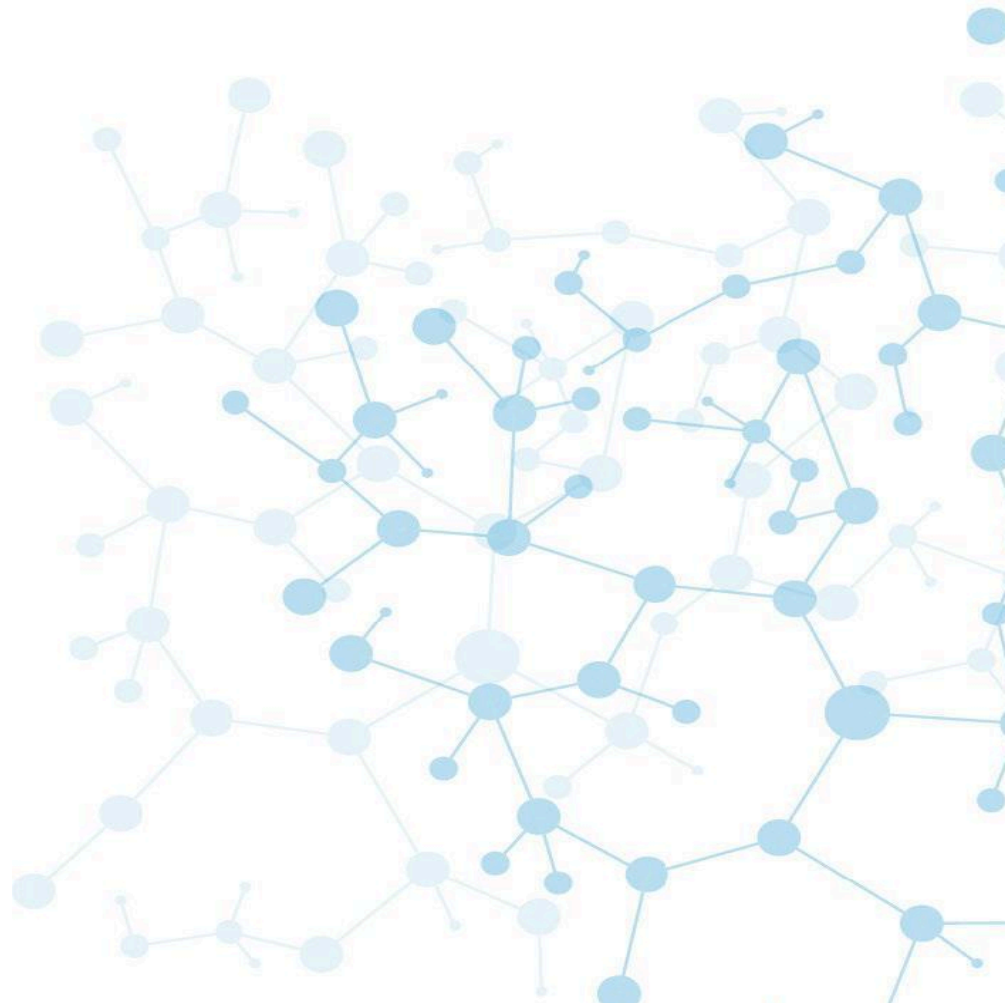


Code of Conduct

Sept 2024



BSME Code of Conduct 2024-25

The aim of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that the Principal/Headteacher and senior leaders of each member school, along with their relevant governing body, (Board of Governors, Board of Directors, controlling company or owner), adhere to and actively promote a high standard of ethical practice within their own school and in their school's relationship with other BSME schools.

BSME's Guiding Statements outline the organisation's purpose, culture and values:

- BSME's purpose is to connect, support and represent our community of schools, enriching the educational experience of tomorrow's global citizens and helping them towards purposeful, fulfilling lives
- The BSME community strives for excellence through a forward-thinking culture of collegiality, collaboration, communication and innovation.
- BSME is a professional organisation underpinned by the values of integrity, respect, inclusion and a drive towards sustainability.

BSME is founded on a culture of collaboration, collegiality and communication, with integrity and respect serving as key underpinning values. Our Code of Conduct must therefore protect and promote these fundamental principles by balancing the needs of individual schools, students, and employees, with respect for the needs of other BSME institutions and their members, whilst also upholding our collective responsibility for the reputation of BSME.

The BSME Code of Conduct is not a legal document, but it does set out clear expectations of Principals/Headteachers to ensure their school operates at all times in a manner which is ethical and conducive to the promotion of collaboration and collegiality between schools.

The Principal/Headteacher is required to agree to the Code of Conduct as a condition of membership. In agreeing to this document, a member school also agrees to accept any decision of the BSME Executive Committee regarding continued membership, following due process, in relation to any breach of the Code of Conduct.

Key Principles

1. As members of BSME we support the organisation's guiding statements and understand that we have professional obligations that extend beyond our individual schools.
2. As leaders of British-style schools in BSME, we have much in common and share many similar challenges. We agree to communicate openly over any issues within the scope of the Code of Conduct.
3. We share the collective responsibility to make every effort to ensure that BSME is not brought into disrepute by the actions of individuals or groups associated with our school.

Key Commitments

A. Overall Integrity of our School

1. Information we publish and use to promote our individual schools will be accurate and will not include criticism of, or disparaging comparisons about, other BSME schools.
2. Our school will honour promises and contracts made with persons, organisations or communities, assuming honourable commitment by the other contractual party, excluding situations of force majeure.
3. We will respect normally accepted conventions regarding confidentiality with regard to the internal or external dealings and operations of our school.
4. As a new member school we commit to meeting BSME accreditation requirements within two years of commencing membership, and as a continuing member school we commit to maintaining accredited status throughout the duration of our membership.

B. Recruitment Practices

Recruitment practices are the source of the greatest disagreement between BSME member schools. These differences are most effectively avoided or resolved through open and transparent communication between senior leaders at both schools. Although these can be difficult conversations to initiate, making the effort to have them shows respect and consideration for the impact your recruitment may have on colleagues in another school. They also allow for contractual circumstances to be confirmed and can help to assuage any upset with a genuine conversation seeking the best way forward for all involved.

1. We accept that both employees and member schools have the right to consider alternative employment or recruitment in confidence, without initially notifying the current employer. However, it is expected that, as soon as procedures progress beyond any preliminary stage, the recruiting Principal/Headteacher, or senior recruiting staff, will contact the employee's current school to ascertain the contractual situation in a transparent and open manner.
2. We will not directly approach staff from other schools in order to recruit them to our own school, without prior consultation and agreement with the current employer.
3. If we receive an approach from an employee of a BSME school and this proceeds towards discussion of employment, that person will be informed that their current employer will be consulted.
4. Unless agreed by all concerned, we will not appoint a person where the notice requirements of their current contract with another BSME school mean they would not be available by the required start date. Employees must be allowed to work the notice period shown in their employment contract. Note that where an employee has given and worked the contractually agreed notice, within a contract period, they are not considered to have broken contract.
5. We will not attempt to influence a person to break a contract already signed with another BSME school, including a signed contract renewal.

6. Our school is committed to safeguarding students and will make appropriate background checks in order to ensure any potential member of staff is suitable to work with children. These checks must include a reference from their current school Principal/Headteacher, not a colleague or line manager.

C. Employment Practices

1. All staff in our school are issued with written contracts and associated documents which clearly state the terms and conditions of employment.
2. We will endeavour to treat all employees fairly and equitably.
3. Our school has in place (or will have within six months of signing the Code of Conduct), clear procedures (which have been disseminated to employees) for dealing with claims of unjust treatment, grievances, or claims of unfair dismissal or non-renewal of contract.

D. Transfer and Enrolment of Students Practices

1. We will not approach students (or parents of students) from other member schools in order to recruit them to our own school.
2. We will respect the confidentiality of students who wish to consider entering another member school, whilst providing an acceptable level of assistance and support to students and parents when students leave our school. This will include the timely production of references, reports, grades and transcripts as well as sharing of required medical and child protection reports with the receiving school.
3. We will not knowingly accept a student from another school if the student (or family) owes money to that school unless an agreement has been reached with all concerned.

Closing statement

Membership of BSME is subject to agreement and compliance with BSME School Membership Terms and Conditions. This includes the holding of a valid licence to operate as a school by the local Ministry of Education, as well as compliance with this Code of Conduct. The current Principal/Headteacher must pledge to inform and advise the relevant staff and Board of Governors, or controlling company, of the details within this Code and the commitment required to the ethical practices contained herein.

Principals/Headteachers are responsible for sharing this agreement with any other senior leaders involved in recruitment and are encouraged to share it with staff in general.

If a breach of the Code of Conduct is drawn to the attention of the Executive Committee an investigation will be undertaken by the BSME Chief Executive Officer with the aim of resolving differences or rectifying errors. Recommendations arising from such an investigation may result in actions which might, in serious or repeat instances, include discontinuation of the school's membership of BSME. Final outcomes will be determined by the BSME Executive Committee.