

Bullying & Harassment Policy

Statement

Merton Music Foundation (MMF) opposes bullying, harassment and discrimination and will not tolerate such behaviour within the organisation or its networks. MMF is committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect.

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe and professional working environment for all MMF staff, tutors, trustees and visitors creating a positive organisational culture across the charity.

This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as at work-related events or social functions. It covers bullying and harassment by staff, which may include partners, and also by third parties such as customers, suppliers or visitors to our premises.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it as the need arises.

Moving Music Forward

Our Values:

Joy

Music is for life – music is life. Happiness should permeate everything we do.

www.mmf.org.uk/vision

What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.

It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include, for example:

- Unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
- Offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content
- Mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

What is bullying?

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include:

- Physical or psychological threats
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision
- Inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

If you are being harassed or bullied

If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to your line manager, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.

If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally under our Grievance Policy.

We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint, where possible. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person accused during the investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, we will inform you of our decision. If we consider you have been harassed or bullied by an employee the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. If the harasser or bully is a third party such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.

Protection and support for those involved

Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Record-keeping

Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our data protection obligations.

Policy Review

This policy should be reviewed biennially by the SLT or as required in response to changes in statutory guidance.

Updated: Feb 22