Ceddesfeld Hall home of the SCA

ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Sedgefield Arts, Recreation and Community Association CIO (SCA) are committed to having an organisation which is free from harassment and bullying, and to ensuring that all members, employees, contractors and others who come into contact with us in the course of our work are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital or family status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, creed, culture, religion or belief, age or disability.

This policy and procedure is intended to support this commitment in practice and to provide guidance to staff on how to deal with concerns of bullying or harassment.

2. POLICY

- SCA will not tolerate bullying or harassment, whether the conduct is a one-off act or a repeated course of conduct, and whether done purposefully or not. Neither will we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. Retaliation or victimisation will also constitute an offence, which may in appropriate circumstances lead to exclusion from all SCA activities. If a court or tribunal finds that someone has bullied or harassed someone, in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.
- We will take appropriate action if any of our members, employees or contractors are bullied or harassed by our stakeholders or suppliers.
- Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. If, after an investigation, we decide that an employee has harassed or bullied another employee or contractor, then the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- Employees and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.
- False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Staff and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. False allegations made in bad faith will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

3. WHAT TYPE OF TREATMENT AMOUNTS TO BULLYING OR HARASSMENT?

- Bullying or harassment is something that has happened that is unwelcome, unwarranted and causes a detrimental effect. If anyone complains they are being bullied or harassed, then they have a grievance which must be dealt with regardless of whether or not their complaint accords with a standard definition.
- For further information, please refer to ACAS guidance.
- It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable. Everyone must therefore treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity.
- Bullying does not include appropriate criticism of behaviour or proper performance management.

4. REPORTING CONCERNS

- If you witness an incident you believe to harassment or bullying you should report the incident in confidence to SCA Secretary. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.
- If you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a stakeholder or supplier (as opposed to a colleague) i.e.by someone with whom you come into contact, please raise this with SCA Secretary. We will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.
- If you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague, another employee or contractor, there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal.

4.1 Informal Resolution

- If you are being bullied or harassed by another member, employee or contractor, you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to our policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask your manager or a colleague to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).
- If the above approach does not work or if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied by a Trustee or member of your section, you should raise the issue with the SCA Secretary or another member of the Trustee board. They will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by:
    - telling the alleged perpetrator(s), without prejudging the matter, that there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a fellow employee
    - that such behaviour is contrary to our policy
    - that the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious disciplinary offence.

- It may be possible for the Secretary or designated Trustee to have this conversation with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. They will also stress that the conversation is confidential.
- In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The Trustee responsible will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.
- If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to disciplinary sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as a serious allegation of sexual or racial harassment or in cases where a problem has happened before) we may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. We will consult with you before taking this step.

4.2 Raising a formal complaint

- If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about the harassment or bullying to Secretary or member of the Trustee board. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to action against the perpetrator(s).
- We will first investigate the complaint. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details (if not already provided).
    - The name of the alleged perpetrator(s)
    - The nature of the harassment or bullying
    - The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred
    - The names of any witnesses
    - Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally
- The alleged perpetrator(s) would need to be told your name and the details of your complaint in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. Where you and the alleged

perpetrator(s) operate in proximity to each other, we will consider whether it is appropriate to separate you while the matter is being investigated.

- After the investigation, we will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation. At the meeting, you may be accompanied by a fellow member.
- After the meeting (and normally within five working days) we will write to you to inform you of our decision and to notify you of your right to appeal to the Trustee Board Chair, if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with our decision. You should submit your appeal within five working days of receiving written confirmation of our decision. If you submit an appeal, you will be invited to attend a meeting to consider it. Once again you may be accompanied by a fellow member or an officer of your Section. We will write to you afterwards to confirm our final decision.

4.3 Use of the disciplinary procedure

- Harassment and bullying constitute serious misconduct. If, at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and a disciplinary offence might have been committed, we will instigate our disciplinary procedure.
- Any member is found to have harassed or bullied a colleague will be liable to disciplinary action up to and including summary exclusion.

Signed on behalf of SCA.....Wendy R Gill.....

This Policy was adopted on:…16/7/26…….....

This Policy will be reviewed by:31/7/28…… …….....

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