

WORLD MICROBE FORUM EVENTS CODE OF CONDUCT

The World Microbe Forum (WMF) is a forum for microbial sciences that considers and debates scientific issues in an orderly, respectful, and fair manner. The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) and the Federation of European Microbiological Societies (FEMS) along with other WMF cooperating societies are committed to providing an environment that encourages the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas and promotes equal opportunities and respectful treatment for all participants. Differing perspectives are valued and WMF welcomes the diversity of individuals and their identities. All participants are expected to treat others with respect and consideration.

As such, the WMF prohibits and will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying at its events, whether the event is in person or virtual. This applies to all related events. Participants violating the Events Code of Conduct will be immediately removed from the digital platform.

Harassment is defined as unwanted and unwelcome attention or other conduct that creates an environment where a reasonable person would feel unwelcome, intimidated, excluded, or abused. Harassment based on gender, race, religion, national origin, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family responsibilities, genetic information, disability, matriculation, political affiliation, and any other personal characteristic is strictly prohibited. Additionally, inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images in public spaces, presentations, or within online forums is considered a violation of the WMF Events Code of Conduct and will not be tolerated.

If a participant experiences or witnesses harassment, the participant should contact WMF management as soon as possible if they feel unsafe. **For virtual WMF events, individuals may report complaints via telephone at 866-209-5916 or at <https://www.ethcomp.com/asm>.** All complaints will be responded to promptly and treated seriously and, to the extent possible, confidentially. Complaints that require broader investigation will be handled by a FEMS investigating officer or the ASM's Ethics Committee. (It shall be within the sole discretion of ASM and FEMS to decide which entity shall handle the complaint.) The appropriate association representative will follow up with the complainant. WMF, ASM, and FEMS expressly forbid any retaliation against individuals for reporting harassment.

If possible, the following information should be provided when reporting a harassment incident:

- Name and contact information of participant
- Name and contact information of any witnesses
- Identifying information (e.g. name, badge number, physical appearance, online profile name) of the individual(s) who are accused of the harassment.

- The specific action or behavior that was in violation of the WMF Events Code of Conduct. Also, any screenshots of the action or behavior will be helpful for the investigation.
- The date and approximate time of the incident
- The location and circumstances surrounding the incident

ASM and/or FEMS will investigate all complaints of harassment, and investigations will be conducted in an unbiased manner. Complaints should be filed as soon as possible after the incident.

Violation of this code of conduct may result in the participant being removed from the digital platform without warning or refund; being barred from attending WMF, ASM, and/or FEMS events (both virtually and in person) in the future; and/or other sanctions, including, if relevant, being barred from or revocation of membership in the ASM or FEMS. In the event that an individual knowingly provides false information related to an alleged violation of this code, WMF, ASM, and FEMS may take similar disciplinary action.

If an ASM Staff member is found to be in violation, the ASM Headquarters Employment Policy (Prohibition against Sexual and Other Harassment and Discrimination; which is distinct from the Ethics Review Process for ASM Members and Volunteers) will be followed. Action regarding an ASM staff member may result in termination of employment.

Any alleged breaches of this Code of Conduct by FEMS members or staff will be investigated following the standard procedure. Any violations will be acted upon following the FEMS employment conditions and disciplinary procedure.

This policy applies to all attendees, speakers, exhibitors, contractors, volunteers, staff and guests at WMF events.