



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

The Presiding Officer

Jenni Minto MSP
Convener
Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

19 June 2026

Dear Jenni,

Updates to the Presiding Officer's Guidance on Conduct in the Chamber and the suspension and variation of Standing Orders

Presiding Officer's Guidance on Conduct in the Chamber

I wish to draw your attention to revisions I have recently made to the 'Presiding Officer's Guidance on Conduct in the Chamber'.

The main changes are:

- Members participating in a debate must, as a minimum, be present for all opening and closing speeches and remain in the Chamber to hear at least the two speeches following their contribution.
- Members participating in a question session, either by asking one of the printed questions or by seeking a supplementary question, must be present for the whole of the question time session.
- Members wishing to ask a question on a Ministerial statement, must attend for the whole of the statement.
- If, in exceptional circumstances, a Member wishes to speak in a debate or participate in a question session but cannot attend for the whole session, they must seek advance permission from the Presiding Officers. If the Member has not received advance permission, they must make alternative arrangements, such as arranging for another Member to take their speaking slot where rules for the item of business allow for that.

- When the Chamber is sitting, Members must not cross the well of the Chamber and must avoid crossing the line of sight between the Presiding Officer and the Member who is speaking.

To maximise Members' opportunity to represent their constituents' interests and question Scottish Ministers on key issues, I have also updated the guidance to emphasise brevity: questions should normally be no more than 100 words, and answers normally no more than 150 words.

The revised guidance has been shared electronically with all Members and will be issued in hard copy in the coming weeks. It has also been published on the Parliament's website.

As you will be aware, the Standards Procedures and Public Appointments (SPPA) supports the interpretation and understanding of the Code of Conduct by producing and publishing guidance on its application. As the Presiding Officer's own Guidance on conduct in the Chamber is referred to in the Code, I invite the SPPA Committee to consider how best to revise the Guidance on the Code of Conduct to reflect the new Guidance I have issued.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Kenneth J Gibson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kenneth" being the most prominent part.

Kenneth Gibson MSP
Presiding Officer