

Autism Society of Minnesota's Advocacy Committee Code of Conduct

The purpose of the AuSM Advocacy Committee (AAC) is to create a unified voice and to offer support and resources to advocates looking to effect positive change for the autism community. AAC is a committee of the Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) Board of Directors. The role of the AAC is to examine legislative activity, make recommendations to the AuSM Board, and represent AuSM's official policy positions in public forums.

The AAC will include members with a variety of life experiences to accurately reflect the diversity of the autism community. Knowing that opinions on issues may differ, committee members are expected to conduct themselves within the following guidelines. The guidelines exist to provide a supportive and respectful environment and ensure that AuSM's mission and reputation are accurately represented by members of this committee.

AuSM Mission

The Autism Society of Minnesota exists to enhance the lives of individuals with autism spectrum disorder. AuSM seeks to realize its mission through education, support, collaboration, and advocacy.

AuSM Goals

- To inform and educate families, professionals, and the community about autism spectrum disorders and promising interventions that meet individual needs.
- To advocate for appropriate services and rights for people with ASD and their families.
- To support families and individuals through services and relationships.

AuSM Advocacy Committee Requirements

AAC Code of Conduct

- All members will sign and abide by the AAC Code of Conduct.

Attendance

- Maintain contact with committee via e-mail at advocacy@ausm.org or the AAC Facebook group.
- Attend a minimum of one in-person meeting each calendar year.
- Attend a minimum of two in-person trainings each calendar year.

Expectations

- Be an AuSM member in good standing. If there are financial barriers, please speak with the co-chairs for scholarship information.
- Have a personal connection to the autism community.
- Report scheduled meetings with legislators to committee co-chairs. Consult with co-chairs before appointment and submit a summary after the meeting takes place.
- Adopt AuSM's core values, policies, and procedures and fairly represent Autism Society of Minnesota to the public.
- Create a safe and welcoming environment for those in the AAC Facebook group and those who participate in committee activities.
- Treat all members and all volunteers, AuSM staff, facilitators, and advisors with respect. Listen to member concerns and respond appropriately. Each individual has a different experience with autism; all perspectives are valid and vital in understanding and advocating for the autism community. In a respectful environment, we can learn from each other and be positioned to represent the collective autism community.
- Refrain from physical, emotional, or verbal abuse or rudeness toward volunteers, staff, associates, or members. Such behavior will not be tolerated.
- Concerns or grievances should be brought to the co-chairs rather than discussed with other members. A unified voice makes the AAC strong.
- Recognize that AuSM is non-partisan. It is imperative that this be recognized because AuSM is a 501(c)(3) organization.
- Keep committee conversations of policy positions within the committee. Multiple viewpoints on supporting or not supporting issues will be shared. Conversations may be challenging in the policy position discussions. The goal is to learn from each other's perspectives in order to present a unified message for lawmakers and the community.
- Take care of yourself. If you need a break, take one. Come and go throughout the meeting as needed. Committee members are welcome to bring fidgets or other accessibility devices.
- Complete a worksheet before and after all legislative meetings.
- Complete the personal information form at the start of your AAC commitment.
- Professional or business casual attire will be worn to all legislative meetings.

Accessibility

AuSM is committed to the successful involvement of all members of the autism community. If you need specific supports in order to participate, please inform the committee co-chairs.

Minnesota's First Autism Resource[®]

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Social Media Policy

ACC members posting on their personal social media accounts representing themselves as members of the AuSM Advocacy Committee will be held to the same Social Media Policy as employees of AuSM (see below).

Social media is a term commonly given to Internet and mobile-based applications that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. AuSM trusts and expects employees to exercise personal responsibility whenever they use social media, which includes not violating the trust of those with whom they are engaging. Guidelines for functioning in an electronic world are the same as the values, ethics, and confidentiality policies employees are expected to adhere to every day, whether you are on a social media site (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.); talking with a customer; or chatting with a friend.

Posting for the Organization: Only those officially designated can use social media to speak on behalf of AuSM in an official capacity.

Your Opinion: Unless authorized to speak on behalf of AuSM, you must state that the views expressed are your own.

Protect Yourself: Be careful about what personal information you share online.

Think twice before posting: Privacy does not exist in the world of social media.

Remember - Social media is an increasingly popular means of communicating and sharing ideas. However, if your personal activity is at all related to your work at AuSM, you may be perceived as representing AuSM. Further, AuSM's confidential and proprietary information should never be disclosed. In view of this, it is not appropriate for AuSM equipment or other resources to be used for non-business related social media or to engage in personal social media during working hours. Your compliance with this policy is very important and violation may result in disciplinary action up to and including the possible termination of employment.

Violation of Code of Conduct

We understand that members come from different backgrounds and experiences and autism can contribute to difficulties navigating social expectations. The AAC has outlined a course of corrective action for instances of purposeful violation of the AAC Code of Conduct.

1st Violation – Member will receive coaching and support from co-chairs to correct violation in future engagements.

2nd Violation – Member will be placed on a 6-month probation period, will receive additional coaching, and will be required to attend all AAC meetings with a co-chair or assigned committee member.

3rd Violation – Member will be asked to step back from representing AAC for one quarter.

4th Violation – Member will be removed from AAC.

Autism Advocacy Committee Member Signature

Date

Membership Number
