

GRAY'S INN CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

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The Code of Conduct

Gray's Inn is committed to providing a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive environment for its Members, and all those who take part in its training, activities, events and use its facilities. Members of Gray's Inn shall:

1. Behave with integrity and treat others with dignity and respect
2. Promote an inclusive, welcoming, collaborative, and supportive environment at the Inn
3. Recognise and value diversity
4. Be aware of differences in power and influence and avoid conduct that exploits, or might be perceived as exploiting, these differences
5. Respect other people's personal space
6. Treat sensitive or personal information with discretion and tact, respecting confidentiality
7. Report and / or challenge the behaviour of others when it falls short of the standards expected unless you have a good reason not to do so.

This Code of Conduct:

- applies to all Members (benchers, barristers, and students alike) when representing the Inn, working on the Inn's behalf, using the Inn's facilities, or attending an Inn event (educational, business, or social, in any location);
- applies to all forms of written, electronic or face-to-face communication;
- is intended to lay down a clear and broad statement of required standards of conduct;
- applies alongside the [Inns Anti-Harassment Policy](#) which covers not only harassment but also inappropriate behaviour; the process and remedies available for addressing complaints and breaches of the Code follow those set out within that Policy;
- is to be given practical effect:
 - by ongoing training and education;
 - by an annual review of its implementation
 - concerns can be raised and resolved informally or by way of a complaint, see the [Inn's Complaints Procedure](#).

The Inn encourages discussion and disagreement: this Code is not intended to stifle debate. What matters is the way that it is conducted.

The Inn does not regulate Members' behaviour in their professional lives, which is subject to standards set out by the Bar Standards Board, including in the Code of Conduct in the Bar Handbook, and other relevant professional bodies.

Gray's Inn Code of Conduct Guidance

The table below provides some guidance by listing examples of behaviour supportive of and contrary to the seven-point code above. These examples are not intended to be exhaustive. **For the avoidance of doubt, a failure to behave in a manner described as "supporting the code" would not necessarily involve a breach of the code.**

More generally it is important to bear in mind that:

- Senior Members have a special responsibility in shaping the culture of the Inn. Differences in power and influence will be more apparent to those who have less. Behaviour which might be perceived as exploiting status and seniority must be avoided.
- Things go wrong when remarks intended in one spirit come across entirely differently to the recipient. A poorly chosen word or phrase or a bad joke can unintentionally make others feel uncomfortable. Much more care is needed with people whom you do not know well than with long-standing personal friends.
- Remarks which draw attention to physical and ethnicity characteristics identify points of difference and are often perceived as excluding and ill-mannered.
- Assumptions about areas of practice related to ethnicity or gender are also inaccurate and unwelcome, as is casual exclusion of members of the employed bar in references to the self-employed as 'the independent Bar'.
- Alcohol is often freely available at functions. It affects everyone differently. Over-consumption resulting in disinhibition has been a source of real embarrassment and serious conduct issues.
- Everyone can get it wrong – if you have given offence, or fear that you may have done, the simplest way of dealing with it is to apologise at the time.

This guidance is intended to be helpful and is kept under review.

If you believe something is missing or unclear please contact the Under Treasurer, Stephen Cartwright, stephen.cartwright@graysinn.org.uk, 0207 458 7802.

Behave with integrity and treat others with dignity and respect	
<p>Supporting the Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to the views of others with respect, conducting debate and expressing differences politely and constructively • Giving others the opportunity to express their views, taking account of different levels of experience, expertise and confidence 	<p>Contrary to the Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using language or a tone which is unnecessarily critical and not constructive, particularly towards students and more junior Members • Shouting, swearing or behaving towards others in a way that they might reasonably perceive as aggressive or harassing • Using terms that could be derogatory or patronising, e.g.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remaining respectful to those around you • Being honest and fair in interactions with the Inn and other Members • Showing appreciation for people's efforts by thanking them 	<p>nicknames or terms of endearment or familiarity to those you do not know well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistently talking over others and imposing your personal beliefs on them • Focussing on blame rather than helping others resolve problems
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Promote an inclusive, welcoming, collaborative, and supportive environment at the Inn

<p>Supporting the Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being aware of unconscious bias, how it can impact your interactions with others, and how to mitigate it • Adjusting your behaviour for those who may not be comfortable with social practices which are the norm for you, such as physical greetings and recognising that there may be differences in what constitutes appropriate behaviour • Proactively inviting the views of others and listening to what they have to say • Working constructively with others and valuing different points of view and different ways of doing things • Appreciating and respecting the skills and contributions of others, especially if they are junior or less influential than you are • Delivering feedback on points of improvement in a way that is constructive and encouraging when teaching or mentoring 	<p>Contrary to the Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making derogatory comments or using inappropriate language about people who are different from you, for example in terms of social background, ethnicity or other protected characteristics • Using unprofessional language in a professional setting • Offensive humour, offensive banter or sexual innuendo • Pressurising others to consume alcohol
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Recognise and value diversity	
<p>Supporting the Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating and supporting the diversity of the Members of the Inn • Listening to views and opinions of Members from all backgrounds • Supporting efforts and initiatives to improve the participation of under-represented groups at the Inn and in the profession 	<p>Contrary to the Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenting negatively on any protected characteristic • Undermining initiatives designed to improve diversity at the Inn and in the profession
Be aware of differences in power and influence and avoid conduct that exploits these, or might be perceived as doing so	
<p>Supporting the Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming those who are new to a committee or group and inviting their views • Treating those less senior or of lower status than you with equal respect • Recognising that social relations with junior Members going beyond a professional activity may give rise to embarrassment and perceptions of impropriety or favouritism 	<p>Contrary to the Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patronising, rude or undermining behaviour towards people less senior than you or to new Members of a group • Romantic/sexual advances to trainees, pupils, or students while their teacher, mentor or similar
Respect other people's personal space	
<p>Supporting the Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting consistently towards others, which avoids singling some out for excessive attention, physical or otherwise • Recognising that some people are not comfortable with any physical contact (including physical greetings and other touching) • Respecting people's privacy 	<p>Contrary to the Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making inappropriate comments about a person's appearance, including excessively flattering comments, which are often unwelcome • Pursuing a conversation on a personal topic with someone who is uncomfortable doing so

Treat sensitive or personal information with discretion and tact, respecting confidentiality

Supporting the Code

Keeping to yourself sensitive or personal information which someone has shared with you, except where it is agreed you may share this with others, or where you are obliged to share the information

Contrary to the Code

- Using contact details provided for professional purposes to make personal contact
- Pressing people to tell you more than they wish through invasive, hostile, or insensitive questions
- Failure to keep personal information about others safe or to dispose of it securely when you no longer need it

Report and / or challenge the behaviour of others when it falls short of the standards expected

Supporting the Code

- Calmly challenge or question behaviour at the time if you can do this with tact and without causing distress
- Countering any bad behaviour you may witness with your own positive conduct
- Telling a member of the Inn's executive team about breaches of the code which you witness
- Where appropriate, offering support and reassurance to anyone who has been subject to behaviour that does not comply with the code

Contrary to the Code

- Ignoring behaviour you know is inappropriate or contrary to professional standards because it has not had a direct impact on you (NB this does not require you to report or challenge where (i) you are the recipient of inappropriate behaviour or (ii) you are aware that another person has reported or challenged the same incident/s or (iii) you reasonably consider you would suffer detriment from doing so, unless you have an obligation to do so under the Bar Code of Conduct).

Complaint Procedure

It is important to know when things are going wrong. Anyone concerned about a failure to comply with this Code or about inappropriate behaviour should raise their concerns, so they can be addressed. Nobody will be penalised for reporting concerns or making a complaint.

If you believe you have been subjected to a breach of the Gray's Inn Code of Conduct, or have witnessed one, a complaint can be addressed by a formal or informal route. The methodology for doing this is explained in detail in the [Inn's Complaints Procedure](#).

The Inn does not regulate Members' behaviour in their professional lives, which is subject to standards set out by the Bar Standards Board and other relevant professional bodies.

Other Support

[The Bar Council](#) works with a confidential online reporting tool called [Talk to Spot](#) which is available to support recording incidents of inappropriate behaviour across the Bar. It also provides a [confidential helpline](#) (020 7611 1426) if you want to speak to a member of its Equality & Diversity team in confidence for support and advice about bullying or harassment issues. This helpline is available to barristers, pupils and Bar students.