



Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy



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Principles


Collective Acting Studio is wholly committed to fostering an environment in which all students, regardless of their background and personal circumstances should be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

The Studio recognises that bullying and harassment can have a serious detrimental effect on the confidence, morale, performance and health of those affected, and may in extreme circumstances ultimately lead to students withdrawing from studies. The Studio believes that this situation should never be permitted to materialise and will treat all reports of bullying and harassment seriously.

The purpose of this policy is to promote a culture where bullying and harassment are acknowledged to be unacceptable and are not tolerated under any circumstances. Where allegations of such behaviour occur, this policy seeks to ensure that they are dealt with fairly, and in a timely fashion, without fear of victimisation.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy and procedure is to:

- Create and sustain a learning environment which is free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation;
- Tackle swiftly and effectively incidents of bullying, harassment or victimisation of, or by, students;
- Ensure that individuals are supported and encouraged in the event of any legitimate complaint;
- Establish that all members of the Studio - staff and students - are responsible for ensuring that individuals do not suffer any form of bullying or harassment;  Safeguard the respect for students' diverse talents, skills and experience;
- Promote the message that harassment, bullying or victimisation will not be tolerated in any form.

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all students at Collective Acting Studio, irrespective of whether an alleged incident takes place on Studio premises or elsewhere. All types of bullying and harassment, as described in this policy, are covered, whether or not the interactions have occurred between students and other students, or whether the allegations relate to students' treatment by Studio staff. This policy covers face-to-face actions, as well as non-face-to-face interactions, for example email, written correspondence, social networking sites and text messages.



The Studio shall, where possible and appropriate, seek to ensure that partners have an equivalent policy in place.

Data Protection

All information gathered on individuals as part of the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Monitor and Review

Monitoring of the Bullying and Harassment policy will be undertaken by the Studio's Governance and Quality Enhancement Team and Student Services.

Harassment Defined

The definition of harassment in the Equality Act 2010 is wide. It is 'where a person (A) engages in unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic and the conduct has the purpose or effect of:

- (a) violating another person's (B's) dignity, or
- (b) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for B'

It should be noted that 'unwanted' does not mean that express objection has to be made, and a serious one-off incident can amount to harassment.

It is important to note that differences of personality traits or culture and the misinterpretation of social signals can mean that what is perceived as harassment by one person may not seem so to another. The defining feature, however, is that the behaviour is offensive or intimidating to the recipient, and as such would be regarded as harassment by any reasonable person. It would need to be considered that, if the purpose of the conduct was to violate the individual's dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, then this is sufficient to establish harassment. However if harassment was not the purpose, but an individual argues that this was the effect of the conduct, the Equality Act says that in deciding whether conduct has that effect, consideration must be given to:

- the perception of the claimant;
- the other circumstances of the case; and
- whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have had that effect.



Forms of harassment involve offensive conduct or behaviour directed at a person's racial origin, religion and beliefs (including non belief), gender, disabilities, sexual orientation, age, family status (including their role as a carer or as a part-time worker, fixed term worker), marital status, political opinion, socio-economic status, or because he/she is a member of a trade union or similar associations or some other personal characteristic. It can also include the inappropriate use, or threat of use, of physical and mental power, authority or through social media.

With regard to religion and belief, it should be noted that there may be cultural differences which make some forms of behaviour generally regarded as acceptable by one group and unacceptable to another because such behaviour does not form part of the normal social interaction of that particular group.

Examples of potential harassment could be:

- Unwanted physical contact or physical attack.
- Offensive, suggestive or derogatory remarks, gestures, mockery, taunts, pranks, jokes, insults or ridicule; in person, on the telephone, by emails or social networking sites.
- Verbal abuse, threats or intrusive questioning.
- Insulting remarks based on the grounds of personal appearance or personal circumstances.
- Using an individual's known disability to demoralise them.
- Leering at another individual's body.
- Compromising invitations or gifts.
- Requests or demands for sexual favours.
- Circulation or displays of offensive, suggestive or degrading materials (such as pictures, graffiti or objects) in the teaching, learning, living or working environment.
- Sending of unwanted messages via e-mail and social networking sites.
- Ridicule for cultural differences such as appearance, dress, diet, religion or ethnic background.
- Subjecting an individual to group pressure.
- Derogatory or belittling remarks in front of others regarding appearance, work or personal attributes.
- Deliberately or repeatedly ignoring someone.
- Unwarranted exclusions.
- Any comments which imply that gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, race or ethnic or national origins, religious or other belief impairs the individual's ability to perform satisfactorily.
- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct.
- Incitement to commit any such act.



Discrimination

Harassment may or may not be linked to discrimination and can be based on characteristics which are protected under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage or civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion and belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

Discrimination can be direct, associative, perceptive or indirect. The table below defines these terms. It is important to remember that the legislation focuses on the outcome of the discriminatory behaviour over the motive or intent.



Concept	Definition
Direct Discrimination	This occurs when an individual is treated less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in similar circumstances.
Associative Discrimination	This occurs when an individual is treated less favourably than another because they are associated with a person who has a protected equality characteristic. This is a form of direct discrimination. The key point to note is that the person bringing the claim does not need to have the protected characteristic (i.e. the protected characteristic can belong to another person). It is sufficient that the treatment is because of a protected characteristic. A student may also be able to bring a claim for harassment in those situations.
Perceptive Discrimination	This occurs when the protected characteristic is a perceived characteristic which the individual does not actually have. An individual may also be able to bring a claim for harassment in those situations.
Indirect Discrimination	This occurs when a condition is applied equally to all students but one group is particularly disadvantaged, and this disadvantage cannot be justified as being necessary for the efficient running of the Studio.

Bullying Defined

Bullying is a particular form of personal harassment and may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behavior, as abuse or misuse of power, position or knowledge through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. It may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people. It may be obvious or it may be insidious (such as ignoring a person).



Bullying can result from a misuse of individual power derived from perceived superior status/position, physical strength or force of personality. It can also arise from the collective power that arises out of strength of numbers.

Bullying is normally characterised by the emergence of a pattern of behavior however if one act is deemed serious enough, this could amount to bullying.

Examples of potential bullying could be:

- Threats;
- Abuse;
- Public humiliation;
- Ridicule
- Repeated shouting or swearing at an individual; 🗣️ Undermining an individual; and 🗣️ Intimidating behaviour.

[Victimisation Defined](#)

Victimisation is when an individual is treated less favourably than they would otherwise have been because:

- They have made a claim or complaint;
- They have helped someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information; or
- It is known or suspected that they are contemplating bringing a complaint.

Under the Equality Act 2010, these are known as ‘protected acts’. If a member of the Studio treats a student less favourably because he or she has carried out a protected act, this could be regarded as unlawful victimisation. There must be a link between the student’s protected act and the resulting treatment of that student.

[Criminal Offences](#)

Where behaviour has been alleged that would amount to a serious criminal offence, e.g. physical or sexual assault, this should be immediately reported to the police.

In such cases, any resulting criminal proceedings would normally be expected to have been completed before the Studio will take action under this policy (although suspension via the Student Disciplinary Regulations may be considered appropriate, if necessary).



Malicious Complaints

The presumption will always be that complaints are made in good faith and that the complainant genuinely believes that they have grounds for raising a grievance. All cases will be investigated on this basis. An unfounded complaint will not be considered as malicious unless a deliberate attempt to mislead or of dishonesty is shown. However, should an investigation reveal a complaint to be malicious, this will be treated seriously and may lead to disciplinary action against the complainant.

Online Harassment and Cyberbullying

The Studio recognises that harassment and bullying can occur through digital means. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Sending abusive or threatening emails, texts, or messages through social media platforms
- Posting derogatory comments or embarrassing photos/videos on social networking sites
- Excluding individuals from online group activities related to studio work
- Impersonating someone online to cause harm
- Sharing private or sensitive information about an individual without their consent

Online harassment and cyberbullying are treated with the same seriousness as face-to-face incidents and are subject to the same procedures outlined in this policy.

Students are encouraged to keep evidence of online harassment, such as screenshots, to aid in any investigation.

Bystander Intervention

The Studio encourages all members of its community to be active bystanders in preventing and addressing bullying and harassment.

If you witness bullying or harassment:

- Speak up and tell the person to stop if it is safe to do so
- Support the person being targeted
- Document the incident if possible
- Report the incident to appropriate Studio authorities

The Studio will provide regular training on effective and safe bystander intervention techniques.



The Procedure

All complaints should be raised as soon as possible in accordance with Collective's Complaints Procedure.

Confidentiality

All complaints of bullying and harassment will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Information about the complaint will only be shared with those directly involved in the investigation process or those providing support to the involved parties.

Any breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.

Intersectionality

The Studio recognizes that individuals may experience multiple forms of discrimination or harassment based on intersecting protected characteristics.

All investigations will take into account the potential compounding effects of multiple forms of discrimination or harassment.

Support services and resolutions will be tailored to address the specific needs arising from intersectional experiences of bullying and harassment.

Restorative Practices

In appropriate cases, and with the agreement of all parties involved, the Studio may offer restorative justice approaches as an alternative or complement to formal procedures.

Restorative practices aim to:

- Repair harm caused by the bullying or harassment
- Restore relationships within the Studio community
- Increase understanding of the impact of harmful behaviours

Participation in restorative practices is voluntary and does not preclude the use of formal procedures if needed.