

Theatre Arts Action Trust Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy

This document sets out the commitment of the Theatre Arts Action Trust (TAAT) trading as the Headgate Theatre to combat bullying and harassment and the procedures in place should it occur.

This policy describes:

- what we mean by bullying and harassment
- our commitment to dignity of all users of the Headgate
- how to report concerns of bullying and harassment
- how we handle accusations

It is applicable to all Staff, Volunteers, Trustees, Hirers, Contractors, and all Users of the Headgate.

What we mean by bullying and harassment

We support the definition of bullying by the Anti-bullying Alliance:

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.

Bullying or harassment is behaviour that is unwelcome, unwarranted and detrimental for the person receiving it.

It is important to recognise that while someone may find certain conduct acceptable, someone else may find the same conduct totally unacceptable. Therefore, everyone must be treated with respect and appropriate sensitivity.

Bullying does not include appropriate criticism of behaviour. Constructive and fair feedback about behaviour or performance is part of the Headgate's management routine.

Bullying can include:

- verbal teasing or belittling
- excluding people from activities
- spreading rumours or inappropriate images
- shouting at or abusing someone
- threats
- stealing or damaging someone's property
- harassment based on age, race, colour, gender, sexuality, or disability
- inappropriate touching
- constantly criticising someone's performance
- deliberately giving someone a heavier workload than everyone else

- showing continued disrespect
- refusing to complete tasks
- constantly undermining someone's authority

It is important to consider the real reasons for the behaviour. For example, there might be a wider issue with the culture of the organisation that can be identified and addressed.

Our commitment to dignity at the Headgate

Every staff member, volunteer and friend of the Headgate has a positive role to play in the prevention of bullying and harassment.

We are committed to being an organisation free from harassment and bullying. We strive to ensure that all Staff, Volunteers, Trustees, Hirers, Contractors, and all Users of the Headgate Theatre are treated with dignity and respect.

This is regardless of:

- age
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- gender identity
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

We will not

- tolerate bullying or harassment at the Headgate. This is regardless of whether the conduct happens once or repeatedly, and whether it is intended or not.
- tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, anyone who reports harassment or bullying.

We will

- advertise and promote the Headgate in an all-inclusive manner.
- seek to encourage all staff, volunteers and friends to welcome new members and visitors to the Headgate and provide support to all new members.
- actively champion diversity at every opportunity.
- endeavour to provide a safe environment for all with special regard for minors and vulnerable adults in line with the TAAT Safeguarding Policy.

How to report concerns of bullying and harassment

If you witness something you believe is harassment or bullying

You should report the incident in confidence to a member of the Headgate staff or Duty Manager. Anything you report will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence, as far as possible.

If you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague, employee, volunteer or hirer

Please report this to Headgate Director or Duty Manager in the first instance. We will then discuss with you how best to deal with the situation.

You can choose to:

- resolve complaints informally
- raise a formal complaint.

We will try to resolve a complaint informally if possible. This is usually quicker and less stressful for everyone. However, not every situation is suitable to handle informally.

How the complaint is handled will depend on:

- what the person making the complaint wants
- what our organisation's policy says
- how serious the issue is

Resolving complaints informally

If you are being bullied or harassed by a Headgate employee, volunteer or hirer, you may be able to resolve the situation informally. You can do this by explaining clearly to the alleged perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to our policy, and must stop.

Alternatively, you may wish to ask the Headgate Director to share this message on your behalf, or to accompany you when confronting the alleged perpetrator(s).

If this approach does not work, you do not want to resolve the situation in this way, or you are being bullied by your own Director, you should raise the issue with a Trustee.

If you are happy for the Trustee to speak to the alleged perpetrator(s) they will then do so on your behalf. During this conversation, they will explain that:

- someone has complained that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on them
- such behaviour is contrary to our policy
- continuing this behaviour could result in a serious disciplinary offence or being asked to review your involvement with the Headgate

If you prefer to stay anonymous, it may be possible for the Director or Trustee to have this conversation with the alleged perpetrator(s) without revealing your name. They will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to help resolve the problem. The Director or Trustee will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, we will

- keep a record of the actions taken and the outcomes
- keep in touch with the person who made the complaint to check things are still okay

Making a formal complaint

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the Headgate or the person making the complaint might decide to take it further as a formal complaint. This decision can be made at any point during the informal process. A formal complaint could lead to disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator(s) or their being asked to review their involvement with the Headgate.

For example, we will need to deal with it formally if:

- the person making the complaint is not willing to try to resolve it informally
- the Headgate's policy says the type of situation they are complaining about must be dealt with formally
- the complaint is very serious

As part of a formal procedure the Trustees will appoint someone to investigate the complaint. They should be neutral and not be involved in the complaint. Alternatively, we could pay for an external person to investigate, for example someone trained in conflict resolution.

You will need to co-operate with the investigation and complete the Bullying and Harassment Complaint form in Appendix 1 providing:

- the name of the alleged perpetrator(s)
- the nature of the harassment or bullying
- the dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred
- the names of any witnesses
- any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

The alleged perpetrator(s) would need to be told your name and the details of your complaint so we can investigate the issue properly but we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible.

After the investigation, we will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation. At the meeting, you can be accompanied by a companion or a trade union official. After the meeting (and normally within five working days), we will write to you to share our decision. We will also notify you of your right to appeal to the Chair of the Trustees if you are unhappy with the outcome. If you choose to appeal, you should put your appeal in writing, explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with our decision.

You should submit your appeal within five working days of receiving written confirmation of our decision. You will then be invited to attend a meeting to consider your appeal. Again, you can be accompanied by a friend or a trade union official. We will write to you afterwards to confirm our final decision.

How accusations are handled

If anyone involved in Headgate Theatre tells us that they are being bullied or harassed, we will respond to their complaint – even if it does not meet the standard definition. For more information, see [Acas guidance on discrimination, bullying and harassment](#) .

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously.

Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially.

If, after an investigation, we decide an employee, volunteer and hirer has harassed or bullied another employee, volunteer or hirer, then appropriate action will be taken. An employee may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases, this can result in dismissal. For a volunteer or hirer their future involvement with the Headgate will be reviewed.

Anyone who makes allegations of bullying or harassment related to our organisation in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.

Disclosure and confidentiality

We will treat personal data collected during this process in accordance with our data protection policy

Use of the disciplinary procedure (for employees)

Harassment and bullying constitute serious misconduct.

If, at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and a disciplinary offence might have been committed, we will follow our disciplinary procedure.

Any employee found to have harassed or bullied a colleague will be liable to disciplinary action. In some cases, this can result in summary dismissal (dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice). Retaliation against, or victimisation of, anyone who reports harassment or bullying will also constitute a disciplinary offence, which may lead to dismissal.

Theatre Arts Action Trust
Bullying and Harassment Form – In Strict Confidence

Name	
E-mail	
Mobile number	
Address for correspondence	
In this section, please set out/summarise the main details/elements of your complaint. Please include: ➤ the name of the alleged perpetrator(s) ➤ the nature of the harassment or bullying ➤ the dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred ➤ the names of any witnesses ➤ any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally ➤ what specific outcomes you are seeking.	
Are you willing to consider mediation? YES / NO (If no please provide brief reasons)	

Signed..... Dated.....