

DFF House Rules

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 participants come from regions and countries spread across the globe 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 support. To ensure the creation of safe spaces, DFF has developed these House Rules for all events it organises. For events DFF sponsors or supports, we expect organisers to have corresponding guidelines in place on appropriate behaviour and processes to follow in case of misconduct. We also welcome the use of our House Rules if they are appropriate for your context.

2. Scope of House Rules

DFF's House Rules apply to all internal and external events, be they in-person or online. The guidelines apply to all event participants, whether they be DFF staff, event support staff or attendees. They apply to all participants during the full duration of the event. This means they are applicable not only during formal sessions of the event, but also during informal activities (e.g. dinner, drinks and other social events).

All participants are required to respect the rules set out below. Participants violating these House Rules may be expelled from an event and possibly face exclusion from all future DFF events.

DFF shall have no liability for any damages whatsoever in connection with or arising from a breach of these House Rules by any person or organisation.

3. Specific rules for 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 venue, context or platform.

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- DFF thanks the Electronic Frontier Foundation and Aspiration for laying the groundwork for parts of these House Rules, and is grateful for the support of Dentons and Clifford Chance in their development.

Communication should be clear and focused to avoid interrupting or disturbing others. Please refrain from words or phrases that may offend others, such as comments related to, but not limited to, gender, ethnicity 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

In order to ensure that the event can take place without any disruption, all participants are expected to be punctual and respect the schedule of the event.

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

- Do engage with other participants by listening and contributing to the conversation (i.e. by not conversing with colleagues when other people are talking, talking over people or using phones or laptops during sessions).
- 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.
- Be mindful of surroundings and colleagues.
- 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. If an act is deemed criminal under the law, then DFF is at liberty to coordinate with local law enforcement in investigation of the crime.

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

- Sexist, racist, ageist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, religiously insensitive or exclusionary jokes or comments.

- Abusive, insulting, offensive or degrading language; any language that encourages harassment or hate speech, or reinforces systems of oppression.
- Unwelcome photography or recording (if you would like to take photos or recordings, permission from those involved should be received first).
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking or following.
- Unwelcome physical contact, violence or threats of physical violence.
- Sexual attention or advances of any kind.
- Forced intoxication or forced drug-taking.
- Sustained disruption of talks, presentations, or other events.
- Advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behaviour(s).

If you see something that you feel is inappropriate and contrary to the spirit of agreed upon conduct, we encourage individuals to say something to the person affected and remind them there is a reporting process (outlined below in section 4) that they can access. 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 temporary measures

4.1 Reporting misbehaviour at a DFF event or activity

Should you witness or be subject to misbehaviour or harassment, please immediately contact:

- (i) a DFF representative (in person or via contact@digitalfreedomfund.org)
- (ii) a designated point of contact;

DFF will treat all complaints confidentially and anonymously to the extent this is possible.

For each 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.

4.2 De-escalating the situation

Once a complaint has been made, DFF will endeavour to reach an amicable solution between the complainant and the accused. No action in this respect will be taken without the prior consent of the complainant.

4.3 Temporarily resolving the situation

If no amicable solution can be reached, both the complainant and the accused shall be given the opportunity to present their side of the story to a designated point of contact.

After hearing both the complainant as well as the accused, the designated point of contact may (but is not obliged to) take the following measures:

- Brief key event staff;
- Issue a warning to the accused individual;
- Ensure that the reported individual and the reporter are not in the same room together for further sessions;
- Ban the accused individual from the event.

The designated point of contact may decide to consult the DFF Complaints Committee before taking a decision.

5. Procedure for raising a formal complaint

If the complainant or the involved designated point of contact is of the opinion that the measures in accordance with clause 4.3 are not sufficient, the designated point of contact or the complainant have the possibility to raise a formal complaint in accordance with the following procedure.

5.1 Starting the complaints procedure

The formal complaints procedure commences by a complainant submitting a complaint to the Board of DFF.

A complaint should be submitted in writing and must contain the grounds for the complaint in sufficient detail.

The submission of a complaint includes at least:

- (a) the name of the complainant;
- (b) an (e-mail)address on which the complainant can be reached;
- (c) a sufficiently motivated complaint. If the complaints regards certain person(s), the complaint shall name this (these) person(s);
- (d) a proposed resolution.

The complainant may at its discretion be assisted or represented by legal counsel or another adviser during the handling of the complaint. The Board of DFF may decide to consult the DFF complaints committee before taking a decision.

5.2 Admissibility

A complaint can be submitted about harassment or misbehaviour.

The Board of DFF can decide not to take a complaint into consideration if:

- (a) the complaint is not submitted within reasonable time after the event giving rise to the complaint;
- (b) the complaint was submitted and handled by the Board before, and no significant new facts have emerged since;
- (c) the complaint is not sufficiently motivated, which will in any event be the case if the complaints does not contain all of the information set out in clause 5.1;
- (d) the complaint is demonstrated to be knowingly false;
- (e) the complaint is submitted anonymously;
- (f) the complaint contains disparaging and/or offensive language; or
- (g) the complainant does not have a reasonable interest.

5.3 Complaints procedures

After receiving the complaint, the Board of DFF will decide within two (2) weeks whether or not the complaint will be taken into consideration.

- (a) If the Board of DFF decides not to take a complaint into consideration, the Board of DFF will promptly, but in any event within two (2) weeks after its decision, inform the complainant about the decision and the reasons for it.
- (b) If the Board of DFF decides to take a complaint into consideration, the complainant may be asked to supply additional information within four (4) weeks from a written request by the Board of DFF.

If the complainant has consented, the Board of DFF will inform the accused about the complaint within two (2) weeks after receiving the additional information. The accused will be requested to give a substantive response within four (4) weeks.

After having received the accused's response (or in the absence thereof after four weeks), the Board of DFF will in principle render its decision. However, the Board of DFF may decide that a further exchange of documents or a hearing is scheduled. A hearing can be held in person, via teleconference or via videoconference.

The Board of DFF will rule within six (6) weeks after the last procedural step. The board of DFF's decision will contain the grounds for the decision. The Code of Conduct will be taken into account by the Board of DFF when making the decision.

The decision of the Board of DFF will be binding.

A ruling of the Board of DFF may consist of the following unlimited measures.

- a) Impose a formal warning on the accused and/or the organisation the accused is representing.
- b) Temporarily exclude the accused and/or the organisation the accused is representing from DFF events and other DFF programmatic activities.
- c) Indefinitely exclude the accused and/or the organisation the accused is representing from DFF events and other DFF programmatic activities.

If the complainant has not consented to informing the accused and the accused therefore has not been given an opportunity to respond in the context of this procedure, the Board will take this into account when considering the measures it can impose.

5.4 Parties can request an extension of the periods mentioned in clause 5.3. The Board of DFF can extend the periods. The Board of DFF ensures the complaint is treated with the necessary diligence and speed.

5.5 Deliberations

The deliberations of the Board of DFF concerning the complaint are confidential.

5.6 Confidentiality

The Board of DFF as well as the complainant and the accused shall be obliged to observe confidentiality in respect of any information they obtain in connection with the persons, the business or the personal or business circumstances of the complainant, the accused or the complaint.

5.7 Costs

Parties shall pay their own costs in connection with the complaints procedure, including, but not limited to, costs for legal counsel.

5.8 Notices

Any notice or formal communication regarding these House Rules must be in writing (which includes e-mail) to be sent to the contact details set out below:

Address: Digital Freedom Fund, Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 104-108, 1012 SG
Amsterdam, the Netherlands

E-mail: contact@digitalfreedomfund.org

The day of receipt by the board of DFF shall be formal date of receipt.

All notices or formal communications under or in connection with the complaint shall be in the English language.

6. Governing law

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