



Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Mission Statement	4
Statement of Purpose and Functions	4
Objectives	4
Who are we?	5
Our programs and official activities	6
Data Protection	6
Why do we process your data?	6
Your rights relating to personal data	7
The requirement to process personal data	8
Automated decision-making and profiling	9
Code of Behaviour for 4AL volunteer members	9
Code of Conduct for 4AL steering committee members	10
General Conduct	10
Independence	11
More specifically committee members:	11
Committee member Roles	11
4AL Regular Meetings and Annual General Meetings-AGM	12
Committee members should:	12
Role of Chairperson	12
Legal Requirements and Policies	13
Code of Conduct for 4AL Volunteers	14
Volunteers are expected NOT to:	15
Conflict of interest and loyalty policy	17
Purpose	17
Objective	17
Scope	17
Definition of conflicts of interests	17
Policy	18

Responsibility of the 4AL steering committee	18
Identification and disclosure of conflicts of interest	18
Confidentiality of disclosures	19
Guide for reporting conflict of interest:	19
Action required for management of conflicts of interest.	20
Conflicts of interest of steering committee members	20
What should be considered when deciding what action to take?	20
Compliance with this policy	20
Contacts	21
4AL bullying and harassment policy.	21
What is harassment?	21
What is bullying?	22
What to do if you are being harassed or bullied	23
Consequences of a breach of this policy	23
Protection and support for those involved.	24
How we can all help to stop bullying and harassment.	24
Volunteer and Committee Recognition Policy	24
Purpose	24
Recognition Events	25
Charitable Purpose Justification	25
Review and Oversight	25
Financial and Expenses Policy	25
Purpose	26
General Principles	26
Bank Account Management	26
Budgeting and Spending Authority	27
Expense Claims and Reimbursements	27
Donations and Fundraising	28
Conflict of Interest	28
Review and Transparency	28

Mission Statement

We are an Advocacy and Support Group with a mission to empower People of All Abilities, as well as their Caregivers and Families, to fully participate in the life of the Community.

We believe that enabling everyone to contribute and benefit from inclusion is the key to our enrichment and growth not only as a community but also as a whole society.

Statement of Purpose and Functions

4AL is a voluntary community group organising yearly and monthly activities and clubs as well as educational and training opportunities for its members.

Objectives

We aim to achieve it through:

- Organising a wide range of events and activities to encourage engagement, to help develop creative expression and create and to strengthen the bonds within the Community.
- Offering guidance, education and practical support to all the Community Members, with attention to equality and equity.
- Raising funds necessary to carry out the Community participation and social inclusion work.
- Maximising our advocacy efforts to ensure that every child with additional needs, both in Co. Louth and on the isle of Ireland, has an adequate school placement.
- Advocacy and action towards full implementation of UNCRC (United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Children) and UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities) as well as ratification of the Optional Protocol to UNCRPD.
- Continuous research and analysis of the needs of our communities.

We are fully committed to delivering the above aims and objectives under the guidance of the principles of transparency and good governance.

Who are we?

The committee of 4AL will consist of the following: Chair, Vicechair, Secretary, Vice Secretary, Treasurer, and PR officers (Public Relations). The responsibilities and affairs will be shared between the officers chosen at the AGM Annual General Meeting. The committee will perform duties per the 4AL objective and mission statement.

The appointed officers are volunteers and there will not receive any salary or any fees/benefits paid to them for their involvement in/with 4AL.

{Not receiving any benefit from volunteering means that the individual, their family members, or persons connected to them do not obtain any financial gain, material advantage, preferential treatment, or personal benefit. (without expectation of payment, reimbursement beyond agreed expenses). Charity Law 2009}

The appointed officers, elected in 2024, are:

- ❖ Shared Chair-Anna Wrobel
- ❖ (Vice Chair- Iwona Gozdek)
- ❖ Secretary- Vesna Radosevic
- ❖ Vice Secretary- Eimear McNally
- ❖ Treasurer- Larisa Schmit
- ❖ Vice treasurer- TBA
- ❖ PR officers- Alexandra Jedrzejewska and Sabina Stachura.

Apart from the management position the 4AL will have the following sub-committees:

-Event

-Fundraising

-Advocacy

At least one committee member will be on the subcommittee.

The officers' roles will be voted on at the AGM by-election. The mandate for officers is two (2) years with one extra year added to the mandate, which makes 3 years in total.

Our programs and official activities

- ❖ 4AL Lego©Based Club

- ❖ Cinema club – monthly during school months
- ❖ 4AL Adventure club-exploring wild outdoors
- ❖ 4AL Gardening-in collaboration with DIG-community gardening group
- ❖ 4AL Sensory Room
- ❖ AAC 4AL
- ❖ 4AL music project
- ❖ Horse riding 4AL
- ❖ Sociable Souls
- ❖ Fun Gymnastic, cancelled
- ❖ ADHD Social Club
- ❖ Fundraising

Data Protection

Data is any information we collect and retain in our system.

Why do we process your data?

We process the data of our volunteers and the members, families:

- To administer the volunteering relationship
- To keep proper records of payments of donations and grants for tax purposes
- Volunteer recruitment and membership processing
- To keep records of our members: individuals supported by our volunteer programmes or service.
- Data that we collect are names, phone numbers, addresses, attendance numbers but not exclude any additional data.

The legal bases on which we process the personal data of our volunteers and participants in the manner described above are:

- where any such processing is necessary for the performance of your volunteering membership with us.
- our legitimate interests in conducting our programmes and services responsibly and prudently. We will not process your data for these purposes if to do so would constitute an unwarranted interference with your own interests, rights and freedoms.

- to comply with our legal and regulatory obligations
- In limited circumstances, your consent (where we have sought it and you have provided it to us), in which case, you can withdraw your consent at any time.

The legal bases on which we collect, process and transfer special categories of data relating to you (e.g. attendance data) in the manner described above are:

- where such processing is necessary to comply with our obligations or 4AL policies
- to enable you to exercise your rights
- where such processing is necessary to assess your volunteering capacity
- where such processing is necessary to start and provide services to our members such as cinema outings, sensory room, construction club and others
- In limited circumstances, your explicit consent (where we have sought it and you have provided it to us), in which case, you can withdraw your consent at any time.

Who we share it with:

We will only share personal information about you with third parties who have a Legitimate Interest, such as volunteers SNAs, hired professionals, experts, club owners, service providers and other third parties.

Our service providers may only process the data of our volunteers and members to provide us with their services, and no other purpose.

We will not trade, sell or rent any data collected.

Your rights relating to personal data

You have the following rights under the GDPR, in certain circumstances and subject to certain exemptions, concerning your personal data:

- right to access the data - you have the right to request a copy of the personal data that we hold about you, together with other information about our processing of that personal data.

- right to rectification- you have the right to request that any inaccurate data that is held about you is corrected, or if we have incomplete information you may request that we update the information such that it is complete.
- right to erasure - you have the right to request us to delete personal data that we hold about you. This is sometimes referred to as the right to be forgotten.
- right to restriction of processing or to object to processing - you have the right to request that we no longer process your data for particular purposes, or to object to our processing of your personal data for particular purposes.
- Right to data portability - you have the right to request us to provide you, or a third party, with a copy of your personal data in a structured, commonly used machine-readable format.

To exercise any of the rights set out above, please contact us at the contact details at the start of this privacy notice.

If we are processing personal data based on your consent, you may withdraw that consent at any time. This does not affect the lawfulness of processing which took place before its withdrawal.

If you are unhappy with how we process personal data, we ask you to contact us so that we can rectify the situation.

You may complain to a supervisory authority. The Irish supervisory authority is the Data Protection Commission.

[Homepage | Data Protection Commission](#)

The requirement to process personal data

The provision of your data for the purposes described above is a contractual requirement. In addition, we may need to process your personal data to comply with statutory requirements, such as keeping proper records of payments, membership processing, complaints and suggestions or safeguarding. We cannot continue to offer volunteering membership or administer the volunteer relationship, or member services if you fail to provide your personal data for the purposes described above.

Automated decision-making and profiling

We do not use any personal data for the purpose of automated decision-making or profiling.

Code of Behaviour for 4AL volunteer members

For the protection of children/young people and volunteers, this code of behaviour has been introduced to provide clarity on what is expected and what is not accepted, concerning their behaviour.

- By reading this document and accepting and signing the role of a volunteer member of 4AL, all volunteer members agree to the following code of behaviour:
- Volunteers should be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports or other activities
- While physical contact is a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children/young people, it should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned
- Volunteers should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child/young person, nor should they even tell degrading, offensive, crude or jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children/young people.
- Volunteers should be sensitive to the possibility of developing favouritism, becoming over-involved or spending a lot of time with any one child/young person.
- Children/young people should be encouraged to Report cases of bullying to either a designated person, DLP, or a volunteer of their choice. Complaints

must be brought to the attention of the persons in charge, as chairperson and Garda Vetting Officer.

- It is recommended that 4AL develops a positive attitude amongst volunteers and children/young people that respect the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals
- Where possible, individual children should not be given lifts by members in the members' own personal vehicles
- Working in a safe environment is of paramount importance to volunteers of the 4AL. They will ensure a safe environment exists for staff and children/children with additional needs and their families by monitoring that all volunteers:
 - Are listened to and any concerns expressed about unacceptable practices or behaviour of colleagues are followed up by a meeting of members, discussion and appropriate action as defined in the policies of 4AL.
 - Are supported when dealing with challenging behaviour of children/children with additional needs and their families and volunteers understand and follow positive behaviour management strategies.
 - Visitors

All visitors should never be left alone with the children/children with additional needs and their families. If they are going to address the children, it is incumbent upon the volunteer to check their credentials and ensure that the address's content is appropriate.

(This code has been adapted for 4AL from https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/our_duty_to_care.pdf)

Code of Conduct for 4AL steering committee members

By reading this document and accepting and signing the role of a volunteer of steering committee member of 4AL, volunteer committee members agree to the following responsibilities:

General Conduct

- Committee members are required to act with honesty and integrity and exercise good judgement which may include seeking professional advice on appropriate matters on which committee members do not have relevant expertise.
- Committee members are required to always act in the best interests of 4AL at all times.

-

Independence

- Committee members are required to act independently, particularly concerning assets, property, legal and regulatory obligations.
- Committee members should conduct themselves with integrity and in a manner which does not damage or undermine the reputation of 4AL or its volunteers.

More specifically committee members:

- should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in performing their duties.
- must avoid actual impropriety and any appearance of improper behaviour. It refers to behaviour that is genuinely inappropriate, unethical, or in violation of established standards, rules, or laws. Such as embezzlement, bribery, conflict of interest, conflict of loyalty, favouritism, nepotism, excessive spending or undisclosed relationships. This is not an exhaustive list of describing improper behaviours or improprieties; there may be other instances not mentioned here.
- Committee members are expected to make decisions and perform their duties without being unduly influenced or swayed by outside pressures, personal interests, or the preferences of others.
- They should make decisions in the best interest of 4AL and avoid personal gain or favouritism.
- Committee members should not act to gain financial or other benefits for themselves or for any persons connected to them such as their family, their friends, or any organisation that they own, manage, volunteer or work for.
- Committee members should avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence them in carrying out their role as committee members.
- Any gifts or hospitality received by a member of the 4AL committee or volunteer member of 4AL in any connection to 4AL activities should not exceed the value of €10 and should be declared to the Committee Board and volunteer members at the next meeting and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Committee member Roles

Committee members should:

- Understand and perform their roles and responsibilities to the best of their abilities at all times.
- Be prepared to provide adequate time and commitment as required to fulfil the role of committee member, adequately preparing for meetings and participating in committees and special events when required.

4AL Regular Meetings and Annual General Meetings-AGM

Committee members should:

- Aim to attend at least 80% of regular monthly meetings, contribute appropriately and effectively, and avoid dominating the contributions of others.
- Always respect the authority of the Chairperson of the board, and the Chairperson of any meeting.
- Bring a fair and open-minded view to all discussions of the board, maintain a respectful balance between speaking and listening, treat different views with respect, and ensure that all decisions are made in the best interests of the charity.
- Bring a genuinely independent perspective to enhance decision-making, given that organisation share responsibility for board decisions.
- Ensure their contributions are informed and impartial when presenting views on topics in meetings while listening to and respecting the input and experience of other charity trustees.

Role of Chairperson

- A chairperson contributes to a positive and productive committee dynamic, fostering effective collaboration and achieving the committee's goals.
- The chairperson should be well-prepared by reviewing the agenda, understanding the key topics, and having any necessary materials ready
- The chairperson is responsible for facilitating the meeting, ensuring that it stays on track and addressing any deviations from the agenda.
- Guide the committee through decision-making processes, fostering collaboration and ensuring that all members have an opportunity to express their views.
- Clearly communicate the purpose of the meeting, agenda items, and expectations for participants.
- Practice active listening to understand the perspectives of committee members and address any concerns or questions.
- Keep the meeting on schedule by managing time effectively. Allocate appropriate time for each agenda item and avoid unnecessary delays.
- Start and end the meeting on time, respecting the time commitments of committee members and volunteers.
- Foster an environment where all group members and committee members feel comfortable contributing to discussions. Encourage input from quieter members and manage dominant voices.
- Acknowledge and respect diverse opinions and perspectives within the committee.

- Ensure that decisions made during the meeting are documented and that follow-up actions are assigned to relevant individuals.
- Hold committee members accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities and commitments.
- If conflicts arise, address them calmly and impartially. Encourage open communication and work toward resolutions that align with the committee's goals.
- Demonstrate professionalism in behaviour, language, and demeanour. Uphold ethical standards and set an example for committee members.
- Remain neutral and impartial, especially in contentious discussions. Avoid showing favouritism or bias.
- Be approachable to group members and committee members who may have questions or concerns. Foster an open and collaborative atmosphere.
- Consider conducting a brief review at the end of the meeting to gather feedback on the process and identify areas for improvement.

Volunteers within 4AL

Volunteer steering committee members should:

- Aim to support volunteers in carrying out their duties and always, in terms of their conduct, serve as an example of how everyone in 4AL should conduct themselves to reflect the values of our community group.
- Work considerately and fairly with everyone in a way that respects diversity, different roles and boundaries and avoids offending.
- Accept and respect the difference in roles between the committee on the one hand and volunteers on the other, ensuring that the committee and volunteers work effectively and cohesively for the benefit of 4AL and develop a mutually supportive and loyal relationship by:
 - respecting committee arrangements and avoiding any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
 - not interfering in the performance of volunteers in duties delegated to them within 4AL, while ensuring that volunteers are held to account through the committee, as appropriate.

-

Legal Requirements and Policies

Committee members must:

- Act in accordance with 4AL's governing document (4AL Constitution) and ensure that 4AL complies with all applicable laws including Charity Law 2009 and GDPR 2016.
- Promote and preserve the obligations of confidentiality about sensitive committee matters. However, the requirement for confidentiality may not apply if it becomes necessary for the member to inform the Charities Regulator or any

other statutory body about any matter, which could threaten the future of the community group or could represent a breach of any law with which 4AL is required to comply.

- Abide by the 4AL conflict of interests or loyalties policy and ensure the 4AL conflict of interest register is completed and updated as required.
- Abide by any safeguarding, child protection, bullying and harassment policies and any other policies agreed by the board and volunteer members of 4AL.

Where a committee member is found to be in breach of the standards outlined by the committee in its Code of Conduct, he or she will be asked to meet with the other members of the committee and a Community Officer as a mediator to assess his or her suitability for the role.

Consistent breach of the Code of Conduct by any member, inclusive of the Chairperson, and Vice-chair may result in the committee member's tenure being terminated.

4AL volunteer members and committee members should review this Code of Conduct for members as well as conflict of interest register every year for the first three years. After that the Code of Conduct can be reviewed every three years.

Code of Conduct for 4AL Volunteers

The purpose of the Code of Conduct for Volunteers is to set out standards of behaviour expected from volunteers of 4AL. All volunteers should ensure that they have read and comply with this Code of Conduct.

Volunteers should maintain the highest standards of behaviour in the performance of their duties by:

- Complain with Irish law and legalisation in regard to volunteering with children with additional needs and their families.
- Fulfilling their role as outlined in their written volunteer role description to a satisfactory standard.
- Performing their volunteer role to the best of their ability in a safe, efficient and competent way.
- Following the organisation policies and procedures as well as any instructions or directions reasonably given to them.
- Acting honestly, responsibly and with integrity.

- Treating others with fairness, equality, dignity and respect.
- Raising concerns about possible wrongdoing witnessed by the volunteer during the volunteer's role with 4AL with members of the committee or Community officers or statutory agencies.
- Meeting time and task commitments and providing sufficient notice when they will not be available so that alternative arrangements can be made.
- Acting in a way that is in line with the purpose and values of the organisation and that enhances the work of the same.
- Always communicating respectfully and honestly.
- Observing safety procedures, including any obligations concerning the safety, health and welfare of other people in line with training provided to volunteers.
- Reporting any health and safety concerns.
- Directing any questions regarding 4AL's policies, procedures, support or supervision to the volunteer's supervisor.
- Addressing any issues or difficulties about any aspect of their role or how they are managed in line with 4AL's complaints policy and procedure.
- Declaring any interests that may conflict with their role or the work of 4AL (e.g. business interests or employment). If any doubt arises as to what constitutes a conflict of interest or loyalty, volunteers may seek guidance from conflict of interest policy, 4AL Secretary or Community Officer;
- Keeping confidential matters confidential.
- Exercising caution and care with any documents, material or devices, containing confidential information and at the end of their involvement with 4AL returning any such documents, or material in their possession.
- Seeking authorisation before communicating externally on behalf of 4AL.
- Maintaining an appropriate standard of dress and personal hygiene.
- Disclosing the fact that they have been charged with, or convicted of a criminal offence by prosecuting authorities (or given the benefit of the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 as amended) to Chair or Vice Chair.[1] For the avoidance of doubt, volunteers are not required to disclose the facts or details of 'spent convictions' under the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016 (as amended) to 4AL.

Volunteers are expected NOT to:

- Bring the community group into disrepute (including through the use of email, social media and other internet sites, engaging with media etc.);
 - Seek or accept any gifts, rewards, benefits or hospitality during their role, other than as defined in the conflict-of-interest policy.
- **Section 89 – Agreements, Remuneration, and Benefits-Charity Law 2009 and Irish Statute Book**

4AL Policy and Procedure

- a. Under Section 89 charities are generally prohibited from entering into agreements that give **remuneration** to charity trustees or persons “connected” (family member, friend, associate,...) to trustees unless very specific conditions are met.
 - b. “Remuneration” in the Act includes “benefit in kind” – this is a wide term capturing not just money, but other kinds of material advantage or benefit
 - c. Agreements giving such benefit must be justified, proportionate, and in the best interests of the charity, and often require written agreement and oversight.
 - d. If an agreement is in contravention of the constitution of the charity or the legal requirements of the Act, it may be void.
 - e. Persons with a “personal connection” to a trustee are also covered under section 89: they are those connected in such a way that benefit could flow through that relationship.
 - f. The Act explicitly prevents trustees from profiting or gaining benefits, except in scenarios allowed (e.g. being reimbursed for reasonable expenses, or under agreements where service is unrelated to their role as trustee, and even then, subject to rules).
-
- Engage in any activity that may cause physical or mental harm or distress to another person (such as verbal abuse, physical abuse, assault, bullying, or discrimination or harassment on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community);
 - Be affected by alcohol, drugs, or medication which will affect their abilities to carry out their duties and responsibilities while volunteering.
 - Provide a false or misleading statement, declaration, document, record or claim in respect of 4AL, its volunteers, or committee members.
 - Engage in any activity that may damage property.
 - Take unauthorised possession of property or funds that do not belong to them.
 - Engage in illegal activity while carrying out their role.
 - Improperly disclose, during or after their involvement with 4AL ends, confidential information gained in the course of their role with 4AL.

Where a volunteer is found to be in breach of the standards outlined in this Code of Conduct or any of 4AL’s other Policies and Procedures this may result in the volunteer’s position being terminated.

Volunteers acknowledge that no employment relationship is created in the context of their role with 4AL.

The committee board will review the Code of Conduct for Volunteers at 3-year intervals or as appropriate. The committee members are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively. All other volunteers are expected to facilitate this process.

[1] In seeking information from volunteers about criminal convictions (or the fact that they have been charged with an offence or given the benefit of the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 (as amended)) charities should comply with data protection law

and be aware of the limitations on the circumstances in which it is possible to process such information (e.g. see section 55 of the Data Protection Act 2018). It is also important that charities have due regard to the provisions of the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016 (as amended). If a charity has any doubt about its rights and responsibilities in this regard, it should obtain legal advice.

Conflict of interest and loyalty policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist 4AL members in effectively identifying, recording and managing any conflicts of interest to protect the integrity of 4AL and to ensure that the volunteer committee members as well as other group members act in the best interest of their community group.

Objective

4AL committee members and its steering committee aim to ensure that the committee members and all group members are aware of their obligations to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have, and to comply with this policy to ensure they effectively manage those conflicts of interest as representatives of 4AL.

Scope

This policy applies to all of the members of 4AL, including volunteer committee members as well as ordinary volunteer members.

Definition of conflicts of interests

A conflict of interest is any situation in which members' personal interests or loyalties could, or could be seen to, prevent the member from deciding the best interests of 4AL. This personal interest may be direct or indirect and can include the interests of a person connected to the member.

These situations present the risk that a person will make a decision based on, or affected by, these influences, rather than in the best interests of 4AL and therefore must be managed accordingly.

Policy

This policy has been developed because conflicts of interest commonly arise, and do not need to present a problem to the community group if they are openly and effectively managed. It is the policy of the 4AL as well as a responsibility of its committee members, that ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest be avoided and that any such conflicts (where they do arise) do not conflict with their obligations to 4AL.

4AL will manage conflicts of interest by requiring its members to:

- Avoid conflicts of interest where possible
- Identify and record any conflicts of interest
- Carefully manage any conflicts of interest, and
- Follow this policy and respond to any breaches.

Responsibility of the 4AL steering committee

The committee is responsible for:

- Establishing a system for identifying, disclosing and managing conflicts of interest across the community group.
- Monitoring compliance with this policy; and
- Reviewing this policy every three years to ensure that the policy is operating effectively.

The members should ensure they are aware of their legal obligations in the management and control of their community group and should refer to the Charities Regulator's 'Guidance for Charity Trustees' for further information on this – see their website www.charitiesregulator.ie

Identification and disclosure of conflicts of interest

Any member of 4AL can report their actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. Once an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is identified, it must be entered into 4AL's register of interests, as well as be raised with the members of the steering committee. The register of interests must be maintained by the Secretary, and record all information related to a conflict of interest (including the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and any steps taken to address it).

Confidentiality of disclosures

To support members in disclosing their conflicts of interest, the level of confidentiality associated with any disclosure is set out in this policy.

Conflict of interest disclosures will be restricted to the steering committee of 4AL which consists of the Chairperson, Vicechair, Secretary, Treasury and PR Officers.

Timely disclosure of conflicts is crucial to maintaining the integrity and ethical standards of our organisation.

Guide for reporting conflict of interest:

1. Use reporting Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form (appendix 4, Lara)

2. Description of Conflict:

Provide a detailed description of the conflict, including any relevant information about relationships, financial interests, or external affiliations that could impact impartiality.

3. Potential Impact:

Describe how the conflict may impact decision-making, actions, or relationships within the organisation.

4. Acknowledgment:

I understand that the information provided in this disclosure is confidential and will be handled with discretion. I acknowledge my responsibility to disclose conflicts of interest promptly and accurately.

5. Sign and date

6. Submit to the Secretary who has to inform the steering committee members within one working week.

Action required for management of conflicts of interest.

Conflicts of interest of steering committee members

Once the conflict of interest has been appropriately disclosed, the steering committee (excluding the disclosing committee member and any other conflicted person) must decide whether or not a conflicted committee member should:

- Vote on the matter (this is a minimum),
- Participate in any debate,
- Be present in the room during the debate and the voting.

In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent a committee member from regularly participating in discussions, it may be worth it for the steering committee to consider whether it is appropriate for the person with the relevant conflict to resign from the steering committee.

What should be considered when deciding what action to take?

- In deciding what approach to take, the steering committee will consider whether the conflict needs to be avoided or simply documented.
- Whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making.
- Alternative options to avoid the conflict.
- 4AL's resources, and
- The possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct or behaviour that might impair confidence in or the reputation of 4AL.

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of steering committee members (excluding any conflicted committee member) who are present and voting (if applicable) at the meeting. All details regarding the conflict of interest, including the action arising, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Compliance with this policy

If the steering committee has a reason to believe that a person subject to this policy (4AL members) has failed to comply with it, it will investigate and document the circumstances.

If it is found that this person has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the steering committee may take action against the person. A verbal warning may be issued, if a conflict of interest is still not resolved, reported and documented, or if it persists, the next instance will include a written warning by steering committee members. Other actions may also include seeking temporary suspension from 4AL or the person's resignation from 4AL.

If a person suspects that a committee member has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they must discuss it with the person in question, notify the steering committee using the form, or notify the person responsible for maintaining the register of interests, the Secretary, who must inform the steering committee and offer an alternative mechanism of reporting to the member as well as supply reporting form.

Contacts

For questions about this policy, contact the 4AL Secretary by email or mobile phone.

4AL bullying and harassment policy.

4AL is committed to providing an environment that is free of harassment and bullying, and where everyone is treated, and treats others, with dignity and respect. The 4AL will not permit or condone any form of bullying or harassment.

This policy covers bullying or harassment of or by any member of 4AL. The policy encompasses bullying or harassment that occurs in the group workplace, and out of the group workplace, such as on trips or at group-related social events.

What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. A single incident of this nature can amount to harassment if sufficient.

The 4AL stance is that harassment is unacceptable, whether or not it is targeted at any of these categories.

Examples of harassment may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Display or circulation of sexually suggestive material or material with racial overtones.
- Use of slang names for racial groups, age groups, or disabled persons.
- Professional or social exclusion.
- Unwanted physical conduct, such as touching, pinching, pushing, and grabbing.

- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour.
- Offensive emails, text messages or social media content.

It is important to note that harassment occurs even if the harasser perceives his/her behaviour as being harmless and without malice, or 'just a bit of fun'. What matters is how the behaviour makes the recipient feel, and not what the perpetrator's intentions were. Also, a person may be harassed even if they were not the intended 'target' of the behaviour. For example, a man may be harassed by sexist jokes about women if the jokes create an environment that is offensive to him.

What is bullying?

Bullying is a sustained form of psychological abuse. It is defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, involving the abuse or misuse of power, which has the purpose or effect of belittling, humiliating, or threatening the recipient.

Workplace bullying usually takes one of three forms: physical, verbal, or indirect. It can range from extreme forms such as violence and intimidation, to less obvious actions, such as professional or social exclusion.

Examples of bullying may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Shouting or swearing at people in public or private.
- Spreading malicious rumours.
- Inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance.
- Physical or psychological threats.
- Constantly undervaluing effort.
- Rages, often over trivial matters.
- Ignoring or deliberately excluding people.
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision.
- Deliberately sabotaging or impeding work performance.
- Unwarranted phone calls, text messages or emails.
- Ridiculing someone's opinion.

What to do if you are being harassed or bullied

Informal approach

You may be able to sort out matters informally. The person may not know that their behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting, so an informal discussion may help them to understand the effects of their behaviour and agree to change it.

If you feel able to, tell the person what behaviour you find offensive and unwelcome, and say that you would like it to stop immediately. You should keep a note of the date and what was said and done. This will be useful if the unacceptable behaviour continues, and you wish to make a formal complaint. If this is too difficult for you, then please talk to a member of the 4AL group or a trusted colleague, for advice and assistance. They may for example speak to the person concerned on your behalf or accompany you when you speak to them.

If the informal approach is not appropriate or has not been successful, you should raise a formal complaint.

Formal procedure

The 4AL committee will investigate complaints in a timely, confidential, and sensitive manner. The investigation will be conducted where possible by someone with appropriate seniority and experience, and no prior involvement in the complaint. Details of the investigation, and the names of the people involved, will only be disclosed on a 'need to know' basis. The 4AL committee will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage the ongoing relationship between you and the person accused during the investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, The 4AL committee member in charge of investigating will inform both parties (separately) of their decision. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, The 4AL committee will consider how best to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person concerned.

Consequences of a breach of this policy

If after due investigation The 4AL committee members, consider that a team member has been harassed or bullied by a member of the 4AL group the matter will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. The person concerned may be suspended or dismissed from the 4AL group, depending on the seriousness of the offence and all relevant circumstances.

If someone makes a complaint which is not upheld, and the 4AL committee has good grounds for believing that the complaint was not made in good faith, the 4AL committee will take disciplinary action against the person making the false complaint.

Protection and support for those involved.

4AL committee or/and members who make complaints in good faith, or who participate in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Any member engaged in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

How we can all help to stop bullying and harassment.

We all have a shared responsibility to help create and maintain a working environment free of bullying and harassment.

You can do this by:

- Considering how your behaviour may affect others and changing it.
- Being receptive, rather than defensive, if asked to change your behaviour.
- Treating your colleagues with dignity and respect.
- Taking a stand if you think inappropriate jokes or comments are being made.
- Making it clear to others when you find their behaviour unacceptable.
- Intervening, if possible, to stop harassment or bullying, and giving support to victims.
- Reporting harassment or bullying to the group committee or another appropriate officer
- Being open, honest, and objective in any investigation of complaints.

Volunteer and Committee Recognition Policy

Purpose

4AL recognises the invaluable contributions made by its volunteers and committee members. In line with the principles of respect, motivation, and retention, and in accordance with good governance and the Charities Act 2009, the organisation has adopted a modest recognition policy.

Recognition Events

To acknowledge the dedication and effort of volunteers and committee members, the organisation may organise up to two appreciation meals or social events per calendar year. These events aim to build morale, express gratitude, and foster a sense of community.

Charitable Purpose Justification

These recognition activities are considered aligned with the organisation's charitable purpose as defined under the Charities Act 2009, as far as they support:

- Volunteer retention and engagement,
- The development of organisational culture,
- The promotion of public benefit through sustaining a committed volunteer base.
- Mental health and well-being of volunteers
- Social-emotional relationships between volunteers and committee board.

Review and Oversight

This recognition policy will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the financial policy review. Amendments may be proposed to ensure ongoing legal compliance, fairness, and good practice in resource management.

Financial and Expenses Policy

Effective Date: January 2025

Review Date: each calendar year.

Approved by Committee Vote

Purpose

This policy outlines the financial procedures and expense reimbursement process for 4AL, ensuring that all funds are used responsibly, transparently, and in alignment with our mission statement and the requirements of Irish charity and community group standards, Charity Act 2009.

General Principles

All financial decisions must support the community group's stated goals and charitable purpose.

The group will maintain accurate and up-to-date financial records, which will be available for inspection by members and regulators. The financial report will be presented in Annual Report booklet that will be published online on group web page: www.4al.ie

All financial records will be maintained in accordance with good accounting practices and Irish law, including the Charities Act 2009, where applicable. All invoices and spending should be sent to email: info.4alouth@gmail.com as soon as possible as to maintain transparency and good governance practice.

Bank Account Management

The group shall hold a financial account in its name.

At least two committee members shall be signatories on the account. If they wish so, any committee member can be signatory for the Connect Credits Union account, but any transaction must be transparent, evident and approved by the treasurer.

Two signatories are required for all withdrawals, cheques, or payments. The reason and purpose of any transaction should be notified and recorded on the financial statement.

Budgeting and Spending Authority

The Treasurer shall keep accurate records of all income and expenditure and present a financial report at each committee meeting if required. Treasurer should approve all expenditures.

All expenditure must be voted on and approved by a majority of the committee in a formal meeting or through Whatsapp poll.

No individual or subgroup has authority to commit the group to expenditure without prior approval by vote on the meeting.

In emergencies, spending over €100 may be authorised by at least three named committee officers, with retrospective approval at the next meeting.

Expense Claims and Reimbursements

Volunteers and committee members may claim legitimate, agreed expenses incurred while performing official duties.

Reimbursable expenses include:

- Local travel costs (parking tickets, public transport, or mileage at Revenue-approved rates)
- Printing, postage, or communication costs (printing up to a max of 10e per month, postage only for necessary mailing up to €50 pr yr, social media ads,)
- Materials and supplies for events or workshops
- Modest refreshments for official meetings or outreach (coffee, tea, and biscuits).

All claims must be accompanied by original receipts and submitted to the Treasurer in paper form or pictures of originals. All invoices should be sent to the Treasurer or emailed to: info.4alouth@gmail.com

All claims must be submitted within 30 days of the expense being incurred. Late claims will be dealt at the Treasurer's convenience.

Additionally all expenses with proof of spending could be submitted to treasurers at the end of the year for reimbursement.

Donations and Fundraising

All income from fundraising, grants, or donations must be lodged to the group's bank account within 7 days of receipt.

A receipt will be issued upon request.

Funds may not be used for any personal or private benefit.

Conflict of Interest

Any committee member with a potential conflict of interest in relation to a proposed expenditure must declare it and abstain from voting on the matter.

Review and Transparency

The Treasurer is responsible for preparing an comprehensive annual financial report, which will be formally presented at the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM). This report will also be incorporated into the organization's official Annual Report, ensuring transparency and accountability to stakeholders.

This financial policy will undergo a formal review at least once annually, or more frequently if circumstances necessitate, to ensure ongoing relevance and compliance with current standards and regulations.

All significant decisions, particularly those involving expenditures exceeding €100, will be meticulously documented in the minutes of the committee meetings. This practice promotes transparency and provides an auditable record of financial decisions.

This Policy and Procedure document has been adapted from guidelines issued by the Irish Charities Regulator, and incorporates best practices from the Health Service Executive (HSE), Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, as well as statutory

requirements under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 and the Child Care Act 1991. The document aims to ensure compliance with relevant legal and regulatory frameworks, fostering good governance and ethical standards within the organization.

The document, authored by Anna W., Larisa S., and Vesna R., has been developed to serve as Policies and Procedures (P&P) for the 4AL project. It was formally approved by the steering committee on July 29, 2025, with all proposed amendments duly incorporated. This comprehensive document provides clear guidelines and standards to ensure consistent and effective operations within the project scope, reflecting the latest updates and organizational requirements.

