

Boundless Theatre

Dignity at Work Policy

Last Review: August 2024
Next Trustee review: July 2025

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Policy Overview

Boundless Theatre values everyone who works for us equally regardless if permanent, freelance, volunteer or paid. We recognise that threatening or intimidating behaviour can create a work

environment that interferes with job performance, undermines job security, causes undue stress and can lead to absenteeism.

We are committed to creating a workplace culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, free from bullying, intimidation and harassment. We believe in building relationships on the basis of mutual respect and where it is possible to give and receive feedback in a constructive way.

This policy is in place to ensure that everyone at Boundless Theatre understands the expectations that relate to acceptable behaviour.

We also recognise that harassment and bullying are serious offences and we will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying by or of our employees, freelancers or volunteers.

Reports of harassment and bullying will be treated seriously; we will ensure that procedures are in place for the reporting of complaints, we will deal with all complaints promptly, fairly and confidentially and we will allow all parties concerned the opportunity to make their case and to appeal a decision if they feel that it is unfair.

Where bullying or harassment is found to have occurred we will take appropriate action against the perpetrators. Boundless Theatre staff who fail to fulfil their responsibilities under this policy may face disciplinary action. Single, serious offences or repeated breaches of this policy may result in dismissal under the Boundless Theatre's disciplinary policy.

This policy will be reviewed periodically by Boundless Theatre's Trustees and Executive Team and amended if required by changes in legislation or significant developments in employment law practice.

Purpose

This policy intends to:

- increase awareness of what is unacceptable behaviour
- increase awareness that any form of harassment is unacceptable
- provide a mechanism for complainants to report cases for resolution
- provide a mechanism for complaints to be properly investigated and addressed

Scope

This policy is for all employees, freelancers and volunteers working with Boundless Theatre.

Policy Revisions

All of Boundless Theatre's policies have been reviewed and updated to reflect Boundless Theatre's current circumstances. The Executives and Board of Trustees will regularly discuss the need to review and adapt company policies to respond to government advice. The Executives will communicate any further policy changes with the team.

Definition of Terms

Harassment	<p>Any unwelcome behaviour that has the effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.</p> <p>Harassment may be related to "protected characteristics" under the Equality Act 2010, i.e. a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/ belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership and pregnancy/maternity or to a personal habit or characteristic.</p> <p>It may also be related to issues such as work status (e.g. part time work), trade union membership or non-membership. Harassment can take many forms and may be directed at one person or at several.</p>
Bullying	<p>Offensive treatment through vindictive, cruel, malicious or humiliating attempts to undermine an individual or group of people.</p> <p>Bullying may combine a variety of different approaches – it can be physical, verbal or non-verbal.</p> <p>It can be experienced from manager to subordinate, subordinate to manager, peer to peer, group of staff to individual.</p> <p>It is insidious (in other words, implied criticism rather than stated) and undermines the ability and confidence of the person on the receiving end. Such persistently negative attacks on personal or professional performance are often not apparent to anyone else.</p>

Harassment and bullying can be evidenced in many ways including offensive emails, texts or social media content, unwanted physical conduct, suggestive comments, or offensive comments.

Comments do not have to be directed at the victim, for example commenting on a person's partner's race or disability would be harassment.

They do not have to be true, e.g: comments about a person's perceived sexual orientation could be harassment whatever their actual sexual orientation.

Further examples of bullying and harassment, by way of illustration and not an exhaustive list, are outlined in the [Appendixes](#).

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

When is Behaviour Unacceptable?

All forms of bullying and harassment are unacceptable. Below are some examples, by way of illustration and not an exhaustive list, but please also refer to the Appendices for examples of harassment related to protected characteristics ([Appendix 1](#)) and Good management behaviours vs bullying behaviour ([Appendix 2](#)).

Examples of unacceptable behaviour may include:

- derogatory comments, offensive language, remarks or jokes;
- spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone;
- insulting behaviours or gestures;
- displaying offensive or suggestive literature or remarks;
- intrusion by pestering, spying or stalking;

- embarrassing, threatening, humiliating, patronising or intimidating remarks;
- unwanted physical contact;
- physical or verbal assault, such as shouting;
- unwelcome sexual advances, such as touching or standing too close;
- undermining a person's self-esteem, for example by constantly making unfavourable comparisons with others or belittling their status;
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading or underloading them with work, and constantly criticising them;
- excluding or isolating a colleague, not cooperating with them or victimising them;

Malicious complaints

Although it is extremely rare, an investigation may reveal that a complaint has been made maliciously. If this happens, the complainant (the person claiming that they have suffered bullying or harassment) may face disciplinary action. It must be stressed, however, that this should in no way deter genuine complaints of harassment or bullying as every case will be dealt with fairly, sympathetically and constructively, and of its own merit.

Complaints procedure

What to do if you feel like you are being harassed or bullied?

All staff, freelancers and other individuals working with Boundless have the right to complain if they are being harassed or bullied. If you feel you are suffering such treatment you are encouraged to keep a diary of events so that the extent of the problem can be determined. You can seek advice from your line manager, the Boundless team member leading the project or production you are engaged on, a Trade Union representative or, a Boundless board member.

How to report an incident of bullying or harassment

If you feel you are being harassed or bullied, we encourage you to report it. You can use the template in [Appendix 3](#) to create a report and then send to a member of the Executive Team:

- **Adele Reeves de Melo**, Executive Producer & Co-CEO - adele@boundlesstheatre.co.uk
- **Pavlos Christodoulou**, Creative Producer & Co-CEO - pavlos@boundlesstheatre.co.uk

Alternatively, if a member of the Executive Team is the alleged bully or harasser we recommend you report the incident directly to the Chair of Boundless Theatre:

- **André Renaud** - andre.boundless@outlook.com

What will happen if I make a complaint of bullying or harassment?

If you make a complaint, we will normally hold an initial meeting with you and a member of the Executive Team or Trustees. You may choose to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. In this meeting, we will confirm the incident details and discuss whether you want the matter to be dealt with informally (initially) or by using a formal procedure. This meeting will be minuted and shared with all in attendance.

How will the complaint be handled?

Depending on the outcome of the initial meeting, a complaint may be handled through:

- The informal procedure outlined in this policy; or
- Mediation; or
- The formal procedure outlined in this policy.

Any employee making a complaint of bullying or harassment can be assured that they will be protected from any victimisation that could arise as a result of making a complaint.

Informal Procedure

You may want to try to resolve the problem informally by explaining to the individual concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and should stop. This allows the opportunity for a resolution without formal escalation.

If you wish, you may do this with support from your Line Manager, who can advise on the best approach to the individual and appropriate wording to describe the Harassment or Bullying.

It's a good idea to keep notes or a diary of any incidents of bullying or harassment and your attempts to resolve matters as these notes may help us investigate should you decide to take things further.

If you choose the informal route, you may not want to take any further action. Although we will normally follow your wishes, if we believe that the welfare, health or safety of others may be at risk or for other overriding reasons, we may decide to look into things further. This may involve us approaching the alleged bully or harasser.

Mediation

If an informal approach has been unsuccessful or is not appropriate it is recommended that you consider mediation before proceeding to a formal procedure. Mediation is a voluntary option and is not the answer to every conflict. It can only be used when both parties agree to take part.

Mediation gives both parties the opportunity to talk directly about the issues that are affecting them, without the stress and time normally associated with a formal investigation. A mediator is an impartial facilitator who will create a structured, safe meeting space in which both parties should feel able to have their say. This can provide a positive, confidential way of reaching an agreement about how each party will behave towards the other in future. A written agreement is then drawn up between the parties to prevent further friction and misunderstandings.

Mediation is not designed to establish facts or to decide if someone is at fault. It is purely a method of resolving past conflicts and agreeing on a positive way forward.

Any employees who want to follow the mediation process should speak to the Executive Team or the Chair, as appropriate, in the first instance.

If you go through mediation and it is not successful, you can then go through the formal complaints procedure.

Formal complaints procedure

The formal procedure will be followed if:

- either you or we decide that the seriousness of your complaint makes this necessary; or
- all attempts at informal resolution or mediation have failed; or
- you particularly want to make a formal complaint.

Formal complaints should be made in writing, to the Executive Team (or to the Chair if an Executive is the alleged bully or harasser). A Trade Union representative can raise a complaint on your behalf. At this stage, a complaint will be treated as an allegation, which means that it is not proven and will be investigated.

The staff or (where appropriate) board member investigating (“The Investigating Officer”) will arrange to meet you to discuss your statement within 5 working days, where possible. A full investigation will begin within 10 working days of receipt of the original complaint, where possible.

The accused person will be informed of the nature of the allegations, in person, by the Investigating Officer before the investigation begins.

The Investigating Officer should collect evidence and/or take statements from you, the person you are complaining about and any witnesses.

It is recommended that an investigation into any complaint is carried out and concluded as quickly as possible, ideally within 21 working days of receiving the complaint. However, some cases will be more complex and therefore take longer to investigate. The Investigating Officer will keep the parties informed of progress and expected timescales.

In some instances, it may be appropriate for Boundless Theatre to suspend the person you have complained about from duty, on full pay, until the investigation has been completed. Suspension is a neutral act and does not presume guilt or innocence. This option will only be considered as a last resort.

Employees may be accompanied at any stage of the formal procedure by either a Trade Union representative or a Boundless Theatre colleague. If your Trade Union representative or colleague cannot attend on the date proposed, you can suggest an alternative time and date for the meeting. This alternate time and date must be reasonable and fall within 5 working days of the date proposed by the Investigating Officer.

The outcome of the meetings must be confirmed in writing to both parties with a copy of the investigation report and all the relevant evidence.

Complaints against non-Boundless Theatre employees

If a complaint involves employees of other organisations we have dealings with regularly, including co-producing partners, venue staff or suppliers, we will seek the full cooperation of the organisation and encourage them to deal with the matter in line with the principles of this policy.

If the organisation refuses to cooperate, the investigation will continue, and when completed we will inform the organisation what action we would like them to take to protect our employees.

Ultimately, we may remove the employee from one-to-one contact with the accused person. It will likely be necessary to advise the organisation involved of the identity of the complainant and the details of the complaint.

Anonymous complaints

We may receive anonymous allegations of bullying or harassment through the Whistle-blowing procedure. This will always involve informing the accused person that a complaint has been received about them and asking for their views. While we recognise that it is difficult to investigate anonymous complaints, management will conduct as thorough an investigation as possible, given the information available.

If an allegation is made by someone other than the person who is being bullied or harassed, the Investigating Officer must check whether the person making the allegation is prepared to make a statement. In addition, the employee who is thought to have been bullied or harassed must be informed that an allegation has been made and to find out whether they feel that they are being bullied or harassed. If so the Investigating Officer should encourage them to make a complaint or advise them of the other available options. In some instances, where there are reasonable grounds to

suspect a serious breach, the organisation will instigate the formal procedure, even if the 'victim' will not make a formal complaint

Records

During the investigation, the Investigating Officer should keep copies of paperwork and correspondence and, after the investigation is complete, file them appropriately to maintain confidentiality. A copy of the outcome letter will be kept in the personnel files of both parties.

Right of appeal

If either the person complaining or the person being complained about is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal procedure, they should write to the Chair within 10 working days of receiving the letter confirming the outcome, to request a review of the findings. The Chair will arrange for an appropriate person to deal with the appeal and will set up an appeal hearing.

If either party is not happy with the way in which the investigation was conducted, they can lodge a grievance through the Boundless Theatre's grievance procedure.

All appeals will be dealt with within Boundless Theatre. You will then have no further right of internal appeal. You have the right to be accompanied at an appeal hearing by a work colleague or an appropriate Trade Union representative.

All parties involved will be given at least 5 working days' notice in writing of the date, time, place and any other arrangements of the appeal hearing.

The appeal decision may dismiss the appeal and confirm the original decision or uphold the appeal and overturn the original decision. A letter confirming the decision will be sent to both parties within 5 working days of the appeal unless otherwise agreed.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1: Examples of harassment related to protected characteristics.

Harassment can take many forms. Examples may include the following:

Sexual harassment

Harassment related to sex or of a sexual nature might include:

- derogatory comments about gender or matters associated with gender
- ostracism related to gender (whether the person affected is of the same or different gender)
- degrading comments about appearance or dress
- physical conduct of a sexual nature ranging from unnecessary touching to sexual assault
- making offensive comments to a pregnant woman about her appearance
- unwelcome sexual advances, flirtatious or suggestive remarks, leering, whistling or sexually suggestive gestures
- display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects or written materials
- repeated requests to go on a date or to socialise outside of work when this is unwanted
- pressure for sexual behaviour/favours in return for avoiding detrimental treatment; or
- detrimental treatment following the rejection of a sexual advance.

Racial or religious harassment

Racial or religious harassment might include:

- derogatory or degrading abuse or insults and offensive comments about race or religion
- display, circulation or discussion of racist pictures, objects or written materials
- repeatedly dismissing or not taking seriously a person's request for their religious practices to be accommodated
- unjustified display of emblems that have sectarian or religious significance; or
- telling jokes related to race or religion.

Disability harassment

Harassment related to disability might include:

- mimicry and imitation of the disabled person
- telling of jokes related to disability
- offensive comments about disability or matters associated with disability

Harassment related to sexuality

Harassment related to sexual orientation might include:

- teasing or name-calling about an individual's sexual orientation (real or perceived)
- homophobic 'jokes' or derogatory stereotyping based on sexual orientation
- 'outing' a person (i.e. revealing their sexual orientation) against their wishes.

Age-related harassment

Harassment related to age might include:

- telling jokes related to age or the perceived effects of age
- derogatory stereotyping based on age; or
- talking down to and humiliating staff on the basis of their age.

APPENDIX 2: Good management behaviours vs bullying behaviours

Effective management entails establishing clear objectives and expectations for employees, equipping them with the requisite resources and support to attain these goals, and holding them accountable for their performance. Additionally, strong managers cultivate a positive and empowering work environment that fosters a sense of value and respect among employees. By leading through example and inspiring their team to strive for excellence, effective managers recognise and celebrate the accomplishments of their team members.

In contrast, bullying behaviour involves the misuse of power to intimidate and manipulate employees. This creates a toxic work environment characterised by stress, anxiety, and diminished motivation among employees. Bullying managers often resort to belittling, public shaming, and micromanagement, prioritising their own needs over those of their team. Such behaviour can be exploited through their position of authority.

The consequences of bullying are substantial and long-lasting. It can lead to a high turnover rate, reduced productivity, and increased absenteeism due to stress and anxiety. Additionally, bullying can tarnish the organisation's reputation and potentially result in legal repercussions if it crosses the line into harassment or discrimination.

Bullying behaviour in the workplace can reveal itself as:

- **Verbal Abuse:** Engaging in shouting, belittling, or using derogatory language towards employees.
- **Intimidation:** Using one's position of power to create a sense of threat or fear among employees.
- **Excessive Criticism:** Providing excessive and unfair criticism, often in public settings, which can undermine employee morale.
- **Micromanagement:** Closely monitoring and controlling every aspect of an employee's work, stifling autonomy and growth.
- **Isolation:** Deliberately excluding employees from meetings, conversations, or social events.
- **Withholding Information:** Intentionally withholding information or resources necessary for employees to perform their duties effectively.
- **Retaliation:** Taking punitive actions against employees who speak out or report bullying behaviour to authorities.

Effective leadership behaviours in the workplace look like:

- **Clear Communication:** Maintaining open and regular communication with employees, setting clear expectations and goals, and providing timely feedback and guidance.
- **Accountability:** Holding employees accountable for their work while ensuring they have the necessary resources and support to succeed.
- **Empowerment:** Fostering a sense of ownership and autonomy among employees, encouraging creative thinking and innovation.
- **Positive Work Environment:** Cultivating a workplace culture characterised by trust, respect, and collaboration.
- **Professional Development:** Providing opportunities for employee growth and development through training and mentorship programs.
- **Leading by Example:** Demonstrating the desired behaviours and work ethic expected of employees.
- **Encouraging Excellence:** Recognising and rewarding high performance while offering constructive feedback for improvement.

APPENDIX 3: Dignity at Work Reporting Template

BOUNDLESS THEATRE DIGNITY AT WORK REPORTING FORM	
Your Name	
Job Title/ Relationship to Boundless Theatre	
Date of Complaint	
Name of the individual/s you are reporting:	
In the box below, using your own words, describe the incident/s, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>dates, times and places;</i>• <i>the people involved, including witnesses;</i>• <i>your feelings concerning the incident(s); and</i>• <i>how long the situation has been going on.</i>	
Was there anyone else present who witnessed the incident(s):	
What outcome and or support, if any, would you like to see?	
Please add any other relevant information in the space below	

Send to:

- Adele Reeves de Melo, Executive Producer & Co-CEO - adele@boundlesstheatre.co.uk
- Pavlos Christodoulou, Creative Producer & Co-CEO - pavlos@boundlesstheatre.co.uk

Alternatively, if a senior manager is the alleged bully or harasser we recommend you report the incident directly to the Chair of Boundless Theatre: André Renaud - chair@boundlesstheatre.org.uk

A digital copy of this reporting form will be saved confidentially on the Boundless server, accessed by:

- *a member of Senior Management*
- *or, if your allegations concern a member of senior Management the Chair of the Trustees*