



Members of



National Network of Parent Carer Forums
"Our Strength is our Shared Experience"
www.nnpcl.org.uk

Southend SEND Independent Forum Code of Conduct



1. Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide steering group members, parent representatives and community champions of Southend SEND Independent Forum with clear guidance about their role and responsibilities, and to provide information for parents, carers, and organisations the forum works with, about the measures that Southend SEND Independent Forum employs to ensure that it meets its responsibilities.

2. What is a Code of Conduct?

The Steering Group has responsibility for all actions carried out by staff, Steering Group Members and parent representative. As a result, the conduct of Steering Group Members, parent representative and any other individual parent carers who are acting on behalf of Southend SEND Independent Forum 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, parent representative and staff 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, forum parent representative, community champion and staff equally.

3. 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 Southend SEND Independent Forum's (SSIF) 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, 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 Southend SEND Independent 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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- **Honesty:** declare private interests relating to our duties and take steps to resolve conflicts arising in a way that protects Southend SEND Independent Forum's reputation, values and mission.
- **Leadership:** promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

4. Disclosure of Interest

4.1 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 Southend SEND Independent Forum activity. There are two main examples where a benefit could occur:

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

4.1.2 A Conflict of Interest. Where a Southend SEND Independent Forum interest and a personal/business/other Voluntary Sector interest occurs over the same matter.

4.2 Both types of interest must be disclosed. The forum Steering group are responsible to ensure that annually Steering Group Members, parent representative, and any other individual parent carers who are acting on behalf of Southend SEND Independent Forum, complete a declaration form. These forms will be held in a register that is open to public scrutiny upon request.

5. Aims and Values

5.1 Our work and reputation rely on us upholding and promoting Southend SEND Independent Forum's aims and values.

5.2 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 Southend SEND Independent Forum and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums.

6. Political Activities



6.1 Southend SEND Independent Forum'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, Southend SEND Independent Forum must clearly be seen as presenting a balanced case in support of our key objectives

6.2 Individual Steering Group Members, parent representative, can engage in political activities, including standing for election to public office, if it is legal to do so. However, participation will be entirely on their own behalf and their political opinions will not represent the Southend SEND Independent Forum's position.

7. Campaigning

Since February 2016, there have been limitations placed on the use of funds from government contracts for campaign activity. These have been written into each government contract, including that between the DfE and Parent Carer Forums. Therefore, Southend SEND Independent Forum will not initiate, incite, or run campaigns using public funding.

7.1 Steering group members, parent representative, community champion recognise that undertaking campaign activity is not consistent with the ethos of Parent Carer Forums who exist to co-produce with service providers, commissioners, and policy makers. Parent Carer Forums strive to have a seat at the decision-making tables and influence in this way.

7.2 While Southend SEND Independent Forum are prevented from actively campaigning themselves, the forum **may** support campaign activity when it aligns with their objectives. Any representative sharing information regarding campaigns, on behalf of Southend SEND Independent Forum, will ensure that the information has been sanctioned by at least one of the forums Steering group.

7.3 All Southend SEND Independent Forum steering group members or parent representatives may choose to engage in campaigning activities if it is legal to do so. However, participation will be entirely on their own behalf and their opinions will not represent the Southend SEND Independent Forum's position.

8. Equality and Diversity



8.1 Southend SEND Independent 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 Southend SEND Independent Forum reflects the SEND community.

9. Confidentiality

Southend SEND Independent Forum's steering group and parent representatives will on occasion be aware of confidential information. This could for example be in relation to the commissioning of services, information in relation to interview processes or other sensitive information.

9.1 All Southend SEND Independent Forum steering group member and parent representatives will always uphold confidentiality and not share information that is confidential in any format.

9.2 All Southend SEND Independent Forum steering group member and parent representatives will ensure confidential information is always stored securely and is destroyed once no longer required.

10. Hospitality

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

10.2 Hospitality must always be recorded in the register held by the Steering groups. Anyone who has received hospitality must record this in the register as soon as practicable.

11. Personal Conduct

11.1 As a Steering Group Member or parent representative who represent parent carers across Southend, your role has clear responsibilities and requirements in relation to personal conduct. We expect any member who represents the forum to strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of our wider membership, and partners whom we work with.

11.2 You must not bring Southend SEND Independent Forum 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 Southend SEND Independent Forum.

11.3 Those who represent Southend SEND Independent Forum must ensure that in their conduct and activity they:



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- 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
- Are reliable and dependable or provide clear information to the Steering groups 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, inform the Steering group 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.

Steering group members and parent representatives, must declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and making sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice.

Steering group members and parent representatives must not behave in a way, which would call into question your suitability to be a representative of other parent carers.

11.4 Steering group members and parent representatives inform the Steering group about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to exercise your responsibilities appropriately. As a member of the forum, you are expected to work in partnership at the highest level with various Local Authority & National Departments, any personal circumstance which may pose a conflict for individuals, and therefore for the organisation must be declared to the chairs immediately.

The following are examples of types of circumstances:

- Any allegation that an individual may have committed, or is being investigated in relation to having committed a crime



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- 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)
- Other similar circumstances

11.5 In these situations, it will be standard practice to ask the individual 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 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 Southend SEND Independent Forum and the individual involved.

11.6 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.

12. General

12.1 Where our personal conduct may be viewed as conflicting with the work of Southend SEND Independent Forum, we are required to disclose details to the Steering group and enter details in the **'Disclosure of Interest Register'**. Advice on any matter in this Code of Conduct should be sought from the Steering group.

12.2 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.

12.3 We should carry out our responsibilities in accordance with Southend SEND Independent Forum's policies and procedures.

12.4 Steering group members, parent representatives and community champions acknowledge all of us represent Southend SEND Independent Forum, which also feeds into The National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF).

13. Failure to follow the Code of Conduct



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13.1 We should recognise that failure to follow this Code of Conduct may damage Southend SEND Independent Forum and will be viewed as a disciplinary matter.

13.2 In the event of an alleged breach of the Code, any investigation or action will be initiated by at least 2 Steering group members. 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.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I understand the above and agree to conduct my activities in line with the code of conduct:

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

First Draft March 2022

Date of next revision: March 2023

Responsibility of: The Steering Group