



Rustington Players – Code of Conduct

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1. Introduction

Rustington Players is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment for all members, volunteers, and participants. As a volunteer community theatre group, the Society relies on the cooperation of its members to maintain a safe and supportive environment for all involved.

This Code applies to all Rustington Players activities and any situation in which members represent the Society, whether in person, online, or at external events. All existing members must have access to this document, and prospective members should be given the opportunity to read it prior to joining. By participating in the activities of Rustington Players, individuals agree to uphold the standards set out in this Code of Conduct and act in a way that protects their own reputation, and the reputation of the Society.

2. Our Principles

Rustington Players operates in accordance with the *Equality Act 2010* and is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of its activities.

The Society aims to create an environment in which all individuals feel welcome and respected, and where no person experiences discrimination based on protected characteristics, including (but not limited to): age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

All individuals involved with Rustington Players are therefore expected to:

- Treat others with respect and courtesy;

- Act professionally, fairly, and respectfully in all dealings with others, cooperating to create a positive experience for everyone;
- Communicate openly and constructively;
- Be reliable and punctual when participating in productions or Society activities;
- Support fellow members and contribute positively to the running of the Society;
- Represent Rustington Players in a way that protects its reputation and values.

3. Safeguarding

Rustington Players is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. This section summarises our approach, however, members must also follow the full Safeguarding Policy available on our website or requested from the Committee.

All members and volunteers involved in Society activities must:

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of others;
- Maintain appropriate professional and personal boundaries at all times;
- Avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable person unless it is unavoidable and appropriate safeguarding measures are in place;
- Obtain appropriate consent where required (e.g. participation, photography);
- Treat all safeguarding concerns seriously and report them immediately.

The Society will ensure that appropriate chaperoning (where required), and safeguarding procedures are in place. However, if there are any safeguarding concerns, these should be reported immediately so that appropriate action can be taken without delay. Where necessary, concerns may be referred to external authorities, including local safeguarding services or the police.

Useful guidance on safe internet use for children and people around them can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers-whose-children-are-using-social-media>

4. Social Media, Photography and Online Communication

Rustington Players members must use online platforms in a way that reflects the values and reputation of the Society.

Members are expected to:

- Act responsibly online and ensure that any content shared (including comments, images, or videos) does not harm individuals or the Society;
- Communicate respectfully and appropriately across all platforms, including messaging groups and email;
- Respect the privacy of others and obtain consent before taking or sharing images or personal information;

- Images of children or young people may only be used with prior written parental or carer consent;
- AI or image-editing tools must not be used to alter or generate images of members without their express consent;
- Ensure that only authorised individuals post on official Society accounts or use Society branding.

Any use of Society branding or production images for publicity must be approved by the Committee or designated Publicity Officer. The Committee reserves the right to request the removal of any online content that is considered inappropriate or damaging to the Society or its members.

5. Unacceptable Behaviour

Rustington Players has zero tolerance for behaviour that undermines the safety, dignity, wellbeing, or inclusion of others. Behaviour that is unwanted, harmful, discriminatory or creates a hostile or intimidating environment will be considered unacceptable.

Unacceptable behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Discrimination or harassment;
- Bullying or intimidation;
- Verbal abuse or aggressive behaviour;
- Physical violence or threats;
- Sexual harassment or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature;
- The use or possession of illegal drugs at Society activities;
- Persistent disruptive behaviour;
- Abuse of position, authority, or influence within the Society;
- Conduct that brings the Society into disrepute.

Such behaviour may result in disciplinary action depending on the severity and circumstances.

6. Reporting Concerns or Complaints

Members are encouraged to raise concerns if behaviour occurs that does not meet the standards set out in this Code of Conduct. All complaints will be acknowledged confidentially, and details shared only with those involved in resolution.

Informal Resolution

Concerns can often be resolved informally by speaking with the Director, a Production Team member or a Committee member.

Formal Reporting

Rustington Players is a volunteer organisation and will seek, wherever appropriate, to resolve issues through discussion, guidance, and mutual understanding. However, where a matter cannot be resolved informally, concerns should be submitted in writing to the Committee and formal action taken where necessary to protect the wellbeing of individuals and the reputation of the Society.

Outcomes

Depending on the circumstances, outcomes may include:

- Informal resolution or mediation between members;
- Guidance or recommendations for improved behaviour;
- Formal warnings;
- Removal from a production;
- Suspension or termination of membership.

All outcomes will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the behaviour.

7. The Role of the Committee

The Rustington Players Committee is the elected governing body of the Society and is responsible for the overall management and strategic direction of the Society. The Committee has collective responsibility for developing and implementing policies and procedures, and for upholding the principles set out in this Code of Conduct.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Committee will:

- Promote and model the standards of behaviour expected of all Society members;
- Ensure that members are aware of and understand the Code of Conduct;
- Address concerns or complaints in a fair, impartial, and timely manner;
- Take proportionate and appropriate action where behaviour falls below expected standards;
- Support Directors, production teams and members in maintaining a positive working environment during productions and Society activities.

All decisions relating to breaches of this Code of Conduct will be made collectively by the Committee and recorded appropriately. If a complaint is received, the Committee will aim to provide a response within 28 days, where reasonably practicable. Where a complaint involves a Committee member, that individual will not be involved in the handling or decision-making process.

8. Acknowledgement

It is a condition of membership of Rustington Players that this Code of Conduct is adhered to.