

Code of Conduct

Introduction

Youth and Environment Europe is the largest independent European network of environmental youth organisations, with all the projects being organised and carried out by young people under the age of 30. YEE organises, facilitates and supports projects and campaigns aiming to increase the knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the environment and the awareness of climate issues among young people in Europe. The organisation's mission is aimed at strengthening the participation of youth in environmental and climate decision-making processes and building capacity among European youth on the climate crisis.

As an organisation that believes in the essential role of young people in solving the climate crisis and achieving a socially fair intergenerational transition that leaves no one behind, YEE is committed to upholding a safe environment where individuals adhere to the code of ethics and conduct.

2. This Code of Conduct sets out the basic standard of conduct expected of all staff, volunteers and participants on matters like ethical principles and disciplinary actions by staff in connection with their official duties.

3. In regards to online events and sessions, we believe that part of what makes YEE online learning unique is the chance to talk to other young people, learners and trainers from all over the world, and to learn from each other. Being a part of our online learning community means behaving with honesty, respect, tolerance and kindness to fellow colleagues, learners and trainers. Therefore, by attending the YEE online learning activities, you agree to the following principles. This behaviour is also expected to extend in in-person settings.

Principles

1. Integrity

- a. *Honesty*: Maintain honesty and clear communication in the workplace and any formal communication between you and any YEE staff member, volunteer or participants. Be reliable and meet your agreements.
- b. *Respect*: Refrain from engaging in undesirable behaviour and forms of interaction. Allow a scope for diversity in the workplace by respecting the beliefs, culture, gender and origins of others, as well as their fundamental rights. Promote positive inclusivity and mutual respect.

- c. *Openness*: Allow and respect an environment of freedom where communication can occur freely and openly without fear of reprisal or judgement.
- d. *Transparency*: The organisation is funded by grants and donations that need to be utilised carefully. YEE believes in transparency and honesty about its fundings. They are open to comments and feedback. Any additional activities and interests should be reported. Conflict of interest should be avoided.
- e. *Responsibility*: YEE upholds a responsibility to its environment as well as its staff, volunteers and participants. Any decisions should be carefully prepared, taking into account the interests and safety of others. YEE staff, volunteers and participants should always adhere to the Safeguarding Policy during any communications or decision making processes.

2. **Objectivity**

Members must be fair, impartial and intellectually honest and must not allow prejudice or bias nor conflict of interest to override decisions or means of communication.

3. **Professional Competence and Due Care**

YEE strongly believes in training its members and participants to become the better version of themselves both professionally and personally. While everyone is encouraged to learn new skills and take on new challenges and roles, it is important that staff members, volunteers and participants first recognise their level of expertise and boundaries before openly seeking to tackle a new challenge.

4. **Confidentiality**

Maintain confidence when dealing with personal documents of staff, volunteers and participants. With the exception of dealing with safeguarding reports and cases, staff and volunteers must not access or disclose any confidential information beyond the means to their work.

5. **Professional Behaviour**

YEE prides itself in being a fluid workspace that allows and fosters artistic and creative expressions. While staff, volunteers and participants are encouraged to prioritise comfort and self-care, it is also important that this freedom does not violate anyone else's. Therefore, a baseline of professional behaviour is expected, especially avoiding making anyone else feel uncomfortable.

Areas of focus

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any **unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature** that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation.

Sexual harassment in the workplace may also be present as a form of sex discrimination which negatively affects the working environment, undermines gender equality at work, creates unfair practices in employment, and adversely impacts the dignity and well-being of workers. It creates psychological anxiety and stress for victims and if ignored, can result in high costs for companies through loss of productivity, low worker morale, absenteeism, and staff turnover.

YEE staff, volunteers, participants and members must be prohibited from initiating or become involved in sexual relationships with children. By agreeing to this code of conduct, you affirm that you are aware that such a relationship will lead to legal consequences and impact the organization's reputation. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence.

External Representation

YEE volunteers, staff, members or participants represent the integrity and values of the organisation both internally and externally and are expected to act in accordance with those values as long as they are involved in the organisation through a contractual relationship, workshop, volunteering or cooperation.

Organisational Hierarchy

Members, staff and volunteers in any position of responsibility over other individuals within the organisation, events or sessions must refrain from the abuse of position and only extend authority to appropriate measures of work.

Standard of practice

All YEE staff, volunteers and participants who are a part of our learning community understand their obligation to behave with honesty, respect, tolerance and kindness to fellow colleagues, learners and trainers. Therefore, by attending the YEE activities, think tanks and decision-making processes, you agree that:

1. You will communicate in English only;

English language is the official working language of YEE. Therefore, the participants as well as the trainers and educators should always communicate in English only. Communicating becomes very difficult if everyone comments in a

different language. If there is a language barrier and you feel like you need support on your English with a simple translation, that's completely fine! Feel free to reach out to the facilitator, trainer or our Project Manager anytime.

2. You will attend training activities and sessions that you have been scheduled to take on time.

You will connect to the call on time and make sure there are no technical issues in advance. You will check your internet connection, camera, microphone and speakers functionality before the start of the call. All participants stay till the scheduled end of the call. In case of any technical difficulties, participants should inform the facilitator or the Project Manager. Participants may not skip activities they have been scheduled to attend without a prior notice to the organisers.

3. You will comply with the timeline and follow the agreed deadlines.

It is important for the effectiveness of the teamwork and the success of the project that each participant fulfils the agreements and delivers tasks on time. Please, make sure to do so. In case of any obstacles or circumstances that make it impossible to deliver the assignment on time, participants should inform the facilitator or the Project Manager.

4. You are respectful of others, and do not use words, tone or share content that is offensive,

disrespectful or inflammatory. This includes, but is not limited to, language, names or content that is sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, sexually explicit, abusive, contains swearing or is otherwise likely to cause offence.

Remember that you are in an inclusive learning environment shared with people who may be of different ages, nationalities, religions, cultures and backgrounds, with different knowledge, ability and experience.

Communicating online can lead to misunderstandings, so it is important to give other people the benefit of the doubt, and be kind in your interactions.

5. If you disagree with someone's ideas you will discuss their ideas, rather than criticise or attack them personally.

We consider a personal attack to be any negative comment directed to or about an individual that is about them personally, or uses personal information against them. This applies to comments directed at educators and course contributors, as well as learners, for example comments about the physical appearance of a contributor in a video.

Do not persistently argue with another learner or an educator.

6. You are honest, supportive and constructive when offering reflections and feedback to other learners and educators in online learning activities and discussions.

Feedback should be offered in order to help the recipient, rather than make them feel bad. Giving constructive feedback is a skill in itself and it's valuable to the learning process.

7. When working with children and/or vulnerable people you must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

YEE staff, volunteers and participants are considered to be acting in a position of trust and must therefore insure appropriate manner of conduct and adhere to the safeguarding policy regulations.

8. You will help the YEE by reporting comments or behaviour that you believe have broken this Code of Conduct.

In order to foster a safe space, we are trying to create a friendly and inclusive work environment. That's why it is important for both participants and learners to respect our Code of Conduct for Online Learning. If you feel like this rule was broken and you would like to support our efforts to create a safe space, you can report such a comment to our YEE Project Manager.

Disciplinary Action

Cases of continuous misconduct will be addressed to the secretariat and the board. When deciding on disciplinary actions, they shall be considered as constructive action for the purpose of salvaging basically satisfactory staff and volunteers, and should, therefore, consist of the least severe action deemed necessary to accomplish this purpose.

Depending on the severity of the case, the board and secretariat shall vote on the best course of action by majority vote.

1. Oral Reprimand

Given when the situation needs to be addressed officially but not too severely in case of any possible misunderstandings or lack of awareness towards the problematic behaviour. Two members of the board are then responsible for giving the oral reprimandation.

- a. Review with the staff/volunteer exactly what is expected of him/her and why.
- b. Explain to the staff/volunteer how he/she has not met the requirements and why his/her conduct has been unacceptable.
- c. Allow the staff/volunteer to give the reasons for his/her actions or failure.
- d. Make a memorandum of this interview and oral reprimand. Ensure that the staff/volunteer understands this and verbally agrees to it.

2. Written Reprimand

- a. The Board will review again the points covered in the oral warning that must be corrected and serve a strong warning that a change must be made within the given period of time.

- b. Tell the staff/volunteer he/she will receive a letter covering the significant points of the discussion.
- c. Ensure the staff/volunteer signs the warning.

3. **Immediate Dismissal**

When the violations or offences are of serious break of conduct or have continued to occur after the written warning, the board and the secretariat have the power to enact immediate dismissal. This may also be the case if the staff/volunteer is uncooperative in terms of signing the warnings.

- a. When the case is presented and dismissal is suggested by the board, a vote is taken to officially decide on immediate dismissal.
- b. A written summary will be prepared giving the circumstances and facts which led to the dismissal and a copy filed in the employee's personnel folder in the Personnel office, and with the Human Relations.
- c. The Chairperson (or any other appointed Board member in special circumstances) produces an official written confirmation of the discharge, suspension or other action taken will be given to the employee including the reason for dismissal.