

**NORTH WALES SHEEP DOG SOCIETY**

**MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT**

The NWSDS (the Society) is committed to providing an environment of cooperation and collaboration among its members.

**Objective**

The Society’s Code of Conduct provides general guidelines for the conduct of members during sheepdog trials, training events and meetings.

The Code sets out guidelines for the ethical conduct of all Society members but it cannot deal specifically with all circumstances that may arise.

Nonetheless, each Society member shares the responsibility to ensure that individual and collective conduct is always considered and appropriate.

**Guiding values and Standards**

All Society and Affiliated Society’s members are, at all times, subject to this code of conduct and the associated disciplinary procedures.

Members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that -

* embraces the Society’s constitution and its provisions.
* seeks to uphold the reputation of the Society.
* is respectful and seeks to encourage and support fellow members.
* acts with integrity towards fellow members.
* does not demonstrate any form of discrimination against other persons motivated by gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, age, occupation, religion or political opinion.

Members will -

* not knowingly be party to the dissemination of false or misleading information and will not deliberately withhold information (except where the confidentiality of a third party is involved) relating to their work with or on behalf of the Society.
* not misuse information supplied to them.
* actively work towards the improvement of the Society in general and acknowledge the need to protect the reputation and integrity of the Society.
* not speak in the name of the Society without the consent of the Trustee Management Committee.
* not engage in any conduct that will bring the Society into disrepute.
* when in competition at sheepdog trials behave fairly and with respect for other competitors and be gracious in winning or losing.
* cooperate as far as practicable with the Trustee Management Committee
* not use abusive or threatening behaviour towards others.
* not harass, bully or abuse other persons, physically, verbally or electronically on the internet (web pages) or any form of social media.
* not abuse or misuse any relationship of trust or position of power or influence held by me within the Society or any affiliated trials committee.
* not post on social media, videos or clips that may cause the Society to be brought into disrepute for example by demonstrating disregard for the welfare of dogs and sheep and poor stockmanship.

**Anti-bullying**

Everyone has the right to experience trialling in a safe environment, free from abuse and bullying. Quite simply, bullying of any kind is unacceptable.

Bullying is the use of force, coercion, hurtful teasing or threat, to abuse, aggressively dominate or intimidate. The behaviour is often repeated and habitual. There is typically an imbalance of physical or social power. This imbalance distinguishes bullying from conflict.

Bullying can be –

Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. threatening gestures).

Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.

Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.

Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

Sexist – belittling someone because of their gender.

Homophobic and biphobic - where people are discriminated against and treated unfairly by other people because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual or are perceived to be such.

Transphobic - where people are discriminated against because their gender identity doesn't align with the sex they were assigned at birth or perhaps because they do not conform to stereotypical gender roles or 'norms'.

Cyberbullying - takes place on social media, in online games and through mobile phones.

If bullying does occur, all members should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Society Secretary (safeguarding officer) as soon as they have concerns. If necessary and appropriate, the victim might consult the police. Laws concerning harassment, online behaviour, hate crime, use of violence and discriminatory behaviour may be relevant. The bullying behaviour will be investigated with the intention of stopping the bullying quickly. The victim will be provided with information about support agencies and helplines. An attempt will be made to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour.

**Banter and bullying**

Many seek to excuse bullying by claiming it is ‘just banter’. Banter can be argued to have an important place in an inclusive culture and could help in developing cohesive relationships in organisations. Where it is genuine banter, it can encourage trust between individuals.

*Banter*is teasing or joking that is amusing and friendly between people where there is no power imbalance. Most importantly it is *an exchange*and not one way; each giving and taking an equal share of the teasing. It is neither designed to nor has the effect of shaming, upsetting, belittling, offending or otherwise making anyone hearing it uncomfortable.

*Bullying*is repeated behaviour that causes physical or emotional harm whether intended or not. It can be offensive, insulting, humiliating, abusive, intimidating or malicious. *Bullying doesn’t require intent;* what is important is the impact it has on the person being bullied.

In a group situation, if someone seems to get teased more than others, or is the repeated target of a joke, then it’s not really banter anymore. That person is being singled out. Often people will not be confident enough to stand up for themselves if they are hurt by something. They don’t want to be considered someone who can’t take a joke, so will often laugh along so as not to draw attention to themselves. This means that everyone is still under the illusion that this is banter, not bullying, and it will only be reinforced!

Don’t be a bystander – if you suspect that some banter has become offensive to anyone involved, don’t laugh. Even better – **call it out**. Just because someone calls it banter, doesn’t mean it is banter!

Negative language or behaviour targeting any of the protected characteristics under the **Equality Act 2010** are always considered inappropriate, irrespective of the bullying/banter debate. These protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender or sexual orientation. Banter which ‘crosses the line’ in these areas and is not challenged, can disguise or lead to the apparent normalisation of discriminatory abuse.

**If there is a complaint**

Should a Society member act in a manner that is deemed contrary to the Society’s generally accepted standards of behaviour, a complaint may be lodged with the Secretary.

In this event the Trustee Management Committee will invoke the Society’s Disciplinary procedure. Mediation can be considered if both/all involved are willing to participate.

**Responsibility for Implementation**

This policy covers the behaviour of all members and people using the Society’s services and sets out the way they can expect to be treated in turn by the Society.

Overall responsibility for ensuring adherence to and implementation of this policy lies with the Trustees.

**Change record**

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| **Date of change / Trustees approval** | **Changes / Comments** |
| January 2020 | Original |
| May 2023 | Updated and anti bullying / banter added |
| March 2024 | Social media posts added - poor stockmanship |
| January 2026 | Next review |