



# Dartford Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society

*President: The Worshipful The Mayor of Dartford*

## Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy

### About this policy

Dartford Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society (DAODS) ("Society") is committed to providing a creative environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all members, the Executive Committee, visitors, audience members, and anyone engaged under contract by the Society ("members") are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. DAODS is a group run entirely by and for volunteers who give up their time for the benefit of the Society.

This Policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs at rehearsals, performances, meetings or during any other activities arranged by the Society, including social functions ("activities"). It also applies to behaviour outside of Society activities, including online or social media interactions, if it affects members or has an impact on the Society's reputation. Personal disagreements, private conduct unrelated to the Society, or opinions that do not affect members or Society activities are outside the scope of this policy.

The theatre and creative world pushes boundaries; it explores, expands, and celebrates the spectrum of human emotions and experiences. This should never be at the expense of safety or people's right to not be bullied or harassed.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Committee, or sooner if necessitated by changes in law, regulation, best practice, or the Society's operations. Any amendments will be approved by the Executive Committee.

### What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal, or non-verbal behaviour that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them, regardless of whether it was intended to do so. Even a single incident can constitute harassment if it has this effect. Harassment may relate to protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation, but it can also occur in other contexts.

Harassment may include, for example:

- unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- offensive emails, text messages or social media content;
- derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group, religion or belief, or gender;
- or
- mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

Victimisation occurs when someone is treated unfavourably because they have done, or are believed to have done a "protective act" under the Equality Act 2010 — e.g, alleging harassment or supporting someone else who has. This protection applies even if the complaint or allegation later turns out to be incorrect, provided it was made in good

faith (not maliciously or dishonestly). This includes being denied opportunities or being excluded because of such actions.

Harassment and victimisation will not be tolerated. They may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of membership of our Society.

## **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. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

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

Bullying may include, for example:

- physical or psychological threats;
- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision; or
- inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance.

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a member's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to members taking part in our activities, will not amount to bullying on their own.

## **Young people and bullying or harassment**

Young people may be more susceptible to being bullied and less likely to come forward. A young person may indicate signs they are being bullied or harassed and it is important adults are aware of some of the signs a young person may demonstrate. They may:

- be frightened of walking to or from a youth activity;
- not want to use public transport;
- change their usual routine;
- become withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- start stammering;
- be frightened to say what is wrong; or
- attempt self-harm, or threaten suicide or run away.

If a young person displays any of these signs, a Committee Member should be made aware so they can investigate.

## **If you are being harassed or bullied**

If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to a member of the Committee, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.

If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally under the Society's Complaints and Disciplinary Policy.

We are committed to handling all complaints fairly, sensitively, and confidentially. Where a complaint has been properly investigated and not upheld, the individual is protected from victimisation. However, repeatedly challenging the outcome of a grievance in a disruptive or inappropriate way, or disclosing confidential information, may itself breach our Code of Conduct or confidentiality expectations. Such behaviour may be dealt with under our Complaints and Disciplinary Policy.

## **Witness Reporting**

Anyone who witnesses bullying or harassment during Society activities is encouraged to report what they have observed. Reports should be factual and include relevant details such as time, place, and the individuals involved.

Witnesses can report to any Committee member or via [daodscom@gmail.com](mailto:daodscom@gmail.com). Reports will be treated confidentially and shared only with those necessary to address the matter.

## **Protection and support for those involved**

Anyone who makes complaints or who participates in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result.

## **Practice Guidance**

Bullying and harassment can take many forms. However, below are some behavioural suggestions:

Do:

- call out bullying and harassment when you see it;
- report any bullying and harassment (either to yourself or others);
- support those suffering bullying and harassment.

Remember that physical intimacy as part of rehearsal and performance can be a source of stress and vulnerability. It should be approached with sensitivity and professionalism as every person has a right to their own boundaries.

Don't:

- put young people in uncomfortable positions by making unreasonable demands;
- push people to share personal experiences if they don't wish to (particularly in creative environments);
- sexually objectify members, and respect changing and performance spaces as in any other intimate environment.

## **Record-keeping**

Information relating to bullying or harassment incidents may be stored in our Society's records. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.