



DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.  
**CODE of CONDUCT**

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS, CANDIDATES, & PYRAMIDS

REVISED FEBRUARY 2021

# INTRODUCTION

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., a national service sorority, requires that its members exemplify and encourage high cultural, intellectual, and moral standards and that their actions exemplify the public and personal behaviors that reflect the ideals and principles espoused by the Sisterhood.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated (“Delta”) has a zero - tolerance hazing policy. The policy expressly prohibits all acts and forms of hazing, before, during, and after the Membership Intake Process.

The Code of Conduct consists of two parts: the **Code of Ethics**, which states the types of conduct that the Sorority considers acceptable, and the **Disciplinary Action Code**, which sets forth the types of conduct that is unacceptable and the corresponding discipline to be imposed upon any individual or chapter that engages in prohibited conduct.

The principles of the Sorority’s Governing Documents, administrative resources and tools are embodied in the Code of Conduct which is embodied in The Acknowledgement of Rights and Responsibilities of Members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Regarding Membership Intake Prohibitions (No Hazing Contract), and the Notice to Applicant/Candidate/Pyramid Regarding Privilege and Responsibilities.

Revisions to this Code of Conduct, including the sanctions and fines to be assessed under this Code, shall be made by the National Scholarship and Standards Committee and approved by the National Board of Directors.

# CODE OF ETHICS

Believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, Delta expects each soror to recognize the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and commitment to social responsibility. Each soror is expected to live up to these ideals by embracing and adhering to the following ethical principles:

- △ Each soror shall regard as primary the bond of Sisterhood and the giving of public service;
- △ Each soror shall uphold the Constitution and Bylaws of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.;
- △ Each soror shall maintain high standards of personal conduct;
- △ Each soror shall support and promote the goals, objectives, and programs approved by Grand Chapter;
- △ Each soror shall treat all persons with dignity and respect;
- △ Each soror shall exhibit compassionate and courteous behavior toward all persons at all times;
- △ Each soror shall refrain from making false or misleading statements about the Sorority to anyone;
- △ Each soror shall recognize her personal responsibility to assist with and promote the development, improvement, and execution of programs designed to strengthen the Sisterhood;
- △ Each soror shall uphold and support all persons impartially;
- △ Each soror shall refrain from engaging in or tolerating any exploitation or disparaging of the Sorority;
- △ Each soror shall refrain from using her membership in any manner that would be inconsistent with the Sorority's underlying principles;
- △ Each soror shall maintain the confidentiality of all information deemed as such by the Sorority;
- △ Each soror shall refrain from using the Sorority's property, including any derivative of its name, its symbols, and other trademarks and service marks, for personal and/or commercial use;
- △ Each soror shall exercise sound business principles in conducting the Sorority's affairs;
- △ Each soror shall refrain from engaging in illegal and unsisterly conduct (including any form of hazing), shall use her best efforts to protect the Sorority from any such conduct by anyone, and shall report any such conduct to the appropriate local, regional or national officer;
- △ Each soror shall support the Sorority's programs through the payment of all dues and fees approved by Grand Chapter; and
- △ Each soror shall demonstrate her commitment to public service by participating with her local chapter or nationally.

# DISCIPLINARY ACTION CODE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Disciplinary Action Code is embodied in the *Notice to Applicant/Candidate/Pyramid Regarding Privilege and Responsibilities* and the *Acknowledgement of Rights and Responsibilities of Members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Regarding Membership Intake Prohibitions (No Hazing Contracts)*. It sets forth the types of improper conduct, on the part of sorors, members, pyramids, candidates, applicants, and chapters, that are unacceptable and, thus, prohibited. Such improper and unacceptable conduct is subject to sanctions, including financial penalties. Sanctions may be applied from any section of the code regardless of the category where it is specifically identified.

The Disciplinary Action Code clearly defines the types of conduct and activities that constitute a violation of the Code and, thus, are unacceptable and prohibited conduct and activities. The enumerated sanctions and fines are designed to address the consequences of a chapter, a member, a soror, an applicant, a candidate, or a pyramid engaging in unacceptable and prohibited conduct. Conduct and activities that violate a state or federal law may result in consequences beyond those delineated in this Code.

**Knowing the difference between effectively managing and resolving conflict versus exercising the Disciplinary Action Code is key to productive interpersonal relationships in local chapters.** There may be instances of interpersonal conflict (e.g. change, power structure/struggles, ineffective communication structures, ineffective processes/procedures, conflicting goals and objectives, etc.) that do not need to be escalated as a violation of the Disciplinary Action Code. Sources of conflict within the chapter and among members that cannot be resolved internally should be referred to the Regional Director for conflict resolution intervention and management.

**Applicants, candidates, and pyramids shall be barred from membership for participating in, and/or failing to report any type of conduct that is deemed unacceptable and in violation of the Sorority's approved Membership Intake Program, including those policies which are summarized in the *Notice to Applicant/Candidate/Pyramid Regarding Privilege and Responsibilities* and detailed in numerous other documents provided to the applicants, candidates, and pyramids.**

**Any applicant, candidate, or pyramid shall be barred from membership at any point in the process in which the Sorority discovers, through any means, that the applicant, candidate or pyramid has engaged in conduct or activities at any point, that would, as determined by the Sorority in its sole discretion, defame the Sorority or diminish its esteem, respect or goodwill; injure its reputation; or are inconsistent with the high ideals of the Sorority.**

Any soror shall be expelled from membership, if at any time after initiation the Sorority discovers that during the process in which she was an applicant, candidate, or pyramid she engaged in activities, participated in, and/or failed to report any type of conduct that is deemed unacceptable and in violation of the Sorority's approved Membership Intake Program.

As provided in the Constitution and Bylaws and specified in detail in this Code of Conduct, sorors and chapters may be placed on probation and/or fined by the Regional Director, the National Scholarship and Standards Committee, or the International President and Chair of National Board of Directors for engaging in prohibited conduct or activities. Sorors and chapters on probation shall not participate in any activity of the Sorority, except specified, monitored activities approved by the Regional Director and the National Scholarship and Standards Committee.

As a condition of reinstatement, a soror or chapter must satisfy all financial obligations imposed as a result of the probation and must successfully complete a specified program of rehabilitation over a period of time as prescribed by the Regional Director or the National Scholarship and Standards Committee.

As provided in the Bylaws, the International President and Chair of National Board of Directors is authorized to suspend or expel a soror as well as suspend a chapter or revoke

# DISCIPLINARY ACTION CODE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

its charter. Sorors and chapters also may be disciplined by the National Scholarship and Standards Committee or Regional Director, with the approval of the International President and Chair of National Board of Directors. A soror or chapter that has been disciplined may be fined and directed to repay expenses, as provided in the Code of Conduct, irrespective of who imposes the disciplinary action

# DISCIPLINARY ACTION CODE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sorors or chapters upon whom fines or restitution has been imposed may not participate in any activities of the Sorority until said obligation has been fully satisfied. During the period of individual or chapter suspension, neither the soror, the chapter, or any of its members who have been disciplined shall participate in any activity of the Sorority except those rehabilitative activities. To be reinstated, a suspended chapter or soror must satisfy all financial obligations imposed as a result of the suspension and must successfully complete an individually-tailored rehabilitation program, over a prescribed period of time. The rehabilitation program shall be supervised by the Regional Director. If a soror has not satisfied her fine or financial obligation within five (5) years of the ending of the period of sanction (e.g., within five (5) years of the last day of a three (3) year sanction), she shall be expelled by the International President and Chair of National Board of Directors. The International President and Chair of National Board of Directors also has the authority to revoke a chapter's charter if the chapter's fine or financial obligations have not been satisfied within a ten-year period, from the inception of the sanction. Chapters that fail to remedy the condition leading to suspension may be required to appear, at the expense of the suspended chapter, before the National Board of Directors for a hearing.

When the Sorority imposes discipline of any kind (probation, suspension, fine, and the requirement to make restitution, expulsion, or revocation of a charter) upon a soror or chapter, it shall provide the disciplined soror or chapter with written notice of the charge (prohibited conduct or activities) and the reason for the sanction imposed. The written notice shall specify the soror's or chapter's appeal rights, the time for filing the appeal, and the procedure for computing the filing time. Within 45 days of receiving notice of sanctions, a soror or chapter may appeal at her or its own expense. The time for computing the 45 days is provided in the *Chapter Management Handbook*. In accordance with the appeals procedure as set forth in the *Chapter Management Handbook*, the request to appeal may be brought before the following, in the order listed: the National Scholarship and Standards Committee, the National Executive Board, and the Executive Session during the National Convention.

Membership in the Sorority may be suspended by the National Executive Board for an extended period when the circumstances warrant such action.

When a soror has been placed on probation, suspended, or expelled from the Sorority; and when an applicant, candidate, or pyramid has been barred from membership, her name shall be posted on the Sorority's public website within a designated section and shall remain until the Sorority, in its sole discretion, decides to remove the name.

Any public display or use of the Sorority's property that may create embarrassment for the Sorority or any individual soror is a violation of the Disciplinary Action Code. This includes but is not limited to, using various derivatives of the Sorority's name and its symbols, trademarks and service marks for shows, presentations, performances or for personal use.

**Any soror who repeatedly violates the Code of Conduct will be expelled.**

Applicants/candidates/pyramids may be barred from membership by the Regional Director, as specified in this Code of Conduct.

# TERMINOLOGY

## **Barred**

Barred means that one has been disqualified from seeking membership in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and applies specifically to any applicant, candidate, or pyramid whose privilege of becoming a member of the Sorority has been revoked because she violated the Sorority's Code of Conduct. The applicant, candidate, or pyramid may be barred for a time certain or permanently, depending on the nature of the violation.

## **Purpose of a Cease and Desist**

A **cease and desist** is a directive provided to an individual/chapter to stop purportedly illegal activity ("**cease**") and to not resume activities ("**desist**") until a determined date. A **cease and desist** generates and prompts the investigative process of the sorority.

## **Cease and Desist (Candidate and/or Pyramid)**

A cease and desist means that you are to immediately cease any and all Membership Intake and related activities and/or interaction, meetings, or Delta related discussions with any members or Sorors of the organization, with the exception of those designated by the Regional Director, National First Vice President, or International President and Chair of National Board of Directors.

A cease and desist means that the Chapter members, and the advisors of the chapter (if applicable), are to immediately cease any and all activities and/or interaction, meetings, or Delta related discussions with any members or Sorors of the organization, with the exception of those designated by the Regional Director, National First Vice President, or International President and Chair of National Board of Directors.

## **Underground**

Underground means any unauthorized, unsanctioned or illegal membership intake activity occurring before, during or after the approved membership intake process and guidelines established by the Grand Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

# CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

## Membership Intake Violations

*Violations of the Membership Intake process include improper and unacceptable conduct such as, but not limited to, physical or psychological abuses (which constitute hazing) by individual chapter members before, during, and after the Membership Intake Process, and violation of processes and procedures that are set forth in the Sorority's Governing documents, administrative resources and tools. Such violations are subject to the sanctions that are listed in this Code of Conduct. If a member or soror engages in any improper or unacceptable conduct **before, during, or after** the Membership Intake process and/or fails to report such improper conduct to appropriate Sorority officials (Chapter Officers, Regional Officers, National Officers, or National Headquarters, as appropriate in order to get results), she will be suspended or expelled from membership in the Sorority and subject to other sanctions, as specified in this Code of Conduct. If an applicant, candidate, or pyramid participates in any way in improper conduct, including allowing herself to be physically or mentally abused, and fails to report such abuse to appropriate Sorority officials (Chapter Officers, Regional Officers, National Officers, or National Headquarters, as appropriate in order to get results), she will be barred from membership in the Sorority.*

- Participation in pre-initiation and/or post initiation activities identified as illegal membership intake and/or underground activities by members, sorors, applicants, candidates, or pyramids (underground is anything that is in addition to or contrary to approved activities).

—Barred for 5 Years from Membership

- Attending unauthorized meetings/gatherings/ information sessions of any kind for any reason before, during and after the Membership Intake Process.

—Barred for 3 Years from Membership

- Failure to report orally and/or in writing the knowledge of any action in violation of the Membership Intake Program (had knowledge of violation(s) but was not present at activities).

—Barred for 1 Year from Membership

- Forgery, falsification, cheating, alteration or misuse of any materials required for membership into the Sorority.

—Barred for 5 Years from Membership

- Activities found in violation of policies, rules and regulations, in which sanctions are levied by the college or university where the chapter is located.

—Barred for Life from Membership

- Any public display that may create embarrassment for the Sorority by a member, soror, applicant, candidate or pyramid, including, but not limited to shows, presentations, social media postings or performances of any kind.

—Barred for 3 Years from Membership

- Failure to comply with the Sorority's approved Alcohol and Illegal Drug Usage policy

—Barred for 1 Year from Membership



# CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

## **Intellectual Properties**

*Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated owns its' Intellectual Property, sorority assets, including word marks, logos, symbols, crest and seal. They are made available for use by the general membership and shall be utilized in the best way possible. Improper or illegal use of the Sorority's intellectual properties is not acceptable.*

- Improper or illegal use of the Sorority's intellectual property (including any derivative of its name, other word marks, logos, symbols, Crest/Seal) for non-commercial (does not involve commerce) purposes.

—Barred for 1 Year from Membership

## **Inappropriate Behavior**

*Inappropriate behavior includes public and personal behavior or actions that are not representative of the ideals, principles and ethics of the Sorority and that damage the goodwill or reputation of the Sorority or damage or injure another person. Such behavior and actions include but are not limited to those delineated below.*

- Fighting (Except in matters of self-defense)

— Barred for 3 Years from Membership

Verbal abuse: threats, foul or demeaning language that is aggressive and insulting and/or is delivered in a hostile tone and/or volume.

— Barred for 1 Year from Membership

- Forgery, falsification, cheating, alteration or misuse of Delta documents, records or identification cards

— Barred for 5 Years from Membership

- Fraudulent acts such as dishonesty, false representation by words or conduct, misleading statements, concealment of information, deception.

— Barred for 3 Years from Membership

- Accepting/giving gifts and/or items to any person(s), from any person(s) at any point in time for the purpose of gaining acceptance, special treatment and/or access to membership into the Sorority.

- Barred for 3 Years from Membership

## **Information and Communications**

*Publicly displaying any information related to the organization, chapter, chapter members and any member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. via any form of media such as, but not limited to, chapter website, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, email, etc. is prohibited. All forms of communication must adhere to the official Delta Internet Guidelines.*

- Violations of the Sorority's Technology Guidelines

—Barred for 1 Year from Membership

- Unauthorized acquisition, disclosure, or distribution of confidential membership or financial information. Improper use of the organization's membership data and information through misuse of proprietary computer software (e.g., Online Dues, Online Registration, or Membership Verification).

—Barred for Life from Membership

# CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

## Information and Communications

- Origination or circulation of any false or misleading information, obscene language, or patented material that violates or is contrary to the Internet Guidelines.

—Barred for Life from Membership

- Use of social media (such as chat rooms, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and other virtual conversation media\*) to defame, slander, or otherwise embarrass/humiliate:
  - A soror, chapter, applicant/pyramid/candidate
  - The Sorority, other groups or organizations \*Includes, but is not limited to, pictures, language, words, videos, images of any kind, etc.

—Barred for Life from Membership

- Use of mass communication (e.g., email, listserv groups, chat rooms, Twitter, Facebook) to disseminate and discuss confidential information such as decisions made at chapter meetings, and voting on candidates (for membership intake and/or chapter offices).

—Barred for 3 Years from Membership

- Unauthorized recording (audio or visual) without expressed approval of those being recorded

—Barred for 3 Years from Membership

## Ethical Responsibility

*All persons associated are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards, including, but not limited to, those standards set forth in the Code of Ethics that is encompassed in this Code of Conduct. The responsibility to act ethically means that you will at all times display integrity, act respectfully towards other sorors, and faithfully follow the tenets of this Code of Conduct.*

- Refusal to cooperate with investigations, including but not limited to, failing to provide, destroying, or hiding information during an investigation of a violation.

—Barred for 3 Years from Membership

- Any egregious act offensive to the Sorority that defames the Sorority or another soror including, but not limited to, engaging in acts of violence, and/or distributing, or accessing pornography through Delta systems.

—Barred for Life from Membership

- Exposure of Delta Secrets and confidential documents intended solely for members of Delta Sigma Theta.

—Barred for Life from Membership

Accepting/giving gifts and/or items to any person(s), from any person(s) at any point in time for the purpose of gaining acceptance, special treatment and/or access to membership into the Sorority.

—Barred for 3 Years from Membership

- Influencing or attempting to influence another person to violate the Code of Conduct.

—Barred for 3 Years from Membership

- Unauthorized use of College or University records or properties.

—Barred for Life from Membership

# CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

## Hazing

*Hazing is an abusive or humiliating action that endangers the psychological or physical health of a member, soror, applicant, candidate or pyramid, including but not limited to, the conduct enumerated below.*

- Physical Hazing such as paddling, beating, slapping, kicking, pushing, blindfolding, sleep deprivation, exercise of any kind, duck-walking, tearing of clothes, disrupting hair styles, damaging hair, consuming alcohol, forcing the use of drugs and/or alcohol, eating so-called “Delta Food”, eating of any substances, restricting personal hygiene, consuming vile substance or smearing of such on one’s skin, burning, branding, and/or bruising of skin, binge drinking, drinking games, displaying nudity with physical endurance, creating excessive fatigue, water intoxication, exposure to cold weather or extreme heat, etc.

Any member, soror, applicant, candidate or pyramid who participates in any way in physical hazing and does not report it to the Regional Director is in violation and shall be sanctioned.

—Barred for Life from Membership

- Emotional Hazing such as deception, assigning demerits, silence periods with implied threats for violation, depriving one of privileges, requiring applicants, candidates, pyramids or new members to perform duties not assigned to others, socially isolating applicants, candidates, pyramids and new members, forcing others to wear embarrassing or humiliating clothes in public, name calling, coercing others to perform stunts or skits that are demeaning or humiliating, demanding servitude such as shopping, cooking, and test taking for others.

Any member, soror, applicant, candidate or pyramid who allows emotional hazing and does not report it to the Regional Director is in violation and shall be sanctioned.

—Barred for 5 Years from Membership

- Travel or Work such as a road trip that would require a member, soror, applicant, candidate or pyramid to travel extreme distances or under hazardous conditions.

—Barred for 5 Years from Membership

- Gift Presentations - To require or cajole the giving of gifts from new initiates to the chapter or chapter member(s) is prohibited as it is not specifically stated in the Membership Intake Program. Additionally, any presentation to any fraternal or Greek organizations is also in violation of the Membership Intake Program.

—Barred for 3 Years from Membership

- Failure to Report Hazing activities in writing whether you were present or not present.

—Barred for 1 Year from Membership

- Refusal to cooperate or being non-responsive to inquiries regarding investigations.

—Barred for 3 Years from Membership

## Lawsuits

*A person has a legal right to press charges against any entity for any reason; however, only through a court of law can a case be deemed a frivolous suit. In some cases, legal lawsuits are brought against the Sorority after evidence has been reviewed and presented by the appropriate sorority committees; whereas the plaintiff still deems it necessary and appropriate to move the proceedings forward. Additionally, some cases are brought forward in bad faith by either the soror, applicant, candidate, or pyramid for the purpose of harassing the Grand Chapter, one of its chapters, its National Officers, and/or Executive Board members. These lawsuits cost the Grand Chapter, its chapters, or its National Officers unnecessary financial hardship that ultimately may be borne by the entire*

# CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

## *Sorority.*

- Applicant(s), candidate(s), and pyramid(s) who file a lawsuit against the Grand Chapter of the Sorority, any of its chapters, or any of its National Officers or Executive Board members that is deemed frivolous by a court of law.

—Barred for 3 Years from Membership & Responsible for all defendant's attorney fees