

HARRASSMENT, ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT POLICY

The Board of Directors (the “Board”) of The Guelph Little Theatre (“GLT” or “the organization”) is committed to providing a safe environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Harassment and/or abuse will not be tolerated from any person at any time.

Definitions

Harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comments or conduct against a person that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome or to constitute sexual harassment. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) verbal, physical or visual forms of harassment;
- (b) behavior or expression that could offend any reasonable person;
- (c) inappropriate conduct that may or may not be intentional;
- (d) a series of conduct or comments that happens over a period of time or one time, if the incident is serious, egregious or constitutes a threat;
- (e) incidents where the victim does not expressly object to the harassment;
- (f) unwelcome comments or conduct which may or may not be directed at a specific person; and
- (g) comments or conduct that ridicule or disparage a group that could cause humiliation, insult, apprehension or disruption that poisons the GLT environment.

Sexual harassment means:

- (a) engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a person because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably be known to be unwelcome; or
- (b) making sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit to or take advantage of another person and the offending person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.

Sexual abuse or misconduct means non-consensual sexual activity, contact or behaviour by one person towards another, and includes but is not limited to:

- (a) any sexual activity, solicitation, involvement or attempt of sexual contact with a person who is a minor (under 18 years old);
- (b) sexual activity with another who is legally incapable or otherwise unable to give consent;
- (c) unwanted and intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature;
- (d) material such as pornographic or sexually explicit images, posters, calendars or objects;

- (e) unwelcome sexual activities, advances, comments, innuendoes, jokes, gestures, electronic communications or messages, exploitation, exposure, leering, stalking, or invasion of sexual privacy; or
- (f) direct or implied threats that submission to sexual advances will be a condition of affiliation or involvement with the organization.

Statement of Policy

GLT prohibits and does not tolerate harassment, sexual abuse or misconduct.

All members and volunteers are expected to adhere to this policy and will be held responsible by GLT for not following it. Any person reasonably suspected or believed to have committed harassment, abuse or misconduct will be appropriately disciplined, up to and including termination of membership and reporting to legal authorities.

Reporting to Law Enforcement or Appropriate Child or Adult Protective Services

GLT is committed to following the provincial and federal legal requirements for reporting allegations or incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct to appropriate law enforcement and protective services organizations.

It is the policy of GLT not to attempt to investigate or assess the validity or credibility of an allegation of sexual or physical abuse as a condition before reporting the allegation to proper law enforcement authorities or protective services organizations.

Any GLT member who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based *directly* to child protective services. "Reasonable grounds" refers to the information that an average person, using normal and honest judgment, would need in order to decide to report.

Reporting to the Board

Volunteers are encouraged to report any incidents of harassment, abuse or misconduct to the Board, either directly to any Officer (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Past President), or through an intermediary who shall bring the complaint forward to the Board (such as, house manager, stage manager, director, producer, production chair, social chair, health and safety chair, membership chair, or any other member of GLT whom you feel comfortable speaking to).

In instances where it is safe to do so, people are encouraged to communicate directly to the person in question that the behavior is unwanted and offensive. However, it is not necessary that you directly confront the person who is the source of the incident, complaint or report before notifying any of the individuals listed above. It is recommended that complainants keep a record of incidents, including time, date and the nature of the behavior or activity and any witnesses, if any.

Investigation Procedure

GLT takes all allegations of harassment, abuse or misconduct seriously. The Board will investigate and deal with all complaints or incidents in a fair, respectful and timely manner.

GLT will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation. Information provided about an incident or about a complaint will not be disclosed except as necessary to protect volunteers or other involved persons, to investigate the complaint or incident, to take corrective action or as otherwise required by law. No public statements or comments regarding any actual or alleged incident will be made by the organization without the aid of legal counsel.

The Board will appoint a team of three members, including at least one Officer, to investigate all complaints. GLT and the Board may, at their discretion, consult legal counsel and utilize such outside third party/parties as necessary to conduct an investigation of misconduct. The investigation team will complete a written incident report.

During the course of any investigation, the Board may require the alleged perpetrator to suspend their involvement with GLT pending the outcome of the investigation.

GLT will take every reasonable measure to ensure that those named in complaint of misconduct, or who are closely associated with those involved in the complaint, will not be part of the internal investigative team.

GLT will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective services agencies.

Anti-retaliation and False Allegations

GLT prohibits retaliation made against any member, volunteer, Board member or other person who lodges a good faith complaint of harassment, abuse or misconduct or who participates in any related investigation.

Making knowingly false or malicious accusations of harassment, abuse or misconduct can have serious consequences for those who are wrongly accused. GLT prohibits the making of false or malicious allegations, as well as deliberately providing false information during an investigation. Anyone who violates this rule is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of membership and reporting to legal authorities.

Screening and Selection

As part of its harassment, abuse and misconduct prevention program, GLT is committed to maintaining a diligent screening program for prospective and existing members, volunteers, and others that may have interaction with, are associated with, or are serviced by GLT.

GLT may utilize a variety of methods of screening and selection, including but not limited to applications, personal interviews, criminal background checks, and personal and professional references.



Supervision of Youth

To provide a safe environment for minors, GLT stipulates that a minimum of two adult members supervise or be in attendance with minors during organization-related activities. This is to avoid one-on-one interactions between adults and minors that are not easily observable by others.

If individual meetings with a minor must be held in an office, doors are to remain open. Any closed door meeting with a minor including another adult are to be scheduled in advance with notice to the Board and the door is to remain unlocked.

Date of Annual Policy Review: _____