

The guidelines described herein are copied from the American Physical Society (APS) Division of Particles and Fields (DPF) code of conduct guidelines, and adapted for the African School of Physics (ASP).

ASP Core Principles and Community Guidelines

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Introduction

The following lists the core principles and community guidelines for conduct during ASP activities, particularly during in-person or virtual events, and mentorship. The core principles form the most important responsibilities of our community members. The community guidelines extend the core principles by setting expectations for participation in in-person events and virtual communication in the context of ASP-related events. Participation in these events and forums implies an agreement to follow these guidelines.

Core Principles

Respect and support community members:

- Acknowledge the privilege and power you hold in different spaces and use it to empower and amplify voices that are being excluded;

- Work to ensure that all colleagues have equal access to opportunities, including networking that happens in a social context;
- Ensure that criticism is constructive, delivered in a respectful way, and aims to create positive discussion;
- Avoid judging, discriminating, making unwelcome jokes or disparaging remarks;
- Do not make comments based on stereotypes or group generalizations;
- Reject all forms of racism, discrimination, or harassment towards any individual or group;
- Reject any inappropriate lecturer-student or mentor-mentee relationships.

Commit to constructive dialogue and take initiative:

- Be receptive to discussions of ways to improve communication and working relationships;
- Challenge your own assumptions about people and the sources of those assumptions;
- Intervene when others are exhibiting conduct unbecoming of a community member and support those who report violations;
- Take it upon yourself to educate yourself on and eliminate challenges or barriers to success that colleagues may face as members of under-represented groups;
- Develop structures to help maintain antiracist and anti discriminatory accountability;
- If you feel that you have been impacted by the actions of another member of the ASP community, contact the IOC.

Community Guidelines

Overview: The ASP community involves a large swath of the fundamental and applied physics communities. The community meetings (both in person and virtual) and chat workspaces are meant to be opportunities for members of the community to engage in a dynamic exchange of ideas to further the objectives of ASP. Members and associates bring different perspectives, ideas, and experiences. We are committed to making ASP events and processes a welcoming environment for all the different voices and perspectives and maintaining a space where people are free to express themselves.

With these community guidelines, we intend to help you understand how best to participate in ASP and what you can expect from the IOC. Guidelines covering all ASP related interactions:

- Be welcoming and open-minded. Other community members may not have the same experience level or background as you, but that doesn't mean they don't have good ideas to contribute. We encourage you to be welcoming to new members and those just getting started.
- Communicate with empathy. Disagreements or differences of opinion are a fact of life. Being part of a community means interacting with people from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives, many of which may not be your own. If you disagree with someone, try to understand their feelings and perspective before you address them. This will promote a collegial atmosphere where people feel comfortable asking questions, participating in discussions, and making contributions.
- Respect each other. Hate speech will not be tolerated. Don't harass anyone. Treat each other with dignity and consideration in all interactions. You may wish to respond to something by disagreeing with it. That's fine. But remember to criticize ideas, not people. Avoid name-calling, ad personam attacks, responding to a post's tone instead of its actual content, and knee-jerk contradiction. Instead, provide reasoned counter-arguments that improve the conversation.
- Recognize that intent does not equate to impact. If a colleague tells you that your words or actions have negative impacts which you did not intend, take responsibility for the impact -- try to understand your colleague's perspective before you address the issue. Educate yourself on why your words or actions had unintended consequences. Do not expect the impacted colleague to shoulder the burden of explaining it to you.
- Strive to make informal activities relating to ASP events inclusive to all who might profit from them. Try to make informal events accessible and welcoming to all. For example, organizing after-hours discussions of ASP activities at a bar may not be a welcoming environment for some. Strive to include new colleagues in informal or unstructured activities, such as lunches, dinners, or coffee breaks.
- Actively work to better our community. Creating an open and inclusive community is not simply a matter of **not** engaging in bad behaviors, rather it is a process of actively engaging and welcoming all members to create a more inclusive and just community. Intervene when you see behavior that violates our community standards. For example, you can use [these strategies on microaggression intervention from UCSC](#) to intervene when you witness a microaggression. Speak up when you hear colleagues disparaging a group of people, even if members of that group are not present. Seek opportunities for education/training on diversity, inclusivity, reporting, and bystander intervention techniques, and encourage others to do the same. Support and implement structural changes that

dismantle discriminatory practices and white supremacy and create structures to maintain accountability. APS has [training materials on ethics](#). We also recommend familiarizing yourself with the [Inclusive Astronomy Nashville Recommendations](#), particularly [these relating to establishing inclusive communities](#).

Specifics for the Chat Workspace, and In-person and Online Events, and Email Threads

- Identify yourself. As in a personal conversation, owning your thoughts and actions is important. Therefore, upon joining a chat forum, modify your profile to use your chosen name that makes you uniquely identifiable in the same way that a nametag at a conference would do. This needs not be your birth name or legal name and you are welcome to include your pronouns. In a meeting, state your name.
- ***When connected online, such as on Zoom, make sure you stay muted until you wish to speak, and mute again after you have spoken. Raise your hand on Zoom if you wish to speak and wait for the moderator to call on you. If you disrupt the meeting, by keeping your microphone un-necessarily or repeatedly, you will be removed from the meeting.***
- Improve the discussion. Help us make this a great place for discussion by always working to improve the discussion in some way, however small. Start discussions from a positive perspective. Keep in mind that meaning, tone, and intent can be difficult to ascertain from written communication, so try to be clear in your communication and reply to content rather than tone.
- Respect the agenda. Stick to meeting agenda items and discussion lengths so that we respect everyone's work and time. If there are topics you would like to be shared with the intent of providing relevant and appropriate information. Share mindfully, prioritizing links which are [accessible, as defined here by the Web Accessibility Initiative](#). When asking others to give you feedback or collaborate on a project, only share valuable and relevant resources to provide context.
- Keep it tidy. Make the effort to put things in the right place, so that we can discuss topics which are not included in the agenda, use the open discussion time or ask the conveners/meeting hosts to include time for these topics in a future meeting.
- Be clear and stay on topic. Communicating with people you may not have met can be awkward. On the internet it's hard to convey or read tone, and sarcasm is

frequently misunderstood. Try to use clear language, and think about how it will be received by the other person.

- This applies to sharing links, as well. Any links shared in the workspace should take more time discussing and less time cleaning up. So:
 - Don't start a topic in the wrong category.
 - Avoid cross-posting the same thing in multiple channels unless you are making an announcement, e.g., about a meeting.
 - Don't divert a topic by changing it midstream. Rather than taking an existing topic in a radically different direction, start a new thread.
- **Email threads**
 - Please be considerate when replying in email threads; don't add to the noise and the volume of emails by replying to all when it is not necessary to do so. Consider replying only to the few concerned individuals.
 - Don't "reply to all" in email threads about "congratulations" or "thanks". Just reply only to the concerned individuals, not to whole lists. Otherwise, it becomes a large volume of emails and people complain. Before you press "send", please be mindful and ask yourself: **is it necessary to "reply to all" just to say "thank you" or "congratulations"?**
 - To prevent people from replying to all and generating a large volume of unnecessary emails, consider using bcc to send information to large lists. In these cases, "reply to all", will go only to the few individuals in "to:" or "cc:" fields.

The "Do-Not-Do" List

- Hate speech and discrimination. We do not tolerate speech that attacks a person or group of people on the basis of who they are. We expect our Community members to be respectful when discussing sensitive topics.
- Bullying and harassment. We do not tolerate bullying or harassment. This means any habitual badgering or intimidation targeted at a specific person or group of people. In general, if you are told that your actions are unwanted and you continue to engage in them, then you are bullying and/or harassing the community.
- Other conduct that violates our community standards and values. The chat forums are professional spaces and should be treated as such.

- Retaliatory behavior against those who report incidents is not tolerated in any form. Any reports of CP&CG violations and the information provided in those reports cannot be used against the reporter.

Community Guidelines Enforcement

The community guidelines enforcement policy is detailed as follows.

[Who enforces the CP&CG and who are the points of contact for violations?](#)

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Who enforces the CP&CG and who are the points of contact for violations?

The CP&CG is enforced by the IOC. In the future, the IOC may delegate this task to a committee of members of the ASP Community.

For virtual and in person meetings, as well as email lists, the meeting or mailing list host (e.g. the subgroup or group convenor) is the first point of contact for violations of the CP&CG. If the reporting person does not feel comfortable contacting the host, they should contact the next person up in the organizational structure, or contact the IOC.

This structure requires that all convenors and sub-group convenors, meeting hosts & moderators adhere to and understand the need to enforce the CP&CG.

In all cases the IOC should be notified.

What happens when the CP&CG are violated?

Ideally a violation of the CP&CG would be reported soon after it occurred, and the meeting hosts or moderators, conveners and the IOC would be contacted. The following steps will be taken in the following progressive order. Note, depending upon the discretion of the moderator/host/IOC member and the desires of the person(s) who reported the violation, there may be deviation from these steps.

1. If the violation is in progress, the moderator/host/IOC will publicly address the violation by stating that the words or actions are not consistent with the CP&CG. This step is important for the community to learn what is inappropriate behavior.
2. If the violation is reported after the fact, the moderator/host/IOC member should determine if there would be value in terms of community education in publicly addressing the incident, e.g. at the next meeting of the group in which the violation occurred. Note, all violations will be publicly reported only after consultation with the aggrieved individual or group.
3. In the event that the violation involves harm to specific individuals, those individuals should be asked if they would like to undergo a process of dialog with the person who violated the CP&CG. The dialog would be facilitated by the IOC. As appropriate, the individual(s) who were harmed, the person who violated the CP&CG, and any ancillary people (e.g. the host, bystanders) are invited to participate if so desired by the individual(s) who were harmed.
4. In the case that the IOC determines that the offense was egregious, or if the offense was repeated, they may contact the institution and/or collaboration of the offending person. They may also be asked to leave the ASP community; i.e., the IOC will not invite the offender to participate in any future ASP activities, in-person or virtual.
5. All violations of the CP&CG which are reported will be tracked by the IOC and an anonymized summary may be made publicly available on the ASP website.

Examples of Code of Conduct Violation Responses

In order to help the community understand how the code of conduct will be enforced, we provide the following examples.

Sexist comment on clothing

Note: this example is taken from “How to Respond to Code of Conduct Reports” by Valerie Aurora and Mary Gardiner

A speaker was given comments on their clothing, including the statement that a different dress would have resulted in a better impression. They reported the comments to the code of conduct committee without personally identifying details.

The code of conduct committee publicly reported the incident with the accompanying text:

A speaker reported that after their talk, one attendee reported comments on their attire during the talk and that a different dress would have resulted in a better impression on the audience. The speaker involved has not provided more details about the incident to avoid making it a personal case, but it's of the uttermost importance to note that comments regarding the appearance are sexist, toxic and dangerous, and they have no place within our community.

Repeated Interrupter: A person continually interrupts others on a call.

Ideally, the host or moderator of the meeting should tell the interrupter in words that the interrupting is not consistent with the CP&CG. The CP&CG states that we must respect our colleagues. If the host or moderator doesn't address the incident in real-time, a code of conduct committee member would reach out to the host/moderator and could ask them to describe at the next meeting that interrupting is a violation of the CP&CG and why. The code of conduct committee would also ask that the host and moderator intervene in situations where people are interrupting each other on any future calls and make sure there are mechanisms in the meeting structures to avoid interruptions in the future (e.g. using the raise hand feature on Zoom). Next, The code of conduct committee would open a dialogue with the interrupter about their behavior and invite any parties harmed by their actions, the host, the moderators, and any bystanders to join the discussion. If the behaviour continues, the code of conduct committee would assess further action.

Racial microaggression

In a discussion in a chat forum (such as Skype) about community engagement with under-represented minority (URM) students, a comment is made that this group would be more interested in applied physics than basic research. A moderator flags this statement as being in violation of the Code of Conduct, citing the core principles: "Do not make comments based on stereotypes or group generalizations" and "Challenge your own assumptions about people and the sources of those assumptions." The person who made the comment responds that they are just trying to think about the most effective methods of outreach and didn't mean any harm. The moderator and/or other community members point out the community guideline to "Recognize that intent does not equate to impact. If a colleague tells you that your words or actions have negative impacts which you did not intend, take responsibility for the impact -- try to understand your colleague's perspective before you address the issue. Educate yourself on why your words or actions had unintended consequences and do not expect the impacted colleague to shoulder the burden of explaining it to you." This conversation

takes place in public so that other community members, particularly those in the group being generalized, see that as a community we do not condone this generalization. The Code of Conduct empowers everyone to call out and engage in dialogue about violations of our guidelines, so that this work is not left to those directly impacted.

Sexual Harassment

A community member reports receiving unwanted advances from a senior colleague from a different institution at a meeting. The IOC informs the senior person that the behavior is unacceptable and reports the incident to the institution's office for dealing with sexual harassment issues. The senior person is asked to not return to the meeting. The incident is publicly reported in anonymized form to the community.

Inappropriate Romantic Relationships

ASP is dedicated to promoting the development of physics throughout the African continent, in particular through the training and mentoring of early-career physicists, regardless of gender and other characteristics. For this reason, ASP nurtures an inclusive and diverse environment, and is resolutely opposed to any behaviors that hinder this objective. In particular, ASP has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment and romantic relationships between lecturers and students, whether consensual or not.

ASP therefore prohibits, in addition to all non-consensual behavior, ***all*** consensual romantic relationships between lecturers and students or mentors and mentees, since personal relationships between lecturers and students are never truly consensual — even when both participants are adults — because of the inherent power differential.

Any lecturer / speaker found to be in violation of this policy will be excluded from all ASP activities with immediate effect, and the reason for this exclusion will be made available to their home institution.

What to do if you think the CP&CG have been violated?

You should contact the IOC.

Acknowledgements

The core principles and guidelines were specifically inspired by the Princeton physics department [code of conduct](#), the [github community](#) guidelines and the APS DPF CP&CG, among others. They also reflect the labour of many individuals, particularly those from marginalized groups, to educate and better the community.