



1. Introduction

Beltane Fire Society are committed to providing an environment where our members, contractors and those who interact with us feel valued, respected and are free from harassment or bullying.

This policy covers the treatment and consequences of bullying, harassment, and victimisation of, and by, Board members, contractors, volunteers, agency staff and anyone else who is involved directly with Beltane Fire Society (BFS). All bullying and harassment will be treated as misconduct and will be addressed under the BFS resolutions, disciplinary or grievance procedures. Serious and severe bullying or harassment may constitute gross misconduct and result in revoking of membership and, if necessary, criminal proceedings.

The policy applies to all BFS events, includes individual group rehearsals and sits alongside the BFS Equality and Diversity Policy. The application of this policy is intended to cover the display of inappropriate behaviours both within and outwith, but directly related to, the Society. This includes social contexts and in the use of social media e.g. Facebook, twitter, blogging sites etc.

2. Responsibilities

BFS will:

- investigate all reports or allegations of bullying or harassment swiftly and treat all cases in strict confidence
- seek ways to protect anyone making a claim of harassment or bullying, providing that the claim is made in good faith
- seek ways to protect anyone acting as a witness or supporting a colleague who is raising a grievance in good faith

BFS members are expected to:

- set an example to others by their own conduct and behaviour, being aware of the impact on others
- treat all other members, contractors and related persons in a professional manner and with courtesy and respect at all times.
- raise concerns about someone's behaviour or conduct with your named person in the first instance - if your concern relates to your named person you should escalate your concern to the Blues, or Board as appropriate.
- Challenge behaviour in others that you believe breaches, or may lead to breaches, of this policy, intervening if necessary to support those affected

3. Policy

Bullying is defined as offensive, malicious or intimidating behaviour which is deliberately targeted to cause distress, humiliation or offence. It can also be the misuse or abuse of power.

Harassment is defined as unwarranted and unsolicited conduct or comments. This is usually related to a trait or characteristic protected by legislation, such as race, disability, gender, gender



reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation or age (“protected characteristics” for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010) – which undermines the dignity of the recipient, who may feel degraded, undermined, humiliated or offended.

Harassment may be the unintended result of persistent targeted comments or conduct. Sometimes a comment intended as a joke by one person is offensive to another, and this can be considered as a form of harassment.

Victimisation is defined as a situation where someone is singled out for unfavourable treatment as a result of their making a complaint under this or a related policy, or supported someone else who has raised a grievance or issued proceedings.

Examples of bullying and harassing behaviours include when someone:

- puts you down or deliberately embarrasses you
- makes insulting or offensive comments or jokes
- scares you, makes threats or shouts at you
- uses insulting words or threatening body language
- ignores you or unreasonably keeps you out of meetings or events
- stops or blocks you from doing your job or role
- threatens you or commits physical violence
- leaves offensive items around your practice or working areas

BFS rehearsals and events may have an informal and relaxed atmosphere. Whilst we expect our members to be polite and courteous to others the social norms of the society may mean there is the use of bad language, that people may be less clothed than might otherwise be usual, and that levels of physical affection are higher amongst colleagues.

Whilst Group Organisers should set out clearly what to expect in a group context, they should also make sure people are aware that personal boundaries vary and that bullying and harassment is never acceptable. Consent should be discussed within groups and it should be mentioned that it should never be taken to be implicit due to group culture. The standards of behaviour and how to navigate this kind of environment are set out in our Safer Spaces policy and Principles of Participation.

4. Procedures

BFS aims to resolve any complaints as quickly as possible and all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

a) Informal Stage

If you wish to make a complaint about harassment, bullying or victimisation, you should first consider raising the matter directly with the person concerned in order to resolve the problem informally.



Sometimes the person may not even be aware that their behaviour is having a negative impact, and an informal chat may be all that is needed to put things right. You may need to explain why you feel the behaviour, comments or actions are unacceptable.

In a group situation you may ask your Group Organiser to pass on a reminder about acceptable behaviour to the group.

Note that this stage is only for smaller issues and anything more serious may go directly to the following stages, especially if you feel unsafe approaching the person / people whose behaviour has become unacceptable.

b) Resolutions Stage

If you feel unable to resolve the matter yourself or your GO is unable to resolve the situation informally, you should speak to the Blues or Board (or ask your GO to do so for you), who will try to help you resolve the issue, initially, through our resolutions procedures.

If you are a GO who is seeing a problem which you feel you cannot deal with on your own, you may also forward it to the Blues or Board to help you handle the situation.

c) Complaints Stage

If the informal approach or resolutions stage is not successful in resolving the issue, a formal complaint can be made at any stage through BFS's grievance procedure.

Malicious Complaints

BFS expects that all complaints made under this policy are genuine and made in good faith. However, if it is determined that the complaint is in fact malicious or made in bad faith it will not be taken any further, and the member may be subject to disciplinary action.

THIS POLICY WAS FORMALLY APPROVED BY THE BFS BOARD ON:	14 AUGUST 2017
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