

## **Code of Conduct for Members of Youth Parliament**

### **Purpose**

This Code of the Conduct applies to any young person taking part in a capacity where they represent the British Youth Council, which is the charity that runs the UK Youth Parliament. This includes members of projects or programmes of work.

This code will set out the relevant standards expected by young people taking part in BYC programmes. It will make clear what's expected of you and the support you can expect to receive as a result of your commitment to the British Youth Council. It is in place to help young people understand what's expected of them, to demonstrate our commitment to equal opportunities, and to help young people recognise behaviour that isn't appropriate and encourage them to report anything that makes them uncomfortable.

The content of Code of the Conduct applies not only to face to face events and activities but all activity carried out whilst in the role, including online activity and private communications whilst undertaking their role.

### **Conduct**

As a representative of the British Youth Council we ask you to comply with the expectations of conduct when undertaking your role:

1. Any young person aged 11 and up to 18, has the right to have his/her view heard and listened to by the UK Youth Parliament
2. As an elected MYP your duty is towards:
  - a. The young people who voted for you
  - b. The young people who didn't vote for you
  - c. Every young person in your LA/Constituency
3. At all times you should act and communicate in a way that does not damage the reputation of the British Youth Council. Communication includes letters, phone calls, face to face meetings and social media.
4. At all times you must remain non-partisan (free from bias toward any political party or group). We understand that you may wish to belong and support a political party and this is fine. However care must be taken to make a clear distinction between your role and any other party political activity. Use separate dedicated social media profile/s for your role in order to avoid accusations of party political allegiance.

### **Behaviour**

*Young people must always:*

1. Treat everyone with respect and dignity
2. Listen to the views of others, challenge discrimination and promote equal opportunities
3. Act as a positive role model
4. Respect other young people's right to privacy

5. Help create an environment that encourages everyone to feel comfortable and confident in challenging any attitudes or behaviours that may be discriminatory or make them feel uncomfortable in any way
6. Remember that others may misinterpret their behaviour and actions, regardless of how well intentioned they may be
7. Report any behaviour which makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe

*Young people may never:*

1. Permit or accept abusive or discriminatory behaviour or peer-led activities
2. Engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact with staff or other young people
3. Allow or encourage others (staff, volunteers or young people) to engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact
4. Use inappropriate or demeaning language
5. Give or lend personal money
6. Jump to conclusions without checking facts
7. Use alcohol, drugs or other substances when taking part in British Youth Council activities
8. Rely on their good name or role to protect them
9. Engage in illegal, or fraudulent activity

## **Expectations**

The following are expected of you:

1. It is important that you take your role and duty seriously when you are representing the British Youth Council/UK Youth Parliament both in and outside meetings
2. You must attend your local youth forum / cabinet meetings and other meetings in your constituency area and maintain regular contact with your worker, which includes answering and responding to emails, texts, messages, phone calls and letters.
3. At local and regional meetings you will be asked to report on what you have done and helped with an action plan. You must notify a worker in advance if you are unable to attend a meeting. This should be 48 hours in advance for a local meeting and 3 weeks for regional or national meetings (unless it is an emergency).
4. As an MYP, you are expected to have, as a minimum, access to an email address through which you can be contacted by the UK Youth Parliament.
5. You must maintain regular contact with the British Youth Council staff supporting your project which includes answering and responding to emails, texts, phone calls and letters
6. You must notify British Youth Council staff in advance if you are unable to attend a meeting
7. You should check messages on the group's Facebook group or equivalent at least once a week and respond to questions, consultations, meeting requests, or anything else related to your role. The group should also be used as a way

to network and share ideas with other members, and not used for any other purpose

8. It is your responsibility to report any difficulties with emails or communication to a member of BYC staff. You must report any changes to your contact details, (address, phone, email etc) or problems with receiving messages, to the British Youth Council
9. It is your responsibility to report any changes in your medical needs or dietary requirements to the British Youth Council

## **Support**

In return for complying with the Code of Conduct you will receive support from the British Youth Council, including:

1. We will ensure that young people of the UK are given a voice on any issue that affects them, as laid out in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
2. We will respect young people's views and will respect and protect their rights.
3. Opportunities to attend events, meetings and activities for MYPs. For some events, places will be limited, or the staff and transport costs of attending events too high, so they may not be available to all. In some cases, your commitment and what you have done in your term of office will be taken into consideration before agreeing you can attend. This is with the exception of The House of Commons and Annual Conference events, which are offered to all elected Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs). Places should be only offered to the MYP(s) who won their election, and only if they are unable to attend (e.g. through illness or holiday) would another young person deputise for them.
4. A named support worker who offers regular support and communication
5. Advance notice and information about meetings and events
6. Public transport costs to and from your home to all meetings in your role should be covered by your Local Authority. Please speak to your Local Authority / BYC to ensure you are not out of pocket for any expenses.
7. Support from a worker to travel to and from regional and national meetings and events where your attendance has been agreed in advance with your worker. Travelling without a worker may be possible only if agreed in advance with parents/ carers and your worker.
8. Appropriate refreshments and subsistence while undertaking your duties
9. Support with your own personal development and development of your role as to help you do the best you can
10. Relevant and appropriate training and accreditation opportunities

## **Breaching the Code of Conduct**

Wherever possible we will support young people to succeed in their role. We recognise that young people have a lot of different things going on in their lives that might mean at any given time they may not be able to give all the time or attention to their role that they or we might like. We will endeavour to support young people to review their commitments and come up with realistic timelines and goals for their volunteer role.

Occasionally, young people might significantly breach the code of conduct or do not respond to ongoing support. In these cases we may implement a disciplinary procedure which starts with informal conversations and may result in verbal or written warnings. In rare circumstances it may result in dismissal from your role. At all times during you will be kept informed about the process and what is happening.

**Signed (Young Person):**

**Signed (British Youth Council):**