

Keele SU Member Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

- i. The Keele SU Constitution provides that Keele SU may establish a Code of Conduct to set out our reasonable expectations of the behaviours of our members, with the aim of ensuring that all students have the best possible experience during their time here at Keele.

2. Scope

- i. This Code applies to;
 - Members of Keele SU¹
 - Keele SU societies
 - Keele Athletic Union clubs
 - Visitors to Keele SU premises
- ii. This code applies to behaviours/actions;
 - On Keele SU premises
 - Whilst using Keele SU facilities (including online)
 - When representing, or purporting to represent Keele SU
 - Whilst on Keele SU business
 - Whilst undertaking any activity supported by Keele SU
 - Whether in person, on-line, in writing, or by a physical act or gesture

3. Our Promises

- i. Keele SU expect our members to express their personalities and opinions positively and constructively. We believe that your time at university should be equally challenging and rewarding and we encourage you to explore new experiences and opportunities to grow as individuals and as members of our talented and diverse community. Broadly, we expect you to behave in line with our values. Equally, you can expect us to behave in line with these values, and we make these promises to you;
 - **We are student-led:** We will provide you with opportunities to lead our work, whether by taking on formal leadership responsibilities, for example in leading a society or sports team, or standing for an elected position, or by feeding into our democratic processes, electing your representatives, telling us what concerns you have with student life, or responding to our surveys so we can take your lead.
 - **We are there for you:** We provide high quality advice, representation and support services, as and when you might need them. The vibrant Keele community is founded on students supporting one another and we will work to sustain and develop this supportive community.

¹ 'Membership' refers to those Keele students registered on a course of study at Keele University, as defined by the Constitution, and include elected Full Time Sabbatical Officers.

- ***We are passionate about your future:*** Student Life is primarily a learning and development experience. We will provide opportunities for you to develop new skills, gain new friends and enhance your student experience, and to help us to understand what we might do differently to help you to achieve your ambitions.
- ***We are professional, but different:*** We aim for business-like efficiency with an entrepreneurial spirit, yet keep our charitable purpose and student beneficiaries foremost in our thoughts and plans. We will always recognise that there may be new and different ways of doing things.
- ***We are quirkily Keele:*** We aim to reflect Keele’s friendly, caring and creative nature, but more than that, we expect you to be you. We will help you find your quirkiness and let it run free here at Keele!

4. Misconduct

- i. We hope never to need to read past this point, but to ensure that when issues do arise they can be dealt with properly and fairly, it is important to set out what we consider to be misconduct and what might happen if this does occur.

- ii. The following are examples of behaviours that might result in disciplinary action being taken against a member. This list is not exhaustive, and aims to give a range of examples that, when read in conjunction with our values, help to set the tone for the behaviours we won’t tolerate in our community;
 - Threatening or abusive behaviour likely to make another member, or members, of the Keele community feel unreasonably vulnerable or unsafe
 - Bullying or harassment of another member, or members, of the Keele community
 - Any breach of Keele SU’s Equality and Diversity policies
 - Failure to comply with the university’s policy regarding freedom of speech
 - Any breach of Keele SU’s drugs and alcohol policies
 - Making defamatory or maliciously false statements about any member of the Keele community
 - Behaving in any manner that brings, or is likely to bring, Keele SU into disrepute
 - Misuse or unauthorised use of Keele SU premises, facilities or resources, including online facilities such as the Keele SU website
 - Damage to, defacement of, or misappropriation of Keele SU property, or the property of other Keele SU members, whether caused intentionally or recklessly
 - Breaches of any other Keele SU codes, policies or guidance that you should reasonably be aware of
 - Failure to comply with Keele SU financial rules and procedures
 - Interference with fire or security equipment, including activating alarms, other than in a genuine emergency
 - Any action likely to cause injury to, or acting without due regard to the safety of others

- iii. The following are examples of misconduct which shall be considered by Keele SU to constitute an act of serious misconduct;

- Discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation of others on the grounds of their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by relevant Equality legislation
- Physical or sexual violence or the threat of physical or sexual violence
- Theft, fraud, deceit, deception or dishonesty in relation to Keele SU, our staff, members, Trustees, or while representing, or purporting to represent Keele SU
- Use, possession, or supply of illegal drugs on Keele SU premises or during Keele SU activities, in contravention of our zero-tolerance to drugs position
- Committing a criminal offence with serious reputational, financial or other impactful implications for Keele SU and/or the Keele community
- Persistent or repeated acts of misconduct over an extended period

5. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

- i. Where a breach of this Code is identified, this policy shall be followed to fairly and appropriately investigate and decide on the matter. Disciplinary sanctions, as set out in this policy and others, may be applied as a result of a decision reached by that process.
- ii. Any actions or decisions taken under this Code do not preclude further and/or additional action being taken by the university and/or other agencies, including the Police, as may be appropriate. Keele SU may determine, at any stage of an investigation that it is reasonable and appropriate to refer a disciplinary matter to any such organisation as deemed appropriate to ensure the upholding of the law and to protect the interests of the Keele community.
- iii. In such cases that a stage one disciplinary sanction is applied, the matter will be recorded within the relevant Keele SU IT system for the purposes of enforcement, monitoring and discouragement of future misdemeanours.

6. Minor Breaches of the Code of Conduct

- i. An SU Manager, Full Time Elected Officer or official Keele SU security sub-contractor personnel may, at their empowered discretion, apply a stage one disciplinary sanction (as detailed at section 10) in response to an observed breach of the Code.
- ii. Examples of situations when this will apply include behaviour observed by sub-contracted security staff within Keele SU venues, or behaviour observed by Keele SU staff or Full Time Officers at a sporting event, a democratic forum or a society meeting.
- iii. If a sanction is applied that you feel is unjustified or disproportionate to the identified breach of the Code, you may appeal the decision following the appeals procedure set out in section 11.

7. Serious Breaches of the Code of Conduct & Formal Investigation

- i. Alleged serious breaches of the Code, or repeated and/or persistent minor breaches of the Code will result in a formal investigation.
- ii. A formal investigation will be led by an investigating person, who will convene a small investigatory panel to consider the facts of the complaint.
- iii. The panel will consist of;

Stage 2 Investigations and stage 1 appeals	The investigating person (an SU Manager or Deputy manager) One other SU Manager or Deputy Manager Any other official person the investigating person deems appropriate to support an effective resolution
Stage 3 Investigations and Stage 2 & 3 appeals	The investigating person (an SU Manager or Deputy Manager) An SU Senior Manager An elected Full Time Officer Any other official person the investigating person deems appropriate to support an effective resolution

- iv. Where an investigation is conducted as a result of a member complaint, normal principles of natural justice determine that the accused will know who is making the complaint against them, and this will be upheld, save for in circumstances where, in the view of the panel, the complainant may be exposed to additional risk of physical or emotional harm.
- v. The panel will invite statements from each of the person making the allegation or complaint, and the alleged perpetrator. If it is deemed valuable and appropriate, the panel may request the complainant and/or alleged perpetrator attends a meeting to discuss the facts of the case. The complainant and/or alleged perpetrator may attend such a meeting with a friend in a support capacity.
- vi. The panel will consider the facts presented and make a judgement as to whether or not a breach of the Code has been committed. The panel will make a decision from the following options;
 - Seek further information from the complainant and/or others before making a decision
 - To uphold the complaint and apply a stage one, two or three disciplinary sanction to the alleged perpetrator
 - Dismiss the complaint as frivolous, vexatious, without foundation or for otherwise failing to demonstrate a breach of the Code
- vii. The decision of the panel, including the specific details of any sanction applied, will be communicated clearly to the alleged perpetrator.

- viii. The decision of the panel whether the complaint has been upheld or not will be communicated to the complainant. The panel will inform the complainant if a disciplinary sanction is to be applied, but will not ordinarily discuss the details of the sanction. Only if the case involves some risk of immediate harm to the complainant, and having taken specialist advice as may appropriate, will we discuss the details of the sanction with a complainant.
- ix. In all cases, the investigating person will identify the range of support services available to both the complainant and alleged perpetrator within the SU and university community.
- x. If a sanction is applied that you feel is unjustified or disproportionate to the identified breach of the Code, you may appeal the decision following the appeals procedure set out in section 11.

8. Raising a complaint against another Member

- i. It is commonly considered good practise for complaints to be addressed informally in the first instance, and we encourage you to consider doing so. If you do not feel comfortable or safe to do so, or if it would otherwise be inappropriate to raise the matter informally, you may raise a complaint under this procedure by;

- Writing to the Union Development and Democracy Officer (su.uddofficer@keele.ac.uk) or to another full-time elected Officer if the complaint is about the UDD Officer, or;
- Completing the online **form (TBC)**

And;

- Explaining as fully as you can how you believe there has been a breach of the Member Code of Conduct, and if appropriate, what action you would like to see taken.
- ii. The UDD Officer, or their designate, will ordinarily acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 7 days, explaining what will happen next.

9. Investigating a Member complaint

- i. The UDD Officer will consider the complaint and seek to appoint an appropriate investigating person. Depending on the nature of the complaint, this may be a manager or senior leader from the SU, an elected Keele SU student representative, a Keele SU Trustee, or an external person of relevant skill and experience.
- ii. The investigating person will consider the nature of the complaint, in line with the guidance provided by the Member Code of Conduct, and will take one of the following actions;
 - Seek further information from the complainant and/or others before making a decision
 - Apply a stage one disciplinary sanction to the alleged perpetrator
 - Dismiss the complaint as frivolous, vexatious, without foundation or for failing to demonstrate a breach of the Code of Conduct
 - Convene a formal investigation to consider if a stage two (or higher) disciplinary sanction is appropriate

10. Disciplinary Sanctions

- i. These disciplinary sanctions are designed to address undesirable behaviours to promote a healthy, supportive student community at Keele SU. They are intended to encourage good behaviour by dissuading misconduct, and by giving members who have committed minor breaches the opportunity to learn and re-engage productively with Keele SU's community activities and events.
- ii. The table beneath provides guidance on the types of misconduct that might attract a sanction, and what that sanction might be. Those deciding what sanctions to apply will give due consideration to the type of activity engaged in, the opportunity for the perpetrator to learn from the situation and the interests of the complainant.
- iii. With all of the above in mind, and in promoting efficiency of the procedure, level one sanctions may be applied immediately by an SU official (SU Staff, a full time elected Officer and/or a sub-contractor working for Keele SU) without the need for an investigation.
- iv. Ordinarily, sanctions will be applicable with immediate effect, though the circumstances of each case shall be considered and this position adjusted if appropriate.
- v. Note that sanctions may be applied to individuals and/or groups, for example a club or society, if deemed appropriate.

Sanction Level	Example Behaviour	Possible Sanctions	Sanction applied by
One	<p>Minor misconduct, including;</p> <p>Minor breach of SU rules/policy with limited negative impact</p> <p>One-off behaviour that makes others feel threatened emotionally or physically</p> <p>One-off abusive/misleading behaviour towards Keele SU staff, representatives or members</p> <p>One off refusal to follow the reasonable instructions of a Keele SU official</p>	<p>One or more from;</p> <p>Immediate rectification of damage</p> <p>Spot fine (max £25)</p> <p>Ejection from premises</p> <p>Removal from or prevention from participating in one activity/event/match/game/training activity</p> <p>Short term ban (maximum 7 days) from participating in a relevant activity/event/ attending a venue</p>	<p>Any one from;</p> <p>SU Manager</p> <p>Full Time elected Officer</p> <p>Official</p> <p>Sub-contractor (e.g. security company)</p>

	<p>Soiling of premises/vehicles</p> <p>Minor/low value theft</p> <p>Minor verbal abuse</p> <p>Minor physical assault</p>	<p>Written warning</p>	
Two	<p>Repeated minor misconduct</p> <p>Behaviour that is intended to make others feel threatened emotionally or physically</p> <p>Physical assault</p> <p>Verbal Abuse</p> <p>Damage to premises/facilities</p> <p>Drugs related offences</p> <p>Indirect or one-off instance of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, disablism, or other prejudicial and/or discriminatory behaviour.</p> <p>Breach of level one sanctions</p>	<p>One or more from;</p> <p>Medium term ban (maximum 35 days) from participating in a relevant activity/ event/ attending a venue</p> <p>Written warning</p> <p>Requirement to fund replacement/repair of damaged items</p> <p>Referred to university disciplinary procedures</p> <p>Temporary suspension of membership benefits</p>	<p>Investigating panel</p>
Three	<p>Persistent repeated minor misconduct</p> <p>Serious assault, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including sexual harassment or misconduct</p> <p>Aggressive or serious sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, disablism, or other prejudicial</p>	<p>Long term ban (range of 60 days to permanent exclusion) from participating in a relevant activity/ event/ attending a venue</p> <p>Referred to university disciplinary procedures</p>	<p>Investigating panel, to include an elected Full Time Officer & SU Senior Manager</p>

	and/or discriminatory behaviour. Serious drugs-related offences Breach of level two sanctions	Temporary or permanent suspension of membership benefits	
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11. Appeals

- i. It can be the case that mistakes are made by the investigating panel in deciding an outcome of a complaint or disciplinary matter, likewise, new information may come to light that may have changed the outcome of an investigation, or you may feel a sanction is unjustified or disproportionate. The appeals process gives both Keele SU and members the opportunity to revisit and re-evaluate decisions made to ensure the outcome is appropriate and effective.
- ii. A complainant may appeal the outcome of a complaint investigation by writing to the UDD Officer (su.uddofficer@keele.ac.uk) within 7 days of being told of the outcome of their complaint. They should seek to explain the grounds for the appeal as fully as possible.
- iii. A member against whom a complaint has been upheld and/or disciplinary sanctions applied may appeal the decision made against them by writing to the UDD Officer (su.uddofficer@keele.ac.uk) within 7 days of being told of the outcome of their complaint. They should seek to explain the grounds for the appeal as fully as possible.
- iv. Upon receipt of an appeal, the UDD Officer shall follow the same process as for the Investigation in to a complaint, but will delegate investigatory responsibilities to a different investigating person, who will convene a different, and non-conflicted investigating panel, who in turn, will revisit the case along the same lines as previous, before determining whether the outcome arrived at previously was correct or not.
- v. The investigating person will write to the appealing member with the outcome of their investigation and any further decisions made.
- vi. The outcome of an appeals process is final.