

Students Nova Scotia

Code of Conduct

Preface

This Code of Conduct sets out the required levels of conduct at StudentsNS (Students Nova Scotia) conferences, official events, and privately organized events during the course of a StudentsNS conference or official event, as defined henceforth as StudentsNS Business. All StudentsNS Business attendees must review and agree to abide by this Code as a condition of attendance at any StudentsNS Business. Violations of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and may result in various repercussions. Repercussions include, but are not limited to, attendee's suspension from the conference without refund, and/or a ban from future attendance at any StudentsNS Business.

Part 1: Scope

This Code addresses Human Rights standards (i.e. anti-harassment and anti-discrimination standards), alcohol usage standards, and expected standards of conduct for StudentsNS Business practices. There may also be other standards of conduct/rules (such as the rules of the Host School) with which attendees may be expected to comply. These rules/standards will be brought to attendees' attention prior to the commencement of the StudentsNS Business.

StudentsNS is not liable for delegates' conduct that may occur outside of StudentsNS Business. Such events may include, without limitation, events privately organized in the course of individuals' attendance at a StudentsNS Business. By registering for any StudentsNS Conference, the attendee expressly acknowledges this Code of Conduct and accepts that StudentsNS bears no responsibility of any kind or any nature in respect of any such conduct.

Part 2: Definitions

2.1 "Alcohol abuse" means consuming alcohol to the point of legal intoxication or to a level which, in the sole discretion of the Board Officers, is excessive.

2.2 "Alcohol use" refers to alcohol consumption that is acceptable to the extent that a reasonable person would consume in the same circumstances. The standard of conduct is centered on reasonable and responsible drinking.

2.3 "Attendee" includes any delegate, staff, observer, or guest appearing at, or attending, any StudentsNS Business in connection with a member school.

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2.4 “Board” means the StudentsNS Board of Directors.

2.5 “Board Officers” means the Chair or Vice Chair of the StudentsNS Board of Directors.

2.6 “StudentsNS Business” include StudentsNS four (4) annual conferences, as well as StudentsNS-related business activities, including, but is not limited to, committee meetings, committee of the whole, lobby meetings, Student-Government Roundtables or any session relating to the affairs of StudentsNS. StudentsNS Business does not include events or meetings that are organized privately by individuals attending StudentsNS conferences/events.

2.7 “StudentsNS Official Event” means an event that is endorsed or hosted by StudentsNS proper. It does not include events or meetings that are organized privately by individuals attending any StudentsNS Business.

2.8 “Conference Facility” refers to any hotel or other accommodation utilized for lodging attendees or holding meetings associated with StudentsNS Business.

2.9 “Privately Organized Event” means an event that is privately organized by individuals attending StudentsNS Business. This could include, but is not limited to, spontaneous excursions, hotel gatherings, or visits at a local establishment.

2.10 “Substance Use” means utilizing banned substances (other than for medicinal purposes).

Part 3: Enumerated Grounds for Violation of the Code of Conduct

The following is a list of actions that may constitute a violation of the code of conduct.

3.1 Violation of Human Rights

StudentsNS supports and abides by the principles articulated in any applicable Human Rights legislation mandated by the Federal Government or the Province of Nova Scotia. It supports diversity, and mandates equal treatment of all without discrimination on the basis of race, colour, gender, gender identity, ancestry, place of origin, social origin, social condition, ethnic origin, source of income, political belief, affiliation or activity, religious belief, association, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, same-sex partnership status, family status and physical or mental disability. The preceding will henceforth be known as “the enumerated grounds” for Students Nova Scotia.

3.2 Discriminatory Treatment

Attendees will not engage in behaviour that, in any way, discriminates, demeans, or treats another member adversely on the basis of any of the enumerated grounds. Examples of

discriminatory treatment may include inappropriate use of language during StudentsNS Business, denial of a benefit based on any enumerated ground and/or any other conduct which in any way differentiates or distinguishes members on the basis of any enumerated ground.

3.3 Harassment

Attendees shall not harass other attendees on the basis of any enumerated ground. "Harassment" for the purpose of this Code of Conduct includes a course of unwelcome conduct or comment that is known, or reasonably known, to be unwelcome. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment. Examples of sexual harassment may include:

- I. Unwelcome physical contact;
- II. Unwelcome sexual remarks or jokes, which denigrate one's gender;
- III. Unwelcome sexual solicitations or advances;
- IV. Displaying derogatory materials such as pictures that denigrate a gender.

3.4 Alcohol Abuse

During StudentsNS Business, as well as private events organized during the course of StudentsNS Business, alcohol consumption is permitted to the extent that a reasonable person would consume in the same circumstances. The standard of conduct is centered on reasonable and responsible drinking. Any person found to be engaging in alcohol abuse may, at the discretion of the Board Officers, be suspended from StudentsNS Business without reimbursement of any conference related fees, and/or may be banned from future participation in future StudentsNS Business. Alcohol use is however strictly prohibited during StudentsNS meetings. Alcohol abuse will not be tolerated in the following capacity:

- I. At official StudentsNS Events;
- II. While representing StudentsNS in an official capacity;
- III. At the expense of participation in an official StudentsNS event;
- IV. *Report to Officer:* Attendees who become aware of alcohol abuse or substance use during the course of StudentsNS Business must report that abuse/use to the Board Officers immediately. The Board Officers will take appropriate steps to address any such conduct.

3.5 Criminal Behaviour

Members shall not engage in any conduct deemed illegal by the Criminal Code of Canada. Criminal behaviour constitutes grounds for immediate suspension from the StudentsNS Business without refund, and may be banned from participation in future StudentsNS Business. Such conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- I. Criminal harassment of any kind contrary to Section 264 of the Criminal Code;
- II. Assault contrary to Section 265 Criminal Code;
- III. Sexual Assault contrary to Section 271-273 Criminal Code – Please see the definition of "consent" at Section 153 (2) of the Criminal Code;
- IV. Substance use contrary to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act;

- V. Possession of any weapon in accordance with Section 4 (3) of the Criminal Code, for definitions and interpretation around possession.

Part 4: Business Practices

4.1 StudentsNS, as a non-profit, non-partisan, provincial advocacy organization, mandates a high standard of ethical business practice and integrity among its delegates. All delegates, staff, observers, and guests must conduct business in an ethical manner that promotes honesty, fairness, consideration, and enlightened professionalism. An infringement of business best practice conduct includes, but is not limited to, knowingly misrepresenting, for personal gain or otherwise, an issue of importance to the membership/other members.

4.2 Members are expected to display behaviour that respects this Code of Conduct during all StudentsNS Business.

4.3 By attending a StudentsNS meeting or conference, the member expressly acknowledges this Code of Conduct and accepts that StudentsNS bears no responsibility of any kind or any nature in respect of any such conduct.

4.4 Conflict of Interest

Members of StudentsNS shall not engage in any business or transaction of a financial or personal nature that may compromise, or be perceived to compromise, the fair and honest discharge of their duties. No member of StudentsNS shall make a decision or participate in making a decision related to the exercise of an official power, duty, or function if they know or reasonably should know, that in making the decision, they would be in a conflict of interest. No member of StudentsNS shall give preferential treatment to any directly associated person or organization, or use information or influence obtained in their position that is not available to the public to improperly further one's private interests or the private interests of a directly associated person or organization. All members of StudentsNS shall immediately declare any potential conflict of interest for themselves or on behalf of any directly associated person or organization. They shall not participate in deliberations or vote on any resolution pertaining to that interest. A member's disclosed conflict of interest will be noted in the official minutes of the meeting. If a member has disclosed a conflict of interest, StudentsNS has the right to exclude them from the deliberations on that matter pertaining to their conflict of interest as deemed by the Board.

4.5 Privacy and Confidentiality

StudentsNS shall act in accordance with all state laws regarding privacy, confidentiality and the collection of personal information. All StudentsNS members shall acknowledge that in their position they may be privy to confidential information regarding the business and operations of StudentsNS. It is essential to the success of StudentsNS to keep the business and affairs of the organization in the strictest confidence, both internally, and with those external to the operations

of StudentsNS. All members agree that all information concerning any matters affecting or relating to StudentsNS and the business affairs of the organization, which are acquired during the term of their membership, shall at all times and for all purposes, be held in trust for the benefit of StudentsNS and shall be held in strict confidence. Members agree that they will not disclose, divulge, authorize anyone to divulge, communicate orally, in writing or otherwise to any person or persons any confidential information without the prior review and approval of StudentsNS. All members of StudentsNS shall immediately report any breach of privacy or confidentiality to the Board Officers.

Part 5: Grievance Process and Reporting

5.1 Reporting

Attendees who become aware of violations of this Code of Conduct at StudentsNS Business must report that abuse/use to the Board Officers immediately. The Board Officers will take appropriate steps to address any such conduct. Where an attendee believes they have experienced discrimination or harassment by another attendee, that individual should:

- I. Raise their concern and attempt to resolve it directly with the individual involved; AND/OR
- II. If the attendee deems it appropriate, immediately bring their concern to the attention of the Board Officers either personally, by phone or by email.

5.2 Complaints process

Upon receipt of a complaint (whether written or verbal) by an attendee, the Board Officers will take appropriate steps to investigate and address the matter. These steps may include:

- I. Where a verbal complaint has been received, asking the complainant to put their concerns in writing;
- II. Requesting that the respondent reply to the complaint either verbally or in writing;
- III. Investigating the allegations of discrimination/harassment;
- IV. Meeting with the concerned parties;
- V. Mediating the dispute, and/or;
- VI. Involving the Board for the purpose of suspending the perpetrator from the Business and any other disciplinary action which the Board, in its discretion, deems necessary.

Part 6: Enforcement of the Code of Conduct

6.1 Violations of the Code of Conduct will be reviewed by the Chair and Vice Chair. If the complaint is against the Chair and/or the Vice Chair, the respective individual will be removed from the investigation process.

6.2 Behaviours considered violations of this Code of Conduct could result in various repercussions, ranging from a verbal or written notice, suspension, or other. More than two written notices of violations will result in an immediate suspension.

6.3 In circumstances where an attendee is suspended or expelled from a conference, that attendee shall be required to leave the conference and the conference facilities immediately upon being requested to do so. In such event, the attendee shall not be refunded any registration or conference related fees, nor shall StudentsNS bear responsibility for assuming any costs associated with such early departure, whether arising from the requirement to alter travel arrangements or otherwise.

6.4 Any criminal behaviour committed at a StudentsNS conference will result in immediate suspension from the conference, and all participation in StudentsNS events. The individual's StudentsNS privileges will be revoked while a proper investigation is undertaken.

Part 7: Appeals

7.1 In the case when an attendee is the subject of a suspension, pending investigation/review or found, by the Board, to be in violation of the code of conduct, the attendee shall have ten days from the date of outcome delivery to appeal this outcome.

7.2 In the event that an appeal is initiated by a member of the Board on their own behalf (i.e. where a member has been disciplined), the process for appeal shall be the same; with the exception that the affected member of the Board Officers shall be excluded from the review process and such review shall be conducted by the remaining members.

7.3 All appeals shall be directed to the Board. Appeals shall be in writing and will describe, in detail, the nature of the events giving rise to the discipline as well as the precise discipline imposed (ex. suspension from a Conference, banning from future Conferences etc.) and the remedy sought ["A Letter of Appeal"].

7.4 Upon receipt of a Letter of Appeal the Board Officers shall, in their discretion, determine whether to uphold, modify or revoke the discipline imposed. It is the Board's mandate that within 30 days of receipt of the Letter of Appeal, advise the attendee, in writing, of the decision. There shall be no further right of appeal following the written decision of the Board Officers having been issued.

Acknowledgement

The attendee acknowledges that they have read and understood the contents of this Code of Conduct and that they agree to abide by it. The member further acknowledges that participation in all StudentsNS business is entirely voluntary and that StudentsNS bears no responsibility for any damages that may occur or arise in the course of such attendance.

Signatures

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