

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. WHAT IS A CODE OF CONDUCT?

The Steering Group has responsibility for all actions carried out by Steering Group Members and any other member representing Family Voice Southend (FVS).

The conduct of Steering Group Members and reps, and any other individual parent/carers who are acting on behalf of FVS 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 and reps 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 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: to take decisions in terms of SSP's aims and objectives (see constitution) and not to gain financial or material benefits for ourselves, our family and friends other than in the case of universal benefit.
- Integrity: not to 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: to accept accountability for our decisions and actions to FVS Members, the providers of public funds and other stakeholders, and submit ourselves to appropriate scrutiny.
- Openness: to be open about all decisions and actions that we take, and where required to give reasons for our actions.
- Honesty: to declare private interests relating to our duties and take steps to resolve conflicts arising in a way that protects FVS's reputation, aims and objectives.
- Leadership: to promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST – Please see FVS Conflict and Duality of Interest Policy June 2020

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

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

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

3.2 Any interest must be disclosed to the Chair of FVS.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Our work and reputation rely on us upholding and promoting FVS aims and objectives. As articulated in our **Constitution** and our **Parent Carer Rep Agreement Form**

4.2 We should all work to the same aims and objectives. We are required to incorporate these in our conduct in relation to FVS.

5. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

5.1 FVS's 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, FVS must clearly be seen as presenting a balanced case in support of FVS's aims and objectives

5.2 Members may 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 FVS's position.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY – Please see FVS Equality and Diversity Policy

6.1 FVS 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 the Steering Group of the FVS reflects its membership.

7. HOSPITALITY

7.1 We may not solicit hospitality. Occasional modest hospitality is allowed.

8. PERSONAL CONDUCT

8.1 As a representative of parent/carers in Southend, each Steering Group Member has clear responsibilities and requirements in relation to personal conduct. Any member who represents the FVS must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of our wider membership, and partners with whom we work.

8.2 Members must not bring the FVS into disrepute while acting in representative capacity. As a representative of FVS, your actions and behaviour may be subject to additional scrutiny.

8.22 As a representative of FVS you must ensure that in your conduct and activity you:

- Conduct yourself appropriately for the duty or function that you are carrying out or attending, which includes treating all of those you 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 meeting at which you are present
- Ensure that the views of parent/carers are fully and accurately represented. Whilst personal experience may inform this, you must not rely entirely on your own experiences, views and judgements, but be fully representative of the wider membership.
- Declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and make sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice
- Do not behave in a way which would call into question your suitability to be a representative of FVS.

8.3 A representative of FVS has a duty to inform the Chair of FVS about any personal difficulties that might affect their ability to exercise their responsibilities appropriately. As a representative of FVS you are expected to work in partnership at the highest level with council officers; 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 such circumstances

- 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 the council (e.g. where individuals may end up in a litigious relationship
- Other similar circumstances

8.4 In these situations, it will be standard practice for the representative to cease such representation until the issues are resolved in agreement with the Chair of the FVS. This is a neutral and non judgemental position, designed to protect the organisation and the individual, and to ensure the individual involved is able to focus all of their attention on the issue at hand. It is felt necessary however to insist on this protocol to safeguard both FVS and the individual involved.

8.5 Consideration will be given by the Steering Group as to how the roles and responsibilities of that individual will be covered in their absence.

9. FAILURE TO FOLLOW CODE OF CONDUCT

10.1 We recognise that failure to follow this Code of Conduct may damage FVS 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 Chair or their nominated substitution. 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.

10.3 Depending on the nature of the allegation the Steering Group may decide to call upon an independent third party to conduct the investigation.

Policy adopted by Family Voice Steering Group

June 2020

Signed *mike wilson*.....

To be reviewed June 2023 or earlier as required