

Code of Conduct

Harwich Festival and Harwich Arts & Heritage Centre

Policy 15 | Version 1.0 | Revised 25 October 2026

Owner: General Manager and Trustees | Scheduled review: 25 October 2027

Who this code covers

This code sets the behaviour expected of trustees, staff, volunteers, artists, contractors and others acting for HF or HAHC. Hirers must communicate relevant venue standards to their groups. It applies on site, at offsite events, while representing the charity and in work-related online activity.

Respect and inclusion

Treat everyone with dignity. Do not discriminate, bully, harass, threaten, humiliate or exploit others. Respect personal boundaries, names and communication needs. Offer reasonable support and adjustments and do not make assumptions about disability, age or background. Disagreement about artistic or organisational choices must remain respectful.

Do not retaliate against someone who reports a concern or helps an investigation. A person may report a single incident without first challenging the behaviour. Use complaints, grievance or whistleblowing routes as appropriate.

Safeguarding and boundaries

Follow both safeguarding policies and your role's supervision arrangements. Never develop an exploitative, sexual or otherwise inappropriate relationship through a position of trust. Do not arrange private contact with children through personal accounts, give unauthorised lifts, make secret arrangements or promise secrecy about harm. Explain necessary physical support and respect consent and dignity.

Do not take custody of a person's money, medication, keys or personal affairs outside your authorised role. Gifts, financial dealings and personal relationships that could affect judgement must be disclosed and managed. Seek advice before accepting significant personal gifts or hospitality; cash gifts intended for the charity must enter the recorded donation process.

Safety competence and fitness

Follow safety instructions, emergency procedures and agreed risk controls. Do not undertake specialist work or operate equipment without competence and authority. Report hazards, accidents, near misses and unsafe behaviour. Stop where there is uncontrolled serious danger. Do not work while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs or any other condition that makes the role unsafe. Discuss relevant support or adjustments confidentially with the responsible manager.

Integrity authority and resources

Use charity funds, property, information and time for authorised purposes. Do not claim false expenses, misuse cash, falsify records, give or accept bribes or seek personal advantage from the role. Declare interests before decisions. Do not sign contracts, incur expenditure, make public commitments or speak for HF without authority. Keep personal and organisational funds and accounts separate.

Information images and communications

Protect confidential and personal information. Access only what your duties require and use approved systems. Do not discuss safeguarding allegations, employment matters or private records in public areas or general messaging groups. Share information lawfully with relevant authorities where necessary to protect people.

Obtain required permissions before taking or using images and respect a refusal. Use authorised channels for organisational communications, check accuracy and protect passwords and devices. Do not publish personal data, discriminatory content or unverified allegations. Personal accounts must not falsely appear to represent HF.

Reporting and response

Raise concerns with the General Manager or an unconflicted trustee. For immediate danger call 999; use direct statutory safeguarding routes where appropriate. A concern involving management must be capable of bypassing management, including private contact with the Chair at the centre address.

Breaches will be considered fairly and proportionately, with support and protection where needed. Depending on status and seriousness, action may include training, changed duties, suspension of access, ending a volunteering arrangement, contractual action or a staff disciplinary process. Do not use an internal response to avoid a necessary external report. Review the code annually and explain it during induction.

Prepared for adoption. Record authorised approval in the master register. Review sooner after a significant change or incident.

Reference guidance

[gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) - safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees

[acas.org.uk](https://www.acas.org.uk) - steps for employers to prevent sexual harassment