



SAFE(R) SPACE POLICY

- English -

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This document describes De Voorkamer's policy for maintaining a safe(r) space for its community. It defines some violations that might threaten community safety and outlines the procedures and actions to be taken in the event of any violation. Latest version Souad Attar, Spring 2026.



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1. INTRODUCTION

At De Voorkamer, we want everyone to feel at home as much as possible. Whoever you are, and whatever your background, identity, or ability, you are welcome here. This policy reflects our mission and values. It guides us in building a community where everyone feels as safe, respected, and heard as possible. We stand firmly against any behaviour or practices that might threaten the well-being of any community members or guests.

We understand that safety means different things to everyone, depending on their personal experiences. De Voorkamer is a space where people of all backgrounds come together to exchange knowledge and share experiences. Building this kind of space requires ongoing

effort, care, and responsibility from all of us, and this commitment is rooted deeply in the values of De Voorkamer.

De Voorkamer is a multilingual community. We do our best to share resources in multiple languages and facilitate clear communication for all, so that language barriers hold no one back.

Clear communication is key to building trust and understanding. Our guidelines help us live by our values, but rules alone are not enough. A safe(r) space grows through daily actions, care, and participation from everyone in the community.

Therefore, we ask our community to:

- Respect and follow these guidelines
- Show respect and empathy in all situations
- Actively embody our policies and values – address/report harmful behaviour, whether to the Safe(r) Space facilitator, the safer space team, the event coordinator or Active Community Member (ACM), or to the person acting out undesirable behaviour directly, in a considerate manner that respects everyone involved, and guarantees the safety of everyone.
- We encourage our community members to speak up about what safety means to them and to communicate what makes them feel comfortable and respected. We encourage our community members to express to each other what safety means to them and what makes them feel comfortable and respected, which can happen during activities, events, open hours, and other special events organized by the community or the safer space team.

We call De Voorkamer a Safe(r) Space rather than a Safe Space. Our goal is for everyone to feel protected, respected, and free from harm. At the same time, we know that complete safety is difficult to guarantee in a shared, open space where many identities and experiences meet. However, we remain committed towards building and maintaining respect, inclusion, and care for all. By calling it a Safe(r) Space, we are reminded that safety is a continuous process we create together through ongoing effort, which involves actively listening, learning, and growing as a community.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

At De Voorkamer, we are committed to building a Safe(r) Space. We stand against all forms of discrimination, whether based on race, gender, age, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, political views, abilities, or immigration status. At the same time, we do not tolerate language, behaviour, or ideologies that promote hatred, exclusion, or harm, including racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, fascism, or other forms of dehumanisation.

This space prioritizes the safety and dignity of those most affected by discrimination.

We know that people's experiences are shaped by many overlapping identities. We stay mindful of this complexity and ensure our community is, too.

Verbal or physical violence and harassment, or any inappropriate behaviour, is not tolerated. Everyone at De Voorkamer plays an essential role in upholding these values. We expect all our community members to take responsibility in doing so, to ensure that our space remains respectful and welcoming for all.

We celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of our community, and we also know that cultural differences can sometimes lead to misunderstandings. These differences should be embraced, but never used to make someone feel unsafe. We ask everyone to meet each other with curiosity and openness. Listen to understand, not to judge. Ask questions with respect, and avoid comments that could cause harm, even unintentionally.

At De Voorkamer, we take every report of harm seriously. Each case is handled on a case-by-case basis with care and confidentiality, without judgment. The safe(r) space facilitator and the safe(r) space team are responsible for handling any reports related to the safe(r) space. The aim is to have at least one member from the safe(r) space team or an ACM with safe(r) space training present at every event happening in the space. The agenda for that is to be managed by the safe(r) space facilitator.

We are committed to responding proactively and ensuring that any harm is addressed thoughtfully and restoratively. We believe in fostering growth and learning from mistakes within our community, rather than relying on strict zero-tolerance policies that often mandate punitive measures such as suspension or expulsion. Implementing restorative practices that focus on reflecting on one's actions, resolving conflicts, and repairing relationships helps foster a more equitable and supportive community for everyone. This approach allows us to address harm in a way that encourages healing and accountability while maintaining an environment where all voices are heard and respected.

We recognize that certain matters may necessitate actions beyond our capacity. In such instances, we will seek external support or expertise to ensure our community's safety as is feasible.

In essence:

- De Voorkamer is an inclusive and welcoming space for everyone.
- Respecting others, including their personal boundaries, is essential.

- Harmful actions, verbal or physical, are not tolerated.
- We focus on learning, growth, and restorative practices rather than only punishment.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to everyone involved in De Voorkamer space (employees, interns, active community members, community members, visitors, collaborators, board members, artists, workshop coordinators and trainers, etc). It is shared openly and made accessible to all.

This policy is a:

- Support system: giving our community a sense of safety and care.
- Guide for behaviour: showing what is expected and what is not accepted.
- Tool for prevention: raising awareness for discrimination, harassment, and mistreatment.
- Way of accountability: stating consequences when the policy is violated.

We embed this policy into De Voorkamer's culture by:

- Sharing it before new agreements or collaborations with partners.
- Sharing it with new involved parties (employees, interns, ACM's, etc.)
- Regular announcements at events, especially at the beginning.
- Displaying it in our space.
- Publishing it on our website and communication channels.
- Collectively and individually develop our understanding of a Safe(r) Space by providing the tools along as needed such as offering workshops, expression circles or other ways we might develop to our community members.

4. HOUSE RULES

4.1 Respectful Interactions

- Be kind. Use people's correct names and pronouns; avoid harmful or discriminatory language.
- Listen actively. Give others space to speak and be heard.
- Speak with care. Show respect across all identities, backgrounds and experiences.
- Ask for consent. Respect personal boundaries and physical space.

- Encourage each other. Support self-expression with empathy and curiosity.
- Communicate clearly. Be open, honest, and thoughtful—ask questions when unsure.

4.2 Unacceptable Behaviour

- Discrimination, harassment, or bullying of any kind is not tolerated.
- Unwelcome comments, gestures, or physical contact, especially those that are sexual or demeaning, are not accepted.
- Respect applies to everyone, no matter their role or authority.
- Microaggressions—small or unintentional actions or comments that harm or exclude someone, are not acceptable.
- Violence, intimidation, or threats, whether verbal or non-verbal, are strictly prohibited.

4.3 Other Undesirable Practices

- Please avoid lingering outside DVK in ways that might disturb our neighbours.
- Research, promotion, recruitment, or invitation to another event should never disrupt the community's comfort or occur without consent.
- The space may not be used for external purposes without explicit permission from a facilitator/employee of De Voorkamer.

4.4 Accountability

Everyone—members, visitors, and collaborators—is responsible for their impact. This means:

- Acknowledging when harm has occurred or you hurt someone, even if it was unintentional.
- Engaging in respectful dialogue when someone raises a concern.
- Taking agreed steps to repair and improve, together with the community. This principle applies equally to all, regardless of position or authority.

5. KEY CONCEPTS

This section explains key terms that guide our Safe(r) Space. We start with some key terms and personal boundaries, then describe behaviours that cross those boundaries, and finally define consent as a way to respect them. These definitions also shape the general house rules and invitations

5.1 General definitions

Safe(r) Space

A place where people work to avoid and, if not possible, reduce harm, treat each other with respect, and create a supportive environment for all. The term “safer” acknowledges that complete safety cannot be guaranteed, but underscores that harmful or uncomfortable situations are actively addressed when they occur.

Identity

Who someone is, including their personal characteristics such as name, culture, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, beliefs, and life experiences: Everyone’s identity is unique and should be respected.

Ability

A person’s physical, mental, or emotional capacity to carry out daily activities. Abilities differ from person to person and may change over time.

Intimidation

Verbal or non-verbal behaviour that attempts to scare, pressure, or control someone. It can include threats or actions that make a person feel unsafe or forced to do something they do not want to do.

Bystander Intervention

When a person sees harmful or inappropriate behaviour takes action to stop it or prevent it. This can be done directly or by asking others for help.

5.2 Personal Boundaries

The physical, emotional, and mental limits that protect our well-being. They show what we are comfortable with and how we wish to be treated. Boundaries differ for each person and may change over time. Respecting them is essential for a safe(r) environment.

5.3 Consent

Permission or agreement for something to happen. Consent must be clear, informed, and freely given. Always ask for an explicit “yes” or “no” before acting. If you are unsure, pause and ask. Consent is not only expressed verbally, given the context of De Voorkamer, but also that cultural and linguistic differences, such as politeness and mistranslations, play a big role in communication, including giving consent. That is why it is important to remember that not every “yes” means consent. For example, some people might be more expressive with body language. When in doubt, always withhold your action for which you are asking consent, such as asking personal questions (journey of asylum, marital status) or ask again for consent and reassure the person that it is okay not to answer or say “no” or express that is a personal question .

Consent is:

- Clear – A definite “yes”
- Capable – The person is conscious, sober, and able to decide.
- Voluntary – Free from pressure, threats, or manipulation.
- Specific – Only applies to what has been agreed upon.

- Reversible – Can be withdrawn at any time.

Consent can be shown with words, actions, or body language, silence or lack of resistance is not consent. If there is any doubt, always ask. For example, if you ask for someone's contact after a lovely conversation and they say "yes," but their facial expression does not seem very enthusiastic, it is good to ask again if that is okay and to say it is understandable if they say "no".

5.4 Inappropriate Behaviour

Crossing someone's boundaries in ways that cause discomfort, harm, or exclusion. This includes:

- **Harassment** – Unwanted behaviour (physical, verbal, written, or non-verbal) that makes someone feel unsafe, humiliated, or uncomfortable.
Examples: offensive jokes, some jokes can be okay for one and offensive for another, so always consider the people you are addressing, unwanted/undesired touching, such as handshakes and hugging, unwanted/undesired repeated social invitations, for example, inviting someone for a meal outside De Voorkamer. Comments with sexual intentions, whether implicit or explicit, like stalking and threats. Also, commenting on someone's weight change or body can harm another person or can be understood as an implicit sexual intention; refrain from doing this.
- **Bullying** – Repeated behaviour that intimidates, shames, or undermines someone.
Examples: public humiliation, constant unfair criticism, spreading rumours.
- **Discrimination** – Unfair or unequal treatment based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, abilities, appearance, political views, or civil status, etc.
- **Microaggressions** – Small, often unintentional comments or actions that reinforce stereotypes or make someone feel excluded.
Example: making assumptions about a person's abilities based on their appearance, accent or language level. For example, assuming that someone does not know about a certain topic because their English is not fluent.
- **Other disturbing behaviours** – Persistent unwanted contact, intrusive questions, or unreciprocated gestures (such as offering physical affection or gifts early in a friendship) that make people feel uncomfortable, which can turn into harm when the feelings of being uncomfortable are ignored.

5.5 Inclusion

Actively building an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and able to participate fully, regardless of their identity or ability.

5.6 Accountability

At De Voorkamer, everyone shares responsibility for keeping the space safe(r) and respectful. No one should face difficult situations alone. If you see or experience behaviour that breaks the house rules, please speak to the facilitator, event coordinator, or the safer space team member or if you wish to be anonymous, you can scan the Safe(r) space QR Code to share your concerns or observations. They will listen, offer support, and take action.

If you feel comfortable, there are also different ways to help:

- Speak up to the person behaving inappropriately
- Gently distract them so the behaviour stops
- Write down what you saw or heard (including who was involved, where and when it happened, and what steps were already taken) and share it with the facilitator.

Facilitators, coordinators, and safer space team members will always listen with care, make sure the concern is taken seriously, and act quickly. Before approaching someone who is behaving inappropriately, facilitators will also check that it is safe to do so and, if needed, ask another team member for support.

6. INCIDENTS CATEGORIES AND RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

To ensure clarity and consistency in our response to incidents, we use a structured three-tiered system: Green, Orange, and Red. Each category reflects the nature of the behaviour, how it should be reported, and the potential response.

While every incident is assessed individually and with full consideration of its context, this framework helps guide our approach and ensures transparency in decision-making. In the sections that follow, we will outline examples of behaviours or incidents that fall into each category, along with the corresponding response. These examples are meant to give a general idea of how we respond to different situations, rather than cover every possible scenario.

Each incident will be handled by the Safe(r) Space facilitator alone or together with one or more members of the Safe(r) Space team as needed, otherwise it will be handled by the safe(r) space facilitator with two other facilitators.

Green Category

Definition: Low-impact situations that typically stem from miscommunication or differing expectations. These may cause discomfort and may be harmful in some situations.
Examples

- Communication issues: digital, verbal and non-verbal
- Oversharing personal information/asking for too much personal information

- Misinterpreting the purpose of De Voorkamer (e.g. romantic or therapeutic engagement)

Reporting & Implementation

- No formal reporting required.
- Community members may resolve the issue directly or request informal support from the Safe(r) Space team.
- If reported, it can be done in person or in writing
- All parties remain anonymous except to the safer(r) space facilitator and the safe(r) space team members involved.
- Safe(r) Space team may offer guidance if asked.

Community Response & Consequences

- A friendly conversation may be initiated to clarify expectations.
- Clearly communicate who the affected person can contact for follow-up and support.
- If the unwelcome behaviour becomes repetitive or more severe (2 or 3 times), it may escalate to the Orange category.
- No disciplinary action needed.

Orange Category — Boundary-Crossing Behaviour

Definition: Actions that cross personal or communal boundaries, whether intentional or not. These may disrupt the comfort or flow of the space.

Examples

- Physical gestures without consent like crossing physical boundaries (e.g. hugging, giving gifts, taking photos)
- Unwanted romantic or sexual attention
- Disrespectful tones or using offensive language
- Verbal aggression or inappropriate tone
- Disrupting events or workshops at DVK
- Causing cyber harm to DVK including team and community members or anyone in the space.
- Repeated unwanted green category behaviour.

Reporting & Implementation

- Should be reported to the Safe(r) Space facilitator or a trusted team member
- Reports can be made in person or in writing via the contact form
- Investigation initiated with the consent from the harmed person. If the report is made anonymously or is a recurrent situation in dvk then we may decide to start an investigation making sure that the privacy of the harmed person is kept.
- Incidents are logged; the affected party remains anonymous

- All parties are spoken to individually

Community response and consequences

- A verbal warning may be issued.
- Explanation of unacceptable behaviour and expectations moving forward.
- Clear communication about boundaries and expectations.
- Participation in Safe(r) Space workshops may be required.
- Escalation to the Red category if the harmful behaviour becomes a pattern.
- If needed and possible, an accountability process, stemming from our house rules (see 4.4), is initiated, including both persons involved, with the consent of the affected person. Different teams or individuals are responsible for each person involved to facilitate an honest accountability process; these teams or affinity groups are formed to support both people involved while also ensuring an honest process which is survivor centered. Suggested steps to start an accountability process:
 - Talk with the person affected and ask about their needs for example: an apology, a way to ensure this doesn't happen again by means of community support, a facilitated confrontation with the person who crossed boundaries.
 - Talk with the person who crossed boundaries to encourage reflection and discuss together how this behaviour can be avoided and how De Voorkamer can support.
 - A discussion with both parties to decide how to move forward.
 - A written or verbal reflection may be asked.

Red Category — Serious Violations

Definition: Severe misconduct that threatens the safety or integrity of the community. Immediate intervention is required.

Examples

- Harassment or intimidation
- Discrimination
- Escalated conflicts
- Credible reports of past harmful behaviour from partner organisations or trusted community members

Reporting & Implementation

- Must be reported to the Safe(r) Space facilitator directly or via the contact form.
- Full investigation to be conducted with the consent of the harmed person, starting within two days and finalised within two weeks, as is feasible.
- The identities of all parties are shared with the team for monitoring and support.
- Temporary measures may be taken (e.g. separating involved parties at events).

- May involve external professionals or institutions if needed

Community response and consequences

- Temporary with a minimum of one month or permanent ban from De Voorkamer: the decision and length of a ban will be decided on a case-by-case basis. If a ban is issued, re-engagement is assessed and considered through a structured, explicit, and supported accountability process that is survivor-centred and community-grounded. This process is not necessarily always facilitated by DVK for example if the report comes from outside the DVK community.
- Required reflection (written or verbal if written is not possible) before re-engagement.
- Referral to external institutions (legal, medical, security) if needed.
- Final decisions are made by the Safe(r) Space Team or, if necessary, brought up to the DVK facilitating team.
- Bans should be reviewed every six months as a way to keep the team of facilitators informed and to maintain knowledge of who is entering the space.

General Reporting Guidelines

To help maintain a safe and respectful space, community members are encouraged to report incidents they experience or witness to be able to recognise repeated patterns and respond adequately and in fairness to De Voorkamer community.

The affected person, if known, should expect an update within two weeks from the safe(r) space facilitator or the person they reported to.

Reports can be made:

1. In person to a facilitator or Safe(r) Space team member:
 - The person receiving the report will assess the situation and offer needed support to the person reporting. In case of initial judgment of the red category the reported person will be asked to leave the space immediately.
 - The incident will be reported to the safer space facilitator.
 - The safer space facilitator will discuss the situation with two safe(r) space team members.
 - The incident is assigned a category and further action is discussed.
 - The harmed person is updated
 - An action is taken following each category's guidelines.
2. In writing via a contact form or email: Anonymously, if preferred.
 - After a report is made the safe(r) space facilitator with two members of the safe(r) space team will assess the situation.
 - The incident will be assigned to a category and further action is discussed.
 - The affected/reporting person is updated.
 - An action is taken following each category's guidelines.

All reports are handled with care and discretion. The Safe(r) Space facilitator leads the response, with support from the De Voorkamer team and keeps the involved persons informed. In cases falling under the red category, decisions may be escalated or referred to external institutions or professionals.

6. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

De Voorkamer reviews its Safe(r) Space policy annually through regular meetings and continuous learning, incorporating community feedback to ensure it reflects evolving needs. Input is gathered through focus groups, conversations, and a feedback box, and is used to improve daily practices.

We encourage all community members to share their experiences so the policy remains inclusive and relevant.

If you have experienced or witnessed misconduct, contact our Safe(r) Space facilitator, Souad, in person or via email (Saferspace@devoorkamer.org) or use the [QR form](#). All reports are handled with care and confidentiality.

We are committed to making our space accessible to everyone, including individuals with specific physical, sensory, or cognitive needs, as is feasible. Feedback is always welcome.