

IFM-SEI Code of Conduct

“Education for Social Change” is the motto of IFM-SEI and its member organisations; we strive towards a world where everyone is equal, where children and young people and their rights are respected and people live in solidarity. Education is our main tool to achieve this world. We offer children and young people a space to learn together and organize themselves, to critically reflect our society and develop ideas for change; a counter-world experience to live cooperation and friendship and build a more peaceful and equal world.



Article 29: The aims of education

Education should develop your personality, talents and mental and physical skills to the fullest. It should prepare you for life and encourage you to respect your parents and your own and other nations and cultures. You have a right to learn about your rights.

Children and young people need to be able to experience this in a safe space, where they can trust that they and their ideas are respected and that our common values are not harmed. This safe space needs clear limits that no one active in our organisations should cross in order to secure the wellbeing and educational experience of all our members.

Article 2: Freedom from discrimination

All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.



This Code of Conduct aims to set these limits and to explain how we, as an educational movement, can deal in situations when this safe space and our basic values are violated. It outlines our values and the lines that cannot be crossed and ensures that all of the work with children and young people is based on non-hierarchical relations between leaders and children. It is a living document that will develop over time and will be regularly reviewed based on our evolving experience. As a children’s rights movement, it is natural for us that we respect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in everything we do.

EDUCATION AND ZERO TOLERANCE

All our values are interlinked; violating one automatically violates other values. If somebody violates a value, we will talk with them about their action, how this was a violation of our values and what this means for our living together, as well as helping them to find alternatives, more

positive behaviours. As a last resort, getting expelled is a hard but necessary tool to preserve a safe space.

In cases where the safety of our members is at risk, we have to set very clear limits. In specific cases, people taking part in IFM-SEI activities and leaders must be sent home directly as their behaviour puts other people taking part in IFM-SEI activities in serious danger. These areas must be well communicated before and at the start of an activity so that everyone is aware of the consequences of such behaviour:

- Sexual assault
- Physical assault (including leaders hitting children, forcing children to drink alcohol)
- Sustained and unreflected verbal abuse and gestures, for example homophobic, sexist, racist language
- Bringing hard drugs to events and activities (for example heroin, ecstasy and cocaine).
- Threatening the life of another participant
- Grooming: when an adult tries to get close to a child in order to form a relationship
- Sex with children under the age of consent either in the country of origin of the child or the country in which the event is hosted, whichever is higher

POSITIVE CONSENT

At the beginning of each activity in IFM-SEI, we will inform people taking part in IFM-SEI activities about the No Means No policy of our movement: people taking part in IFM-SEI activities must not engage in any sexual activities without obtaining explicit and informed consent of all persons involved or present at every step. Be aware that personal boundaries may be different for each person and are defined by themselves only: respecting them is absolutely necessary. Saying 'no' does often not happen through using this word, so it is absolutely important that you wait for clear consent and agreement of the other person. Violating this policy will lead to the immediate exclusion from the activity.

OUR VALUES AND OUR RULES

Our values are not just words and paper; they are the basis of our living, playing and learning together and give concrete proposals for behaviours and actions. At the same time they set limits for behaviour that is not acceptable for us.

Article 3: The child's best interests

All actions and decisions that affect children should be based on what is best for you or any child.



DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION

We believe that people should be able to take part in decision-making on all levels in meaningful and inclusive ways. Democratic processes govern IFM-SEI and its member organisations. Through all our activities, we work with children and young people to develop their knowledge, attitudes, values and skills so they can secure their equal participation in the democratic process. We aim to create a better world not just for children, but with children. Therefore, within our member organisations children and young people should be actively engaged in democratic decision-making and we make sure that adequate spaces for participation are provided on all levels.

- Children must be able to shape the programme of activities, they must be encouraged to share their opinion and be able to develop their own ideas for activities.
- Children must also be able to input into the organisation's strategy and work plans through appropriate methods that correspond to their evolving capacities. This participation is an on-going process that needs constant reflection and effort from the organisations.
- Member organisations need to organise a regular and open democratic process to select an accountable decision-making body. Children and young people should be empowered and motivated to take part in the democratic processes of their organisation and space offered for them to do so.



Article 12: Respect for the child's opinion.

When adults are making decisions that affect you, you have the right to say freely what you think should happen and to have your opinions taken into account.



Article 13: Freedom of expression and information.

You have the right to seek, get and share information in all forms (e.g. through writing, art, television, radio and the internet) as long as the information is not damaging to you or others.

EQUALITY

We campaign for an inclusive and equal society and live it as much as possible. This means for us a diverse community where no one is discriminated, for example with regard to their age, origin, ethnicity, belief, abilities, sexuality or gender, and where everyone can show their own identity without having to fear exclusion. Therefore we combat all forms of fascism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, trans*phobia, ableism and sexism inside and outside of our organisations. We are a socialist organisation and our members must uphold our values. We proactively reflect on our own practices and aim to eradicate inequalities within our movement and challenge inequality when we see it.



Article 23: Disabled children

If you have any kind of disability, you should have special care, support and education so that you can lead a full and independent life and participate in the community to the best of your ability.

We fight for women's rights and against the discrimination of women and we are in a permanent educational process about all forms of discrimination that women are facing in our societies. We are a feminist organisation fighting for equality between genders and against patriarchy. Therefore we use affirmative action and tools such as the gender quota in our organisations and educate for equal rights and awareness of gender stereotypes, discrimination and privileges. Besides that, we constantly reflect gender roles and whether they are reproduced in our organisations and we reject the gender binary, recognising there are more than two genders.

- We must educate our members about the importance of equality and inclusion and reflect privileges and power relations
- We do not allow any comments or behaviour that devalues or discriminates people because of their age, ethnicity, origin, sexuality, gender, religion or abilities. This includes:
 - Jokes on behalf of other people's identity, for example their gender, sexuality, origin, ethnicity, religion, age or disability.
 - Offensive comments that devalue other people's identity, for example their gender, sexuality, origin, ethnicity, religion, age or ability.
 - The exclusion of children (and other groups of people, e.g. people with mental disabilities) from decisions that affect them (with respect to their evolving capacities)
 - The exclusion of women from decision-making, even if unconsciously. Delegations to international activities should consist of at least 50% women, and we strongly encourage member organisations to ensure gender equality in their boards. We recommend member organisations to set up women's quotas for their national boards.
- We recognise the importance of women and trans* only spaces as safe spaces to discuss discrimination among equals and we do not accept men's only spaces, as society as a whole already is a men's space.
- New members must be welcomed openly into our organisation and our activities must be accessible to them without regard to their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, origin, religion, nationality or disability as long as they respect our values.
- Equality also means that children have the same rights, deserve the same respect and need therefore special protection. In line with the UNCRC, abuse of children and violence against children is strictly prohibited. More safeguarding rules can be found at the end of this document.

ANTI-CAPITALISM

The capitalist system that our societies are based on creates inequality. A small part of the world lives on the expense of another, and within each country the ruling class exploits the majority of

people. The ones suffering the most under this inequality are children living in poverty who lack opportunities to develop their potential.

IFM-SEI undertakes critical education to understand the mechanisms behind this system and to be able to fight all forms of exploitation and end poverty. We speak out against capitalism and promote socialism and democracy as alternatives to the capitalist system. Our groups must offer a space where children can at least partly escape the capitalist logic and develop strategies how to better deal with it.

- We must aim to include everyone in our activities no matter their economic means, for example through putting in place solidarity fee concepts
- We must discuss with children how we can practice anti-capitalism together, both practically in everyday life and through public action.
- We must aim to avoid products from big corporations at our activities and to use products from cooperatives instead; we educate children about the negative impact of multinational companies.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

International solidarity is a fundamental principle of IFM-SEI. It is a deep and consistent commitment to the collective based on an active respect for difference. Rather than "tolerance" which involves passively allowing for difference, solidarity means actively seeking and incorporating difference in meaningful ways.

We believe that cross-cultural exchange acts as a foundation on which to achieve our key aims such as peace, equality and social justice. Only by coming together as a global movement will we be able to challenge and change the current world order.

Through international solidarity we directly get to know how other people experience the global system of inequality and learn how we can overcome this system together.

We actively encourage solidarity by providing opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and learning to take place. Our activities work towards this fundamental principle as we can best achieve our aims by learning from each other, working together and supporting each other's struggles in solidarity. International solidarity starts with educational offers – by learning about the situations in other countries we create a sense of solidarity.

- People taking part in IFM-SEI activities at IFM-SEI activities represent their movements and not their governments or countries and stand against national borders. Therefore it is forbidden to display any national flags. People taking part in IFM-SEI activities are informed about the reasons for this policy before activities and we educate our members on the values of solidarity and internationalism.

- Member organisations and groups aim to implement bilateral solidarity projects to realize solidarity also between international camps and seminars, for example through support letters, lobbying and fundraising.

PEACE AND FREEDOM

Peace is more than just the absence of war. IFM-SEI is dedicated to a world where everyone can live in a non-violent environment free from violence, war, bullying, discrimination, exclusion and fear, that is healthy and stimulating, where people can express their opinion and where conflicts can be peacefully resolved. We see that the key to peaceful solutions is education. IFM-SEI undertakes peace education and promotes peace initiatives whenever and wherever possible. Peace will only be really achieved when all forms of exploitation cease.

- Our education must be based on respect and equality. This means that educators don't use any kind of violence against the children in their care to demand their discipline. They don't shout at children, don't hit or push them, don't humiliate children or use any other kind of violence against them.
- At our activities, we do not use any games and media that promote war and violence; this includes the use of toy guns, computer games about war and violence and games where children purposefully hurt each other.
- Bullying is a form of violence widespread among children. We cannot accept bullying between members. This means that we will stop bullying when we see it happens and raise awareness of its causes and consequences with the children, as well as empowering them to stand up against bullying outside their groups.
- As long as everyone respects our basic values and rules, everyone is allowed to say their opinion and to discuss in respectful ways.
- Everyone must be free to show their identity without being discriminated against.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Our natural world is damaged by the capitalist system which values profit above people and the planet. Climate change and the unequal use of natural resources have the greatest impact on the poorest children in the poorest countries. Both technological solutions and social change are necessary to tackle the environmental challenges we face.

As a movement working for the rights of children and young people, IFM-SEI believes that we must protect our environment so that future generations have access to a healthy, stimulating and secure environment.


- We make sure that at all events we take care of the environment. We use resources such as water and electricity in moderation; we use sustainable sources of energy where

possible; we reduce, re-use and recycle in order to minimise waste; and we consider the environmental cost as well as the financial cost when we travel.

- We educate for social, economic and environmental sustainability and raise awareness among our members and the wider public that sustainability is key to secure the rights of children today and in the future.

CHILD PROTECTION

Children at our activities need special protection. We want to create a safe space for all children and give special support to those who experience conflict and violence in schools, in their families and communities. Through educational work with children and their carers, we aim to prevent violence in families. The following child protection rules are crucial for the wellbeing of everyone and must be respected by all leaders in all member organisations.



Article 19: Protection from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect.

Governments should ensure that you are properly cared for and protect you from violence, abuse and neglect from your parents or anyone else who looks after you.

Concerns about children's wellbeing may relate to physical violence, sexual violence, neglect or emotional violence of a child.

Physical violence is defined as actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury to a child.

Sexual violence occurs when there is actual or likely exposure of a child to inappropriate sexual activity. This could include activities ranging from inappropriate touching to sexual intercourse, and from exposure to pornographic material to sexual exploitation and exposure to sexualised language. However we seek to educate our children and young people about sexuality, gender and identity in a sex-positive, open and inclusive way. We encourage discussions about body confidence, exploring sexual identity and criticizing the dominant patriarchal and misogynist society.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Emotional violence is the persistent emotional ill treatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Collectively these terms are referred to as Child Protection issues. Concern may be felt after one incident or emerge over a period of time following an escalation of events or concerns. Information leading to the concern may come from various sources – observation, statements made by a child, by another member of the family, friend or by a staff member or volunteer.

- Leaders must at all times take responsibility for the care, welfare and safety needs of all children and young people in their care. Every adult has this responsibility for all children at all times.
- Our work with children needs to empower them: discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable and what they can do if there is a problem.
- It is good practice for the protection of both sides that a leader should never be alone with a child or young person (unless you are their parent or guardian). At all times, they should be close enough to another adult to be within sight and hearing range. If circumstances require that they should be alone with a child then they should ensure that another adult has agreed to this course of action, knows what they are doing and how long it will last.
- They must listen attentively to any ideas and views a child wants to share with them and must never dismiss what a child tells them as 'lies' or exaggeration.
- Leaders should not exaggerate or trivialize another worker's concerns about a child or ignore an allegation or suspicion of abuse in the hope that it will either 'go away' or that 'someone else will deal with it'.
- Leaders must respond sensitively to children who seem anxious about participating in certain activities.
- Leaders should not allow a child, young person or adult to be bullied or harmed by anyone in the organisation.
- Leaders must listen carefully to any child who tells them (sometimes through drawings and behaviour as well as words) that they are being harmed. They must tell the child that they cannot keep this information secret and this must be passed on to someone else. This then must be discussed as soon as possible with a designated Child Protection person in their organisation or district.
- When leaders are concerned about a child's wellbeing, any discussions with other leaders must remain confidential and the designated Child Protection person in their organisation or group must be involved or informed of any discussions.
- Leaders should ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.

PUTTING THE CODE OF CONDUCT INTO PRACTICE WHEN VIOLATIONS OCCUR

1) In activities of IFM-SEI

When people taking part in IFM-SEI activities violate this Code of Conduct, we will make sure to not only explain and warn them, but also support them in finding alternative behaviours. Many

people have never reflected on their behaviour, and as an educational movement it is our duty to support them in understanding the consequences of their actions.

In specific cases, when people taking part in IFM-SEI activities or leaders put others in danger, they will be sent home directly. These cases are outlined in the beginning of the document.

Specifically chosen people will take decisions on violations of the Code of Conduct:

- At large-scale events: Teams that have been appointed before the start of the event and have experience in dealing with such conflicts
- Small-scale events: The educational team of the activity
- Other events (e.g. EVS projects): The secretary general and president of IFM-SEI appoint an ad-hoc disputes panel

2) In IFM-SEI member organisations

Organisations joining our movement need to sign up to this Code of Conduct, as it defines the values described in the IFM-SEI constitution. We expect all member organisations to follow these rules. We recommend to all organisations to discuss the Code of Conduct with their members, use it to make their own code and share experiences on the behaviours outlined here.

When someone reports a violation of the code in a member organisation, then the IFM-SEI secretariat or a presidium member will contact the organisation to explain the concerns and discuss ways to avoid these situations in the future. If the organisation shows a willingness to learn, they get a second chance. We will make a difference between the behaviour of leaders of the organisation and children or young members. If for example a child or young member disrespects the value of equality, then our aim must be to educate them, even if it is a long process. If a leader acts against this code, then there must be evidence of the leader reflecting on their negative behaviour in order not to violate the safe space that leaders are supposed to ensure. When an organisation is not willing to learn, the procedures set out in the IFM-SEI constitution of IFM-SEI will be employed (see appendix).

IFM-SEI is an international space to learn together and from each other in solidarity. This Code of Conduct can ensure that our movement is a safe space where everyone can contribute, because positive behaviour based on respect, equality, solidarity and democracy can change the world.

Article 3.2 Membership review

Membership may be reviewed by an ad hoc committee of three people from different organisations, appointed by the Control Commission who will present a report to the next International Committee or Congress. The report may recommend termination of membership. The concerned organisation should be consulted openly and should be given the opportunity to share their views.

A membership review may be requested by:

- *10 members or 20% of the membership, whichever is less; or*
- *The Presidium*

Article 3.3 Membership termination

3.3.1 *The Presidium may with a two-thirds majority suspend membership until the start of the next Congress or International Committee if an organisation has acted contrary to the Constitution of IFM-SEI.*

3.3.2 *Where membership fees remain unpaid for more than two years from the due date, the Congress or International Committee shall consider the circumstances and may terminate an organisation's membership.*

3.3.3 *The Congress or International Committee will hear any membership review or suspension and may suspend or terminate the membership of the organisation by a two-thirds majority.*

3.3.4 *Any termination of membership must be ratified by a simple majority by the following Congress if the decision is made at an International Committee.*