



YOUR HEALTHY CHOICE AMBASSADOR

Conflict of Interest Policy

Effective: February 4, 2014

The Mentoring Junior Kids Organization (MJKO) maintains high ethical standards in order to establish and maintain the trust of its valued partners, its donors, and above all, the community it serves. MJKO's integrity depends upon ethical behaviour throughout the organization and on well-informed decision-making practices.

Recognizing that decision-making abilities may sometimes be affected by other interests (either personal or professional), and that such conflict of interest situations may arise, this policy has been put into place to enable MJKO to manage such situations. This entails impartial investigation of matters, asking fair questions, and making determinations as to whether potential, perceived, and actual conflict of interest situations truly exist. Should any of these situations be found to exist, steps must be taken to resolve them quickly and successfully.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the MJKO Board of Directors, including the Executive Director, and all staff and volunteers in charge of events.

Definition of Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a person has a private or personal interest which may influence, or may appear to influence, the objective exercise of his or her official duties at MJKO. A "private or personal interest" refers to an individual's self-interest (e.g. to achieve financial profit, or to gain another special advantage or avoid a disadvantage), the interests of the individual's immediate family or business partners, or the interests of another organization in which the individual holds a position (voluntary or paid).

Overall Responsibility

The MJKO Executive Director, members of the Board of Directors, staff and all volunteers are responsible for being aware of this policy and its requirements in order to successfully avoid conflict of interest situations or to manage any that may arise. This is required to ensure that behaviour, judgement and decision-making throughout MJKO is not influenced by conflicting interests.



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Responsibility for Prevention

MJKO encourages a culture in which people take responsibility for both “self-declaring” possible conflicts of interest, and respectfully raising possible conflicts faced by others in the organization. The Executive Director, board members, staff, and volunteers in charge of events have the responsibility to implement practical preventive measures, which include:

- Providing education about what to do when gifts and hospitality are offered
- Providing meeting agendas in advance to enable participants to foresee possible conflicts
- Ensuring that people are clearly told when information must be protected from improper use
- Declining involvement in an outside activity which one believes may create a conflict situation

Responsibility for Managing

Where prevention is not the solution, conflict of interest situations must be managed. In these types of situations, MJKO maintains an approach which requires all parties to work together and support one another’s ethical accountabilities. All those in scope of this policy are required to take the following actions where it is believed that a conflict situation has materialized:

- Declare the conflict using the MJKO *Conflict of Interest Declaration* form
- If unsure as to whether or not a conflict exists, or could be perceived to exist, the matter may be discussed with a member of the Board of Directors, or with the Executive Director. A meeting may be requested by emailing beleive@mjko.ca
 - In situations where a real or perceived conflict of interest is reported, steps will be taken by the board member approached or the Executive Director to maintain utmost confidentiality. However, circumstances may arise where consultation between the Executive Director and other board members is required in order to make a determination as to whether a conflict truly exists.
 - Only the Executive Director can make the final determination as to whether or not a conflict exists, and may do so following the recommendation(s) of the investigating board member, if the situation warrants it
- Determine the measures to be put in place in order to mitigate or eliminate the conflict of interest. This will depend on the severity of the situation. Options may include, but are not limited to:
 - Restrict the involvement of the individual from their regular functions, or remove specific accountabilities altogether, if possible to do so without compromising effectiveness and efficiency
 - Remove the individual with the conflict from duties related to the conflict. The individual could transfer to other duties
 - Request that the individual relinquish the private interest. In cases of serious conflict, the individual may choose to remove themselves from the private interest, such as membership on the board of another organization, which is causing the conflict



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- In serious cases where the individual opts not to remove themselves from the private interest, full removal from their official duties at MJKO

Accountability

Every individual covered in the scope of this document is responsible for his or her own conflict of interest situation. In summary, this accountability entails that the following requirements be met:

- Being aware of this policy
- Self-declaring potential problems to a board member or to the Executive Director
- Identifying potential conflicts of other volunteers, staff or board members
- Undertaking follow-up action determined by the Executive Director
- Making disclosures when circumstances change significantly (i.e. whenever new conflicts arise)

All MJKO members covered by the scope of this policy are responsible for respecting the principles and requirements established herein. Questions regarding the contents or requirements set out in this policy may be sent to beleive@mjko.ca. This policy will be applied under the general direction of the Executive Director.

The Executive Director is responsible for the ongoing application of the policy and procedures to MJKO members. The Executive Director will:

- Provide a point of contact for advice about conflict of interest matters
- Determine the actions required as a result of confidential disclosures
- Receive complaints about possible breaches of the policy
- Determine the actions required by breaches of the policy
- Make annual reports to the Board on conflict of interest matters

The Executive Director's own conflict of interest situation is the responsibility of the Board of Directors. In such a situation, the Board will determine who is to lead the investigative process (be it a fellow board member or a third party external to MJKO). The investigative lead will be accountable for collecting information and drafting a report, complete with recommendations, for the review of the board. The board will jointly review the recommendations and vote on the determination as to whether a conflict exists, and if so, must also determine the most appropriate solution.

Where conflict of interest situations or related disputes arise among board members, the Executive Chair or a third party external to MJKO will be required to take investigative action and make a determination. Conflict of interest rules pertaining specifically to the Executive Chair and Board of Directors are included in Appendix A.

Note on gifts:

A conflict of interest may arise when gifts are larger than a normal token in a given situation. A possible solution may be to explain that policy will only allow the gift to be accepted on behalf of the organization. If there is an appearance of indebtedness, it may be necessary to respectfully decline the gift.



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Sample Categories of Conflict of Interest Situations

This list is not exhaustive. It is meant to act as a guide to the Executive Director or any member of the Board of Directors, in the event that a conflict of interest declaration is submitted and must be further investigated.

Improper influence: when an individual solicits or accepts some form of benefit in return for influencing MJKO's activities, or promoting the interests of others outside of MJKO

Misuse of information or property: when an individual uses MJKO information or property to which he/she has access, for some personal benefit

Inappropriate outside activity: when an individual's activities or interests outside of are in potential, perceived, or direct conflict with the interests of MJKO

Accepting undue benefits: this includes significant gifts, which place individual under obligation to the donor

Self-interested funding, contracting or hiring: when an individual uses their position in MJKO to influence a decision to provide funding or contracts to another organization in which he or she has an interest, or to go outside normal hiring processes to give a job to a friend or family member.



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Appendix A

Rules for Executive Chair and Board of Directors

- No member of the Board of Directors will receive financial remuneration for serving on the Board
- Members of the Board of Directors are expected to declare to the Executive Chair any functions they perform for other charitable organizations, either on a voluntary or paid basis
- Members of the Board of Directors shall not accept personal favors, gifts, or services from any external party or stakeholder as a result of any support or services provided through MJKO
- Members of the Board of Directors must declare a potential conflict of interest in the event that MJKO applies for funding from an organization which the board member is currently involved with in a voluntary or paid capacity
- The failure of the Executive Director or any member of the Board of Directors to comply with the procedures described in the Conflict of Interest Policy shall not of itself invalidate any decision, contract, or other matter by MJKO