Equity Policy: Imperial Novices 2026

We want Imperial Novices 2026 to be a tournament where everyone feels safe, respected, and included—during debates and in every other part of the event. Equity is first and foremost an attitude of respect and care, but this policy sets out the standards of behaviour expected from all participants and how issues will be handled if they arise.

The policy applies to everyone involved in the tournament: debaters, adjudicators, coaches, observers, members of the CA and Tab Teams, volunteers, and organisers. It covers all tournament-related spaces, including online channels, accommodation, meals, socials, and informal interactions.

All participants are expected to act with courtesy, professionalism, and respect. This means following tournament rules, avoiding disruption, and engaging constructively with others. Feedback on adjudications should be submitted through the official forms rather than argued in person. Passionate debating is welcome; personal hostility is not.

Prohibited behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Bullying or intimidation: repeated or aggressive behaviour that humiliates, threatens, or pressures others.
- Discrimination or harassment: any unfair or unwelcome conduct based on protected characteristics such as race, gender, sexuality, disability, age, religion, nationality, or institutional affiliation.
- Sexual harassment: any unwanted sexual advance, comment, or behaviour that could reasonably cause discomfort.
- Victimisation: treating someone unfairly for raising or supporting a complaint.
- Vilification or inflammatory language: promoting hatred or contempt toward an individual or group.
- Leaking: sharing results, deliberations, or speaker scores before they are officially released.
- Abuse of technology: online research, use of generative AI, or any form of cheating during prep or rounds.

Language in debates should be considerate. Avoid slurs, harmful generalisations, or comments attacking a person's identity. When motions involve sensitive topics (such as violence or sexual assault), please give appropriate content warnings and avoid overly graphic detail. Critique arguments, not individuals. Political critique of governments is fine; targeting participants because of nationality or belief is not.

Pronouns and accessibility: Chairs should introduce themselves, optionally state their pronouns, and invite others to do so without pressure. Participants may also share accessibility needs if they wish. Misgendering should be corrected briefly and without fuss. Failure to respect pronouns or accessibility disclosures may count as an equity breach.

Opt-out policy: Teams may opt out of two rounds in total (each speaker once). If one speaker opts out, their partner may iron-person, with the higher of the two marks counting. If

both opt out, the team takes a fourth. Iron-personing is not allowed in out-rounds. All reasons for opting out, including discomfort with motion content or health issues, are valid.

Clashes: Clashes exist to protect fairness and comfort. They may be filed for family, housemates, romantic partners, long-term debate partners or coaches, or serious interpersonal conflicts. Strategic or tactical clashes are not valid. Clashes must be submitted through the official form before the stated deadline. Please do not contact the CAs or Tab directly.

Raising an equity issue: Participants may approach the Equity Officers at any time—whether for advice, informal discussion, or to make a formal complaint. Complaints may also be submitted through the online form, anonymously if preferred (though anonymity may limit our ability to act). All information will be treated confidentially. The complainant decides whether the issue proceeds formally.

If an issue is raised, the Equity Officers may speak with those involved, facilitate mediation, or request an apology. Most matters are resolved through awareness and discussion. Where necessary, and in consultation with the CA or Organising Team, sanctions may include removal from specific rounds or events, loss of break eligibility, or expulsion from the tournament. Serious cases may be referred to appropriate authorities.

Positive consent: All participants must obtain active and ongoing consent before any sexual or potentially sexual interaction. Silence or lack of resistance is not consent, and consent can be withdrawn at any time.

We hope this policy will rarely be needed. Its purpose is not to restrict speech, but to ensure a respectful, welcoming space for everyone. If you think something might breach this policy, don’t do it. If you feel uncomfortable, please reach out.

We look forward to a kind, fair, and enjoyable tournament.

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