

Royal Northern College of Music
Dignity at Work
Policy & Procedure
Department: Human Resources
Document owner: Head of Human Resources
Approval Committee: HR Committee
Revised: January 2019
Period of Approval: 3 Years
Review Date: January 2022

1 Purpose

The College is committed to creating a work environment free of harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

The College operates a policy of zero tolerance towards any form of bullying and harassment and staff found guilty of bullying or harassment may face disciplinary penalties, up to and including dismissal. All allegations of bullying or harassment will be investigated and, if appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

The College will also not tolerate victimisation of a person for making allegations of bullying and harassment in good faith or supporting someone to make such a complaint. The policy covers bullying and harassment in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, e.g. work-related social events such as a leaving party, conference or training event.

2 Objectives

The main objectives of this policy are to: -

- Communicate and explain the terms bullying and harassment;
- Reiterate that, within the College, bullying or harassment is not acceptable in any form and will not be tolerated;
- Advise that bullying or harassment by an individual could be grounds for disciplinary action and could result in dismissal;
- Outline the procedure that should be followed if individuals feel that they are a victim of bullying or harassment in the workplace.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Board of Governors

The College Board of Governors has an overall responsibility for ensuring that all staff are treated with dignity and respect. In practical terms, all members of the College have a responsibility to comply with the policy and behave in a way that is not offensive to others.

3.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum is responsible for developing equality and diversity-related policies, procedures and guidance, ensuring the College meets legislative requirements and fostering a tolerant and inclusive working and learning environment and public performance venue.

3.3 Managers / Heads of Schools

Managers have both a right and a responsibility to discharge their managerial duties. In so doing, they may need to adopt an assertive style but they should take care not to demean, offend or intimidate others. There should be a clear focus on integrity, fairness and transparency in all staff dealings.

Managers are responsible for setting, and adhering to, acceptable and professional standards of behaviour that ensure all staff are treated with dignity and respect. They should ensure that staff know about the Dignity at Work Policy and know how to raise harassment or bullying issues.

3.4 Staff

All Staff are required to treat colleagues, students and visitors with dignity and respect, and support those who are being bullied or harassed by bringing the issue to the attention of the appropriate manager.

Colleagues are respected for their knowledge, skills and experience and are trusted to deliver to the best of their ability. All staff have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy (i.e.in words, tone and body language), and stereotypical or generalised comments about colleagues are not acceptable.

4 What is bullying and harassment?

The policy recognises that staff have a variety of backgrounds and cultures and their perceptions of what is and what is not considered acceptable behaviour at work may differ. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that all new staff are properly inducted into the College including what is regarded as acceptable and professional standards of conduct.

4.1 Bullying

Bullying is characterised by offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour, often associated with the misuse of power or authority, which aims to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end.

For example, bullying behaviour is when criticism is not constructive and does not assist in future actions. It is, therefore, distinct from the way we feel when we are under pressure, or on those occasions when we make a mistake and are legitimately called to account for this in private.

Bullying and harassment can occur in any medium; face-to-face, by written communications, electronic E-mail, phone, and supervision methods.

Examples of bullying include:

- Singling out one person for criticism when the particular fault is common;
- Criticising a person in public and/or in a deliberately humiliating manner;
- Deliberately setting targets that are known to be unachievable;
- Physical abuse.

4.2 Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, having regard to all the circumstances including the perception of the victim.

Harassment includes behaviour that is offensive, frightening or in any way distressing. It may be intentional bullying which is obvious or violent, but it can also be unintentional or subtle and insidious. It may involve nicknames, teasing, name-calling or other behaviour, which may not be intended to be malicious, but nevertheless is upsetting.

What is important to remember is that harassment is not classed by how the action is meant but rather the impact that it has on the recipient. Therefore, behaviour that is acceptable by some staff may cause embarrassment, distress or anxiety to others.

4.2.1 Examples of behaviour the policy seeks to prevent include:

Sexual Harassment

- Unwelcome sexual remarks such as jokes, innuendo, teasing and verbal abuse;
- Displaying of sexually suggestive material;
- Unwelcome remarks about a person's dress, appearance or marital status;
- Behaviour which condemns or ridicules a person because of their sexual orientation;
- Unwelcome physical contact.

Racial Harassment

Racial harassment is conduct based on race, colour and ethnicity which is offensive to the recipient. This may include:

- Racial derogatory remarks or racist jokes;
- Display of racially offensive material or graffiti;
- Deliberate isolation.

Personal Harassment

Personal harassment constitutes the inappropriate introduction of comments or activities into teaching, learning, living or work environments concerning an individual's disability, age, socio-economic group, sexual orientation, religion or any other form of personal victimisation. This may include:

- Insulting remarks based on grounds of personal appearance or personal circumstances;
- Using a person's known disability to demoralise them;
- Mockery, taunts and pranks.

Victimisation

This is treating someone less favourably than others because he or she has, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing him or her or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because he or she has made a complaint or giving him or her worse work.

Individuals have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the College will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found guilty of victimisation.

5 Resolving incidents of bullying or harassment

All complaints of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and will be investigated promptly and in full. The information disclosed will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively, in a fair and objective manner.

In the first instance, wherever possible, issues relating to bullying or harassment should be dealt with through the informal procedure. However, if a member of staff does not feel that the informal procedure is suitable due to the nature of the complaint it may be appropriate to go directly to the formal procedure.

5.1 Informal Procedure

It may be possible to sort matters out informally. If the recipient of the behaviour feels confident in taking this course of action, they should inform the person(s) concerned as soon as possible after the event that their behaviour is causing concern and tell them to stop, the person may not know that his or her behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting. It may be useful to have notes of incidents including times and dates. Through this recourse, the recipient can advise the individual and it can be dealt with directly and may be rectified without the need to involve outside parties.

To discuss issues in confidence, and the options that are available, staff can approach their line manager, the Human Resources Department or alternatively they can contact their Trade Union Representative.

5.2 Formal Procedure

If an informal approach does not resolve matters, or you think the situation is too serious to be dealt with informally, a formal complaint can be made by using the College's Grievance Procedure.

5.3 Vexatious Claims

Any complaint made solely or partly out of malice will result in disciplinary action. Making a complaint which staff know to be untrue, or giving evidence which they know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

6 Legislation

As well as being a disciplinary offence for staff, certain incidents of harassment may also mean that individuals become liable to prosecution in courts of law, under civil or criminal legislation.

7 Confidentiality

The College undertakes to observe and monitor confidentiality wherever possible in dealing with cases of alleged unacceptable behaviour in this context. Confidentiality means that information will only be disclosed on a need to know basis. Breaches of confidentiality will be considered in accordance with the College's Disciplinary Procedure.

8 What can we do to help stop bullying and harassment?

We all have a responsibility to help create and maintain a work environment free of bullying and harassment. We can all help to do this by:

- being aware of how our own behaviour may affect others and changing it, if necessary - you can still cause offence even if you are 'only joking';
- treating our colleagues with dignity and respect;
- taking a stand if we think inappropriate jokes or comments are being made;
- making it clear to others when we find their behaviour unacceptable.;
- intervening, if possible, to stop harassment or bullying and giving support to recipients;
- making it clear that we find harassment and bullying unacceptable;
- reporting harassment or bullying to your manager or Human Resources and supporting the College in the investigation of complaints; and
- if a complaint of harassment or bullying is made, not prejudging or victimising the complainant or alleged harasser.

10 **Related Policies**

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Student Complaints Procedure
- Handbook for Full- and Part-Time Academic Staff and Code of Professional Conduct