Firstsite's Code of Conduct

August 2023

Our vision is 'Making Art Matter'. Our mission is to ensure art and creativity are valued for their integral role in shaping a happy and healthy society for everyone.

We do this by championing creativity as a catalyst for positive change in society, celebrating everyone's imaginations as places to shape a better future and demonstrating the impact of art and galleries at the centre of everyday life.

We collaborate with people where, together, we can have the most impact and we share the results of our work with diverse audiences to influence change.

We do this in three places; in our award-winning gallery, reflecting our radical region and digitally with audiences around the world.

We have four values that help us do what we do to the best of our abilities – we are

creative, inclusive, agile and responsible.

By choosing to visit Firstsite you agree to act by this code of conduct:

Firstsite is for everyone

We are inclusive, unconventional and fun!

We listen so we understand more

We encourage open, honest and non-aggressive interactions and conversations, to help us continue to learn and understand. If something is not clear, or you need support – just ask.

Take part – be creative

Firstsite is a creative active space with opportunities for everyone to respond to exhibitions, artworks and our organisation. Be part of Firstsite - start a dialogue, make an artwork, ask a question and help shape our organisation.

Be aware of assumptions

Everyone has different life experiences and may be experiencing challenges which may not be apparent. Be aware that others may have different physical or emotional boundaries to you. Inappropriate or aggressive infringement of personal boundaries are not tolerated. This includes: use of inappropriate language, abusive comments, shouting, physical threats, physical actions.

Be patient and open

Everyone is unique, and individuals may have viewpoints that are different to our own. Individuality is respected. Remember that people may prefer to communicate and interact in different ways.

Respect human rights and dignity

Be aware of your privileges and prejudices. It is vital that everyone feels safe at Firstsite and in our community and treatment of everyone should be fair, and impartial.
We are actively anti-discriminatory and inclusive. Discrimination of any visitor or Firstsite team member on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, religion, age, disability or any protected characteristic, will not be tolerated.
We openly acknowledge that progress towards an equitable society inside our organisation, on our doorstep and globally has been woefully slow especially with regards people of African, Caribbean, South Asian, East Asian, South East Asian and West Asian heritage. We are allies of the Black Lives Matter movement, but to fully be so we need to acknowledge the practical and philosophical changes we need to make to eradicate racism completely.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Firstsite or on any of our social media platforms:

- Shouting at members Firstsite staff or other visitors and users of the building, either in person or over the telephone
- Physically or emotionally intimidating a member of staff, or other visitors and users of the building, e.g. standing very close to them
- The use of aggressive hand gestures
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour of any kind which we will accept as such if a member of staff or another visitor deems it to be
- Shaking or holding a fist or finger towards another person
- Swearing
- Pushing
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking
- Spitting
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, ageist comments
- Breaching the Firstsite's security procedures
- Aggressive and threatening phone calls or emails.
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour towards Firstsite as a whole, someone attending an event whilst in our building, our staff or their families via social media

This is not an exhaustive list
but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour may result in a visitor being asked to leave the building immediately and the police being informed of the incident.

We will follow a timed action plan of short and long term commitments to identify and address the changes needed. This will be published on our website.

Following this code of conduct is required by anyone interacting with our organisation.

If you are unable to follow these guidelines, we will open dialogue with you to address this, we have the right to ask anyone to leave if we feel this code of conduct is not being followed.

Thank you for your coorperation.

Firstsite, Lewis Gardens, High Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1JH