



Code of Ethics & Conduct of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc.

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Mission Statement of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc.

Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. (SIA) is a not-for-profit Latina-based community service organization. The sorority's goals are to educate others on the Latino culture, uplift women, and encourage scholarship and leadership among its members and all women. Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. does not discriminate based on opinions, political party, race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. Hermanas must take responsibility for their actions and decisions, upholding the values and principles of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc.

Preamble¹

Any woman who takes the oath to become an Hermana of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. agrees to uphold this Code of Ethics & Conduct. By doing so, she commits to comply with the purposes and goals of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. Violation of any part of this code can result in a penalty. The Conflict Resolution Board will conduct hearings for any alleged violations.

¹ Reference the Conflict Resolution Procedures for guidelines.

1. Purpose of the SIA Code of Ethics & Conduct

The purpose of the SIA Code of Ethics & Conduct is to inform sisters of what constitutes proper decorum. These rules apply to Hermanas whenever they are acting as representatives of the organization. This includes, but is not limited to, instances where a sister is wearing her letters, performing the call, chanting, strolling, or attending a SIA-sponsored event. Sisters are expected to carry themselves in a manner that represents the organization in a positive light.

The SIA Code of Ethics & Conduct is not intended to dictate how Hermanas should live their personal lives. SIA recognizes and respects sisters as individuals. However, it is important to acknowledge that once a woman wears the letters of Sigma Iota Alpha, she is no longer just an individual but a representative of the organization. Thus, every Hermana should present herself in a manner that upholds the standards and values set forth by Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc.

1. Reporting Violations²

Any active Hermana of the organization may file a complaint with the Conflict Resolution Board if she believes someone has violated this Code of Ethics & Conduct. Upon crossing into this organization, sisters swear their dedication and commitment to Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. Upholding the standards as set forth by SIA in this Code of Ethics & Conduct is an extension of that commitment. As Lovely Latin Ladies,

² Visit the [Conflict Resolution Procedures document](#) for reporting steps.

Hermanas must present themselves in a way that reflects positively on the organization. Refer to the Conflict Resolution Board Procedure documents for further information.

2. Financial Obligations

a. Expenditures General Guidelines

- i. *Pre-Approval Required:* Any sister making an expenditure on behalf of the sorority must obtain prior approval to be eligible for reimbursement.
- ii. *Expenditure Request Form:* The sister incurring the expense must fill out an expenditure request form and have it approved by the appropriate parties before spending any money.

3. Approval Processes

a. National Level Expenditures

- i. *Scenario:* An officer plans to make an expenditure for a sorority-related activity or travel.
- ii. *Procedure:*
 1. The officer (e.g., Convention Planning Director) estimates the costs (e.g., copies, travel, souvenirs).
 2. The officer submits a budget for these projected costs to the Chief Financial Officer.

3. The Chief Financial Officer reviews and submits the budget to the Chief Executive Officer for final approval.
- iii. *Example:* If a \$1,000.00 budget is approved, any amount spent over this must be petitioned for reimbursement, but it is not guaranteed.
- b. Regional Level Expenditures
- i. *Scenario:* An officer plans to make an expenditure for a sorority-related activity or travel.
 - ii. *Procedure:*
 1. The officer (e.g., Regional Expansion Director) estimates the costs (e.g., copies, travel, souvenirs).
 2. The officer submits a budget for these projected costs to the Regional Financial Administrator.
 3. The Financial Administrator reviews and submits the budget to the Regional Director for final approval.
 4. *Example:* If a \$100.00 budget is approved, any amount spent over this must be petitioned for reimbursement, but it is not guaranteed.
- c. Local-Level Expenditures
- i. *Scenario:* A sister is asked to purchase materials for a chapter event or activity.
 - ii. *Procedure:*

1. The sister must receive the money from the chapter Treasurer before making the purchase, or
2. The sister must fill out an expenditure request form and obtain prior approval from the chapter for compensation.
3. Without one of these actions, the sister incurs the expense at her own risk.
4. Oral agreements are not binding; written contracts are required for reimbursement eligibility.

4. Reimbursement and Disputes

- a. *Out-of-Pocket Expenses:* Sisters should not expect to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket costs unless an expenditure request form has been pre-approved.
- b. *Filing Complaints:* If an expenditure request form is approved and reimbursement is subsequently refused, the sister can file a complaint with the Conflict Resolution Board.

Membership Intake Process

1. False Statements and Information Control

- a. It is prohibited for any Hermana to make false statements about the organization.
- b. Only designated officers (e.g., Recruitment Chairwoman) are authorized to provide specific information about the membership intake process, such as application deadlines and fees.
- c. Hermanas should direct prospective new members to the appropriate officer for accurate information to prevent misinformation and ensure consistency.

2. Prospective New Members' Applications

- a. All Hermanas must ensure that prospective new members have credible qualifications.
- b. It is strictly prohibited to make or submit fraudulent remarks or documentation about a prospective new member.
- c. Hermanas must verify the accuracy of the prospective new member information. If any falsified information is discovered, it is an Hermana's responsibility to inform the application review committee and relevant parties immediately.

3. Membership Materials

Materials used by candidates during the membership intake process, including rules and practices, are strictly for Hermanas only. Additionally, Hermanas must not purchase materials with non-sisters, cannot wear letters when shopping for these materials, or send non-sisters to make these purchases. The exception is when the candidate(s) go shopping with the Hermanas for banner materials.

4. Participation in Membership Intake Activities

- a. In good standing, Hermanas have the right to attend membership intake process sessions, following the directives of the Membership Process Chairwoman (MPC).
- b. Not in good standing Hermanas may not have any interaction with any membership intake process activities or individuals.

5. Respect and Conduct During the Process

- a. Hermanas must respect the dignity and personal space of prospective new members.
- b. The MPC's authority must be respected.
- c. Hazing in any form is strictly prohibited.
- d. All behavior and assignments must adhere to the Membership Process Manual. Any deviations may result in disciplinary action.

6. Membership Process Chairwoman (MPC) Duties

- a. The MPC must adhere to responsibilities as outlined in the Membership Process Manual. For any clarifications, the MPC should contact the Regional Assistant Director of Membership Intake (RADMI).
- b. Trust is essential between candidates and the MPC. Abusing this trust can lead to disciplinary action.

7. Addressing Disagreements with the MPC

- a. Concerns about the MPC should be addressed personally and privately to avoid public disputes.
- b. If a resolution is not reached through direct communication, involve an unbiased party (e.g., chapter coach, RADMI, DMI).
- c. If issues remain unresolved, a complaint can be filed with the Conflict Resolution Board after allowing the MPC to rectify the situation.

8. Judicial Hearings for MPC

- a. The Conflict Resolution Board will determine penalties for any MPC misconduct.
- b. If an MPC is relieved of duties, the Director of Membership Intake (DMI), Regional Assistant Director of Membership Intake (RADMI), and chapter leadership will select a replacement.

- c. In urgent cases where the Conflict Resolution Board cannot meet, the DMI, RADMI, chapter coach, and chapter president can make decisions by majority vote (Note: if tied, the CEDO can be the tie-breaker).³

9. Handling Prospective Member's Breaches of Secrecy

- a. If a Hermana learns that a prospective member is violating their oath of secrecy, they must inform the MPC immediately.
- b. The MPC must explain to the chapter coach, and RADMI the rationale for allowing a prospective member to continue despite breaches. (Note: Depending on the severity and decision the MPC will inform the chapter of the breach.)
- c. Continuous disregard for rules by a prospective member, if not addressed by the MPC, can lead to a judicial hearing to determine the prospective member's withdrawal and potential replacement of the MPC.

10. Professional Boundaries and Relationships with Candidates

No member of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. shall engage in dating, sexual relationships, or romantic interactions with candidates who are actively involved in the membership intake process. This prohibition applies from the time she submits an application until their formal induction into the sorority or withdrawal from the process. Any behavior that contravenes this policy will result in disciplinary action, as outlined in the organization's bylaws.

³ For an undergraduate line cases are always urgent due to universities crossing deadlines. Graduate lines are a case by case basis.

a. Rationale and Importance

i. This policy is in place to uphold the following principles

1. *Professionalism and Integrity*: During the membership intake process, the organization has a responsibility to establish a climate of professionalism. Members who engage in relationships with candidates risk compromising the impartiality and integrity of the intake process, potentially creating conflicts of interest or perceived favoritism. This can lead to resentment, distrust, and harm to the organization's reputation.
2. *Power Dynamics and Equity*: An inherent power imbalance exists between current members and candidates. Any attempt to form personal or romantic relationships with candidates during this sensitive process may create undue pressure, influence candidates' experiences, or make them feel obligated to reciprocate advances to gain favor. This is unfair and can constitute undue influence, an abuse of positional power that may expose the organization to legal risk.
3. *Legal and Ethical Risks*: In some jurisdictions, inappropriate or coercive behavior during a recruitment process can lead to claims of discrimination, harassment, or exploitation. Members who engage in such conduct place themselves and Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. at risk for legal action, including lawsuits or reputational damage, which could significantly impact our mission and standing as a respected organization.

4. *Consequences of Violating this Policy*: Violations of this policy will lead to a formal investigation by the Director of Membership Intake, Conflict Resolution Board, or designated oversight body within Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. Possible disciplinary actions include suspension, revocation of membership, or other measures aligned with the severity of the violation and in accordance with the sorority's policies.

7. Confidentiality and Sorority Secrets

All Hermanas have sworn an oath to uphold the secrecy of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. This oath is absolute; there are no exceptions or excuses for breaking it. Hermanas must understand that the essence of any Greek-lettered organization lies in its secrecy. A secret society cannot exist if its secrets are public. Therefore, revealing SIA's secrets to outsiders, including members of other Greek-lettered organizations, is strictly forbidden. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Details of the membership intake process
- b. Information about our crest
- c. Confidential sorority information not yet made public
- d. Sorority business is not meant for non-members

Violations will result in severe penalties, determined by the Conflict Resolution Board.

Social Networking

Membership intake process pictures and videos (membership intake items, ceremonies, etc.) must not be posted on social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.). This prohibition includes images of neophyte Hermanas who are not presentable. However, pictures of crossing gifts are permissible. Members shall use social media responsibly and in a manner that reflects the values of SIA. Members shall not post any content that is harmful, inappropriate, or damaging to the sorority's reputation.

Bullying

Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. is committed to fostering a safe and respectful environment for all its members. Bullying in any form is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. All members are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect.

1. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as repeated, intentional behavior that aims to intimidate, humiliate, or harm another member. This can include, but is not limited to:

- a. *Verbal Bullying*: Name-calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, or threats.
- b. *Social Bullying*: Spreading rumors, excluding someone from a group, or embarrassing someone in public.
- c. *Physical Bullying*: Hitting, pushing, or any other form of physical aggression.

- d. *Cyberbullying*: Using electronic communication to bully a member, such as through social media, text messages, or emails.

2. Commitment to a Bully-Free Environment

- a. All members of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. are expected to contribute to a culture of respect and to stand against bullying in any form.
- b. By adhering to this anti-bullying policy, members help create a supportive and empowering community for everyone.

3. Cyberbullying

Hermanas should avoid cyberbullying because it contradicts the values of sisterhood, respect, and inclusivity that Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. stands for.

Cyberbullying harms individuals emotionally and can damage the reputation and integrity of the sorority as a whole, undermining its mission of fostering a supportive and positive community.

Examples of cyberbullying within Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. could include:

1. *Harassment via Social Media*: Sending threatening or derogatory messages through social media platforms or group chats.
2. *Spreading Rumors or Lies*: Sharing false information about a sister intending to harm her reputation.

3. *Exclusion or Isolation:* Deliberately excluding a sister from online group discussions or activities.
4. *Public Shaming:* Posting humiliating or embarrassing content about a sister online.

These behaviors can undermine trust, cause emotional distress, and damage the sorority's unity and spirit of sisterhood.

1. *Zero Tolerance:* Hermanas must not engage in cyberbullying of any kind, including harassment, threats, or spreading false information about other members or individuals.
2. *Reporting:* Any Hermana experiencing or witnessing cyberbullying must report it to the Conflict Resolution Board immediately for investigation and appropriate action.

Sorority Meetings

All meetings, whether national, regional, or local, require content discretion. The Board of Trustees (BOT) and Chief Executive Suite (C-Suite) members must be particularly secretive about discussions. All in good standing Hermanas are entitled to sorority information. Outsiders, including members of other organizations, friends, lovers, roommates, etc., should not know what is discussed during SIA meetings, especially during the planning stages. Leaking this information is unacceptable.

1. National, Regional, and Local Leaders

At meetings, avoid discussing hearsay. If an Hermana is not present, her opinions and decisions should not be discussed. Statements prefaced with "I heard her say," "I think she said," or "I'm not sure, but I think she said" are considered hearsay and should be avoided.

BOT and C-Suite members must be especially discreet, refraining from discussing decisions with members of other Greek-lettered organizations or sharing information with the general body unless explicitly permitted. Confidentiality is crucial for maintaining credibility.

2. Chapter & Association Meetings

Confidentiality is essential for all discussions at meetings, including those involving the chapter coach. The chapter coach, acting as the chapter's confidant, must maintain discretion regarding chapter issues to ensure the chapter's viability.

Conflict of Interest

An Hermana should recuse herself from any decision-making situation where a conflict of interest exists. A conflict of interest arises when a sister has a personal interest in the outcome or is related to one of the involved parties. Examples include:

1. Conflict Resolution Board members with a biological sister involved in a case should recuse themselves.
2. Situations where an Hermana has any personal connection to a party involved, such as a line sister, a prospective new member, a best friend, or a chapter member.
3. An Hermana holding a leadership position or officer role within the sorority should not concurrently hold another position whether Nationally, regionally or locally, this includes but is not limited to serving as Membership Process Chairwoman (MPC), or Assistant Membership Process Chairwoman (AMPC) of a membership process line. This guideline ensures:
 - a. *Unbiased Leadership*: Leaders and officers can focus fully on their responsibilities without potential conflicts of interest arising from dual roles.
 - b. *Fairness in Decision-Making*: Prevents situations where personal involvement in membership processes could influence decisions or perceptions of fairness.

To avoid the appearance of impropriety, sisters should remove themselves from situations where personal connections might influence their judgment. Contact the Parliamentarian or Conflict Resolution Board for an advisory opinion if unsure about a potential conflict of interest.

Annual Disclosure Requirement

Regardless of their role or position, every officer must complete and update a conflict of interest disclosure form annually. This form must be submitted to the Parliamentarian, ensuring transparency and accountability in leadership roles. Any potential conflicts of interest should be documented, and officers must reaffirm their commitment to the sorority's ethical guidelines.

Alcohol Use for Hermanas

1. Legal Compliance

- a. Hermanas who are under the legal drinking age (21 or the legal age of the state they reside in) are strictly prohibited from consuming alcohol at any sorority-affiliated event.
- b. It is the responsibility of all members, regardless of age, to know and adhere to the alcohol laws of the state or country in which they reside or are attending events.

2. Event Conduct

- a. Chapter events, formal gatherings, or recruitment events should prioritize professionalism and reflect the values of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc.
- b. Alcohol consumption is prohibited during these events unless approved by the Regional Executive Board (REB) and restricted to those of legal age.

3. Alumnae Conduct

- a. Alumnae members are permitted to consume alcohol responsibly while wearing letters or sorority-affiliated attire, provided they are of legal drinking age and are in environments that reflect positively on the organization.
- b. Alumnae are expected to model appropriate behavior and are encouraged to consume alcohol in moderation, particularly in the presence of underage members or in public settings.

4. Wearing Letters

- a. All members (undergraduate and alumnae) must maintain a respectful and responsible image while wearing sorority letters. This includes responsible consumption of alcohol for those of legal drinking age.
- b. Any behavior that could be deemed inappropriate, reckless, or damaging to the sorority's reputation while consuming alcohol and wearing letters will result in disciplinary action.

5. Hosting Events with Alcohol

- a. Chapters that wish to host events where alcohol will be present must adhere to all local laws, campus policies, and sorority guidelines. These events must have clear boundaries regarding who can consume alcohol (i.e., only those of legal age).
- b. Non-alcoholic beverages must always be available at events where alcohol is served.

6. Consequences for Violation

- a. Violations of this code of conduct will result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension, fines, or revocation of membership, depending on the severity of the infraction.
- b. Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. aims to ensure that all Hermanas honor the legacy, professionalism, and positive image of the sorority while encouraging responsible, legal alcohol consumption.

Non-Partisan Conduct

Hermanidad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. is committed to fostering an inclusive environment that respects diverse political beliefs while remaining non-partisan. Members are encouraged to engage in civil discourse and to support one another regardless of political affiliation. Any political activities conducted by members must not reflect the views of the sorority. We strive to maintain a space where all voices can be heard and respected, ensuring that our commitment to sisterhood and service remains paramount.

Hermanas can:

1. Engage in respectful discussions about political topics.
2. Share personal views without representing the sorority.
3. Support civic engagement initiatives that promote community involvement.

Hermanas cannot:

1. Use sorority resources or events to endorse political candidates or parties.
2. Pressure fellow members to adopt specific political views.
3. Allow political disagreements to disrupt the spirit of sisterhood.

We strive to maintain a space where all voices can be heard and respected, ensuring that our commitment to sisterhood and service remains paramount.

Social Behavior and Letter Wearing

When an Hermana of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. wears the letters Sigma Iota Alpha, she represents the sorority, and her actions reflect on the organization.

Therefore, the following rules must be adhered to:

1. Displaying Letters

Wearing Sigma Iota Alpha letters signifies affiliation with the organization. An Hermana's behavior while wearing these letters is crucial as it reflects not only on herself but also on the organization. Specific guidelines include:

a. *Avoid wearing letters:*

- i. While inebriated (drunk) at public functions

b. *When not to wear letters:*

- i. While using illegal/legal substances or under their influence

1. *Examples of legal substances⁴ are marijuana, depending on states, opioids, etc.*

2. *Examples of illegal substances are cocaine, fentanyl, etc.*

- ii. During unscrupulous acts, physical altercations, or being arrested.

- iii. Generally, letters should not be worn in bars unless it's a sorority or other Greek letter organization function where the Hermana is representing the organization without being inebriated.

c. *Inappropriate display of paraphernalia:*

⁴ Per US law we acknowledge alcohol is a legal substance. Depending on each state's threshold of intoxication levels.

- i. Letters should not be worn across the back of pants, on waist seams, or on pockets of shorts or jeans where sitting on them occurs.
- ii. Ensure letters are always worn tastefully and respectfully, avoiding placements that may demean oneself or the organization (e.g., on undergarments).

2. Negative Behavior in Public Settings

Hermanas of Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. should uphold respect for members of fellow Greek-lettered organizations, fostering mutual respect. Specifically:

- a. Refrain from making negative remarks about other sororities or fraternities, especially in public or mixed companies.
- b. While Hermanas are entitled to personal opinions, criticisms of other organizations should be reserved for private discussions among Hermanas. Public criticism can damage SIA's reputation and professionalism.

Communication Platform Etiquette

General group email servers created by the marketing committee are intended for distributing useful information. Guidelines for proper use include:

1. Avoid sending negative or disrespectful messages that could harm an Hermana's professional reputation.
2. Emails should not be used for arguing with or negatively portraying other Hermanas, chapters, or organizations.
3. Direct communications to governing bodies like the BOT or C-Suite should follow appropriate channels rather than through mass emails.

Personal Disputes

Conflict resolution within the sorority should be handled with respect and professionalism:

1. Disagreements during meetings should adhere to Robert's Rules of Order, focusing on the issue at hand without descending into personal insults or disrespect.
2. Personal disputes among sisters should never escalate to physical altercations and should be resolved through the chain of command, involving the chapter president, chapter coach, and if necessary, the Assistant Regional Director or Conflict Resolution Board.

Ethical and Behavioral Standards

1. Hermanas shall use the sorority's resources responsibly and for their intended purposes. Misuse of funds, property, or information is strictly prohibited.
2. Hermanas shall promote transparency in all sorority operations, ensuring that decisions and actions are open to scrutiny and align with the sorority's values.
3. Hermanas shall act fairly and impartially in all dealings, ensuring that all members are treated equally and without favoritism.

Communication Platform Etiquette

The purpose of communication platform etiquette is to establish guidelines for the appropriate use of email communication within Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. (SIA). These policies aim to ensure effective, respectful, and secure communication among members and between the sorority and external parties.

1. Use of Productivity and Writing Tools
 - a. *Authorized Use:* Hermanas are encouraged to use productivity and writing tools like Asana, Grammarly, and ChatGPT to enhance efficiency and save time in their sorority-related tasks.
 - b. *Ethical Use:* Hermanas must use these tools ethically and responsibly, ensuring they do not engage in plagiarism or misrepresent authorship (e.g., using ChatGPT to write a recommendation letter falsely attributed to someone else).

- c. *Plagiarism*: All work produced using these tools must be original or properly cited to avoid any instances of plagiarism.
- d. *Personal Accountability*: Hermanas are responsible for maintaining the integrity of their work and upholding the ethical standards of the sorority.

2. Email Etiquette

- a. All official communication should be conducted through SIA-issued email accounts.
- b. Personal email accounts should not be used for official SIA business.
- c. All emails must maintain a professional tone.
- d. Use clear and respectful language, avoiding slang, jargon, or informal abbreviations.
- e. Ensure emails are free from grammatical and spelling errors.
- f. Aim to respond to emails within 48 hours during business days.
- g. Set up an out-of-office reply if you are unable to respond within this timeframe.

Penalties

Clear guidelines for penalties ensure accountability and adherence to SIA's standards:

- 1. Penalties may include fines, loss of in-good standing status privileges, community service, or participation in workshops on ethics or conflict resolution.

2. The severity of penalties will be based on the gravity of the violation, ensuring fairness and consistency in enforcement.

All members are required to acknowledge their understanding and commitment to the Code of Conduct and Ethics upon renewal of membership each year. This acknowledgment affirms their commitment to upholding the principles of respect, fairness, and integrity that Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc. seeks to embody in all its activities.