



# Code of Conduct

Compliance Guidelines for the  
Children's of Alabama Community

8TH EDITION



Children's  
of Alabama®



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## To the Children's of Alabama Community

Children's of Alabama is committed to following applicable laws, regulations, policies, and ethical guidelines.

The Code of Conduct is our compliance guidebook and includes our compliance philosophy, expectations, and Conduct Commitments that everyone associated with Children's of Alabama must follow. The Children's community includes employees, Board of Trustees, medical staff, contractors, providers, vendors, agents, representatives, consultants, temporary employees, volunteers, students, associated educational institutions, and other business partners.

We must hold ourselves and each other to the highest standards of integrity, character, and professionalism. It is our duty to report a suspected violation as soon as possible. We encourage you to discuss the issue with your supervisor. You may also contact the Corporate Compliance Officer, Human Resources, or call the Compliance Hotline.

The Board of Trustees and Senior Administration join me in pledging to uphold the Code of Conduct and supporting the Corporate Compliance program. We expect supervisory staff to fulfill their responsibility of ensuring their team has sufficient information to follow laws, regulations, and policies, as well as the resources needed to solve ethical dilemmas.

Thank you for your commitment to our children and their families. Your caring professionalism and individual integrity enhance our standing in the community, state, and region.

Very truly yours,

Tom Shufflebarger  
President and CEO  
Children's of Alabama



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**Children's of Alabama Values:**

**TRUST  
TEAMWORK  
COMPASSION  
INNOVATION  
COMMITMENT**

# Corporate Compliance Program

The Corporate Compliance Program’s purpose is to prevent and detect fraud and abuse. To do that, we must work in a culture that encourages following healthcare laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. All policies are in our document management system, Lucidoc, on **The Red Wagon**.

The Corporate Compliance Officer and staff work to prevent, detect, and correct compliance matters. We conduct audits, monitor activities, respond to reported compliance violations, conduct monthly exclusion verifications, monitor conflicts of interest, and provide education and training to employees. Corporate Compliance collaborates with other departments to make a better Children’s.

## Anonymous Corporate Compliance Hotline\*

For details on Hotline reporting, refer to the *Reporting Potential Compliance Issues* policy.



Call the toll-free  
Hotline number at  
1-800-624-9775



Use the “Hotline” link  
in the right margin of  
The Red Wagon



Report online at  
[childrensal.ethicspoint.com](http://childrensal.ethicspoint.com)  
or scan the QR code



SCAN ME ↑

\*To protect your identity, reports are received by an outside agency—not Children’s employees.

## Important Contacts



### Compliance Officer

Robert Royston  
[robert.royston@childrensal.org](mailto:robert.royston@childrensal.org)  
205.638.7134



### Joint Commission Contact

Leesa Hatch  
[leesa.hatch@childrensal.org](mailto:leesa.hatch@childrensal.org)  
205.638.3560



### HIPAA/Privacy Officer

Kathleen Street  
[kathleen.street@childrensal.org](mailto:kathleen.street@childrensal.org)  
205.638.5959



### Compliance Coordinator

Salena Stalker  
[salena.stalker@childrensal.org](mailto:salena.stalker@childrensal.org)  
205.638.2370



### Employee Relations

Michelle Galipeau  
[michelle.galipeau@childrensal.org](mailto:michelle.galipeau@childrensal.org)  
205.638.6657

### Risk Manager on Call (RMOC)

Ask Operator to page RMOC.  
(For government investigations, RMOC is available 24/7/365.)  
205.638.9100

**Security (Emergencies only) 205.638.4444**

# Workplace Conduct

Children's team members include employees, medical staff, volunteers, and the Board of Trustees. These are the "we" of Children's. We devote ourselves to a work culture where everyone experiences dignity. Team members appreciate each other regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin. Our team includes others with diverse backgrounds, cultures, and points of view. We treat each other with integrity and honesty. Team members use positive words and conduct to bring out the best in each other. We avoid poor behaviors.

## Poor behavior examples

- Verbal outbursts, like shouting at another person
- Rude or insulting words. This includes personal attacks, threats, racist or sexist comments.
- Making a record of opinions or comments in the medical record that do not relate or add to patient safety or care
- Harassment, such as sexually suggestive comments or jokes, unwelcomed touching, or offensive gesturing
- Violent behaviors, like aggression, intimidation, bullying, or using threatening motions
- Not following directions or finishing job-related tasks
- Not taking part in work as a team member
- Not following policies, including those about professional behavior.
- Actions that damage another's personal possessions



**Employees and medical staff members must report cases of improper conduct. Children's will investigate reports and decide about corrective action.**

### **What should I do if a doctor or other employee uses rude or insulting language?**

This is not okay. The *Professional Physician Behavior* policy in Lucidoc addresses this situation and outlines the steps to take when a physician is involved. You should direct concerns about employees to their supervisor. You can also contact Human Resources and/or the Compliance Hotline (800.624.9775).

### **My co-workers discuss sexually based stories at work. These make me uncomfortable. What should I do?**

Sexually based stories that make you uncomfortable or that you think are not in keeping with a professional setting is not okay. You should report the actions at once to your supervisor or on the Hotline (online form in the right margin of The Red Wagon or call 800.624.9775), or Human Resources.

### **A patient or patient family member threatened me. What do I do?**

Contact Security at once, file a Children's' 360 report, and let your supervisor know.

# Conflicts of Interest

We conduct ourselves in an ethical manner. We avoid perceived or actual conflicts of interest. The *Conflict of Interest (COI)* policy provides guidelines and examples of activities, contracts, and relationships that may conflict with Children’s business decisions, reputation, or relationships. Team members keep professional relationships with patients, their families, and vendors. Team members do not ask for or accept gifts, cash, or things like cash. We make good business decisions free from financial or personal gain. We do not engage in a conflict of interest and avoid the appearance of wrongdoing.

## Gift Receiving

- Team members should never request or accept cash or gift cards from patients or patient families.
- Team members should never request or accept cash or gift cards from vendors or other business partners.
- Team members can accept things like food and snacks in certain situations. See the *Conflict of Interest* policy for more detail.

## Gift Giving

- Employees should not give gifts to patients/family members.
- Employees can help by letting Child Life and Education know about a patient’s special event like a birthday. The law limits patient gift giving (\$15 per gift/\$75 per year).
- Employees cannot give their own money to patients/families. Contact Social Services for resources for families in need.

## Other Conflicts

- **Selling:** We should not sell things during work time or in patient care areas. Also, we should not ask others to buy products or pass out information for products or services during work time or in patient care areas. See our *Solicitation and Distribution* policy in Lucidoc.
- **Outside Activities:** Team members should not work for, or serve on, boards of other organizations if it is likely to conflict with their responsibilities at Children’s.
- **Political Activity:** Children’s is a tax-exempt organization. That means we cannot campaign for any political candidates or parties while on Children’s property.

### What do I say if offered cash or a gift card by a patient/family member since employees cannot accept cash or gift cards?

Be polite. Try to say “no.” If they insist, you can suggest that they make a tax-deductible donation in your honor at [childrensal.org](http://childrensal.org) under the Donate Now tab or accept the card. Let your supervisor know and turn it over to The Foundation.

### I have a situation at work where I cannot decide if it is a conflict of interest, or not. Where can I find help?

The *Conflict of Interest* policy has a reference tool called “Identifying and Managing Conflicts of Interest” for the most common situations. The policy is in Lucidoc or listed on the Corporate Compliance website, linked in the left margin of The Red Wagon. If you are still uncertain, please call the Compliance Department to ask for guidance.

# Quality Care

Our team is compassionate and delivers the highest quality care to our patients. Our goal is to meet or exceed national standards for quality and patient safety to make Children’s a safe place for everyone. We work together to prevent medical errors and learn from our mistakes. We use universal precautions to help prevent infections.

## HIPAA and Privacy

Children’s team members help keep the privacy and security of Children’s confidential business and patient information.

There is a federal law called “The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.” This law is called HIPAA for short. HIPAA protects patient information. The United States Office for Civil Rights enforces HIPAA.

Children’s has a HIPAA Compliance Program to monitor compliance with HIPAA. If you believe there is a breach of confidential information, you must report it. This could happen if your paperwork or computer is lost.

If you believe someone has done something they should not do with patient information, you must report it. This could happen if one of your friends at work is posting about a patient on Facebook.



**Time is important when you report a HIPAA issue. Please file a report within 24-48 hours to any or all these ways:**

Your supervisor

HIPAA Privacy Officer at  
205-638-5959

Information Technology,  
CyberSecurity, HIPAA Coordinator  
at 205-638-7803

Corporate Compliance Hotline  
800-624-9775 or website.  
You can report it at any time and do not need to give your name!

**I saw an employee stealing a patient’s medicine. I am afraid to report it because they will know the report came from me. What should I do?**

This is a serious event. It does not matter what kind of medicine it was. You should report it to your supervisor at once. You can also page the House Supervisor. This is illegal and may be a serious safety event. If you do not report it, this patient, and others, might be in danger. See the Controlled Substance Diversion Response Flowchart in Lucidoc.

**Do patients with insurance receive better care?**

No. If you believe that you have seen care based on lack of insurance or ability to pay, please contact a department team manager or a supervisor in that area as soon as possible. If you continue to have concerns, contact the Compliance Officer or file a Hotline report.

**I read a news story about a child who went to Children’s to be treated. I want to know what happened to the child. May I look up the record?**

No. HIPAA protects the privacy of all patients. This includes patients in the news! Children’s can run reports to tell who is accessing information.

# Patient Rights

We treat every patient and patient family member with respect and courtesy. Each patient is unique. They have diverse cultural, social, and spiritual backgrounds. The law gives patients the right to take part in healthcare decisions. Since our patients are children, the law gives their parents or legal guardians the right to take part in healthcare decisions.



The Red Wagon has more information on patient financial aid.

Patients or their parents must give informed consent for treatment. If the patient is an adult, they can make advanced directives. Parents of children can also make a type of advanced directive. When necessary, patients, parents, and legal guardians have a right to complain or file a grievance with a representative of Children's and to remain informed of our findings, according to law.

## Admission, Discharge, and Transfer

We offer medical exams for anyone who shows up with an emergency medical condition. We treat all patients based on their medical need.

## Research

Research is important to find new treatments. Children's partners with UAB in the research process and we follow human research rules.

**I know employees are not supposed to post pictures of patients/family members on social media but is it all right for me to take a picture of my patient? We have become close, and I would like to have something to remind me of her and her family.**

No. *The Photography Consent* policy states that you cannot take pictures or videos like this with your device.

**Someone stole my Children's laptop. What do I do?**

You should let your supervisor know at once. Often, patient information is on laptops. If that is the case, you should let

the HIPAA Privacy Officer know at once or file a Hotline report (800.624.9775 or on The Red Wagon).

**Do we have to see patients in the Emergency Department (ED) that do not have an emergency medical condition?**

Yes, we must offer all patients who come to the ED a medical screening exam and care. We cannot delay it based on insurance or their ability to pay.



# Personal Use of Assets & Resources

Team members use Children’s resources to support patient care and organization goals. We use them for business purposes and not for our own benefit. We will protect Children’s assets from loss and waste.

**Examples of Children’s resources and assets are:**

- Office supplies
- Financial data
- Email
- Copy/fax machines
- Patient names or information
- Time on the clock
- Computers
- Medical supplies/equipment
- Cash/funds
- Company Corporate Card

Children’s will allow team members to use its internet for limited personal business.

**Any personal use of the internet should not:**

- Interfere with our productivity
- Run another business
- Break the law
- Discredit or harm Children’s

Children’s has the right to check use of any of its property. See the *Internet and Email Usage* policy in Lucidoc for details.

**Can I use Children’s medical equipment to check my glucose, blood pressure, or temperature?**

No. You should not use Children’s equipment for personal medical testing. Employee health needs while at work should be referred to Employee Health unless it is an emergency.

**I am selling a product (or service) I think would be of interest to my co-workers and our patients. Can I provide them with information while I am on-the-clock or if I am in patient care areas?**

No, because this is a possible conflict of interest and violates the *Solicitation and Distribution* policy.

**Is it okay to use the copy/fax machine, Internet, or email to help with my schoolwork or other outside activities?**

No. Business assets are for Children’s business rather than your personal business or outside activities.

## Follow the Law

We follow all relevant federal, state, and local laws. Team members support compliance by making sure all parties that work for, or on behalf of, our organization also follow the law and our policies.

## Exclusions

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) keeps a list of excluded people and groups. That list is known as the “List of Excluded Individuals and Entities” (LEIE). Children’s cannot hire or do business with anyone on the exclusion list. The Compliance Department makes sure employees, physicians, volunteers, vendors, and trustees are not on the LEIE.

The False Claims Act forbids charging the government for goods or services that we know are false. Medicare, Medicaid, or Tricare are part of the government. The *False Claims Act* policy is on The Red Wagon in Lucidoc.

## Cooperation with Government Agencies

We respect the government. Children’s cooperates with all government investigations. Government agencies use various investigation techniques. They may send a letter, fax, phone call, or just show up unexpectedly. They may try to contact an employee at home. The most common agencies in our workplace are Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), and the Office of Inspector General (OIG).

### **If a government agent comes onsite or directly to you, take the following actions:**

- Call 205.638.9100 and ask for the Risk Manager on Call (RMOC). Tell the agent that the RMOC is the point of contact and coordinates investigation requests.
- ALWAYS request the agent’s identification for the RMOC to confirm.
- DO NOT SIGN any documents or give permission for them to search for anything.

### **If the government shows up at your house or outside work:**

- Call 205.638.9100 to page the RMOC.
- The RMOC or legal counsel should be present during any interview.
- The RMOC will talk to and oversee the request with the investigator.

### **If the government sends a letter, fax, or calls:**

- Send audit notice or “demand” letters to the Corporate Compliance Officer at once
- Send any request for patient information to the Privacy Officer
- For calls, ask for the caller’s contact information and report this to the RMOC or the Compliance Officer. Do not offer confidential information over the phone.
- See the *Responding to External Investigations* policy in Lucidoc for more details.

## Conduct External Relationships Appropriately

Unless it is part of your job description, you should not talk with the media. You are not the hospital spokesperson. Corporate Communications is the only department allowed to communicate with the media. Direct all public and media requests for patient information to Children's main number (205.638.9100)

Our Social Media, Networking policy describes where you can take pictures with your personal device. Never put pictures of patients on social media. You should report policy violations to your supervisor, the HIPAA Officer, Risk Manager on Call, or the Corporate Compliance Officer.

### **What should I do if someone is not following the Code of Conduct, regulatory requirements, a law, policy, or procedure?**

Report your concern to your supervisor, Human Resources, or the Compliance Hotline (in right margin of The Red Wagon or call 800.624.9775). As an employee, it is your responsibility to report any potential violations.

### **May I express my opinions in public forums or on social media regarding current healthcare topics or practices?**

Yes, but you may not appear to be representing or speaking on behalf of Children's of Alabama when doing so. Please see the *Social Media, Networking* policy in Lucidoc regarding disclaimers to be posted on social media platforms when you show Children's as your employer.

### **If I receive a work-related letter from a government agency, what should I do?**

Promptly page the Risk Manager on Call (RMOC) at 205.638.9100. These notices are usually time sensitive. A delayed response could compromise Children's position in the matter.

### **What do I do if an FBI agent comes to my home and asks me about the activities of my department?**

ALWAYS request identification from the agent. Page the Risk Manager on Call at once, so the RMOC may appropriately respond to the request from the agent. The RMOC is available any time of day, 365 days a year.

### **While caring for a patient injured during a tornado, I received a call from a reporter. Is it okay for me to give information about the patient?**

No. It is not okay to talk to the media if it is not in your job description. Refer all media requests for information to the Corporate Communications Department.

### **I have been asked to give interviews, provide white papers, or presentations in my field of expertise based on my experience at Children's. May I do this?**

Employees should never appear to speak on behalf of Children's without receiving approval from Corporate Communications. Additionally, Children's may need to use disclaimers on documents such as white papers or presentations.

## Fundraising

Children's counts on gifts from donors. Many activities would not happen without their support. The Children's Hospital Foundation (the Foundation) manages all fundraising activity for Children's of Alabama. The Foundation shares the same ethical conduct goals as Children's. The Foundation protects Children's reputation in the community. If you have questions, contact the Foundation at [childrensal.org/foundation](http://childrensal.org/foundation).

## Relationships with Patients

We keep professional boundaries. Professional boundaries are like guardrails on a road. They keep us from going into an area that is not safe. They protect safe and emotionally healthy relationships with patients. Healthy boundaries help promote fair treatment as well as limit decisions based on emotion.

## Relationships with Business Partners

All Children's business partners must abide by the Code of Conduct and relevant policies. We do not give or accept bribes or kickbacks. A kickback is anything of value that is given in exchange for buying products or services or referring patients.

## Accurate Patient & Financial Records

We make and keep truthful patient records. We make and keep complete business records according to professional and legal standards. Business records are records like employment and payroll records, expense/travel reimbursement, tuition reimbursement, conflict of interests. We obey the law and send charges for the services we provide and for those that are needed and covered, no more or less. We pay attention to the whole process to see that the services have an order, are delivered, and are documented. We keep both patient and business records according to their retention and destruction schedule.

## Whistleblower

A "whistleblower" is someone that reports a company for wrongdoing. According to the False Claims Act, a whistleblower has a right to file a lawsuit on behalf of the government. If the lawsuit is successful, the person will receive a part of the money recovered by the government. The *Reporting Potential Compliance Issues* policy protects people working for Children's when they make a report of wrongdoing.

**I am an employee and I want to hold a fundraiser for Children's. Is there anything I need to know?**

While we appreciate your efforts, please contact the Foundation prior to holding any fundraising events, per the *Administrative Fundraising* policy.

**Can I help a family in need by providing personal transportation to their medical appointments?**

No. The ethical thing to do is help them contact the Social Services Department for resources.

**Can Dr. Smith refer his patients to the physical therapy practice owned by his wife?**

This may result in a Stark Law violation or could appear to be a conflict of interest. When faced with these circumstances, please contact the Corporate Compliance Department for a review of the situation.

**Should I "friend" or "follow" Children's patients/family members on social media?**

It is best to avoid this, as it may create circumstances that violate professional boundaries or HIPAA/ Privacy laws. Review the *Social Media, Networking and Professional Boundaries* policies for more information.

**One of the vendors who presented a new product to my department offered to give me a gift card to an expensive restaurant. Can I accept this offer?**

No employee of Children's should take money or anything of value from a vendor. This could be a kickback. Please refer to the *Conflict of Interest* policy for more information

**Children's has Pyxis drug and medical supply stations throughout our facility. What could produce an inaccurate charge?**

Some examples include choosing the wrong patient when using Pyxis, unused supplies used on the wrong patient, unused/unopened supplies returned to Pyxis under an incorrect patient name.

**I suspect we are using inaccurate charging procedures in my department. Should I report this?**

Yes. Federal and state laws prohibit the submission of false information to obtain payment, even if it is unintentional. If you suspect that charging or coding procedures are improper, you should promptly report this to your supervisor or the Hotline.

**My coworker is off work and cannot complete his Children's University curriculum requirements by the deadline. Can I complete that for him?**

No. All work-related records, including education records, are business documents. Falsification of records is punishable, per the *Infraction of Health System Rules* policy.

**I am attending a work-related conference out of town. My favorite hotel is nearby, but costs more than other hotels. May I stay there at company expense?**


No. Please review the *Travel, Employee Reimbursement and Corporate Card* policy before making travel arrangements to ensure proper expense reimbursement.

**Should I delete or erase incorrect entries in the patient's EMR (Electronic Medical Record)?**

No. Doing so appears to be concealing information. Please follow the guidelines specific to the EMR program in which the error occurred.

# Reporting Suspected Compliance Violations

It is important to report suspected violations quickly and to the proper people. Reporting does not have to follow the chain of command. Anyone may report a compliance concern through the channels listed here:

  
Reporting does not have to follow the chain of command.



## Anonymous Corporate Compliance Hotline\*

For details on Hotline reporting, refer to the *Reporting Potential Compliance Issues* policy.



Call the toll-free Hotline number at 1-800-624-9775



Use the "Hotline" link in the right margin of The Red Wagon



Report online at [childrensa.ethicspoint.com](http://childrensa.ethicspoint.com) or scan the QR code



SCAN ME ↑

\*To protect your identity, reports are received by an outside agency—not Children's employees.

### Who can use the Hotline?

All staff, vendors, physicians, and employees (both on and off-campus) can use the Hotline reporting system for compliance concerns.

### Do I have to use the telephone to report a compliance concern?

No, there is an online form you can fill out instead of calling the toll-free Hotline number (800.624.9775). You can get to the online form by clicking on the Hotline link in the right margin of The Red Wagon.

# Administration

The annual performance appraisal includes satisfying Compliance Program requirements. Progressive discipline, according to the *Infraction of Health System Rules* policy, applies if:

## EMPLOYEES

- Violate, or help others violate, a law, regulation, or policy
- Know of a compliance violation and do not report it
- Tell others not to report a compliance violation
- Do not follow the Code of Conduct

## SUPERVISORS

- Do not supervise staff to ensure compliance
- Know of a compliance violation and do not report it
- Do not communicate compliance requirements to staff
- Attempt retaliation if staff reports compliance concerns

**We expect our leaders to lead by example and help by giving staff information about compliance.**

### **How do I know for sure if something is a compliance concern?**

If you are uncomfortable with certain behaviors or practices, speak with your supervisor or the Corporate Compliance Officer.

### **What if I report to my supervisor that something is wrong, but they tell me not to worry about it?**

If you know something is wrong, report the situation to the Corporate Compliance Officer, Human Resources, or the Compliance Hotline (800.624.9775).

### **Will I get in trouble if I report a situation, but my suspicion turns out to be wrong?**

It is your right and responsibility to report suspected problems. If you have a concern and truthfully report it, our policy prohibits termination, demotion, or any type of retaliation for reporting.

### **What happens when I report a compliance concern?**

Children's investigates reports of violations. If a violation occurs, we implement corrective action plans. When necessary, we send reports of the suspected violation to proper authorities for further investigation.

QUESTIONS?

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# Got Questions?

More answers to some commonly asked compliance questions can be found in our emailed quarterly newsletters, **Children's by the Book**, and in the **Happenings** weekly emails.

**A special thanks to all of you for your commitment to Children's of Alabama.**



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of Alabama®