**THE CODE OF ETHICS OF SIGN LANGAUGE INTERPRETERS**

Sign Language interpretation in Nigeria has come of age. And in recognition of the fact that most professions operate under sets of guidelines and the unique position that Sign Language Interpreters hold in the Nigerian society can is very vital to the growth and development of the society. The need for setting forth principles for ethical behavior which will protect both the deaf and the interpreters has become most imperative.

To this end, the following 15 general principles upon which the code of ethics rest are being proposed which will constitute the code of ethics for consideration and adoption to the Association of Sign Language Interpreters of Nigeria (ASLIN). These principles are: Confidentiality, Impartially, Discretion and Professional Distance.

These four principles provide concise reference points from which interpreters can draw inspiration in the course of performing their responsibilities.

Under these principles the following postulates are set forth as the code of ethics:

1. Confidentiality involves trust and therefore the interpreter shall be a person of high moral standard, honest, trustworthy and of emotional maturity. He/she shall guard all confidential information and not betray the confident that has been reposed in him/her by divulging such information.

2. The interpreter shall, at all times, maintain an impartial attitude; avoiding interjecting his/her own views unless asked to do so by the party involved. It is highly essential that he/she should avoid siding with or even appealing to side with one client.

3. The interpreter shall interpret faithfully and to the best of his/her ability always conveying the thoughts, intent and spirit of the speaker. He/she shall always remember the limits of his/her particular function and not go beyond his/her responsibility.

4. The interpreter shall recognize his/her own level of proficiency and use discretion in accepting assignments, seeking for the assistance of other interpreters when necessary.

5. The interpreter shall adopt a conservative manner of dress, upholding the dignity of the profession and not-drawing undue attention to him/her. He/she keep in mind that his/her appearance may aid, hinder or detract from effective interpretation.

6. The interpreter shall use discretion in the matter of accepting compensation for services and be willing to provide service in situations where funds are not available. Arrangements should be made on a professional basis for adequate remuneration in court and other formal cases comparable to that provided for interpreters of foreign languages.

7. The interpreter shall be fully aware of his/her own abilities and be willing to turn down an interpreting job if he/she does not feel skilled enough for the specific assignment.

8. If the interpreter has difficulty interpreting in certain situation. Such as those involving a philosophical view point different than his/her own, then it is probably best to avoid such situations. If, however, he/she can maintain an impartial attitude. Then he/she should be able to accept such interpreting assignment as these and possibly even enjoy them.

9. The interpreter shall never encourage deaf persons to seek legal or other decisions in their favour merely because the interpreter is sympathetic to the handicap of deafness.

10. In the case of legal interpretation, the interpreter shall inform the court when the level of literacy of the deaf person involved is such that literal interpretation is not possible and the interpreter is having to gross paraphrase and restate both what is said to the deaf person and what is saying to the court.

11. The interpreter shall attempt to recognize the various types of assistance needed by the deaf and do his/her best to meet the particular need. Those who do to understand and language of signs may require assistance through written communication or, in the of stark illiterate deaf persons, through informal gestures that are understood and used by illiterate deaf persons.

12. The interpreter shall recognize the maintenance of his/her professional distance as being the quality of caring about the clients he/she serves without allowing that to interfere with his/her interpreting function. He/she shall not let his/her knowledge or information about the clients affects his/her outside life.

13. Recognizing his/her need for professional improvement, the interpreter will join with professional colleagues for the purpose of sharing new knowledge and development to seek to understand the implications of deafness and the deaf person’s particular needs, broadening his/her education and knowledge of life and develop both his/her expressive and receptive skills and interpreting and translating.

14. The interpreter shall seek and uphold the dignity and purity of the language of signs. He/she shall also maintain a readiness to learn and accept new signs if these are necessary to understanding.

15. The interpreter shall take the responsibility of educating the public regarding the deaf whenever possible, recognizing that many misunderstanding arise because of the general lack of knowledge in the area of deafness and communication with the deaf.