

ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

Behaviour at Work Policy

Introduction

The College believes that its staff are committed to ensuring that the College environment is one in which all are encouraged to contribute to the best of their ability. Staff colleagues place particular value on a working atmosphere within the College that is relaxed but purposeful, professional and humane. Members of staff are valued as individuals, and they each bring to their roles, whether as professors or administrators, qualities that are intrinsic to the student experience and to the RCM's international reputation.

The *Behaviour at Work Policy* has been formulated in order to establish clear points of reference that reflect the College's legal obligation to protect its staff from bullying and harassment. Definitions of the terms 'bullying' and 'harassment' are included.

Under the terms of this policy, any regular or systematic patterns of behaviour by an individual or individuals that come under the definition of bullying or harassment is unacceptable and constitutes a serious offence. The policy sets down a complaints and resolution procedure and identifies post holders who have the formal responsibility for handling and advising any member of staff who has concerns in relation to this policy.

Application

The policy applies to all staff of the College and equally applies to casual staff, contractors and voluntary workers. The support and co-operation of staff is essential in ensuring the success of the policy.

The policy also applies to members of staff working elsewhere on collaborative programmes or on college-related placements, trips or conferences.

The policy also applies to staff behaviour towards students. It does not deal with student behaviour. This is covered by the Student Code of Conduct.

Objectives

The main objectives of this policy are to: -

- Communicate and identify the terms 'bullying' and 'harassment';
- Clarify 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.

Responsibilities

The Council has an overall responsibility for ensuring that all members of staff are treated with dignity and respect. In practical terms, all members of the College have a responsibility to comply with the policy.

Managers

Managers are responsible for setting, and adhering to standards of behaviour that ensure all members of staff are treated with dignity and respect. They should ensure that staff know about the *Behaviour at Work Policy* and know how to manage harassment or bullying issues. It is the manager's responsibility to support staff who may feel they are being harassed or bullied, and deal with any complaints appropriately in line with this policy.

Staff

All staff are responsible for adhering to this policy. Staff, are required to treat all colleagues with dignity and respect, and support those who are being bullied or harassed by bringing the issue to the attention of the appropriate manager.

What is bullying and harassment?

The policy recognises that staff, come from a wide range of backgrounds and their perceptions of what is and what is not considered acceptable behaviour at work may differ. This policy therefore seeks to clarify these points.

What is 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 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.

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 to some members of staff may cause embarrassment, distress or anxiety to others.

Types of harassment

People can be subjected to harassment on a wide variety of grounds, including:

- Race, ethnic origin, nationality or skin colour;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation;
- Religious belief or political convictions;
- Social class;
- Family responsibility;
- Marital Status;
- Trade Union Membership;
- Disabilities;
- Age or Youth;

- Status as an ex-offender;
- Personal characteristics of the individual;
- Real or suspect infection with HIV/AIDS.

Harassment may also include:

- Any conduct based on these characteristics which affect the dignity of any individual at work;
- The intentional intimidation or belittling of someone through the misuse of power or position which leaves them feeling hurt, upset, vulnerable or helpless.

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

- Derogatory racial remarks or racist jokes;
- Display of racially offensive material or graffiti;
- Deliberate isolation.

Age and Disability Discrimination

- Ridiculing or demeaning behaviour focused towards people because of their age, disability, their vulnerability or actual or perceived reduced independence;
- Exclusion of people because of their disability.

Religious Discrimination

- Discriminatory behaviour, which fails to acknowledge the rights or needs of people with different beliefs or practices

What is 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 the confidence and self-esteem of the recipient. For example, bullying behaviour can occur 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.

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.

The College cannot guarantee not to pursue an allegation of harassment once the allegation has been brought to its attention.

If an individual feels that they are being harassed or bullied, the College encourages them to bring this to the attention of either their line manager or Human Resources.

In the first instance, 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, they can go directly to the formal procedure.

Informal Procedure

If the employee feels confident in taking this course of action, they should attempt to resolve the issue with the person concerned. The employee can do this on their own, or request assistance from their line manager or a member of Human Resources. It may be the case that the person concerned is not aware that their actions or comments are causing offence. 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.

Staff can approach their line manager or the Human Resources department informally who will discuss the issues in confidence. Alternatively, they can contact a Trade Union or Union Officer.

If, however, the member of staff does not feel that this line of action is appropriate, or if this course of action has not produced the intended results, they may wish to raise the issue informally with the accused bully/harasser's line manager. They will respond in writing to the individual as soon as is practicable, and normally within 5 working days, regarding what course of action has been taken, or they intend to take, in order to resolve the matter.

Formal Procedure

If as a result of the informal procedure the situation is not resolved, or if the recipient perceives that the incident requires formal action, then the formal procedure should be followed.

The employee should submit their complaint in writing to the College Representative as outlined in the Grievance Policy.

Each complaint will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and impartially through the Grievance Procedure.

Any complaint made solely out of malice will result in disciplinary action.

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 Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

General measures for the prevention of harassment and bullying in the workplace

Bullying and harassment can be prevented by members of staff:

- Being aware of its existence and alert to its consequences;
- Setting a good example and making sure their conduct does not cause offence or misunderstanding;
- Not being afraid to make a stand against the injustice of harassment whether one is personally involved or providing support for a colleague.

HR Department/ BAW POLICY / 171105

Updated February 2019

Re-formatted September 2019