



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

Code of Conduct Policy

Principle

This Code is intended as a guide to indicate the standards of conduct and accountability which are expected of staff, committee members and other individuals involved with Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup.

Policy

This Policy is designed to assist Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup as a whole to function efficiently and to understand what conduct is expected of individuals when they are operating as a member of Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup and its sub-groups and any other meetings which take place under the auspices of Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup.

The key aims of this Code are:

- To be clear about how we are expected to conduct ourselves.
- To enhance opportunities for the fullest participation.
- To recognise and value the strengths, experience and expertise of all those involved with Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup.

Procedure

On appointment any management teams, member or staff/volunteer will agree to adhere to this policy and procedure. The management team and staff with authority will monitor this on an ongoing basis.

This Code of Conduct is underpinned by the seven Principles from the Code of Good Governance, as follows (further information can be attained from NICVA www.nicva.org).

Principle 1 – Management Teams

The key principle – leadership is one of the key roles of any management team/board. Every voluntary and community organisation should be led and



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

controlled by a management team which ensures delivery of its objects, sets its strategic direction and upholds its values.

Principle 2 - the Management Team's Responsibilities, Legal Requirements and Obligations

The key principle - the management team members are equally responsible in law for committee actions and decisions. They are collectively responsible and accountable for ensuring that the organisation is performing well, is solvent and complies with all its obligations.

Supporting Principles

Compliance - the management team must ensure that the organisation understands and complies with its own governing document, relevant laws, contractual obligations and the requirements of any regulatory bodies.

Equality and diversity - the management team must ensure that it upholds and applies the principles of equality and diversity and that the organisation is fair and open to all sections of the community in all of its activities.

Prudence - the management team must act prudently to protect the assets and property of the organisation and ensure that they are used to deliver the organisation's objectives.

Managing risk - the management team should understand and regularly review the risks to which the organisation is subject and take action to manage the risks identified.

Managing staff and volunteers - the management team needs to understand the distinction between employees and volunteers and ensure that good practice in the recruitment and management of both staff and volunteers is in place.



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

Principle 3 – the Effective Management Team

The key principle – the management team should have clear responsibilities and functions, and should organise itself to carry out these responsibilities effectively.

Supporting Principles

Effective training, development and support – the management team should ensure that all their members receive the necessary induction, training and ongoing support needed to discharge their duties effectively.

Staff – the management team should ensure proper arrangements are in place for the supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of all staff including the employee in the most senior position.

Principle 4 – Performing, Reviewing and Renewing the Management Team/Board

The key principle – the management team should periodically review its own and the organisation's effectiveness and take any necessary steps to ensure that both continue to work well and meet legal requirements.

Principle 5 – Management Team/Board Delegation

The key principle – the management team should set out the functions of sub-committees, officers, staff and anyone performing duties on behalf of the management team in clear delegated authorities and should monitor their performance.

Principle 6 – Management Team

The key principle – the management team should view maintaining the integrity and interest of the organisation as a primary overriding duty. They should act reasonably at all times in the interests of the organisation and of its present and future



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

beneficiaries, users and/or members. All individual management team members should act according to high ethical standards and ensure that conflicts of interest are highlighted and properly dealt with.

Supporting Principles

No personal benefit - members of the management team must not benefit from their position beyond what is allowed by their governing document and the law, and only when it is in the best interests of the organisation.

Dealing with conflicts of interest - members of the management team should identify and promptly declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest affecting them, including conflicting loyalties which may arise when members are appointed as representatives of other organisations.

Principle 7 - Management Team

The key principle - the management team should be open, responsive and accountable to its users, beneficiaries, members, partners, funders and others with an interest in its work.

Supporting Principles

Selflessness - those in management should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity - those in management should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity - in carrying out business, including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, management should make choices on merit.



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

Accountability - those in management are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness - those in management should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty - those in management have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership - those in management should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Behaviour During Formal Meetings

Much of the work of the setting will be undertaken at meetings, small and large. The effectiveness of these meetings is critical because they will be:

- The principal decision-making tool of the setting.
- The principal method of wider community and partner involvement.

The behaviour of participants at meetings is important to the success of the meeting. Some people may lack the confidence to express themselves fully in a meeting with other people, whereas some find it all too easy to dominate. Effective meetings can be achieved if all individuals are committed to some simple ground rules for behaviour before and during meetings.

- Individuals have a responsibility to be prepared for meetings by reading the paperwork beforehand and by committing themselves to attending meetings as required.
- Individual and personal disputes should not be allowed to affect conduct within the meeting but should be resolved elsewhere.
- All contributions should be addressed to the meeting via the Chair. Individuals wishing to speak should seek the attention of the Chair and wait their turn to speak only when directed by the Chair.



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

- Individuals should not have meetings within meetings by discussing issues with other individuals or groups of individuals when another person has been directed by the Chair to speak. All comments and queries should be directed to the whole meeting via the Chair.
- Individuals should respect the contributions of others by not interrupting when someone is speaking even when they may not agree with what the other person is saying.
- In contributing to the meeting, individuals will ensure that comments they make do not amount to a personal attack on another individual and should avoid using heated, emotional and value loaded language and behaviour.
- Individuals should be constantly aware in their remarks of their equal opportunities responsibilities and avoid the use of potentially offensive language and comments.
- Individuals should above all remember that collective decision-making means not always getting the decision you want and accepting the responsibility of abiding by majority decisions.

It is very important that decisions taken in meetings are well informed by having appropriate, accurate information and debate on the topics concerned. Stakeholders must be able to feel that decisions, particularly those affecting the spending of public funds, are fair and have not been influenced by the vested interests of those making these decisions or based on misinformation. For this reason one of the most important areas of appropriate behaviour during meetings, in addition to the above, relates to declarations of interest.

Declarations of Interest

If you have a private or personal interest on a topic on which committee members must make a decision, you should state this in advance and should not be involved in any part of making the decision.

Outside of Formal Meetings

It is just as important that individuals conduct themselves appropriately outside of official meetings since they may be seen as representing the organisation and its views in a number of other circumstances including non-organisational meetings. Some of the issues to consider are outlined below:



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

- Confidentiality - meetings may occasionally receive information which is not in the public domain often relating to individuals, organisations or financial matters. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that this information remains confidential to the meeting or the organisation unless prior authorisation has been given by the Chair for this to be discussed elsewhere. Individuals must never use confidential information for their personal advantage or to the advantage or disadvantage of anyone known to them or to disadvantage or discredit the organisation.
- Collective decisions - individuals will inevitably have differences of opinion on issues debated at meetings. After full discussion when the meeting has reached a conclusion, all individuals must support this decision whether they voted for or against it. Speaking against agreed decisions in public will only serve to undermine the organisation and individuals have a responsibility to stand by the collective decisions of the organisation and to present a united front.
- Communications with other agencies - there will be occasions when individuals will be asked to, or they may wish to, communicate with external agencies, eg a government office, the local council, the press, etc. In order to ensure they are fully apprised of the latest information and that communications are consistent throughout the organisation, this should only be done following contact with the Manager of the organisation.
- Roles and responsibilities - it is important to have a clear understanding of the various roles and responsibilities of the different individuals and groupings which operate within the organisation.



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

- Staff - the day-to-day management of the staff rests with the Leader and Staff Liaison Officer appointed by the organisation. It is not the role of the committee or others to act as managers of the staff team or to give direct instructions to members of staff. Reasonable day-to-day contact between staff and committee/board members during working hours is encouraged as it recognises that good quality trusting relationships between staff and committee are essential to the effective delivery of the setting's work. It is therefore expected that:
 - Committee and staff treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times.
 - Staff will endeavour to give appropriate advice to all committee members as requested.
 - Staff and committee members will not seek to use their positions to exercise inappropriate influence.
 - Staff and committee members will pay due respect to the private lives of all individuals involved in the setting's activities.

Concerns and Complaints

Any concerns or complaints regarding the work of staff should be directed through the Leader. Any concerns or complaints regarding work-related issues concerning the Leader should be directed through the Chair.

Chair

This is a key role within the organisation's structure and is concerned largely with:

- Promoting the good conduct of any individuals representing the organisation.
- Directing and supporting the Leader as necessary.
- Keeping order and making sure that the agreed rules of conduct are followed.
- Minimising any sense of confusion and frustration by ensuring that the agenda is properly covered and that individuals understand the debate and what decisions are required and why.
- Making sure that everyone who wants to contribute is encouraged to do so.
- Summarising the decisions taken and the action points which arise from this.



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

Committee Members

The committee function is to decide the strategy, policies and overall direction of the organisation's work within the budget, and legal and statutory framework. The Committee members are required to pay due regard to formal advice given by the Leader, accountant, solicitor, the bank and funders.

Leader

It is the role of the Leader to implement the committee's legitimate decisions and to manage on a day-to-day basis the affairs of the staff team, within the budgets, legal and statutory framework and other relevant government criteria set for the organisation's work.

Conflict of Interest

It is a requirement within the setting that there is a formal written procedure for the avoidance of conflicts of interest (see separate Conflicts of Interest Policy).

Breaches of the Code

It is always preferable for breaches of the Code to be dealt with in a timely manner. A sub-committee will be established by the committee if required. The role of this sub-committee will be to investigate potential breaches of the Code of Conduct and the sub-committee would be authorised when appropriate to give:

- Caution concerning transgressions and future conduct.
- A fixed term suspension from involvement in specific/all meetings of the organisation. This will depend on the extent of transgression.

If it is decided that permanent suspension from meetings of the organisation is warranted, or in the case of a committee removal from office, then a report will be taken to the next full meeting of the committee for decision.

Where the breach of Code takes place outside a meeting, then complaints must in the first instance be made in writing to the Leader. The Leader will then, in consultation with the Chair, decide whether a sub-committee is to be set up to investigate as



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

outlined above. A copy of the complaint will be sent to the individual and to the other sub-committee members seven days before any review meeting. The sub-committee will allow the individual to attend the meeting and to speak in reply to the complaint. If there is any dispute about the facts, the sub-committee may call for evidence and reconvene at a later date but it must be within a further 14 days.

If it is agreed that the Code has been breached, then appropriate sanctions will be taken.

Where the breach of Code occurs during a committee meeting:

- Participants should raise breaches of the Code as a point of order through the Chair.
- If the Chair agrees that a breach has taken place, a first oral warning will be issued to the person concerned. This will be noted in the minutes.
- If an individual breaches the Code for a second time, they may be asked to leave the meeting. This will be noted in the minutes, explaining briefly the reasons for exclusion from the meeting.
- Following exclusion from a meeting, the Chair will arrange a meeting of the sub-committee to discuss the breach. This sub-committee will meet within 14 working days of the original meeting.
- The meeting will decide whether it is appropriate for the individual to attend any committee meetings or functions during this review period depending on the nature of the complaint.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the management team to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

This policy was adopted by Ballygawley Early Years Management Committee on 01/09/2026.

Date: 01/09/2026



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

Signed:
(on behalf of the Management Committee)

Name and Position: Iona Devine, Chairperson
Reviewed on:

Date: Signed:..... Position:.....

Date: Signed:..... Position:.....

Date: Signed:..... Position:.....