



# ROANOKE VALLEY JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

## Code of Ethics

### I. IN PUBLIC SERVICE

#### A. Serve the Public Interest

To serve the public beyond serving oneself, Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center employees will:

1. Exercise discretionary authority to promote the public interest.
2. Oppose all forms of discrimination and harassment.
3. Recognize and support the public's right to know the public's business.
4. Exercise compassion, benevolence, fairness and optimism.
5. Respond to the public in ways that are complete, clear, and easy to understand.
6. Assist citizens in their dealings with government.
7. Be prepared to make decisions that may not be popular.

#### B. Respect the Constitution and the Law

Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center employees will respect, support, and study government constitutions and laws that define responsibilities of public service by:

1. Understanding and applying legislation and regulations relevant to juvenile detention and public service.
2. Working to improve and change laws and policies that are counterproductive or obsolete.
3. Eliminating unlawful discrimination.
4. Preventing all forms of mismanagement of public funds by establishing and maintaining strong fiscal management controls, and by supporting audits and investigative activities.
5. Respecting and protecting privileged information.
6. Encouraging and facilitating legitimate dissent activities in government and protect the whistle-blowing rights of public employees.
7. Promoting constitutional principles of equality, fairness, representativeness, responsiveness and due process in protecting citizen's rights.

#### C. Demonstrate Personal Integrity

Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center employees will demonstrate the highest standards in all activities to inspire public confidence and trust in public service by:

1. Being truthful and honest and to not compromise truthfulness and honesty for advancement, honor, or personal gain.
2. Ensuring that others receive credit for their work and contributions.
3. Zealously guarding against conflict of interest or its appearance: e.g. nepotism, improper outside employment, misuse of public resources or the acceptance of gifts.
4. Respecting superiors, subordinates, colleagues and the public.
5. Taking responsibility for their errors.

D. Promote An Ethical Organization

To promote an ethical organization, Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center employees will:

1. Enhance organizational capacity through open communication, creativity, and dedication.
2. Subordinate institutional loyalties to the public good.
3. Establish procedures that promote ethical behavior and hold individuals within the organization accountable for their conduct.
4. Provide employees with an administrative means for dissent, assurance of due process and safeguards against reprisal.
5. Promote fair personnel practices that protect against arbitrary and capricious actions.
6. Promote organizational accountability through appropriate controls and procedures.
7. Promote the Center's Code of Ethics as a living document.

E. Strive for Professional Excellence

To strengthen individual capabilities and encourage the professional development of others, Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center employees will:

1. Provide support and encouragement to upgrade competence.
2. Accept as a personal duty the responsibility to keep up to date on emerging issues and potential problems.
3. Encourage others to participate in professional activities and associations.
4. Allocate time to meet with interns and students in order to provide a bridge between classroom studies and the reality of public service.

II. IN JUVENILE DETENTION

The Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center shall endeavor to advance the science, processes and the art of juvenile detention services. Employees will strive to recognize the critical role of conscience in choosing among courses of action and taking into account the moral ambiguities of life while committing to:

A. Demonstrating the Highest Standards of Personal Conduct

Recognizing that the work of juvenile detention is highly complex and subject to public scrutiny, employees must refrain from any activity that threatens

personal and organizational integrity. Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center employees will:

1. Conduct themselves in an honest and truthful manner.
2. Respect superiors, subordinates, colleagues, juveniles and the public.
3. Take responsibility for their errors.
4. Conduct themselves within the boundaries of what would be considered best practices within juvenile detention.
5. Positively promote the work of juvenile detention as a legitimate and valued component of the juvenile justice system.

B. Demonstrating the Highest Standards of Professional Conduct

Progress as a profession depends upon public trust and professional competency. In order to advance the cause of the organization, Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention employees will:

1. Develop, maintain and broaden competencies within juvenile detention.
2. Strive for excellence in job performance.
3. Promote the interest of youth.
4. Support and encourage programs that develop knowledge, skills, and abilities directly relevant to juvenile detention services.
5. Provide and/or demand regular feedback regarding job performance.
6. Actively pursue career goals.
7. Establish adult-youth relationships that encourage respect, accountability, trust, sensitivity, personal growth, skill acquisition, confidence, etc.
8. Develop and/or maintain interpersonal communication skills.
9. Promote the highest quality of care within juvenile detention.
10. Refrain from performing duties in a meddlesome or overbearing manner.
11. Eliminate the interference of influences from personal feeling, prejudices, animosities, or friendships in decision-making.
12. Deliver services without fear or favor and without malice or preferential treatment.
13. Refrain from violent or hostile responses toward youth and from employing unnecessary force.

C. Avoid Any Conflict of Interest

In order to maintain organizational and personal integrity, Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention employees must execute their official duties without benefit of undue personal gain. Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention employees will:

1. Refrain from any task which is in conflict or could be viewed as in conflict with job responsibilities.
2. Refrain from activities or interests related to partisan politics when they create a conflict of interest, produce undue personal gain, or occur at the work place and interfere with official duties.
3. Refrain from any behavior that satisfies personal needs at the expense of detained youth.

D. Safeguard the Confidentiality of Detained Youth

Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention employees will protect the confidentiality of youth by:

1. Adhering to federal and state statutes regarding issues of confidentiality for juvenile offenders.
2. Refrain from identifying youth and discussing critical problems and incidents in situations outside of the official work setting.

E. Advocate the Legal and Ethical Rights of Youth

Roanoke Valley Juvenile Justice employees will advocate the legal and ethical rights of youth by:

1. Developing and adhering to policies and procedures that specify the legal and human rights of youth.
2. Educating youth and others about policies and practices which ensure and violate these rights.
3. Refusing to remain silent when the rights of juveniles are violated.
4. Subscribing to the belief that detained youth have the right to live in a psychologically and physically safe and secure environment.
5. Promoting a therapeutic social climate within the detention facility.

F. Eliminate All Forms of Unethical and Illegal Behavior

Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention employees are committed to legal and ethical standards of behavior as demonstrated by:

1. A willingness to confront and report illegal and unethical behavior within the workplace.
2. Actively seeking to remove from the profession those who condone or engage in discrimination, theft, or any form of child abuse.

G. Maintain an Optimum Level of Physical Conditioning and Mental Alertness

In order to intervene in physical confrontations in a safe and efficient manner, Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention employees will:

1. As may be necessary to fulfill job requirements, maintain sufficient physical conditioning in order to respond to physical situations in a safe and efficient manner or
2. Realize that youth and staff are less likely to be injured when physical conditioning is maintained.
3. Support and encourage training and education in stress management.

NOTE: RVJDC's Code of Ethics has combined various portions of code of ethics from the American Correctional Association, National Juvenile Detention Association, and the American Society of Public Administration.