

# **The Writers' Summer School Policy on Harassment**

## **Introduction**

1. The Writers' Summer School, hereinafter referred to as The School, does not tolerate any form of harassment and expects all members of its community, including visitors and tutors, to treat each other and staff of The Hayes with respect, courtesy and consideration.
2. The School is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all members of its community are respected.
3. The aims of The School as reflected in this Policy are to:
  - promote a positive environment in which people are treated fairly and with respect;
  - make it clear that harassment is unacceptable and that all members of The School have a role to play in creating an environment free from harassment;
  - provide a framework of support for members who feel they have been subject to harassment; and
  - provide a mechanism by which complaints can be addressed.
4. All members of The School community have the right to expect fair and courteous behaviour from others, and a corresponding responsibility to behave fairly and courteously towards others. All members of The School community have a personal responsibility for complying with this Policy and Procedure and shall comply with and demonstrate active commitment to this Policy by:
  - treating others with dignity and respect;
  - discouraging any form of harassment by making it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable; and
  - supporting any member who feels they have been subject to harassment, including supporting them to make a formal complaint if appropriate.

## **Definitions**

5. Harassment is unwanted conduct related to relevant protected characteristics, which are sex, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age, that:
  - has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
  - is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating their dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.
6. Harassment in this policy includes bullying and victimisation.
  - Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end.
  - Victimisation is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint.

## **Behaviours**

7. Harassment may involve repeated forms of unwanted and unwarranted behaviour, but a one-off incident can also amount to harassment.
8. The intentions of the alleged harasser are not always determinative of whether harassment has taken place. The perception of the complainant and the extent to which that perception is in all the circumstances reasonable will also be relevant.
9. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not an excuse for harassment.
10. Harassment can take a variety of forms:
  - physical contact, ranging from touching to serious assault
  - verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander and letters
  - visual display of posters, obscene gestures
  - isolation
  - coercion
  - persistent undermining of an individual
  - rudeness and verbal aggression
11. Examples of behaviour which may amount to harassment under this Policy include (but are not limited to) the following:
  - unwanted physical contact, ranging from an invasion of space to an assault, including all forms of sexual harassment, including:
    - inappropriate body language
    - sexually explicit remarks or innuendoes
    - unwanted sexual advances and touching
  - offensive comments or body language, including insults, jokes or gestures and malicious rumours, open hostility, verbal or physical threats.
  - insulting, abusive, embarrassing or patronising behaviour or comments, humiliating, intimidating, and/or demeaning criticism
  - publishing, circulating or displaying pornographic, racist, homophobic, sexually suggestive or otherwise offensive pictures or other materials.

## **Application of the Policy**

12. Any member of The School's community who feels they have been subject to harassment can make a complaint to the Chairman or any other member of The School's Committee
13. All allegations of harassment will be investigated. Where harassment or bullying is proven to the satisfaction of The School's Committee, the individual will be asked to leave immediately. No fees paid to attend the school will be refunded and any fees due to the individual will be reduced to take account of the curtailment of their services.
14. When a criminal offence may have been committed, the Police may be advised.
15. All parties involved in a complaint (including any witnesses who may be interviewed as part of any investigation) should maintain the confidentiality of the process.

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