

THE ROYAL NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE
OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

College Member Code of Conduct



The Royal New Zealand
College of General Practitioners
Te Whare Tohu Rata o Aotearoa

RNZCGP BOARD REGULATION

APPROVED JUNE 2022

CODE OF CONDUCT OF

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners

1. Introduction

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners is the professional body and postgraduate educational institute for general practitioners and rural hospital doctors. The charitable purpose of the College is to encourage, foster and maintain the highest possible standards for medical care within the scope of general practice, in order to reduce health inequalities and achieve improved health for all New Zealanders.

Consistent with this purpose, the Board has adopted this Code of Conduct as a regulation (pursuant to clause 22.13 of the Rules) to set expected standards for membership of the College.

College members must abide by this Code, at all times, as a condition of their ongoing membership of the College. All College members are expected to read and understand this Code.

This Code does not alter or excuse a College member's compliance with other applicable codes and does not vary any legal obligation.

2. Interpretation

College means The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners.

College member has the same meaning as defined in the College Rules.

3. Application

This Code applies to all College members.

The standards outlined in this Code are the standards the College expects all College members to adhere to consistently and throughout their membership with the College.

College members who breach the standards may be subject to complaints procedures and disciplinary actions, including expulsion from the College.

4. The Code

College members must:

- 4.1 treat others fairly and with courtesy and respect;
- 4.2 respect the training, knowledge and experience of others and promote mutual respect among their colleagues, other health professionals, their patients and College staff;

- 4.3 not engage in, facilitate or condone any communication or actions which involve discrimination, bullying or harassment;
- 4.4 not engage in conduct (physical or verbal) which a reasonable person would deem to be unwelcome, offensive, humiliating or intimidating;
- 4.5 exercise caution when using social media, including in a private capacity, and observe the same levels of respect for others when using social media as a College member would in a public forum;
- 4.6 maintain professional and personal integrity and accountability, consistent with the highest ethical standards;
- 4.7 ensure that all actions, whether in a professional or personal capacity, are consistent with all relevant applicable laws and abide by the rules and standards of regulatory agencies empowered to regulate sectors in which the College operates, including:
 - a) Good Medical Practice, Medical Council of New Zealand
 - b) Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003
- 4.8 not be found guilty of any professional misconduct;
- 4.9 satisfy all registration requirements for Continuing Professional Development;
- 4.10 act in the best interests of the patient and provide the best attainable care for their patients;
- 4.11 maintain the privacy and confidentiality of information, including complying with the Privacy Act 2020 and Health Information Privacy Code 2020;
- 4.12 utilise up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge and practices and not misuse their professional knowledge or skills;
- 4.13 avoid providing information in any way that is deceptive or misleading;
- 4.14 when providing scientific information to the public, recognise their responsibility to give the generally held opinions of the profession in a form that is readily understood; and, when presenting any personal opinion which is contrary to the generally held opinion of the profession, to indicate that clearly;
- 4.15 promote the College's Charitable Purpose and interests;
- 4.16 not engage in behaviour that has brought or could bring the College into disrepute;
- 4.17 use reasonable endeavours to ensure the efficient use of the assets and resources of the College for legitimate College purposes.

5. Reports of Misconduct

- 5.1 Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that there has or may have been a breach of this Code, a report should be made to the College.
- 5.2 A report must be made in writing and should be made as soon as practicable after the conduct or behaviour occurs.
- 5.3 The College will consider the report as soon as practicable after receiving the report and determine, considering the particular circumstances of each case, the appropriate response. The College may request further information from the person making the report, and may request that the person formalise the report as a complaint under the College “Process: Complaints against Members and right to appeal”.
- 5.4 Appropriate responses include
 - a) Taking no further action
 - b) Requesting further information
 - c) Issuing a warning
 - d) Initiating the complaints process to investigate the College member for an alleged breach. The College may decide, following an investigation, to exercise its powers under clauses 14.3 or 15.2 of the College’s Rules in relation to expulsion or other sanctions for misconduct.
- 5.5 The College “Process: Complaints against members, and right to appeal” will be applied to any matters investigated under this Code of Conduct.
- 5.6 The College may consider the report and determine to take no further action, for instance if it is satisfied that:
 - a) the complainant has insufficient interest in the matter or otherwise lacks standing to raise it;
 - b) the matter is trivial or does not appear to disclose misconduct;
 - c) the matter raised appears to be without foundation or there is no apparent evidence to support it;
 - d) the conduct, incident, event or issue has already been investigated and dealt with by the College;
 - e) the conduct, incident, event or issue is currently being dealt with, or is more appropriately dealt with, by a Regulatory Agency;
 - f) the conduct, incident, event or issue is more appropriately dealt with in another forum.
- 5.7 After considering a report, the College may determine that issuing a warning is the appropriate response. The President and CEO will use their discretion to determine the process for issuing a warning, which may include sending one or more letters to the College member.

- 5.8 After initial consideration of the report, the College may determine that further information is required to progress or investigate an alleged breach. The College may request further relevant information from the complainant and specify the date by which the additional information must be provided.
- 5.9 The Board will initiate the Complaints process to investigate a member for an alleged breach on the receipt of one or more of the following:
- a) a complaint in writing from a member of the public that the Board considers may amount to non-compliance with the Rules in a serious and material way
 - b) a complaint in writing from a member of the College that the Board considers may amount to non-compliance with the Rules in a serious and material way
 - c) written advice from the Chief Executive of member behaviour or actions that may give rise to an alleged breach
- 5.10 If a complainant declines to allow their identity to be disclosed to the College member who is the subject of a report of misconduct, the College may be limited in how they are able to proceed with the report.