

**AOS CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

**OUR CODE OF CONDUCT**

As a leading orchid society, our volunteers, and staff are critical to working towards our common vision, values and goals. It is up to each of us to ensure that how we conduct our business, and how we interact with each other, earns and maintains the trust, loyalty and solid reputation bestowed upon the American Orchid Society. We share a common vision and values which mandate how we behave towards each other within the organization, as well as towards others outside the organization while we represent the AOS.

 **OUR VISION: (what we strive for)**

 A world where orchids are protected, cultivated, and enjoyed.

 **OUR MISSION: (the goals we work towards)**

The AOS will promote the preservation, cultivation, and enjoyment of orchids through education, conservation, and research. We will do this by disseminating knowledge via the internet, publications, and outreach as we strive to raise awareness of orchids and their importance in ecosystems and our lives.

 **OUR VALUES: (how we act)**

 **Inclusiveness:** Membership in the American Orchid Society is open to all individuals without regard to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age and as such, all actions of the AOS are conducted in accordance with the principles or nondiscrimination and mutual respect.

 **Integrity:** As members of the AOS, we act in a professional manner that does not call ` into question the legitimacy of our organization or our roles within the organization.

 **Humility**:  We commit to respect, to listen, and to learn from each other even if we do not always agree.

 **Trustworthiness**:  We trust each other to act in a manner that is in the best interest of the AOS. We depend on each other to help the AOS be as strong and vital an organization as it can be.  We depend on each other, and that is our greatest strength.

 **Life-long Learning**:  We commit to continual exploration and understanding of orchids as well as the best ways to share this understanding with others.

 **Accountability**:  We hold each other and ourselves to the highest standards.

 Decisions and outcomes are openly and positively communicated.

This policy applies to all AOS Officers and Trustees, Committee chairs and committee members, judges and employees while conducting AOS business.

In the AOS, improper (offensive, hateful, derogatory, bullying and harassing, etc.) behavior will not be tolerated. While, definitions and perception of respect, fairness, civility etc. differ among individuals, and between the offender and the offended, we recognize it is impossible to set a hard line in the sand regarding behavior. We will, however, strive to conduct ourselves in a civilized and adult manner. We are sensitive to the feelings and values of others. We treat each other with respect. Similarly, the AOS, including its members, also expects to be treated in a similar manner of respect and civility by those outside the organization.

Further guidance on expectations of acceptable behavior is covered in the Personnel (Employees) Handbook, the Trustee Handbook (Officer, trustee and committee job descriptions, Conflict of Interest, Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality Agreement), the Judging Handbook, and for social media postings, in the Facebook Policy.

 Those who believe the values above have been abrogated may ask for investigation/ resolution within the appropriate organisational structure described above. Issues of significant complexity or controversy that cannot be resolved within the local structure may be raised to the Executive Committee for consideration and final decision by the Board, as per section 5.3 of the Bylaws. Applications to the Executive Committee (EC) must be made in writing, contain a concise statement of the issue and any accompanying evidence to support the case. Decisions will be published in the minutes of the Board.

**CONCLUSION**

The overarching goal of this policy is to affirm a framework and guidance for our organization, and to provide the basis for a positive and productive working environment that is supportive of all our employees, board and committee volunteers who work so hard for the betterment and success of the American Orchid Society.

Approved By the Board of Trustees February 25, 2021