

Dignity at Work, Equal Opportunities and Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy

Purpose & Scope of Policy

We strive to offer an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We do not tolerate bullying or harassment. Our Dignity at Work Policy encompasses our approach to Equal Opportunities, Diversity, Bullying and Harassment and the conduct we expect within the context of our commitment to a working environment where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the Ulster Orchestra Society's success and where they can realise their potential.

Breaches of this policy may be regarded as misconduct and will be subject to investigation which could lead to disciplinary procedures with sanctions applicable up to and including dismissal.

To Whom Does This Policy Apply?

These principles extend to everyone working for or with the Ulster Orchestra Society Ltd including employees, guest players, sub-contractors, consultants, agency employees, those taking part in our programmes, visitors and guests.

Definitions

Bullying & Harassment: The Labour Relations Agency in liaison with the Equality Commission NI have suggested a definition which can apply to both bullying and harassment: "Where one person or persons engage in unwanted conduct in relation to another person which has the purpose or effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person." (From "Harassment and Bullying" issued jointly by the Equality Commission NI & Labour Relations Agency.)

Such behaviour is unacceptable:

- where it is unwanted, unreasonable or can reasonably be supposed to be offensive to the recipient;
- where it is used as the basis for an employment decision;
- where it creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment.

We condemn any offensive, malicious or insulting behaviour, particularly where this is an abuse or misuse of power through hostile behaviour intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure others.

Protected Characteristics: These are the specific grounds on which discrimination is unlawful: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage & civil partnership; ethnic or community background; pregnancy or maternity; race and nationality; religious belief or political opinion; sex; sexual orientation.

We aim to ensure that no job applicant, employee or service user receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged on the grounds of any protected characteristic.

Equality: Equal rights and treatment to all individuals.

Diversity: Valuing people as individuals.

Responsibilities

Managing Director

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the Dignity at Work policy and for ensuring compliance with the anti-discrimination laws. The Managing Director has delegated day to day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Director of Operations and the Director of Finance and Business Management.

Managers

Line Managers have particular responsibility for the practical application of this policy and ensuring that a harmonious working atmosphere is maintained. They should endeavour to address and eliminate any situation involving bullying, harassment or any other form of discrimination and should promote diversity at all times.

Employees

Each employee has personal responsibility for the practical application of this policy and to ensure that the Society achieves its objectives of ensuring equality of treatment, the promotion of diversity and the maintenance of a working environment in which everyone can contribute to our success.

The successful implementation of this policy depends on everyone treating each other with the respect and the dignity which they would rightly expect from others.

Equal Opportunities

The Employer is committed to promoting equal opportunities in the workplace. Our aim is to ensure that no job applicant, employee or service user receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics. Nor should job applicants or employees be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which are neither justified nor relevant to the occupational requirements of the role.

Human Resources procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are recruited, promoted and treated in all other ways purely on the basis of merit and ability to do the job for which they have applied.

Bullying & Harassment

The Society recognises the problems that harassment may cause at work and is committed to ensure that such unacceptable behaviour does not take place. All forms of harassment are abhorrent and will not be tolerated.

This includes Cyber bullying which is any form of bullying, harassment or victimisation online. Cyber bullying can happen in a number of ways such as the posting of inappropriate photographs; making offensive or threatening comments; or revealing sensitive personal information. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated, whether it takes place inside or outside the workplace.

Any reported or suspected incidences of harassment will be dealt with under the Society's disciplinary procedure.

Dignity at Work

We aim to support and sustain a positive working environment for all staff, free from any form of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour. This policy supports our aim to make it clear that harassment is unacceptable and that all members of the Society have a role to play in creating a thriving environment for everyone, free from harassment.

This policy provides a framework for respect and good conduct to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment and misconduct.

Conduct

As representatives of a public facing Society funded through public money and donations, we must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example. As a member of a creative community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the Society, whether inside or outside working hours. When performing or attending a public performance, it is important to remember that employees remain ambassadors for the Society and represent the Society. The reputation of the Orchestra must be preserved at all times.

Examples of required standards include the avoidance of:

- using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- any reputational risk to the Society through inappropriate behaviour or conduct
- putting yourself at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct
- conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Society or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Society
- criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable
- use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the Society or employer into disrepute
- being under the influence of alcohol or drugs at any time which may impede the ability to attend work or perform duties at a satisfactory standard or behave in an appropriate way.

and the maintenance of:

- high standards of honesty and integrity in all aspects of work and interactions
- transparent and appropriate handling and claiming of money and the use of the Society's property and facilities
- caution when using information technology and awareness of the risks to themselves and others

We cannot provide an exhaustive list of behavioural standards but have set out the above as a guide to establish general principles and appropriate behavioural patterns. Further information can be obtained through reference to the Social Networking Media policy, Anti-Bribery Policy, Drug, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy and the Disciplinary Rules and Procedures.

Complaints

Colleagues who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed Grievance procedures. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. If you believe

you are the victim of such treatment you should bring it to the attention of your Line Manager or a Director as soon as possible.

These internal procedures do not replace or detract from the right of the employees to pursue complaints under relevant legislation.

Protection from detriment

Colleagues who make complaints or participate in any investigation under this policy in good faith will be protected from any form of intimidation or victimisation and shall not be subjected to any form of detrimental treatment as a result of their involvement. Every effort will be made to ensure that employees making complaints and others, who give evidence or information in connection with the complaint, will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation may result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

Any colleague who is, after investigation, found to have provided false information or to have acted in bad faith may be subject to action under the Society's Disciplinary Procedure.