



**Friends United of WNY**

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futiwny.org



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## **2023 Code of Conduct for Friends United of WNY (FUN@WNY)**

Friends United of WNY (hereinafter referred to as ‘FUN@WNY’) is a nonprofit organization registered and insured in New York State. Our programs are designed to increase the sense of agency for all participants. Individual participants come from a wide range of social, economic, mental and physical ability backgrounds. We strive to be a provider of safe havens and community spaces that are fully inclusive. Our primary objective is to enable effective and positive lines of communication between family, friends, potential employers, and the community at large.

To accomplish this, our mission includes:

1. The development of both functional life and work-related skills through hands-on training
2. Encouraging social engagement and communication through our recreational opportunities
3. Increasing awareness of wellness, healthy choices, and exercise through our sports programs

The conduct of FUN@WNY must therefore not violate any physical, psychological or community concerns. All of our participants, including the members of our Board of Directors and all Volunteer Program Coordinators, are expected to hold up our high standards and demonstrate the utmost respect for all individuals that our organization comes in contact with, both internally and externally. All activities in which FUN@WNY may be engaged in, on any level and in all surroundings, are hereinafter referred to as ‘events’.

The following seven sections outline what FUN@WNY considers to be acceptable/unacceptable behavior and appropriate responses with which to address such behavior:

1. Harassment
  - a. The creation of an unpleasant or hostile situation for an individual especially by uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, often pursued repeatedly and with persistence.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. This includes physical confrontations of any sort that subjugate an individual.
2. Bullying
  - a. The overbearing mistreatment, abuse, and/or domination of someone vulnerable by someone stronger, more powerful, etc.<sup>2</sup>
  - b. Included within this are any sub-groups formed within FUN@WNY that seek to create a social structure that is hierarchical in the classification of self-worth.

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<sup>1</sup> “Harass.” Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/harass>. Accessed 22 Apr. 2023.

<sup>2</sup> “Bullying.” Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bullying>. Accessed 22 Apr. 2023.



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### 3. Discrimination

- a. Using a prejudicial judgment or adverse opinion formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge is obtained to determine outlook, action, or treatment of specific individuals.<sup>3</sup>
- b. All individuals, participants, volunteers, and board members of FUN@WNY are expected to pursue knowledge regarding topics, situations, and individuals prior to creating any policies, social structures, or delineations of any kind.

### 4. Preservation of Confidentiality

#### a. Social Media

- (i) If you choose to voluntarily participate with FUN@WNY, we would ask that, if possible, full consideration is used when deciding to post any images to social media. In the event that this is unavoidable, please make a reasonable attempt to inform any individuals that may be inadvertently included in the aforementioned media prior to posting. We strongly suggest contacting any individuals that might be “tagged” (marked by name or identifying characteristic) prior to posting such content.
- (ii) It must be noted that FUN@WNY in no way has any desire to restrict any individuals’ rights regarding freedom of speech or participation in any public forum and will never do so with malicious intent.

#### b. Personal Information

- (i) FUN@WNY will make every effort to restrict the distribution of any personal and confidential information to only those qualified board members and other essential parties who have been approved to view, evaluate and act on such information.

### 5. Community Involvement and Respect in Society

#### a. Internal

- (i) Our group programs are meant to engender a sense of trust and community amongst our participants, and as such no behavior will be tolerated that results in physical, mental, or psychological distress being affected on any individuals present.

#### b. External

- (i) When the community as a whole outside of FUN@WNY is engaged in any capacity, all efforts must be made by all participants, volunteers, and board members of FUN@WNY to offer the utmost respect to all persons, organizations and facilities that are encountered.

<sup>3</sup> “Prejudice.” Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prejudice>. Accessed 22 Apr. 2023.



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## 6. Conflict of Interest

- a. When a conflict exists between the private interests and the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust.<sup>4</sup>
- b. Board members, volunteer leaders, participants, and any included individuals of Friends United will examine decisions with a fair mind and be conscious at all times of the goals and mission of the organization as a whole.
- c. All persons present at any gathering hosted by or involving FUN@WNY in any capacity will strive to never place any individual, group of individuals, or select group needs before the overall success, safety, and security of the whole of Friends United.

## 7. Conclusion

- a. Compliance
  - (i) Compliance to the aforementioned concepts is mandatory to ensure continuing membership or inclusion in any way with FUN@WNY.
  - (ii) This includes participants, volunteer leaders, board members, and any other parties that are included in any and all gatherings in which FUN@WNY hosts or engages in.
- b. Reporting misconduct
  - (i) All persons, including (but not limited to) participants, volunteer leaders, board members, or other parties are requested to report any concerns regarding potential misconduct to any board member or volunteer leader with whom they are comfortable.
  - (ii) Anonymity will be maintained whenever and wherever possible. Contact with complainants or incident reporters will be handled by the board of directors of FUN@WNY in compliance with the bylaws of FUN@WNY.
- c. Disciplinary actions
  - (i) The board of directors will conduct an emergency vote in compliance with the bylaws of FUN@WNY to determine disciplinary action.
  - (ii) One or more of the following four forms of disciplinary action may potentially result from the pursuance of, or practice of, any of the unacceptable behaviors:
    1. Expulsion from an ongoing event.
    2. Temporary ban from a type, style, or number of events.
    3. Participation only when a board-approved third party is present to accept liability for the individual who is deemed to be out of compliance.
    4. Permanent ban from the organization and all activities until board approval is given to return to the organization.

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<sup>4</sup> "Conflict of interest." Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conflict%20of%20interest>. Accessed 22 Apr. 2023.



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The Board of Directors of Friends United of WNY thanks you for your time, attention, and acknowledgement of the seven sections outlined in this 4-page document.

President: Mary Wilkinson  
 Secretary: Michael Sokol  
 Treasurer / Vice-President: Cheryl Nowicki  
 Active Program Lead: Michael Juby

**Signatory** (Participant or Parent/Legal Guardian if legally required):

Date of Document Review (4 pages): \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name (printed): <sup>Last</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>First</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>Middle Initial</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

Name (signed): \_\_\_\_\_