

Scottish Poetry Library

Code of Conduct for the Scottish Poetry Library

This document sets out what the standards of expected behaviour are for everyone undertaking work for, with and on behalf of the Scottish Poetry Library (SPL). These standards apply to our board members, staff, volunteers, advisory bodies and commissioned third-parties. This code of conduct also applies to anyone who works on an individual's behalf at events or represents them in communications with the SPL or host organisations, for example as an agent or publicist. As the nation's home of poetry, we value our reputation as a sector lead organisation. We also value the safety and comfort of everyone who engages with us.

We take a proactive role in challenging inappropriate conduct such as bullying, harassment and physical assault, and we will not tolerate abuse on the grounds of a person's disability, race, language, religion, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation. We ensure the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults through nurturing an environment that is safe, secure and where creativity can flourish. The SPL also respects the rights and freedom of expression of writers and other creative practitioners.

As a charitable organisation, the SPL aims to apply and adhere to the legal and good practice guidelines of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), to whom we would report any notifiable events.

Defining misconduct

Misconduct is when the behaviour of someone undertaking work for, with or on behalf of the SPL does not meet expected standards of behaviour, and their actions or conduct leads to

- harm of other people or endangers them
- a negative effect on the success of people's engagement with the SPL
- reputational damage of the practitioner, 3rd parties or the SPL

This policy sets out expected standards of behaviour and seeks to convey not just *what* people do but *how* they do it while representing or supported by the SPL. These standards emphasise the need to be respectful and professional at all times. If it is clear that an individual has not been respectful or professional, this is misconduct.

Where this is unclear, the SPL takes into account that

- behaviour that is considered misconduct by one person may be considered acceptable by another, and
- SPL activity takes place in a variety of settings and involves a wide range of audiences and themes. Some aspects of the understanding of appropriate and professional conduct will vary depending upon the context of the activity.

For this reason, we emphasise the importance of clear, honest communication.

Scottish Poetry Library

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Expected standards of behaviour

1. When carrying out events supported by the SPL, we expect individuals to act with integrity and good faith when communicating with the SPL or host organisations.
2. Individuals must respect audiences and the staff of the SPL or host organisations. They should always be professional, respectful and appropriate. The SPL will always treat individuals with the same respect and professionalism in return.
3. The SPL supports equality, diversity and inclusion and does not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. We expect that individuals will act in a way that upholds these standards when working with us.
4. Individuals must respect confidential information gained in the course of engaging with us, e.g. creative writing workshops, **unless** the wellbeing of an individual requires disclosure to the SPL or host organisation, or relevant authorities.
5. In most circumstances, individuals do not have to have a Disclosure/PVG check to carry out SPL events. It is expected that they will work with the SPL or host organisation to ensure they are not left alone with children or vulnerable adults.
6. If the SPL or host organisation informs individuals of health and safety, safeguarding (Disclosure) or public liability insurance policies that apply during their visit, they must follow them.

Please be aware that our code of conduct applies to online activity. We have adapted the best practice guidance on social media from Scottish Book Trust, which can be read in our E-mail, Social Media and Internet policy (available on our website).

Process for investigating misconduct

Where problems or conflicts arise and are brought to our attention, the SPL will do its best to informally resolve issues between parties. With regards to specific reports of misconduct, we will investigate with due diligence and may ask to see any available communications relating to the matter.

Matters relating to misconduct should be reported to Aly Barr, Head of Operations & Deputy Director - email: aly.barr@spl.org.uk. A complaints register will be maintained. Serious allegations will be brought to the attention of the Director and, where appropriate, the Chair of the Board.

Scottish Poetry Library

Should it be decided that the matter cannot be informally resolved, we will aim to complete our investigation within 28 days. This might involve seeking legal or other specialist advice, which could result in a lengthier process.

Following the investigation, where the complaint is upheld or partly-upheld on the balance of probabilities, the SPL may take some or all of the following steps:

- Issue a warning that any future misconduct will result in the SPL ceasing to book an individual for future events or removing the individual from groups that the SPL has responsibility for or that meet at the SPL.
- Ask to meet with the individual about whom the complaint has been made to discuss how the situation can be avoided in the future.
- Where misconduct by an individual is serious, or presents a risk to audiences or the SPL's reputation, we reserve the right to cancel events, future bookings or terminate voluntary agreements at our discretion.
 - This includes removing them from groups or activities that the SPL has responsibility for, or that meet and take place at the SPL. This applies to formal charges of criminal activity and offensive comments on social media such as Twitter and Facebook.
 - We reserve the right to remove that individual's profile from our website while we look into the matter. We will also contact the Police or relevant regulatory authorities when deemed necessary.
- The SPL reserves the right to withhold or deny payment for events/sessions where serious misconduct has occurred.

Where an allegation of misconduct relates to a member of SPL staff or volunteers, the SPL's Grievance and Disciplinary policies will apply. Any matters relating to the trustees (the board) will be referred to the board chair.

Policy Approved by the Board: May 2018

Date revised: June 2019

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