

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

Adopted April 2024

The Society is committed to ensuring that this Code of Conduct is made available in an accessible format and, if you require the text in another form or language, we will respond to any reasonable request in this regard.

Legal status, brand and values

1. The WS Society's legal status is a corporation at common law and Scottish charity (SC050987).
2. The WS Society's brand – the way the Society projects itself to the outside world – is encapsulated in three words: Excellence, Permanence and Integrity.
3. 'Excellence' and 'Integrity' are self-explanatory. 'Permanence' captures the idea that the Society endures by balancing change and continuity, tradition and modernity. Things that do not change do not endure. The WS Society is driven by its history, respect for heritage, and a duty to future generations.
4. The WS Society's culture – the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of its Trustees, employees and members in relation to the affairs of the Society – are those of being open, responsible, and collegiate.
5. 'Open' means being inclusive, communicative and welcoming. 'Responsible' means being capable and dependable. 'Collegiate' means being respectful of others, collaborative, sharing a common esprit de corps.

Standards of behaviour

6. The Society's Trustees expect all members to respect and uphold the Society's legal status, brand, and culture as described above.
7. Members are also expected to uphold the dignity and good standing of the office of Writer to the Signet, the Society, and the Signet Library.
8. When communicating or participating in relation to the Society's affairs, the Trustees expect all members to:
 - 8.1. at all times consider what is best for the WS Society;
 - 8.2. act in accordance with the Society's Regulations and any applicable legislation;
 - 8.3. declare any relevant interests giving rise to, or which may reasonably be perceived to give rise to, a conflict of interest;
 - 8.4. respect confidentiality, and behave considerately and respectfully towards all, respecting diversity, different roles and opinions, and avoid giving offence;
 - 8.5. when questioning or challenging in discussion and debate, do so sensitively and avoiding conflict;
 - 8.6. act collectively at meetings and accept a majority decision; and

8.7. refrain from

- a. violent, abusive or defamatory behaviour or language against any person;
- b. harassing behaviour, being unwanted conduct that violates or affects a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and
- c. bullying behaviour, being offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient, including persistent criticism, ridiculing or demeaning someone, and criticism in an inappropriate context.

Sanctions

9. The Trustees are resolved that a member's failure to comply with any provision of this Code of Conduct falls within the ambit of the Trustees' responsibility for discipline under clause 76 of the Society's Regulations and, furthermore, may be regarded in the opinion of the Trustees as liable to bring the Society into disrepute. Such failure will accordingly render that member liable to censure and sanction, which in the case of a material or persistent failure may include expulsion or suspension from the Society.

Complaints

10. Any complaint about any member's failure to comply with the standards set out in this Code of Conduct should be made in writing and addressed to the Society's Chief Executive, or, alternatively, to the Society's Fiscal, providing the name and contact details of the Complainant. An email to complaint@wssociety.co.uk is sufficient for a complaint in writing.