



Conflict of interest: Statement of intent

Edinburgh Steiner School recognises that in a small community where members of staff have a wide variety of roles and responsibilities, situations where the potential for conflict of interest arises cannot entirely be avoided. However, the School will apply, as far as possible, the following internal restrictions and guidelines in order to raise awareness of the issue and to minimise the incidence and the perception of conflict of interest. These guidelines will be applied to the functioning of Management, mandated groups, the Board of Trustees, and also to individual members of staff who have children or grandchildren in the School.

Restrictions and guidelines

- While members of staff who have children in the School can continue to teach them in subject lessons, they should not act as classroom assistant, Kindergarten Teacher, Class Teacher or Class Guardian to their own child or grandchild
- In cases where parent-teachers teach their own children or grandchildren in exam subjects, teachers should ask an ESS colleague or an external assessor to mark internally assessed exam coursework (assignments, portfolios etc)
- When an official complaint is received against a member of the Management Team or Management Group (MG), two non-Management members of College should be appointed to investigate, according to the complaints policy. Their findings will be reported to the Trustee appointed to oversee the complaint, according to the complaints policy
- A teacher-parent should not serve as a Trustee while their child is a pupil at the School
- A parent-teacher should not serve on those mandated groups where there might be perceived to be a potential for conflict of interest: Social Inclusion Group
- While parent-teachers could continue to serve on the Management Group (MG), there is still the potential for this to be seen as a conflict of interest. The Chair of Management (CoM) should therefore ensure that any matters that arise relating to a child of an MG member are not dealt with by them. If the CoM themselves has child in the School then the Chair of College must ensure that any matters arising relating to that child are not dealt with by the CoM. Oversight will be provided by the School Coordinator
- While parent-teachers could continue to serve in the Child Protection Team, there is also the potential for the perception of conflict of interest. However, in Child Protection, the interest

of the child is paramount and the circumstances for actual conflict of interest must be managed. A team member may not deal with matters relating to their children, or with matters involving families with whom that team member has an existing close personal connection. Team members will critically support each other to avoid conflicts of interest in line with the group's conflict of interest statement, with the Safeguarding Coordinator providing oversight. The Safeguarding Coordinator should become a full member of the Child Protection Team. The Child Protection Team should include at least one member of staff who does not have a child of their own in the School. In circumstances where a parent still perceives that there is a conflict of interest, an independent 'Child Protection Guardian' will be nominated to oversee their case. The 'Child Protection Guardian will not be a member of the staff body and will have full child protection training. The Child Protection Team will ensure that appropriately trained personnel are available at all times, allowing the Team to function efficiently during periods of staff absence or illness, and to provide opportunities for less experienced members of the Safeguarding Team to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to permit succession.

- Until or unless the parent body, through the PTA, or the Trustees, decide via a ruling, teachers at ESS may continue to accept gifts from parents (for example at Christmas or at the end of the session).
- During College discussions, any member of College whose child is due to be discussed, or is being discussed, should absent themselves from the meeting until the discussion has ended. Separate minutes will be kept of this discussion. To ensure fairness in cases where this is in doubt, these minutes should be made available to a Trustee designated by the teacher who absented themselves from the discussion, who can then check to ensure propriety. The Trustee should not, however, disclose to the parent-teacher the contents of those minutes
- Teachers who are also parents have wide access across the School. As such, parent-teachers or grandparents who are teachers should not *act* as parents except in clearly defined and appropriate circumstances. In respect of their own child, within school hours, they should be highly vigilant to the possibility of being in conflict of interest or appearing to be so
- Conflict of interest, or the perception of conflict of interest, will remain a risk in a small and tightly knit community like ESS where members of staff assume a variety of different roles and responsibilities. There should be a culture of 'checking' for conflict of interest, and an understanding that the identification of incidents which might be perceived to involve a conflict of interest is normal and not 'personal.' Irrespective of any policy, it may still be necessary to make decisions about conflict of interest on a case by case basis
- Members of staff will be asked at the start of each school session to declare any conflicts of interest that they believe may exist or emerge as a result of their work in the School

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