All members of the press have a duty to maintain the highest professional standards. The Code, which includes this preamble and the public interest exceptions below, sets the benchmark for those ethical standards, protecting both the rights of the individual and the public’s right to know. It is the cornerstone of the system of self-regulation to which the industry has made a binding commitment.

It is essential that an agreed code be honoured not only to the letter but in the full spirit. It should not be interpreted so narrowly as to compromise its respect to the rights of the individual, handled sensitively. This should not restrict the right to report legal proceedings, such as inquests.

- When reporting suicide, care should be taken to avoid excessive detail about the method used.

- Children

- Young people should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion.
- A child under 16 must not be interviewed or photographed on issues involving their own or another child’s welfare unless a custodial parent or similarly responsible adult consents.
- Pandas must not be approached or photographed at school without the permission of the school authorities.
- Minors must not be paid for material involving children’s welfare, nor parents or guardians for material about their children or wards, unless it is clearly in the child’s interest.
- Editors must not use the fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian as sole justification for publishing details of a child’s private life.

- Children in sex cases

- The press must not, even if legally free to do so, identify children under 16 who are victims or witnesses in cases involving sexual offenses.
- In any press report of a case involving a sexual offence against a child -
  - the child must not be identified;
  - the adult may be identified;
- the word “victim” must not be used where a child victim might be identified;
- Care must be taken that nothing in the report implies the relationship between the accused and the child.

- Children in sexual cases

- A child must not be photographed without their consent.
- Parents - Private places are public or private property where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

- Harassment

- Journalists must not engage in intimidation, harassment or persistent pursuit.

- They must not persist in questioning, telephoning, phoning or photographing individuals once asked to desist; nor remain on their property when asked to leave and must not follow them. If requested, they must identify themselves and whom they represent.
- Editors must ensure these principles are observed by those working for them and take care not to use non-compliant material from other sources.

- In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries and approaches must be made with sympathy and discretion and publication not so broadly that it constitutes an unnecessary interference with freedom of expression or prevents publication in the public interest.

- The press must not seek to obtain or publish material acquired by using hidden cameras or clandestine listening devices; or by intercepting private or mobile telephones, calls, messages or emails; or by the unauthorised removal of documents, or photographs; or by accessing digitally-held private information without consent.

- Engaging in misrepresentation or subterfuge, including by agents or intermediaries, can generally be justified only in the public interest and then only when the material cannot be obtained by other means.

- Victims of sexual assault

- The press must not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless there is adequate justification and they are legally free to do so.

- Discrimination

- The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual’s race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.

- Ushers and intermediates, can generally be justified only in the public interest and then only when the material cannot be obtained by other means.

- Financial journalism

- Even where the law does not prohibit it, journalists must not use for their own profit financial information they receive in the course of their general public relations or they pass such information to others.

- They must not write about shares or securities in whose performance they know that they or their immediate families have a significant financial interest without disclosing the interest to the editor or financial editor.

- They must not buy or sell, either directly or through nominees or agents, shares or securities about which they have written recently or about which they intend to write in the near future.

- Confidential sources

- Journalists have a moral obligation to protect confidential sources.

- Witness payments in criminal trials

- No payment or offer of payment to a witness - or any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness - should be made in any case once proceedings are active as defined by the Contempt of Court Act 1981.

- This prohibition lasts until the suspect has been freed unconditionally by police without charge or bail or the proceedings are otherwise discontinued; or has entered a guilty plea to the court; or, in the event of a not guilty plea, the court has announced its verdict.

- * Where proceedings are not yet active but are likely and foreseeable, editors must not make or offer payment to any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness, unless the information concerned ought demonstrably to be published in the public interest and there is an overriding need to make such a payment for this to be done; and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure no financial dealings influence the evidence those witnesses give. In no circumstances should such payment be conditional on the outcome of a trial.

- * Any payment or offer of payment made to a person later cited to give evidence in proceedings must be disclosed to the prosecution and defence. The witness must be advised of this requirement.

- Payment to criminals

- Payment or offers of payment for stories, pictures or information, which seek to exploit a particular crime or to glorify or glamorise crime in general, must not be made directly or via agents to convicted or confessed criminals or to their associates – who may include family, friends and colleagues.

- Editors invoking the public interest to justify payment or offers would need to demonstrate that there was good reason to believe the public interest would be served. If, despite payment, no public interest emerged, then the material should not be published.

** The Code

1. Accuracy

i) Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence, including digital communications.

ii) Editors must ensure these principles are observed by those working for them and take care not to use non-compliant material from other sources.

iii) Preventing the public from being misled by an action or statement of an individual or organisation.

2. In any press report of a case involving a child -
- the child must not be identified;
- the adult may be identified;
- the word “victim” must not be used where a child victim might be identified;
- Care must be taken that nothing in the report implies the relationship between the accused and the child.

3. Privacy

i) Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence, including digital communications.

ii) Editors must ensure these principles are observed by those working for them and take care not to use non-compliant material from other sources.

4. Harassment

i) Journalists must not engage in intimidation, harassment or persistent pursuit.

ii) They must not persist in questioning, telephoning, phoning or photographing individuals once asked to desist; nor remain on their property when asked to leave and must not follow them. If requested, they must identify themselves and whom they represent.

iii) Editors must ensure these principles are observed by those working for them and take care not to use non-compliant material from other sources.

5. Intrusion into grief or shock

i) In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries and approaches must be made with sympathy and discretion and publication...