

Code of practice

1. The Association

Aspect is the professional organisation for people who work on a professional basis in educational improvement and children's services. The Association aims to ensure that the professional activity of members makes an effective contribution to education and children's services. To assist its members in the field, the Association will offer:

- Professional representation and legal services
- Information
- Training and development
- Contact networks
- Career support
- A means of influencing educational and children's services policy.

2. Values of the Association

Members of the Association share common ideals about the importance of education and children's services to society at large and believe that:

- Standards and quality of service can be improved through the professional activities of its membership
- Consistently high professional standards among its members can make a positive contribution to better local practice.

3. Purpose of the code

The Association requires its members to accept and abide by its code of practice as a condition of membership. The code sets out the standards of personal and professional conduct required both for members who are employed by local authorities or other organisations and for those who are self-employed. The code is intended to give members clear guidance about how to conduct themselves. It also demonstrates to employers and the public at large the standards which are expected of Association members.

4. Application of the code

The code applies to full- and part-time members of the Association.

5. Compliance with the code

The Association's disciplinary powers and procedures are set out in its rules. These provide for disciplinary action, including suspension and termination of membership, after proper consideration by the Strategy Sub-Committee of the Council. The rules also lay down the rights of members to appeal against any decision of the full Council. Members who lose their membership of the Association will have their names deleted from the business register and any other register maintained by the Association.

6. Terms of the code

Professional responsibilities

- a. Professionals working at a senior level may encounter circumstances in which various values, principles, rules and interests appear to conflict. It is not always easy to reconcile them in practice. In such circumstances, members' major safeguards rest in adherence to the Association's statement of values and to the terms of the code which follow.
- b. Members should not do, or say, anything which might bring their profession into disrepute, might be inconsistent with the objectives and interests of the Association or cast doubts on their own professional integrity. Nor by omitting to act should they bring the profession into disrepute, fail to be consistent with the objectives and interests of the Association or cast doubts on their own professional integrity.

- c. Members must not be associated with any occupation or business which is likely to prejudice their professional status or the status of the Association.
- d. Members should at all times be aware of their responsibilities to their employers or clients and of the need to ensure that any activities which they undertake do not conflict with the interests of their employer or client.
- e. Members who make public their personal views on any subject should not claim or give the impression that they are representing the views of the Association unless they have been expressly authorised in writing to do so by or on behalf of the Council.
- f. Members should not claim or give the impression that any view expressed in relation to their business activities represents the official view of the Association or has the approval of the Association unless express authorisation has been given in writing by, or on behalf, of the Council.
- g. Members should maintain a high level of knowledge and skills and have regard to any Association guidance on professional practice which may be issued.
- h. Members should report to the general secretary any breach of the code that comes to their attention. Members should be prepared to assist the Association in its enquiries into any breach of the code.

Personal conduct

- a. Members should perform their duties diligently, conscientiously and without favour and at all times have regard to the interests of their employers, professional colleagues, clients and other associates.
- b. Members must at all times work within the law.
- c. Members should ensure that their private, personal, political and financial interests do not conflict with their professional duties. They should disclose to their employer, or if self-employed to any relevant clients, any direct or indirect interest which might affect or appear to affect decisions made by their employers and clients and in such cases they must not influence or appear to influence such decisions.
- d. The Association is firmly committed to the furtherance of equal opportunities. By their words and actions, members should not give support to activities or policies which encourage unfair discrimination against any individual or group.
- e. Members should not disclose to a third party any confidential or privileged information entrusted to them by their employers or clients.
- f. Advertising by members should be legal, honest and truthful and must not mislead or cause public offence.
- g. Members should not allow their professional judgement or conduct to be influenced or compromised by commercial considerations.
- h. Members should not accept any hospitality or inducements which could influence their professional judgement in favour of the donor.
- i. Members should not directly or indirectly exert undue influence or pressure on any person for the purpose of securing work or contracts.
- j. Self-employed members should have particular regard to the need for adequate professional indemnity insurance to enable them to meet any claims for breach of their professional duty.
- k. Self-employed members should not act for any client if there is a conflict of interest between their own professional duty or professional interests and the interests of the client. It is the duty of the member, before accepting a commission, to carry out the necessary checks to ensure that no conflict of interest exists.