



1. Document Control Information

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2. Purpose

Safer spaces policies aim towards creating and maintaining supportive and friendly environments. As the co-op is a space used by many different groups and individuals, it is important that we share the space in a spirit that is as welcoming and as safe as possible for all.

3. Scope

This policy is directed at the Mara Community Space and people who use it, but it applies to Mara Co-op members as well. We expect everyone who uses Mara Community Space to be aligned to this Safer Spaces Policy. To treat each other with respect, kindness and care. We encourage all the members to engage in constructive conversations and activities and to be self-aware and take responsibility for the safety of the other members and the good state of the facilities.

4. Definitions

The Co-op – Mara's Housing Co-operative Limited

Member – All those who have been accepted as full member by a General Meeting. This definition includes tenants and prospective tenants of The Co-op.

Tenant – Housed members of The Co-op. This means they live in the property and actively take part of the day-to-day at The Co-op. All aspects of this policy apply to tenants.

Prospective Tenant – A member who has been accepted into the Co-op but does not currently live in the property. Prospective tenants who are not housed at the Co-op property within two years must reapply for membership. Parts of this policy that are not tenant-specific are applicable to prospective tenants.

Probationary Member – All members who have been accepted as such by a General Meeting for a limited period of time not exceeding one year known as "probationary period". These individuals can be tenants or prospective tenants.

Mara Community Space (MCS) – The parts of the Co-op's building which is explicitly used as space open to the public.

Community member – All those who are not formal members of the Co-op but attend and make use of the MCS.

5. Principles and Values



Our safer spaces policy have been drafted in close alignment with our principles and values, which are as follows:

5.1 Equality

All people have equal value, and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of who they are or where they're from. We actively work against inequality and discrimination, and we organise non-hierarchically. Though property-related decisions are made by co-operative members, we encourage all community members to participate in decision making of Mara Co-op by attending our open meetings.

5.2 Diversity

We celebrate the many ways of being human, and anyone can make a valuable contribution. We actively work to make our organisation, space, and events inclusive for all people who share our values, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, nationality, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or beliefs.

5.3 Sustainability & Degrowth

We recognise that the way we extract, distribute and consume resources has caused profound harm to all life on the planet we share. We actively work for a more sustainable society, environmental justice, and fairer distribution of resources. We know that infinite economic growth on a finite planet is fantasy, so we promote a lifestyle of waste reduction, circular economy, and degrowth.

5.4 Anti-capitalism

We believe there shouldn't be a cost to participate in community. Food and leisure should be free, so we strive to provide a space that can offer communal use without the pressure for profit. As a fully mutual housing co-operative, we are a non-profit and no surplus will ever go into an individual's pocket. All money taken in by the co-op will go back directly to our community.

5.5 Solidarity

All progressive struggles are interconnected; none of us can stand alone. We actively support other progressive causes.

5.6 Self & Community Empowerment

We believe that all people should be able to play an active role in shaping our world, in ways that are meaningful to them. The co-op seeks to provide resources and structure that can encourage active participation. Anyone participating in the space has a responsibility to it and to each other. Action is empowering, and we support people to take initiative and act autonomously.

5.7 Education

We share our knowledge, learn from others, and take individual and collective action towards social change. We also believe that the best way to learn is by doing. We take a DIY approach to learning and acting, to promote a culture of self-sufficiency and a true sense of responsibility to the space we occupy.

5.8 Animal Liberation

We believe that rights of equality and dignity extend to non-humans. All living beings are oppressed under a capitalist system, though many do not have voices to speak for themselves. All communal meals and shared foods are vegan.



6. Policy

6.1 Care for the Space

Use equipment and the space respectfully, safely, and tidy up after yourself. Leave the space as you would be happy to find it. All individuals using the space have a duty of care to it. If you see something you can fix yourself, you are encouraged to do so. However, if you come across a problem that looks dangerous and you cannot fix it quickly yourself, notify a co-op member who can assist and arrange repairs if necessary.

6.2 Private and Public Areas

While the community space is for public use, the building is also used as private residence for co-op members. Be respectful of co-op members by avoiding entering into their private living spaces unless there is an emergency and there is no other way to contact any co-op member. Clear signage is provided to show what areas are for private co-op member use only, and what parts of the building are for public use.

6.3 Pets

MCS welcomes pets into the space so long as they do not interfere with or risk the safety of others or themselves. This includes considering the safety of current co-op resident pets. All individuals who use the space have a responsibility to ensure the safety of any pets present. This includes behaviour such as not leaving food out unattended, especially foods that are toxic to dogs or cats (clear signs are displayed as to what those foods are), and not leaving gates or doors open that can risk a pet escaping. Be as respectful of non-humans as you are to humans and use your common sense when around them. If you are uncomfortable with pets in a space for whatever reason, speak to a member of the co-op.

6.4 Substance-free Space

Excluding the Co-op members' personal pantry, the MCS is a substance-free space unless explicitly stated for an event. This is to allow the community space to be family friendly and a safe, welcoming place for all.

6.5 Online Spaces

Online MCS meetings and group chats are also covered by this policy. Affiliated groups are responsible for moderating their own communications. In online discussions, we expect the same respectful behaviour, including no spamming, and respecting others' privacy. However, in the case that an individual is identified as being potentially unsafe for other community members to be around, you have a responsibility to inform Mara Co-op so that we can ensure our space is safe and welcoming for all.

6.6 Unacceptable Behaviours

We will not tolerate violence or the threat of violence, unless in self-defence. We will not tolerate sexual assault. We will not tolerate verbal, emotional or psychological abuse. We will not tolerate oppressive behaviour, harassment or discrimination against an individual based on their gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, responsibility for dependents, sexual orientation, disability, age, gender reassignment or identity, class, or cultural or religious beliefs. We will call out and reject any racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, sexist, or classist language or behaviour in the MCS. We do not tolerate purposeful destruction of communal spaces, and we expect people to make co-op members and/or group organisers aware.

While debate and disagreement amongst people is inevitable, we will not tolerate slander, defamation, or libel.



7. Resolution Process

MCS is committed to responding to complaints in a thorough and considered manner, while striving to continually improve the inclusivity and safety of our spaces. Mara Co-op has published a clear process for dealing with disputes between members, and disputes between community members follow a similar process (See *Mara's Housing Co-operative Limited's Primary Rules, Rule 6*).

7.1 Informal Resolution

In the first instance, and if a person feels it is appropriate, they may choose to challenge behaviour and perhaps resolve issues immediately without a formal process.

7.2 Formal Resolution Process

If the individual/s do not wish to seek informal resolution, or if the issue cannot be settled, the first port of call should be to speak to a member of the housing co-operative and make them aware.

The co-op member(s) will then speak to all involved to try to make certain what has happened. They may take notes to aid this process.

They will then either pass to another co-op member who is better placed to mediate, or attempt mediation themselves. This is a process that will take as long as it needs to, and should be done with the consent of all parties involved in the dispute. Any parties involved in the dispute have the right to request another co-op member to mediate, if they feel that the mediator in question is not suitable for an appropriate reason.

If someone has breached our safe spaces policy and they are not prepared to apologise and/or make sufficient restitution, they will be expelled from the Mara Co-op's premises for a period of time. If the breach is serious enough, this expulsion may be permanent. This decision will be arrived at by the members of the co-operative through a general meeting. Depending on the nature of the breach, other parties involved in the dispute may be invited to attend.

All arbitration should be entered into in good faith with the aim being to resolve the issue. Malicious accusations will not be tolerated and will also result in expulsion for a period of time. If serious or repeated this may become permanent.

Minutes are recorded at all of our general and special general meetings, and will also be recorded at a meeting related to a dispute. While minutes of our meetings are generally available to any interested community members, minutes recording disputes may be restricted or redacted as necessary, to protect those involved.

8. Involving Law Enforcement and/or Healthcare Professionals

We do not wish to involve law enforcement unless absolutely necessary. However, if there is a serious criminal accusation involving violence or sexual misconduct, we will support any individual who chooses to involve the authorities.



If someone is a risk to themselves, and it is beyond the capacity of us as an organisation to deal with it, or if children or vulnerable people are at risk, we have a responsibility to inform health care professionals and/or the authorities.

9. Related Documents

The Fully Mutual & Common-Ownership Rules of Mara's Housing Co-operative Limited

Secondary Rules and Ethical Policy

Statement of Values and Aims

Eviction Procedure

10. History of Changes and Scheduled Reviews

Date	Version	Reason for Review	Changes Made

END OF POLICY