



Neath Little Theatre  
Westernmoor Road, Neath SA11 1BQ

## **Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy**

This Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy is designed to clarify Neath Little Theatre's expectations of how all members should conduct themselves whilst involved in the activities of the Theatre.

NLT acknowledges the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and affirms that it will never knowingly, in its dealing with its members and guests, give rise to any situation or cause any act that might possibly be taken as "discrimination" under the terms of the Act.

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 and Behaviour Policy your reputation, and the reputation of Neath Little Theatre, will be upheld and protected.

### **All individuals involved in Neath Little Theatre 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 Neath Little Theatre into disrepute;
- Display control, respect and professionalism in all activities;
- Be courteous in dealings with others;
- Control their temper;
- Refrain from any violent behaviour.

In addition, Neath Little Theatre 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 will be taken.

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

This Code should be read in conjunction with Neath Little Theatre's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (that covers the code of behaviour for adults interacting with children and young people) and Data Protection Policy. All policies are reviewed on an annual basis.

## **The Role of General Committee**

The General Committee is the strategic decision-making and governance body of the Theatre. Sitting Officers and Members are duly elected by Theatre members and have a collective responsibility for the strategic oversight of:

- The operation of Theatre business;
- The development of and compliance with, policies and procedures;
- The health and emotional well-being of Theatre members and visitors.

This is done in accordance with Neath Little Theatre's constitution.

Sitting Officers and Members of General Committee should:

- Set a good example in their own behaviour and conduct;
- Be attentive to and observant of the ways that Theatre 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 Theatre members feel supported if they need to bring any issue to the General Committee's attention, 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 liaise with General Committee 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 members of their 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 and positive 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 a sense of achievement and fulfillment.

### **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 and direction 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 Assistant Director are the only persons who should direct actors. Actors should not direct other actors in the production, unless this has been specifically requested by the Director;
- Be respectful of the Theatre. This involves keeping the Theatre'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 irreplaceable;
- 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 45 minutes before the show. (Doors open for the audience 30 minutes before the start of the show and members of a production's cast should not be front of house once doors are open.)

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

A successful business and licensed premises relies on excellent service quality and everyone should conduct themselves according to the highest standards of behaviour. All Front of House and Bar volunteers should:

- Understand that they are in a customer-facing role, and as such, they act as ambassadors for the Theatre;
- Recognise that audience members are our customers, and volunteers should endeavour to be courteous and helpful at all times;
- Be on time for all Club nights and performances. Front of House and Bar volunteers should be at the Theatre at least 15 minutes before front of house opens (doors generally open for the audience 30 minutes before the start of any show/event);
- Deal with any complaints respectfully and promptly, referring issues to General Committee members where necessary and appropriate.

## **Child and Youth members**

The Theatre has a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which should be adhered to in all interactions with children and young people in the Theatre. It is every members' responsibility to familiarise themselves with this policy when interacting with children and young people in the Theatre.

## **General Considerations**

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

- The Theatre is in 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 and equipment (whether it belongs to Neath Little Theatre or to others);
- Stealing will not be tolerated;
- Discretion is expected from all Theatre members in relation to Theatre productions – please do not discuss details of plays or rehearsals with friends/family outside the organisation. There should be no public posting of stories, photographs or videos relating to productions without the ratification of the Publicity Team (including on social media websites such as Facebook, You Tube, Instagram etc.);
- Members' personal information (telephone number, address, email, etc.) should not be given out or shared unless permission has been given to do so.

## **Health and Safety**

Everyone has the right to participate in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe.

- All actors and crew should be fully 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.
- No member should feel obliged to take part in an activity that makes them feel uncomfortable. If this is something related to performing or working backstage in a production, the member needs to relate this to the Director well ahead of the opening night.
- All hazards, accidents or injuries should be reported in line with the Theatre Health and Safety procedures.
- The responsible person for every activity needs to ensure they open the appropriate fire doors in line with the Fire Safety Policy.

## **Alcohol and Drug consumption**

All activities relating to alcohol and drugs on the Neath Little Theatre site must be lawful.

- Illegal drugs are strictly prohibited and cannot be brought onto Theatre premises.
- 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 Neath Little Theatre.
- Only members who have been trained and authorised to serve behind the bar may do so.
- The Licensee (or their nominated stand in) has the final decision on matters of serving alcohol

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

Neath Little Theatre has a Data Protection Policy to which it adheres. All members are entitled to access this document.

When using Neath Little Theatre's own equipment, members are expected to use the Internet responsibly and productively.

- Internet access is limited to Neath Little Theatre-related activities only and personal use is not permitted
- All Internet data that is composed, transmitted and/or received by Neath Little Theatre computer systems is considered to belong to Neath Little Theatre 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 Neath Little Theatre and the Theatre 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 Neath Little Theatre 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 Neath Little Theatre if they are deemed to be harmful and/or not productive to business;
- The installation of unauthorised software on Neath Little Theatre 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 Neath Little Theatre 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 Neath Little Theatre, its products/services, members, colleagues and/or customers
- Introducing malicious software onto Neath Little Theatre 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 and Behaviour Policy**

This Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy is designed to protect ALL members and visitors to Neath Little Theatre. It is envisaged that the majority of breaches of this code would be dealt with at the time of the breach, by challenging the behaviour at the point it occurs and a resolution sought. It is appreciated that putting on a production can sometimes be stressful and pressured and this may lead to unintentional breaches of the code. In these cases, a simple recognition and apology should be enough to resolve the issue. Additionally, it should be remembered that different people have different levels of what is deemed acceptable and intention may be different to the impact of how something is received. Respect, communication and understanding of this is key to resolving issues immediately and something to be encouraged.

However, blatant and repeated disregard of any of this Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy may jeopardise a person's ability to be a member of Neath Little Theatre. 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 Policy has been breached in any way, then they are encouraged in the first instance to raise this issue informally with any sitting member or Officer of General Committee, who has the duty to raise it with the Committee.

General Committee takes 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. Each purported breach will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Resolution will be sought by one or more of the following:

- Discussion by a sub-panel of General Committee and/or the full committee
- Raising in a face-to-face meeting with the member who has reportedly violated the code and a verbal warning given
- A written warning to members who have breached the code
- Holding a restorative meeting with members involved (if consented to by both parties)
- In extreme cases, terminating a person's membership (in line with procedures outlined in the constitution)

All members will be permitted to appeal and put representation to the committee in defence of their actions, however General Committee's ultimate decision will be final.

***Draft Policy created in August 2023***  
***Review date: October 2024***

### **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.

*This document was adopted by Neath Little Theatre's General Committee in November 2023. It is due for review in Autumn 2024.*