



Code of Conduct Policy

INTRODUCTION

This code of conduct policy ("Code of Conduct") addresses VARP's procedures, rules, and terms that all members are expected to follow.

VARP is committed to providing an environment that promotes productivity and expects a high standard of professionalism and conduct from all members. This standard extends to all behavior at all times when members engage with others, whether in structured VARP meetings, social gatherings on VARP property or other locations.

VARP strives to have all members and participants enjoy its services and engage in the many virtual and in-person offerings free from implied or expressed discrimination, retaliation, harassment, or bullying of any kind. All who engage with VARP should be treated with respect and dignity; behavior to the contrary will not be tolerated.

DISCRIMINATION DEFINED

Discrimination is the unequal treatment of persons for a reason that has nothing to do with legal rights or ability. VARP's intent is to provide its qualified members assignments to committees, board of directors, Executive Committee, and other roles without regard to:

- Race, skin color, national origin, or citizenship status
- Sex, gender identification, or sexual orientation
- Religious beliefs or political affiliation
- Age
- Disability or genetic information
- Marital status or pregnancy
- Veteran's status
- Any other category protected by applicable federal, state or local law

HARASSMENT/ BULLYING DEFINED

Harassment (including sexual in nature) and bullying are considered unwelcome conduct that is based on, but not limited to, any of the discrimination criteria previously listed. Harassment and bullying can be physical, emotional or mental; harassment and bullying can be direct, indirect, in-person or virtual

(including on the internet and/or social media), including any overt or covert act or combination of acts directed against another person or group of people that is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate.

VARP also prohibits harassment against individuals in retaliation for reporting discrimination, filing a discrimination charge or complaint, testifying or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or lawsuit under these laws, or otherwise engaging in legally protected activity.

Petty slights, annoyances, and isolated incidents (unless extremely serious) are unlikely to rise to the level of prohibited harassment or bullying. Rather, the conduct must create an environment that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people.

VARP strictly prohibits any kind of unlawful harassment or bullying in any form, such as physical, verbal, or visual.

Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited, to:

- Offensive jokes, slurs, nicknames, epithets, derogatory comments, or name calling
- Physical assaults, threats, or intimidation
- Ridicule, mockery, insults, or put-downs
- Displaying offensive or sexually suggestive objects, images, cartoons, signs, statements, pictures, **videos, or audio**
- Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, propositions, or touching
- Sexually implicit or explicit statements, gestures, or sounds
- Lewd or off-color jokes or innuendo
- Questions/comments pertaining to another's sex life or experiences

REPORTING AND ADJUDICATION PROCESS

VARP is committed to providing the best possible environment for its members. Part of this commitment is establishing a system and environment in which VARP receives and responds to member questions, suggestions, grievances, and complaints in a timely manner. This includes any matter related to discrimination, retaliation, harassment, or bullying.

Members who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against, harassed, or bullied should promptly report the matter to VARP's Executive Director. In the event the complaint is against the Executive Director, or if a member does not believe the issue has been adequately addressed following the report to the Executive Director, he or she must provide a written complaint, question, or concern that adequately describes the issue to VARP's President. If a member is uncomfortable reporting the issue to VARP's Executive Director or President, he or she may submit a report of the issue to any member of VARP's Executive Committee.

Any member who engages with this reporting process will be treated courteously, and the matter will be handled with as much confidentiality as reasonably possible. VARP strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against any member for making a good faith complaint or grievance.

VARP, in its sole and exclusive discretion, may issue disciplinary action against any member found in violation of this Code of Conduct. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, issuance of a verbal or written warning, required training, private or public censure, suspension, and/or revocation of membership for a specified time or permanently.

ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This Code of Conduct supersedes all previous policies and management memoranda that may have been issued on subjects covered in the Code of Conduct. VARP reserves the right to revise, add, or eliminate any provision of this Code of Conduct at any time, with or without prior notice, except to the extent prohibited by law.

It is understood that VARP membership is not offered or guaranteed for any specific length of time. Members have the right to leave VARP at any time, and VARP has the right to terminate membership at any time and for any reason. This Code of Conduct is not a contract but merely provides behavior-related policies that govern VARP membership.

VARP is headquartered in Mechanicsville, Virginia, which is also the location of the VARP's principal office. By accepting or continuing membership with VARP, you agree to the terms of this Code of Conduct policy and that to the full extent permitted by law:

(a) this Code of Conduct and your membership with the VARP shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and, as applicable, the United States of America (federal law); and

(b) any action to enforce, interpret, or construe this Code of Conduct or otherwise related at all to your membership with the VARP shall be brought in a state or federal court of competent jurisdiction within Mechanicsville, VA. By accepting or continuing membership with the VARP, to the full extent permitted by law, you agree and expressly waive all rights to bring any suit, action, or other proceeding in or before any court or tribunal other than those described in this Section, and waive any and all objections to venue including, without limitation, personal jurisdiction and/or the inconvenience of such forum.

Adopted by the VARP Board of Directors, September 2023