

ALMEIDA THEATRE

Conduct and Respect Policy

The Almeida is committed to creating an environment in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We value all our staff, our performers and artists of all kinds, and our audiences.

The Almeida is dedicated to promoting a working environment in which everyone is treated equally and can flourish. This conduct and respect policy is core to the Almeida's commitment.

Who is this policy for?

This policy applies to everyone working with the Almeida (employees, artists, contractors, consultants, interns, and those working on casual and freelance contracts).

Failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action. Breaches of the policy may also represent breaches of the law, and may result in legal sanctions for the individual and/or the Almeida.

Please read this policy and make sure you understand how it relates to your role and position within the Almeida. If you have any questions, please speak to Fiona Greenhill (General Manager).

What is Harassment and Bullying?

We define harassment & bullying as unwanted behaviour which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating a hostile, intimidating, degrading, offensive or humiliating working environment for them. We are committed to providing a positive, safe and supportive working environment in which the dignity of everyone working with us is respected. We all share the underlying principle that harassment and bullying will not be tolerated.

Harassment is any action, conduct or behaviour which you or a group of staff finds unwelcome, intimidating, upsetting, offensive, embarrassing or humiliating. It can be open or covert.

It may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, maternity, pregnancy, marital or civil partnership status, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. It's important to know that what's relevant is how the person feels rather than your intention.

Bullying is persistent behaviour or action, directed against an individual, which is intimidating, offensive or abusive, and which undermines confidence and/or self-esteem. It may be offensive, intimidating, malicious, deliberate or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures - or is intended to do so.

Bullying or harassment may be towards an individual or groups of people. It may be obvious or it may be insidious. It may be face to face or in writing, email, phone, social media etc. It may take place in private or in public. Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome.

Examples of harassing behaviour include but are not limited to:

- Verbal and written harassment through jokes, racist/sexist/ageist remarks, offensive language, gossip and slander, threats, letters
- Visual material, graffiti, obscene gestures, or any other offensive material
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Coercion, including pressure for sexual favours
- Showing pornography or other offensive material
- Isolation or non-co-operation at work, exclusion from social activities

- Unwanted pressure to participate in political/religious or other groups
- Intrusion by pestering, spying following etc

It is important to emphasise that harassment results from this kind of behaviour if it is unwanted. It should not be confused with any such behaviour that is accepted by the individual.

Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. In addition to the above unwanted conduct, it can arise where a person engages in any kind of unwanted sexual behaviour (or gender reassignment or sex related behaviour).

Examples of bullying behaviour can include but are not limited to:

- Verbal or physical threats or intimidation
- Humiliating someone in front of others
- Unjustified, persistent criticism
- Offensive or abusive personal remarks
- Regularly isolating or excluding someone
- Regularly criticising someone even if they're doing a good job
- Claiming someone else's work as your own and taking the credit
- Belittling someone's opinion
- Making false allegations or spreading malicious rumours
- Monitoring work unnecessarily and intrusively
- Changing elements of a job role without reason
- Imposing unfair sanctions
- Misuse of power or position
- Making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- Preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

However, throughout this, performance management that is legitimate, constructive and fair or justified criticism of an employee's performance or behaviour at work is not bullying.

There may also be circumstances in which an individual is subjected to unwanted behaviour by someone outside of the Almeida, such as a supporter or audience member.

If you feel that you have been bullied or harassed by audience members, supporters, or visitors, you should report it to your line manager who will take appropriate action.

How can I help stop harassment and bullying?

We ask everyone working at or for the Almeida to consider the impact of their actions or comments on others and to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

You can help to do this by:

- being aware of how your own behaviour may affect others and changing it, if necessary - you can still cause offence even if you are "only joking"
- treating your colleagues with dignity and respect
- taking a stand if you think inappropriate jokes or comments are being made
- making it clear to others when you find their behaviour unacceptable
- intervening, if possible, to stop harassment or bullying and giving support to recipients
- making it clear that you find harassment and bullying unacceptable
- reporting harassment or bullying to your line manager or the General Manager and supporting the Almeida in the investigation of complaints
- if a complaint of harassment or bullying is made, not pre-judging or victimising the complainant or alleged harasser.

Managers have a responsibility to:

- set a good example
- ensure that there is a supportive working environment
- make sure that your teams know what standards of behaviour are expected of them
- intervene to stop bullying or harassment
- report promptly to the General Manager any complaint of bullying or harassment, or any incident of bullying or harassment witnessed by them.

How do I report it?

If you feel you are being bullied or harassed, you may initially consider raising the problem informally with the person responsible, if you feel able to.

You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you have the option of an informal or formal complaint.

You should speak to your line manager, the General Manager or any other senior manager, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in whether to resolve the issue formally or informally.

If you wish to take forward an informal complaint

You can ask a manager to approach the person, either with you, or without you but on your behalf. It is worth emphasising here that the aim of taking action is to stop or change the behaviour of the person causing the harassment or bullying. Unless they are made aware of the effect they are having, they are unlikely to change. This is why it is important to take steps to explain this to them.

If you wish to take forward a formal complaint

If the situation continues, or if it is not appropriate to resolve it informally, you should raise it through the formal grievance procedure. As such your complaint should be in writing with full details of the incident(s) including the type of behaviour, dates, duration of the problem, names of any witnesses and any action already taken to stop the problem.

If the allegations relate to either the Artistic Director or the Executive Director you may address your grievance to a member of the Board of Trustees.

It is important in all such situations, for everyone concerned, that any action is taken as soon after the incident(s) as possible.

What if I am accused of bullying or harassment?

If someone approaches you informally about your behaviour, do not dismiss the complaint out of hand because you were only joking or think the complainant is being too sensitive. Remember that different people find different things acceptable and everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others. You may have offended someone unintentionally. If that is the case, the person concerned may be content with an explanation and an apology from you and an assurance that you will be careful in future not to behave in a way that you now know may cause offence. Provided that you do not repeat the behaviour that has caused offence that may well be the end of the matter.

What happens next?

Anything reported will be investigated and usually in the first instance by the General Manager, unless the report directly concerns them as an individual, in which case the matter will normally be investigated by the Executive Director.

The complaint will be dealt with fairly, confidentially and sensitively using the general format of the Almeida's grievance procedure. Bullying or harassment is a serious issue and will be treated as such. Details of the complaint, including the names of the complainant, and person(s) accused, will be disclosed on a 'need to know' basis

If appropriate, the matter will be dealt with informally; sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease.

Where the complaint is found to be upheld and the individual is an employee, the matter will normally amount to misconduct or gross misconduct and be dealt with through the Almeida's disciplinary procedures. Where bullying or harassment amounts to gross misconduct, dismissal without notice may be appropriate. Where the individual is a contractor/third party, the Almeida will take appropriate action according to the seriousness of the offence. Such action and investigation may also lead to immediate termination of the individual's engagement with the Almeida.

Anyone who makes a complaint or who participates in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. "Good faith" does not mean that a reported concern must be correct, but it does require that a Worker be truthful when reporting a concern. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Retaliation against someone or the victimisation of someone who reports a problem in good faith may result in sanctions against the retaliator, up to and including termination of their contract with the the Almeida.

You can talk to any one of the following - whether formally or informally:

Rupert Goold, Artistic Director at rgoold@almeida.co.uk

Denise Wood, Executive Director at dwood@almeida.co.uk

Fiona Greenhill, General Manager at confidential@almeida.co.uk

Luke Johnson, Chair of the Board plus our nominated Trustees Lucy Perman and Tanya Seghatchain at Boardconfidential@almeida.co.uk