

ASDP Professional Code of Conduct

1. Purpose and Scope

This document outlines the standards of ethical and professional conduct expected of ASDP members and associates involved in Society activities.

The ASDP Board, Executive Officer, Company Secretary and Senior Leadership Team have responsibility for leading by example and promoting strong ethical and respectful behaviour. All members, contracted staff and associates are expected to comply with the Code and related ASDP policies.

In this policy, the term “associates” refers to employees, contractors, volunteers, researchers and non-members who attend or participate in ASDP events and activities, including ASDP online activities.

The Code provides a framework for day-to-day standards of personal and professional conduct when participating in ASDP activities or events. It does not, and cannot, cover every situation that may arise and does not replace the need for respect and common sense in how people conduct themselves.

2. Professional and personal respect

Everyone working or interacting with the ASDP should expect to be treated, and treat others, with respect, dignity and fairness.

It is self-evident that high standards of workplace practice and conduct improve morale. They facilitate more effective working relationships and enhanced outcomes. By contrast, bullying and harassment cause harm to the individual and the organisation, and will not be tolerated.

To support professional respect, members and associates are expected to:

- treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times;
- respect differing approaches to clinical practice;
- respect different beliefs and opinions on professional matters, particularly where ethical, moral, cultural and religious perspectives are relevant;
- seek to engage in constructive debate on professional matters, guided by the best relevant data, science, principles and reasoning;
- maintain respectful and objective professional discussion. This includes refraining from public or personal statements that may shame or criticise individuals when addressing practices or beliefs considered to be incorrect or problematic; and
- seek appropriate pathways for resolution where problematic conflict arises (see below).

3. Communications

We expect that all communications within the services and other activities of the ASDP, particularly the Discourse discussion forum, will be guided by the following principles:

- The assumption that every member is striving to do their best to help children in what can be a difficult area of work.
- That issues are clearly differentiated from individuals. Communication is addressed to the issue (message), not the individual (messenger).
- As professionals, we are on a collaborative journey of learning. Where issues are potentially polarising, where opinions are strong, this energy is appropriately directed into energetic but respectful discussion of the science, the data, reasoning and principles that guide examination of the issues.

Further information regarding communications conduct is outlined in the ASDP Social Media Policy, which should be read in conjunction with this Code of Conduct document.

4. Confidentiality

Sharing of clinical practice information with professional peers is a necessary part of continuing education. In the undertaking of communication among professional colleagues, patients, members and contractors / associates have a right to both respect and privacy. In all discussions, to maintain confidentiality, members and contractors are expected to:

- Make all appropriate attempts during case discussions to de-identify patients and families, and minimise the likelihood of identification;
- Hold in confidence any information shared during professional development activities or case discussions, where the material presented potentially leads to the identification of children and families (both during and after the sharing); and
- Hold in confidence information that may identify other professionals in a manner that breaches their right to privacy, or may otherwise cause harm.

5. Respect for the Society

Members, contracted staff and associates are expected to behave in a way that promotes the ASDP, and does not bring our Society into disrepute - See ASDP Constitution 21.1 (b).

6. Conflicts of Interest

Members and contractors / associates are expected to disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Examples include, but are not limited to financial interests, such as funding by pharmaceutical companies or other therapeutic interventions, that may be relevant to discussions in ASDP events and forums.

7. Related ASDP documents and policies

[ASDP Constitution](#)

[Policy: Conflict of Interest: Office Holders](#)

[Policy: Circulation of Information](#)

[Position Statement: Membership Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)

[Position Statement: Use of Discourse](#)

8. Management of concerns

Low severity concerns

For concerns considered to be of low severity, the ASDP Board encourages a process of informal communication towards possible resolution between those involved. Such situations do not necessarily need to be brought to official attention.

Discourse Discussion Platform

The ASDP Discourse discussion platform has a system for registering concerns (flagging posts). The first time a post is flagged, the system automatically responds as follows:

- The post is taken offline;
- The reasons for the flag are provided to the writer (Poster); and
- The Poster is offered the opportunity to modify their post and have it reinstated.

If an individual post is flagged again, or other posts by an individual Poster are taken offline, the issue is taken to formal moderation. It is the decision of the ASDP moderating group whether:

- The post be reinstated (ie, concerns are not justified);
- The post is removed; or
- The Post and Poster may be referred to the ASDP Board. The concerns will then be managed according to Sections 20 and 21 of the ASDP Constitution.

All other concerns (e.g. communications, behaviour)

Where there is a concern that ethical or professional behaviour has occurred that is not consistent with this Code of Conduct, a Board director or the Executive Officer (EO) should be advised in the first instance.

Where the concern relates to the EO and / or the Company Secretary the Board President should be advised.

All concerns formally brought to the Board will be addressed according to Sections 20 and 21 of the ASDP Constitution.

Whilst matters are being investigated, the ASDP reserves the right to temporarily suspend a member's membership. This may occur if the alleged Code of Conduct breach is considered by the Board to be significant.