

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Complicité is committed to providing a safe, healthy and fair environment free from unacceptable behaviour including bullying, harassment and victimisation. All employees are required to treat each other, along with partners, audiences, participants and anyone else they come into contact with through their work, with dignity and respect. While our creative process may at times require the robust exchange of differing views, by fostering and maintaining a culture of courtesy and professionalism, we strengthen freedom of thought and expression by ensuring that all feel able to express their perspectives safely and clearly.

The Board of Trustees is committed to an open and honest culture, ensuring that employees have access to the support they need. We will not tolerate any form of unacceptable behaviour and commit to addressing concerns raised in line with this policy with care and expediency.

This policy applies to all employees, including directors and staff working full-time or part-time and those employed on a temporary basis (actors, creative teams and freelancers), both on and off the premises.

This policy outlines our expectations for how employees must behave in their work for Complicité and sets out the framework for employees to raise concerns regarding other employees. External parties with concerns regarding a breach of this Dignity at Work Policy should refer to Complicité's Complaints Policy & Procedure (available at www.complicite.org).

Complicité employees failing to fulfil their responsibility under this policy may face disciplinary action. Single, serious offences or repeated breaches of this policy may result in dismissal under Complicité's Disciplinary Procedure.

This policy may be updated in line with legislation or where there are any changes to Complicité policy.

2. BEHAVIOUR

All Complicité employees are expected to:

- treat all others with dignity and respect
- conduct themselves professionally
- communicate courteously
- be proactive in creating a positive and supportive working atmosphere
- be proactive in developing and maintaining effective working relationships
- take appropriate action where there are difficulties in working relationships
- avoid all actions that may be considered unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, harassment or victimisation

3. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Unacceptable Behaviour is behaviour that is abusive, threatening or deliberately offensive. Complicité defines behaviour as unacceptable if it has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour may include:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour

- circulating information that is critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- unfair treatment
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected
- making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities

Unacceptable behaviour may constitute a pattern of repeated behaviours in which individual incidents are borderline, but which taken together, breach the bounds of acceptability. The behaviour does not need to be ongoing; a single event of unreasonable behaviour is enough for an employee to make a complaint.

Bullying is the use of personal strength or the power to coerce through fear or intimidation, not necessarily from someone in a position of authority. Bullying may be physical, verbal or non-verbal. It can include conduct that is not face-to-face, including via text message, email and social media.

Harassment, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 also makes harassment potentially a criminal offence and gives the harassed party the right to legal redress.

Victimisation is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as occurring when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so.

Victimisation can be described as subjecting an employee to unfavourable treatment because in good faith they have:

- taken out court proceedings under the Equality Act, other similar legislation or they have indicated their intention to do so

- given evidence or information in connection with the proceedings
- done any other thing for the purposes or in connection with the Equality Act
- participated in an investigation of a complaint, or participated in any disciplinary hearing arising from an investigation
- alleged that a person has harassed or unlawfully discriminated against them
- made a relevant pay disclosure

Bullying, harassment and victimisation are always unacceptable behaviour.

4. DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Informal Action

Every effort should be made to use informal means to stop the perceived offensive behaviour. You should make a note of any incidents, so that you are clear about what happened, when, where, and whether anyone else was there. You can choose the following options:

- Talk to the person who is bullying or harassing you. Tell them about the behaviour that is causing you distress, and ask for it to stop. In some cases, the person may be unaware that their behaviour is inappropriate, or it may be that their words or actions have been misinterpreted.
- Discuss the matter with your line manager who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue.
- Raising a concern – please see below.

Making a complaint

If you do not feel that informal steps are appropriate, or they have been unsuccessful, or the behaviour is of a more serious nature, you may decide to make a formal complaint. Complicité's Complaints Policy and Procedure can be found at complicite.org.

Raising a concern

A concern is distinct from a complaint because, whereas a complaint typically relates to an experience that directly impacts the person complaining, a concern may be raised about any risk, malpractice or wrongdoing that an employee thinks is harming the service Complicité delivers, regardless of whether it impacts them directly. All employees have the right and the duty to raise their concerns and do not need to wait for proof. Complicité would like employees to raise the matter while it is still a concern. It does not matter if they turn out to be mistaken, so long as the employee is genuinely troubled and there is no malicious intent.

The process for raising a concern is as follows:

1. Please raise the concern with your line manager.
2. Please explain as fully as you can the information or circumstances that gave rise to your concern, including:
 - a. Dates, times and location of the matter of concern
 - b. The name of the person concerned
 - c. Details of other employees who were present and may have been witnesses; and
 - d. How you think the matter might be best resolved
3. Once you have raised the concern with your line manager a meeting will be arranged with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern and, if necessary, an investigation will follow.
4. The line manager will take every possible step to maintain anonymity of the employee who has made the allegation of wrongdoing.
5. The employee who has raised the issue will be kept informed of any investigation that is taking place. The employee will be informed of the outcome of the investigation. It might not always be appropriate to tell the employee the detail of any action that is taken, but the employee will be informed if action is taken.
6. If the employee does not feel that approaching their line manager is appropriate then they should talk to a Board Member or the Chair of the Board.
7. The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for ensuring that cases are dealt with appropriately.

Any employee who acts under the Public Disclosure Act 1998 will be protected from any detriment in relation to any allegations that are made.

5. MANAGERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers have a particular responsibility for making sure that this policy is implemented by communicating the policy and resolving any instances of unacceptable behaviour quickly and confidentially, following the company's Complaints and/or Disciplinary Procedures if necessary.

6. MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS

Not every allegation of unacceptable behaviour is well-founded. Malicious allegations (i.e. a complaint with no basis and made with the intention of causing harm) may give grounds for disciplinary proceedings against the complainant, but this will not include ill-founded allegations which were nonetheless made in good faith.

7. REVIEWING THE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed in September 2025 or earlier if new legislation, or other changes, demand.