



# Behaviour & Disciplinary Policy

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## 1. OVERVIEW

**Maidenhead Musical Comedy Society ("MMCS")** is committed to providing a creative working environment, free from poor behaviour, including harassment and bullying, and ensuring all officers, volunteers, visitors, audience members (and any staff and freelancers) are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect.

This policy covers the behaviours we expect from all participants in MMCS activities, as well as setting out how the Society will deal with issues should they occur.

## 2. EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS

All members and participants involved in MMCS activities are expected to treat all people with dignity and respect; this includes not only fellow cast members or crew, but any other member of the society or public.

Whilst attending an activity, including rehearsals and performances, all individuals are seen to be representing the Society and must conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the society into disrepute.

Behaviours which will not be tolerated by the Society include, but are not limited to:

- Alcohol and / or substance abuse
- Breaches of the societies Child Protection Policy
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Not complying with health and safety advice, or the instructions of the society

## 3. Alcohol / Substance Abuse

All participants are expected to be in full control of their actions when taking part in an MMCS activity. This is especially important during performances, where the theatrical environment poses an increased number of health and safety issues.

Any participant who is deemed to not be in control of their actions through the consumption of alcohol will be suspended pending disciplinary proceedings (see later in this policy for details).

The taking of illegal drugs or substances is prohibited by the society. Anyone confirmed to be attending an MMCS activity while under the influence of illegal drugs will again be suspended pending disciplinary proceedings.

## **4. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

MMCS has a Child Protection Policy in place to ensure any child or young person taking part in an MMCS activity is kept safe.

One key aspect of the Child Protection Policy is that adult participants must maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children. This is especially important during rehearsals when chaperones need not be employed.

Adults also must only make physical contact with children when it is absolutely necessary - for example, where it is requested by the director to convey the script - and only where the consent of the child has been sought and gained prior to any physical contact, and the purpose of the contact made clear.

Any members who breach the above, or any other part of the societies Child Protection Policy, will be suspended immediately pending disciplinary proceedings.

## **5. HARASSMENT**

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that 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.

It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, 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 conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- offensive emails, text messages or social media content; or
- mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

## **6. BULLYING**

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include, for example:

- physical or psychological threats;
- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision; or
- inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance.

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

## **7. HEALTH & SAFETY ADVICE & INSTRUCTIONS**

When taking part in an MMCS activity you will often be given instructions; for example, by a director, technician or stage manager. These instructions will often be with regards to health and safety, and are designed to ensure your safety and the safety of others around you.

Where any individual does not follow clear instructions provided by the society, and this is deemed to have either posed, or had the potential to pose a danger to any other member or participant in a society activity, then that individual will be suspended pending a disciplinary process.

## **8. IF YOU'RE BEING HARASSED OR BULLIED**

If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to a Committee Member, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.

If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally by contacting the Chairman.

## **9. IF YOU WITNESS POOR BEHAVIOUR, BULLYING OR HARASSMENT**

If you witness a member or participant behaving in a manner which you feel breaches this policy, including where you believe someone else is being bullied or harassed, then where you feel able to you can raise this with the individual. Where this is not possible, then you should speak to a Committee Member as soon as possible.

Children and young people may be more susceptible to being bullied and less likely to come forward. A young person may indicate signs they are being bullied or harassed and it is important adults are aware of some of the signs a young person may demonstrate.

They may:

- be frightened of walking to or from a youth activity;
- not want to use public transport;
- change their usual routine;
- become withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- start stammering;
- be frightened to say what is wrong; or
- attempt self-harm, or threaten suicide or run away.

If a young person displays any of these signs, a Committee Member should be made aware so they can investigate.

## **10. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS**

We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint, where possible. 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. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person accused during the investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, we will inform you of our decision. We will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.

## **11. PROTECTION & SUPPORT FOR THOSE INVOLVED**

Anyone who makes complaints or who participates in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result.

## **12. RECORD KEEPING**

Information about an investigation may be placed in MMCS's records, along with a note of the outcome and of any documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.