

National Council for Special Education

**Code of Business Conduct for the Members of Council of the NCSE
and Members of Council Committees**

Adopted by the Council of NCSE on 6th December 2012

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This Code of Conduct (“Code”) applies to all Council members of the National Council for Special Education (“NCSE”). It was adopted by the Council at its 73rd meeting held on 6th December, 2012. The Code underscores the Council’s commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct.

While it is not possible for a set of rules or guidelines to provide for all situations that may arise, Council members are expected to ensure that all their activities are governed by the ethical standards reflected in this Code in letter and in spirit. This Code of Business Conduct is part of, and must be read in conjunction with, the NCSE Guide for Council Members on Corporate Governance. The purpose of the Code is to ensure that all Members act ethically at all times and in a manner that promotes and maintains the confidence and trust in the good name of the NCSE.

Council members must at all times exercise due care, skill, prudence and diligence, acting in the utmost good faith in the discharge of their functions. In this regard, Council members should take reasonable steps to ensure that any advice provided by them to the NCSE takes cognisance of the NCSE’s corporate, regulatory and statutory obligations.

Council members must treat all information obtained in the course of performing their duties on behalf of the NCSE as strictly confidential unless there is clear and unambiguous evidence, instruction or indication to the contrary. Specifically, information relating to the NCSE, the State or any organs of the State or State bodies, whether or not such information relates directly to the NCSE, to which Council members become privy and which is not in the public domain, is to be treated as confidential. Council members should be aware that the non-disclosure obligation in respect of privileged or confidential information does not cease when their membership of the Council has ended.

Members should use their reasonable endeavours to attend all Council meetings. Council and Committee Members should observe the highest standards of honesty and integrity. To ensure this, they should adhere to the following:

- Submit annually a declaration of interests statement in accordance with the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001;
- Disclose, in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, to the Chairperson of the NCSE any matters or interests which may be in conflict, or in potential conflict, with the business of the NCSE;
- The Chairperson of the NCSE Council should disclose to the CEO any matters or interests which may be in conflict, or in potential conflict, with the business of the NCSE;
- Excuse themselves from discussions or decisions concerning matters or interests involving conflicts or potential conflicts of interest whether or not such conflicts have previously been disclosed;
- Not seek to influence any other member of Council or any member of the Executive in relation to matters or interests that are the subject of a conflict or potential conflict of interest for the Member;
- Avoid giving or receiving corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the

- recipient to make independent judgment on business transactions;
- Avoid use of the NCSE's resources or time for personal gain or for the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with NCSE;
- Ensure that any information acquired through Council business is only used as required for NCSE Council purposes;
- Do not seek to acquire NCSE information through Council except as required for NCSE Council purposes;
- Do not disclose privileged or confidential information during the term of office or afterwards when Board membership has ended;
- Only claim expenses legitimately incurred relating to their Membership.

Good faith reporting

A Council member who has concerns about workings of the NCSE or the Council which might be illegal, improper or unethical, including suspected wrongdoing or malpractice is encouraged to raise the matter directly with the CEO, with Council, or with the Chairperson as appropriate for appropriate action.

Circulation

This Code of Business Conduct as approved by Council will be circulated to Members and published on www.ncse.ie