

MUDS Schools Trainer Code of Conduct

Introduction

This policy is not an exhaustive list of your legal obligations whilst working in schools with students under the age of 18. Instead, it seeks to draw attention to some issues, and highlight important aspects of being a MUDS Schools Trainer. In 2017 all trainers are required to read and agree to this Code and are responsible for upholding it. A failure to uphold your obligations under this policy may lead to you being excluded from the Schools Training Program.

1. Overview and expectations

- 1.1. This Code of Conduct clarifies the behaviour and attitudes expected from schools trainers while undertaking duties related to training or workshop sessions. The policy works from the basis that trainers are:
 - 1.1.1. In a position of seniority, and often greater influence than they may experience in their day-to-day lives;
 - 1.1.2. Responsible adults, who have a duty of care to the students they are training;
 - 1.1.3. Are there to facilitate and not indoctrinate. Debating is about developing critical and open minds; and
 - 1.1.4. Representing MUDS as an organisation, and the Schools Training Program, as a brand.
- 1.2. Trainers are reminded that whilst engaged by MUDS and facilitating sessions, they are acting in their role as trainers and must follow the Code at all times.
- 1.3. In order to maintain a high quality of training, schools trainers are responsible for reporting back to the Schools Training Officers no more than 24 hours after their session in order to report on:
 - 1.3.1. How the session went, including any positive feedback on the session and fellow trainers; and
 - 1.3.2. If any difficulties were encountered, including any concerns or points for improvement for fellow trainers.
 - 1.3.2.1. The source of this information will be kept confidential and it will be used to improve the training program.
 - 1.3.3. All schools trainers must be current members of the Melbourne University Debating Society. Returning trainers with expired membership may continue training, as long as they renew their membership by the 1st of March in the relevant year.

2. General Welfare

- 2.1. Schools trainers should understand, as responsible adults, their duty of care to students. Trainers are responsible for working with teachers to maintain safety and decorum within their sessions.
- 2.2. Schools trainers shall NOT:
 - 2.2.1. Come into physical contact with students under any circumstances, except in a medical emergency;
 - 2.2.2. Verbally, physically or sexually abuse, harass, or bully students;
 - 2.2.3. Consume or be under the influence of alcohol, tobacco or recreational drugs immediately before, during or after the sessions;
 - 2.2.4. Break the law; or
 - 2.2.5. Discriminate against students based on personal characteristics and identities. Rather, all students should be treated equally.
- 2.3. School trainers are reminded of their duty of care to students, and their role as a trainer and responsible adult whilst employed by MUDS. In their role as trainers, trainers should NOT:

- 2.3.1. Contact students via social media. If communication for debating purposes is required (eg reading speeches), use email, preferably school emails!
- 2.3.2. Enter into relationships with students before, during or after debating season.
- 2.3.3. Accept any job at a school in which they have, or used to have, a relationship with students currently at that school.
- 2.4. Schools trainers should immediately report welfare issues during or outside sessions to both the teachers on duty and the Executive.
- 2.5. Further to the duties outlined under points 2.2 and 2.3, schools trainers should be aware of how they communicate with students and understand that:
 - 2.5.1. Any communication by trainers encouraging violent or inappropriate behaviour, or the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substances is strictly forbidden;
 - 2.5.2. Schools trainers are reminded of their role as facilitators for learning and development, and as such should remain impartial and apolitical. This does not preclude conversation about controversial topics, however it does mean that conversation should be centred around helping students to approach topics with a broad and critical mind. As you are in a position of influence and seniority as a trainer, discussion about your personal political, religious and beliefs and associations is not appropriate.

3. Debating Related Behaviour

- 3.1. Schools trainers shall treat all schools with respect. As the school is contracting MUDS, trainers should not engage in negative discussion about the school or its employees.
- 3.2. Schools trainers shall treat all school and student property with respect. This involves ensuring that debating spaces are left tidy after sessions.
- 3.3. Schools trainers shall treat the Debaters Association of Victoria and all other debating organisations with respect. Disclosure of any sensitive or confidential material about any relevant organisations is forbidden.
 - 3.3.1. Schools trainers are responsible for meeting the requirements of other organisations and managing any conflicts themselves. MUDS will not be held responsible for any trainers that fail to disclose conflicts to other organisations.
- 3.4. Schools trainers shall aim to positively encourage students, rather than act in a punitive manner.
- 3.5. Students should be treated with respect at all times. It should always be remembered that students are younger, not less intelligent. Patronising or belittling attitudes towards students both in and outside of sessions students are not appropriate.

4. Working with Children Checks (WWCC) and Child Safety Obligations

- 4.1. Schools trainers have a legal responsibility to:
 - 4.1.1. Ensure they have a valid Working with Children Check which will not expire during the debating season (note that this must be an Employee Check);
 - 4.1.2. Notify the Schools Training Officers of their full name, WWCC expiry date and WWCC number or application number; and
 - 4.1.3. Notify the Schools Training Officers if they receive any communication from the Victorian Department of Justice regarding changes to their WWCC or its conditions, including if their WWCC is revoked.
- 4.2. Any schools trainer who has a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under the age of 16 MUST notify the Schools Training Officers and the Executive. Additionally, they have a legal obligation to report such information to the police.
- 4.3. Any schools trainer who has reason to believe that a child is at substantial risk of child sexual abuse MUST notify the Schools Training Officers and the Executive.

5. Breaches of this Code

- 5.1. All trainers have a responsibility to report any potential breaches of this policy to the schools training officers and/or the Executive.
 - 5.1.1. A failure to do this is considered a breach of this code.
- 5.2. Any potential breaches will be considered by both the Schools Training Officers and the Executive. At their discretion, the matter may be referred to the full Committee. The Executive or Committee will evaluate:
 - 5.2.1. The severity of the breach or complaint;
 - 5.2.2. What the potential repercussions are, including but not limited to: mediation, probation, or restrictions on the jobs awarded; and
 - 5.2.3. In severe instances, whether the individual is fit to continue as a trainer.
- 5.3. The Schools Training Officers and the Executive reserve the right to escalate the issue to either the school or UMSU if deemed necessary.
- 5.4. Grievances with the outcome of this procedure may be handled according to the University of Melbourne Student Union Clubs and Societies Regulations.
- 5.5. Any potential breaches of this policy that could also be considered illegal, or any other illegal behaviour by trainers, may be reported to and dealt with via the relevant law enforcement authority.

6. Definitions

- 6.1. To avoid ambiguity, the following terms in this policy are defined as follows:
 - 6.1.1. Code refers to this MUDS Schools Trainers Code of Conduct;
 - 6.1.2. Committee refers to the Committee of the Melbourne University Debating Society;
 - 6.1.3. Executive refers collectively to the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Melbourne University Debating Society;
 - 6.1.4. MUDS refers to the Melbourne University Debating Society;
 - 6.1.5. Schools Training Officers refers to the Schools Training Officers on the Melbourne University Debating Society Committee; and
 - 6.1.6. UMSU refers to the University of Melbourne Student Union Incorporated.