

SOCIAL SAFETY POLICY

The social safety policy of ASVA

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This document is a translation of the Dutch-language “Sociale veiligheidsbeleid ASVA”. Any contradictions between this document and the Dutch-language document should be resolved by following the text of the Dutch-language document.

Disclaimer

The following document lists terms and situations that may be perceived as triggering for some people.

Introduction

ASVA believes that having a socially safe (work) environment is extremely important for the functioning of the organisation and the well-being of its employees, members and third parties. In order to create a socially safe culture within the organization, it is important to have a policy that outlines important rules that the board, employees, volunteers, and members must follow when working in the office, attending ASVA activities, or communicating online within ASVA domains. Among other things, the policy is designed to provide a framework in which people can determine to call each other out on inappropriate behaviour and so that it is clear how to report or complain about inappropriate behaviour.

This policy cannot provide for every conceivable situation. The examples of physically, sexually and emotionally undesirable behaviour listed are examples and not all-encompassing. It is also up to everyone covered by this policy to act on their own if they deem that unwanted behaviour has occurred.

In addition, it should be extremely clear that if there are criminal acts in the unwanted behaviour, that it is advisable to report it to the police. ASVA's complaints procedure cannot be seen as an alternative to a judicial process. The complaints committee of ASVA bases its possible sanction on its own convictions and is not obliged to follow the verdict of a judge if they find the perpetrator innocent.

This document will first discuss what the desired manners of behaviour and what the undesired manners of behaviour are within ASVA, then it will explain how undesired behaviour can be reported and a complaint can be filed and finally there is more information about the composition and functioning of the complaints committee.

This document and the accompanying policy were approved by the GA of ASVA on March 2, 2022, changes can be proposed by the GA and / or the board but should always be approved before it can become part of this policy.

Desired manner of conduct

ASVA strives to be an inclusive organisation. To achieve this vision, the logical starting point is that board members, staff, volunteers and other members treat each other with respect. This applies to both professional situations of ASVA, social events that are organized outside of work, and online communication within ASVA (think mails, chats and online meetings). Treating each other with respect is done by recognizing and valuing each other's identity, valuing group identities, valuing each other's physical person, dealing with confidential information with integrity and making an effort to maintain a good (work) atmosphere for everyone.

Unwanted manner of conduct (Omgangsvormen (Transgressive Behaviour)

Transgressive behaviour is harmful. It interferes with people's personal and professional freedom and safety. Undesirable behaviour occurs when at least one of the parties involved reasonably perceives it as such.

Undesirable behaviour can be divided into physically undesirable behaviour, sexually undesirable behaviour, and emotionally undesirable behaviour, although it should be remembered that undesirable behaviour can be intersectional and thus include multiple types of undesirable behaviour at the same time.

Physically undesirable behaviour

When thinking about social safety, it is often overlooked that this also includes objective, physical safety. Within ASVA, there is no room for physical abuse or acts where someone causes physical or emotional harm to another through physical actions. Examples may include hitting, biting, sexual fondling, spitting, pushing, and physically preventing someone from performing work.

Sexually undesirable behaviour

Sexually undesirable behaviour refers to behaviour or advances that are sexual in nature and transgress another's boundaries. This will not be tolerated at ASVA. Sexual contact between employees, volunteers, board members and/or members must involve mutual consent, voluntariness, equality and be appropriate within the context. Examples of sexually undesirable behaviour may include: unwanted sexual messages, inappropriate comments, sexual groping, and sexual contact without mutual consent.

Emotionally undesirable behaviour

Emotional undesirable behaviour also results in sanctions. Within ASVA, there is no room for inflicting emotional harm on another person. Emotionally undesirable behaviour includes things like bullying, harassment, manipulation, and exclusion.

Reporting unwanted behaviour

People who experience transgressive behaviour may report it to the vice chair or file an official complaint with members of the complaints committee. If an employee witnesses inappropriate behaviour between other employees, board members, and/or members, that person may report it to the vice chair. For the policy to work properly, it is important that the board, employees, volunteers and members of ASVA call each other out to account for transgressive behaviour and, if necessary, report it or file a complaint about it. There is also the possibility to talk to the ASVA confidential advisor.

If a person approaches the ASVA confidential advisor, this will mainly be an opportunity to talk about their situation in confidence. The confidential advisor has no obligation to report, but can make an (anonymous) report to the vice chair upon request. Despite the fact that the confidential advisor is part of the complaints committee, the advisor will not take action if no complaint is filed. The confidential advisor can, however, recommend that a complaint be filed.

If a report of transgressive behaviour is made, this report will be handled internally. The report will then lead to a conversation with the person who made the report (if the identity of this person is known), the person about whom the report was made and any relevant others. Based on these conversations, a good next step will be determined. The report will also be placed in the file of the person about whom a report has been made. If, after an initial report, the decision was taken to issue a written reprimand, this measure will be taken into account when determining the next step.

An official complaint can also be submitted to any member of the complaints committee. In that case, a complaint procedure will be initiated. The complaint will be taken up by the complaints committee. A complaint can also be filed anonymously. A complaint can be submitted in writing by emailing klachtencommissie@asva.nl or by contacting the members of the complaints committee.

Complaints committee

Composition of the complaints committee

The complaints committee will consist of three members, including a confidential advisor, a board member and an external member. In principle, from the board, the vice chair will sit on the complaints committee because they are responsible for employee policy. If a complaint concerns a board member or the entire board, no board member will sit on the complaints committee. If the complaint involves a board member or the entire board, the complaint can be made to the confidential advisor or the external member and they will jointly decide whether to involve a board member in handling this complaint. The external member is someone who is not involved with ASVA. The external member of the complaints committee will be sought by means of a vacancy that will be shared via the ASVA website and social media. If (a) suitable candidate(s) applies, an interview will be held by the first and second vice chair. The potential external member of the complaints committee must be nominated to the GA, if approved, they can join the complaints committee. The members of the complaints committee will take on this task for the period of one year. At the end of this year, it will be evaluated together with the ASVA Board whether the term will be extended.

If the complaints committee is actively handling a complaint during the transfer of boards (end of August), the board member of the current board will remain on the complaints committee to handle the complaint in question. Thus, the handling of a complaint is not transferred across different boards.

Operation complaints committee

When a complaint is received by the complaints committee, the complaints committee will take action. Roughly speaking, the task of the complaints committee is to deal with and deepen the complaint and to issue an advice to the Board of ASVA for the handling of the complaint in question. This will mainly be done by means of interviews with the persons involved and possibly by gathering information from parties who have relevant knowledge.

The ultimate goal of the complaints committee is to issue an advice to the board. The board is obliged to seriously consider this advice, but is not obliged to follow it. Thus, the final responsibility will rest with the board. The complaints committee has a period

of six weeks within which the advice must be issued. This period starts from the date that the complaint was filed.

The complaints committee must deal confidentially with the information they have. They must build up a file of the handling of the complaint, which includes minutes of conversations, if the complaints committee has to justify itself in any way. However, this file can only be accessed by the members of the complaints committee handling the complaint and will be deleted no later than one year from the date of issuing the opinion to the board. In their advice to the board, the complaints committee must provide enough information for the board to make an informed decision without compromising the confidentiality of those involved.

Prevention

Preventing transgressive behaviour and reporting impending transgressions and undesirable situations in a timely manner is very important. To ensure that the board, staff and members are aware that transgressive behaviour is unacceptable within ASVA, this policy will be cited and discussed at least twice a year at an MO (monthly employee meeting). Also, every new employee at ASVA will receive this policy so they are aware of the social safety within ASVA. This way all employees and the board will have sufficient knowledge of this policy.