

Suffield Players Anti-Harassment Policy

Purpose and Policy:

The Suffield Players seeks to provide and ensure a safe environment, free from harassment and bullying. All **Volunteers** will refrain from **Bullying, Inappropriate Behavior, Unwelcome Attention, or Sexual Harassment**. Any **Volunteer** who violates the policy may be subject to **Corrective Action**.

The Suffield Players is a community theater with the emphasis on community. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Suffield Players Code of Conduct and, as stated in the Code, members are encouraged to talk with one another about anything that makes them uncomfortable. The Policy is not meant as a substitute for communication, but as guidance should communication break down or not be feasible.

This Policy applies to all events related to The Suffield Players whether or not the events occur at Mapleton Hall.

Definitions:

- **Bullying:** language or physical behavior that seeks to harm, intimidate, belittle, or coerce another individual.
- **Complaint:** any verbal or written statement to a **Volunteer with Authority** about one or more incidents involving one or more **Respondents**.
- **Complainant:** the individual who initiates a **Complaint** against one or more individuals. If **Complainant** is a member of the Board of Directors, they will automatically be recused from all material Board discussions, meetings, and communications relating to the **Complaint**.
- **Confidentiality:** Every effort will be made to keep the disclosure of the **Complaint** and the identity of **Complainant** on a “need to know” basis. Nevertheless, for any **Corrective Action** to be effective, neither

the **Complaint** nor the identity of **Complainant** can be kept confidential from the **Respondent**. Any potential **Complainant** should note that, if a **Complaint** is anonymous, then only limited action might be available and no action is likely.

- **Inappropriate behavior:** actions and/or statements that lack civility, which includes but is not limited to:
 - excessive profanity;
 - loud and angry or offensive outbursts;
 - intimidating or threatening actions;
 - intimidating or threatening statements;
 - offensive slurs or jokes or comments about gender expression, sexual identity, appearance, sexual orientation, age, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, or disability.

- **Respondent:** the individual about whom one or more individuals has complained. If **Respondent** is a member of the Board of Directors, they will automatically be recused from all material Board discussions, meetings, and communications relating to the **Complaint**.

- **Retaliation for a Complaint:** when **Respondent** or any **Volunteer** — including the Board of Directors or any of its Members — takes adverse action or makes adverse comments against **Complainant** for filing a **Complaint**. This prohibition includes any conduct or comments made by any **Volunteer** on or off the grounds of Mapleton Hall.

- **Sexual Harassment:** inappropriate touching of a personal nature that occurs as little as once, including but not limited to unsuccessful or successful attempts at kissing, fondling, slapping, squeezing, pinching, or tickling. In addition, any comments of a sexual nature targeted at an individual, including but not limited to comments about an individual's looks, dress, body, body parts, or proclivities.

- **Unwelcome Attention:** includes but is not limited to unsuccessful or successful attempts at blocking, trapping, hugging, invasion of personal space, following, or staring.

- **Volunteer:** Any paid or unpaid individual working on any aspect of a Suffield Players production, on a committee, or in any other capacity at

any location.

- **Volunteer with Authority:** any individual with authority, such as a producer, artistic or musical director, stage manager, or Board Member.

Corrective Action Procedures:

The Suffield Players will review all **Complaints** with dignity and respect. No **Complaint** should be minimized, explained away, or dismissed as a misunderstanding. At the same time, a **Respondent** has the right to be notified of the **Complaint** and to have their response to the **Complaint** heard.

Any **Volunteer with Authority** who receives any **Complaint** will take immediate, appropriate and **Corrective Action** under Part I or Part II below. The recipient of the **Complaint**, if not up to the task, may ask any other **Volunteer with Authority** to intervene.

Part I:

The intent of this Part is to keep minor incidents minor. If the conduct consisted of only occasional remarks or acts that are arguably offensive — those that fall under **Bullying, Inappropriate Behavior**, or single instances of **Unwelcome Attention** — **Corrective Action** may consist of no more than the recipient of the **Complaint** discussing the matter with **Respondent**, explaining why the conduct was inappropriate, and instructing **Respondent** that it should not continue. A copy of the Anti-harassment Policy should be provided to **Respondent** at this time. The recipient of the **Complaint** should follow-up with **Complainant** to discuss the **Corrective Action** taken.

Special note to the Members of the Board of Directors:

Board Members have a fiduciary duty to report all material facts to the Board. Normally, if a Board Member received a **Complaint**, then the **Complaint** and the identities of those involved would be required to be reported to the Board. If, however, a Part I incident is resolved by the Board Member to the satisfaction of all involved, then

the adoption of this Anti-Harassment Policy is an explicit waiver of the fiduciary duty of that Board Member to inform the Board of the **Complaint** or those involved. Again, the purpose of this waiver is to keep minor incidents minor.

Part II:

If the conduct was more severe or pervasive or if it involved an individual who is a minor, it must be reported to the Board of Directors for immediate action. “Severe or pervasive” conduct includes but is not limited to **Retaliation**, frequent **Bullying**, frequent **Inappropriate Behavior**, **Unwelcome Attention**, **Sexual Harassment**, or one or more previous Part I **Complaints** against **Respondent**.

While waiting for the Board of Directors to meet and decide the best course of action, the **Volunteer with Authority** who received the **Complaint** may, at their discretion, separate **Complainant** and **Respondent** by transferring or removing **Respondent** from further interaction with **Complainant**. Other **Volunteers** and **Volunteers with Authority** are instructed to cooperate in implementing the transfer or removal.

Board Members are reminded of their fiduciary duty to avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest. If a Board Member is a family member or close friend of **Complainant** or **Respondent**, then the Board Member should recuse themselves from all material Board discussions, meetings, and communications relating to the **Complaint**. Board Members should be mindful of any urge to shape the outcome of any **Complaint** — this urge likely is a signal that a conflict of interest is at work. If in doubt, bring your concerns to your fellow Board Members for discussion.

When informed of a **Complaint** under this Part, the Board of Directors may meet in a special emergency meeting pursuant to the By-Laws, the Articles of Incorporation, and any other binding documents or laws. As an initial matter, the Board of Directors should:

- 1) Meet as a “committee of the whole” to avoid having material facts recorded in the Board minutes. Meeting as a “committee of the

whole” is meant to keep the **Complaint** and the identities of those involved on a “need to know” basis;

2) Appoint one or more Board Members as point of contact with **Complainant** and **Respondent**. All communications between the Board and the parties should proceed only through these appointed Board Members; and

3) If **Respondent** is not already aware of the details of **Complaint**, decide when and how to notify **Respondent** of those details.

The Board will then determine the best course of action, including but not limited to:

- **Mediation.** Requiring third-party mediation between **Complainant** and **Respondent**. The mediator may be one or more Board Members, a Suffield Player member appointed by the Board, or a third-party volunteer mediator brought in by the Board. If any party refuses to mediate, then the Board may decide to dismiss the **Complaint** or proceed with an investigation;
- **Investigation.** Engaging the services of a third-party investigator, preferably *pro bono*, to review all documents and interview **Complainant**, **Respondent**, and any witnesses necessary for resolution of the **Complaint**. By necessity, an investigator will have to reveal the identity of **Complainant** and the substance of the **Complaint** to **Respondent** as well as to any witnesses. The investigator will gather facts, will eschew speculation or assumptions, and will provide a written report to the Board of Directors with the detailed facts of the incident or incidents.
- **Written Statements.** Since memories fade, time is of the essence. The Board may ask **Complainant** and any potential witnesses to write statements concerning the incident. These statements can be forwarded to an investigator, or, in the alternative, the Board can review the statements, ask for written clarifications, then forward the statements and clarifications to **Respondent** for their written response. The Board may request clarifications of **Respondent's** response. All requests for written statements and clarifications

should include deadlines for receipt by the Board.

- **Other.** No mediation, investigation, or collection of written statements is warranted.

The Board of Directors will review **Complaint** as well as the results of any mediation or investigation and, at its sole discretion, decide the best Corrective Action, which may include dismissal of the **Complaint** with no action up to — for the most serious incidents — suspension or dismissal from Mapleton Hall, committees, productions, or the Board of Directors. **Complainant** and **Respondent** will receive written notice of the Board's decision.

Policy implementation:

This Policy will be made available to all **Volunteers** with the Suffield Players, including Board Members, actors, directors, committee members, and crew. The Policy will be on the website and will be posted at Mapleton Hall. Board Members will read and acknowledge receipt of this Policy. The Board of Directors or its designee will establish a system for receiving and maintaining records of those acknowledgments. From time to time, the Board of Directors may update this policy.

Implemented: November 2022

Updated: February 2024