

# Stevenage Lytton Players

## Bullying and Harassment Policy



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### 1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1. This policy sets out the Stevenage Lytton Players' ("SLP's") commitment to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all members, volunteers, participants, staff and audiences. Bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation are unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- 1.2. This policy should be read alongside the following documents:
  - SLP Code of Conduct
  - SLP Public Behaviour Policy
  - SLP Complaints Policy & Procedure
  - SLP Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
  - SLP Safeguarding Policy
- 1.3. This policy applies to all rehearsals, performances, workshops, social events, online communication, and any situation where individuals are representing the theatre group. The Trustees are responsible for maintaining, implementing and reviewing this policy.

### 2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

- 2.1. SLP recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, and the common-law duty of care owed to volunteers and participants. As a registered CIO, we also follow Charity Commission expectations on safeguarding, governance, and volunteer management.
- 2.2. Nothing in this policy reduces the rights of individuals under UK law.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Bullying** is repeated or persistent behaviour that demeans, intimidates, offends or undermines an individual or group. It may be:
  - verbal (e.g., insults, shouting, ridicule)
  - physical (e.g., intimidation, threats)
  - psychological (e.g., exclusion, manipulation)
  - written or online (e.g., messages, posts, emails)Bullying can be obvious or subtle, direct or indirect.

- 3.2. **Harassment** is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic (such as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation) which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. A single incident may constitute harassment.
- 3.3. **Sexual Harassment** includes unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature, such as inappropriate comments, physical contact, suggestive messages or sexualised humour. A single incident may constitute harassment.
- 3.4. **Victimisation** occurs when someone is treated detrimentally because they have raised a concern, made a complaint, or supported someone else to do so.

#### **4. Responsibilities**

##### 4.1. Members and Volunteers

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Follow the Code of Conduct and behave appropriately in all group activities.
- Report concerns as soon as possible using the Complaints Policy & Procedure or Safeguarding Policy, as appropriate.

##### 4.2. Executive and Management Committee Members:

- Lead by example and promote a culture of respect.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour promptly and sensitively.
- Report/escalate concerns where required.

##### 4.3. Trustees:

- Hold overall responsibility for this policy and ensure its alignment with related policies.
- Ensure the organisation promotes an environment free from bullying and harassment.
- Oversee the handling of reports fairly, promptly and confidentially.
- Review this policy annually or after significant incidents.

#### **5. Standards of Behaviour**

- 5.1. All individuals must behave in accordance with the SLP Code of Conduct and Public Behaviour Policy.
- 5.2. Examples of behaviour considered unacceptable include:
  - Insults, ridicule, shouting, name-calling or aggressive language.
  - Persistent criticism without justification or constructive intent.
  - Excluding someone socially or within group activities.
  - Spreading rumours or malicious gossip.
  - Misuse of status, seniority or roles to intimidate others.
  - Unwanted physical contact or sexualised behaviour.
  - Harassing or hostile behaviour online (social media, messaging apps, email).
- 5.3. Constructive direction during rehearsals, artistic critique, or debate is not bullying when delivered respectfully and appropriately.

## **6. Reporting Concerns**

6.1. Concerns should be raised through the SLP Complaints Policy & Procedure, which provides informal and formal options.

- Informal resolution may be suitable for misunderstandings or minor issues.
- Formal complaints should be made when the behaviour is serious, repeated, or where the individual feels unsafe addressing it informally.
- Individuals may bypass informal stages when necessary.

## **7. Responding to and Handling Cases**

7.1. All reports will be taken seriously and treated with fairness, impartiality and confidentiality.

7.2. The Executive Committee and/or Trustees will decide whether the matter can be resolved informally or requires formal action.

7.3. Formal cases may be referred into the SLP Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

7.4. Possible outcomes include:

- Mediation or facilitated discussion
- Training or behaviour-improvement measures
- Written warnings
- Suspension or removal of membership/role
- Referral to external agencies (e.g., police, safeguarding bodies) where appropriate

7.5. Both the complainant and the respondent will be informed of the process and supported appropriately.

## **8. Safeguarding Concerns**

8.1. Any bullying or harassment that involves a child or vulnerable adult MUST be reported to the Safeguarding team.

- SLP Safeguarding Policy details the necessary steps and contact information.

8.2. The Safeguarding team will follow SLP's safeguarding procedures and may need to contact statutory authorities immediately.

## **9. Protection Against Victimisation**

9.1. No person will be treated unfavourably for raising a concern in good faith or supporting someone who has done so. Victimation is itself a disciplinary matter and may result in sanctions under the SLP Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

## **10. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping**

- Information will be handled sensitively and stored securely in accordance with UK GDPR requirements.
- Records of complaints, investigations and outcomes will be retained only for as long as necessary.

## **11. Reviewing This Policy**

11.1. The Trustees will review this policy at least annually or earlier if:

- legal or regulatory changes occur,
- related policies are updated, or
- an incident highlights the need for revisions.

11.2. Feedback from members may be considered when updating the policy.

**Approved by the Trustees of the Stevenage Lytton Players**

13 December 2025

## Signatories:

I have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy.