

# Durham Youth Council Code of Conduct & Expectations

## Durham Youth Council (DYC):

- ❖ seeks to represent no party-political view. All discussions are to be issue based.
- ❖ will ensure that Young People of Durham are given a voice to raise any issue that they feel affects them.
- ❖ will identify, discuss and debate issues of concern for Young People.
- ❖ will act on those issues and identify how to influence change at a local, regional and national level.
- ❖ will develop and increase the representation of Young People to encourage a diverse Youth Council.

As an elected representative, it is your duty to represent all Young People across County Durham. During your term in office you will be representing Durham County Council and Durham Youth Council; DYC members agree to adhere to the codes and expectations outlined in this contract.

## Expectations:

You are accountable for your actions and the manner in which you carry out your role as a DYC Member.

- ❖ It is important that you take your role and duty seriously when you are representing Durham Youth Council, both in and outside Durham Youth Council meetings. This means being a good role model and show a good level of social responsibility.
- ❖ It is important to remember you are representing DYC, and should thereby present yourself in a way which will reflect our Council, e.g. dressing appropriately for meetings and events, being respectful etc.
- ❖ You must attend Youth Council meetings and maintain regular contact with DYC staff, which includes answering and responding to emails, texts, phone calls, letters and social media posts.
- ❖ You should check Durham Youth Council related emails/social media posts and website at least once a week and respond promptly to questions, consultations, meeting requests and anything else related to your role as a DYC Member.
- ❖ You must notify a member of DYC staff in advance if you are unable to attend a meeting. This should be 24 hours in advance of possible (unless it is an emergency).
- ❖ When using the online groups or message boards, you should only post messages which are deemed appropriate in accordance with the Durham Youth Council Code of Conduct and Social Media Policy.
- ❖ You should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, sub-culture or disability.
- ❖ You should strive to uphold the reputation of DYC on all occasions and act in accordance with the trust or position that the Young People of Durham have given to you.

## Responsibilities:

- ❖ You have a responsibility to report any difficulties with emails or communication to a member of DYC staff so we can find a solution.
- ❖ You have a responsibility to report any changes to your contact details (address, phone, email etc.) or problems with receiving messages about DYC within 10 days to a member of DYC staff.

- ❖ You have a responsibility to ensure you report any changes in your medical needs or dietary requirements within 10 days to a member of NYC staff. In some circumstances, it might be appropriate to have your parent/carer to contact a member of NYC staff.
- ❖ You have a responsibility to ensure your choices and decisions should be informed by feedback from your affiliates. This is in addition to your own research. They should be based on merit and be objective.
- ❖ Should you be arrested, charged or convicted of any offence you have a responsibility to inform a member of NYC staff who will review the circumstances and take the appropriate actions.

## **Representation:**

NYC Members, should act and communicate in a way that does not damage the reputation of Durham County Council or Durham Youth Council.

- ❖ NYC members should not contact any Councillors or Heads of Service on behalf of the Youth Council without the agreement of the group and Participation & Engagement Officer. All communications must come through the Participation & Engagement Officer.
- ❖ NYC staff will provide opportunities to meet with senior decision-makers during your term.
- ❖ Any work undertaken as part of an external group, or as an individual, must not be sent from any NYC related platforms - such as, an NYC email address or social media account. This includes any accounts that note your position as a NYC member in the signature or bio.
- ❖ There is a zero-tolerance policy for the use of offensive, derogatory or discriminatory language and any accusations of the use of such language will be investigated and dealt with in accordance with our warning system. (This includes verbal communication, emails and social media.)

## **NYC Warning System:**

1. A formal verbal warning will be given by the Participation & Engagement Officer.
2. A written dismissal from Durham Youth Council.

On both accounts, this will be recorded on NYC systems and shared with relevant partner organisations, for example; British Youth Council.

Note, that in exceptional circumstances, the Participation & Engagement Officer may choose to proceed straight to step 2.

## **Social Media Policy**

Please note that this is a summary of our Social Media Policy in relation to our Young People. You can access the entire document from NYC.

### **What is meant by Social Media?**

The term 'social media' is defined as websites and applications for social networking, where people create, share and exchange content and ideas in virtual networks and communities. The content shared may include (but is not limited to) personal information, opinions, research, commentary, video or pictures.

For the purpose of this policy, the term applies, but is not limited to: blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Whatsapp, Flickr, LinkedIn, YouTube, Vimeo, Foursquare, discussions forums, special interest forums, user communities and any other personal web space where content is created, manipulated and shared.

NYC members should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than are listed here and this is a constantly changing area. Young People should apply this policy and accompanying guidelines in relation to any social media that they use.

In line with NYC and Durham County Council's Social Media Policies, NYC Members

must adhere to the social media guidelines as outlined below:

- ❖ Where appropriate, and only with the correct level of approval from Durham County Council, DYC Members are required to use separate dedicated social media profiles and email for their role within DYC, in order to avoid accusations of party-political allegiance.
- ❖ If you would like to make party political statements on your personal profile they should contain no reference to DYC or Durham County Council.
- ❖ DYC respects all Young People's right to a private life, however, Young People must be aware that where they are identifiable as a DYC Member, they are expected to behave appropriately.
- ❖ If DYC Members choose to comment or post opinions from their personal accounts about DYC activities, they should not bring the DYC or Durham County Council into disrepute.

## What is expected of DYC?

In return for complying with DYC Code of Conduct, you will receive the following from DYC:

- ❖ Regular updates and information about meetings and events.
- ❖ Opportunities to attend regional and national events, meetings and activities.
- ❖ Support with travel to and from local, regional and national meetings and events where your attendance has been agreed in advance with DYC.
- ❖ Support with your own personal development.
- ❖ Where appropriate, relevant training opportunities.
- ❖ Support to lead and influence local and national campaigns.

Please note that all DYC members will be offered these opportunities, however, your commitment to DYC and what you do during your term in office will be taken into account. Sometimes places may be limited, or the staff and transport costs of attending events may be too high, this may impact on the amount of Young People being able to attend.

## Contract / Agreement

**Any inappropriate behaviour or allegations of misconduct may result in restrictions or dismissal from DYC and/or relevant partners (British Youth Council or UK Youth Parliament).**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to abide by the requirements and recommendations as outlined above within Durham Youth Council's Code of Conduct. I understand that if I do not, I may be in breach of the Durham Youth Council Code of Conduct with could lead to my dismissal.

DYC Member:

Name	
Signature	
Date	

DYC Staff

Name	
Signature	
Date	