



Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society

DIGNITY AT THE SOCIETY

CAODS Executive Committee

DIGNITY AT THE SOCIETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

PURPOSE, SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

The aim of this policy and procedure is to secure your dignity whilst at CHELMSFORD AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY (CAODS). To do this, the policy sets out definitions of behaviours that are unacceptable, and a procedure for dealing with them.

As part of its overall commitment to equality and diversity, CAODS is fully committed to promoting a fair and open environment, where all members are treated with respect and dignity, where no-one feels threatened or intimidated for any reason, and where everyone therefore will work effectively to achieve the Society's aims.

All members must comply with this policy, and all are protected by it.

- **Harassment** is any action, conduct or behaviour that you, or a group of members, find unwelcome, intimidating, upsetting, offensive, embarrassing or humiliating. It can be open or covert. It is important to be aware that it is the impact of the action, conduct or behaviour which is relevant, and not just the motive or intent behind it.
- **Bullying** is any persistent behaviour, action, or conduct, directed against you or others, which is intimidating, offensive or abusive, and which undermines your confidence and self-esteem.

It is possible for harassment and bullying to happen to anyone and, likewise, it can be committed by anyone, regardless of their position at CAODS.

It is normally characterised by more than one incident of unacceptable behaviour, but in some circumstances just one instance may constitute harassment or bullying if it is serious.

Some examples of harassment are given below but many forms of unwanted behaviour, action or conduct can constitute harassment:

- Verbal and written harassment through jokes, racist/sexist/ageist remarks, offensive language, gossip and slander, threats, letters, social media
- Visual displays or posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags or emblems, or any other offensive material
- Being isolated, facing a lack of co-operation at the society and exclusion from social activities
- Coercion, including pressure for sexual favours, pressure to participate in political/religious or other groups
- Intrusion by pestering, spying following etc

It is important to emphasise that harassment results from such behaviour, conduct or action if it is unwanted and should not be confused with any such behaviour that is accepted by the individual.

Members are also protected from harassment by third parties, i.e. anyone they come into contact with during their involvement in CAODS business that is not a member of the CAODS. Any incidents should be reported immediately to the Executive Committee or Chairman or President.

Some examples of bullying are set out below:

- Verbal or physical threats or intimidation
- Humiliating someone in front of others
- Unjustified, persistent criticism
- Offensive or abusive personal remarks
- Regularly isolating or excluding someone
- Not giving credit where it is due on an ongoing basis
- Claiming credit for someone else's effort
- Belittling someone's opinion
- Making false allegations
- Monitoring a person's efforts unnecessarily and intrusively
- Removing areas of responsibility without justification
- Imposing unfair sanctions

It is also important to state what does not constitute bullying or harassment;

Legitimate, constructive, and fair criticism of a member's performance or behaviour at CAODS, by CAODS' Employees or team members e.g. Production Assistant and Dance Captain, is not bullying or harassment.

The making of false or malicious complaints of bullying or harassment will be regarded as a serious disciplinary offence.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Members' Rights

You have the right to be in an environment that is free from any form of harassment or bullying. CAODS fully recognises your right to complain about harassment or bullying if it occurs, and all complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially as detailed in the CAODS Grievance Procedure and the CAODS Disciplinary Procedure.

The Chairman and Committee will make every effort to ensure that those making complaints, and those giving evidence or information in connection with the complaint, will be treated with respect and understanding and not singled out or victimised.

Member/Employees/Committee Member Responsibilities

It is important that everyone takes responsibility to ensure that the environment at CAODS is one in which the dignity of all is respected. It is essential that everyone complies with this policy and ensures that their behaviour does not cause offence. You can help to discourage harassment and bullying by making it clear that you find such behaviour unacceptable, and by supporting members who suffer such treatment and are considering making a complaint.

It is part of the responsibilities of all members/employees/committee to implement this policy by making every effort to ensure that harassment and bullying do not occur, particularly in their own productions. If harassment or bullying does occur, employees/members must deal effectively with the situation by following the CAODS Grievance Procedure. These are not problems that will

disappear on their own and they should be dealt with quickly in order to avoid them turning into major problems; members/employees/committee members are responsible for the following:

1. Being responsive and supportive to any member who makes an allegation of harassment or bullying, provide clear advice on the procedure, and maintain confidentiality as appropriate.
2. Set a good example by treating all members and related contacts with dignity and respect.
3. Be alert to unacceptable behaviour and take appropriate action promptly.
4. Ensure that members know how to raise harassment and bullying problems.

Members/employees/committee should be sensitive to the fact that the symptoms of harassment and bullying can be seen in the following behaviours of members: fear, stress, anxiety, and reduced attendance.

Where members/employees/committee become aware of bullying or harassment, either through observation or approach from another member, they have a responsibility to inform the Executive Committee or Chairman or Secretary who will advise on next steps. Organisations have a duty of care to deal appropriately with this type of behaviour.

The Executive Committee's Responsibilities

It is the Executive Committee's responsibility to ensure that it enables all complaints of harassment or bullying to be dealt with promptly, seriously, and confidentially.

The Executive Committee will monitor any recorded incidents of harassment and bullying and will review the effectiveness of this policy at any time.

The President's Responsibilities

The President of CAODS may be available, by invitation, to mediate in any formal action but will be included in all instances where the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer of the Executive Committee is alleged to have breached this policy.

PROCEDURE

We recognise that harassment and bullying are sensitive areas, where strict guidelines are not always appropriate for the person on the receiving end. The objective with all forms of action is to stop the unacceptable behaviour, conduct or action. In order for this to happen, the person causing offence needs to be made aware that they need to stop the behaviour.

If you feel able to do so, you should consider raising the matter with the person concerned in the first instance. Where bullying is the problem, pointing out that the person's conduct, behaviour, or action is causing a personal concern to you, may be sufficient to resolve the situation. With harassment, it is important that you are clear with the person, by explaining that what they are doing is unwelcome and should be stopped.

If a situation is difficult or embarrassing, you may wish to seek informal help or make a formal complaint. The procedure going forward from this point is detailed in the CAODS Grievance Procedure.

If the allegations relate to a member of the Executive Committee, members may address the issue to the President or Chairman or Secretary.

December 2022

This procedure has been put in place by the Executive Committee and will be regularly reviewed or may be amended at any time by the Executive Committee