

Code of Conduct FAA

Field guide to a safe learning and workplace

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Introduction

Imagine stepping into a rehearsal room,
a studio, or onto a stage.

You assume that space is safe.
Right?

But safety doesn't magically appar overnight.
It is something we have to build together.

At FAA, we believe social safety involves more than rules and guidelines.
It is about shared commitment and mutual respect.

A code of conduct guides us.

It helps us build a pleasant and safe workplace that focuses on imagination, connection,
strenght and responsibility.

It isn't a static document collecting dust somewhere.
It's a dynamic tool that evolves with us, growing more meaningful with use.

Look out for each other.
And take care!

Team IDEAS

Hard limits

There is no room for this behavior in our academy. It transgresses fundamental norms and values and requires action from ourselves and our environment.

Discrimination

Definition

Discrimination is an expression of intolerance towards people and groups based on their personal characteristics. In other words, treating people differently, disadvantaging or excluding them due to attributes such as age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion. The primary forms of discrimination are defined in the Code of Conduct and are punishable by law.

Within FAA

Any form of *discrimination* is **unacceptable**. It undermines the foundation of our community and goes against the values we uphold at FAA.

Examples

- A student from a migrant background is frequently complimented on their "good Dutch."
- A non-binary colleague is consistently referred to with "he" or "she," despite their request to use a different name or pronoun.
- In a casting call, only white students are selected for the "neutral" roles.
- A teacher makes a joke about a student's accent, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.
- A student with a disability is not provided with reasonable accommodations during a lesson or presentation.
- Someone does not feel safe expressing their true self during a group assignment.

What can I do?

- *Understand Your Role and Position*
Be - mindful of your position within the group. What feels normal to you may be sensitive for someone else.
- *Check in with Others*
Ask how your actions or words are perceived by others. Make sure what you say or do is acceptable to them. Listen actively and respect each other's boundaries.
- *Speak Up*
If you notice something troubling, address it directly or report it to someone who can help.

Sexual Harassment

Definition

Sexual harassment refers to unsolicited sexual advances directed towards another person in public. This can manifest through inappropriate comments, gestures, sounds, or physical contact that evoke fear, humiliation, offense, or degradation. It encompasses verbal and non-verbal behaviors, as well as any form of physical interaction. Sexual harassment is considered a criminal offense under the law and is punishable as an offense against public order.

Within FAA

In art, the body often plays a significant role. Intimacy, touch, and physical expression are sometimes essential to achieve the desired final result. Therefore, it is crucial that we take good care of one another by clearly communicating our boundaries and respecting those of others without question.

Sexual harassment in any form is **unacceptable** at FAA; it undermines the safety of individuals and the group as a whole and can lead to deep emotional scars and trauma.

Examples

- A teacher consistently makes remarks about a student's appearance.
- During a group activity, someone is touched for an extended period without consent.
- A student is being pressured into sharing personal feelings or sexual experiences under the pretense of contributing to an artistic project.
- Someone shares sexually explicit images or jokes that are intimidating or offensive to another person.
- An imbalanced relationship, such as between a teacher and a student, takes on an intimate or sexual tone.
- A look, stance, or touch is perceived as threatening but is dismissed as a matter of 'artistic freedom.'

What can I do?

- *Always ask for permission when performing personal or physical tasks.*
Be clear and explicit in your questions, and respect a "no" as a complete answer.
- *Normalize conversations about boundaries.*
Make it standard practice to discuss what is acceptable and what is not. Set a good example by initiating these discussions yourself and establishing your own boundaries.
- *Take responsibility for your behavior, even if your intentions were good.*
You may not have meant any harm, but the other person may have experienced the situation differently. Acknowledging this difference is essential for restoring trust.

Sexual Abuse

Definition

Sexual acts that are not consensual and equal are punishable under the Sexual Offences Act (July 1, 2024). This applies particularly when force, coercion, or an age or power differential is involved. However, coercion is not a necessary condition for an act to be considered a sexual offense; it merely serves as an aggravating factor. If an offender knows or should reasonably suspect that the victim did not want to participate, it constitutes a sexual offense. These crimes can occur both offline and online.

Within FAA

Sexual abuse is a serious offense that violates an individual's physical integrity and psychological safety, and it is **not tolerated** within our academy.

When a formal power relationship exists—such as between a teacher and a student or a supervisor and a trainee—there is an inherent inequality. Informal power imbalances may also arise among peers, whether between students or colleagues.

Examples

- A teacher isolates a student or privately invites them under the pretense of a work-related meeting, then coerces them into sexual contact.
- A student is pressured to engage in sexual acts in exchange for a favorable assessment or opportunity.
- A manager uses their position to force or coerce a colleague into an intimate relationship.
- Someone is compelled to do something they do not want to do, but they remain silent due to fear of the consequences.
- A situation may start off as mutual, but if one party says "no," that refusal is not respected.

What Can I Do?

- *Recognize that power is never neutral*
If you hold a position of power—such as a teacher, coordinator, coach, or supervisor—it is your responsibility to maintain a professional distance, even if a situation ‘feels right’ or seems mutual.
- *Support someone when they share their experiences*
Listen without judgment and ask what they need. Help them find a safe place and a confidant to talk with further.
- *Report it, even if you have doubts*
If you have seen or heard something that raises your suspicions, trust your instincts and report it to a confidant or supervisor. It is better to act early than to wait too long.

Undesirable Physical Contact

Definition

Undesirable physical contact refers to any form of physical touch that one finds intrusive, uncomfortable, or intimidating, regardless of the intent behind it.

This can include actions such as touching, hugging, grabbing, kissing, or leaning against someone—essentially, any physical interaction that breaches the other person's comfort zone. **The key factor is the perception of the individual experiencing the contact;** what may seem harmless to one person can feel threatening or unsafe to another.

Within FAA

Undesirable physical contact is **not acceptable**. Any physical contact should never be taken for granted and must always be based on agreement, consent, and mutual respect. This principle holds true even when physical contact is an essential part of the art form or work process, such as in theatre and dance.

Examples

- A teacher or fellow student touches you without asking for your permission.
- During a scene or exercise, you are unexpectedly kissed, grabbed, or hugged/
- Someone stands too close during a conversation or repeatedly touches you without your consent.
- You express discomfort with physical contact, but your feelings are met with laughter or dismissal.
- You are physically guided during instructions or corrections without being asked.

What can I do?

- *Always ask for permission before making physical contact.*
For example, you can say, "Can I touch you to show you something?"
- *Respect one's boundaries, even if they change.*
Just because someone says "yes" today doesn't mean they will say "yes" tomorrow. Keep communication open and regularly revisit what has been agreed upon.
- *Clearly state your own boundaries, and assist those who may find it difficult to do the same.*
You can say, "I am not comfortable with this," or "Can we discuss this first?" If you notice that someone else appears uncomfortable, don't hesitate to ask about it or report your observations.

Physical and verbal violence

Definition

Physical violence is the use of physical force against another, such as hitting, pushing, kicking, or grabbing. *Verbal violence* is a language intended to hurt, dominate, or frighten - such as shouting, cursing, threatening, humiliating, or insulting. Both forms fall under transgressive behavior and can be punishable.

Within FAA

Our learning and working environment focuses on individual development and experimentation, making it essential to express one's vulnerability. Mutual respect and safety are crucial in this academic setting. While conflicts and emotional outbursts may arise, violence is never a solution.

Expression and confrontation can be integral parts of the artistic process. During presentations, performances or rehearsals, interactions—both physical and verbal—can become intense. However, it is important to distinguish between play and reality. Both *physical and verbal violence* are **unacceptable**, whether in a work context or elsewhere.

Examples

- A student is scolded or verbally threatened during a group assignment.
- A teacher throws objects around the room in anger or bangs their fist on the table.
- A student is physically grabbed or forcibly removed from the room during an argument.
- During a rehearsal, "artistic freedom" is used as an excuse for aggressive actions without prior agreement.
- A person is repeatedly laughed at, humiliated, or intimidated.

What can I do?

- *Interrupt the Situation*
If you witness verbal or physical violence, try to de-escalate the tension. Acknowledge what you see by saying something like, "This is going too far," and pause the moment to restore safety. Make sure to do this without personally attacking either the perpetrator or the victim.
- *Respect and Monitor Physical Boundaries*
Always ask for permission and respect the response. Foster a safe environment where every "no" is honored.
- *Agree on How to Handle Intensity*
In artistic settings, emotions can run high. Therefore, it's important to discuss everyone's limits before starting an assignment or project and to check in with one another throughout the process. Keep in mind that what feels like a powerful gesture to one person may be too intense for another.

Threatening Behavior and Abuse of Power

Definition

Threatening behavior refers to actions that instill fear or are perceived as intimidating, even if they do not involve physical violence. This behavior can be either subtle or explicit.

Abuse of power occurs when someone misuses their formal position to exert pressure, manipulate, or overstep another person's boundaries.

Often, both threatening behavior and abuse of power are linked to a dependency relationship, such as those between a teacher and a student, an evaluator and a participant, or a manager and an employee.

Within FAA

To ensure a friendly and informal atmosphere within the FAA, we encourage you to be aware of your role. Threatening behavior and the abuse of power are not acceptable and will **not be tolerated**.

Examples

- A teacher states: "Discussing this matter will not improve your assessment."
- A study or teamleader share something personal or significant to secure your full commitment.
- A senior student, member of a project group, lets a freshman do all the work without anyone intervening.
- A staff member creates the impression that certain opportunities—such as an internship, a lead role, or a workplace placement—are contingent upon personal loyalty.
- Someone pressures another person to take part in an activity by saying, "Otherwise, your career will come to an end."

What can I do?

- *Recognize Subtle Forms of Pressure*
Understand that threats can manifest not only through loudness but also through power dynamics. Be alert to signs of discomfort, dependence, and fear, and be courageous enough to discuss these issues.
- *Use Your Position to Protect Others, Not Control Them*
Are you a teacher, coach or project leader? If so, you automatically have influence. Use that influence to ensure space, freedom of choice and safety.
- *Be Approachable*
Ensure that others know they can come to you. Communicate this openly – an inviting and open culture starts with a clear invitation.

Use or Distribution of Hard Drugs

Definition

Under the Dutch Opium Act, *hard drugs* are defined as substances that pose an unacceptable risk to health. This includes drugs such as cocaine, ecstasy (XTC), ketamine, GHB, speed, LSD, and heroin. The possession, use, or distribution of these substances is punishable by law. This also applies to passing or sharing hard drugs.

Within FAA

FAA commits to an open and creative culture that encourages experimentation and self-expression. However, this freedom comes with responsibilities. Activities that compromise safety, health, or legal boundaries are **not tolerated**. As such, hard drugs are strictly prohibited. The FAA maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding the use or distribution of hard drugs.

Examples

- A student uses ketamine, ecstasy (XTC), or another hard drug during a class, project week, music performance, or similar events.
- A student offers drugs "to relax" or to enhance creativity.
- Hard drugs are shared or exchanged during a field trip or study trip.
- A teacher, student, or staff member appears to be under the influence of hard drugs in front of the group or class.
- Someone knowingly or unknowingly leaves hard drugs in a common area.

What can I do?

- *Establish clear boundaries: drug use is unacceptable here.*
If you notice that hard drugs are involved, speak to someone calmly and directly. Use phrases like, "Hey, what are you doing? We're still focused on school," or "I don't feel comfortable with this."
- *Remember, reporting is not the same as 'snitching.'*
Take responsibility for our community. If you're ever uncertain about what to do, you can always talk to a mentor, coordinator, or confidential advisor who will keep your concerns private.
- *Make sure to communicate clearly and maintain your approachability.*
This includes being responsible during FAA activities, even outside of class hours.

Grey Areas

Our behavior is influenced by context, power dynamics, agreements, and mutual understanding. Grey areas always require careful reflection and open conversation.

Not every uncomfortable feeling indicates a transgressive act. In an artistic learning environment like FAA, where proximity, expression, and experimentation are key, boundaries can often become unclear.

Behaviors that fall into these grey areas necessitate awareness, reflection, mutual coordination, and clear agreements.

In this chapter, we will clarify some of these grey areas to help you recognize when situations may become problematic.

Artistic Experiments that Challenge Taboos

Definition

An artistic "experiment" is an attempt to engage with subjects that are often considered inappropriate or off-limits.

Within FAA

Art challenges, we encourage questioning taboos, addressing uncomfortable topics, and exploring boundaries. However, it's important to emphasize that no one should feel compelled to surpass their personal limits. Artistic experiments that venture into taboo subjects should never become discriminatory or threatening.

Examples of Situations Where Boundaries Can Become Unclear

- A performance that emphasizes themes of sex, violence, or sensitive religious or political symbolism.
- An activity that requires you to engage with or share personal trauma.
- A scene in which you portray a character that conflicts with your own beliefs and identity.

What can I do?

- *Clearly indicate what your personal boundaries are and when they are crossed.*
- *Discuss options with your teacher or director if a project exceeds these boundaries.*
- *Discuss these points before starting the project.*

Personal Discussions on Sensitive Topics: Politics, Faith, and Identity

Definition

An exchange of thoughts and opinions regarding sensitive and/or painful subjects.

Within FAA

In a diverse environment like the FAA, ideas and opinions can quickly differ. While personal discussions about politics, religion, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity can be enriching, they may also become hurtful and exclusionary. When discussions become harmful, they are **not accepted** within the FAA community.

Examples of situations where boundaries can quickly become blurred

- A student creates personal work on a polarising topic, such as abortion or migration
- A heated discussion about the war in Gaza starts in the canteen.
- Someone feels unheard because of their religious or political beliefs.

What can I do?

- *Listen carefully before responding, even if you strongly disagree.*
- *Ask questions without making assumptions and speak up if a project or a situation crosses your boundaries.*
- *Express your feelings when you feel excluded or attacked, but do so without attacking the other person.*

Disagreement, Clash, and Conflict

Definition

Struggles arise from their differences.

Within FAA

In creative work, tensions may develop due to varying styles, pacing, work ethics, and personalities, leading to frustration, miscommunication, and arguments. As long as these conflicts remain negotiable and respectful, they are manageable. However, when disagreements escalate into physical or verbal violence, threatening behavior, or abuse of power, they are **unacceptable**.

Examples of situations where boundaries can become blurred

- A peer consistently does less work and refuses feedback.
- Conflicts emerge over direction, role distribution, and final decision-making.
- You feel excluded from your team.

What can I do?

- *Address the conflict without making personal attacks.*
- *Seek assistance from a neutral third party, such as a teacher or coach, to resolve the situation.*
- *Allow everyone to have their say and maintain a neutral stance if you do not agree.*

Use of soft drugs and alcohol

Definition

The Opium Act differentiates between hard drugs and soft drugs. In the Netherlands, the sale of soft drugs is tolerated under strict conditions. Both alcohol and soft drugs are legal in the Netherlands, but they come with certain risks.

Within FAA

What is considered relaxation for one person may be unsafe or even inappropriate for another. Substance use is **not permitted** during educational activities. Outside of these lessons, such as at openings, excursions, FAA events, or activities, the boundaries set by others should guide decisions about whether consuming alcohol is acceptable.

Examples of Blurred Boundaries

- Someone drinks alcohol or smokes a joint during a performance outside the classroom.
- During an event, one or more students, teachers, or staff may become drunk, tipsy, or high.
- Someone arrives at a class or meeting under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

What can I do?

- *Be aware of your influence on the group, especially if you are seen as a role model. Avoid using substances in the classroom or at work.*
- *Respect that not everyone is comfortable with the use of drugs and alcohol. It's important to discuss this openly and establish clear boundaries.*
- *Ensure that you remain clear-headed and approachable during FAA activities outside of school. Active substance use is not acceptable in these contexts.*

Hugs, Touch, and Closeness

Definition

Being close and engaged involves warm, friendly physical contact, such as a gentle pat on the shoulder or sharing a heartfelt moment by leaning in affectionately.

Within FAA

At the FAA, we cherish an informal and inviting atmosphere where hugs, touch, and closeness are not uncommon. However, it's essential to understand that not everyone experiences this type of interaction as comfortable or natural. Physical comfort is deeply personal and can vary greatly among individuals. Therefore, when personal boundaries are not respected, such behaviors are **not acceptable**. By fostering a culture of understanding and respect, we can ensure that everyone feels comfortable and valued within our community.

Examples of Situations Where Boundaries May Be Blurred

- A colleague greets you with a hug, despite your preference to keep your distance.
- Someone offers a reassuring touch, leaving you feeling uneasy.
- You receive a personal message from a teacher or manager that touches on non-work-related matters.

What can I do?

- *Politely ask, "Would you like a hug, or would you rather not?"*
- *Clearly express your desire for personal space if needed.*
- *Always respect others' boundaries, accepting their choices without requiring explanations or expressing disappointment.*

Friendships and Preferences

Definition

Preferring someone or something over another due to friendship or a desire for friendship.

Within FAA

Close friendships can develop when individuals work together closely and share personal commonalities. This connection is valuable and important. However, friendships should not lead to exclusion, undue influence, or favoritism. If a friendship impacts a cooperation, it needs to be addressed, as such situations will **not be tolerated**.

Examples of Where Boundaries Can Quickly Blur

- A teacher shows clear preference towards a particular student, giving them more attention, time, and opportunities.
- A friendship within a team results in the exclusion of others.
- A teacher and a student share the same group of friends or meet outside of school hours.

What Can I Do?

- *Be truthful with yourself and the other person if friendships affect agreements or the division of roles in a project/work.*
- *Ensure that friendships do not disrupt group dynamics or influence assessments.*
- *Allow others to hold you accountable for any imbalances in power dynamics and take their feedback seriously.*

Infatuation

Definition

Infatuation refers to the intense feelings of love for someone.

Within FAA

Infatuation is a powerful emotion that can often take people by surprise. It's common for individuals to fall in love at work or school, which can be a beautiful experience. However, when feelings of love arise in situations involving a power imbalance—such as between a teacher and a student or between a colleague and a supervisor—it can become problematic. Additionally, if these feelings lead to influencing, excluding, or inconveniencing others, this behavior is **unacceptable**.

Examples of situations where boundaries can quickly become blurred

- A colleague develops an feelings for a student and struggles to manage those feelings.
- A student falls in love with a coach or supervisor and feels rejected when those feelings are not reciprocated.
- An infatuated relationship between two colleagues can disrupt the atmosphere and collaboration on a project.
- A mutual relationship between a supervisor and an employee may compromise the terms of their professional relationship.

What can I Do?

- *Be aware of your role and position.*
Do you hold a formal or informal position of power over the other person, such as being their teacher, mentor, assessor, or supervisor? If so, it is important to maintain an appropriate distance and discuss your feelings with a trusted individual.
- *Talking about your feelings can help alleviate any insecurity you might have.*
If you feel uncomfortable due to someone else's behavior or feelings, talk to someone about it before the situation escalates.
- *Always prioritize the learning process or partnership*
Infatuation may never jeopardize the learning experience, work process, or group dynamics. It is essential to protect your professional boundaries, even if feelings are mutual.

How to Navigate Concerns and Communication

Who Can I Contact?

For confidential discussions, guidance, or to report inappropriate behavior, please connect with our dedicated contacts:

- Fontys vertrouwenspersoon: vertrouwenspersonen@fontys.nl
- More information on [Fontys Sharepoint Sociale Veiligheid en vertrouwenspersonen](#)

If you have any questions or uncertainties, don't hesitate to reach out to:

- Contact your studentcoach, studieleader or Team IDEAS
- More information on [FAA Sharepoint](#)

What can I do?

- Before addressing a situation, pause to reflect: How do I genuinely feel about this, and how does my behavior influence the other person?
- Practice active listening and ask clarifying questions if a situation or reaction feels uncertain or troubling.
- Establish clear agreements before embarking on any project or collaboration.
- Revisit these agreements periodically and openly share your boundaries.
- Speak up if anything affects you negatively or if an uncomfortable situation arises.
- Report any concerns to us or to a confidential advisor who can help.
- Create an environment where everyone has the freedom to excel.
- Maintain awareness of your role and position within the team.
- Show kindness and attentiveness to one another's feelings and needs.

What can I expect from those around me?

- Your boundaries will be honored and taken seriously.
- Expect to see your boundaries respected and acknowledged.
- Power dynamics will be recognized and addressed.
- You will find support and assistance if challenges arise.
- Proactive measures will be taken against any undesirable behavior, even if it goes unspoken.
- You are free to express your true self and grow into the person you aspire to be.

Consequences

If this code is not followed, a conversation will initially be held to address the issue. If necessary, we may take further action, which could include issuing a warning or arranging mediation. However, if a legal offense, breach of contract, or cross-border misconduct is identified, we will have to take more serious measures.

About IDEAS

IDEAS stands for **Inclusion, Diversity, Equality, Accessibility, and Social Safety**. We believe that a strong artistic community can thrive only when everyone feels safe, free, seen, and heard.

IDEAS is here to support you in making FAA an excellent place to study and work. If you have any ideas, questions, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Pnina Avidar and Sander Jongen

Team IDEAS | Fontys Academy of the Arts
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Social Safety

Present on Mondays in room C1.13, via mailbox at the entrances or via e-mail:

faa-ideas@fontys.nl

p.avidar@fontys.nl

s.jongen@fontys.nl

Resources

- www.om.nl
- www.mores.nl
- www.discriminatie.nl
- [KUO: Code of Social Safety](#)
- [Fontys Social Safety and Confidential Person](#)
- [FAA IDEAS](#)