

Worcester Philharmonic Orchestra

Bullying and Harassment Policy

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all personnel and members of Worcester Philharmonic Orchestra are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect, free from harassment and bullying. All personnel, members and visitors should take the time to ensure they understand what types of behaviour are unacceptable under this policy.

This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs both during and outside of orchestral rehearsals, concerts and orchestra-related social functions. It covers bullying and harassment by any personnel or member and also by third parties who may have reason to interact with the orchestra such as, but not limited to, deputising instrumentalists.

Worcester Philharmonic Orchestra is committed to providing an environment free from bullying and harassment. If you experience any form of bullying or harassment you should immediately report it to any member of the orchestra committee. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

This policy refers to the conduct and actions of **Personnel** these being paid and unpaid people who are in a position of leadership and management of Worcester Philharmonic Orchestra. This policy also applies to **Members** and this term refers to all participants in Worcester Philharmonic Orchestra whether paying a subscription or not, those deputising for members, consultants, volunteers, contractors.

2. Basis in law

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits harassment related to gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or age. Harassment is unlawful under equality laws. Harassment and bullying may also be civil or criminal offences and may contravene health and safety law.

3. Clarification of terms

3.1 What is 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. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct.

3.2 Bullying may include, by way of example but not limited to:

- Verbal abuse - shouting at, being sarcastic towards, ridiculing or demeaning others. Unjustified, persistent criticism or rumour spreading, belittling someone else's opinion. Inappropriate and/or derogatory remarks about someone's performance.
- Inequitable treatment.
- Physical or psychological abuse.
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision.
- Abuse of authority or power by those in positions of seniority or deliberately excluding someone from meetings or communications without good reason.
- Mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability; racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender.

- Threatening to out someone's sexual orientation; or ignoring or shunning someone, for example, by deliberately excluding them from a conversation or a orchestral social activity.

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a player's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to players in the course of their orchestral membership, will not amount to bullying on their own.

4. Clarification of terms – What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It can include violating a person's physical or psychological space which results in feelings of discomfort, distress and lack of safety. 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 the victim's gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, or age. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

4.1. Harassment may include, for example but not limited to:

- Unsolicited physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing, grabbing, brushing past someone, invading their personal space, and more serious forms of physical or sexual assault.
- Unsolicited and unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless).
- Unsolicited communications, in any format, not pertaining to orchestral business, or utilising orchestral business as a plausible excuse for such communication.
- Unsolicited and persistent communications.
- Continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome.
- Sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including e-mails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet).
- Offensive or intimidating comments or gestures, or insensitive jokes or pranks.

5. Bullying or harassment can take place:

- in person
- by letter
- by email
- by phone
- online or via social media

6. Procedures for dealing with concerns of bullying or harassment

If you report an instance of bullying or harassment the committee will conduct an investigation using the following procedures:

- Complaints must be recorded in writing to the Chair of the Committee.
- The Committee will inform all parties involved of the reported bullying or harassment complaint as soon as possible.
- Arrange separate meetings with both parties within 10 days (or if not possible as soon as it can be arranged) of the reported incident. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.
- Both parties should be given the chance to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.
- Meetings will be attended by the Chair and at least two other committee members.

- All parties will also be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.

7. Resolution and disciplinary action

Once an investigation has taken place the committee will decide on next steps, which will be communicated in writing to all parties within five working days. If bullying or harassment is found to have taken place, any resolution or decision will be taken in the best interests of the person who has suffered the bullying or harassment. Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the Worcester Philharmonic Orchestra Constitution and may result in dismissal of personnel or result in a membership being terminated. A repeat offence will result in immediate dismissal in the case of personnel and immediate and permanent termination of membership for a member. The incident can also be escalated by raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences.

8. Connected policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies pertaining to the expectations of members including:

- Constitution of the orchestra
- Safeguarding Policy

Date Agreed: 19/3/25
Date of Review: 19/3/27
Authorised by: Colin Harnett
Position: Secretary