

Out East Fencing Club

Code of Conduct

Document status: Club policy

Approved by: Board of Directors

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1. Purpose

1.1. Out East Fencing Club (the **Club**) is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, inclusive and enjoyable environment in which people can learn, train and participate in fencing.

1.2. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected from everyone involved in the Club.

1.3. The Code applies to conduct that takes place during Club activities and, where relevant, to conduct outside Club activities that has a significant connection with the Club or affects the safety or welfare of Club participants.

1.4. The Code is intended to provide clear expectations rather than an exhaustive list of prohibited behaviour.

1.5. A breach of this Code may be addressed under the Club's Complaints Policy & Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy or another appropriate procedure.

2. Who the Code Applies To

This Code applies to:

- adult members;
- youth members;

- parents and guardians;
- Directors;
- coaches and instructors;
- employees;
- volunteers;
- contractors;
- competition participants; and
- visitors attending Club activities.

Different responsibilities may apply depending on a person's role within the Club.

3. Our Standards

Everyone involved in the Club is expected to:

- treat others with dignity and respect;
- behave honestly and responsibly;
- follow reasonable instructions intended to maintain safety;
- respect personal boundaries;
- contribute to an inclusive environment;
- avoid behaviour that could reasonably intimidate, humiliate or distress another person;
- raise concerns appropriately rather than attempting to deal with serious matters through confrontation or retaliation; and
- take reasonable responsibility for their own conduct.

4. Respectful Behaviour

4.1. People participating in Club activities should communicate with one another respectfully, including when disagreeing.

4.2. The Club does not accept:

- bullying;
- harassment;
- intimidation;
- threatening behaviour;

- abusive or degrading language;
- deliberate humiliation;
- unwanted sexual behaviour or attention;
- discriminatory behaviour;
- persistent disruptive behaviour; or
- deliberate behaviour intended to make another participant feel unsafe or unwelcome.

4.3. Good-natured competition, disagreement or robust discussion is not prohibited. The distinction is whether behaviour remains respectful and appropriate to the circumstances.

4.4. People should take reasonable care not to escalate disagreements and should seek assistance from a coach, Welfare Officer or other appropriate Club representative where necessary.

5. Equality, Inclusion and Respect for Identity

5.1. The Club welcomes people of all backgrounds and identities and seeks to provide an environment in which everyone can participate in fencing safely, comfortably and without discrimination or harassment.

5.2. This includes people of different:

- ages;
- races and ethnicities;
- nationalities;
- religions or beliefs;
- sexual orientations;
- gender identities and gender expressions;
- disabilities and health-related needs; and
- social or economic backgrounds.

5.3. The Club is committed to being a **queer-friendly and LGBTQ+ inclusive** club.

Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic behaviour, jokes, slurs, harassment or deliberate misgendering are not acceptable.

5.4. Participants should respect the names and pronouns that people ask others to use.

5.5. No person should be pressured to disclose personal information about their sexual orientation, gender identity, transition, medical history or other sensitive personal circumstances.

5.6. The Club will seek to make reasonable adjustments and practical arrangements that enable people to participate safely and comfortably, including where a person's disability, gender identity or other circumstances affect their participation.

5.7. The Club will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, intimidation or exclusion based on a protected characteristic or another personal characteristic.

5.8. Further information about the Club's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion will be set out in its Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

6. Fencing Safety

6.1. Fencing involves inherent risks, including the use of weapons and movement at speed. Everyone participating in fencing has a responsibility to take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of others.

6.2. Participants must:

- follow reasonable instructions from coaches and Club officials;
- use appropriate protective equipment;
- use equipment responsibly;
- respect piste and training-area boundaries;
- remain aware of other participants and activity around them;
- report unsafe equipment or conditions;
- behave appropriately when using fencing weapons; and
- stop activity when instructed to do so.

6.3. Participants must not:

- use fencing weapons irresponsibly or as a means of intimidation;
- deliberately endanger another person;
- continue an activity after being instructed to stop;
- deliberately interfere with another person's equipment;
- engage in horseplay involving weapons or other fencing equipment; or
- knowingly use damaged or unsafe equipment without reporting it.

6.4. Coaches and Club officials may immediately stop or modify an activity where they reasonably consider this necessary for safety.

7. Coaches and Instructors

7.1. Coaches and instructors have additional responsibilities because of their position of authority and trust.

7.2. Coaches should:

- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- treat participants fairly and respectfully;
- provide instruction appropriate to the participant's ability and circumstances;
- give feedback constructively;
- maintain appropriate supervision;
- follow the Club's safeguarding and welfare requirements;
- respect confidentiality appropriately; and
- report safeguarding, welfare or safety concerns.

7.3. Coaches must not use their position to:

- intimidate or humiliate participants;
- exploit personal relationships;
- show inappropriate favouritism;
- engage in inappropriate relationships with youth participants;
- request inappropriate personal information or images;
- communicate with children inappropriately; or
- use Club activities to pursue inappropriate personal, financial or romantic interests.

7.4. Physical contact should be limited to what is reasonably necessary for coaching, safety or first aid and should be appropriate to the circumstances.

7.5. Coaches should follow the Club's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Welfare Policy & Procedure.

8. Directors, Officers and Volunteers

8.1. Directors, officers and volunteers are expected to act in the interests of the Club and to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with members.

8.2. They should:

- act honestly and responsibly;
- avoid conflicts of interest or declare them where they arise;
- respect confidential information;
- avoid using their position for inappropriate personal benefit;
- treat members and colleagues fairly;
- follow relevant Club policies; and
- raise concerns through appropriate channels.

8.3. Directors must also comply with their statutory and constitutional responsibilities and the Club's Board Governance & Decision-Making Procedure and Conflicts of Interest Policy & Procedure.

9. Children and Young People

9.1. The Club expects adults to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children and young people at all times.

9.2. Adults involved in youth activities must follow the Club's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

9.3. Adults should not:

- engage in inappropriate private communications with children;
- arrange inappropriate private meetings;
- share inappropriate images or material;
- use inappropriate language or behaviour;
- engage in sexual or romantic behaviour with a child; or
- use their position to manipulate, pressure or exploit a child.

9.4. Children and young people are expected to treat other participants, coaches and volunteers respectfully, subject to their age and level of understanding.

9.5. The Club recognises that children may require additional support and that behaviour should be considered in an age-appropriate context.

10. Parents and Guardians

10.1. Parents and guardians are important members of the Club community and are expected to support a positive environment.

10.2. Parents and guardians should:

- treat coaches, volunteers, officials and other participants respectfully;
- support reasonable Club safety requirements;
- avoid putting inappropriate pressure on children or coaches;
- raise concerns through appropriate channels;
- respect coaching decisions during sessions; and
- support their child's participation in a constructive manner.

10.3. Parents and guardians must not:

- threaten, abuse or intimidate coaches, volunteers, officials or other participants;
- attempt to interfere improperly with coaching or competition;
- encourage unsafe or abusive behaviour;
- confront another child directly about a dispute where an appropriate Club process should be used; or
- use Club activities as a setting for personal disputes with other participants.

11. Youth Member Conduct

11.1. Youth members and beginners are expected to behave appropriately towards other participants, coaches and volunteers.

11.2. Expectations will be applied in an age-appropriate manner.

11.3. Young people participating in activities related to the Club should:

- listen to coaches and follow reasonable safety instructions;
- treat other participants respectfully;
- use equipment appropriately;

- avoid bullying and intimidation;
- tell a trusted adult if something makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable; and
- take reasonable care of Club and other people's property.

11.4. The Club recognises that children and young people may make mistakes and that behaviour should be dealt with constructively and proportionately.

12. Personal Boundaries and Physical Contact

12.1. Everyone has the right to reasonable personal boundaries.

12.2. Participants should respect another person's indication that they do not want physical contact or interaction, except where immediate intervention is necessary for safety.

12.3. Fencing and coaching may involve appropriate physical contact. Such contact should have a legitimate coaching, safety or first-aid purpose.

12.4. Unnecessary, inappropriate or sexualised physical contact is not acceptable.

13. Changing Areas and Personal Privacy

13.1. Participants should respect the privacy of others when using changing rooms, toilets or other private areas.

13.2. Photography or recording in changing areas, toilets or other areas where people reasonably expect privacy is prohibited.

13.3. Adults working with youth participants must follow the Club's safeguarding arrangements concerning changing, supervision and privacy.

13.4. Participants should avoid behaviour that could reasonably make others feel unsafe or uncomfortable in private areas.

14. Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking

14.1. No person may participate in Club activities while impaired by alcohol or recreational drugs where this could compromise their safety, judgement or the safety of others.

14.2. Smoking or vaping must comply with applicable law and the rules of the relevant venue.

14.3. The Club may take appropriate action where alcohol or drug use creates a safety, welfare or conduct concern.

15. Online and Social Media Conduct

15.1. The standards in this Code apply to online behaviour where the behaviour has a sufficient connection with the Club or its participants.

15.2. Participants should not use Club-related online spaces to:

- bully or harass others;
- threaten or intimidate;
- share inappropriate or private information;
- publish images of others without appropriate permission;
- make discriminatory or abusive comments; or
- deliberately damage another person's reputation through malicious or misleading conduct.

15.3. Adults communicating with children on behalf of the Club must follow the safeguarding requirements governing such communications.

15.4. Further requirements are set out in the Club's Photography & Social Media Policy.

16. Photography and Recording

16.1. Photography and recording at Club activities must comply with the Club's Photography & Social Media Policy and applicable consent arrangements.

16.2. Participants must respect reasonable requests not to be photographed or recorded.

16.3. No person should photograph or record another person in a private or sensitive setting.

16.4. Images or recordings must not be used to harass, embarrass, exploit or otherwise harm another person.

17. Property and Equipment

17.1. Participants must take reasonable care of:

- Club property;
- fencing equipment;
- venue property; and
- other participants' belongings.

17.2. Equipment must be used only for its intended or authorised purpose.

17.3. Damage, loss or unsafe equipment should be reported promptly.

17.4. Deliberate or reckless damage to Club or other people's property may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

18. Competition and Club Events

18.1. The Code applies at competitions, demonstrations, social events and other activities organised or supported by the Club.

18.2. Participants should respect:

- opponents;
- referees and officials;
- coaches;
- volunteers;
- venue staff; and
- other participants.

18.3. Competitive frustration does not justify abusive, threatening or discriminatory behaviour.

18.4. Participants must also comply with the rules of the relevant competition or event organiser.

19. Visitors and Guests

19.1. Visitors and guests are expected to comply with reasonable Club rules and venue requirements while attending Club activities.

19.2. A member who brings a guest may be asked to ensure that the guest understands relevant expectations.

19.3. The Club may ask a visitor or guest to leave where their behaviour creates a safety, welfare or conduct concern.

20. Raising Concerns

20.1. Anyone who experiences or witnesses behaviour that may breach this Code is encouraged to raise the concern.

20.2. Depending on the nature of the concern, it may be raised with:

- a coach;
- the Welfare Officer;
- a Director;
- another appropriate Club representative; or
- an appropriate external safeguarding or statutory organisation where necessary.

20.3. Concerns involving possible abuse or risk of harm to a child must be dealt with in accordance with the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

20.4. Complaints about the Club or its services should normally be dealt with under the Complaints Policy & Procedure.

20.5. Serious or repeated breaches of this Code will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

21. Retaliation

21.1. The Club does not tolerate retaliation against a person who raises a genuine concern or participates appropriately in a complaint, safeguarding process or disciplinary matter.

21.2. Concerns about retaliation should themselves be reported and may be treated as a breach of this Code.

21.3. A concern that is not ultimately substantiated should not be treated as malicious merely because it was unsuccessful.

22. Consequences of Breaching the Code

22.1. The Club will respond to breaches of this Code proportionately and according to the circumstances.

22.2. Depending on the circumstances, action may include:

- informal discussion or guidance;
- an apology or other restorative action;
- additional supervision or support;
- a formal warning;
- restrictions on participation;
- suspension;
- removal from a particular activity;
- termination of membership or another relationship with the Club; or
- referral to British Fencing, the police or another appropriate authority.

22.3. Formal disciplinary action shall be handled in accordance with the Club's Disciplinary Procedure.

22.4. Safeguarding concerns shall be handled in accordance with the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and should not be delayed by a disciplinary process.

22.5. The Club may take immediate temporary measures where necessary to protect participants or maintain safety while a matter is considered.

23. Fair and Proportionate Application

23.1. The Club will seek to apply this Code fairly and proportionately.

23.2. In considering an alleged breach, the Club may take account of:

- the seriousness of the behaviour;

- whether the behaviour was deliberate;
- whether harm was caused or reasonably foreseeable;
- whether the behaviour was repeated;
- the person's role and responsibilities;
- the person's age and circumstances;
- any relevant vulnerability or disability;
- previous relevant conduct; and
- whether the person has acknowledged and taken responsibility for the behaviour.

23.3. The Club may make reasonable adjustments to its processes where necessary to ensure that participants can engage fairly.

24. Relationship with Other Club Policies

24.1. This Code should be read alongside the Club's:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy;
- Welfare Policy & Procedure;
- Complaints Policy & Procedure;
- Disciplinary Procedure;
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy;
- Health & Safety Policy;
- Photography & Social Media Policy;
- Data Protection Policy; and
- relevant membership terms and conditions.

24.2. Where another policy imposes a more specific requirement, that requirement should also be followed.

25. Review

25.1. This Code shall be reviewed at least annually and sooner where appropriate.

25.2. The Board shall review the Code following significant incidents, material changes to the Club's activities or relevant changes in law, British Fencing requirements or safeguarding guidance.

25.3. Members and other relevant participants may be consulted where appropriate when significant changes are proposed.

26. Acceptance

By participating in Club activities, members and other participants are expected to comply with this Code of Conduct and the other policies and rules applicable to their role.

The Club may require members, parents/guardians, coaches or volunteers to provide a specific acknowledgement of the Code where appropriate.

27. Approval

This Code of Conduct was approved by the Board of Directors of Out East Fencing Club on:

Date: 11/08/2026

Chair / Director: Pel Houlihan

Next review date: 11/08/2027