



CODE OF CONDUCT (Including Conflict and Diversity)

1. What is a code of conduct?

All Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum representatives, staff and volunteers have an obligation to work in the best interests of the organisation. Steering Committee has responsibility for all actions carried out by staff, Steering Committee Members and Parent Representatives. As a result, the conduct of staff, Steering Committee Members, Parent Representatives, and any other individual parent carers who are acting on behalf of Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum, should give our member's, partners and funders confidence. All individuals covered by the Code of Conduct need to show integrity; ensure actions are transparent and avoid any suggestion of improper influence. There must be no abuse of authority in our actions.

All staff, Steering Committee Members and Parent Representatives are required to uphold the spirit, as well as the wording, of this Code of Conduct.

This "Code of Conduct" includes the findings of the Nolan Committee on "Standards in Public Life" and goes beyond these. The term "we" and "us" have been used throughout to show that the Code of Conduct applies to Steering Committee Members and staff equally.

2. Findings of the Nolan Committee

The seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee guide the content of our Code of Conduct.

- **Selflessness:** take decisions in terms of Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum values and mission and not to gain financial or material benefits for ourselves, our family and friends other than in the case of universal benefit.
- **Integrity:** not place ourselves under obligations to individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our duties.
- **Objectivity:** to ensure that we represent, always, a range of disability, Special Educational Needs, cultures, social backgrounds and geographical areas.
- **Accountability:** accept accountability for our decisions and actions to Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum Members, the providers of public funds and other stakeholders, and submit ourselves to appropriate scrutiny.
- **Openness:** be open about all decisions and actions that we take. Where required give reasons for our decisions.

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via email in April 2023



- **Honesty:** declare private interests relating to our duties and take steps to resolve conflicts arising in a way that protects Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum reputation, values and mission.
- **Leadership:** promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

3. Disclosure of interest

All Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum representatives, staff and volunteers are asked to declare their interests and any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their role, using the template form provided at the earliest opportunity.

This should include involvement with other organisations (voluntary, public or private sector) whether as a representative, staff member, volunteer or other close associate.

To be effective this form needs to be updated annually and, also when any changes occur. If you are unsure what to declare, or whether and when your declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution. If you want to discuss this issue, please contact the Chair for confidential guidance.

Interests will be recorded in the this covers circumstances where an individual (or their close relative) could in theory receive a personal or business benefit (other than Rep Claim/Self Employed Salary/Salary and expenses) as a consequence of Forum activity. There are two main examples where a benefit could occur:

Duality of Interest. Where the circumstances could potentially bring about some personal or business gain.

A Conflict of Interest. Where the Forum's interest and a personal/business/other Voluntary Sector interest occurs over the same matter.

Both types of interest must be disclosed. The Administrator is responsible to ensure that annually members complete a declaration form. These forms will be held in a register that is open to public scrutiny. If the discussion or decision-making involves potential benefit to you, a member of your family or to an organisation you are closely associated with, you should offer to withdraw from any subsequent discussion.



4. Aims and values

Our work and reputation rely on us upholding and promoting Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum's aims and values.

We should all work to the same aims and uphold the same values. We are required to incorporate these in our conduct in relation to Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum.

5. Political activities

Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum work may take it into the political arena, but we must ensure that we demonstrate our non-political nature and are impartial about party politics. When making any political representation, Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum must clearly be seen as presenting a balanced case in support of Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum key objectives.

Members can engage in political activities, including standing for election to public office, as long as, it is legal to do so. However, participation will be entirely on their own behalf and their political opinions will not represent the Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum position.

6. Equality and diversity

Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum is committed to achieving equality of opportunity in every area. Our aim is that everyone should be treated fairly and be equally respected and represented. The aim is to ensure that Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum reflects its members. Please see out Equality and Diversity Policy for more information.

7. Hospitality

We may not solicit hospitality; occasional modest hospitality is allowed.

Hospitality must always be recorded in the register held by our communications Officer. Anyone who has received hospitality must record this in the register as soon as practicable.

8. Personal conduct

As a representative of parent carers in Bedford Borough staff, Steering Committee Members and Parent Representatives roles have clear responsibilities and requirements in relation to personal conduct and expects any member who

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represents the Forum must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of our wider membership, and partners whom we work with.

You must not bring Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum into disrepute while acting in your representative capacity. As a Steering Committee member or parent rep, your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions in both your public and private life might have an adverse impact on your own role, and the Forum.

Those who represent Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum must ensure that in their conduct and activity they:

- Conduct ourselves appropriately for the duty or function that we are carrying out or attending, which includes treating all of those we come into contact with courteously and with dignity and respect.
- Respect diversity and different cultures and values.
- Are honest and trustworthy.
- Communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.
- Respect confidential information and do not share any information that is confidential outside of the Steering Committee
- Are reliable, dependable or provide clear information to the Chair if they are experiencing challenges that may prevent them from being so.
- Honour work commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explaining why to the Chair and other Steering Committee members as appropriate.
- Ensure that the views of parent carers are fully and accurately represented. Whilst personal experience may inform this, we must not rely entirely on own experiences, views and judgements, but be fully representative of the wider membership.
- Declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and making sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice.
- Not behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to be a representative of other parent carers.

Steering Committee members must inform the Chair about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to exercise your responsibilities appropriately. As members of the Steering Committee are expected to work in partnership with many different individuals and organisations, any personal circumstance which may pose a conflict for individuals, and therefore for the organisation must be declared to the Chair immediately.

The following are examples of types of circumstances.

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- Any allegation that an individual may have committed or is being investigated in relation to having committed a crime.
- Any child protection or safeguarding concern relating to children and / or vulnerable adults.
- Any significant challenge between individuals and Government agencies (e.g., where individuals may end up in a litigious relationship with a central or local Government Department) NB This does not include any statutory Tribunal or Complaints procedures.
- Other similar circumstances

In these situations, it will be standard practice to ask the Steering Committee member to temporarily stand down until the issues are resolved. This is a neutral and non-judgemental position, designed to protect the organisation and the individual, and to ensure the individual involved can focus all of their attention on the issue at hand. It is felt necessary however to insist on this protocol to safeguard both Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum and the individual involved.

Consideration will be given as to how the roles and responsibilities of that individual will be covered in their absence, and whether a temporary replacement should be sought.

9. General

Where our personal conduct may be viewed as conflicting with the work of Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum, we are required to disclose details to the Chair, and enter details in the “Disclosure of Interest Register”. Advice on any matter in this Code of Conduct should be sought from the Administration Manager

In any case of uncertainty, we should always make an entry in the “Disclosure of Interest Register” and / or seek advice and make a record of this.

We should carry out our responsibilities in accordance with Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum policies and procedures.

All of us represent Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum.

All steering group members must be active in their role within the group. This includes responding to all emails, telephone calls, completing feedback forms for any attended events, any other communications sent out by steering group members.

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10. Failure to follow code of conduct

We should recognise that failure to follow this Code of Conduct may damage Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum and will be viewed as a disciplinary matter.

In the event of an alleged breach of the Code, any investigation or action will be initiated by the Chair. Based on the outcome of the investigation, a range of actions may be taken ranging from seeking appropriate training and support for the individual member, to asking them to permanently step down, depending on the severity and impact of any alleged breach.