



# Learning Difficulties Australia

## Code of Ethics

### Preamble

Learning Difficulties Australia is an association 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 associations, or are registered teachers, and are therefore bound by the ethical codes or guidelines of their particular professional association.

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 are expected to:**

- 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 and broader educational issues.
- 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 ensure that a careful and comprehensive assessment of the student has been made prior to implementing any program of special instruction, and that the program to be implemented is appropriate to the needs of the student.
- 1.9 ensure that in cases where standardised tests are used for assessment, 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 ensure wherever possible, 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 Use of Media, 'SIGNATURES' and Storage of Information**

- 2.1 Social media - LDA Members must uphold the values and aims of LDA and not bring our association into disrepute through misuse of social media. LDA members should keep separate personal and professional accounts, profiles, and email addresses; ensure confidentiality and privacy by not sending to insecure phones or accounts; and agreeing not to allow testimonials or online reviews.
- 2.2 LDA Consultant websites and emails are expected to look professional. Therefore Consultants who have a dedicated teaching/consulting website, and Consultants who place a 'signature' at the end of email messages, are expected to list in these only items related specifically to their professional teaching work, and to refrain from including membership of unrelated organisations or their other interests and/or businesses.

- 2.3 Storage of information - Storing details of clients, such as names and contact details must be kept safe. This applies in particular to records on computers and especially on lap-tops or tablets which are more likely to be lost or stolen. Safe storage apps are one way, or use of USB memory sticks to safely store client information.

### **Section 3: Ethics Related to Online Tutor Search (OTS) Referrals and Private Tuition**

All LDA Consultant Members who receive referrals from the LDA Online Tutor Search are expected to abide by the general LDA Member Ethics standards, plus specifically to:

- 3.1 refrain from offering services to a student who is already receiving similar services from another LDA professional.
- 3.2 personally teach any student who has been referred via the Online Tutor Search and accepted by that Consultant.
- 3.3 refer the parent back to the OTS if unable to teach the student personally, or to another specific Consultant, if s/he is considered the best option for this student.
- 3.4 refrain from delegating students referred through the Online Tutor Search to an assistant employed by the Consultant regardless of the assistant's qualifications.
- 3.5 ensure that tutors employed by a consultancy business to teach children with learning difficulties who are sourced from the LDA OTS, have current and valid LDA Consultant Member certification, and their current OTS registration fee to access LDA students has been paid.
- 3.6 suggest referrals to an appropriate registered professional or agency for further assessment as may be required, e.g. Educational Psychologist, Paediatrician, Speech/Language Therapist.
- 3.7 refrain from receiving or giving any remuneration for referring clients to other teaching professionals or professionals in other disciplines.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 organise pre-and post-testing to keep a record of progress made during the course of the tuition.
- 3.10 ensure that all professional reports written by the Consultant Member regarding the student are signed by the author.
- 3.11 maintain accurate records of assessments, teaching programs, interviews and report.
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 provide clear communication, both verbally and in writing, with regard to fees,

appointment times and other administrative arrangements.

- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 be responsible for sound business practices such as keeping records and accounts up-to-date including adequate and currently valid insurance (i.e. public liability cover and professional indemnity cover - which is compulsory for all LDA Consultants taking students privately), and currently valid police / teacher registration authority for working with children.
- 3.16 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.
- 3.17 refrain from teaching students from the school at which they are employed.

#### **Section 4: Obligations of LDA Consultant Members**

##### **All consultant members of LDA must agree to:**

- 4.1 abide by the LDA Consultant Guidelines and LDA Code of Ethics: incorrect practices must be reported to the Convenor of the Consultants Committee for investigation and if necessary, the implementation of corrective measures; all information is to be held in the strictest confidence.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 ensure that no service is delivered for which the Consultant is not adequately trained and qualified.
- 4.4 refrain from public criticism of a colleague in the learning difficulties or special education field
- 4.5 Be careful and professional in 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 particular, Consultants should 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* ([refer website](#)) and Auspeld's *Understanding LD: A guide for parents*, ([refer Auspeld website](#)) or other documents, articles or organisations that support evidence-based approaches.