

Singles Outreach Services, Inc.

SOS ETHICS COMMITTEE: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

August 5, 1992, Approved, October 14, 2023, Revised, December 15, 2023 Revised

ESTABLISHMENT

10.00 The Ethics Committee shall resolve issues concerning the revocation or suspension of an individual's membership and other issues concerning an individual's behavior and conduct at the events and activities of Singles Outreach Services, Inc., hereinafter referred to as SOS.

COMPOSITION

20.00 The Ethics Committee shall be composed of at least three Board members.

MEETINGS

30.00 A majority of the Ethics Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business except with respect to the penalties imposed under Section 60.00 (where a unanimous vote of all Ethics Committee members is required).

30.10 A unanimous vote shall be controlling. In the event that the Ethics Committee is unable to reach a unanimous vote, then the issue shall be referred to the Executive Committee for determination.

30.20 The Ethics Committee shall meet at such times and places as may be determined by its members and shall keep minutes of its meetings. The minutes are to be filed with the Executive Director.

30.30 The minutes must remain confidential unless just cause exists for disclosure upon such terms and conditions as may be determined by the Board of Directors.

DUTY AND SCOPE

40.00 The Ethics Committee shall undertake in strictest confidence the alleged violations of the Standards of Conduct as set forth in Section 90.00.

40.10 The Ethics Committee shall report its actions at each meeting of the Board of Directors in Executive Session.

40.20 The Ethics Committee shall, unless unusual circumstances warrant otherwise, limit itself to issues which occur at SOS sponsored activities.

REFERRAL OF ISSUES

50.00 The Ethics Committee shall consider issues or address complaints referred from the Executive Director or other members of the Board of Directors.

50.10 The Ethics Committee shall only entertain certain issues/complaints from network members if the request is submitted in writing. The official complaint form must be completed and submitted within 30 days of the incident.

50.20 The Ethics Committee shall entertain issues / complaints presented to it within fifteen days of receipt of same.

AUTHORITY

60.00 Upon a finding of a violation of the Standards of Conduct, the Ethics Committee will take one of the following actions depending on the severity of the violation:

- a. issue a verbal warning to the network member;
- b. issue a letter of warning to the network member;
- c. issue a notice suspending the network member 's membership for a specific period of time;
- d. issue a notice revoking the network member's membership.

60.10 Any decision made by the Ethics Committee shall be reported promptly to the Executive Director and to the Board of Directors.

60.20 The letter of warning, notice of suspension or notice of revocation shall be mailed to the member's address on file by the Executive Director, or the President in case of the vacancy of the Executive Director position.

GROUNDS FOR REVOCATION, SUSPENSION OR WARNING

70.00 Any network member who engages in any of the prohibited conduct listed under the Standard of Conduct in Section 90.00 is subject to revocation, suspension or a warning.

70.10 Any network member who is discovered to have a criminal conviction for a violent crime, a crime which involves moral turpitude, or sex offense as defined in Article 130 of the Penal Law of the State of New York will have his/her membership revoked.

70.11 There is no affirmative duty placed upon the Ethics Committee, the Board of Directors or any SOS staff to ascertain the criminal records of any network member.

70.20 An individual who, despite the request of the Executive Director, any member of the Board of Directors, or any person designated by the Executive Director to be in charge of the activity, refuses to participate in the resolution of a problem which arose at an SOS sponsored event, must immediately leave the SOS sponsored activity.

70.21 A refusal by the network member or his/her failure to immediately co-operate by leaving said SOS activity is grounds for an immediate suspension of his/her membership.

70.30 Any party, including the victim, engaged in a fight or any other volatile situation at an SOS sponsored event, must upon the request of the Executive Director, member of the Board of Directors, or any person designated in charge of the event leave the SOS sponsored event. Failure of the party to comply is grounds for an immediate suspension.

IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION

80.00 The Executive Director, Program Coordinator, or any member of the Board of Directors may temporarily suspend a network member's membership privileges if a network member exhibits disruptive, violent or threatening behavior.

80.10 Upon such an immediate suspension, the suspended network member must leave the SOS sponsored activity.

80.20 The Ethics Committee and the Executive Director shall be promptly notified of such an immediate suspension by the person who made the suspension. The Ethics Committee shall treat such notification as a referral of a complaint as described in Section 50.00.

80.30 The network's member's membership shall be deemed suspended until action is taken by the Ethics Committee.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

90.00 The By-laws of Singles Outreach Services, Inc. state that SOS membership may be revoked or suspended for harassment against one or more members; placing other members in jeopardy; interfering with program activities; subjecting the members to embarrassment, or preventing them from enjoying the benefits of their membership. As stated in the By-laws some examples of such behaviors include:

- a. The unauthorized use of SOS events to solicit gifts or sell goods or services.
- b. The use of romantic encounters for the purpose of gaining financial or other material favors.
- c. Subjecting others to embarrassment via persistent ridicule or falsehoods which impugn another's reputation.
- d. Unsolicited and unwanted persistent phone calls.
- e. Unsolicited and unwanted physical contact of an offensive nature.
- f. Threats of physical harm to a person, his/her car or other property, or family members.
- g. Unsolicited and unwanted persistent requests for or demands for social or sexual encounters and favors.
- h. Inappropriate sexual behavior, including unsolicited and unwanted comments of a sexual nature directed against another member.
- i. Committing any act that would violate any State, Federal or local law, ordinance or regulation.

APPLICATION AND RE-APPLICATION

100.0 In order to become a member of SOS, a prospective member will submit an application for approval. All questions on the application must be answered truthfully.

100.10 If an applicant or current member is found to have lied about a felony conviction on the application, their membership will be revoked or their application will be denied.

100.20 If a membership has been revoked or an application denied, there is no appeals process. The decision is final.

INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS

110.00 When the Ethics Committee cannot make a determination based upon the information it possesses or it believes further information may be beneficial; the Ethics Committee may request an individual to meet with the Committee for the purpose of exploring specific issues.

110.10 The Ethics Committee is not under an obligation or duty to have any witnesses appear before it unless it determines the facts and circumstances of the particular issue or complaint requires further investigation.

110.20 The Ethics Committee is not under an obligation to advise a network member that he/she is under investigation unless the Ethics Committee determines it necessary to ask individuals to meet with the Committee as provided for in Section 110.00.

110.30 Notwithstanding Section 110.10, a network member who has been advised that he/she is under investigation may submit written material on his/her behalf or at the discretion of the Committee, meet with the Committee.

110.40 The Ethics Committee is not under an obligation to provide the network member with specific details or the name of the person making the complaint or other information it deems confidential should it believe there is just cause for withholding the information.

110.50 Under no circumstances is the Ethics Committee under an obligation to advise a network member under investigation of the names of the people with whom it has spoken during the course of its investigation.

110.60 The Ethics Committee, in its discretion, may record electronically, any statements made by an individual who meets with the Committee as long as they are made aware of and agree to being recorded.

110.70 The Ethics Committee may, in its discretion, request that the network member under investigation appear before it to answer questions or provide an explanation of his/her conduct.

110.71 The Ethics Committee cannot compel a network member under investigation to meet with it nor can an unfavorable inference be drawn because a network member refuses to meet with the Committee.

110.80 A network member who is under investigation may request that the Ethics Committee speak to certain individuals whom he/she believes would be beneficial in establishing his/her position or defense.

110.90 The Ethics Committee may take into consideration a written statement submitted to it by the network member under investigation or any third person. The amount of weight provided to such a written statement is at the discretion of the Ethics Committee.

110.91 The Ethics Committee will make a determination of the validity of the complaint based on the available information provided. This decision will be reported at the next Board of Director's Meeting or to the Executive Committee immediately for extremely critical issues.

APPEAL PROCESS

120.00 A network member or any member of the Board of Directors may appeal a decision of the Ethics Committee to the Board of Directors within 30 days of a verbal warning or receipt of the letter of warning, notice of suspension or notice of revocation.

120.10 The Board of Directors must place such appeal on its agenda for the next scheduled Board meeting.

120.20 The network member is entitled to present evidence in his/her favor in writing or, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, in person.

120.30 Should the Board of Directors permit another individual to appear before it, the Board of Directors may excuse the network member and speak with the individual out of the presence of the network member.

120.40 Upon consideration of the network member's appeal, the Board of Directors may:

- a. table a vote of the matter until its next scheduled Board meeting if, and only if, further investigation is necessary;
- b. vote to affirm the decision of the Ethics Committee;
- c. vote to modify the decision of the Ethics Committee or
- d. vote to reverse the decision of the Ethics Committee.

120.50 No member of the Ethics Committee may partake in the vote although he/she may be present while the network member presents evidence and he/she may also participate in the discussion by the Board of Directors.

FORMAL COMPLAINT FORMS

NOTE: For anyone wishing to file a formal complaint, forms are available at the SOS office.