

Learning Difficulties Australia

Code of Ethics 2016

Preamble

Learning Difficulties Australia is an organisation of professionals whose work is in some way related to the support or teaching of students with learning difficulties.

As professionals, many of our members belong to other professional organisations, or are registered teachers, and are therefore bound by the ethical codes or guidelines of their particular professional organisation.

All members of LDA are expected to abide by their particular professional Code of Ethics. In particular, members are expected to follow the accepted principles of professional conduct, and to demonstrate integrity and honesty at all times.

The basic principles that underpin our profession are **integrity, respect and responsibility**. In supporting students with learning difficulties, our members are aware that we hold a unique position of trust and influence, which we recognise in our relationship with students, their parents or guardians, our colleagues and the community.

We demonstrate our **integrity** by:

- acting in the best interests of children
- maintaining a professional relationship with students, parents, colleagues and the community
- behaving in ways that respect and advance the profession

We demonstrate our **respect** by:

- acting with care and compassion
- treating students fairly and impartially
- holding our colleagues in high regard
- acknowledging parents as partners in the education of their children

We demonstrate our **responsibility** by:

- providing quality teaching
- maintaining and developing our professional practice
- working cooperatively with colleagues in the best interests of our students.

Section1: Ethics Related to Teaching

All members of LDA should:

- 1.1 provide for students an environment that is encouraging and promotes physical, emotional, social and intellectual wellbeing.
- 1.2 develop constructive relationships with students and maintain a positive attitude at all times.
- 1.3 demonstrate a working knowledge of the current educational curriculum.
- 1.4 be informed about, and critically appraise, current research published in professional literature and attend professional development courses related to the learning difficulties field and broader educational trends.
- 1.5 follow effective evidence-based practices for teaching and intervention, and reject practices which are not supported by scientific evidence or do not have a sound theoretical rationale to support their implementation.
- 1.6 have a knowledge of expected levels of achievement, materials available, teaching methods, strategies utilised, and special programs available for students with special needs.
- 1.7 liaise with all professionals concerned with a student.
- 1.8 prior to implementing any program of special instruction, ensure that a careful and comprehensive assessment of the student has been made, and that the program to be implemented is appropriate to the needs of the student.
- 1.9 in cases where standardised tests are used for assessment, ensure that the tests administered are valid and appropriate for the purpose for which they are being used, and that they are administered, scored and interpreted according to the instructions for administration and interpretive guidelines as provided in the test manual.
- 1.10 wherever possible, ensure that follow-up testing is undertaken to monitor progress and/or to evaluate the effectiveness of particular programs or interventions.
- 1.11 provide parents or guardians and students with feedback that is accurate at the time of reporting through informative written and verbal reports.
- 1.12 provide support for parents or guardians in the form of information and advice appropriate to the student's situation.

Section 2: Ethics Related to Referrals and Private Tuition

All Consultant Members of LDA who receive referrals from LDA Online Tutor Search should:

- 2.1 refrain from offering services to a student who is already receiving similar services from another LDA professional.
- 2.2 personally teach any student who has been referred via the Online Tutor Search and accepted by that Consultant.
- 2.3 refer the student back to the Online Tutor Search if unable to teach the student personally.
- 2.4 refrain from delegating students referred through the Online Tutor Search to an assistant employed by the Consultant regardless of the assistant's qualifications.
- 2.5 ensure that other teachers employed to teach children with learning difficulties within their business are registered LDA Consultant Members and have paid the fee for the Online Tutor Search in order to have access to LDA students; in such cases the Director of the business may pay the fee for the Online Tutor Search on their behalf and all the referrals will go through the Director.
- 2.6 suggest referrals to an appropriate registered professional or agency for further assessment, e.g. Educational Psychologist, Paediatrician, Speech/Language Therapist.
- 2.7 refrain from receiving or giving any remuneration for referring clients to other teaching professionals or professionals in other disciplines.
- 2.8 identify and set clear and achievable goals with, and for students, and teach in such a way that each student is able to experience success.
- 2.9 organise pre-and post-testing to keep a record of progress made during the course of the tuition.
- 2.10 ensure that all professional reports written by the Consultant Member regarding the student are signed by the author.
- 2.11 maintain accurate records of assessments, teaching programs, interviews and report.
- 2.12 terminate services being delivered to a student if it is clear that the student is not benefitting from the program that is being offered and refer back to the Online Tutor Search.
- 2.13 provide clear communication, both verbally and in writing, with regard to fees, appointment times and other administrative arrangements.

- 2.14 notify the parent or guardian of the presence of a trainee student or other adult who may be present at a lesson for a specific reason and obtain prior written consent from the parent or guardian.
- 2.15 be responsible for sound business practice, including adequate insurance i.e. public liability cover and professional indemnity cover is now compulsory for all Consultants taking students privately. Keep records and accounts up-to-date.
- 2.16 ensure the safety of students at all times. Consultants must provide supervision within the confines of their premises for students who arrive early to the lesson and supervise students until parents/guardians arrive at the end of the lesson. Parents must not drop and go but wait until the Consultant is able to supervise their child.
- 2.17 refrain from teaching students from the school at which they are employed.

Section 3: Obligations of Consultant Members

All consultant members of LDA should:

- 3.1 follow the LDA Consultant Guidelines and LDA Code of Ethics: incorrect practices must be reported to the Convenor of the Consultants Committee for investigation of the reported practice and, if necessary, the implementation of corrective measures; all information is to be held in the strictest confidence.
- 3.2 be aware that LDA Council, on the recommendation of the Convenor of the Consultants Committee, has the right to withdraw consultant registration if professional and ethical standards and services are not maintained: Consultant Members have a right to appeal to Council.
- 3.3 ensure that no service is delivered for which the Consultant is not adequately trained and qualified.
- 3.4 refrain from public criticism of a colleague in the learning difficulties or special education field, when there is an area of disagreement.
- 3.5 be careful and professional in their use of social media and other forums, being mindful of representing LDA in a positive light and conveying the values and beliefs of LDA in a correct manner.
- 3.6 refrain from criticising other professionals involved in the teaching or assessment of students with learning difficulties on social media or other forums. (See Code of Ethics p 1 – respect)
- 3.7 refrain from giving specific professional advice on social media or other

forums to families regarding a student with learning difficulties, especially if the Consultant has not worked directly with the student in question. Information of a more general nature in line with current best practice could be provided. Parents can be referred to publications such as the LDA 2015 position paper, "Approaches to Reading Instruction," Auspeld's "Understanding LD's: A guide for parents," or other documents, articles, or organisations that support evidence-based approaches.