



# GARSINGTON OPERA

## AT WORMSLEY

### **Garsington Opera Dignity at work Policy to guard against harassment and bullying in the workplace**

All individuals have the right to work without fear of harassment or abuse. It is Garsington Opera's policy to make every effort to provide a working environment free of harassment and intimidation.

- All GO Company policies are to be adhered to.
- The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all employees are treated and treat others with dignity and respect, free from harassment and bullying. Everyone working for GO should ensure they understand what types of behaviour are unacceptable under this policy.
- This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs both in and out of the workplace where work colleagues meet e.g. at social functions.
- Everyone working for GO must treat colleagues and others with dignity and respect and should always consider whether their words or conduct could be offensive. Harassment still occurs where actions are perceived as offensive even if the behaviour was not intended to offend.
- GO will take allegations of harassment or bullying seriously and address them promptly and confidentially where possible. In some cases, it may amount to gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

#### **1. What is harassment?**

- Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct (whether in email or other written form) which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.
- Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories. Harassment may include for example:
  - Unwanted physical contact, even if not obviously sexual, including unnecessary touching or standing too close.
  - Verbal conduct of a sexual nature, advances, propositions.
  - Display or circulation of offensive materials, insults, ridicule or teasing
  - Action/comments which are deliberately focused on an individual because of their sex or sexual orientation.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended 'target' for example of a racist joke.

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## **2. What is bullying?**

- Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour or misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated or threatened. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal, and non-verbal conduct.

## **3. Informal steps**

- If someone working for Garsington Opera feels bullied or harassed, they should initially consider raising the problem informally with the person responsible, if they feel able. They should explain clearly to the perpetrator that their behaviour is not welcome or makes them uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, they should speak to their line manager or one of the people named in point 8, who can provide confidential advice and support in resolving the issue formally or informally, which might include talking to the perpetrator informally on their behalf.
- If informal steps have not been successful or are not possible or appropriate, the worker should follow the formal procedure set out below.

## **4. Raising a formal complaint**

- If a worker wishes to make a formal complaint about bullying or harassment, they should submit it in writing to their line manager or one of the people named in point 8, whose role is to achieve a solution wherever possible and to respect the confidentiality of all concerned.
- The worker's written complaint should set out full details of the conduct in question, including the name of the harasser or bully, the nature of the harassment or bullying, the date(s) and time(s) at which it occurred, the names of any witnesses and any action that has been taken so far to attempt to stop it from occurring.
- The manager receiving the formal complaint will consult with senior management.

## **5. Formal investigations**

- GO will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. Individuals not involved in the complaint or the investigation will not be told about it. The investigation will be conducted by someone with no prior involvement in the complaint. The investigation will be thorough, impartial and objective, and carried out with sensitivity and due respect for the rights of all parties concerned.
- The Company will arrange a meeting with the worker so that they can give their account of events. The worker has the right to be accompanied by a colleague of their choice, who must respect the confidentiality of the investigation. The worker will be given a provisional timetable for the investigation. The investigator will arrange further meetings with the worker as appropriate throughout the investigation.
- The Company may consider suspending the perpetrator or may make other temporary changes to working arrangements pending the outcome of the investigation, if circumstances require. The investigator will also meet with the alleged harasser or bully to hear their account of events. They have a right to be told the details of the allegations against them, so that they can respond.
- It may be necessary to interview witnesses to any of the incidents mentioned in a complaint. If so, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.
- At the end of the investigation, the senior manager will arrange a meeting with the worker, usually within a week of receiving the report, in order to discuss the outcome and what action, if any, is going to be taken.

## **6. Action following the investigation**

- If the senior manager considers that harassment or bullying has occurred, prompt action will be taken to address it. Whether or not a complaint is upheld, the Company will consider how best to manage the ongoing working relationship between the worker and the alleged harasser or bully.

## **7. Confidentiality and data protection**

- Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. Everyone involved in the operation of the policy, whether making a complaint or involved in any investigation, is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis.

## **8. Who to contact?**

- GO recognises the sensitive nature of complaints and all discussions will be in confidence.
- Anyone affected by bullying or harassment can speak to their line manager or one of the following people:

Company Manager (Hannah Barkley), Event Manager (Angus Boyd-Heron), Director of Artistic Administration (Laura Canning), Technical Director (Steve Hawkins), Office Manager (Penny Gilbert).

These people will offer support and will decide who else it is appropriate to involve, depending on the nature of the complaint.

- If you feel you would prefer an informal confidential conversation, please feel free to contact Dr Alexandra Threlfall on [xanholloway@gmail.com](mailto:xanholloway@gmail.com) mobile 07775 891384. She has no formal connection to Garsington Opera but is a G.P and has agreed to be a point of contact should you wish to discuss anything and would feel more comfortable speaking to someone outside Garsington Opera. Dr Threlfall will maintain confidentiality unless you give your permission for her to speak to senior management on your behalf.

**Penny Gilbert, Office Manager**

**07 April 2022**