

**Dignity at Work Policy and**

**Code of Procedures**

**(required under Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005)**

## **Dignity at Work Charter**

### **United Arts Club**

#### **Adopts the**

### **HSA Dignity in the Workplace Charter**

*The United Arts Club commit ourselves to working together to maintain a workplace environment that encourages and supports the right to dignity at work. The members of the United Arts Club, their guests and all who work here are expected to respect the right of each individual to dignity in their working life. All will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity.*

*Bullying in any form is not accepted by us and will not be tolerated. Our policies and procedures will underpin the principles and objectives of this Charter.*

*All individuals, whether directly employed or contracted by us, have a duty and a responsibility to uphold this Dignity at Work Charter.*

### **Dignity in the Workplace Policy and Procedures**

#### **Introduction:**

A core employment value is the commitment to ensuring that each individual is guaranteed a working environment where s/he may expect to be treated with dignity both by management and work colleagues. This approach is a positive emphasis on the importance of each individual and the contribution s/he makes to the success of the workplace. It guarantees the optimal working conditions that allow individuals to freely maximise their role in the workforce. Sound management ethos is based on providing leadership that encourages individuals in this regard. This is best achieved in the club through the creation and maintenance of a positive working environment.

Integral to this employment value and in particular to the principle of mutual respect is the commitment to provide a workplace free from bullying. It is in such a context that the philosophy and policy statement will be realised.

#### **Objectives of Dignity at Work Policy**

- To create and maintain a positive working environment in the United Arts Club where the right of each individual to dignity at work is recognised and protected.

- To ensure that all are aware of and committed to the principles set out in this policy.

The United Arts Club is committed to providing all employees with an environment that is free from any form of workplace bullying.

The purpose of this document is to outline the Club's policy and procedures in relation to workplace bullying.

A complaint of workplace bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly and in accordance with due process.

In approving this policy, the club has agreed that:

- It be brought to the attention of all Staff
- All Staff be asked to co-operate in its implementation

## **The Policy**

The objective of the Club's policy is to eliminate workplace bullying and to contribute to a supportive environment where the staff has the right to carry out the work of the United Arts Club.

The Policy guarantees that all complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly, and that all parties involved will be treated with respect.

Staff will be protected from victimisation or discrimination for assisting in an investigation. Victimisation as a result of a member of Staff raising a complaint will not be tolerated.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Definition of Bullying:**

Workplace bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. **An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but as a once off incident is not considered to be bullying.**

(Codes of Practice 2002 under the Industrial Relations Act and the Health and Safety at Work Act)

### **Harassment and Sexual Harassment:**

The Equality Act 1998 (Code of Practice) (Harassment) Order 2012 specifically deals with harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace. The Code aims to give practical guidance and advice.

Harassment that is based on the following grounds - Gender, Age, Civil Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Race, Religion or membership of the Traveller Community is a form of discrimination in relation to conditions of employment

### **Harassment:**

Harassment is defined in Section 14A(7) of the Employment Equality Act as any form of unwanted conduct has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual Harassment is defined in Section 14(A)(7) of the Employment Equality Act as any form of verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display, or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

### **What Constitutes 'Unacceptable Behaviour'/ Workplace Bullying?**

Bullying can take a number of forms. Under the Health and Safety Act there is a requirement that personnel are consulted in respect of acceptable/unacceptable behaviour and that through this consultation process, the staff will have ownership of the policy as it relates to their organization.

A pattern of the following behaviours are examples of types of bullying:

- Exclusion with negative consequences
- Verbal abuse/insults
- Physical abuse
- Being treated less favourably than colleagues
- Shouting
- Intrusion – pestering, spying or stalking
- Menacing behaviour
- Intimidation
- Aggression
- Undermining behaviour
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Humiliation
- Withholding work-related information
- Setting unreasonable and unrealistic targets
- Blame for things beyond the person's control
- Unequal treatment

This list is not exhaustive.

### **What are the Effects of Bullying?**

International research shows that the effects may be physiological, psychological and behavioral.

*Effects on the individual:* research shows that individuals who are continually bullied lose self-confidence as self-esteem is eroded and they are at an increased risk of suffering stress. There may be serious effects on health and the person's career may be adversely affected.

*Effects on the Organisation:* individuals who are bullied will find it difficult if not impossible to give their best in the workplace. Among the well-documented effects are increased sickness/absenteeism, low morale, a tense atmosphere, cliques or factions.

### **Why might an individual be reluctant to take action?**

Because the particular workplace culture passively supports bullying i.e. staff in general are unaware of the seriousness of bullying.

Because of fear that the complaint may not be taken seriously.

Because s/he may be seen as unable for the job or/and a weak person.

If the alleged bully is a person in authority, there may be the fear management will support the alleged perpetrator(s).

Because making a complaint could result in further intimidation and increased bullying.

Because there are no witnesses to the bullying and it would be one person's word against another

Because s/he might be seen to be lacking in credibility or/and personal status

Where there are witnesses, these might be unwilling to come forward because they are afraid of being branded troublemakers

### **What can I do to ensure that workplace bullying does not occur in this club?**

By being familiar with the policy.

By participating in in-service with respect to dignity at work.

By engaging in consultation with respect to the development and review of the dignity in the workplace policy.

By being aware and educated about workplace bullying.

### **What can I do to stop people bullying me?**

Tell them it has to stop! This may be more difficult for some individuals than for others. It is inappropriate for work colleagues to act out their behaviour in an unacceptable manner. If you find it impossible or difficult to make an approach, tell somebody – the Honorary Secretary, a Contact Person, a member of the UAC Committee, or other...GET HELP AND SUPPORT.

### **What may be the consequences of not dealing with workplace bullying?**

There are consequences for the individuals who perceive themselves to be targets of bullying behaviour, for the alleged perpetrators(s), for organisational culture/ethos and for the United Arts Club.

### **Are there performance criteria by which the success of the Policy might be judged?**

- The existence of a policy on Dignity in the Workplace and the prevention of workplace bullying forms part of health, safety and welfare at work
- Awareness/availability of Policy
- Existence of Charter in a visible place: Dignity in the Workplace
- Dignity in the Workplace as well as inappropriate/bullying behaviour are defined in the Board Policy
- Employee's right to complain is respected Informal resolution of complaints is encouraged.

### **Procedures for dealing with workplace bullying**

There are two stages for dealing with cases of alleged bullying:

Stage 1: Informal and

Stage 2 Formal.

#### **Stage 1. Informal procedure:**

Sometimes individuals may be unaware of the negative effects of their behaviour on other adults in the workplace. Such individuals may simply need to be told. Thus, at times incidents of bullying can be handled effectively in an informal way under Stage One. If an incident occurs that is offensive, it may be sufficient to explain clearly to the offender that the behaviour is unacceptable. If the circumstances are too difficult or embarrassing for an individual, support may be sought from another colleague, a contact person, staff representative.

A complainant may decide, for whatever reason, to bypass the informal procedure and proceed to Stage Two.

The following section outlines the procedures to be followed with respect to a complaint.

## **Stage 2: Formal Procedure**

If an informal approach is inappropriate or if after the informal stage, the bullying persists, the following formal procedures should be invoked:-

- a. The complainant should make a formal complaint in writing to the Hon Secretary of the United Arts Club.
- b. The alleged perpetrator(s) should be notified in writing that an allegation of bullying has been made against them. They should be given a copy of the complainant's statement and advised that they shall be afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the allegation(s) in writing.
- c. The complaint should be subject to an initial examination by a designated member of management, who can be considered impartial, with a view to determining an appropriate course of action. An appropriate course of action at this stage, for example, could be exploring a mediated solution which would require the agreement of all parties, or a view that the issue can be resolved informally. Should either of these approaches be deemed inappropriate or inconclusive, a formal investigation of the complaint should take place with a view to determining the facts and the validity or otherwise of the allegation(s).

### **Investigation**

- d. The investigation should be conducted by either a designated member or members of management or, if deemed appropriate, an agreed third party. The investigation should be conducted thoroughly, objectively, with sensitivity, utmost confidentiality, and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator(s).
- e. The investigation should be governed by terms of reference, preferably agreed between the parties in advance.
- f. The investigator(s) should meet with the complainant and alleged perpetrator(s) and any witness or relevant persons on an individual confidential basis with a view to establishing the facts surrounding the allegation(s). Both the complainant and alleged perpetrator(s) may be accompanied by a work colleague or employee/trade union representative or legal representative if so desired.
- g. Every effort should be made to carry out and complete the investigation as quickly as possible and preferably within an agreed timeframe. On completion of the investigation, the investigator(s) should submit a written report to the Committee of the United Arts Club containing the findings of the investigation.
- h. The complainant and the alleged perpetrator(s) should be informed in writing of the findings of the investigation.

- i. Both parties should be given the opportunity to comment on the findings before any action is decided upon by the Committee. The method of communicating the commentary may be in writing and/or by the individuals presenting at a Committee meeting.

### **Outcome**

- j. Should the Committee decide that the complaint is well founded, the alleged perpetrator(s) should be given a formal interview to determine an appropriate course of action. Such action could, for example, involve counselling and/or monitoring or progressing the issue through the disciplinary and grievance procedure of the employment.

### **3. Confidentiality**

All individuals involved in the procedures referred to above should maintain absolute confidentiality on the subject. Failure to adhere to this is a serious disciplinary matter.

### **4. At all stages of the process a clear record should be kept of:**

- the investigation undertaken.
- all communications to/by the complainant
- the subject of the complaint
- the steps and all the decisions taken

The above records should be held by the Honorary Secretary of the UAC in a confidential manner in a secure place.

Where a complaint has been rejected or has not been upheld, a statement to that effect shall conclude the record in the personnel file of the complainant. All records in relation to a rejected/not upheld complaint shall be removed from the personnel file of the subject of the complaint. A statement of the outcome of the investigation will conclude all other files. Where a statement of the outcome of the investigation confirms the allegation to be true then the statement of outcome shall be placed on the file/record of the person against whom the investigation upheld the complaint.

### **5. Protection and Support**

Staff shall be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Retaliation against a member of staff for complaining about bullying/harassment is considered a disciplinary offence. A malicious complaint made by a staff member will be treated as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.

### **6. Assistance in the event of Harassment**

Every effort will be made to assist if they so wish, persons who are victims of bullying/harassment to deal with the problem and where it is requested, the services of a counsellor will be made available by the Committee of the United Arts Club. Persons who bully/harass others may be requested to attend counselling to prevent further incidences of harassment occurring. Access to such counselling may be made available by the United Arts Club.

**7. Training/Awareness**

It is considered that all personnel who have a role in either the informal or formal procedure – e.g. designated members of management, worker representatives, union representatives etc- should be made aware of appropriate policies and procedures which should, if possible, include appropriate training,

**The policy is subject to periodic review.**

**Signed:** .....

**(for and on behalf of the United Arts Club)**

**Date:** .....