Code of Principles and Values

Purpose of Document

This document has been written to codify the principles, values and behaviours of London Leathermen (LLM). It is partially based on unwritten codes that served the club for 50 years, and leans on traditions while updating them to modern-day use. The Code demonstrates the values we want to see in our community, and what is considered to be acceptable behaviour at events by our Members and 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.

The objects of the club, as defined in our Constitution are:

- to promote and organise activities for the mutual enjoyment of Club Members;
- to develop and maintain close and friendly relations with, and to show hospitality towards members of similar Clubs;
- to raise money and collect gifts for charity; and
- to provide such services for the benefit of Members as the Executive Committee deems desirable and practicable.

This document aims to describe the principles and values of the Club, including what we ask each Member and event Guest to aspire to in order to mutually enjoy our activities. 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 Executive Committee at president@londonleathermen.co.uk or secretary@londonleathermen.co.uk.

Principles and Values

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

Honour

- We treat others with respect and dignity
- We look out for one another
- We hold each other accountable
- We aim to act with transparency, owning our mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow
- We aspire to be role models for our community

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
- We support our youth to forge meaningful connections within the community

Unity

- We believe in working towards a connected, collaborative community
- We make decisions through open discussion and broad consensus
- We look to unite as equals, not letting our differences 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 Executive Committee. At public events, we will also expect our Guests to follow this same Code.

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.

Exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances are defined as:

- Situations in which a member is known to be under active investigation by authorities like the police or the court system.
- Situations in which a member brings the club into disrepute in the public sphere by making unfounded claims

Under these circumstances, LLM's Grievance Resolution Committee **may decide** to take preventive action outside of scope and outside 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), there are two avenues of action available to you:
-Talk to an Executive Committee Member or an event Host for an informal action
and/or
-Submit a grievance to our independent Grievance Resolution Committee , 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. The Club strives to keep its events **Safe** and **Sex-Positive.** To do so, **we encourage our Guests and Members to gain and provide clear, verbal consent and to keep ongoing communications at events** before engaging in intimate activities, while engaging in intimate activities, and before 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 Venues, 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. The club uses the database as a resource only, but adopts its view that some symbols (e.g. norse iconography, numeric symbols, etc) need to be considered within a certain context.

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 in a manner designed to obstruct or harass.
- 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 derogatory behaviours that target 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 strive 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-tier Strike Policy is detailed below.

Three Strike Policy

The intent of this policy is to give a framework for keeping events safe and enjoyable for everyone, providing proportional responses to breaches of the Code, and allowing space for those subject to the strike system an opportunity to learn and change.

The Process

Breaches of this Code can be reported via our online Grievance Report Form. These reported breaches will be reviewed by the LLM Grievance Resolution Committee (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, with the possibility of multiple strikes to match the severity of the act. The severity will be determined by multiple factors, which include but are not limited to:

- The nature of the complaint
- Documented past offences
- Cooperation with the investigative process
- Input from both parties to the grievance

The accumulative strike severity scale is as follows:

- Strike 1 will result in a written warning from the GRC, potentially with specific conditions depending on the nature of complaint.
- Strike 2 will result in barring participation in all club activities for a period of up to a year
- Strike 3 will result in barring participation in all club activities for a period of at least a year.

In exceptional circumstances (as defined in the Scope), additional disciplinary actions may be considered, including a possible permanent ban.

Should these strikes be issued against a Member holding a position in the club (Executive Committee Mmbers, GRC), the GRC will learn towards increasing the severity. If issued a second or third strike, Members in question will not be able to participate in any decision-making for the club for the decided period.

The outcome of a grievance, along with details of any strikes issued, will only be advised to the subject of the claim, the complainant, and, in case of a ban, volunteer EventHosts. The GRC, LLM committee and Event Hosts are not permitted to discuss disciplinary outcomes with anybody outside these groups.

Procedure Following Strikes

Members issued with one strike will be provided with resources to educate themselves about the issue in question (e.g. consent, bullying), to encourage reflection and growth.

Any member wishing to return to LLM events after a second or third strike will be subject to a short interview with a GRC member. This interview will determine whether this member is allowed to return.

Once allowed back in, 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.