

AUTSCAPE'S LISTS POLICY

This policy includes information about:

1. The principle of the lists
2. List guidelines (see also **Appendix A – Using the list**)
3. Confidentiality
4. How we manage the lists
5. Why we may intervene on discussions (see also **Appendix B - Moderator guidelines**)
6. Sanctions reserved for the board (see also **Appendix C - Moderators concerns brought to the board**)
7. Complaints
8. Responsibility
9. Monitoring and Learning

1. The principle of the lists

The lists provide a means for Autscope members and other interested parties to socialise and talk about Autscope, autism in general and anything else that is of interest to others in an amicable way.

2. List guidelines

The board has produced guidelines for users of the lists.

The board will ensure that list users remain informed of these guidelines.

When posting to the list please:

Avoid - offensive, intimidating or bullying posts, as well as disablist, sexist, homophobic or racist remarks.

Behave - respectfully and considerately. Autscope list subscribers are a wide and diverse group of people, not all of whom post. Attempt to maintain an amicable and accessible atmosphere for other subscribers. Please consider your audience and be respectful of differences.

Respect Confidentiality - by treating all posts to the list as confidential and not reproducing them outside of the list in which they appear unless the message in question explicitly states that reproduction is allowed. Don't approach anyone directly with requests for consent to use or quote posts.

(We may allow general requests for quotes eg. to further research or contribute to somebody's work in another area, and surveys or questionnaires. However, permission must first be sought from the moderators who may set boundaries at their discretion.)

Respect Autonomy - Do not try to control other people's use of the list. This includes but is not limited to: telling people how they must post, asking people to remember things which you may find upsetting, being passive aggressive or psychoanalysing their intentions.

3. Confidentiality

Subscription to the list must be with a personal email address. Family email addresses are allowed eg. JohnandSueSmith@gmail.com but not group email addresses where others may access the list eg. autismcollective@gmail.com.

Autscape cannot guarantee that messages sent to the mailing lists will not be redistributed. However, we expect list subscribers to be respectful of other list users and treat all posts as confidential and not repeat or reproduce either part or the whole of a message in another place unless the sender explicitly states they can.

To avoid misunderstandings and to minimise offence we also do not allow people to ask if they can quote somebody.

If it is brought to the board's attention that people are being asked by private email or a post has been reproduced elsewhere without the originators permission, then the board will take action and may sanction a subscriber which could result in them being removed from the list.

However, we may allow general requests for quotes eg. to further research or contribute to somebody's work in another area, and surveys or questionnaires. In these instances permission must first be sought from the moderators who may set boundaries at their discretion.

4. How we manage the lists

Each list is moderated by several moderators, one of which will be a board member known as the List co-ordinator.

The List co-ordinator will support the moderators and provide a link to the board.

Moderators will be subject to the Autscape confidentiality policy and the Autscape participant confidentiality policy.

List members will be informed how to contact the moderators.

Please remember that the list moderators are probably also autistic, so try to be patient when waiting for replies and explanations.

Also remember that in dealing with your concern the moderators will look at all the information available to them and the outcome may not be as you expect.

If the moderators receive a complaint against a person who has posted on a list, or they believe a topic is contravening the principles of the list or falls within any of the categories listed below in **section 5 – Why we may intervene in discussions**, they have the power to moderate an individual or the entire list, and to hold all posts, or posts on a specific topic pending a decision on the appropriate next steps.

The full powers of the moderators and moderating procedures are set out in **Appendix B - Moderators guidelines**.

Any matter outside the powers of the moderators will be brought to the attention of the board. See **Appendix C - Moderators concerns brought to the Board**.

5. Why we may intervene in discussions

The moderators may intervene in discussions if somebody has expressed a concern or they have been notified of a complaint against the behaviour of one or more individuals.

The moderators may intervene if they feel there is a serious risk to the reputation of The Autscope organisation.

The moderators may intervene if they believe a topic is contravening the principles of the list or there has been any detrimental contravention of the list guidelines (see section 2 - **List guidelines**).

The moderators may take reasonable steps to ensure the smooth running of the list, particularly where rapid intervention is necessary.

6. Sanctions reserved for the board

Only the most serious concerns will be brought to the board by the moderators.

Following actions taken under the board's guidelines (see **Appendix C - Moderators concerns brought to the board**), the board has the right to place sanctions on an individual.

The board will only place sanctions on an individual as a last resort.

The board may sanction an individual in any way they feel is appropriate including:

- A. Setting a longer period of moderation.
- B. Placing a total ban on a participant posting to a list or lists, either forever or for a set period of time.
- C. Asking a participant to formally agree to comply with the standard of behaviour outlined in section 2 - **List guidelines** before they are allowed to continue posting on the list or lists.

In all cases where the board decides to take action against an individual they will inform the individual of that action. Decisions taken by the board are final.

7. Complaints

Complaints regarding a post on the list or a person's behaviour on the list should be sent to community.moderator@autscope.org. Further information is available under section 2 - **List guidelines**.

Complaints regarding the way the moderators have dealt with a situation should be sent to secretary@autscope.org and the board will follow the procedure outlined in the Complaints policy.

In its investigation the board will take into account this **Lists policy** and its three Appendices: **Appendix A - Using the list**, **Appendix B - Moderator guidelines** and **Appendix C - Moderation concerns brought to the board**.

8. Responsibility

The List co-ordinator has responsibility for the moderators and the general functioning of the lists. Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board of trustees.

9. Monitoring and learning

Procedures are reviewed periodically to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on 27th January 2017. Updated and reviewed on 27th May 2023

Appendix A – Using the list

All list members must abide by the list guidelines (see section 2 – List Guidelines).

Autscape's preferred posting style is:

Subject header - when posting on a new topic, please try to make the subject header of the post clear, so people can choose what they wish to read. When replying to posts, please retain the subject header, unless the topic changes; if so you should change it accordingly.

Quoting in replies - try to reply “traditionally”, underneath the quote of the original post, snipping away any quoted text from the original post that may not be relevant. Interspersing your reply between quoted snippets is also common. If you are receiving digests, please pay particular attention to this.

If you are having problems such as:

- How to change the subject header or reply traditionally;
- you are offended by a post or feel intimidated or bullied;
- you believe people are being disrespectful or inconsiderate;
- you have an issue regarding confidentiality or
- you need to complain about somebody on the list.

Please bring the matter to the attention of the moderators by emailing community.moderator@autscape.org

Please remember that the list moderators are probably also autistic, so try to be patient when waiting for replies and explanations.

Also remember that in dealing with your concern the moderators will look at all the information available to them and the outcome may not be what you expect.

Intervention

Occasionally the moderators or the board may intervene if they decide that a subject is getting out of hand, there is a serious risk to the reputation of The Autscope organisation, they have received a complaint, if it has been brought to their attention that somebody is not adhering to the above guidelines, or to promote the smooth running of the list.

Full details of when and how moderators may intervene are contained in **Appendix B - Moderator guidelines**.

As a last resort, in accordance with this Lists policy, the board may place sanctions on a person or remove them from the list or lists.

Appendix B - Moderators guidelines

Moderators should passively moderate the lists. They should read the list on a regular basis but they are not required to read every post. Moderators should read enough so that they are able to identify subjects which are likely to be contentious and be alert to changes in the volume of posts.

Moderators are required to take as little intervention as necessary for the list to operate successfully.

Moderators should at all time be mindful that many of the Autscope list members may have difficulties communicating and as such they should not be publicly ridiculed or brought to task, e.g., forced to apologise directly on the list.

Moderators should also assist participants who may have general queries regarding list guidelines.

Moderators have the power to decide whether to allow general requests for quotes eg. to further research or contribute to somebody's work in another area, and surveys or questionnaires. In giving permission they may also set boundaries at their discretion.

Dealing with problems:

Should a moderator identify a potential problem, or is alerted to a problem by a list member, or receives a complaint or concern they should first attempt to contact another moderator to discuss and agree on the best course of action. If time does not permit or they cannot contact another moderator they can take the initial actions 1 to 3 below until they contact another moderator or alert the board for support.

Moderators are permitted to join in discussions but if a moderator becomes personally involved in a discussion that is brought to the attention of the moderators, then that person temporarily forgoes the right to make moderator decisions until the situation is resolved.

In the event that no moderator is available then the board may take over moderation or decide to suspend all list activities until further notice.

Initial actions moderators may take:

1. Moderators may place the whole list on moderation for a maximum of 96 hours and must inform the list that all messages are moderated until further notice.
2. Moderators may place an individual on moderation for a maximum of 96 hours and must inform the individual that they are being moderated until further notice. They should also issue a reminder of the list guidelines (see section **2 - List guidelines**).
3. Moderators may issue a warning to the list to be mindful of the list guidelines.

Actions moderators may take after discussion and agreement with another moderator or the list coordinator (or the board acting in their absence):

1. Moderators may take the initial action 1 above and inform the list when the moderation is lifted.
2. Moderators may take initial action 2 above and inform the individual when the moderation is lifted. They may also issue a warning that any further incidents may result in them being sanctioned by the board.
3. Moderators may email an individual and issue a gentle reminder of the list guidelines (see section **2 - List guidelines**), within 96 hours of the post being posted on the list, without placing them on moderation, and stating no further action will be taken at the present time.
4. Moderators may email an individual and remind them of the list guidelines (see section **2 - List guidelines**), within 96 hours of the post being posted on the list, without placing them on moderation, and issue a warning that any further incidents may result in them being placed on moderation or sanctioned by the board.

In all cases where the moderators remind an individual of the list guidelines the email must state that 'The moderators have decided' which guideline or guidelines have been broken and be clear, using examples, if necessary, how they have been broken.

Where a post has definitely caused or is likely to have caused offence the moderators should also give the participant a chance to apologise either to the whole list or to an individual by private email, but this cannot be enforced. However, if the moderators think that an apology is appropriate and the offender refuses to give one, they should ask the person if they agree for the moderators to apologise on their behalf. If they still refuse, the offender should be made aware that the matter will therefore be brought to the attention of the board who may sanction them instead.

In the above cases, the moderators also have discretion in whether they should inform the list that a post has caused offence and is contrary to the List guidelines. This should be a general post and

not naming individuals but reminding the list of the guidelines and also if required pointing out the guideline that has been broken.

Where possible the moderators should only contact a participant once regarding moderation in relation to a subject thread except to inform them that moderation has been lifted or if action 4 above applies (where they have been previously issued a warning but not placed a participant on moderation), to inform them that they will now be moderated.

If the participant has a query regarding the moderators intervention, objects to a reminder of the list guidelines or a warning, refuses to apologise or continues to make inappropriate posts the matter must be brought to the attention of the board.

The moderators should have regard to confidentiality when emailing individuals and not disclose who may have identified a problem or brought a concern or complaint to their attention.

The moderators also have the power to take the list or an individual off moderation if they feel the situation has resolved itself with a simple cooling off period but if the moderation was as a result of a complaint about an individual's behaviour the moderators should still deal with the complaint.

If after 96 hours, or when moderation is lifted, the situation continues, moderators have the power to reinstate moderation for a further 96 hours but they must alert the board.

If an individual repeatedly makes unacceptable posts or causes concern to the moderators they must inform the board.

Appendix C - Moderation concerns brought to the board

Matters brought to the board will be reviewed and the next course of action decided by majority voting outside of a formal board meeting (i.e., via the board's e-mail list), within 72 hours of the problem being notified to the board. All available board members must vote.

Should no decision be possible within 72 hours, the Chair (or Vice Chair or delegated person in the event of their absence or of a conflict of interest), should seek to either extend the limit further, or, and only in extreme circumstances (e.g., if the majority of the board is not being available for comment), make an executive decision to resolve the situation. In doing so, the Chair must have due regard for all previously expressed board members opinions and the board must be informed of any resulting actions.

If a board member declares a conflict of interest in the discussion, they forgo the right to discuss the matter.

The board may implement sanctions in accordance with this Lists policy.

