



MELBOURNE CAMERA CLUB

Code of Conduct and Ethical Principles

Policy

The Code of Conduct and Ethical Principles (the Code or this Policy) aims to ensure a safe and positive environment within the Melbourne Camera Club's (the MCC or the Club) meetings, programs, competitions, exhibitions, outings and activities (that is, all MCC events).

To Whom does the Code apply?

This Code applies to all MCC members and guests. The Code shall make all members and guests aware of an expectation of appropriate behaviour consistent with the MCC values, including fairness, integrity, open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. The MCC is committed to providing and maintaining a collegial, productive, safe environment.

A collegial environment is free from bullying, harassment, vilification, and victimisation of all MCC members and guests. The MCC welcomes all people to the Club who wish to enhance their photographic skills in an informal educational environment where the culture and history of photography are celebrated.

The MCC Board of Directors (the Board) has a duty to protect the reputation of the Club and all members, including themselves, from any behaviour that interferes with a member or guest's participation and enjoyment of the Club in a collegial environment.

All members are expected to:

- Be honest, impartial and conscientious when involved in MCC activities;
- Ensure the principles of natural justice are observed;
- Ensure all decisions are made ethically and in the best interest of the Club and its members;
- Report genuinely suspected harm, fraud, corrupt conduct, misconduct, or maladministration to the Board.

Conduct that violates the Code may be subject to disciplinary measures as outlined in this Code and under the MCC Constitution Club (the Constitution).¹

Where and When does the Code apply?

The Code applies to all MCC members, including life members and guests at any Club facilitated events (onsite and offsite) and all forms of communications, including social media.

What are the disciplinary measures?

The Board takes matters of breach of the Code seriously and shall impartially investigate violations with rigour. Subject to clause 19 of the Constitution, the Board may exercise disciplinary measures as

¹ 'Constitution of the Melbourne Camera Club' <<https://melbournecameraclub.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Melbourne-Camera-Club-Final-20211007.pdf>> ('MCC Constitution').

a direct result of the misconduct by a member. This includes bringing about no action, issuing a warning, suspending, or expelling a member.

The Board shall give due regard to the alleged prohibited conduct by the member and the awareness of the member's intent and state of mind in the act of their misconduct. The Board shall consider the scope and magnitude of the harm caused to individuals and the consequential damage to the Club's reputation combined with the breach of the prohibited conduct within the Code or unlawful activity.

The Board shall also consider any charges of acts of unlawful activity that either damages the reputation of the Club or brings the Club into disrepute as a breach of this Code. The Board may elect to suspend the member and, in the event of a civil or criminal conviction, to expel the member.

Under clause 19 of the Constitution, all members accused of alleged misconduct shall be formally notified of the allegations against them and the proposed resolution. The accused member has the right to defend the allegations against them. In its disciplinary measures, the Board decides to bring about no action, issue a warning, suspend, or expel the member. At the discretion of the Board, the matter may be referred to an impartial person to arrive at an appropriate disciplinary measure.

A person who has had their membership either suspended or expelled from the Club has the right of appeal. Clause 19.10 of the Constitution applies.

In the event of expulsion from the Club, the subscription payment shall not be refunded. Furthermore, the Club shall not be liable for any losses incurred by the member due to their suspension or expulsion.²

What are my responsibilities?

All members and guests of the MCC shall:

- a. Not take any action that would harm the dignity or self-esteem of any individual,
- b. Demonstrate respect to all people regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, political opinion, or economic status. See also: [Victorian anti-discrimination law – Fitzroy Legal Service \(fls.org.au\)](#)
- c. Direct their comments or criticism appropriately and avoid public criticism of other members or organisers of events and activities.
- d. Treat all people fairly and reasonably.
- e. Comply at all times with the rules, regulations, and policies of the MCC, as adopted and amended by the Board from time to time.
- f. Not engage in activities, behaviour, or conduct that jeopardises any individual's health or safety.
- g. Respect the public or private facilities provided for Club members and MCC events, and do not willfully cause damage to those facilities or the property of another member of the Club.
- h. Prevent unwanted interruptions in formal presentations from personal electronic devices, including but not limited to mobile phones.
- i. Not damage the Club's reputation or bring the Club into disrepute.
- j. Act lawfully at all times.

² Ibid cl 19.

Director conflicts of interest

If a Board Director is subject to a conflict of interest, the Director shall take all actions required pursuant to clause 51 of the Constitution.³

MCC property

All members and guests shall show due care and safe handling in using and storing MCC property. MCC members may be personally liable for the deliberate misuse and mishandling of MCC property where it is damaged.

Some MCC property and materials can be dangerous and should only be handled or directly overseen by Special Interest Group (SIG) coordinators.

MCC property shall not be removed from the MCC club rooms without express written approval from the Board, including information on where the material is to be stored and how it can be retrieved or accessed.

MCC Property includes and is not limited to:

- Darkroom equipment,
- Studio equipment,
- Archival material,
- Board materials, and
- Gallery and office equipment.

Harassment and bullying

Members must not engage in any behaviour that constitutes harassment, or bullying, where harassment is defined as comment or conduct directed towards a person or group which is offensive, abusive, racist, degrading, malicious or sexist. Bullying is defined as verbal, physical, social or psychological abuse. See also: [Victorian anti-discrimination law – Fitzroy Legal Service \(fls.org.au\)](http://fls.org.au)

Examples of behaviours that constitute harassment or bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Written or verbal abuse, threats, outbursts or inflammatory remarks.
- Unwelcome remarks, jokes, comments, innuendos or taunts.
- Leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures.
- Practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment.
- Any situation created intentionally to cause embarrassment, harassment or ridicule and risks emotional or physical harm to members, whether new or not, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.
- Uninvited physical contact or assault.
- Behaviours such as those described above are not directed towards individuals or groups but have the same effect of creating a negative or hostile environment.
- Retaliation, or threats of retaliation, against an individual who reports a breach of this Code, this is an example of vilification.
- Behaviour that intimidates, manipulates, offends, degrades or humiliates.
- Unreasonable criticism that is not part of a Club member's conduct.
- Exclusion or isolation by other club members.
- Withholding information which Club members might need to perform tasks and activities.

³ Ibid cl 51.

Bullying behaviour can range from very obvious verbal or physical assault to very subtle psychological abuse. Bullying is a safety hazard and poses a risk to a person's physical or psychological safety. Examples of bullying conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated verbal or physical abuse.
- Yelling, screaming or offensive language.
- Intimidating gestures or behaviours such as banging on tables.
- Excluding or isolating members or guests;
- Intimidation;
- Assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to a member;
- Withholding information or repeatedly changing agreed targets or guidelines;
- Constant or public criticism or belittling;
- Repeated sabotage, isolation, continuous undermining, or giving a member or guest too little information;
- The use of hate speech.

Sexual Harassment

Do not engage in any behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment, where sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual comments and sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or conduct of a sexual nature.⁴ Types of behaviours that constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Sexist jokes.
- Display of sexually offensive material.
- Sexually degrading words used to describe a person.
- Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances or propositions.
- Persistent unwanted contact.
- Unwanted sexual compliments or excessive and unwelcome flirting.
- Requests for sexual favours.
- Suggestive comments about someone's appearance or body.
- Remarks of a sexual nature about a person, their sex life or physical appearance.
- Asking questions or divulging confidences of a sexual nature.
- Leering or staring at a person or parts of their body.
- Suggestive behaviour, unnecessary physical intimacy, unwanted body touching, or physically molesting a person, including standing too close, excessively lengthy touching or body contact.
- Unwanted touching, patting, pinching, kissing or embracing someone.
- Displaying or transmitting sexually offensive posters, handouts, emails or screen savers.
- Gender-based insults or taunting.
- Smutty or sexist jokes.
- Sexually suggestive behaviour, including offensive body and hand movements.
- Indecent exposure, stalking, sexual assault, and rape.

Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in a similar situation because of their characteristics or attributes, such as race, gender, age, disability, gender identity,

⁴ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) Pt II Div 2 ('*The SDA*').

sexual orientation, or religion. Direct discrimination can take many forms, including exclusion, segregation, and differential treatment.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination can also occur through language, behaviour, or other forms of communication. For instance, if Club members make derogatory comments or jokes about a person's characteristics, such as race, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation, this could create a hostile or intimidating environment that amounts to direct discrimination.

Direct discrimination includes and is not limited to:

- Refusing to admit members based on race, gender, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability status.
- Denying certain club privileges, such as access to equipment or participation in events, to members based on their personal characteristics.
- Making derogatory or insulting comments or jokes about members or potential members based on their race, gender, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability status.
- Creating a hostile or intimidating environment for members based on personal characteristics, such as harassment or bullying.

Indirect discrimination refers to practices, policies or rules that appear neutral but disadvantage people from particular groups. These policies or rules may seem to apply equally to everyone, but in practice, they put certain groups at a disadvantage.

Indirect discrimination includes and is not limited to:

- Requiring club members to attend meetings and events at specific times and locations without considering the needs of members with disabilities or caregiving responsibilities.

The MCC prohibits all forms of discrimination. Discrimination is contrary to establishing an inclusive and collegial environment for all MCC members and guests.

Discrimination is prohibited under the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth), the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), the *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth), the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic), the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* (Vic), and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic).

Victimisation

Victimisation is prohibited by law and will not be tolerated at the MCC. Victimisation occurs when a person is subjected to detrimental treatment, including harassment or intimidation, because they have made a complaint or taken other action concerning discrimination, bullying, or harassment.

For example, victimisation may occur if a member of the Club raises a concern about discriminatory behaviour and then subsequently experiences adverse treatment or retaliation from other members due to making the complaint. Victimisation can also occur if a member takes action to support someone else who has raised a complaint or concern about discrimination or harassment.

The Club is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all members, and we take all complaints of discrimination or harassment seriously. We will not tolerate any form of victimisation against individuals who have made a complaint or taken other action concerning discrimination, bullying, or harassment.

Any member who has engaged in victimisation may be subject to disciplinary action, including expulsion from the Club. Members are encouraged to report any victimisation incidents to the Board, which will investigate the matter promptly and take appropriate action.

Report it

Report any breach of this Code in writing to the MCC Board for action by the Complaints/disputes Resolution Coordinator (See also the MCC Complaints/disputes Handling Policy).

Approved by the MCC Board: September 2023

For Review: September 2025