

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The role of East Sussex Parent Carer Forum (ESPCF) is to place the views of all parent carers at the heart of decision making. ESPCF operates as a public facing organisation, making use of the internet and social media ¹as well as working alongside local authority and health professionals. It is essential therefore that ESPCF promotes confidence and trust.
- 1.2. The reason for a code of conduct is to provide guidance for staff and volunteers about what behaving responsibly and with integrity means for ESPCF. This policy cannot cover all eventualities but exists to provide a framework to underline the principles and how to put them into practice.

2. Principles of the code of conduct

- 2.1. The main principle of this code of conduct is **respect**:

- Respect for parent carers who share their views and experiences
- Respect for colleagues – staff and volunteers
- Respect for ESPCF and its work and values
- Respect for external organisations and their staff and volunteers
- Respect for yourself
- Respect for everyone (equality and diversity)

- 2.2. The principles of the code of conduct reflect the values of ESPCF which underpin the work carried out by the ESPCF

- 2.3. The work of ESPCF requires collecting the views and experiences of parent carers which will often be sensitive data and may need to be treated anonymously. **Confidentiality** ²is a key requirement of the code of conduct:

- Staff and volunteers will not share any personal or sensitive information gathered as part of ESPCF's work without the consent of the individual(s) involved.
- ESPCF staff are required to operate within Amaze's data protection and confidentiality policy setting out clear requirements for how data and information is shared and stored.
- Volunteers are required to operate within ESPCF's confidentiality policy.
- Staff and volunteers may gain confidential and privileged information about strategic decisions or issues that may not be made public yet. Information that is said to be confidential must be treated as such.

¹ Also see ESPCF's social media policy

² Also see ESPCF's confidentiality policy

- Any information of a confidential nature acquired in the course of ESPCF duties must under no circumstances be shared or passed to any unauthorised individuals, either during or after a volunteer or staff member has been involved with ESPCF.
- In instances where it is found that a member of staff has disclosed any such information this could result in disciplinary action being taken against them. Where volunteers have disclosed confidential information, it may result in their volunteering position being terminated.

3. Personal Conduct

3.1. To represent ESPCF in a way that promotes trust and confidence, all staff and volunteers are expected to:

- Work in a manner that upholds the integrity and reputation of the ESPCF
- Work alongside colleagues with respect and dignity and to challenge any harassment, intimidation or discrimination
- Respect individual and group differences and diversity (see Amaze Equality Policy)
- Communicate openly and honestly and in a way that is trustworthy
- Seek the widest reasonable range of parent carer views when representing ESPCF. This encompasses anything from informal chats with friends/peers to formal feedback via support groups or directly with ESPCF.
- Declare any potential or current personal conflict of interest in relation to the work of the ESPCF (see conflict of interest policy)
- Be considerate, and to appreciate that words and actions can have a negative effect on others
- Be responsible and accountable for their own behaviour
- Operate within ESPCF's policies and procedures

3.2. Behaviour considered unacceptable includes:

- Breaches of confidentiality
- Bullying
- Unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- Lewd, sexually explicit, threatening or similarly inappropriate or offensive comments, images or videos
- Defamatory or knowingly false statements or comments
- Breaches of copyright
- If it is unlawful in any other way or brings ESPCF into disrepute

4. Conduct for meetings

4.1. Staff and volunteers may attend external meetings as part of their role, and as such will be representing ESPCF. To maintain the integrity and reputation of ESPCF, all staff and volunteers are asked to abide by the following guidance:

- Send apologies if unable to attend
- Aim to be prepared by reading and/or reviewing any relevant papers in advance
- Try to arrive in time for a prompt start
- Use the protocol requested for the meeting, such as raising hand to contribute
- Be honest, courteous, non-judgemental, allowing others to comment and finish speaking
- Be confident to challenge and disagree while remaining respectful, offering ideas and solutions wherever possible
- Where a challenge is required this should be towards systems and processes, not individuals
- Inflammatory language and behaviour is not acceptable.

5. Areas of dispute

5.1. If a staff member or a volunteer is felt to be working outside of this code of conduct, it will be brought to their attention by the ESPCF Chair and discussed to decide if any further action is needed.

5.2. If a dispute arises about the behaviour and/or actions of a volunteer that isn't resolved through dialogue between the individual and the Chair, then this will be brought to the attention of the steering group to decide if any further action is needed.

5.3. If a dispute arises about the behaviour and/or actions of a staff member this will be overseen by the appropriate line manager, and if necessary with reference to the Amaze Disciplinary Policy.

5.4. If a dispute arises about the behaviour and/or actions of the Chair this will be overseen by the steering group in liaison with the Chair's line manager (for HR purposes), and discussed to decide if any further action is needed.

6. Other

Should staff or volunteers encounter difficulties (e.g. abuse/harassment) for example over social media, in relation to their role at ESPCF, it is advised that they not respond directly, but keep a record of the incident and alert the ESPCF chair as soon as possible. The ESPCF chair will, in liaison with at least one steering group member but preferably as many as available unrelated to the case, consider the most appropriate steps to support the individual(s).

Should the ESPCF chair encounter such difficulties, they should alert their pastoral support manager at Amaze who will liaise with one/two steering group members unrelated to the case and consider the most appropriate steps to support the individual.

Particular consideration will be given to whether a communication is needed from ESPCF to provide further information or clarification on a matter from which such difficulties have arisen.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the ESPCF steering group or earlier if matters arise demonstrating gaps in its effectiveness or in light of any relevant legislation change.

Signed off: March 2022

Last review: March 2023

Next review due: March 2024