



Digital
Freedom Fund

House Rules for Online Meetings

These House Rules for Online Meetings are an abridged, simplified version of *DDF's House Rules*, which are applicable to all DFF meetings, online or offline. This version was created for participants in DFF online events to facilitate ease of reference only and is not intended to detract in any way from what is set out in the original version. In case of conflict between these House Rules for Online Meetings and the original House Rules, the latter prevail.

1. Introduction

Positive and constructive attitudes serve as the foundation for the work we do. DFF takes great care to design events that are welcoming and inclusive of everyone. Our events are attended by participants from various jurisdictions and contexts and, in every instance, represent a broad range of experiences and perspectives. Building international collaboration and cross-cultural discussion is a crucial aspect of DFF's work. Therefore, it is crucial to create a safe space for dialogue without curtailing or dictating individual behaviour at every event we host. To ensure the creation of a safe space, DFF has developed these House Rules for Online Meetings that are applicable to all our events held in a virtual format.

2. Scope of House Rules

DDF's House Rules for Online Meetings apply to all event participants, whether they be DFF staff, event support staff or attendees, and they apply for the full duration of the meeting in and out of formal sessions.

All participants are required to respect the rules set out below. Participants violating these house rules may be expelled from the online meeting and possibly face exclusion from all future DFF events.

3. Specific rules for online events

3.1. Respecting other participants

We expect all participants to respect one another by conducting themselves appropriately and in a polite manner, regardless of context or platform.

Communication should be clear and focused. We also ask that participants avoid interrupting or disturbing others. Please refrain from words, phrases or other content that may offend others, such as comments related to, but not limited to, gender, age, disability, ethnicity, political beliefs or sexuality.

English may be a second language for some of our participants, so we promote the use of slow, clear and simple communication. We ask that participants avoid jargon and acronyms, be mindful of their colleagues and practice inclusive language as much as possible.

3.2. Respecting the schedule

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In order to ensure that the meeting can commence on time and take place without any disruption, all participants are expected to be punctual and respect the schedule of the meeting. Participants should make sure they give themselves enough time to sign in and troubleshoot the online platform used for the meeting before the agenda start time to avoid any delays.

3.3. Inclusion of all participants

Each participant should actively strive to include everyone in attendance at the event.

We ask that all participants assume individual and collective responsibility to ensure an atmosphere of mutual respect and solidarity.

3.4. Acceptable behaviour

We encourage participants to adopt the following practices during virtual meetings:

- Do engage with other participants by listening and contributing to the conversation;
- Do ask and answer questions, but avoid lengthy speeches;
- Be considerate and respectful at all times in your speech and actions;
- Attempt collaboration before conflict;
- Be courteous to fellow participants;
- Notify DFF or event staff if you recognise a dangerous situation, someone in distress or someone violating the below unacceptable behaviours.

3.5. Unacceptable behaviour

We actively promote the adherence by all event participants to comply with the local laws and customs within the respective country that they are participating from.

While we defend, promote and encourage everyone's right to free expression, the below forms of behaviour and harassment will not be tolerated in any form at DFF events:

- Sexist, racist, ageist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, religiously insensitive or exclusionary jokes;
- Abusive, insulting, offensive or degrading language;
- Any language that encourages harassment or hate speech, or harmfully reinforces systems of oppression;
- Unwelcome photography, recording or screenshotting (if you would like to take screenshots or recordings, permission from those involved should be received first);
- Deliberate intimidation or online stalking;
- Unwelcome chatting, violence or threats of physical violence;
- Sexual attention or advances of any kind;

- Participate while under the influence of drugs;
- Sustained disruption of talks, presentations, or other activities;
- Advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behaviour(s).

If you notice something that you feel is inappropriate and contrary to the spirit of agreed upon conduct, we encourage individuals to follow the reporting process outlined below in section 4. Any participant asked to stop any perceived harassing behaviour by other participants or DFF staff are expected to comply immediately.

4. Procedure in case of misbehaviour and possible measures

The process and sanctions outlined below will be adopted in scenarios where a breach of the House Rules has occurred.

4.1. Reporting breach of House Rules at DFF event

DFF will identify persons who serve as “points of contact” for issues regarding the violation of the House Rules. Participants will be given information regarding the designated point(s) of contact prior to the event.

Complaints can be made via any of the following means:

- (i) Contacting a DFF staff member or designated point(s) of contact that you feel comfortable sharing your complaint with by another means of communication (e.g. email, phone, etc.)
- (ii) Reporting a complaint to DFF by email at contact@digitalfreedomfund.org; or send a Signal message to the number provided prior to the event.

4.2. De-escalating the situation

Once a complaint has been made, the issue enters into the escalation stages set out below. However, no specific action will be taken without consultation with and approval of the complainant. DFF will proactively address the concerns and intervene in one of the following ways:

- Brief key event staff;
- Provide warnings;
- Ensure that the reported individual and the reporter are not in the same virtual meeting room together for further sessions;
- Expulsion from a session or event;

We will act swiftly to reconcile all cases in a timely manner. However, the timeline may vary depending on the severity of the action and the desired outcomes.

4.3. Resolving the situation

Participants who are accused of harassing other individuals during the online meeting shall be given the opportunity to present their side of the story. DFF aims to resolve any issues in one of the following (non-inclusive) ways:

- (a) Parties involved amicably resolve the matter between them (e.g. by apologising);
- (b) The accused individual receives an informal warning;
- (c) The accused individual is banned from the event; or
- (d) The accused individual is banned from all future events.

DFF will endeavour to be fair and transparent with all parties in each case. A ban from all future events or any similar measures will require the approval of the DFF Board.

5. Governing law

These House Rules for Online Meetings and the Board of DFF's decision are governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Netherlands.