

KL!NK Code of Conduct

KL!NK strives to be a safe space for everyone to share their interest in the world of words through their own creations or discussing those of others, be it at creative writing sessions, book club meetings, open podia, or other activities. This document presents the values that are quintessential to the association and serves as a guideline for our members, who should keep it in mind at all times, such that everyone feels safe, respected, and welcomed. It is based on the values of respect, freedom of expression, diversity, inclusivity, and integrity. Furthermore, it is implied that all members should abide by Dutch law and comply with TU/e regulations when activities occur on campus. The examples given below are not an exhaustive list. A procedure to be followed in case of violation is outlined at the end of the document.



Respect

All members are expected to treat each other with respect. Constructive criticism and feedback are encouraged during the writing session, but any form of offensive, inappropriate, or degrading speech is unacceptable. Any form of bullying, (sexual) harassment, or violence will not be tolerated. Members are encouraged to set boundaries for themselves and to respect each other's boundaries.

The following definition from Wikipedia is considered: "Bullying is the use of force, coercion, hurtful teasing or threat, to abuse, aggressively dominate or intimidate." Harassment is understood to be "a behaviour that demeans, humiliates, and intimidates a person, and it is characteristically identified by its unlikelihood in terms of social and moral reasonableness" (Burger, 2022). [\[1\]](#)

During our weekly or non-weekly activities, members should check if their piece may have:

- NSFW content such as:
 - Sexually explicit content
 - Abusive content
 - Substance abuse
 - Use of slurs or hate speech
 - Gore
- Elements that mock other members without their consent
- Hate ideologies
- References to suicide

They should preface their piece with a trigger warning and consider reaching out to the board or the host to double-check and get a second opinion. Remember that members might not actually leave the room if you announce that a piece has sensitive themes - they are being put on the spot. We advise all members to speak up to a board member or the host if

they are made uncomfortable by a piece. It is important that we work together to maintain KLINK as a safe space. It is okay to write about any of the sensitive topics stated above as long as you do so respectfully. If you believe your piece might contain some triggering content, please consider reaching out to a board member or the host to get a second opinion. In the end, it is always the choice of the author if they want to disclose their work.

Freedom of expression

We value highly the ability of members to express themselves freely and openly. However, it is important that a member's freedom does not obstruct another's, and in view of this, members should keep in mind to notify the audience when sharing pieces that include sensitive topics (as defined above). For example, if you write about a traumatic event in an explicit way at the creative writing session and want to share your piece with the rest of the members, you should announce that this subject is present in your story and ask if there is anyone who might be uncomfortable with it being mentioned.

Diversity and Inclusivity

KLINK promotes diversity and inclusivity, and all members should feel welcome regardless of their differences, be it cultural, race, political beliefs, language, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, class, disability, or level of education (MBO, HBO, WO, PhD/PdEng). To ensure inclusivity, the language spoken at the activities or meetings should be in a language everyone can understand, as far as possible. On social media platforms and any other official means of communication, such as email, the language used should be English.

Writing is a deeply personal endeavor, which is why everyone is encouraged to create pieces in any language they prefer. However, feedback on the content might not be offered in the case that the participants at the writing session cannot understand the language of the piece. Moreover, members are not obliged to share their pieces at the creative writing sessions, and they should not feel pressured to do so.

Integrity

We expect our members to be honest, transparent, and accountable. Confidential and sensitive information should not be shared freely. The board should not withhold information from the members without good reason and should not purposely mishandle the collective funds of the association. Members who volunteer for activities or take up roles are expected to show up or announce their inability to do so in advance, if they are able to do so. We do not tolerate dishonesty for personal gain. Furthermore, committee members should not use the budget for things outside the scope of the committee and should not give false information to the board. Other examples of undesirable behavior are: purposefully misleading others or manipulating them.

Procedure in case of violation

Note that the procedure outlined below serves as a guideline, and exceptions may occur. Resolving the conflict and promoting safety should always have priority.

In case a code of conduct violation occurs, and the gravity of the situation is not severe, the parties involved should first try to resolve the issue and have a conversation amongst themselves. If this is not possible, a detailed procedure is given below on how to handle such situations. A warning could be issued to the offender, or penalties might be applied, such as a ban from joining an activity. The names of people who have been issued a warning or a penalty will be kept for a period of 5 years. The list will be accessible only to the board of the association, and upon request, each member can ask for the information stored about incidents they have been part of. Reports of incidents will be created and stored by the secretary of the association.

1. Plagiarism:

In general, if plagiarism occurs, as described in the HR, the first step should be to try to resolve the issue internally, without escalation. If both parties cooperate, then an apology can suffice, be it private or public. In cases where the person making the claim feels as though it is more serious, or if the offending party is being uncooperative, we encourage the involvement of the board or a CPS, as defined in the HR, to investigate the case.

The board or a CPS should meet with both the person claiming they were plagiarized and the person being accused of plagiarism, separately, and hear both sides. The board then decides whether there is enough proof to conclude that plagiarism did in fact take place (i.e., proof of sufficient similarities, text messages exchanged). The board is advised to take punitive action as described below.

- In case of Open Podium plagiarism (e.g., performing someone else's work): Bar the offender from performing at the next Open Podium.
- In case of Bundle submission plagiarism: We cannot reprint the bundle, but for unsold copies it is advised to add a one-page insert warning about the plagiarism containing story (e.g.: The story titled "X" by "Jane Doe" has been found to be plagiarized from "Y". We do not condone plagiarism). The offender should also be barred from submitting pieces for the next bundle.
- In case of Creative Writing session plagiarism: Issue a warning at first, and in case of reoffending, the offender should be banned from writing sessions for a month.

The board may deviate from these guidelines, making the consequences more or less severe on a case-by-case basis (e.g., if a person has a long history of plagiarizing, then more severe action might be taken, such as permanently banning them from specific activities or stripping them of their membership). The above guidelines are a recommendation.

2. Conflict between members

The goal of this procedure is to protect social safety within the association. We are not aiming to act as investigators or judges, but the information outlined below is meant to help decide which steps should be taken if a conflict does occur.

It is first advised to try to solve the conflict between yourselves, without escalation. If both parties cooperate, then an apology can suffice, be it private or public. If the matter is thought to be more serious by the accusing party or the accused party is being uncooperative, then the matter should be brought up to either the board or the CPS. The CPS is not asked to resolve conflicts, but is instead there to provide a safe space for members to report unwanted situations and receive support. They can then point them in the right direction, either reaching out to the board, Ombuds or police if they choose to do so. If further emotional assistance is needed, the CPS can, for example, ask them to make an appointment with their GP or with a student psychologist if they suffer mentally from the incident. This is also the case if the offending party experiences mental health problems from the incident and its repercussions. The CPS should come to the board and report any unwanted behaviour that could be a danger to the social safety within the association, while still maintaining the anonymity of the victims.

For serious cases of unwanted behavior we encourage members to reach out to the Ombuds for TU/e students - Roel Notten (T: +31 6 39 58 68 47 E: r.notten@tue.nl). The Ombuds for Students can provide impartial advice, mediate between parties, refer you to other forms of support, or initiate an independent investigation if necessary. Contacting the Ombuds for Students will not have negative consequences or disadvantages for you.

If a situation that goes against Dutch law occurs, then the accusing party is strongly advised to go to the police. In this case, the accused is suspended until the police give a verdict. After which, the board reviews the situation and makes its final decision.

When it comes to situations in which there is a conflict of interest, especially when a board member, or someone close to the board, is involved, the accusing party should contact either the CPS, the advisory board, the board of Scala, or the TU/e Ombuds directly. While this process is ongoing, the offender is suspended from joining any activities. The advisory board or the CPS can advise that the board member be "bedankt" (asked/forced to resign) in a GMM. The board enacts the decision. If the board or CPS feels that their participation in their role has impacted their mental health, they should seek advice from Scala or the TU/e and are strongly advised to make an appointment with their GP.

In case a GMM is needed, it is the job of the board, in collaboration with the CPS to protect the victims as much as possible. This includes maintaining their anonymity and/or leaving out sensitive details if they ask them to do so.

Here are some examples of situations and the advised course of action:

- Inappropriate behaviour in a group chat (sending mean messages about members, inappropriate jokes, etc.): The board should first explain to the offending party why what they did is deemed wrong and give an official warning. If the behaviour is repeated, they are removed from the group chat.
- Inappropriate behaviour in an activity (e.g., being mean to members, disrupting activities, etc.): The board should first explain to the offending party why what they did is deemed wrong and give an official warning. If the behaviour is repeated, they are banned from joining the activities for a month. In case of repeated behaviour, they get kicked out of the association.
- Cases that need more time (e.g., unclear circumstances, lengthy discussions with the two parties, etc.): The board can choose to ban all parties or only some from joining activities while the investigation is running. If a case is deemed beyond the scope and power of the board, then the accusing party is advised to approach the appropriate authorities, for example, the police or the university.
- Very serious cases (e.g., sexual harassment, physical violence): In cases where the situation cannot be resolved through mediation or societal safety is substantially impacted, the board can suspend the offender for a longer period of time or strip them of their membership. The decision can be challenged in a GMM by any member or the offender themselves.

*Instituted and signed by
5th Board of KL!NK*

Petru Rădulescu - Chair



Raluca Aron - Treasurer



*Vladis Michail - Commissioner of Internal
Affairs*

