



The Frederick Center Participant Policies

The mission of The Frederick Center (TFC) is to support, educate, link, organize and provide outreach to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) community and its allies.

1. Participant Code of Conduct

a) Confidentiality

Every attendee who participates in TFC activities must adhere to our confidentiality requirement. General discussion of topics and issues are fine, as long as no connection to another individual can be made. This includes any personal conversations or interactions with any TFC employee, staff or Board Member, or anyone affiliated with TFC. Some programs may require a confidentiality form to be signed prior to acceptance into the program. If anyone becomes aware of anyone else not following this confidentiality requirement, they should report it to the Program Coordinator, Executive Director, or lastly to any member of the Board.

b) Mailing List Policy

It is the policy of TFC that our mailing list/membership list is confidential. The mailing list will not be given to any person or organization for any reason. However, if another organization has a mailing that, in the opinion of the Board, would be interesting or valuable to the persons on our mailing list, TFC will affix our mailing labels onto that mailing. We will not allow the originating organization to examine the labels or to have access to our database.

c) Dress Code

TFC's Dress Code is intended to provide a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere for all participants. These guidelines are designed to address general questions related to attire and are not exhaustive. Participants who are uncertain about what constitutes inappropriate attire should check with TFC staff. Clothing and shoes should be clean and neat. Dresses, skirts, pants, shorts and/or skorts must be an acceptable length (no short shorts or super minis).

The following are examples of inappropriate clothing:

- Clothing items that by fabric or design display undergarments
- No shirts with exposed midriff
- No clothing with inappropriate or offensive language, sayings or images

Participants who do not abide by these guidelines may be asked to leave TFC until they return appropriately dressed.

2. Participant Safety

a) Weapons Policy

Weapons and every other instrument designed in part to inflict injury upon any person or animal shall be prohibited in all TFC facilities and at every sponsored program, service, or activity.

b) Alcohol & Substance Use Policy

It is the policy of TFC to provide a safe, drug-free place for its employees, volunteers, and clients/visitors. The policy prohibits the use, sale, dispensing, or participating under the influence of, or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, and narcotics on TFC's premises and at any time while visiting TFC or attending any of TFC activities. The only exception to this foregoing policy will be properly reported prescription drugs/narcotics prescribed by a licensed physician to be used by the person possessing such drugs, or at events pre-approved for alcohol use as long as individuals are of legal age and behave responsibly.

c) Safety Policy

TFC is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people and adults can have fun, learn, socialize, grow, be supported and find acceptance.

The following policy reflects our commitment to provide protective care of all minors (under 18 years of age) who participate in TFC sponsored activities.

- All adult volunteers and staff assigned to supervise minors will adhere to the Supervisor of Minors policies, which require a background check and other qualifications. They may not leave minors alone with anyone other than that minor's legal guardian or another Supervisor of Minors
- Legal guardians may attend any activity in which their minor child participates. They may, however, be asked to remain off to the side as to not interfere with the program, activity, or group dynamics.
- All participants, volunteers and staff participating in the same activity with minors should immediately report any behaviors that seem abusive or inappropriate to the Program Coordinator, Executive Director or any member of the Board.

3. Program Participation

Programs and events held or sponsored by TFC are generally open to the public, but may be dependent on relevant eligibility, age appropriateness, signed confidentiality agreements, TFC membership or other relevant criteria. Therefore, in order for a person to participate or attend, they must meet these TFC requirements.

The fact that TFC is funded to provide programs and services does not mean that every potentially eligible participant can demand access to a program. What it does mean is that

every eligible participant is able to apply to participate in programs and that TFC may, at its own discretion, assess their eligibility based on TFC requirements and program availability.

4. Participant Removal

Behaviors that warrant removal:

- Violating TFC values, as written in the Mission, Vision, Values statement within the General Operating Policies document.
- Disruptive behavior that prevents or disrupts group, event or day-to-day TFC activities. Examples include slurred speech, physical incapacitation (falling down, passing out, etc.), or yelling. Assessment of such behavior should consider the psycho-social needs of the person exhibiting the behavior and appropriate referrals for mental or physical health are considered.
- Behavior which threatens the well-being of other staff, volunteers or participants, including but not limited to verbal threats, intimidation, and harassment. This includes offensive statements to staff, volunteers or participants that target someone based on their identity or group membership (e.g. racist, sexist, trans-phobic, and other similar type remarks).
- Behavior which threatens the safety of staff, volunteers or participants, including physical threats or physically abusive behavior. Non-consensual touching is considered inappropriate and abusive.
- Any intentional damage to TFC's property or the property of TFC staff, volunteers or participants while at TFC or attending TFC's off-site activities.

5. Program Participant Grievance Procedure

TFC has established a grievance procedure for guests, program participants and prospective participants to assure fair and equal access to our programs and services.

1. You have the right to file a grievance if:
 - a. You are a participant or prospective participant of TFC and you:
 - i. Asked for help, but were told you were not eligible or were denied help;
 - ii. Received help but are dissatisfied with the assistance given; or
 - iii. Received help but additional help was denied, for reasons that you do not agree with.
 - b. You are a family member of a participant or prospective participant and you:
 - i. Asked for help, but were told you were not eligible or were denied help;
 - ii. Received help but are dissatisfied with the assistance given; or

- iii. Received help but additional help was denied, for reasons that you do not agree with.

2. Procedure

- a. You and/or your representative are encouraged to discuss your disagreement with the TFC staff member who is involved.
- b. If you are dissatisfied with the staff member's response, or if you do not want to talk directly to the involved staff member, you have the right to speak to the staff member's supervisor to discuss the complaint within (18) working days of the problem or action with which you disagree.
- c. If you are dissatisfied with the supervisor's response or proposed action, you have the right to file a written complaint.
 - i. If you need help writing your complaint, a TFC staff member who is not involved in the disagreement will assist you upon request.
 - ii. Write your grievance or complaint and explain the circumstances, what you were told by the TFC staff member, what services you think were improperly given or denied, and why you are dissatisfied with TFC decision. Include who you have talked to at TFC about your complaint.
 - iii. Where to file: All written grievances must be filed at TFC: The Frederick Center, P.O. Box 3231, Frederick, MD 21705-3231. You, or someone on your behalf, may file the grievance by certified mail or by hand delivery in a sealed envelope to the Program Coordinator, the Executive Director, or any member of the Board.
 - iv. Your written complaint will be investigated by the Executive Director, or Program Coordinator and a written response and plan of action will be prepared and mailed to you.
 - v. If you are still dissatisfied after receiving the written response you may put your complaint in writing to the Board Chair. The Board Chair will appoint a committee to review your complaint and all TFC's responses. If additional information is required to make a decision, the committee will ask to meet with you and/or your representative. The Board Chair will send you a written decision within thirty (30) days of the committee meeting at which your grievance was reviewed.

Please be aware that instituting a grievance against TFC acts to waive privileges of confidentiality or privacy for purpose of responding to the grievance. That means that the TFC staff member is allowed to defend themselves against charges of misfeasance or malfeasance, and for the purposes of that defense the privileges no longer apply.

This means that if you believe that TFC has handled your matter inappropriately, we are allowed to use all information known to us to defend ourselves from such an allegation no matter where

or in what form that allegation is made. This is true whether we must defend ourselves to program funders, to the State of Maryland, or other governmental offices or agencies, in the media, in court, or in other public arenas.