

Society for Muscle Biology, Inc.

Code of Conduct Policy

Purpose and Commitment

The Society for Muscle Biology is dedicated to providing an inclusive, positive, safe and harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, physical appearance, race, ethnicity, religion (or lack thereof), or political beliefs. We are committed to fostering a professional environment — encompassing all Society-sponsored events, meetings, communications, and online platforms, whether in-person or virtual — that promotes respectful collaboration, scientific excellence, and meaningful participation for all members of our community.

Scope and Applicability

This Code of Conduct applies to all Society activities and interactions, including but not limited to:

- All SMB events (conferences, workshops, meetings, social gatherings)
- Online platforms and digital communications (website, social media, email lists, virtual meetings)
- Professional interactions between SMB members at other venues when representing the Society
- Interactions with SMB staff, volunteers, and representatives
- Any conduct that could reasonably affect the SMB community or its reputation

Expected Behavior

SMB expects that all participants and members will:

1. Be considerate and respectful to all individuals participating in Society activities, including organizers, session chairs, invited speakers, presenters, attendees, sponsors, staff, and fellow members
2. Avoid any demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior, materials, and speech
3. Respect diverse perspectives and engage in constructive dialogue, even when disagreeing
4. Maintain professional standards in all communications and interactions
5. Respect privacy and confidentiality when appropriate
6. Speak up safely when observing behavior that conflicts with this Code of Conduct
7. Support bystander intervention by creating space for others to speak and offering assistance when appropriate

Unacceptable Behavior

Unacceptable behavior from any participant will not be tolerated. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Intimidating, harassing, abusive, discriminatory, derogatory, or demeaning speech, materials or conduct
- Sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, or otherwise discriminatory jokes and language
- Personal insults, particularly those related to gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or disability
- Inappropriate photography or recording, or their use on social media, without prior permission
- Sustained disruption of talks or other SMB activities
- Use of sexual images in public spaces or inappropriate contexts
- Stalking, following, or threatening behavior
- Sexual harassment of any kind, including unwelcome sexual attention and inappropriate physical contact
- Violence, threats of violence, or violent language directed against another person
- Deliberate intimidation or blocking of pathways or exits
- Retaliation against anyone who reports violations or participates in investigations
- Violation of local laws or venue policies

Reporting Procedures

Multiple Reporting Channels

If you are subjected to unacceptable behavior, notice someone else being subjected to unacceptable behavior, or have other concerns, you may report through:

- Immediate contact: SMB event staff or designated contact persons
- Email: smbmusclesc2026@gmail.com

What to Include in Reports

When making a report, please include:

- Your contact information
- Description of the incident, including date, time, and location
- Names of individuals involved and any witnesses
- Any supporting documentation (screenshots, photos, etc.)
- Whether you have reported this elsewhere

Investigation and Response Procedures

1. Initial Response: Reports will be acknowledged within 24-48 hours when possible
2. Assessment: Designated SMB representatives will assess the situation and determine appropriate next steps
3. Investigation: If warranted, a thorough and impartial investigation will be conducted
4. Documentation: All reports and investigations will be properly documented
5. Resolution: Appropriate actions will be taken based on investigation findings
6. Follow-up: Support and monitoring will continue as needed

Consequences

Consequences for unacceptable behavior may include:

- Verbal or written warning
- Removal from specific activities or sessions
- Expulsion from events without refund
- Temporary or permanent suspension from Society membership
- Restriction from Society communications or platforms
- Other actions deemed appropriate by SMB leadership

Anyone asked to stop unacceptable behavior is expected to comply immediately. The SMB reserves the right to take immediate action to ensure the safety and comfort of all participants.

Appeals Process

Individuals subject to consequences may appeal decisions by:

1. Submitting a written appeal within 30 days to the Executive Committee
2. Providing relevant information and documentation
3. Requesting review by an impartial panel when appropriate

Appeal decisions will be made within a reasonable timeframe and communicated in writing.

Retaliation Protection

The SMB strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who:

- Reports violations of this Code of Conduct in good faith
- Participates in investigations or proceedings
- Supports others in reporting violations

Retaliation will be treated as a serious violation subject to the same consequences as other prohibited behaviors.

Definitions

Harassment: Unwelcome conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, including verbal, physical, or visual conduct based on protected characteristics.

Discrimination: Unfair treatment based on membership in a particular group or category.

Retaliation: Adverse action taken against someone for engaging in protected activity under this policy.

Bystander Intervention: Safe and appropriate action taken by witnesses to prevent, interrupt, or address incidents of misconduct.

Policy Review and Updates

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and updated as needed to reflect best practices, community feedback, and changing circumstances. Members will be notified of significant changes.

Relationship to Other Policies

This Code of Conduct works in conjunction with other SMB policies including the Conflict of Interest Policy, Privacy Policy, and organizational bylaws. In cases of conflict, the most restrictive standard will generally apply.

Contact Information

For general inquiries about this policy:

- Visit musclebiology.org to send a message using the contact form on the Governance page.

Emergency situations should always be reported to local authorities first (911 in the US).

This Code of Conduct reflects our commitment to creating a professional, inclusive, and respectful community for all members of the muscle biology research field. By participating in SMB activities, you agree to abide by these standards and help maintain a positive environment for scientific collaboration and discovery.