CODE OF ETHICS

Department of Immigration and Emigration

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1. Introduction

(A brief statement may be included outlining the objectives of this Code of Ethics and its applicability of the ethics to all staff members.)

Eg:

The establishment of a Code of Ethics for all public institutions helps provide guidance on the conduct of officers, ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards, and promote a positive and harmonious working environment. With the aim of establishing an ethical and well-disciplined public service in Sri Lanka, this Code of Ethics sets out the standards of conduct to be observed by public officers serving in the Department of Immigration and Emigration, with a view to fostering professionalism and ethical behaviour and building a dignified service culture that safeguards public trust.

This Code of Ethics shall be implemented in conjunction with, and subject to, the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, all laws, rules and regulations in force from time to time, the Establishments Code, the Procedural Rules of the Public Service Commission, the Financial Regulations, circulars, and other instructions and directives issued by the competent authorities. Accordingly, all officers of the Department of Immigration and Emigration shall be bound by this Code of Ethics, which aims to ensure a professional, transparent and accountable working culture within the Department.

This Code of Ethics shall come into effect on 1 January 2026 and shall be reviewed and updated periodically.

2. Personal Responsibilities

All staff members shall, in the performance of their duties:

- Uphold the principles of dedication to public service, courtesy, discipline, honesty, proper conduct, responsibility, accountability, reliability, impartiality, fairness, efficiency, good governance, professional competence, cooperation, mutual respect and ethical behaviour.
- Strive to establish a service-oriented institution with a strong institutional identity by providing efficient public services to staff and clients through digitalisation based on innovation, new ideas and creativity, while maintaining up-to-date knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Ensure that all officers are aware of the institution’s vision, mission, and long-term and short-term objectives, and work collectively towards achieving them.
- Contribute to creating a pleasant working environment that promotes employee motivation.
- Make every effort to create an institutional environment that facilitates easy access to services and ensures the provision of prompt and orderly services.
- Exercise self-discipline by accurately recording their arrival and departure times and, where necessary, contribute to providing their services beyond normal working hours.
- Treat every employee and clients equally in the performance of official duties.

- Conduct themselves appropriately and responsibly at all times, both within and outside the institution, in a manner that safeguards the good name of their position and the public service, while ensuring that their official duties do not conflict with their personal affairs.
- Perform their day-to-day duties with self-discipline, having understood and adhering to the relevant official instructions.
- Respond to clients in a courteous manner, using appropriate and polite language to ensure their satisfaction, and act in accordance with the Client Charter.
- Refrain from using mobile phones, WhatsApp, Facebook and other social media platforms, or the internet in a manner that interferes with their own duties or those of other officers in the office.
- Ensure that all staff members willingly contribute to providing high-quality and effective services to all clients.
- Refrain from using government property for personal purposes.
- Ensure that only the Secretary to the Ministry, the Head of the Institution, or an officer specifically authorised for that purpose officially provides the public with accurate information of public importance concerning government affairs. However, information that may place the Government in an embarrassing or difficult position shall not be disclosed.

3. Relationship with the Public

3.1 In dealing with the public, services shall be provided courteously and efficiently, while upholding the ethical standards of the public service.

3.2 In providing services, the needs of the public shall be given priority, and services shall be delivered accurately and without delay.

3.3 No client shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, disability, or any other form of difference.

3.4 Concerns of the clients shall be heard patiently, and appropriate guidance shall be provided. Active assistance shall be extended to clients who are unfamiliar with legal procedures or requirements.

3.5 Unless restricted by law, accurate, truthful, and reliable advice or information shall be provided to the public promptly, with the utmost care taken to ensure its reliability.

3.6 The legal and administrative provisions relating to language rights under the Official Language Policy shall be complied with.

3.7 Any unlawful attempts made by a client to obtain a service shall be resisted, and such attempts shall be reported without delay to the appropriate senior officer of the Department or the Internal Affairs Unit.

4. Compliance with the Law

4.1 All officers shall act in accordance with the Constitution, the Establishments Code, the Financial Regulations, the Procedural Rules of the Public Service Commission, the Procurement Guidelines, Acts of Parliament, external and internal circulars, directives and orders in force from time to time, regulations, provisions and all other applicable laws and rules.

5. Refraining from Bribery and Corruption

5.1 Refraining from Acts of Bribery

5.1.1 Requesting or accepting any gratification (including money, property, goods, discounts, services, favours, or any other benefit) as an inducement or reward for performing, expediting, delaying, obstructing, or refraining from performing any official duty shall be considered an act of bribery. All officers shall refrain from such acts entirely.

5.1.2 Engaging in acts such as offering, giving, soliciting, or accepting bribes constitutes a serious disciplinary offence and may also constitute an offence punishable under the disciplinary rules applicable to the Public Service, the Anti-Corruption Act, and other relevant laws, and may give rise to criminal prosecution.

5.1.3 If any person attempts to offer an officer an undue privilege or any other benefit, the officer shall immediately report the matter to the relevant senior officers of the Department or the Internal Affairs Unit.

5.2 Refraining from Acts of Corruption

5.2.1 An act of corruption occurs when an officer misuses his or her position to perform any act with the intention of causing an unlawful or improper loss to the Government or obtaining an unlawful or improper benefit for him or her or another person, or while knowing that such loss or benefit may result from the act.

5.2.2 Furthermore, if an officer improperly uses information obtained through his or her official position or induces another officer to act improperly, and such conduct results in a loss to the Government or a benefit to himself or herself or another person, the officer shall be deemed to have committed an act of corruption.

5.2.3 Any violation of these provisions constitutes an offence punishable under the disciplinary rules applicable to the Public Service, the Anti-Corruption Act, and other relevant laws, and may give rise to criminal prosecution.

5.2.4 Upon becoming aware of an act of corruption, an attempt to commit corruption, or any information relating to such conduct, an officer shall immediately report the matter to the relevant senior officers of the Department or the Internal Affairs Unit.

6. Refraining from Accepting Gratifications (Gifts, Hospitality and Benefits)

6.1 Every officer shall strictly refrain from directly or indirectly soliciting or accepting any gratification as an inducement or reward for performing, refraining from performing, expediting, delaying or obstructing any official act or duty.

6.2 For the purposes of the above provision, the term "gratification" includes any gift, money, reward, commission, personal discount, free service, invitation, employment, contract, trip, loan, release or discharge from any obligation or liability, sexual favour, or any other similar benefit.

6.3 Any violation of these provisions shall be regarded as an offence subject to the disciplinary rules applicable to the Public Service and other relevant laws, including the Anti-Corruption Act.

7. Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest

7.1 There shall be no conflict between an officer's official duties and obligations and his or her personal interests or obligations arising from friendships, family relationships or business relationships.

7.2 A conflict of interest shall be deemed to exist where personal interests are directly or indirectly connected with matters relating to an official decision. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest and engaging in official duties without disclosing such a conflict may lead to corruption.

7.3 Where an actual, potential or perceived conflict exists between any official activity and a personal interest, the following guidelines shall be observed:

7.3.1 Promptly disclose the relevant interests in writing to the immediate supervisor or higher authority.

7.3.2 Inform the relevant supervising officers of the conflict of interest and refrain from participating in the decision-making process relating to the matter giving rise to the conflict.

7.3.3 Participate in the relevant process only if written authorisation has been expressly granted by the competent authority, and strictly in accordance with the terms of such authorisation.

7.4 Officers shall not engage in outside employment, business activities or professional activities, or hold membership on boards of directors, where such activities or positions conflict with, or appear likely to conflict with, their official duties.

7.5 All officers shall act with a proper understanding of the rules and regulations relating to conflicts of interest.

7.6 Failure to disclose conflicts between official duties and personal interests, or failure to abstain from decision-making where a conflict of interest exists, shall be regarded as offences punishable

under the Anti-Corruption Act and other applicable laws, and may result in criminal prosecution and the imposition of penalties.

8. Maintaining Personal Financial Integrity and Declaring Assets and Liabilities

8.1 All financial activities shall be carried out with transparency, accountability and honesty, in compliance with the Financial Regulations, and strictly within the financial limits of the authority delegated to each officer.

8.2 Public funds shall not be used for personal purposes or misappropriated.

8.3 Officers shall refrain from generating illicit income or engaging in any other form of financial irregularity and shall not facilitate or encourage such activities.

8.4 Any person who has knowledge of or information relating to the generation of illicit income shall report such information to the appropriate authorities.

8.5 It is the legal responsibility of every officer required to declare assets and liabilities to submit an accurate Declaration of Assets and Liabilities within the prescribed time limit, in accordance with the Anti-Corruption Act and the relevant regulations.

8.6 Any person who fails to submit a Declaration of Assets and Liabilities within the prescribed period, includes false information in such a declaration, or deliberately omits any asset or liability therefrom may be subject to an administrative fine or imprisonment under the Anti-Corruption Act.

8.7 Any violation of these provisions shall be considered an offence under the disciplinary rules applicable to the Public Service, the Anti-Corruption Act, the Proceeds of Crime Act, and other applicable laws.

9. Management of Public Funds and Procurement

9.1 Financial management shall be carried out prudently and with due care, in compliance with financial laws and regulations.

9.2 It shall be ensured that public funds are used prudently, economically and efficiently, solely for official purposes.

9.3 It shall be ensured that all transactions involving public funds are accurately accounted, and officers shall act strictly within the financial limits of the authority delegated to them at all times.

9.4 When claiming reimbursement for expenses incurred in the performance of official duties, only actual expenses genuinely incurred and reasonably justified shall be claimed for reimbursement.

9.5 It shall be ensured that all procurement processes are conducted fairly, lawfully, competitively and impartially, in accordance with the applicable procurement guidelines.

9.6 Officers involved in procurement processes shall act in compliance with the prescribed procurement guidelines and all other relevant laws and regulations, and shall not accept any gifts or benefits from suppliers.

10. Use of Official Information, Confidentiality and Information Security

10.1 Personal, professional and sensitive data and information obtained in the course of performing official duties shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed to any third party without authorisation, whether orally, in the form of copies or by any other means.

10.2 All official documents, data and records shall be used solely for the performance of authorised official duties.

10.3 No document maintained in the office, or any copy thereof, shall be released or provided to the media for any purpose, or any such release facilitated, without the authorisation of the Head of the Institution.

10.4 No officer shall provide articles, letters, creative works or information to any media organisation in Sri Lanka or abroad, whether anonymously or under a pseudonym. Officers shall also refrain from writing articles, delivering speeches or expressing opinions publicly on administrative matters.

10.5 When providing information to the public, officers shall act in accordance with the provisions of the Right to Information Act.

10.6 No alteration, copying or destruction of data stored in computer systems shall be carried out under any circumstances without proper authorisation.

10.7 All staff members shall be responsible for ensuring that all information systems, databases and communication networks used by the institution are maintained securely, accurately and reliably.

10.8 Usernames, passwords and access codes shall be kept confidential and shall not, under any circumstances, be shared with unauthorised persons.

10.9 Officers who use or have access to computer systems, equipment or software shall take all possible measures to protect the information contained therein against potential security threats.

10.10 All staff members are responsible for promptly reporting any suspected information security incidents to the relevant authority.

11. Use of Social Media

11.1 Every officer shall refrain from expressing opinions, posting or sharing content on social media in a manner that could damage the reputation of the Government or the Department of Immigration and Emigration.

11.2 Officers shall not disclose official information obtained in the course of their duties on social media or facilitate the disclosure of such information.

11.3 Officers shall not use social media during their daily working hours in a manner that interferes with the performance of their assigned duties.

12. Use of State Property and Services

12.1 Government officers shall not use State-owned property or vehicles for their personal purposes, in contravention of the relevant circulars, whether during or outside office hours.

12.2 State property shall be properly recorded in the relevant registers and maintained in an orderly manner in accordance with all applicable standards and security procedures.

12.3 Utility services and resources, such as fuel, telephone, electricity, water, internet and stationery, shall be used prudently and economically, without wastage.

12.4 When using technology, computer systems, network software, equipment, the internet and official email shall be used solely for official purposes.

12.5 In the event of a transfer or retirement, all inventoried items, equipment, files and other items belonging to the Government shall be duly handed over in accordance with the prescribed procedures.

12.6 Any officer involved in the disposal of departmental property or in duties relating to the valuation of items for auction shall refrain from purchasing such items or property and shall ensure that no action is taken to confer any personal benefit or advantage on friends or associates.

12.7 All staff members have a responsibility to report to the relevant authorities or the Internal Affairs Unit, either by disclosing their identity or anonymously, any observed damage to or misuse of State property, and to take appropriate action to prevent such damage or misuse.

13. Purchase of State Property by Government Officers

13.1 Where officers of the Department purchase State property, they shall strictly comply with all applicable laws, Gazette Orders and procedures, ensuring transparency, fairness and the obtaining of proper approval from the relevant authorities.

13.2 Any officer involved in the disposal of goods or in the valuation of items to be sold by public auction shall refrain from purchasing such goods or property and shall ensure that they do not act in a manner that serves the interests of friends or provides them with any undue benefits.

14. Restrictions on Political Activities

14.1 Participation in political activities shall be undertaken strictly in accordance with the laws applicable to public officers, the Establishments Code, and the circulars issued by the Government.

14.2 Official powers, government resources, buildings, vehicles, equipment, information systems, or official working hours shall not be used for the benefit of any political party or candidate.

14.3 Regardless of their personal political opinions or affiliations, all officers shall maintain strict political neutrality in the performance of their official duties.

15. Work Environment

15.1 Every officer shall ensure that their workplace and its premises are maintained in an orderly, clean, safe and pleasant manner.

15.2 Every officer shall contribute towards creating a work environment that promotes anti-corruption, integrity and ethical conduct in the performance of official duties.

15.3 All officers shall be responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that upholds mutual respect, irrespective of rank or position, and ensures that no staff member is subjected to discrimination, harassment, and interference with the performance of official duties, humiliation, ridicule or any other form of unfair treatment.

15.4 Officers shall use their special skills and abilities to assist and support others.

15.5 Officers shall refrain from consuming alcohol or intoxicating substances, smoking, and using betel quid within office premises and during official working hours.

15.6 All officers shall work collectively in a spirit of mutual trust and harmony to achieve the objectives of the Department of Immigration and Emigration.

16. Compliance with the Code of Ethics

16.1. This Code of Ethics serves as a guide for all staff members of the Department of Immigration and Emigration in maintaining professional discipline and proper conduct in the discharge of their duties. Accordingly, all staff members shall read, understand and comply with this Code of Ethics. If any matter is unclear, the necessary clarification shall be sought from the appropriate authority.

16.2. Any violation of this Code of Ethics shall be considered a violation of the applicable laws, rules, circulars or directions issued by the Head of the Institution, as applicable. Accordingly, appropriate action may be taken in respect of such violations in accordance with the relevant provisions.

16.3. Compliance with this Code of Ethics will ensure that officers of the Department of Immigration and Emigration provide the public with a reliable, respectful and efficient service.

Let Us Move Towards an Integrity-Driven Public Service!