

UO Dignity at Work Policy

1. Introduction

At the Ulster Orchestra (UO), we strive to offer an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect in line with our values. Our Dignity at Work Policy is designed to balance the creative and collaborative nature of our work with the need for professionalism and respect for personal boundaries. It aims to create a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for all employees.

This policy extends to everyone working for or with the Ulster Orchestra including employees, workers, volunteers, and third parties including conductors, guests, visitors, subcontractors, consultants, agency employees and anyone taking part in our events and activities.

NB. Breaches of this policy may be regarded as misconduct and will be investigated, which may lead to disciplinary procedures with sanctions applicable up to and including dismissal.

2. Purpose of this policy

Our Dignity at Work policy aims to:

- Support and sustain a safe and inclusive working environment for all, free from any form of bullying, harassment or any other inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour;
- Make it clear that bullying, harassment or any other inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated and that everyone has a role to play in creating a positive working environment;
- Provide a framework for respect and appropriate conduct to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying, harassment or any other inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour;
- Highlight the options available to anyone who feels they are or have been subject to bullying, harassment, or any other inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour;
- Provide a mechanism by which complaints can, wherever possible, be addressed in a timely way;
- Set out the responsibilities for managing and supporting anyone raising a concern under the policy.

3. Expectations & Responsibilities

The successful implementation of this policy depends on everyone treating each other with the respect and dignity which they would rightly expect from others.

CEO

The CEO has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the Dignity at Work policy and delegates day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the People & Culture Leader.

Managers

Managers have responsibility for maintaining the standards and appropriate workplace behaviours as set by the organisation, ensuring concerns raised are acted upon, and a safe working environment is maintained.

Everyone

We expect everyone to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration and to behave professionally towards one another.

We all have a **personal responsibility** for complying with this policy and demonstrating active commitment to it by:

- Treating each other with dignity and respect.
- Recognising and challenging inappropriate conduct or behaviour
- Raising and escalating concerns to management where appropriate so these can be dealt with
- Supporting anyone who feels they have been subject to bullying and/or harassment, including supporting them to make a formal complaint if appropriate

All employees, workers and volunteers should be mindful that they are ambassadors for and represent the UO, therefore their behaviour, whether during or outside working hours, should never compromise their reputation or the UO's reputation. As representatives of a public facing company funded through public money and donations, we all must uphold and adhere to behaviour that sets a good example. **The reputation of the orchestra must be always preserved.**

4. Bullying & Harassment

The Labour Relations Agency in liaison with the Equality Commission NI have suggested a definition which can apply to both bullying and harassment: "Where one person or persons engage in unwanted conduct in relation to another person which has the purpose or effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person." (From "Harassment and Bullying" issued jointly by the Equality Commission NI & Labour Relations Agency.)

Such behaviour is unacceptable:

- where it is unwanted, unreasonable or can reasonably be supposed to be offensive to the recipient;
- where it is used as the basis for an employment decision;
- where it creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive working environment.

At UO, we recognise the problems that bullying and harassment may cause at work, and we are committed to ensuring that such unacceptable behaviour does not take place. We have a zero-tolerance approach to any offensive, malicious or insulting behaviour, particularly where this is an abuse or misuse of power through hostile behaviour intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure others.

This applies to behaviours both within and outside the workplace including any form of bullying or harassment online such as posting or sharing inappropriate photographs; making offensive or threatening comments; or revealing sensitive personal information.

Any reported or suspected incidences of bullying or harassment will be dealt with under the UO's Disciplinary Policy.

5. Appropriate Behaviours at Work

As an orchestra, we celebrate creativity and individuality, but we must also ensure that our interactions remain professional and considerate of everyone's boundaries. The following guidelines outline the standards of appropriate behaviour concerning physical contact, personal space, and comments on appearances.

Physical Contact with Others

- Physical contact should always be approached with caution and any form of contact that could be perceived as intimate, invasive, or inappropriate should be avoided. While some individuals may be comfortable with physical contact, others may not be. Always seek explicit consent before initiating any form of physical contact.
- Any non-consensual physical contact is strictly prohibited and will be considered a serious violation of this policy. This includes any unwanted touch, embracing, grabbing, or any other physical actions that could make another person uncomfortable.

Invading Personal Space

- Everyone should be mindful of maintaining an appropriate distance during interactions. Invading someone's personal space can make them feel uncomfortable or threatened. Even in creative and collaborative environments, it's essential to be conscious of personal space in meetings, rehearsals, or when working closely on projects.

- Everyone should feel confident and encouraged to make their boundaries known, where possible. Always check that your proximity is comfortable for all involved. If someone indicates discomfort with space, whether verbally or non-verbally, immediately make the appropriate adjustments.

Commenting on Appearance

- Always exercise caution about making any comments on another's (or your own) appearance - looks, attire, weight, or body - which may be misinterpreted, cause discomfort and/or be perceived as inappropriate. NB. Intentionally making inappropriate comments will be considered a serious violation of this policy
- Be aware that perceptions of appropriate comments may vary based on personal experience and/or cultural backgrounds. What may seem harmless to one person could be harassing or offensive to another.

Taking Photos and/or Videos in the Workplace

- Not everyone is comfortable with being photographed and/or videoed, and some people might feel harassed or threatened by it, so always ask permission in advance, explain the purpose and respect their wishes.
- You must never post a photo or video of anyone online without getting their express permission, this could be a breach of privacy rights.

6. Handling Complaints and Violations

NB. These internal procedures do not replace or detract from the right of the employees to pursue complaints under relevant legislation.

- **Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour:** Anyone who feel uncomfortable or who believes that this policy has been violated are encouraged to report their concerns to the Orchestra Manager, Line Manager (for admin) or the People & Culture Leader. Reports can be made confidentially, and all complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.
- **Investigation Process:** The organisation will investigate any reported incidents fairly and thoroughly. All parties involved will have the opportunity to present their side of the story. The investigation will be conducted with discretion and respect for the privacy of those involved.
- **Consequences for Violations:** Violations of this policy may result, where appropriate, in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment for employees, workers or volunteers. The

severity of the action will depend on the nature of the violation and the outcome of the investigation, in accordance with the UO's Disciplinary Policy.

7. Creating a Respectful Workplace Culture

- **Awareness Raising:** All new employees, workers and volunteers will be made aware of our Dignity at Work Policy, and where appropriate training sessions will be held to raise awareness and reinforce the importance of maintaining a respectful and professional workplace. It will also be referenced in any third-party contracts.
- **Encouraging Open Dialogue:** The organisation encourages an open dialogue about personal boundaries and appropriate workplace behaviour. Everyone is welcome to discuss any concerns or seek clarification about this policy with the Orchestra Manager, Line Manager (for admin) or the People & Culture Leader.
- **Commitment to Inclusion:** As a creative organisation, we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where all employees feel respected and valued. This policy is part of our broader effort to maintain a workplace where everyone can thrive without fear of harassment or discomfort.

8. Protection from detriment

Anyone who makes complaints or participates in any investigation under this policy in good faith will be protected from any form of intimidation or victimisation and shall not be subjected to any form of detrimental treatment because of their involvement. Every effort will be made to ensure that those making complaints and others who give evidence or information in connection with the complaint will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, in accordance with the UO's Disciplinary Policy.

9. Malicious or False Information

No employee, worker or volunteer should intentionally, recklessly or negligently make a false or misleading representation under this policy. Anyone who, after investigation, is found to have provided false information or to have acted in bad faith may be subject to action under the UO's Disciplinary Policy

Contact Information:

For any questions or concerns about this policy, please contact the People & Culture Leader,
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