volunteer by management, supervisor, employee, volunteer, contractor, vendor, customer or visitor in any form, is prohibited.
- (a) **Sexual Harassment.** While it is not easy to precisely define sexual harassment, examples of prohibited behavior include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, unwelcome or offensive touching and/or other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:
 - Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment or volunteer service, or
 - Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or appointment decisions affecting such individual, or

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

(b) Hostile Work Environment Harassment. Harassment can also include unwelcome joking, teasing, or other conduct directed toward a person because of a protected characteristic which is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create an unprofessional and hostile working environment and is prohibited. This type of harassment applies to situations where race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status or other protected characteristics are involved.

IV. PROCEDURES

The following procedures will be followed for reporting, investigating, and disciplining violations of this ethics policy:

1. **Reporting Possible Violations**. A Village employee or volunteer who has knowledge of a violation of any of the provisions of this Ethics Policy shall report this violation as provided below within a reasonable time after the person has knowledge of a violation. A Village employee or volunteer shall not delegate to, or rely on, another person to make the report.

To report possible violations, an employee or volunteer may, without fear of retaliation, contact his/her immediate supervisor, Department Head, Director of Human Resources, or the Village Manager. To ensure the matter is properly documented and investigated, the reporting employee or volunteer shall provide as many facts and details as possible in writing.

All reports of violations of this policy must be provided to the Village's Human Resources Director, who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating Village-wide compliance with this policy.

2. **Investigation of Possible Violations**. The Village of Pinehurst will treat each report seriously and any individual who reports or participates in an investigation of a report of a violation shall not be retaliated against. However, knowingly submitting a false complaint will subject an employee to discipline up to and including termination, which will be administered based on guidelines of the Village of Pinehurst Employee Handbook.

(a) Upon receiving a complaint, the Village will promptly conduct a thorough investigation in consultation with the Human Resources Department. It is the obligation of all employees and/or volunteers to cooperate in such an investigation. The Human Resources Director will keep the Village Manager appropriately informed of any investigation regarding possible violations of this policy.

- (b) Those responsible for the investigation will maintain the confidentiality of the allegations of the complaint and the identity of the persons involved, subject to the need to conduct a full and impartial investigation, remedy any violations of the Village's policies, or monitor compliance with or administer the Village's policies.
- (c) The investigation generally will include, but will not be limited to, discussion with the complaining employee (unless the complaint was submitted on an anonymous basis), or the reporting party.
- (d) In the event that an investigation establishes that an employee or volunteer has engaged in conduct or actions constituting a violation of this policy, the Village will take immediate and appropriate corrective action up to and including termination of the employee's employment, based on guidelines of the Village of Pinehurst Employee Handbook, or removal from the volunteer board, commission, or committee.

3. **Corrective Action.** In addition to any other penalty as provided by the law, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be administered based on guidelines of the Village of Pinehurst Employee Handbook. Corrective action will be taken against any employee who violated this policy, retaliates against another employee or volunteer for reporting a possible violation of this policy, or deliberately makes a false report against another employee or volunteer. Any volunteer who violates this policy, retaliates against another employee or volunteer for reporting a possible violation of this policy, or deliberately makes a false report against another employee or volunteer is subject to removal from the volunteer role.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT TO ADHERE TO TERMS OF THE POLICY

All Village employees and volunteers will agree to abide by the terms of this Ethics Policy on an annual basis.

Approved by:



 Policy Committee Chair

10-29-2015

 Date



 Village Manager

10/30/15

 Date