



Code of Conduct

1. What is a Code of Conduct?

Parents and Carers Forum Swindon has the responsibility for all actions carried out by its Steering Group and representatives, past and present. As a result, the way we are can make a big difference to the confidence and trust others have in the relationships we build and the work that we do.

NB Please read in conjunction the **Conflict of Interest** Policy.

2. Core Values

Parents & Carers Forum Swindon has a strong professional working ethos. Our work and reputation relies on us upholding and promoting Parents & Carers Forum Swindon's aims and values. We ask anyone representing us to share and uphold the spirit of our core values and act professionally at all times as this code details:

2.1 Integrity - ensuring we are honest, having strong moral principles, our actions are genuine and transparent, avoiding any suggestion of bias, or improper influence.

2.2 Respect - for all, there must be no abuse of authority in our actions.

2.3 Selflessness - make decisions in terms of Parents & Carer Forum Swindon's values and mission. Not to gain personal, financial or material benefit for ourselves, our family or friends. To consider 'universal' benefit for all.

2.4 Objectivity - ensure we fairly and impartially represent at all times, all disability, Special Educational Needs, additional needs, cultures and social backgrounds.

2.5 Accountability - accept accountability for our decisions and actions to Parents & Carers Forum Swindon, its members and be open to appropriate scrutiny.

2.6 Openness - be open about all decisions and actions that we take.

2.7 Honesty - be truthful, when appropriate declaring private interests relating to our duties and take steps to resolve conflicts arising in a way to protect the forums reputation, values and mission. Also be honest with your capacity for PAC Forum's work with your other commitments, such as family, work and your own physical and mental health.

2.8 Teamwork - good teamwork is based on fairness, trust and support as well as playing to each other's strengths. Remember we are part of a wider team representing disabled and special needs individuals across the borough.

2.9 Fun - Life can be difficult at times, we want to enjoy what we do with Parents & Carers Forum Swindon.

3. Disclosure of Interest

This covers circumstances when an individual (or a close relative) could get a personal or business benefit (other than honorarium/salary/expenses) as a consequence of Parents & Carers Forum activity. There are two main examples of this:

- 3.1 **A Duality of Interest** -where the circumstances could potentially bring about some personal or business gain
- 3.2 **A Conflict of Interest** - when a 'Parents & Carers Forum interest' and a personal/business or other Voluntary Sector interest occurs about the same matter which may create a difficulty with loyalties and decision making etc "Taking sides.'

Both types of interest MUST be disclosed.

4. Political Activities

- 4.1 Parents & Carers Forum work may go into a political arena but we must ensure we remain impartial about party politics. When making any political representation, Parents & Carers Forum Swindon must clearly be seen as presenting a balanced case in support of our key objectives.
- 4.2 Forum members may engage in political activities, including standing for election to public office, as long as it is legal to do so. Participation however, will be entirely on your own behalf and your political opinions will not represent Parents & Carers Forum Swindon's position.

5. Equality and Diversity

Parents & Carers Forum Swindon is committed to achieving equality and diversity of opportunity in every area. Our aim is everyone should be treated fairly and be equally respected and represented.

6. Personal Conduct

- 6.1 As representatives of parents and carers in Swindon we have a clear duty and responsibility in how we behave with others. We expect anyone representing the forum to establish and maintain the trust & confidence of our wider membership and partners with whom we work through conducting ourselves in a professional manner.
- 6.2 It is vital not to bring Parents & Carers Forum Swindon into disrepute while acting as a representative. Individuals must be mindful that actions and behaviour in both public and private life (including social media) are likely to be subject to greater scrutiny than that of other members of the general public.
- 6.3 It is important to treat anyone you meet as you would like to be treated yourself: courteously, with dignity and respect etc.

6.4 We will :

- respect diversity and different cultures and values
- be 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 Forum or any other meetings you are attending
- be reliable, dependable and honour Forum commitments, agreements and arrangements. And declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and make sure they do not influence judgement or practice as per Conflict of Interest Policy.
- not behave in a way that would call into question suitability to be a representative of other parent carers

6.5 Ensure the views of parent carers are fully and accurately represented. Whilst our own personal experience may inform us, we must not rely entirely on own experiences, views and judgements - we need to be mindful to always fully represent our wider membership.

6.6 We ask our PAC Forum Core members to let the group know of any personal difficulties affecting their ability to carry out forum responsibilities appropriately. As Core Members, we are expected to work in partnership at the highest level with various professionals and families. To safeguard you and Parents & Carers Forum you need to keep us informed.

6.7 In any times of absence from your Parents & Carers Forum role, consideration will be given as to how your Forum roles and responsibilities may need to be covered. We aim to work in pairs where possible so the need for this is reduced.

6.8 Any Parents & Carers member attending strategic meetings and representing parent carers views will feedback progress to the Core Group at each meeting. Any forum member who also has a regional and or national role within parent participation will be expected to give quarterly updates at a local level- or sooner if the matter is time sensitive.

7. FAILURE TO FOLLOW CODE OF CONDUCT

7.1 Failure to follow our Code of Conduct may damage the Forum's reputation and any concerns raised regarding a member's conduct will be investigated by the appropriate Steering Group members.

7.2 Based on the outcome of any investigations and the severity and impact of any alleged breach Parents & Carers Forum Swindon may decide on a range of actions.

These may include but not exclusive to:

- additional training and support
- the individual being asked to temporarily or permanently step down.

This policy is to be read and understood by all the core members of PAC and anyone representing the group and will be reviewed annually. Dated: January 2017 - to be reviewed December 2017.