



## Wigan Little Theatre Code of Conduct and Behaviour

This Code of Conduct and Behaviour is designed to clarify Wigan Little Theatre (WLT) has expectations of how all members should conduct themselves whilst involved in the activities of the theatre. Our responsibilities are both legal and moral. Legally, the theatre has to comply with the Equality Act 2010 in ensuring that no one within the theatre experiences unfair discrimination on the basis of their sex, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and gender reassignment. Morally, we all want the theatre to be a place that we enjoy coming to and where everyone can feel valued, comfortable, supported and secure. The theatre is totally reliant on volunteers and therefore we have to operate with a higher degree of trust in each other than would necessarily be the case for a business with contractual employment relationships.

By following this Code of Conduct your reputation, and the reputation of Wigan Little Theatre, will be upheld and protected.

### All individuals involved in WLT activities are expected to:

- Treat everyone with respect;
- Be fair, discreet, considerate and honest in all dealings with others;
- Refrain from any behaviour which will bring WLT into disrepute;
- Display control, respect and professionalism in all activities;
- Be courteous in dealings with others;
- Control their temper;
- Refrain from any violent behaviour.
- WLT will not tolerate discrimination, bullying, verbal or physical abuse, or sexual harassment against any member of or visitor to the theatre. A zero tolerance approach is taken.

All existing members of the organisation should receive (or have access to) a copy of this Code of Conduct and Behaviour. All potential new members should have an opportunity to read it on joining.

### The Role of The Committee

The Committee is the strategic decision-making and governance body of the theatre. Members are duly elected by WLT members. Committee members have a collective responsibility for the strategic oversight of: the operation of theatre business; the development of and compliance with, policies and procedures; and the health and emotional well-being of WLT members and visitors.

Committee members should:

- Set a good example in their own behaviour and conduct
- Be attentive to and observant of the ways that WLT members interact and keep a regular health check on the overall situation to ensure that it meets the expectations of this Code

- Be approachable and welcoming so that WLT members feel supported if they need to talk with committee about any issue, particularly around conduct and behaviour.

### **The Role of the Director of a Production**

The Director of a production has responsibility for the overall practical and creative interpretation of their production. The Director has the right to select actors and crew and is involved at all stages of the process, from the design, pre-production and rehearsal phases, right through to the final performance and subsequent set strike.

The Director has ultimate responsibility for the performance. They may be assisted in their role by Assistant Directors, a Stage Manager and the Technical Teams.

Directors work closely with their production team and the performers to create a performance which connects with the audience. They therefore need to be able to coordinate effectively across a wide range of disciplines and with artistic vision.

The Director should:

- Strive to create a good, harmonious, supportive working environment;
- Start the planning process early, involve everyone in the team and be clear about personal expectations;
- Treat members of their cast with respect e.g not make them feel vulnerable nor waste their time;
- Be reasonable in their demands on time, energy and enthusiasm of performers and crew;
- Teach their cast the principles of theatre etiquette and stage craft and encourage gratification through achievement and a sense of fulfilment.

### **The Role of Actors and Crew**

All actors (and where appropriate crew) should:

- Commit themselves to the production and all rehearsals
- Learn lines as quickly as possible
- Co-operate with each other within the production team. Accept the Director's advice in the spirit it is given for he/she is ultimately responsible for the performance and sees the production as a whole
- Be aware that the Director and Stage Manager are the only persons who should direct actors. Actors should not direct other actors in the production
- Be respectful of the Theatre. This involves keeping the WLT's appearance clean and professional i.e. pick up and clean up after yourself
- Be responsible and take care of all props and set items. Remember that some are borrowed and are not replaceable;
- Not move anyone's prop, costumes or personal items without their knowledge and consent;
- Take responsibility for storing personal items, including costumes and props in appropriate places;
- Be on time for all rehearsals and performances. In production, all performers and technical teams should be at the theatre at least 35 minutes before the show. Doors open for the audience 30 minutes before the start of the show.

### **The Role of Front of House and Bar Volunteers**

All FoH and Bar volunteers should:

- Understand that they are in a customer-facing role, and as such, they act as ambassadors for the theatre. A successful business and licensed premises relies on excellent service quality and everyone should conduct themselves according to the highest standards of behaviour
- Recognise that audience members are our customers, and volunteers should endeavour to be courteous and helpful at all times
- Be on time for all performances. Front of House and Bar volunteers should be at the Theatre at least 35 minutes before a show opens. Doors open for the audience 30 minutes before the start of the show
- Deal with any complaints respectfully and promptly, referring issues to committee where necessary and appropriate

### **Child and Youth members**

- The Theatre has a Safeguarding Policy which should be adhered to in all interactions with children and young people in the Theatre
- Actors and crew under the age of 18 will have a designated member of the production team responsible for their duty of care who will advocate on their behalf, where necessary, if problems arise
- The Director will liaise with the assigned advocate on any problems involving the child or young person

### **General Considerations**

In addition to the behaviour already outlined all members must be aware that:

- The theatre is near a residential area. At all times neighbours should be respected and any noise past 11pm should be kept to a minimum
- Honesty is expected from all theatre members. Care should be taken of all property whether it belongs to the theatre or to others
- Stealing will not be tolerated
- Discretion is expected from all WLT members in relation to all productions. Personal information should not be given out or shared unless permission has been given to do so. There should be no public posting of stories, photographs or videos relating to productions without the ratification of the Publicity Officer (including on social media websites such as Facebook, You Tube, Instagram etc.)

### **Health and Safety**

- Everyone has the right to participate in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe
- All actors and crew should be full briefed about safety procedures and potential risks by the Stage Manager at the start of the rehearsal period on the stage
- All members must take responsibility for their own Health and safety, ensuring that their actions do not risk the health and safety of themselves or others
- It is a member's duty to inform the committee's Health and Safety representative if they believe they have a disability or medical condition which could impact on their participation.
- All hazards, accidents or injuries should be reported in line with WLT's Health and Safety procedure.

### **Alcohol and Drug consumption**

- All activities at WLT must be lawful. This particularly applies to the consumption of prohibited and illegal drugs
- Alcohol can only be consumed by people of legal drinking age and should not be consumed by performers and crew until after the show. Alcohol may only be consumed to the extent that it does not affect the comfort, safety or performance of any member, performer, crew or volunteer, nor harm the reputation of WLT.
- Only alcohol purchased from the theatre bar may be consumed on the premises.
- Only members who have been trained and authorised to serve behind the bar may do so.

### **Computer, Email and Internet Usage**

- WLT Members are expected to use the Internet responsibly and productively. Internet access is limited to theatre-related activities only and personal use is not permitted
- All Internet data that is composed, transmitted and/or received by the WLT computer systems is considered to belong to WLT and is recognised as part of its official data. It is therefore subject to disclosure for legal reasons or to other appropriate third parties
- The equipment, services and technology used to access the Internet are the property of WLT and the organisation reserves the right to monitor Internet traffic and monitor and access data that is composed, sent or received through its online connections
- Emails sent via WLT email system should not contain content that is deemed to be offensive. This includes, though is not restricted to, the use of vulgar or harassing language/images
- All sites and downloads may be monitored and/or blocked by WLT if they are deemed to be harmful and/or not productive to business
- The installation of software such as instant messaging technology is strictly prohibited

### **Unacceptable use of the internet includes, but is not limited to:**

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images on the Internet or via the WLT email service
- Using computers to perpetrate any form of fraud, and/or software, film or music piracy
- Stealing, using, or disclosing someone else's password without authorization
- Downloading, copying or pirating software and electronic files that are copyrighted or without authorization
- Sharing confidential material, trade secrets, or proprietary information outside of the organisation
- Hacking into unauthorized websites
- Sending or posting information that is defamatory to WLT, its products/services, members, colleagues and/or customers
- Introducing malicious software onto WLT's network and/or jeopardizing the security of the organization's electronic communications systems
- Sending or posting chain letters, solicitations, or advertisements not related to business purposes or activities
- Passing off personal views as representing those of the organization

### **Breach of the Code of Conduct**

- Blatant disregard of any of this Code of Conduct and Behaviour may jeopardize your ability to be a member of WLT
- Members may also be held personally liable for damages caused by any violations of this policy
- If anyone feels that they have been unfairly treated or that this Code of Conduct and Behaviour has been breached in any way, then they are encouraged in the first instance to raise this issue informally with any committee member
- Committee members take the issue of appropriate conduct and behaviour within the Theatre very seriously and will do all they can to support the complainant and thoroughly investigate the issue to reach a satisfactory resolution.

## **Appendix: What is bullying and harassment?**

Bullying may be characterised as:

*offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.*

Harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is: *unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.*

Bullying and harassment is a very difficult and sensitive area to navigate. Behaviour that is considered bullying or harassment by one person may be considered firm leadership, or friendly and jokey behaviour by another. Most people will agree on extreme cases of bullying and harassment but it is sometimes the 'grey' areas that cause most problems.

Bullying and harassment can often be hard to recognise – symptoms may not be obvious to others, and may be insidious. Those on the receiving end may think 'perhaps this is normal behaviour in this organisation'. They may be accused of 'overreacting', and worry that they won't be believed if they do report incidents. People being bullied or harassed may sometimes appear to overreact to something that seems relatively trivial but which may be the 'last straw' following a series of incidents.

It is important to note that in cases of complaint about behaviour, the consideration about whether behaviour is acceptable or not depends on how the recipient of the behaviour feels, not on the intent or motivation of the person being complained about.

It is good practice to offer some examples of what can be deemed to be unacceptable behaviour and this may include:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour
- ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- deliberately unfair treatment, especially if related to a characteristic protected under the Equality Act 2010 (e. age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation)
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- inappropriate or offensive comments about an individual, especially if related to a characteristic protected under the Equality Act 2010.

- unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials, making sexual comments about an individual's body or conduct, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected

Harassment of a sexual nature is one of the most common forms of harassment and is specifically outlawed by the Equality Act 2010. Unacceptable behaviour that is sexual in nature can be verbal or non-verbal and could include sexual comments and gestures as well as sexual touching.

Harassment related to other relevant protected characteristics are also outlawed by the Equality Act 2010.

See also WLT's Safeguarding Policy, Safeguarding Procedure, Complaints Procedure at [wiganlittletheatre.co.uk/join us](http://wiganlittletheatre.co.uk/join-us)

This policy was introduced in 2022

*Wigan Little Theatre is a voluntary organisation run by and for anyone interested in providing high quality, wide-ranging, traditional and innovative theatre, accessible to all.*