



Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

National Services Day is a respected organisation whose member organisations provide a valued and appreciated support to all frontline Services. The strength of the National Services Day organisation lies in its ethos and with the professional and volunteer personnel who willingly and freely give of their time and expertise.

The National Services Day is committed to:

- Maintaining an environment that allows its participants to carry out their duties free from intimidating behaviour of any nature. This includes discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.
- Ensuring that a positive and professional image of the National Services Day Organisation is portrayed at all times.

The aim of this Code of Conduct is to promote a positive environment based on mutual respect and professionalism. All participants are entitled to expect professionalism and impartiality and to be treated with respect and dignity by their fellows, regardless of rank.

All participants must adhere to this policy while engaged in any National Services Day activities, while travelling to and from such activities, or on any other occasion where their actions or words can be interpreted as representing the National Services Day organisation.

All National Services Day members must comply with the following standards:

- Report for National Services Day activities in a timely manner and free from the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Comply with all reasonable instructions and lawful orders received during National Services Day activities to the best of your ability.
- Act within the law at all times. This includes complying with the Road Traffic Act, adhering to drink & drug driving regulations.
- Maintain strict confidentiality in relation to all dealings with members of the public and National Services Day.
- Do not engage in any activity which could be considered detrimental to the organisation or which could result in personal injury to any participant or member of the public.
- Show respect and consideration at all times for fellow participants, members of the public, and other Voluntary and Statutory Bodies.
- Ensure you are aware of Health and Safety notices and seek clarification if necessary. All participants must wear any protective clothing/equipment provided for their role. All



participants must comply with any health and safety rules in force and must immediately report all injuries, incidents and accidents occurring whilst working for the organisation to a Board member. An incident report must also be completed in writing and submitted to the Board within 14 clear days.

- Participants should not attend for duties and/or training if medically unfit.
- Where participants are signed off sick from their normal employment, they should not attend for duties and/or training.
- Maintain National Services Day property, equipment to a high standard. Use is restricted to the purpose for which they are intended.
- Portray a positive and professional image of National Services Day and refrain from unacceptable forms of behaviour.
- Return all property belonging to National Services Day on or before within an agreed time frame.
- Follow local authority and National Services Day media and social media policies.

2. Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment & Bullying

Unacceptable forms of behaviour such as discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and bullying will not be tolerated. Such behaviour contravenes the ethos and professionalism of the organisation. Maintaining a positive environment not only places an obligation on the structure of the organisation but is also the responsibility of all Representative Members and participants. All participants must always treat their colleagues with respect and ensure that their own actions and behaviour do not cause offence to others or contribute in any way to a discriminatory environment.

Representative Members and participants have a duty to support this policy on discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment or bullying by bringing any instances where such behaviour has occurred to the attention of a Board member, at an early stage and by co-operating with any ensuing investigation whether as a complainant, the person complained of or as a witness. It is important to make every effort to ensure that any person involved in an investigation into discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying observe confidentiality and that witnesses to an investigation respect the privacy of the parties involved and refrain from discussing any matters pertaining to the investigations.

This policy governs conduct and disciplinary procedures within the National Services Day organisation only. It does not have any bearing on an individual's legal and statutory rights. For the purposes of this Code the definitions of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment have been taken from the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2004. The definition of bullying was taken from the Government Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying 2001. As it represents best practice, it is the intention of the National Services Day to apply these definitions notwithstanding the fact that Representative Members and participants are not deemed to be employees of the National Services Day.

Discrimination

Discrimination occurs where an individual is treated less favourably than another individual is, has been or would be treated on the following distinct grounds: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race, membership of the traveller community, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender non-conformity, political opinion, residence status or social origin.

Harassment

Harassment takes place where an individual subjects another individual to any unwelcome act, request or conduct including spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of



written words, pictures or other material that could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating. The harassment must be based on one or more of the discriminatory grounds outlined above. Harassment extends to situations where the person does not have the relevant characteristic, but the harasser believes that they have that characteristic. The list is not exhaustive, but some examples of harassment are as follows:

- Verbal harassment – jokes or comments.
- Written harassment – emails or texts.
- Physical harassment – shoving or any form of assault.
- Intimidatory harassment – gestures or threatening poses.
- Visual displays - posters, emblems or badges.
- Isolation or exclusion from social activities.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is defined under the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004 as any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. Such unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material. The list is not exhaustive, but some examples of sexual harassment are as follows:

- Unwanted physical contact.
- Unwelcome sexual advances, propositions, or pressure for sexual activity.
- The display of pornographic or sexually suggestive material.
- Conduct that ridicules or is intimidatory or physically abusive of a person because of his or her sex.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise conducted by one or more persons against another or others in the course of their National Services Day duties which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition is undesirable but as a once-off incident is not considered to be bullying. On occasion you may receive feedback regarding your performance. Bullying does not arise where negative feedback is given constructively and honestly and relates to issues relevant to your official duties within the organisation.

3. Grievance Procedures in respect of Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment or Bullying

If any person feels that they have been a victim of Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment or Bullying, they should:

- avoid being alone with the harasser.
- document all incidents including date, time and details of the offending behaviour, including the names of any witnesses.

If a person feels that they are being discriminated against, harassed, sexually harassed or bullied in the course of carrying out their National Services Day activities they can seek advice from a member of the Board

Resolution

Complaints of unacceptable behaviour should where possible be dealt with at the lowest possible level. In the case of less serious offences a complaint may be most easily resolved by the



complainant making it clear to the offender that their behaviour is offensive and unwelcome. An informal discussion may be enough to alert the person to the effects of their behaviour. A formal complaint can be made through any member of the Board, with responsibility for National Services Day. The complaint should be made in writing outlining the specific nature of the complaint, together with any accompanying details.

One possible method of resolution is mediation, which is a voluntary process. If both parties are willing, it provides an opportunity for the person who feels that they are being harassed or bullied to discuss the matter with their alleged harasser in private and to agree a way forward which will allow both parties to work together in the future, the Board will arrange a meeting and will appoint an independent mediator, who will be acceptable to both parties. The mediator should keep a written record of the meeting. If the matter is resolved by mediation, then disciplinary action will not be taken.

If mediation fails to resolve the matter or either party is unwilling to go through the mediation process then an investigation into the allegations may be carried out by an appointee. The results of the investigation including the nature and detail of the complaint will be forwarded via a written report to the Chairman. The complainant and the alleged offender will receive a copy of this report if:

- The investigation upholds the complaint then action will be taken in accordance with the disciplinary procedures.
- The complaint is not upheld, and the complainant is judged to have acted in good faith then no further action will take place.
- The complaint is not upheld, and the complainant is judged to have acted maliciously then action against the complainant will be taken in accordance with the disciplinary procedures.

4. Disciplinary Procedures

Where a participant breaches this code of conduct the following disciplinary procedures will apply: suspension or expulsion. In all cases where a Representative Member or participant has been suspended or terminated, a full report must be submitted to the relevant Head of Organisation and also to the Chairman.

Notwithstanding the procedures set out below, in the event of a potential conflict of interest the Representative Member or participant may, at any stage, choose to have an independent observer present.

5. Suspension or Expulsion

If the desired improvements have not been made or further breaches of discipline occur, or in cases of gross misconduct the Representative Member or participant will be suspended from the National Services Day organisation by the Board. Formal written notification of this suspension will be forwarded to the Representative Member or participant involved and the suspension notice will be retained on file in the organisation's electronic document library .

The term of the suspension will be determined by the nature/severity of the offence and is at the discretion of the Board. Suspension as a result of serious offences or cases of gross misconduct may progress to expulsion from the organisation. A copy of the expulsion notice will be retained on file in the organisation's electronic document library.

Gross misconduct may include but is not limited to, theft, physical violence, sexual harassment and bullying, deliberate damage to property, misuse of the National Services Day property or name, bringing National Services Day into disrepute, serious incapacity brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs, negligence which causes or might cause unacceptable loss, damage or injury, serious infringement of health and safety rules. This list is not exhaustive.



6. Expulsion from the organisation

On return from suspension, further breaches of discipline will warrant immediate expulsion from the organisation. Formal written notice of expulsion will be forwarded to the participant or Representative Member involved and a full written report will be forwarded to Head of Organisation. A copy of the expulsion notice will be retained on the file in the organisation's electronic document library.

7. Criminal Acts

If any participant has been charged with or convicted of a criminal offence, the Board will fully consider the circumstances surrounding this occurrence. Based on the nature of the offence, the potential impact on the National Services Day organisation and the totality of the circumstances surrounding the event(s) involved, including the application of this Code of Conduct, the Board may immediately suspend the participant involved from the organisation.

If an individual is being investigated by An Garda Síochána for an alleged offence which may impact on their National Services Day activities the Chairman, with the concurrence of the Board, may suspend the Representative Member from the Committee, and request an alternative nominee from the parent organisation.

At the conclusion of any judicial proceedings that may arise from the said occurrence an independent person, appointed for this purpose by the Board, will review the situation, including the appropriateness of any continuing suspension, or the need for further disciplinary action including expulsion. In carrying out such a review, the independent person will consider the totality of the factual situation involved, including any acquittal of criminal charges, possible civil proceedings and the potential impact on the National Services Day organisation.

8. Other Matters

Fund Raising

National Services Day is not a charitable organisation and relies on sponsorship. Small fundraising activities at National Services Day events by recognised charities may be acceptable, and should be pre-approved by the Board.

Political Activities

National Services Day is not a State organisation.

It is important that personal views are not reflected in the discharge of your National Services Day activities. All participants must refrain from any form of political activity whilst engaged in any National Services Day activities.

The following principles cover all activities in which official information or experience is used. This includes the publication of books or articles, contacts with the press, broadcasts, speeches or lectures, and participation in outside conferences.

They are that you must not

- Discuss matters of current or potential political controversy in respect of National Services Day policy.
- Comment on individuals or organisations in terms that National Services Day would find objectionable.
- Take part in activities, which conflict with the interests of National Services Day or bring the good name of the organisation into disrepute.



The Code of Conduct Policy was issued by FESSEF
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Glossary

- **Participant:** Any person under instruction of a member organisation taking part in National Services Day event.
- **Representative Members:** those persons nominated to the National Services Day committee by their parent organisation.
- **Associate Member:** Persons who, in the opinion of the Board, have specialist knowledge or experience to offer in furtherance of the ideals and may be co-opted on a voluntary basis to the group on an *ad hoc* basis.
- **Committee:** the persons nominated by the member organisations to the National Services Day
- **Board:** persons from the Committee to manage the National Services Day organisation.
- **Head of Organisation:** the person in charge of each member organisation, CEO, Commissioner, Director-General for example

