



WORLD SCHOOLS DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The World Schools Debating Championships brings together participants from around the world to compete in a short, intensive debating event. Normally the participants stay together in one host venue, engage in debates at several different host schools during the event, and attend a variety of tours or social events together.

In this environment, it is very important that all the participants have a common understanding of the standards of behaviour expected of them in order to maintain a safe and enjoyable event for everyone involved. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is thus to help maintain a pleasant, safe and healthy environment for all participants in each Championship.

1.2 To whom does the Code of Conduct apply?

This Code of Conduct shall apply to the following participants in the Championship:

- (a) debaters
- (b) team coaches
- (c) team managers
- (d) adjudicators (including shadow adjudicators)
- (e) registered observers
- (f) individuals assigned other roles by the host organising committee.

1.3 All participants must agree to abide by this Code of Conduct

(a) Before the start of each Championship, all participants shall sign the undertaking at the conclusion of this Code of Conduct that they will abide by this Code of Conduct for the duration of the tournament.

(b) At least one parent or guardian of every debater attending the Championship shall also sign the undertaking.

(c) No participant shall be allowed to be involved in the Championship event unless:

(i) he/she has signed such an undertaking

(ii) in the case of a participant who is a debater, one parent or guardian has signed the undertaking.

1.4 Who is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Code of Conduct during the Championship?

(a) All participants shall ensure that they comply with the Code of Conduct for the duration of the Championship.

(b) In addition, each nation which sends a team to the Championship shall appoint a coach, an adjudicator or a registered observer to serve as the team manager as defined in Rule 4A of the Rules and who shall be responsible for ensuring that the debaters comply with the Code of Conduct for the duration of the Championship.

(c) The team manager shall:

(i) attend the Championship; and

(ii) be at least 19 years of age; and

(iii) be deemed legally an adult or have attained the age of majority in both the host nation and in the nation the team represents.

(d) No team of debaters shall be allowed to participate in the Championship unless such a person is appointed.

1.5 What do the terms in this Code of Conduct mean?

Most of the terms used in this Code of Conduct should be self-explanatory. However, to be clear:

(a) “**Age of majority**” means the age at which an individual becomes an adult as specified by either the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child or the legislation of the host nation, whichever is the older age

(b) “**Championship**” means the World Schools Debating Championship in which the people listed in paragraph 1.2 are participating

(c) “**complainant**” means a person who has complained about a breach of the Code of Conduct

(d) “**host**” means the organising committee of the country which is hosting the Championship for that year

(e) “**laws of the host country**” include the law of the state or region within the host country in which the championship is being held, as well as the host country’s national law

(f) “**nation**” is as defined in Rules 4 and 5 of the World Schools Debating Championship Rules

(g) “**sexual harassment**” means any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour of a sexual nature which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. Sexual harassment can take on many different forms and may include physical contact, verbal comments, jokes, propositions, the display of offensive material or other behaviour which creates a sexually hostile environment. Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to uninvited touching, smutty jokes or comments, sex-based insults, repeated invitations to go out after prior refusal, persistent insinuations about a person’s private life. Sexual harassment is not behaviour which is consensual, welcome and reciprocated but for the purposes of the Championships does also include behaviour specified in paragraph 2.4.

(h) “**start of the Championship**” means the commencement of the first formal event or function of the Championship

The Code of Conduct

2. What is expected of participants?

2.1 What participants must do

During the championship, all participants must:

- (a) behave in a respectful and courteous manner towards other participants in the event, guests and sponsors of the championship, and members of the public attending championship events
- (b) abide by the laws of the host nation
- (c) abide by any rules, guidelines and restrictions set by the host organising committee to keep the event regulated and ensure the safety of participants.

2.2 What participants must not do

During the championships, participants must not:

- (a) make insulting comments, jokes, insults, or insinuations about another person’s culture, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation or which may be construed as being derogatory or as harassment, whether in the presence of that person or in any other forum in which the person may not be present.
- (b) stalk or physically harass another individual
- (c) engage in any form of violence or threats of violence
- (d) engage in any form of sexual harassment [as defined in paragraphs 1.5 (d) and 2.4]
- (e) take or use other people’s property without permission
- (f) intentionally cause damage to the property of other individuals or of any host venues
- (g) consume any substance which they are not legally entitled to consume in the host country, or supply any such substances to others
- (h) consume or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs in a way which may bring the championships into disrepute.

2.3 Behaviour during debates

(a) Participants in the Championship, especially coaches and debaters, must not confront adjudicators in an aggressive manner after a debate.

(b) Feedback between teams and adjudicators must be given and received in a constructive and non-confrontational manner.

2.4 Relationships

Any romantic or sexually-based relationship during the Championship between a debater and an adult acting as a coach, adjudicator, shadow adjudicator, team manager, observer or in any other capacity will not be tolerated and shall be treated as sexual harassment regardless of intention or apparent consent.

Enforcement of the Code of Conduct

3. What happens if a participant breaches the Code of Conduct?

3.1 Breaches can be reported to a Complaints Officer

If a participant believes that another participant has breached this Code of Conduct, s/he may report the breach to an appointed Complaints Officer.

3.2 Who are the Complaints Officers?

Before each championship, the Convenor shall nominate two Complaints Officers – one male and one female. The nominations for Complaints Officers must be approved by:

(a) the World Schools Debating Council at its meeting at the previous year, or

(b) the World Schools Debating Council Executive Committee at least 90 days before the Championship begins, if the nomination was not approved at the previous meeting of the Council.

3.3 What will the Complaints Officers do?

Each Complaints Officer shall be responsible for:

(a) being available to participants to receive complaints about breaches of this Code of Conduct

(b) investigating complaints

(c) supporting the complainant appropriately, which could include referring him/her to:

- (i) a counsellor
- (ii) a doctor
- (iii) a lawyer
- (iv) the police
- (v) their parents
- (vi) an adult member of their family or contingent.

3.4 Complaints Officers can deal with some complaints themselves

If the Complaints Officer considers it appropriate, they may discuss the complaint with the complainant and the person about whom the complaint has been made to try to resolve the matter by mediation so that both parties are satisfied with the outcome of the matter.

3.5 Complaints Officers can refer complaints to the Complaints Committee

(a) A Complaints Officer may refer a complaint to the Complaints Committee. Such a referral must be submitted in writing to the Chairperson of the Complaints Committee.

- (b) Complaints of the following nature must be referred to the Complaints Committee:
- (i) any form of violence or threat of violence
 - (ii) sexual harassment
 - (iii) stalking or physical harassment
 - (iv) the consumption or supply of substances which are illegal in the host country
 - (v) a participant's being under the influence of alcohol or drugs in a manner which has brought or threatens to bring the Championship into disrepute
 - (vi) any form of inappropriate relationship between a debater and any other participant
 - (vii) wilful damage to public property or the property of a host venue.

4. What happens if a complaint is referred to the Complaints Committee?

4.1 Who forms the Complaints Committee?

- (a) Every championship shall have a Complaints Committee comprising
- (i) at least three members; and
 - (ii) at least one person of each gender; and

(iii) at least one but no more than two members from the host nation; and

(iv) neither of the Complaints Officers who have been approved for the same Championship as the Complaints Committee.

(b) The members of the Complaints Committee shall be approved by:

(i) the World Schools Debating Council at its meeting at the previous year, or

(ii) by the World Schools Debating Council Executive Committee at least 90 days before the championship begins if the nomination was not approved at the previous meeting of the Council.

(c) The Complaints Committee shall appoint one of its members to serve as Chairperson by the start of each Championship at which it will operate.

(d) Subject to 4.1 (b), each member of the Complaints Committee shall serve until such time as a replacement is appointed.

4.2 When must the Complaints Committee meet?

(a) The Complaints Committee's Chairperson shall convene a committee meeting:

(i) if a Complaints Officer refers a complaint to them in writing

(ii) if the Complaints Committee otherwise considers it appropriate.

(b) The Complaints Committee shall convene a meeting within 24 hours of receiving a complaint in accordance with 4.2 (a) above.

4.3 What can the Complaints Committee do?

(a) At a meeting to discuss a complaint, the Complaints Committee may:

(i) decide to take no further action

(ii) make a decision about the complaint without a hearing (but it may not suspend or expel the person complained about without a hearing) or

(iii) hold a hearing about the complaint.

(b) Regardless of which option it takes, the Complaints Committee may also refer the complaint to the host country's relevant authorities (such as the police) if it considers that this is appropriate.

4.4 What are the rights of a person complained about at a hearing?

If the Complaints Committee holds a hearing, the person complained about must:

- (a) be told what the complaint is about
- (b) be told the date and time of the hearing
- (c) be allowed to participate in the hearing and to be heard
- (d) be allowed to bring a person of their choice with them to the meeting with whom s/he may confer before and during the hearing
- (e) be allowed to remain silent during the hearing if s/he so chooses
- (f) be allowed not to attend the hearing if s/he so chooses.

4.5 A person complained about who is not legally an adult in the host country shall have special protection and assistance

- (a) If the Complaints Committee holds a hearing and the person complained about is not legally an adult in the host country, the Complaints Committee shall:
 - (i) ensure that the person complained about fully understands his/her rights as set out in paragraph 4.4 above before the hearing begins
 - (ii) ensure that an adult chosen by the person complained about attends the hearing to support the person complained
 - (iii) if the person complained about is unable to choose an adult to attend with him or her, select an adult to take on this role.
- (b) The adult chosen in accordance with paragraph 4.5(a) shall attend the hearing and shall be able to speak on behalf of the person complained about at the hearing.

4.6 Hearings are confidential

Until the Complaints Committee makes a decision about a complaint, details of the complaint and the hearing shall be kept confidential and shall be discussed only with the people participating in the hearing.

4.7 What can the Complaints Committee do without a hearing?

If the Complaints Committee reaches a decision about a complaint without a hearing, it may:

- (a) dismiss the complaint, or
- (b) uphold it and:
 - (i) take no action
 - (ii) counsel the person complained about
 - (iii) warn the person complained about.

4.8 What can the Complaints Committee do at the conclusion of a hearing?

If the Complaints Committee holds a hearing, it may:

(a) dismiss the complaint, or

(b) uphold it and:

(i) take no action

(ii) counsel the person complained about

(iii) warn the person complained about

(iv) suspend the person complained about from the Championship for as long as it thinks appropriate

(v) expel the respondent from the Championship

(vi) ban the person complained about from all future Championships or a specified number of future Championships.

4.9 What the Complaints Committee can consider at a hearing.

The Complaints Committee shall inform itself at a hearing and generally as to evidence and facts in its absolute discretion and as it sees fit, subject to this Code of Conduct.

4.10 The Complaints Committee's decision is final

The Complaints Committee's decision shall be final. The person complained about is not able to appeal it, but where the person complained about has been expelled for longer than the next Championship he or she can apply for readmittance in accordance with section 6 below.

5 Who must be told about the Complaints Committee's decision?

5.1 Where there has been no hearing

Where a complaint has been decided without a hearing, the Chairperson of the Complaints Committee must give a written copy of the decision to:

(a) the complainant

(b) the Complaints Officer who referred the complaint

(c) the Convenor

(d) the person complained about

(e) where the person complained about is a debater, the team manager.

5.2 Where there has been a hearing

Where a complaint has led to a hearing, the Chairperson of the Complaints Committee must give a written copy of the decision to:

- (a) the people mentioned above in 5.1 (“Where there has been no hearing”)
- (b) the parent or guardian of a person complained about, if that person is a debater and not an adult according to the laws of his/her home nation
- (c) the Chief Adjudicator, if the complaint has been about an adjudicator.

5.3 Where a hearing has led to a suspension or expulsion

Where a complaint has led to a suspension or expulsion, the Chairperson of the Complaints Committee must give a written copy of the decision to:

- (a) the people mentioned above in rule 5.2 (“Where there has been a hearing”)
- (b) the World Schools Debating Council Executive Committee through that Executive Committee’s Chairperson
- (c) the Convenor and Chief Adjudicator of the following year’s championship.

5.4 Where the person complained about is expelled from future Championships

(a) Where the person complained about is expelled from all or any future Championships, the Secretary of the World Schools Debating Council Executive Committee shall ensure that a copy of the Complaints Committee’s written decision is kept on file.

(b) The person complained about shall have the right to apply to be readmitted in accordance with paragraph 6 below.

5.5 Limitation on disclosing Complaints Committee decision

The written decision of the Complaints Committee shall not be disclosed, published, produced, copied, or otherwise communicated to people other than those specified in 5.1 to 5.4 above unless:

- (a) The complainant and the person complained about agree; or
- (b) Disclosure of the Complaints Committee’s written decision is required by the law which applies in the home nation of the person complained about and/or in the host nation in which the complaint arose.

6 What are the rights of a person who is suspended or expelled?

6.1 A young person must be looked after

Where the Complaints Committee decision has led to a suspension or expulsion and the person suspended or expelled is not legally an adult in the host country, the Complaints Committee, in conjunction with the Convenor, shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that the person suspended or expelled is able to make satisfactory arrangements for:

(a) accommodation and meals for the duration of his/her suspension or until he/she is able to return to his/her home country

(b) returning to his/her home country if he/she has been expelled from the Championship.

6.2 Where a person has been expelled for longer than the next Championship

(a) Where the Complaints Committee's decision has led to an expulsion and the person complained about has been expelled for longer than the next Championship, the person complained about may, after the conclusion of the following Championship, apply in writing to the Chairperson of the World Schools Debating Council Executive Committee to be readmitted as a participant at future Championships.

(b) If the Chairperson of the World Schools Debating Council Executive Committee receives an application by such a person to be readmitted ("the applicant"):

(i) the application shall be forwarded to the Chairperson of the Complaints Committee as soon as possible

(ii) the Chairperson of the Complaints Committee shall discuss the application with the other members of the Complaints Committee, and the Complaints Committee shall make a decision whether to grant or decline the application within 90 days of receiving the application.

6.3 What is the process for a hearing on the application for readmittance?

The process for a hearing on the application is:

(a) the Complaints Committee shall either hold a hearing in person (if practical), or shall discuss the issue by telephone, video link, e-mail or in writing, depending on constraints of cost, time and the distance between the parties

(b) the person applying for reinstatement ("the applicant") shall be invited to submit statements in writing in support of the application to be readmitted, and may additionally be asked to submit answers to specific questions by the Complaints Committee

(c) the Complaints Committee shall determine who, apart from the applicant the applicant and such persons as the applicant may decide, may be asked to submit written statements regarding the applicant. These may include:

(i) referees about the applicant's character or change of circumstances

(ii) the Complaints Officer who received the original complaint

(iii) the original complainant

(iv) a current Complaints Officer.

(d) the Complaints Committee shall inform itself at a hearing about the application and generally as to evidence and facts in its absolute discretion and as it sees fit, subject to this Code of Conduct.

6.4 Hearings about the application are confidential

Until the Complaints Committee makes a decision about the application for readmittance, details of the application and the hearing shall be kept confidential and shall be discussed only with the people participating in the hearing.

6.5 What must the Complaints Committee do to decide on the application?

(a) The Complaints Committee must make a decision about the application by:

- (i) declining the application, or
- (ii) readmitting the applicant subject to any conditions the committee thinks fit, or
- (iii) readmitting the applicant without any conditions.

(b) After making a decision about the application, the Complaints Committee must send a written copy of its decision to:

- (i) the applicant
- (ii) the current Complaints Officers
- (iii) the World Schools Debating Council Executive Committee, through that Executive Committee's Chairperson
- (iv) the Convenor and Chief Adjudicator of the following Championship
- (v) the person who made the original complaint about the applicant.

6.6 Limitation on disclosing Complaints Committee decision about the application

The written decision of the Complaints Committee shall not be disclosed, published, produced, copied, or otherwise communicated to people other than those specified in paragraph 6.5 unless:

(a) The applicant agrees; or

(b) Disclosure of the Complaints Committee's written decision is required by the law which applies in the home nation of the applicant and/or in the host nation in which the breach of this Code of Conduct occurred.

6.7 The Complaints Committee's decision about the application is final

The Complaints Committee's decision on the application shall be final. The applicant is not able to appeal it but s/he can apply again for readmittance or for the removal of any conditions imposed on readmittance 6 months or more following the decision on the application. The new application must also be made according to paragraph 6.

Undertaking

7. Undertaking required to be signed prior to the commencement of the Championship

Undertaking by all those participating in the World Schools Debating Championship

I _____ undertake that:

- (a) I have read and understood the Code of Conduct above and
- (b) I will abide by the Code of Conduct for the duration of the _____ World Schools Debating Championship

Signed Dated

Undertaking by parent or guardian of debater(s) participating in the Championship

I _____ undertake that:

- (a) I am a parent/guardian of _____ who is a debater participating in the _____ World Schools Debating Championship
- (b) I have read and understood the Code of Conduct above
- (c) I have explained the Code of Conduct to the above debater
- (d) I have instructed the above debater that I expect and require the debater to abide by the Code of Conduct
- (e) the debater has confirmed to me that s/he will abide by the Code of Conduct.

Signed Dated