Code of Professional Conduct

Founded in 1929 as the first specialty board in dentistry, the American Board of Orthodontics (ABO) is sponsored by the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) as the national certifying board for Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics in accordance with the rules of the National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards.

Adoption of the AAO Code

Given the long-standing relationship between the ABO and the AAO, the ABO has adopted the AAO's *Principles of Ethics, Code of Professional Conduct and Advisory Opinions of the American Association of Orthodontists*, as adopted April 2017, amended May 2018 and April 2023, and as may be amended in the future (AAO Code), with the modifications noted below.

While membership in the AAO is not a requirement for Board Certification by the ABO, the ABO believes the AAO Code represents the ideals of the ABO, and that all orthodontists who have chosen to become Board Certified should assume the same obligation for self-discipline and ethical conduct above and beyond the requirements of laws and regulations, whether or not a member of the AAO. All ABO Diplomates are expected to comply with the AAO Code (including its *Principles of Ethics, Code of Professional Conduct, and Advisory Opinions*), as modified by this ABO Code of Professional Conduct (ABO Code). The ABO expects Diplomates to comply with the highest principles, practices, customs, and usages of the orthodontic specialty as set out in the AAO Code and this ABO Code.

The AAO Code is available on-line through the AAO: https://www2.aaoinfo.org/practice-management/ethics-resources/. All Diplomates are expected to obtain a copy of the current AAO Code, and all future updates, from this on-line site or through a written request to the ABO. Each time the AAO updates the AAO Code, the current updated version of the AAO Code is incorporated into this ABO Code by reference and adopted with the modifications noted below.

Modifications of the AAO Code by the ABO

The ABO has adopted the following modifications to the AAO Code:

- Advisory Opinion 5.A.(i): The ABO does not have jurisdiction over certifications by other boards which may be recognized by the American Dental Association (ADA) or which meet the requirements of Advisory Opinion 5.H.2 of the ADA's *Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct*. The first four sentences of Advisory

Opinion 5.A.(i) are adopted by the ABO, but the remainder of the Advisory Opinion is not. Instead, the *ABO Brand Standards Guide* and ABO Certification Marks Usage Guidelines shall apply.

- Advisory Opinion 5.A.(ii): Diplomates are prohibited from announcing certifications from certifying boards not recognized by the American Dental Association. The disclaimers required in Advisory Opinion 5.A.(ii) are not allowed to Diplomates, who may not announce such non-recognized certifications under any circumstances.

- Advisory Opinion 5.A.(viii)(2): All use of the ABO Board Certification must comply with the ABO Brand Standards and ABO Certification Marks Usage Guidelines.

- Disciplinary Proceedings: The ABO has not adopted the portions of the AAO Code regarding disciplinary and membership proceedings (lines 392-731). The ABO is not a membership organization. Instead, proceedings regarding violations of this ABO *Code of Professional Conduct* shall be conducted according to the ABO *Disciplinary Policy*, available at https://americanboardortho.com/about-abo/our-story/policies/disciplinary-policy/.

- Conflicts: In any conflict between the AAO Code and other ABO policies, procedures, and rules, the ABO policy, procedure, or rule shall control.

Additions to the AAO Code

- References to ABO: Use of the ABO name or logo, or statements regarding Board Certification, must comply with the ABO Brand Standards and ABO Certification Marks Usage Guidelines.
- Each Diplomate is responsible for the Diplomate's personal compliance with the ABO Brand Standards and ABO Certification Marks Usage Guidelines, and each Diplomate associated with a practice is responsible for the practice's compliance with the ABO Brand Standards and ABO Certification Marks Usage Guidelines.
- Former, resigned, time-limited or removed Diplomates are no longer permitted to use the ABO name and logo or statements regarding ABO Board Certification as provided in the ABO Brand Standards and ABO Certification Marks Usage Guidelines.
- Violations of the ABO Brand Standards and ABO Certification Marks Usage Guidelines are violations of this ABO Code.

- No Commercial Endorsements: The ABO prohibits any use of the ABO's name or reference to the ABO for commercial purposes, or for any endorsement (or implied endorsement) of a product, service, or enterprise. See https://americanboardortho.com/about-abo/our-story/policies/no-endorsement-policy/.

- Power of Board of Directors: Pursuant to Article III, Section 2, Paragraph A, Subparagraph 8 of the Bylaws of the ABO, the Board of Directors of the ABO may, in its discretion, suspend or revoke a Diplomate's certification if the Board determines there are violations of this ABO Code by the Diplomate.

- ABO Policies: Diplomates are required to read and understand the ABO policies available on the ABO website at https://americanboardortho.com/about-abo/our-story/policies (ABO Policies), and to comply with those policies that apply to Diplomates. Violations of the ABO Policies are violations of this ABO Code.

- Licensure: A Diplomate must notify the ABO if the Diplomate's license to practice dentistry or orthodontics in any jurisdiction is revoked or suspended within the scope of the ABO *Diplomate Active License Policy* available at https://americanboardortho.com/about-abo/our-story/policies/diplomate-active-license-policy/.

Adopted: August 24, 2024, to be effective January 1, 2025
Amended: August 4, 2025