

Code of Conduct

North Essex Astronomical Society



Committee Members

1 Introduction

This code of conduct is written for committee members of the North Essex Astronomical Society, which will from this point forward be referred to as “the Society”.

Committee members who will often be seen as the ‘face’ of the Society and will represent all its members. As such they have to be held to higher expectations than general members.

2 Adherence to the code of conduct

All committee members are required to read the code of conduct annually and abide by the guidelines set out.

3 Conduct of Committee Members

As a committee member of the Society, you will conduct yourself with integrity, honesty and in a manner that does not undermine nor damage the reputation of the Society. The Committee should not engage in any activities that threaten the fundamental aims of the Society. Any concerns regarding a committee members’ behaviour, that causes concern in relation to the outline above, needs to be referred to the Chair immediately; if the behaviour of the Chair is a concern then one of the other Officers should be told immediately. The process for this is detailed further below.

All committee members must read and adhere to the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection document; any concerns regarding a members’ behaviour in this regard should be referred to the Child Protection Officer as identified within the Society.

All members will treat other members with respect and courtesy and refrain from actions or comments that discriminate members, or members of the public, based on sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, race, nationality, ethnicity, religious belief, being pregnant or having a child; all of these are protected by law and therefore all members must adhere to this.

Any form of bullying, harassment, or victimisation is unacceptable and prohibited; any concerns on these grounds must be reported immediately to follow the complaints process.

The property of the Society remains the property of all members and as a result, should be treated with respect and internal procedures should be followed regarding the use/loaning of this equipment.

4 Expectations of Committee Members

It is important that committee members are prepared and equipped to take their roles seriously. Through their roles the committee members will ensure they:

- make a full effort to attend all meetings
- appreciate the time involved in making the Society successful and that we will support each other
- uphold the reputation of the Society
- express views openly, courteously, and respectfully in our communications
- maintain a professional presence online and consider the impact of our personal views

- adhere to all policies created in the management of the Society *e.g.* finance policy.

5 Raising an allegation

Any complaints/concerns of a committee member not adhering to the code of conduct should be raised as soon as possible to the Chair (or any Committee Officer in the absence of the Chair), with confirmation in writing by emailing the issue (either as a follow-up, or to raise the issue). The allegation should carefully identify the way the committee member has not adhered to the code of conduct and should remain objective and only communicate the facts, without any opinions or assumptions.

Non-members, *i.e.* members of the public, can also raise a concern/allegation by following the same procedure.

The accused committee member will be informed promptly of the accusation by providing them with the details of the complaint, with no redactions made unless this would put anyone at risk and therefore the judgement of the committee is applied, ensuring they record their reasoning.

6 Handling the allegation

Where possible the allegation will be handled informally by immediately discussing the issue with the accused member to clarify the concerns and to allow them to explain or address the accusations. In the case of a misunderstanding, the committee will contact the accuser regarding the follow-up and a decision will be made on the action taken.

In the case of continuing concerns, or significant risk to members of the Society then the Committee will meet and discuss the case again taking an objective position to consider all evidence equally. It may be necessary to introduce general members of the Society to the panel if it is inappropriate to sit amongst the committee.

When the Committee comes to a conclusion, then one of the following course of actions can be taken:

- Allegation rejected – no further action; the person who raised the complaint is informed and the accused will be informed in writing.
- The member is required to apologise in writing for the behaviour which did not follow the Code of Conduct.
- A formal warning, in writing, is given to the member warning them that repeated behaviour will risk the loss of their membership. For a period of time which the Committee decides
- The suspension of their membership, for a period of time which the Committee decides.
- The removal of their membership.

6.1 Expulsion

The removal of membership will be effective immediately, and the member is to be informed. No such member shall have any claim on the Society for monies paid.

6.2 Suspension

The length of the suspension will be down to the discretion of the Committee. While this member loses all membership benefits during this period, they will still adhere to uphold the Code of Conduct. The member has the right to appeal the length of the suspension, as well as the reason for the suspension. No such member shall have any claim on the Society for monies paid.

6.3 Appeals Process

When an allegation has been upheld, the member has the right to appeal, in writing, up to 28 days after the

effective date. The appeals panel will consist of a quorum of members of the Committee and an equal number of ordinary members of the Society. The points raised in the appeal need addressing, sending a response in writing to the member. The panel may confirm or alter the initial decision of the Committee.