

Code of Conduct with Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

INTRODUCTION

Like all U3As, Newent and District U3A (referred to below as "The U3A") is built around interactions between people. It is the thoughtful and mindful communication and cooperation between all parties that supports the smooth running of The U3A. The Management Committee has developed, like some other U3As, a Members' Code of Conduct to ensure that all of us, in whatever role we undertake, but especially as members, are aware of our responsibilities to each other and to The U3A. Procedures are also provided in this document to cover the handling of any grievances or disciplinary issues that might arise from time to time.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

The U3A expects that all members will behave in a courteous and civilised manner at all times. As a condition of membership of The U3A, members' agree to abide by the following Code of Conduct:

- a) Participating in The U3A activities in a respectful, inclusive and positive way at all times.
- b) Being honest and ethical in all dealings with The U3A, its members and other related organisations.
- c) Showing respect, courtesy and consideration to everyone with whom they deal with in The U3A.
- d) Observing the confidentiality regarding members' personal information that might be held. Not disclosing any information without their permission.
- e) Avoiding all forms of discriminatory behaviour, in regard to: nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, culture, religion, age and mental or physical disability.
- f) Not engaging in behaviour that is inappropriate, disruptive or intimidating, such as would breach the rights of other persons to participate in a group/event or to carry out their designated role.
- g) Participating safely in activities and adhering to reasonable safety instructions designed to protect all.
- h) Not causing willful damage to The U3A equipment, materials, facilities, or that of others.
- i) Positively promoting The U3A and not making /taking inappropriate or untrue comments /actions.
- j) Abiding by this, and all other policies and procedures that are put in place by The U3A.
- k) Comply with and support the decisions of the Management Committee.
- l) Notify the Membership Secretary of any changes to their personal details.
- m) Abide by the terms and conditions of The U3A Constitution.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Grievance Procedure below is designed to provide a mechanism to deal with any grievances that may be raised by a member/s, regarding the activities or operation of The U3A. Key principles behind the Procedure are:

- a) It is expected that, in the first instance, all parties will have tried to directly resolve any grievance between them and, in consultation, if appropriate, with the relevant Group Leader. Only then, if the issue is not resolved, can the parties involved request the Grievance Procedure be applied.
- b) Aim to achieve resolution of any grievances quickly, with fairness, care and understanding.
- c) Preserve confidentiality; involvement in the Procedure will be restricted to those with a defined role.
- d) Grievances reported to The U3A should be responded to initially within 10 working days.

The following Grievance Procedure will be applied to grievances formally reported to The U3A:

1. A letter setting out the grievance should be prepared by the member (the Complainant). The letter should then be sent via post or email, to the Committee Secretary, The U3A.
2. The Management Committee will appoint a Grievance Officer (referred to below as the Officer), who may be a member of the Management Committee or a designated volunteer not involved with the grievance.
3. The Officer will then meet with the Complainant to ascertain the details and facts of their grievance/s.
4. After the meeting the Complainant, under step **3**), the Officer will meet all other parties involved in the grievance/s to ascertain the facts surrounding the grievance/s raised by the Complainant.
5. Following steps **3**) and **4**) above the Officer will hold a meeting between all parties involved, to try and find common ground leading to the satisfactory resolution of the grievance.

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6. If, after step 5), the grievance has not been resolved, the Officer, with reference to other parties as they see fit, will make a decision as to the validity of the grievance and decide on the matter.
7. If any of the parties involved are dissatisfied with the Officer's decision under 6), the matter will be referred to the Chairman of the Management Committee for a final decision after any further representations have been made.
8. As an alternative to making a decision under 7), the Management Committee, where appropriate, may appoint a facilitator to mediate between parties. This course of action must be acceptable to all parties, who will have to bear any associated costs. Any mediation outcome will be binding on all parties.
9. All meetings, actions, and outcomes, will be documented by a note taker, appointed by the Management Committee, who will attend all meetings.
10. Papers and meeting records will be retained by the Meeting Secretary of the Management Committee.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

This Disciplinary Procedure is underpinned by the Code of Conduct which applies to all members. The Procedure provides a mechanism to deal fairly with issues which arise because of a member's conduct. Misconduct could arise from a member's failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct, or their behaviour having a detrimental effect on The U3A. Key principles behind the Procedure are:

- a) Aim to quickly resolve any problems with a member, with fairness, care and understanding.
- b) Preserve confidentiality; involvement in the Procedure will be restricted to those with a defined role.
- c) In instances where the issue is more of a minor nature, an Officer of the Management Committee (the Officer), nominated by the Chairman, will seek to resolve the issue directly with the member. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved via this route then the Disciplinary Procedure will be followed.

The following Procedure will be applied to disciplinary matters reported to the Management Committee:

1. The Management Committee will appoint a Disciplinary Officer (referred to below as the Officer) to deal with the matter.
2. The Officer will send a formal letter to the member, setting out the alleged misconduct, and a suggested timetable for dealing with matter.
3. A meeting between the Officer and the member will be held to fully discuss the alleged misconduct.
4. The Officer will then report their findings to the Management Committee who, with the exception of the Chairman, will consider the matter. In their review of the Officer's findings, the Management Committee will take account of any mitigating circumstances, before agreeing what course of action is appropriate.
5. Possible actions include: a verbal or written warning, lasting for a fixed period; a final written warning; exclusion from a group/s; temporary suspension; or, as a final resort, termination of membership.
6. The Officer will notify the member concerned of the Management Committee's decision in writing.
7. All meetings, actions, and outcomes, including any appeal, will be documented by a note taker, appointed by the Management Committee, who will attend all meetings.
8. Papers and meeting records will be retained by the Meeting Secretary of the Management Committee.

Right of Appeal

- a) If a member does not accept the Management Committee's decision, particularly in the case of: exclusion from a group; temporary suspension; or termination of membership, they can appeal in writing to the Chairman of the Management Committee. Their appeal must be made within 7 days of the member receiving confirmation of the Management Committee's decision. The grounds for appeal against the Management Committee's decision must be clearly identified.
- b) The Chairman will hear the appeal promptly, and will allow the member, in writing or in person, to make any further representations, as may be deemed necessary and relevant. The member may be accompanied by a friend who may speak on behalf of the member at an appeal hearing. The Chairman will then make a final decision, which will be confirmed in writing to the member as promptly as possible.