



BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY

First Concert 1845

www.bfcs.org.uk

**President:
THE LORD MAYOR OF
BIRMINGHAM**

**Music Director:
DAVID WYNNE**

Registered Charity No. 510847

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

Statement of intent

This policy sets out the commitment of BFCS to providing a positive and harmonious working environment, free of bullying and harassment, in which our members, visitors, volunteers and members of the public will be treated with dignity and respect.

1. Everyone in BFCS is working together to create a community where harassment or bullying in any form and of any description will not be tolerated.
2. As part of its overall Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, BFCS is committed to offering equality of opportunity to anyone wishing to join in its activities or enjoy its concert performances, irrespective of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.
3. BFCS is committed to ensuring that all members are treated with dignity, fairness and respect.
4. The Committee is committed to creating an environment for positive relationships.
5. This policy is concerned with the prevention of harassment and bullying and aims to provide a means of challenging unreasonable or unjustifiable behaviour.
6. Harassment and bullying will not be permitted or condoned by the Committee.

To whom does this policy apply?

All members of BFCS and professional musicians providing a service to BFCS have a responsibility to comply with this policy. The Committee has a particular responsibility to implement it by creating a good environment and by dealing with people in a caring manner.

Definition of harassment and bullying

Bullying means any unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated or offended. Harassment is unlawful under equality laws. Harassment and bullying may also be civil or criminal offences and may contravene health and safety law. When this happens in relation to a protected characteristic (listed in Point 2 above) as defined in the Equality Act 2010 it is harassment:

Examples of harassment and bullying include but are not limited to:

- a. displays of rage at a fellow member in public and/or in private
- b. personal insults and name-calling
- c. verbal abuse or offensive comments, jokes or pranks
- d. persistent unjust criticism and public humiliation
- e. spreading malicious rumours
- f. ridiculing or demeaning someone.
- g. victimisation
- h. lewd or suggestive comments
- i. unwelcome sexual advances
- j. inappropriate touching
- k. physical abuse such as hitting, pushing or jostling
- l. displaying offensive materials

Harassment and bullying are characterised as aggressive, intimidating, malicious, offensive or insulting behaviour or abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying or harassment can take place face-to-face, by letter, text message, email, phone or by a social media post.

It is important to realise that conduct which one person may find acceptable another may find totally unacceptable. Therefore, members must be treated with respect and appropriate sensitivity.

How to report harassment or bullying

The Committee will ensure that any allegations of harassment or bullying are considered seriously and confidentially. Lack of confidentiality can harm both the complainant and also the person accused. The Committee recognises that members may fear victimisation for making or being involved in a complaint and so is committed to ensure complainants do not suffer.

A member who experiences, or who witnesses, behaviour that seems to be harassment or bullying, should take action in response to the behaviour.

The first thing a member can do is ask the person to stop their behaviour. If that does not work, or if a member is uncomfortable attempting that, then the member can report their concern to BFCS leadership. If the complainant does not feel able to do this alone they should approach the Chair or Vice Chair who will arrange for someone to support.

If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally in this way, the BFCS Complaints and Grievances procedure should be used to formally address the issue and seek a resolution.

The complainant may find it helpful to keep records of incidents of behaviour which they consider to be harassment or bullying, noting the date and time of the incident and details of any witnesses. Such records can be helpful in describing the problem and may also be used if any formal action is subsequently taken. All correspondence and documentation will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Reports of harassment or bullying can be made in writing or in person to the Chair, Vice Chair or a Committee Member.

Responsibilities of BFCS members

The Committee requires all BFCS members to maintain a high standard of conduct in relationships with other members and people providing a service to BFCS.

This policy further requires all BFCS members to act to eliminate any harassment or bullying of which they are aware.

Harassment or bullying of any kind should not be dismissed by BFCS members as trivial or insignificant, as a matter of interest only to a minority or as behaviour that can be excused as 'fun or a joke'.

The Committee will not tolerate intimidation, victimisation, retaliation or discrimination against an individual for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation, whether or not the complaint is upheld. Where such action is alleged, the matter will be dealt with in the same way as an allegation of harassment or bullying.

False or malicious complaints of harassment or bullying will not be condoned. In that instance, the Committee will decide whether the complainant can remain as a member of BFCS, with or without conditions, or whether they should be refused ongoing membership.

Revision	Rev. Date	Description of change	Revised by
1	Mar 2018	Original issue	Trustees
2	Aug 2020	Heading and font updated	Trustees

3	Nov 2024	Policy updated	Trustees
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