Code of Principles and Values

Purpose of Document

This document has been written to codify the principles, values and behaviours of London Leathermen (LLM). The Code demonstrates what is considered to be acceptable behaviour by our Members and event Guests, in order to ensure everyone involved with the Club feels safe, included, and welcomed.

Foreword

LLM, originally called MSC London, was founded in 1973 as a social group for gay and bisexual men in London with an interest in leather, rubber, uniforms, and related kinks or fetishes. Our goal has always been to facilitate meetings between like-minded individuals in congenial surroundings, such as bars and other public places. We aim to provide a place to gather that we can be proud of, where people look out for one another and hold one another accountable to a set of ideals long held by the fetish scene.

This document aims to describe the principles and values of the Club, including what we ask each Member to aspire to. The Club wants to ensure that all Members, and other people who attend our events, are treated fairly and with respect and dignity.

If you have any questions about the Code, or would like further information, or would like to contribute to future versions of the Club's policies, please do not hesitate to contact the LLM Committee at president@londonleathermen.co.uk or secretary@londonleathermen.co.uk.

Principles and Values

The Club's ideals are simple, and fall under three domains:

Honour

- We treat others with respect and dignity
- We look out for one another, and hold each other accountable
- We aim to act with transparency, owning our mistakes as an opportunity to learn and grow
- We aspire to be bastions of our community, where we do no harm but stand our ground

Fellowship

- We provide a safe environment for our fellows to meet and socialise, free of judgement or derision
- We look for those who aren't at our table, and invite them in
- We honour our elders for their experience and hard work, and support our youth to become the best that they can be

Unity

- We believe the community is bigger than any one individual
- We make decisions through open discussion and substantial unanimity
- We look to unite as equals, and look past matters that may divide us
- We do not tolerate discrimination or bigotry of any type

Scope

As a social club made up of a small group of unpaid volunteers, LLM's policy scope will be limited to events and interactions taking place under the Club's immediate control, which **are limited to**:

LLM-Organised Events

We expect this Code to be followed at both public and private events arranged by LLM and attended by at least one member of the LLM Committee. At public events, we will also expect our Guests to follow this same Code.

External events to which LLM attends as an organised group (for example, marching at Pride) are also considered within this scope.

To ensure the Code is followed at events, we have established a process to allow for on-the-spot identification and resolution of Code breaches (see Events Policy).

Official Social Media Accounts

Our official social media accounts (ones named London Leathermen) and our official mailing list are considered within the scope of this Code.

This includes and is limited to:

- Twitter account @LDNLeather
- Instagram account @londonleathermen
- Facebook page "London Leathermen"
- Mastodon account @LondonLeathermen
- The official London Leathermen mailing list

Any other official communication channel announced by the Club in the future will be added to this list.

Extreme circumstances

Extreme situations are defined as cases in which a member is under active investigation by authorities like the police or the court system.

Under these circumstances, LLM **may decide** to take preventive action out of scope and out of the strike system if it judges a member to be an active danger to its events or its members.

If you believe a Member or Guest has breached this Code (outlined under Expectations), please submit a grievance to our independent Grievance Resolution Committee (GRC), and this will be addressed as per our Grievance Policy.

Expectations

When considering the values and principles of the Club, it is important to also note behaviours that run contrary to these ideals.

Honour

Actions or behaviours that cause others to feel unsafe run contrary to our principle of Honour. This includes:

- Consent violation
    - As BDSM practitioners, consent is a complex subject; we acknowledge that consent can come in a variety of different forms, and many types of play involve situations in which implied consent or consensual non-consent are used

    - The Club strives to keep its events **Safe** and **Sex-Positive.** To do so, **we encourage our Guests and Members to receive repeated, verbal, enthusiastic consent** before engaging in sexual activities, or escalating upon agreed activities, in order to avoid any ambiguity or misunderstanding**.**
    - The Club will not tolerate the willful violation of a Member's or Guest's consent. This applies, but is not restricted to: touching, groping, unwanted photography, sexual harassment, or other acts that could be considered sexual (e.g. choking or biting) that a Member or Guest does not consent to.
    - **The wearing of BDSM gear or alluring clothing is not enough to assume consent.**
- Violence
    - The Club will not tolerate the use or threat of: physical violence, theft, or deliberate destruction of property of Members or event Guests.
- Symbology from hate groups
    - The Club will not tolerate Members or event Guests displaying symbology associated with recognised hate groups. This applies, but is not restricted to: outfits, accessories, badges, or tattoos.
    - We define hate symbology as a recognised item included in the Anti-Defamation League's Hate Symbols Database.

Fellowship

Actions or behaviours that cause others to feel excluded run contrary to our principle of Fellowship. This includes:

- Bullying or harassment
    - The Club specifically prohibits behaviour that could be construed as bullying or harassment.
    - Such behaviour includes, but is not restricted to: directing others to exclude individuals, spreading rumours, repeatedly mocking or belittling an individual, ignoring requests to be left alone, and following another Member or Guest around an event.
- Discrimination
    - The Club will not tolerate discrimination or bigotry of any kind.
    - This includes, but is not limited to: the use of slurs or other hate speech, or behaviours that target of one or more Members or Guests on the grounds of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, including: age, physical or mental health (including HIV status, as well as non-visible and/or learning disabilities), gender identity (including trans, non-binary and

genderqueer identities), body size, neurodiversity, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

Unity

The LLM Code of Principles and Values and accompanying Grievance Policy are designed to ensure everyone can attend and enjoy our events equally.

Conversely, abuse of the Grievance Resolution Policy for any reason will be looked upon unfavourably, as this runs contrary to our principle of Unity.

Details about what is considered an abuse of the Grievance Policy can be found within said policy.

Potential Outcomes

Behaviours that run contrary to this Code, and are within its Scope, may result in the LLM GRC allocating a strike against the Member or Guest in question.

Information surrounding this Three-Strike Policy is detailed below.

Three-strike policy

The intent:

The intended spirit of the strike system is to give a framework for keeping events safe, whilst still allowing space for those subject to the strike system the opportunity to learn and change.

The Process:

Breaches of this Code can be reported via our Grievance Report Form. These reported breaches will be reviewed by the LLM GRC. For full details of this process, please read our Grievance Policy.

If the GRC upholds a reported grievance against an individual, they will be issued with a strike. Knowledge of Strikes an individual has will be kept on a need-to-know basis, to ensure matters can be handled fairly and confidentially while still allowing LLM to enforce outcomes (such as temporary event restrictions).

The strike process is as follows:

- 1 Strike will result in a written warning.

- 2 Strikes will result in the barring of attendance to club activities for 3 months.
- 3 Strikes will result in barring attendance to club activities for 12 months.

Should these strikes be issued against a Member holding a position on a committee, the following additional restrictions will be put in place:

- At 2 strikes, the Committee Member cannot participate in any Committee activity and decision-making process for 3 months.
- At 3 strikes, the Committee Member will be removed from the Committee, and will also be ineligible for election to any position within the club for the suspension period.

Ending of the strikes

The strike against the member expires 12 months after the latest issued strike.

Any member returning after the end of a 3rd strike will be treated as already having 1 strike for a further 12 months.

Once the strike periods have passed, the individual will be treated with a clean slate. This is to encourage Members and Guests to learn and change their behaviour, and not be tarnished with an immutable reputation.

Strikes can be removed by the GRC following a successful appeal. Details of this appeals process are detailed in our Grievance Policy.