

Shropshire Women in Business Code of Conduct

Our Commitment

Welcome to SWIB! As a member of this business network, you are joining a community dedicated to professional growth, mutual support and meaningful connections. This Code of Conduct outlines the behavioural standards we expect from all members to ensure a respectful, productive and inclusive environment.

Core Principles

Professional Respect

- Treat all members with courtesy, dignity and respect, regardless of background, experience level or industry.
- Communicate professionally in all interactions, whether in person, online or through network platforms.
- Listen actively and engage constructively in discussions and networking activities.
- Respect others' time, opinions and business priorities.

Collaborative Spirit

- Share knowledge, resources and opportunities generously with fellow members.
- Offer support and mentorship when appropriate and requested.
- Celebrate others' successes and provide encouragement during challenges.
- Foster an environment where all members can learn and grow together.

Confidentiality and Trust

- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding sensitive business information shared during network activities.
- Respect intellectual property and proprietary information.
- Honour confidentiality requests.
- Build trust through reliable, honest and transparent communication.

Inclusivity and Diversity

- We actively welcome members from all backgrounds and experiences. Discriminatory language or behaviours based on age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 will not be accepted.

- We encourage mindful language and openness to learning about experiences different from your own.

Expected Behaviours

During Network Events

- Arrive punctually and prepared for meetings and events.
- Participate actively and contribute meaningfully to discussions.
- Follow event-specific guidelines and respect facilitators.
- Network authentically and focus on building genuine relationships.

Online and Digital Conduct

- Maintain professional standards across all digital platforms associated with the network.
- Use appropriate language and tone in all communications.
- Respect others' privacy and seek permission before sharing personal information.
- Avoid spam, excessive self-promotion or irrelevant content.

Business Interactions

- Conduct business dealings with integrity and transparency.
- Honour commitments and follow through on promises.
- Communicate clearly about services, pricing and expectations.
- Resolve conflicts professionally and seek mediation when necessary.

Unacceptable Behaviours

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited and may constitute unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010:

Harassment and Discrimination

- Any form of harassment, intimidation or discriminatory behaviour related to protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation).
- Direct discrimination, treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination, applying policies or practices that disadvantage people with protected characteristics.
- Inappropriate comments about appearance, personal life or protected characteristics.
- Unwelcome advances or persistent inappropriate contact.

- Victimisation, negative treatment as a result of making or supporting a discrimination complaint.

Disruptive Conduct

- Aggressive, hostile or disrespectful behaviour toward other members.
- Disruption of network events or activities.
- Monopolising conversations or consistently dominating discussions.
- Inappropriate use of network resources or platforms.

Unethical Business Practices

- Misrepresentation of qualifications, services or business practices.
- Solicitation of confidential information for competitive advantage.
- Violation of non-compete or non-disclosure agreements.
- Fraudulent or deceptive business conduct.

Consequences

Breaches of this Code of Conduct may result in:

- Verbal or written warnings.
- Temporary suspension from network activities.
- Permanent removal from the network.
- Forfeiture of membership fees where justified and proportionate.

The severity of consequences will depend on the nature and frequency of the breaches, with network leadership maintaining discretion in enforcement decisions.

Consumer Rights and Membership Terms

Fair Contract Terms

In accordance with the Consumer Rights Act 2015, the membership terms are:

- Transparent and clearly communicated.
- Fair and balanced between member and network interests.
- Not designed to create significant imbalance to the detriment of members.
- Subject to good faith in their design, negotiation and implementation.

Membership Cancellation

Members have the right to cancel their membership in accordance with our terms and conditions. Any cancellation fees or restrictions will be reasonable and proportionate. Details of cancellation procedures and any applicable fees are set out in your membership agreement.

Complaints Process

If you believe any term of your membership is unfair or if you wish to make a complaint about our services, please contact network leadership. We are committed to resolving disputes fairly and will work with you to address concerns.

Diversity Statement

Our Vision

We believe that diverse perspectives, experiences and backgrounds strengthen our business network and create richer opportunities for all members. Our commitment to diversity is fundamental to our mission of fostering professional growth and meaningful connections.

Our Commitment to Inclusion

Welcoming Environment

We are dedicated to creating and maintaining an inclusive environment where all members feel valued, respected and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives and expertise. We welcome women from all backgrounds, industries, career stages and life experiences.

Diverse Representation

We actively seek to build a membership that reflects the rich diversity of our business community. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we welcome members regardless of protected characteristics including:

- Age — members across all age groups and career stages.
- Disability — we are committed to making reasonable adjustments to ensure accessibility.
- Gender reassignment — we welcome all women including trans women.
- Marriage and civil partnership status.
- Pregnancy and maternity — supporting members through all life stages.
- Race — women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- Religion or belief — respecting diverse faiths and philosophical beliefs.
- Sex — our network is designed for women in business.
- Sexual orientation — welcoming members regardless of sexual orientation.

We also welcome:

- Entrepreneurs, executives and professionals from various industries.
- Women with diverse educational backgrounds and professional experiences.

- Members representing different geographic regions and cultural perspectives.

Equitable Opportunities

We are committed to ensuring that all members have equal access to:

- Speaking engagements and visibility platforms.
- Business opportunities and referrals.
- Network events and activities.

Our Actions

Inclusive Practices

- We provide diverse programming that addresses varied interests and professional needs.
- We make reasonable adjustments to ensure accessibility for members with disabilities.
- We ensure our recruitment and membership processes are free from discrimination.

Education and Awareness

- We celebrate diverse perspectives and encourage cross-cultural understanding.
- We foster dialogue about diversity and inclusion within our business community.

Accountability

- We welcome feedback and suggestions for improvement from all members.
- We hold ourselves and our members accountable to these diversity commitments.

Moving Forward Together

Our strength lies in our collective diversity of thought, experience and perspective. By embracing and celebrating our differences, we create a more dynamic, innovative and successful business network for all members.

We recognise that building truly inclusive communities requires ongoing effort, learning and adaptation. We are committed to this journey and invite all members to join us in creating a network where every woman can thrive professionally and personally.

Dispute Resolution

- If a concern arises about a member's behaviour, please report it confidentially to the network leadership team via Camilla@architectureventures.com
- We commit to handling all concerns fairly and with respect for member rights.
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in suspension or termination of membership without refund, depending on the severity and after fair review.

Escalation Process for Breaches of the Code of Conduct

We take the integrity, safety and inclusivity of SWIB seriously. If a member breaches our Code of Conduct, we follow a fair and transparent escalation process to address concerns proportionately.

Step 1: Informal Resolution

- For a first-time or minor concern, the leadership team will reach out to the member privately to discuss the incident.
- The purpose is to clarify the expectations of the community, provide guidance and agree on how the member can realign their behaviour.
- Most cases are resolved at this stage through open dialogue.

Step 2: Formal Written Warning

- If the behaviour persists, or if the initial breach is more serious, a formal written warning will be issued.
- This communication will:
 - Clearly describe the breach and why it is a concern.
 - Reference the relevant section(s) of the Code of Conduct.
 - Outline the impact on others or the network.
 - Specify what changes are required moving forward.
- The member will be given an opportunity to respond and share their perspective within a reasonable timeframe (usually 7 days).

Step 3: Final Review and Potential Termination

- If there are repeated breaches or a case of gross misconduct (such as harassment, discrimination or breaches of confidentiality), the member may be suspended immediately pending a full review.
- The leadership team will review the evidence and determine whether membership should be terminated.
- A decision will be communicated in writing, with reasons provided.
- Where membership is terminated for a serious breach of conduct, no refund will be issued in accordance with UK Consumer Law, which

allows businesses to withhold refunds where services or benefits have already been accessed.

Right to Appeal

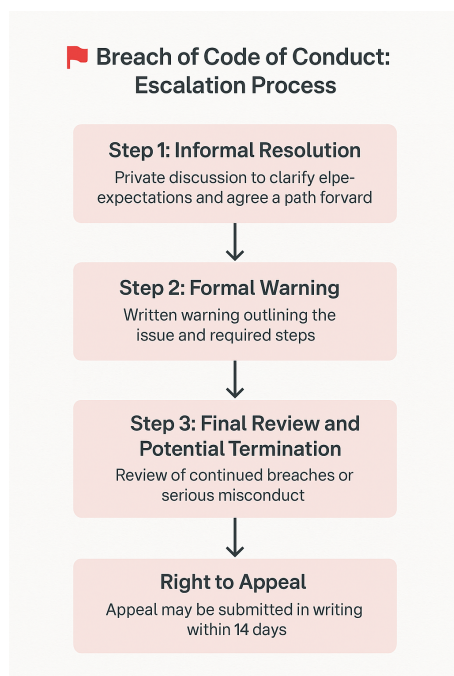
- A member has the right to appeal a decision within 14 days of notification.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing to [insert contact email], stating the grounds for appeal.
- An independent member of the leadership team or an external advisor if necessary, will review the case. The decision following appeal is final.

Gross Misconduct Examples

Gross misconduct may lead to immediate termination without prior warnings. Examples include:

- Harassment or bullying.
- Discriminatory behaviour as defined under the Equality Act 2010.
- Abuse of confidential member information.
- Behaviour that brings the network into disrepute.

This process ensures fairness to all members while upholding the standards of our community. We believe that by having clear steps, we maintain the integrity of SWIB as a supportive and empowering space.



This Code of Conduct and Diversity Statement are living documents that may be updated periodically to reflect our evolving commitment to excellence and inclusion.