

BWSPA Policy Framework

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Document control

These policies were formally initially agreed by the BWSPA Committee on 8 May 2025.

Subsequent revisions were agreed as documented below:

Introduction

The BWSPA Trustees have overall control of the charity and are responsible for making sure it is meeting the objectives that it was set up to meet. They achieve this by reference to a set of policies, which are set out below. In many cases, policies have developed in a somewhat *ad-hoc* way without being properly documented. This document therefore sets out relevant policies in one place for the first time.

Adherence to these policies will ensure that the Trustees act in accordance with the six main duties of Charity Trustees, which are as follows:

- Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with your charity's governing document and the law
- Act in your charity's best interests
- Manage your charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure your charity is accountable

These policies will be formally reviewed and agreed at least once per year, typically at the AGM in November of each year. Changes to individual policies can be proposed at any committee meeting.

Financial policies

Internal charity financial controls policy and procedures

Context:

To ensure all transactions made from BWSPA bank accounts are legitimate.

Policy statement:

Receipts are required for all payments from BWSPA accounts. These must be seen and approved by two account signatories.

Financial reserves policy and procedures

Context:

The BWSPA will keep a suitable reserve to cover unforeseen expenditure.

Policy statement:

A £2000 reserve has been agreed in committee.

Trustee expenses policy and procedures

Context:

BWSPA trustees may incur costs in discharging their duties, some of which may be reimbursed.

Policy statement:

BWSPA trustees do not receive personal expenses. The exception is the reimbursement of receipted expenses incurred for the general running of the BWSPA including supplies required for events organised by the BWSPA.

Investing charity funds policy and procedures

Context:

In order to maximise the return on BWSPA monies, it is prudent to have access to a bank account that pays interest on the balance.

Policy statement:

Transfer any surplus BWSPA monies to a higher interest cash savings account when appropriate, ensuring the agreed reserve amount remains in the current account.

Other policies

Safeguarding policy and procedures

Context:

Although the primary purpose of the BWSPA is to support the education of pupils at Bishop Wordsworth's School, the day-to-day activities of the BWSPA do not lead to regular contact with those pupils. Nonetheless, from time to time we may be involved in events that are either directly promoted for pupils, or where some pupils (typically sixth form prefects) assist the BWSPA as volunteers. Therefore, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is an absolute requirement in any activities carried out by the BWSPA.

Policy statement:

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all BWSPA Trustees and volunteers. If any trustee or volunteer has a safeguarding concern in relation to BWSPA activities, they must report it, in the first instance using the BWS safeguarding processes.

As part of the risk assessment carried out for any BWS activity, consideration will be given to the potential safeguarding risks caused by the involvement of children, and where necessary, appropriate mitigations will be put in place.

Complaints policy and procedures

Policy statement:

If any volunteer or parent feels that they need to make a complaint about the actions of the BWSPA, they should raise their concern with the BWSPA Chair. The Chair thus notified must carry out an investigation, involving other Trustees and / or the BWSPA's external advisor as they deem fit, and where they consider that the complaint is justified, must consider suitable mitigations, to be discussed at the next committee meeting.

Where a complaint is explicitly made against the BWSPA Chair, the same process shall apply, except that the concern should be raised with the BWSPA Secretary.

Serious incident reporting policy and procedures

Context:

A serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant harm to the BWSPA's beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with the BWSPA through its work; loss of BWSPA money or assets; damage to property or harm to the BWSPA's work or reputation. "Significant" is in relation to the scale of the charity, for example in the BWSPA case a financial loss of over £500 on a single event would be considered significant.

Policy statement:

Any committee member who becomes aware of a potential serious incident, or feels that there is a risk of a developing serious incident, must raise their concern with the BWSPA Chair. Because there is no absolute guidance as to what is considered "serious", the presumption when unsure should be to err on the side of caution and raise a concern.

The chair will make the final decision whether to report the issue or not, and may involve the other Trustees or the BWSPA's external advisor in reaching a decision. In any case, a record of the concern and the decision whether to report or not will be recorded in the minutes of the next committee meeting.

Internal risk management policy and procedures

Context:

The Trustees must manage the charity's resources properly. Resources include the charity's money, property, stock and reputation and the health and wellbeing of volunteers and event attendees. Activities undertaken by the BWSPA (such as organising events) may lead to risks such as financial loss, injury or illness to attendees or BWSPA staff, safeguarding risk to helpers or attendees and / or reputational risk to BWS or the BWSPA.

Policy statement:

Before undertaking any activity, the committee will consider the risks associated with the activity and where necessary put in place appropriate mitigations to manage those risks.

Trustee conflicts of interest policy and procedures

Context:

Charity commission guidance recognises that the charity must manage both conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty. In this case, a conflict of interest exists where a committee member, or someone closely associated with a committee member such as a relative, may stand to benefit financially from the activities of the BWSPA. A conflict of loyalty exists where a decision by the BWSPA committee may have a beneficial or detrimental impact on another organisation closely associated with a committee member and that member therefore may be induced to support or oppose a course of action not because it is in the best interests of the BWSPA, but because it is in the best interests of another organisation.

Policy statement:

Committee members must declare any potential conflict of interest or loyalty where appropriate to discussions about particular BWSPA business. Such conflicts will be recorded in the minutes. The chair may request that the conflicted individual takes no further part in discussion or voting on that area of business during a meeting and during subsequent meetings.

Campaigns and political activity policy and procedures

Context:

The BWSPA Constitution requires that the BWSPA “shall be non-party political and non-sectarian in seeking to develop and maintain the status, freedom, interests and traditions of the school.”

The constitution also allows the BWSPA “if it so decides, [to] campaign, or assist a campaign, in support of the school’s status as a grammar school and/or its status as an academy, should the Governing Body, as represented by the President or his representative, consider that status to be under threat.”

Policy statement:

Except where allowed in support of the school’s status as a grammar school, the BWSPA will maintain a non-party political and non-sectarian stance. No support or endorsement will be given by the BWSPA for any event which could be seen to benefit one political viewpoint or party over another. The BWSPA website and social media channels must not be used for endorsing a particular political viewpoint.

Bullying and harassment policy and procedures

Context

The BWSPA relies for its ongoing ability to function on a small group of dedicated volunteers. These volunteers should be free to volunteer without being bullied or harassed by any other BWSPA Trustee or volunteer, or from those associated with organisations working with the BWSPA.

Policy statement:

All BWSPA volunteers have the right to work in an environment free from bullying or harassment.

If any volunteer feels that they, or another volunteer they are working with, is subject to bullying or harassment, they should raise their concern with at least two Trustees, of whom one must be the Chair. Those Trustees thus notified must carry out an investigation, involving other Trustees and / or the BWSPA’s external advisor as they deem fit, and where they consider that bullying has taken place, must consider suitable sanctions against the perpetrator. Sanctions may include being excluded from future business of the BWSPA.

Where an allegation of bullying is made against the BWSPA Chair, the same process shall apply, except that the concern should be raised with at least two Trustees of whom one is the President (i.e. BWS Headmaster).

Social media policy and procedures

Context:

The BWSPA has three active publicly-available social media channels: a website (<https://www.bwspa.org.uk>), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/BWSparentsAssociation>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/bwsparentsassociation/>).

This policy covers posting on any of those channels, and on any other public online channels as may be set up by the BWSPA in the future.

Policy statement:

BWS Accounts on new social media platforms may only be set up following agreement by the BWSPA Committee.

At any time, at least two members of the BWSPA committee must have full administrative control of all web and social media channels.

All posts and comments on social media and pages on the website attributable to the BWSPA must be supportive of the aims and objectives of the BWSPA and, where appropriate, supportive of Bishop Wordsworth School.

Posts and pages must not personally identify any BWSPA volunteer, school staff member or pupil unless written permission is obtained from that person in advance.

No endorsement of other social media content (for example, by “liking” or re-posting other posts) is permitted unless those posts also comply with the policy above.

Engaging external speakers at charity events policy and procedures

Policy statement:

Unless agreed by exception by the BWSPA Committee, external speakers will not be paid for appearing at BWSPA-managed events.