

Member Guidelines

Article 1. Membership

Section 1.

- a. Article 1 of By-laws applies.
- b. All joining members would have to sign an application form (to be prepared by the Board) that includes consent to adhere to the KhushDC By-laws and Member guidelines. The Board can also allow members to submit this consent in electronic form. A new member should also provide with a working email address at which the said member can be contacted if needed.

Section 2. Membership Dues:

- a. The annual membership dues for the year 2005-2006 are \$10 for general members and \$8 for Youth Members.
- b. The KhushDC Board shall decide on the membership dues for the term till elections in July 2005.
- c. Payment of Dues: Member Dues can be paid in one of the following ways:
 - i. By check/cash at the Annual General Meeting
 - ii. By check at designated events

The check should be made payable to "KhushDC". As KhushDC acquires more resources, the Board could decide on alternate ways for payment of dues (this could, for example, include allowing a mail-in check to a POBox address when we have one, or making payments over the internet using credit cards)

- d. Waiver of Dues: A partial or full waiver of dues shall be available to members at the Board's discretion. Such waivers may be granted for reasons including but not limited to student status, sudden loss of employment, reasons related to health/medical, low-income groups. The member seeking a dues waiver shall submit a written (email/letter/other) request to the Board for consideration. Once the Board receives a request the decision to waive the dues in part or in full should be taken latest by the following Board Meeting. A member whose dues are waived in part or in full shall have all the benefits of the type of membership for which he/she is eligible.

Section 3. Conduct During Events:

- a. General and Youth Members shall observe federal/state/local laws and KhushDC Member guidelines.
- b. KhushDC Board will try to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all our members, especially the youth members. However, many of

our meetings are at bars or clubs and the KhushDC Board does not have any control over the people present there. We advise that members attend these events at their own discretion.

- c. We urge our members to maintain the general guidelines of decent and polite conduct during events. We encourage a healthy and friendly environment. Closed events such as potlucks are intended to create a safe and non-judgmental environment for its participants. We hope that members will not depart from general decorum in their own conduct and in their conduct towards other members.
- d. It should be understood that the KhushDC Board does not believe in policing members during events and the Board, in general, expects that members resolve their own conflicts. However, there might be cases where the intervention of the Board might be required or felt needed by a member. In that case, the Board will operate by the process outlined in Section 5 of this Document.
- e. In order to respect the privacy of our members we require that a member take permission before taking anyone's pictures at KhushDC events. We strongly discourage photography without permission at our events and such behavior could lead to disciplinary action from the Board.

Section 3. Guidelines concerning Youth Members:

- a. Youth Members (i.e. below 21 years of age) are barred from any KhushDC event where alcohol is served.
- b. This can be relaxed only in case of an event at a venue like a bar where the establishment allows patrons below 21 years of age and itself takes the responsibility of not selling/serving alcohol to patrons below the legal drinking age.
- c. In case of an event at a bar/club (see section above) General Members are strongly advised to refrain from offering alcohol to KhushDC Youth Members or to other patrons below the legal drinking age. Offering/Buying alcohol for those below 21 years of age could be a serious offence punishable by law.
- d. KhushDC Board shall make an attempt to keep some of its events alcohol-free. Among other things, we feel this would encourage a healthier attitude where participation and enjoyment are not dependent on the availability/consumption of alcohol and should also encourage the participation and involvement of Youth Members.
- e. Youth Members are eligible for most other benefits of General Membership in keeping with the KhushDC by-laws and Member Guidelines. Youth members are eligible to voting in the elections for the Board Positions and serving on any KhushDC Committee. Youth members are, however, not currently eligible to run for KhushDC Board positions.
- f. KhushDC reserves the right to arrange events at places where the minimum age of patrons is 21 years. KhushDC Board will not be

responsible for the actions of Youth Members who might try to gain access to such venue/event by illegal/improper means.

Section 4. Conflict Resolution and Anti-Harassment Policy:

a. Intent and purpose. KhushDC is committed to creating and sustaining a safe and supportive environment for, promoting awareness and acceptance of, and fostering positive cultural and sexual identity among Queer South Asians. KhushDC strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all members. Members are expected to treat each other with mutual respect.

Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which a problem, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response from the KhushDC board. Grievances that are not addressed have the potential to grow into major problems that can cause tension and low morale.

KhushDC's own best interest lies in ensuring fair treatment of all members and guests and in making certain that problem resolution is prompt, uniform, and impartial. The major purpose is to correct the problem and prevent recurrence.

No member will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with the KhushDC board in a reasonable manner, or for using the problem resolution procedure. KhushDC will respect (and requests the respect of) the confidentiality of all involved and will strive to resolve issues raised within a timely manner.

b. Coverage: All KhushDC members may use this policy to raise issues or concerns to the KhushDC Board regarding other KhushDC members or guests of KhushDC events. Members should not raise grievances that are frivolous or malicious. All members are expected to participate in the grievance resolution process in good faith.

c. Procedures to raise a grievance: Before initiating the grievance procedures, the complainant should try to resolve any grievance directly with the person/s concerned. If this is not possible or appropriate, the member should proceed to Step 1 of these Procedures.

d. Resolution/Board Action

Step 1: Present the problem to a KhushDC Board member as soon as possible after incident occurs.

Step 2: The KhushDC Board member responds to problem during discussion or as soon as possible, after consulting with other Board members when necessary. The Board member documents discussion. The member should be asked to submit a formal letter stating his/her grievance to the Board.

Step 3: The KhushDC Board reviews and considers problem, next steps, and potential resolution. The Board has full authority to make any adjustment deemed appropriate to resolve the problem.

Step 4: The Board shall operate on the following guidelines to resolve the conflict.

- Wherever possible, grievances should be resolved by a process of discussion and cooperation. The Board as a first step should try and mediate between the parties involved in the dispute. This should be done no later than the next Board meeting. The member who is found to be at fault may at this stage be let off with a warning.
- If the conflict is not resolved by the first step, the Board under consent of the complainant shall appoint committee of three General Members, not on the Board, to take the final decision on the issue. The Board shall try its best to form an unbiased and fair committee. The decision of the Committee shall be final.
- The Committee shall then try to mediate between the members involved and give a fair chance to each side to present his/her case. If the Committee finds a member to be at fault, it could decide one of the following recourses:
 - a. Give a written warning to the member at fault.
 - b. Membership at probation for the member at fault.
 - c. The membership of the faulting member can be revoked under extreme cases, depending on the severity of the problem and number of occurrences.

There may be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed.

Progressive discipline means that, with respect to most disciplinary problems, these steps will normally be followed: a first offense may call for a verbal warning; a next offense, depending in severity, may be followed by a written warning, membership on probation, or termination of membership.

KhushDC recognizes that there are certain types of issues that are serious enough to justify either membership on probation, or, in extreme situations, termination of membership, without going through the usual progressive steps.

While it is impossible to list every type of behavior that may be deemed a serious offense, KhushDC stands by the general guidelines of harassment as laid out under local, state, and federal guidelines.

Section 5. Violation of By-laws and Guidelines

In case of flagrant violation of the by-laws and/or member policies by a particular member, the Board shall follow the general guidelines of progressive discipline as outlined in the section 5 of this Document. It is understood that there might be situations where one or more steps might have to be skipped.

In case, the member does not respond to repeated warnings, the Board might consider further action. This could include, for example, membership on probation, suspension of membership or in extreme case revoking of membership. The Board can also appoint a committee under the same guidelines as in Section 5. The Committee shall then review the case and submit a written report to the Board recommending a further course of action. The Board shall take the final decision which should be communicated to the member by written notice.

If the Board decides to revoke the membership, said member may appeal within 10 days of membership termination by providing written notice to the Secretary of the organization setting forth the basis for the appeal. A committee of three General Members, not already on the Board, shall be appointed by the Board to review the appeal. The Committee shall take the final decision.

A refund of prorated membership dues shall be made in case of membership termination. The refund shall be paid to the member in cash/check within 10 business days of the final decision.

It should be noted that revoking the membership should be an extreme step, based on seriousness of the violations, and frequency of occurrence.

A member may reapply for membership. The Board should take the history and present circumstances into account while considering the membership application of a member whose membership was previously revoked.

Section 6. Membership Termination/Revoking

a. A member can voluntarily resign his/her membership by written notice to the KhushDC Secretary.

b. Membership might be revoked by Board action in cases of conflict resolution of violation of By-laws and/or Policies of KhushDC as stated in Sections 4, 5 of this document.

It should be noted that revoking the membership should be an extreme step, based on seriousness of the violations, and frequency of occurrence.

In any case of membership being terminated/revoked, a refund of prorated dues shall be made. The Board shall decide on the exact amount of the refund. The refund shall be paid to the member in cash/check within 10 business days of the final decision.

Section 7. Changes to Policy.

Member Guidelines are liable to change as KhushDC evolves and with changes in the Board. For a change to be considered, five General Members have to bring up the motion to make the particular amendment to the Member Guidelines document. The decision to amend shall be made by conducting a vote among the General and Youth Members of KhushDC. The Board can decide on the exact details of conducting the poll/vote. The amendment would require a simple majority of votes cast to be passed.

Section 8. Approval

The Document would be presented to the KhushDC Board and other community leaders for comments and critique by Wednesday, April 6th. On Sunday, April 10th the document, modified based on the feedback, would be made available for the KhushDC membership via website and KhushDC listserv. If there are no objections it would go into affect along with the By-laws. If the membership has issues with certain portions of the document, the Policies committee would try and resolve those and modify the Document as needed. It might be needed to have a discussion meeting and/or finally conduct a poll to bring the Member Guidelines into affect. We look towards solutions that are agreeable to most of our members, and solutions that they can live with or do not have major disagreement with.

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KhushDC Board for feedback

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Section 4 of this document is based in part on the anti-harassment policy of AQUA, courtesy of Joseph, Chair, AQUA.

The KhushDC Policies Subcommittee

Ameet, Ashish, Ayush, Shiva