FRIENDS OF EDITH BORTHWICK SCHOOL
Code of Conduct

Background

From <https://www.parentkind.org.uk/your-pta-expert/governance/pta-objectives-conduct-and-conflicts>

Disagreements and more serious conflict

We know that problems can arise within PTAs. At best through a clash of personalities and at worst, personal conflict. Left unresolved, this could result in an awkward atmosphere or, in the worst-case scenario, the breakdown of a PTA.

Calls to the PTA Member Support Line suggest that the most common issues faced are:

- Dominant committee member(s)
- Conflict between committee members
- Unacceptable behaviour from a committee official (e.g. a secretary making unilateral decisions or a treasurer appearing not to be doing their job properly)
- Strained relationships with the headteacher/school staff/governors
- Agreeing with the school how the funds raised are spent
- A committee member trying to use the PTA as a way of raising a personal issue with the school

Tools and techniques that may help

Constitution (governing document) and a PTA Code of Conduct.

What is a code of conduct?

A code of conduct provides clear guidelines on behaviour to ensure that members conduct themselves in a professional manner, and that everyone is treated with respect. It sits alongside your PTA's constitution and supports its charitable objectives. It should be followed by all members of your association, not just those on the committee.

Why does my PTA need a code of conduct?

A code of conduct strengthens your PTA and school community, by fostering a caring environment and promoting effective relationships between parents, pupils, and staff. Having your expectations regarding behaviour clearly documented can be a useful tool if you ever need to resolve conflict between members.

Content in part has been taken from a template in March 2023 that is a benefit of Parentkind membership.

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Code of Conduct

Introduction

This Code of Conduct binds both Committee members (Trustees) and non-committee members of The Friends of Edith Borthwick School (referred to as FOEBS).

These guidelines describe the basic expectations for behaviour and the importance for all members to conduct themselves professionally and ethically. They will run alongside our constitution, which is a legally binding document.

The overriding expectation is that volunteers will adopt the highest standards of personal integrity and conduct both in and outside of their work with FOEBS. As role models they must behave, through their words and actions, at all times in a manner which demonstrates their suitability to work with the School and which upholds the standards and reputation of the School.

This Code of Conduct provides an overall framework of the behaviours expected of individuals who work in FOEBS. The Code is not intended to be exhaustive and individuals should use sound professional, ethical and moral judgements to act in the best interests of FOEBS, the School, its pupils and its community.

For FOEBS to function successfully, all members must agree to follow these guidelines while acting in association with FOEBS.

In addition to this Code, both Committee (Trustees) and non-committee members agree to follow the policies and procedures as set out by the School to which FOEBS is affiliated. Including but not limited to: Safeguarding such as anti-bullying and behaviour, Child Protection, Relationships, Conduct Outside of Work, or Others such as communications, use of social media, use of computers & ICT, confidentiality, data protection, equality, health & safety, use of financial resources, property & personal possessions, whistleblowing, and Codes of Conduct, as applicable to adults, such as Parents, Staff or Governors Codes). These are available from the School or on its website.

It is the responsibility of the Committee to establish and monitor standards of conduct and behaviour within FOEBS, including the establishment of relevant policies and procedures.

The Committee as Trustees are also required to sign Charity Commission declarations and abide by any guidelines and legal requirements it specifies.

Breaches

If the Committee suspects, or becomes aware, that a member has breached the Code of Conduct, another of its policies, School policy or Charity Commission guidelines, the Committee will investigate.

Complaints regarding a member should be addressed in writing to a Committee member, and the Committee members will investigate.

This may mean that a single or several Committee members are appointed to investigate and report to the Committee. If an issue or complaint is regarding a Committee member, they will be excluded from investigating. The Committee may choose to appoint the School or its governing body to investigate.

Decisions on resulting action from a complaint will be made by a majority vote of the elected Committee members, excluding any that the complaint concerns.

If the issue or complaint is considered to be regarding a breach of a School policy, the Committee will follow the School complaints policy, and the School and or governing body will be directed to conduct their own investigation, the outcome of which may lead to a further decision of action to be taken by Committee members.

If the issue cannot be immediately dealt with, Committee members will agree on a timescale to resolve it. If the Committee cannot meet this deadline, they will provide an updated and revised response date.

FOEBS aim is always to find a peaceful and acceptable solution to all issues and disagreements. FOEBS wishes to promote an open environment that enables individuals to raise issues in a constructive way and with confidence that they will be acted upon appropriately without fear of recrimination.

FOEBS may share the findings of any investigation and the Committee decision with the School and its governing body. FOEBS may also alert the School and its governing body that an investigation is to take place.

The Code

- Any parent or guardian or carer of a pupil currently attending The Edith Borthwick School and all members of School staff presently employed by the school or in any other association with it, and any person over the age of 18 wishing to offer appropriate support or help to the School and who is accepted by the Committee as a member are deemed to be members FOEBS, with the vested interest in enhancing the School for all pupils.

- All work done on behalf of FOEBS is voluntary and for no personal gain.

- All members will act in the best interest of FOEBS and the School.

- All members will be encouraged to make relevant and positive contributions to meetings they attend.

- All members have the right to be heard and must respect each other's opinions.

- All members have the right to communicate together responsibly. Any matters relating to the School, should be directed to the School office. All members must be polite and courteous to all our members, the School or any others in association with it, in all modes of communication. Communications in whatever form, must not be overtly negative in tone, or excessive in duration or quantity.

- All members must refrain from posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about FOEBS and its members, the School, its staff or any member of its community, on social media platforms.

- Any items emailed through to the FOEBS email addresses or sent via social media may not be answered immediately. All Committee members work on behalf of FOEBS voluntarily in their free time and may not be able to address issues immediately. Any query raised will need to be discussed by the Committee and, if necessary, will be added to their next meeting agenda.

- The Committee will work to the rules stated in their constitution. As per the constitution, decisions will be made by a majority vote of the elected Committee members. The Committee may, from time to time, consult with the wider membership. However, the Committee's decision is final.

- All members must ensure that any material or discussion of a confidential nature, especially matters concerning donors or sponsors, individual staff, pupils, or parents or guardians or carers, is confined to a meeting attended only by elected Committee members. Names and or details will be blacked out of the meeting minutes if necessary.

- The Committee should be made aware of any conflict of interest, and the person involved should withdraw from any discussion pertaining to that subject. A conflict of interest may be with a member's personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body, be it the School, its governing body, or a third party.

- All members must respect the School and personal property.

- All paperwork and assets (physical or digital) relating to FOEBS are the property of FOEBS, not that of the individual. When leaving FOEBS, a member should return any relevant paperwork or assets to the FOEBS Committee.

- Should it be deemed by the Committee that any member (both Committee and non-committee) has disregarded this code, or those of the School, or their actions have brought FOEBS or the School into disrepute, the Committee has the right to exclude that member from future involvement. The procedure for removal of a FOEBS member or FOEBS Committee member is stated in the constitution (4.23 for members 6.76 for Committee members).

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Extract from Constitution adopted 10 November 2021:

4.2.3 the committee members/trustees may for good reason, regardless of whether or not this is at the request of the governing body or the headteacher, exclude any person from membership or from attending an event whose presence at or support of the school is deemed a danger to the school or its pupils or staff or might bring the association into disrepute. Removal is not effective until the member concerned has been notified in writing of the proposal and his/her right to respond within 14 clear days, and the matter has been considered in light of any representations made.

6.7 A committee member/trustee (whether elected or co-opted) automatically ceases to be a committee member/trustee if he or she:
6.7.6 is removed by a resolution passed by a majority of other committee members/trustees. Removal is not effective until the committee member/trustee concerned has been notified in writing of the proposal and his/her right to respond within 14 clear days, and the matter has been considered in light of any representations made.

If you remove a member who is also a committee member/trustee, they are automatically removed from the committee under clause 6.7.4. However, removal as a committee member/trustee does not automatically mean that the individual is also removed as a member. If you want to remove someone who is no longer a committee member/ trustee from membership of the charity as well, you will have to use the provision in 4.2.

All Members will be asked to agree to the Code of Conduct annually prior to the AGM.

Adopted at a meeting held:

At: Edith Borthwick School **On:** 9th May 2023

Signed: **Witness:**

S Davies ....

Meeting Chair Committee Member/Trustee

Treasurer ..... Secretary .....

Position Position

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