

# Code of Conduct for Members of Seanad Éireann

## Preamble

Members of Seanad Éireann other than office holders (referred to hereafter as "Members" ) recognise that it is in their individual and collective interest to foster and sustain public confidence and trust in their integrity as individuals and in Seanad Éireann as an institution. To this end, Members should at all times be guided by the public good and ensure that their actions and decisions are taken in the best interests of the public.

Members of Seanad Éireann have adopted this Code of Conduct pursuant to Article 15.10 of the Constitution and in accordance with Section 10 of the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001, the purpose of which is to guide Members in the discharge of their functions in a manner which is consistent with the proper performance of the functions of the Office of Member of Seanad Éireann.

## Code

Members must, in good faith, strive to maintain the trust placed in them, and exercise the influence gained from their public office to advance the public interest.

Members must conduct themselves in accordance with the provisions and spirit of the Code of Conduct and ensure that their conduct does not bring the integrity of their office or the Seanad into disrepute.

3. (i) Members have a particular obligation to behave in a manner which is consistent with the proper performance of the functions of the Office of Member of Seanad Éireann and with the maintenance of confidence in such performance by the general public.

(ii) Members must interact with authorities involved with public administration and the enforcement of the law in a manner which is consistent with their roles as public representatives and legislators.

4. (i) A conflict of interest exists where a Member participates in or makes a decision in the execution of his or her office knowing that it will improperly and dishonestly further his or her private financial interest or another person's private financial interest directly or indirectly.

(ii) A conflict of interest does not exist where the Member or other person benefits only as a member of the general public or a broad class of persons.

5. (i) Members must base their conduct on a consideration of the public interest and are individually responsible for avoiding conflicts of interest.

(ii) Members must endeavour to arrange their private financial affairs to prevent such conflicts of interest arising and must take all reasonable steps to resolve any such conflict quickly and in a manner which is in the best interests of the public.

6. Members may not solicit, accept or receive any financial benefit or profit in exchange for promoting, or voting on, a Bill, a motion for a resolution or order or any question put to the Seanad or to any of its committees.

7. Members must fulfil conscientiously the requirements of the Seanad and of the law in respect of the Ethics in Public Office Acts and, to assist them in so doing, should familiarise themselves with the relevant legislation and guidelines published from time to time by the Select Committee on Members' Interests and the Standards in Public Office Commission as appropriate.

8. (i) Members must not accept a gift that may pose a conflict of interest or which might interfere with the honest and impartial exercise of their official duties.

(ii) Members may accept incidental gifts and customary hospitality.

9. In performing their official duties, Members must apply public resources prudently and only for the purposes for which they are intended.

10. Members must not use official information which is not in the public domain, or information obtained in confidence in the course of their official duties, for personal gain or the personal gain of others.

11. Members must co-operate with all Tribunals of Inquiry and other bodies inquiring into matters of public importance established by the Houses of the Oireachtas.

Adopted by Seanad Éireann on 18 April, 2002