

## Code of Conduct for Group Social Events

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University recognises that there are many different organised groups within its community. These groups exist for a variety of reasons: to participate in specific activities, to share passion for a subject, or to practise a chosen lifestyle, culture or religion. Membership of these groups is often diverse, incorporating many different cultures, religions, lifestyles and ages (with some student members being under the age of 18).
- 1.2 The University encourages all students to take up opportunities to share in the benefits of membership of such groups.
- 1.3 It is acknowledged that groups often hold social events at various times throughout the year. It is recognised that 'socials' are good team building and morale boosting exercises which are an important part of being a group.
- 1.4 This code sets out how the University expects group social events to be conducted. As a representative of a group, students have a 'duty of care' to all group members when participating in 'socials'. Students have the right to be a member of a group without facing embarrassment, humiliation or abuse from others and should not feel coerced, pressured or forced into taking part in any games or activities during 'socials', unless they choose to. All members of the group should be sensitive to the needs, beliefs and feelings of others (whether they are member of the group or are bystanders) and should be aware of their own attitudes and behaviours, and their impact on others.

### 2. Definitions:

- 2.1 A '**social event**' is defined as:

An event, held at any time, whereby the members of a group gather at a specific place and time for the purpose of socialising.

Social events are allowed at Keele University.

2.2 An **'induction'** is defined as:

An event where new members are introduced to the rules, structure and other members of the group they have joined. Inductions often take the form of a social event.

Inductions are allowed at Keele University.

2.3 An **'initiation'** is defined as:

An instance in which members (often, but not limited to, new members) of a club are encouraged, expected or forced either directly or through peer pressure to perform a task or tasks as a means to gaining entry, credibility, or status within that club and where that task may compromise a person's inherent dignity.

Initiations are not allowed at Keele University, even if everyone consents to the activity.

### 3. Scope

3.1 This Code of Conduct covers all group social events held on and off campus.

3.2 All students involved in group social events of any kind for new and existing members must follow this code of conduct. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action being taken against them by the University and/or the Students' Union.

3.3 It is the responsibility of the group's social secretary (or the organiser of the event, where no social secretary exists) to ensure that all members are aware of the need to act responsibly and respectfully at all times and in all situations.

### 4. Code of Behaviour

4.1 All students should be made aware prior to or at the beginning of any kind of social events that at no time is the completion of any tasks or activities mandatory. Students should not be adversely affected for saying no.

4.2 Students should not feel coerced, pressured or forced into taking part in any games, ceremonies or activities. Peer pressure is not acceptable.

4.3 In addition, the following are activities (not exhaustive) which the University considers to be unacceptable at any time. Any student or group found engaging in these activities (even if individuals are willing to take part) will be subject to disciplinary action:

- Forcing or requiring someone to drink alcohol or to take banned substances
- Consumption of various foodstuffs or drink, that could potentially cause harm or be demeaning
- Varying states of nudity that any reasonable person would find offensive or inappropriate
- Consumption of any bodily fluids

- Any other behaviour that any reasonable person would find offensive or inappropriate

4.4 Under no circumstances can the membership of a University group be awarded for anything other than legitimate entry requirements.

4.5 Under no circumstances should any damage be purposefully caused to any persons, property, or to the build and natural environment of the University.

4.6 No groups or students should organise or take part in initiation ceremonies.

4.7 Groups must abide by any national, local or University rules/guidance relating to public health.

## **5. University Disciplinary Action**

5.1 The University will endeavour to act in response to any report of any form of discriminatory or prejudiced behaviour which erodes the dignity and respect for any of its students.

5.2 Disciplinary action will be taken by the University against any groups (including all formally constituted societies) or individuals that are found to have breached this code of conduct during any induction or other social event. The disciplinary action taken, and any penalties subsequently imposed, will depend on the nature of the breach. The range of penalties that can be given are set out in Regulation B1, listed below:

- A written warning, to be held permanently on the student's record, indicating that the student's behaviour was unacceptable and that they must not commit any further offences in the future;
- A fine up to a maximum of £250 for minor offences and up to a maximum of £500 for major offences. The penalty amount will be determined on the severity of the offence and whether it was a first or subsequent offence;
- A charge to cover any financial loss or damage to property resulting from the offence(s);
- A written apology from the student to the University and/or to those affected by the offence(s);
- A statement (minimum of 1000 words) on specific aspect(s) of the student's behaviour, to demonstrate their understanding of the consequences of their conduct relevant to the findings of the Discipline Committee;
- Completion of an appropriate training and/or development activity;
- A ban from attending the student's graduation ceremony;
- Exclusion from specified University facilities, including University accommodation, either for a specified period or permanently;
- Exclusion from a society or club;
- Exclusion from the University, either for a specified period or permanently.

5.3 Any reports of an initiation having taken place will be thoroughly investigated and may

be considered by the University's Discipline Committee. The disciplinary action may also include immediate exclusion from specified facilities, or the University by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, under Regulation B1, until the Discipline Committee has considered the matter.

- 5.4 In addition to disciplinary action taken by the University, the University may recommend to Keele SU and Athletic Union that they may also wish to impose sanctions against students and societies/clubs for a breach of this code of conduct.

## 6. Links

Regulation B1: Student Discipline -  
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/regulationb1/>

Information on the Student Discipline process -  
<http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentdiscipline>

KeeleSU Discipline Policy -  
<https://keelesu.com/advice/academic/discipline/>

Student Alcohol Policy  
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/policyzone/data/studentalcoholpolicy/>

## 7. Document Control Information

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