



Warrington
Parents & Carers

Code of Conduct

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Warrington Parents and Carers (WarrPAC) have responsibility for all actions carried out by employees and volunteers. This Code of Conduct therefore sets out the expectations of Team WarrPAC to ensure that we are reliable, ethical and trustworthy in our dealings with families and our professional partners.

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

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

The Seven Principles of Public Life

- **Selflessness:** We should act solely in terms of the public interest. We should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- **Integrity:** We should not place ourselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence us in the performance of our official 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 Team WarrPAC, the providers of public funds and other stakeholders, and submit ourselves to appropriate scrutiny.
- **Openness:** We should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that we take. We should give reasons for our decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- **Honesty:** We have a duty to declare any private interests relating to our public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest and in a way that protects Warrington Parents and Carers reputation, values and mission.
- **Leadership:** We should promote and support these principles by leadership and example

Failure to Follow our Code of Conduct

We should recognise that failure to follow this Code of Conduct may damage Warrington Parents and Carers 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.

HOSPITALITY, BRIBERY & CORRUPTION

We may not solicit hospitality. Occasional modest hospitality is allowed, please discuss with the Chair or Development Officer if you have any concerns about hospitality requests.

Any activity that might potentially be interpreted as Warrington Parents and Carers Forum or its team members offering or giving; or requesting or accepting a bribe, is strictly prohibited and may be illegal.

(i) Gifts and entertainment/hospitality

- It is forbidden to receive gifts from, or offer gifts to, any supplier, service user, firm or individual with whom Warrington Parents and Carers does business, if such a gift could reasonably be construed to be a bribe or a pay-off.
- Gifts or favours must not be solicited, offered or given.
- Gifts of money must never be accepted, solicited, offered or given.
- No gifts or hospitality should be accepted from, or offered to, business associates (or potential business associates) involved in any tender or contract negotiation.
- Reasonable hospitality may be acceptable provided this does not place the recipient under any obligation, is not recurring and is in the course of normal business conduct.
- Any excessive hospitality should be declined. For guidance, a meal or a day at a sporting event must be declared, but may be acceptable if it is approved by the Chair or Development Officer. A weekend skiing or repeated trips to sports events is not acceptable. Our general rule is that the hospitality must be completed within one business day.
- Gifts and entertainment/hospitality must be treated in accordance with the reporting procedures below.

(ii) Declaration of gifts, entertainment/hospitality

- Gifts that are genuine advertising and marketing matter (for example, pens, calendars, diaries etc.) and which are of nominal value may be accepted and offered without declaration, provided that they do not place the recipient under any obligation and are not regular or systematic.
- Any other gifts (including those of more than a nominal value) and any entertainment/hospitality offered must be declared to the Chair or Development Officer.
- For gifts of more than a nominal value, managers are encouraged to seriously question whether the goods should be retained by the team member involved. While not prohibiting team members from keeping such gifts, it is preferable that they be "pooled" and used for the purposes of a charitable raffle.

DISCLOSURE OF AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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 Warrington Parents and Carers Forum activity. There are two main examples where a benefit could occur:

- A Duality of Interest. Where the circumstances could potentially bring about some personal or business gain;
- A Conflict of Interest. Where WarrPAC's interest and a personal/business/other Voluntary Sector interest occurs over the same matter.

Both types of interest must be disclosed..

No team member shall engage in personal activities or pursue financial or business interests which might give rise to, or give the appearance of, conflicts of interest with Warrington Parents and Carers, or which might compromise their ability to meet the responsibilities of their role.

The following examples are conflicts of interest that team members should avoid:

- Receiving any gifts or entertainment/hospitality in breach of the rules outlined above;
- Providing or influencing the award of a contract or business to a supplier due to a close personal relationship, such as family or friendship; or
- Processing or providing a service or reviewing, influencing or processing the payment to a family member, friend or associate.

Team members are responsible for ensuring that conflicts of interest are avoided. If there is any doubt whether an action might create a conflict of interest, the situation must be raised with the Chair or Development Officer

AIMS AND VALUES

Our work and reputation rely on us upholding and promoting Warrington Parents and Carers 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 work on behalf of Team WarrPAC in a way that protects our reputation, values and mission.

FRAUD

Everyone within Team WarrPAC has a responsibility to protect Warrington Parents and Carers against fraud and other financial crime. All team members have an important part to play in our defence against financial crime and can help protect Warrington Parents and Carers and its assets.

To ensure that fraud and financial crime are identified at the earliest opportunity, it is essential that all team members are aware that it may occur, the signs that they should be aware of and the action that needs to be taken when it is discovered.

Every employee or volunteer has a responsibility to:

- Observe the highest standard of ethical, personal and professional conduct;
- Read and comply with Warrington Parents and Carers policies, standards and procedures;
- Understand the types and common signs of fraud/financial crime that they may come across in fulfilling their role at Warrington Parents and Carers and the steps that should be taken to report concerns.
- Refer breaches of procedure or controls, suspected fraud and other financial crime risks to the attention of the Chair or Development Officer.

N.B. Personal information provided by team members may be used for the purposes of the prevention, detection and investigation of fraud and malpractice.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Team members, must not (except where required in the proper course of their duties) disclose to any person or make use of or permit to be used in any way any confidential information (including customer data) received or made in the course of their work with Warrington Parents and Carers.

These restrictions apply during and after your work with Warrington Parents and Carers.

It is essential that when working alongside families that their details and concerns are kept private. If they raise an issue that would need to be addressed by one of our professional partners, permission must be gained from the parent / carer. They may either wish for their contact information to be included or to request that this be kept confidential and the issue to be raised anonymously. All such requests should be directed via the Development Officer to pass on to the relevant department.

It is also essential that the content of strategic groups and meetings with professional partners is kept confidential. As Team WarrPAC increasingly work in service development, some information may be particularly sensitive and not for public sharing. WarrPAC do, however, want to keep the wider WarrPAC family up to date with our work and involvement, so it will be the responsibility of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Development Officer to manage public communications from the team.

INSIDE INFORMATION

Information received by employees in the course of business dealings must not be used for personal gain or any purpose except that for which it is intended. This includes information about Warrington Parents and Carers Forum and all group companies.

SPEAKING UP (WHISTLEBLOWING)

Warrington Parents and Carers is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of openness, quality and accountability. In line with these commitments we encourage any employee or volunteer who has serious concerns, or discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing, to come forward without fear of reprisal.

Any concerns should be discussed confidentially with the Chair or Development Officer without delay.

COMPLIANCE

All team members must become familiar; and at all times comply with, in so far as applicable to the performance of their duties, any principles, rules or regulations as communicated by Warrington Parents and Carers and laid down in Social Care Policy and any other body regulating directly or indirectly any business undertaken by Warrington Parents and Carers Forum. Any team member who becomes aware of a breach, or potential breach, of any regulations of these bodies should immediately consult the Chair or Development Officer.

TREATING STAKEHOLDERS FAIRLY

We have an obligation to treat our families and partners fairly throughout their relationship with Warrington Parents and Carers.

All team members have a part to play in helping Warrington Parents and Carers to achieve this obligation and must ensure that they act with integrity and in line with Warrington Parents and Carers' policies at all times to safeguard the trust in WarrPAC and its work.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

WarrPAC'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, we must clearly be seen as presenting a balanced case in support of our 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 WarrPAC's

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Warrington Parents and Carers 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.

PERSONAL CONDUCT

As a representative of parent carers across Warrington, the Parent Rep role has clear responsibilities and requirements in relation to personal conduct, and expects any member who represents WarrPAC to strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of our wider membership, and partners with whom we work.

You must not bring the Warrington Parents and Carers into disrepute while acting in your representative capacity. As a member of Team WarrPAC, 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 WarrPAC.

Those who represent the Warrington Parents and Carers Forum must ensure that in their conduct and activity they:

- Conduct themselves 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 Team WarrPAC.
- Are reliable and dependable, or provide clear information to the Chair or Development Officer 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, letting the team know at the earliest opportunity.
- 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
- Behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to be a representative of other parent carers
- Be active – you cannot be a dormant or ‘sleeping’ Team WarrPAC member, you are still liable for the decisions the others make in your absence.
- Act jointly – work with other Team WarrPAC members
- Act constitutionally (and within the law) – make sure that you act within the powers and objects set out in the constitution of Warrington Parents and Carers.

- Act reasonably and honestly – remembering to minute discussions and debates so that your reasonableness can be demonstrated.
- Have a duty of care – act prudently and reasonably.
- Do not use their position to further my own interests / beliefs or the interests / beliefs of any other agency or organisation (statutory, voluntary or commercial)
- Do not offer individual case work or counselling, but rather signpost people to relevant organizations who can offer this.

Team members must inform the Chair about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to exercise your responsibilities appropriately. As members of Team WarrPAC, you are expected to work in partnership at the highest level with various services, 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

- 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)
- Other similar circumstances

In these situations, it will be standard practice to ask the team 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 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 WarrPAC and the individual involved.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Team members have a statutory obligation to look after their own and others' health and safety in the workplace. They must comply with the Health and Safety Policy which outlines some of the obligations they have.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Disregard or breach of the Code by a team member may result in disciplinary action. Any disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

This policy was adopted ondate

Signed on behalf of Warrington Parents and Carers forum

Signature..... Role.....

Signature..... Role.....

Signature..... Role.....

Date policy should be reviewed