



## Code of Conduct Grievance Procedure Akron Democratic Socialists of America

The Akron Democratic Socialists of America is committed to creating a space that is welcoming and inclusive to members of all genders, sexualities, races, level of ability, former convicts, and classes. The following policy provides guidelines to ensure that everyone is able to organize without fear of harassment, abuse, or harm.

### Scope

#### **Creation of New Akron DSA Bylaw Section**

Implementation of this Code of Conduct Procedure will add said documentation to a newly formed section of the Akron DSA Bylaws; under section XIV.

#### **Creation of Oversight Representatives**

This document will create the position of Harassment Grievance Officer (HGO) and the implementation of the Code of Conduct Committee (CCC) as an independent and nonpartisan oversight extension of the chapter. In the event that the chapter declines to elect official Code of Conduct Committee members upon acceptance of this document; the CCC will be made up of the two HGO's and the alternate HGO until the chapter decides to elect individual CCC members (minimum of three).

**Prohibited behavior.** Members shall not engage in harassment on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical appearance, disability, race, color, religion, national origin, class, age, or profession. Harassing or abusive behavior, such as unwelcome<sup>[1]</sup> attention, inappropriate or offensive remarks, slurs, or jokes, physical or verbal intimidation, stalking, inappropriate physical contact or proximity, and other verbal and physical conduct constitute harassment when:

Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a member's continued affiliation with DSA;

Submission or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for organizational decisions affecting such individual; or

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating a hostile environment interfering with an individual's capacity to organize within DSA.<sup>[2]</sup>

**Other protected classes.** Harassment based on categories not encompassed by those listed section (a) will be evaluated at the discretion of the HGO and Code of Conduct Committee representatives.

### Reporting Harassment



**Complaints.** Members may follow the standard DSA complaint process as set out in the following sections if they believe they have been harassed by another member. There will be no time limits requiring the accuser to file a report within any amount of time after the alleged harassment has occurred.

**Harassment Grievance Officers.** Members filing a formal complaint must contact either or both of the local Akron DSA harassment grievance officer(s) (“HGO”).

Akron DSA will:

- Vet and appoint at least two members to serve as the designated HGO(s);
- HGO(s) will hold their positions for one year, same as other elected chapter positions.
- With the election of two HGO(s); these positions must be filled with varied genders, of at least two different gender identities.

Code of Conduct Committee will:

- Determine appropriate training requirements for HGOs
- Develop methods for removing HGO(s) for cause.
- Reserve the right to elect an alternate HGO in the case a formerly elected HGO cannot perform their duty.

Akron DSA will:

- Establish an email address to function as a confidential reporting “hotline” that is only accessible by the HGO(s); and the alternate HGO as needed.
- Develop template forms both for reporting and responding to accusations of harassment that include:
  - The parties’ contact information
  - The names of the parties involved
  - A description of reported incident
- Develop template forms for appealing the form of relief determined by Code of Conduct Committee that include:
  - The grounds of the appeal

The Akron Chapter of the DSA will have these structures in place no later than July 1, 2018.

### **Reporting procedure and timeline**

After a written report has been submitted--whether through the email hotline or otherwise: The HGO(s) responsible for the reporting channel used by the accuser will contact the accused member within seven days to notify them that a report has been filed against them and request a written response to the report either affirming or denying its substance;



The accused will be given an in depth notice on specifically what event is being called into question as per the mandatory notice.

The accused will submit their written response within seven days of being notified. If the accused does not meet this deadline, the HGO will recommend the Code of Conduct Committee move to take appropriate disciplinary action;

If the accused denies the substance of the report, the HGO overseeing the dispute will have the option to investigate the report by:

interviewing other members with direct knowledge of the substance of the report;

requesting documentation from either the accuser or accused or any other parties directly involved; or

employing any and all other means deemed necessary, with the utmost respect for the confidentiality of the parties, within a time period not to exceed ten days.

The HGO(s) responsible for adjudicating the dispute will determine whether the report is credible and, if necessary, make a recommendation to the Code of Conduct Committee for appropriate disciplinary action as soon as possible, but ultimately within thirty days of the report being filed. This is to ensure the timely, efficient, accurate, and discreet adjudication of all reports. The HGO(s) may notify the Code of Conduct Committee of the accuser's report and its substance at any time after the report is filed, but must give written notice to both the accuser and the accused member before doing so.

In the event of multiple accusations in regards to one individual; both HGO's and if necessary the alternate will coordinate the grievances into one formal complaint.

It is up to the HGO(s) to request the activation of the Alternate HGO in the event of a consolidated grouping of grievances.

If the Code of Conduct Committee accepts the proposal from the HGO(s) the Alternate HGO will be activated only for the duration of the specific case.

In the event that a case is closed without any credible findings; an accuser is able to reopen a grievance case against the accused in the future at their discretion.

**HGO responsibilities.** The HGO(s) will:

Receive, acknowledge receipt of, and archive accuser reports;

Contact the accused to notify them of the accusations, request their written response, and archive any written response;

Conduct any necessary investigation of the claim; and

Present their findings to the Code of Conduct Committee with a written report and, if necessary, a recommendation for disciplinary action.

If necessary, HGO(s) may recommend that parties do not contact each other for the duration of the investigative process.

Compile a yearly report that details:



How many reports were made

How many were taken to the disciplinary process

How many disciplinary actions were taken

Any recommended changes for making the reporting system more effective

This report will not include personally identifying information of any parties in any dispute. The local chapter HGO(s) will send the yearly report to the national HGO(s) no later than January 1 of the new year.

**Code of Conduct Committee responsibilities.** The CCC will:

Determine appropriate training requirements for HGOs

Develop methods for removing HGO(s) for cause.

Reserve the right to elect an alternate HGO in the case a formerly elected HGO cannot perform their duty.

In the event that the position(s) of HGO(s) is compromised; as per being an accused themselves or non-compliant with Code of Conduct Ethics, an accuser may report a grievance directly through the CCC.

It is up to the CCC's determination on how to proceed with the case and determining if an HGO, or alternate are capable of ethically providing judgement for the case.

In the event of an internal investigation being conducted on any or all acting members of the Executive Committee; the CCC will provide oversight and determine continued action depending on the outcome of the investigation. The Executive Committee will have no part of any investigation into an individual member or the group as a whole.

No member of the CCC will simultaneously be a part of the Executive Committee.

## **Remedies and penalties**

### **Determinations**

All reports will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the HGO(s) and Code of Conduct Committee associated with the accuser's reporting channel. The ultimate disposition of each report will be made by the chapter's Code of Conduct Committee after that body reviews the written report and recommendation of the HGO(s).

### **Standard for Determining if a Report is Credible**

The chapter's Code of Conduct Committee will find the factual allegation in a report is "credible" if it more-likely-than-not occurred.



This will also be conducted through the assertion of as much evidence as possible. While it is not necessary to have any solid evidence to find an accused guilty; HGO(s) will attempt to obtain any and all evidence, even if it does not exist.

### **Remedies and Penalties**

If the Code of Conduct Committee finds the report to be credible, they are authorized to carry out the following remedies and penalties:

- A formal discussion between the accused and the Code of Conduct Committee to develop a plan to change the harassing behavior(s);
  - Suspension from committee meetings and other chapter or organizational events;
  - Removal from chapter committee(s);
  - Removal from DSA; and
  - Any and all other relief deemed necessary and just by the chapter or national leadership.
- If any other action is to be taken and not specified above; relay to Article III, Section 4 of the DSA Constitution and Article I, Section 3 of DSA bylaws.

DSA national is authorized to enforce certain remedies and penalties in accordance with Article III, Section 4 of the DSA Constitution and Article I, Section 3 of DSA Bylaws

Removal from DSA; and

Any and all other relief deemed necessary and just by the chapter or national leadership.

The appropriate form of relief will be determined by, among other things:

- The request of the accuser;
- The severity of the offense;
- The response of the accused; and
- The accused's relevant behavioral histories.

**Appeals process.** Either party may appeal the form of relief determined by Code of Conduct Committee by filling out appellate form created by the accuser's reporting channel. Appeals must be filed within thirty days of receiving written notice of the Code of Conduct Committee's decision. The limited grounds for appeal are:

- Either party believes the behavior was not interpreted using the standards for harassment set out in Section 1a;
- Procedural errors, misconduct, or conflicts of interest affected the fairness of the outcome; and
- The remedy or penalty determined by Steering was grossly disproportionate to the violation committed

**Retaliation.** This policy prohibits retaliation against any member for bringing a complaint of harassment pursuant to this policy. This policy also prohibits retaliation against a person who



assists someone with a complaint of harassment, or participates in any manner in an investigation or resolution of a complaint of discrimination or harassment. Retaliatory behaviors includes threats, intimidation, reprisals, and/or adverse actions related to organizing. If any party to the complaint believes there has been retaliation, they may inform the HGO who will determine whether to factor the retaliation into the original complaint, or treat it as an individual incident.



Code of Conduct Ethical Guidelines  
Akron Democratic Socialists of America

**Scope**

**Creation of New Akron DSA Code of Conduct Ethical Guidelines**

Implementation of this Code of Conduct Procedure will add said documentation to a newly formed section of the Akron DSA Bylaws; under section XV.

**Addressment Policy**

- (a) In the event that a member of the local chapter breaks any of the following ethics or participates in a malicious activity that is addressed by the Code of Conduct Procedure; it is advised that the member witnessing the breach of Ethics or Procedure to confront the member about said grievance.
- (b) In the event that a correction to a grievance is not adhered or the behavior is duplicated; it is advised that the member witnessing the breach advise the HGO's of the breach.
- (c) In the event of bodily harm/abuse/assault is involved in the breach of Ethics or Procedure; it is advised for the member witnessing the breach to report directly to the HGO's or the Code of Conduct Committee.

**1.0 Cultural Awareness and Social Diversity**

- (a) Members should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
- (b) Members should be willing to expand their knowledge base of others members' cultures and strive to demonstrate competence in interactions that are sensitive to other members' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.
- (c) Members should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, conviction history, and mental or physical ability.
- (d) The local chapter should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among members and how they may use electronic technology. Members should assess cultural,



environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the access to chapter activities and information.

- (e) The local chapter and membership should be aware of the current climate of violence and aggression towards trans individuals. Due to this; members should strive to address all individuals by their pronouns as well as other identity markers such as names.

## **2.0 Conflicts of Interest**

- (a) Members of the local chapter should strive to abstain from any and all potential conflicts of interest while in a leadership position
- (b) In the event a member of the local chapter is elected or appointed to a National DSA position, said member will resign from any and all local chapter positions
- (c) In the event that a member runs for political office that member must abstain from any and all endorsement votes
- (d) No member of the local chapter should use their position or membership status for financial gain

## **3.0 Privacy and Confidentiality**

- (a) Akron DSA does not allow secret clubs/societies within the local chapter to operate
- (b) Keep exclusionary language to a minimum, explain inside jokes if used at public meetings/events, acronyms should only be used if known by all members present.
- (c) Whenever requested and as per the Code of Conduct Procedures confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld

## **4.0 Sexual Harassment/Unwanted Touch**

- (a) All members and visitors to the local chapter are required to adhere to consent of touch as well and respect for personal boundaries.
- (b) In regards to inter member fraternisation; members should be cautious of personal actions and refrain from unwanted sexual advances, innuendo, and any other forms of sexual or physical harassment

## **5.0 Intimate relationships**

- (a) If someone in a leadership position is under investigation the significant other or direct family member to that person may not be involved in a ruling position in the investigation



- (b) Someone in a leadership position may not use that authority to gain favor in romantic pursuits nor use it as a grounds for abuse against individuals

### **6.0 Impairment of Members**

- (a) Members are barred from attending formal local events while inebriated or under significant influence of any drug or substance
- (b) Members should refrain from unhealthy activities where inebriation impacts the ability to organize or conduct local business
- (c) Members are barred from using another members' past history of inebriated behavior in a malicious manner
- (d) Members are barred from encouraging relapse behavior with known recovering members

### **7.0 Personal Conduct**

- (a) Members are to assume good faith in all members and visitors interacting within the local chapter until otherwise demonstrated; this is also in adherence to any and all findings, punishments, and conclusions administered by the Executive Committee, Code of Conduct Committee, and the HGO's.
- (b) Members will adhere to all national and local chapter bylaws, constitutions, Code of Conducts and strive to uphold positive socialist based values and interactions
- (c) Members may exercise their right to warn the HGO's about members and visitors with history of battery, assault, or sexual harassment
- (d) Members should engage in productive political dialogue with one another and avoid impugning motives of their comrades.