



Code of Conduct

1. WHAT IS A CODE OF CONDUCT?

The Steering Group has responsibility for all actions carried out by staff, Parent Carer Representatives and Steering Group Members. As a result, the conduct of Steering Group Members, staff, Parent Carer Representatives and any other individual parent carers who are acting on behalf of SNAP PCF should give our members, 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 Steering Group Members, staff and Parent Carer 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 Group Members, staff and Parent Carer Representatives 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 SNAP PCF mission, purpose and values 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, at all times, a range of disability, Special Educational Needs, cultures, social backgrounds and geographical areas.
- **Accountability:** accept accountability for our decisions and actions to SNAP PCF 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.
- Honesty: declare private interests relating to our duties and take steps to resolve conflicts arising in a way that protects SNAP PCF reputation, mission, purpose and values.
- Leadership: promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

3.1 This covers circumstances where an individual (or their close relative) could in theory receive a personal or business benefit (other than Reimbursement of Time, Salary and Expenses) as a consequence of forum activity. There are two main examples where a benefit could occur:

3.1.1 A Duality of Interest is a situation where the circumstances could potentially bring about some personal or business gain.

3.1.2 A Conflict of Interest is a situation where the forum's interest and a personal/business/other voluntary sector interest occurs over the same matter.

3.2 Both types of interest must be disclosed. The Participation Manager will ensure that members complete a declaration form annually. These forms will be held in a register that is open to public scrutiny.

4. AIMS AND VALUES

4.1 Our work and reputation rely on us upholding and promoting SNAP PCF aims and values.

4.2 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 SNAP PCF.

5. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

5.1 SNAP PCF 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, SNAP PCF must clearly be seen as presenting a balanced case in support of the forum's key objectives.

5.2 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 SNAP PCF position.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

6.1 SNAP PCF 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 SNAP PCF reflects its membership.

7. HOSPITALITY

7.1 We may not solicit hospitality but occasional modest hospitality is allowed.

8. PERSONAL CONDUCT

8.1 As a representative of parent carers in Central Bedfordshire, the Steering Group Member and Parent Representative role has clear responsibilities and requirements in relation to personal conduct, and any member who represents the forum is expected to strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of our wider membership, and the partners with whom we work.

8.2 You must not bring SNAP PCF into disrepute while acting in your representative capacity. As a Steering Group Member or Parent Representative, 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.

8.2 As representatives of SNAP PCF we must ensure that in our conduct and activity we:

- 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 Group or Parent Representative Group;
- Are reliable and dependable, and provide clear information to the Participation Manager if we are experiencing challenges that may prevent us from being so;
- Honour work commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explain why to the Participation Manager
- 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, making sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice;
- Behave in a way, both within the forum and outside of it, which would not call into question your suitability to be a representative of other parent carers;

8.3 As a Steering Group Member or Parent Representative you must inform the Participation Manager about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to exercise your responsibilities appropriately. As a representative of SNAP PCF you 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 Participation Manager immediately.

The following are examples of types of circumstances:

- Any allegation that you may have committed, or are 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 procedure
- Other similar circumstances

8.4 In these situations, it will be standard practice for you to be asked to stand down temporarily until the issues are resolved. This is a neutral and non-judgemental protocol, designed to protect to safeguard both you and SNAP PCF and to ensure that you are able to focus all of your attention on the issue at hand.

8.5 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

9.1 Advice on any matter in this Code of Conduct should be sought from the Participation Manager.

9.2 We should carry out our responsibilities in accordance with SNAP PCF policies and procedures.

10. FAILURE TO FOLLOW CODE OF CONDUCT

10.1 We should recognise that failure to follow this Code of Conduct may damage SNAP PCF and will be viewed as a disciplinary matter.

10.2 In the event of an alleged breach of the Code, any investigation or action will be initiated by the Participation Manager and/or director. 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.