



Volunteers are an integral component of the International Orthoptic Association's (IOA) success. The IOA benefits greatly from the time, expertise, wisdom and enthusiasm its volunteers bring to the fulfilment of the organization's mandate. Through this Code, the IOA aims to assist volunteers by setting clear expectations for behaviour and performance. The fundamental principle of this Code is personal responsibility for professional conduct, consistent with the standards of professionalism long espoused by the IOA.

The following standards of conduct are meant to supplement good judgement. The list of situations described is not exhaustive but representative of common circumstances that may arise where additional information may help clarify expectations or guide behaviour. If a volunteer has any questions about these standards, he or she is encouraged to contact the IOA Director of Volunteers for guidance.

## PROFESSIONALISM

The IOA Volunteer work is to be guided by the IOA and OCE "*Orthoptic Code of Ethics: Standards of Professional Behaviour*" — particularly the duty of the orthoptist to provide services that fall within their scope of practice, level of competence, considering their level of education or training and recent experience and in accordance with their national requirements of registration, licensure or certification. The Orthoptic volunteer will comply with the duty to practice based on best available evidence and professional consensus. Orthoptists involved in the education of students have a duty to deliver the highest standard possible in both academic and clinical aspects to ensure professional competencies taught are achieved. They are also committed to safeguarding patients' rights to autonomy, confidentiality, and informed consent. Finally they will respect the dignity of patients and their students, which includes respect for their cultural and religious beliefs.

## RESPECTFUL CONDUCT

Volunteers must treat with respect all patients, students, staff, and fellow volunteers with whom they interact while conducting the IOA's business. Harassment, discrimination or other behaviours that compromise the dignity and self-worth of others cannot be tolerated, and will be addressed promptly, in confidence, and in accordance with standards of due process developed by the Association. The IOA expects all staff and volunteers to abide by Human Rights codes.

## PERSONAL GAINS

Volunteers must not use their status as an IOA volunteer to obtain personal gain. IOA volunteers should neither seek gifts, payments, services, fees, special valuable privileges, pleasure or vacation trips, accommodations or loans from any person or from any organization or group related to their volunteer placement. The acceptance of gifts, hospitality and other



benefits is permissible if they are infrequent and within the normal standards of courtesy or protocol, arise out of activities or events related to the official duties of the volunteer, and do not compromise or appear to compromise the integrity of the work concerned or the IOA.

## **PRIVILEGED INFORMATION**

Volunteers must not use for their own purposes, including financial gain, or disclose for the use of others, information obtained as a result of their volunteer role with the Association (for example, lists of sponsors or suppliers). This applies both during and after the period in which the individual is an IOA volunteer.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Many IOA volunteers fulfill multiple roles; thus, avoiding conflicts may not always be possible. This fact makes real or perceived conflicts of interest a reality of the IOA's working environment. As a result, the appropriate management of conflicts is a primary concern of the IOA. To ensure the appropriate management of real or perceived conflicts, volunteers are asked to disclose any relationships, contracts, transactions or activities, whether existing or proposed, that would create, or appear to create, a conflict between their personal, professional or other private interests and their responsibilities to the IOA. This request to disclose is reinforced with the invitation to accept a volunteer role and prior to each volunteer activity.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

At all times, the privacy and dignity of students, patients, donors, and staff will be respected. Volunteers may have access to information and documents relating to clients, donors, volunteers and staff that are private and confidential in nature; reasonable care and caution will be exercised to protect and maintain total confidentiality. Volunteers will not read records or discuss such information unless there is a legitimate purpose.

## **OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Volunteers are encouraged to promote the IOA. When communicating officially and unofficially on matters of direct interest to the IOA or about the nature of their IOA Volunteer work (including through social media such as blogs, Twitter, and Facebook), volunteers must make every effort to protect the integrity and reputation of the IOA.

For additional guidance, volunteers should

- Share information that is in the public domain and other information not designated as confidential to promote dialogue about IOA initiatives.
- Separate personal and other professional opinions from their IOA volunteer role
- Be careful to not commit the IOA to any action or initiative unless approved by the Association.



- Respect colleagues, staff and other eye care professionals by avoiding derogatory comments.

Volunteers should not approach the press about IOA volunteer activities on their own accord without prior approval from the Association and or the Volunteer Site authority.

## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Any intellectual property developed by the IOA for its Volunteer Program (for example, guidebooks, training resources, promotional materials) is the property of the Society.

## **CODE BREACHES**

Volunteers who know of, or suspect, a breach of this Code are asked to report this information to the IOA President or Director of the IOA Volunteer Program. All complaints or suspicions of misconduct will be reviewed in accordance with the process for addressing Volunteer Code of Conduct Concerns and Complaints.

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