The Code of Ethics of the American Academy of Audiology specifies professional standards that allow for the proper discharge of audiologists' responsibilities to those served, and that protect the integrity of the profession. The Code of Ethics consists of two parts. The first part, the Statement of Principles and Rules, presents precepts that members of the Academy agree to uphold. The second part, the Procedures, provides the process that enables enforcement of the Principles and Rules.

**PART I : STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND RULES**

**PRINCIPLE 1:** Members shall provide professional services and conduct research with honesty and compassion, and shall respect the dignity, worth, and rights of those served.

**Rule 1a:** Individuals shall not limit the delivery of professional services on any basis that is unjustifiable or irrelevant to the need for the potential benefit from such services.

**Rule 1b:** Individuals shall not provide services except in a professional relationship, and shall not discriminate in the provision of services to individuals on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or general health.

**PRINCIPLE 2:** Members shall maintain high standards of professional competence in rendering services.

**Rule 2a:** Members shall provide only those professional services for which they are qualified by education and experience.

**Rule 2b:** Individuals shall use available resources, including referrals to other specialists, and shall not accept benefits or items of personal value for receiving or making referrals.

**Rule 2c:** Individuals shall exercise all reasonable precautions to avoid injury to persons in the delivery of professional services or execution of research.

**Rule 2d:** Individuals shall provide appropriate supervision and assume full responsibility for services delegated to supportive personnel. Individuals shall not delegate any service requiring professional competence to unqualified persons.

**Rule 2e:** Individuals shall not permit personnel to engage in any practice that is a violation of the Code of Ethics.

**Rule 2f:** Individuals shall maintain professional competence, including participation in continuing education.

**PRINCIPLE 3:** Members shall maintain the confidentiality of the information and records of those receiving services or involved in research.

**Rule 3a:** Individuals shall not reveal to unauthorized persons any professional or personal information obtained from the person served professionally, unless required by law.

**PRINCIPLE 4:** Members shall provide only services and products that are in the best interest of those served.

**Rule 4a:** Individuals shall not exploit persons in the delivery of professional services.

**Rule 4b:** Individuals shall not charge for services not rendered.

**Rule 4c:** Individuals shall not participate in activities that constitute a conflict of professional interest.

**Rule 4d:** Individuals using investigational procedures with patients, or prospectively collecting research data, shall first obtain full informed consent from the patient or guardian.

**PRINCIPLE 5:** Members shall provide accurate information about the nature and management of communicative disorders and about the services and products offered.

**Rule 5a:** Individuals shall provide persons served with the information a reasonable person would want to know about the nature and possible effects of services rendered, or products provided or research being conducted.

**Rule 5b:** Individuals may make a statement of prognosis, but shall not guarantee results, mislead, or misinform persons served or studied.

**Rule 5c:** Individuals shall conduct and report product-related research only according to accepted standards of research practice.

**Rule 5d:** Individuals shall not carry out teaching or research activities in a manner that constitutes an invasion of privacy, or that fails to inform persons fully about the nature and possible effects of these activities, affording all persons informed free choice of participation.

**Rule 5e:** Individuals shall maintain documentation of professional services rendered.

**PRINCIPLE 6:** Members shall comply with the ethical standards of the Academy with regard to public statements or publication.

**Rule 6a:** Individuals shall not misrepresent their educational degrees, training, credentials, or competence. Only degrees earned from regionally accredited institutions in which training was obtained in audiology, or a directly related discipline, may be used in public statements concerning professional services.

**Rule 6b:** Individuals' public statements about professional services, products, or research results shall not contain representations or claims that are false, misleading, or deceptive.

**PRINCIPLE 7:** Members shall honor their responsibilities to the public and to professional colleagues.

**Rule 7a:** Individuals shall not use professional or commercial affiliations in any way that would limit services to or mislead patients or colleagues.

**Rule 7b:** Individuals shall inform colleagues and the public in a manner consistent with the highest professional standards about products and services they have developed or research they have conducted.

**PRINCIPLE 8:** Members shall uphold the dignity of the profession and freely accept the Academy's self-imposed standards.

**Rule 8a:** Individuals shall not violate these Principles and Rules, nor attempt to circumvent them.

**Rule 8b:** Individuals shall not engage in dishonesty or illegal conduct that adversely reflects on the profession.

**Rule 8c:** Individuals shall inform the Ethical Practice Board when there are reasons to believe that a member of the Academy may have violated the Code of Ethics.

**Rule 8d:** Individuals shall cooperate with the Ethical Practice Board in any matter related to the Code of Ethics.

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Signature: __________________________________________    Date: ________________________
PART II.
PROCEDURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

INTRODUCTION
Members of the American Academy of Audiology are obligated to uphold the Code of Ethics of the Academy in their personal conduct and in the performance of their professional duties. To this end it is the responsibility of each Academy member to inform the Ethical Practice Board of possible Ethics Code violations. The processing of alleged violations of the Code of Ethics will follow the procedures specified below in an expeditious manner to ensure that violations of ethical conduct by members of the Academy are halted in the shortest time possible.

PROCEDURES

1. Suspected violations of the Code of Ethics shall be reported in letter format giving documentation sufficient to support the alleged violation. Letters must be addressed to:

   Chair, Ethical Practice Board  
c/o Executive Director  
American Academy of Audiology  
11730 Plaza America Dr.  
Reston, VA 20190

2. Following receipt of a report of a suspected violation, at the discretion of the Chair, the Ethical Practices Board will request a signed Wavier of Confidentiality from the complainant indicating that the complainant will allow the Ethical Practices Board to disclose his/her name should this become necessary during investigation of the allegation.

   a. The Board may, under special circumstances, act in the absence of a signed Waiver of Confidentiality. For example, in cases where the Ethical Practice Board has received information from a state licensure or registration board of a member having his or her license or registration suspended or revoked, then the Ethical Practice Board will proceed without a complainant.

   b. The Chair may communicate with other individuals, agencies, and/or programs for additional information as may be required for Board review at any time during the deliberation.

3. The Ethical Practice Board will convene to review the merit of the alleged violation as it relates to the Code of Ethics

   a. The Chair of the Ethical Practice Board shall remove identifying information from the complaint and forward it to the members of this Board.

   b. The Ethical Practice Board shall meet to discuss the case, either in person or by teleconference. The meeting will occur within 60 days of receipt of the waiver of confidentiality, or of notification by the complainant of refusal to sign the waiver. In cases where another form of notification brings the complaint to the attention of the Ethical Practice Board, the Board will convene within 60 days of notification.

   c. If the alleged violation has a high probability of being legally actionable, the case may be referred to the appropriate agency. The Ethical Practice Board may postpone member notification and further deliberation until the legal process has been completed.

4. If there is sufficient evidence that indicates a violation of the Code of Ethics has occurred, upon majority vote, the member will be forwarded a Notification of Potential Ethics Concern

   a. The circumstances of the alleged violation will be described.

   b. The member will be informed of the specific Code of Ethics rule that may conflict with member behavior.

   c. Supporting AAA documents that may serve to further educate the member about the ethical implications will be included, as appropriate.

   d. The member will be asked to respond fully to the allegation and submit all supporting evidence within 30 calendar days.

5. The Ethical Practice Board will meet either in person or by teleconference:

   a. within 60 calendar days of receiving a response from the member to the Notification of Potential Ethics Concern to review the response and all information pertaining to the alleged violation, or.

   b. within sixty (60) calendar days of notification to member if no response is received from the member to review the information received from the complainant.

6. If the Ethical Practice Board determines that the evidence supports the allegation of an ethical violation, then the member will be provided written notice containing the following information:

   a. The right to a hearing in person or by teleconference before the Ethical Practice Board;

   b. The date, time and place of the hearing;
c. The ethical violation being charged and the potential sanction
d. The right to present a defense to the charges.

At this time the member should provide any additional relevant information. As this is the final opportunity for a member to provide new information, the member should carefully prepare all documentation.

7. Potential Rulings.

a. When the board determines there is insufficient evidence of an ethical violation, the parties to the complaint will be notified that the case will be closed.

b. If the evidence supports the allegation of a Code violation, the rules(s) of the Code violated will be cited and sanction(s) will be specified.

8. The Board shall sanction members based on the severity of the violation and history of prior ethical violations. A simple majority of voting members is required to institute a sanction unless otherwise noted. Sanctions may include one or more of the following:

a. Educative Letter. This sanction alone is appropriate when:
   1. The ethics violation appears to have been inadvertent.
   2. The member’s response to Notification of Potential Ethics Concern indicates a new awareness of the problem and the member resolves to refrain from future ethical violations.

b. Cease and Desist Order. The member signs a consent agreement to immediately halt the practice(s) which were found to be in violation of the Code of Ethics.

c. Reprimand. The member will be formally reprimanded for the violation of the Code of Ethics.

d. Mandatory continuing education
   1. The EPB will determine the type of education needed to reduce chances of recurrence of violations.
   2. The member will be responsible for submitting documentation of continuing education within the period of time designated by the Ethical Practice Board.
   3. All costs associated with compliance will be borne by the member.

e. Probation of Suspension. The member signs a consent agreement in acknowledgement of the Ethical Practice Board decision and is allowed to retain membership benefits during a defined probationary period.
   1. The duration of probation and the terms for avoiding suspension will be determined by the Ethical Practice Board.
   2. Failure of the member to meet the terms for probation will result in the suspension of membership.

f. Suspension of Membership.
   1. The duration of suspension will be determined by the Ethical Practice Board.
   2. The member may not receive membership benefits during the period of suspension.
   3. Members suspended are not entitled to a refund of dues or fees.

g. Revocation of Membership. Revocation of membership is considered the maximum punishment for a violation of the Code of Ethics.
   1. Revocation requires a two-thirds majority of the voting members of the EPB.
   2. Individuals whose memberships are revoked are not entitled to a refund of dues or fees.
   3. One year following the date of membership revocation the individual may reapply for, but is not guaranteed, membership through normal channels and must meet the membership qualifications in effect at the time of application.

9. The member may appeal the Final Finding and Decision of the Ethical Practice Board to the Academy Board of Directors. The route of Appeal is by letter format through the Ethical Practice Board to the Board of Directors of the Academy. Requests for Appeal must:

a. be received by the Chair, Ethical Practice Board, within 30 days of the Ethical Practice Board's notification of the Final Finding and Decision,

b. state the basis for the appeal, and the reason(s) that the Final Finding and Decision of the Ethical Practice Board should be changed,
c. not offer new documentation.

The EPB chair will communicate with the Executive Director of the Association to schedule the appeal at the earliest feasible Board of Director’s meeting.

The member may attend the portion of the Board of Directors meeting that addresses the appeal, but will be prohibited from providing new information. The deliberation must be on the facts presented to the EPB, as introduction of new evidence would compel the Board of Directors to act as the adjudicating body, rather than the appeals body.

The decision of the Board of Directors regarding the member's appeal shall be final.

10. In order to educate the membership, upon majority vote the Ethical Practice Board, the circumstances and nature of cases shall be presented in Audiology Today and in the Professional Resource area of the AAA website. The member’s identity will not be made public.

11. No Ethical Practice Board member shall give access to records, act or speak independently, or on behalf of the Ethical Practice Board, without the expressed permission of the members then active. No member may impose the sanction of the Ethical Practice Board, or to interpret the findings of the Board in any manner which may place members of the Ethical Practice Board or Board of Directors, collectively or singly, at financial, professional, or personal risk.

12. The Ethical Practice Board Chair shall maintain a Book of Precedents that shall form the basis for future findings of the Board.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDS
Confidentiality shall be maintained in all Ethical Practice Board discussion, correspondence, communication, deliberation, and records pertaining to members reviewed by the Ethical Practice Board.

1. Complaints and suspected violations are assigned a case number.
2. Identity of members involved in complaints and suspected violations and access to EPB files is restricted to the following:
   a. EPB Chair
   b. EPB member designated by EPB Chair when the chair recuses him or herself from a case.
   c. AAA Executive Director
   d. Agent/s of the AAA Executive Director
   e. Other/s, following majority vote of EPB
3. Original records shall be maintained at the Central Records Repository at the Academy office in a locked cabinet.
   a. One copy will be sent to the Ethical Practices Board chair or member designated by the Chair.
   b. Redacted copies will be sent to members.
4. Communications shall be sent to the members involved in complaints by the Academy office via certified or registered mail, after review by Legal Counsel.
5. When a case is closed,
   a. The chair will forward all documentation to the Academy Central Records Repository.
   b. Members shall destroy all material pertaining to the case.
6. Complete records generally shall be maintained at the Academy Central Records Repository for a period of 5 years.
   a. Records will be destroyed five years after a member receives a sanction less than suspension, or five years after the end of a suspension, or after membership is reinstated.
   b. Records of membership revocations for persons who have not returned to membership status will be maintained indefinitely.