



Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society

# CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

CAODS Executive Committee

# CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

## Policy Statement

The *Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society* (herein referred to as 'the Society') endeavours to ensure that all members, committee members, life-members, vice presidents, staff and supporters of the Society (the 'Individuals') achieve and maintain a high standard of conduct during their time with the society. This policy is designed to help and encourage all individuals to behave in a manner deemed acceptable within the society, and aims to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all.

Where there are issues surrounding a member or a member of staffs conduct, this will initially be addressed on an informal basis. Where, however, such counselling is not effective or misconduct is deemed serious, the society reserves the right to initiate a formal process in the best interests of the society and to ensure fairness and consistency to all.

It is preferred, of course, that acceptable conduct standards should be set voluntarily and be self-imposed, and this is the case in the majority of circumstances. However, there are times when members or staff do not achieve the required conduct and therefore this policy intends to clarify the basic rules and deal with any breaches of standards fairly, firmly and sensitively.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of the society and will be subject to annual review. The policy can be amended by the Executive Committee from time to time outside of the annual review.

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Executive Committee are responsible for dealing with all conduct issues in the society.

All members, committee members, life-members, staff and supporters of the society (the 'individual') are expected to read and understand this document, and adhere to this policy at all times as part of their membership to the society.

## CAODS Executive Committee

# CODE OF CONDUCT PROCEDURES

## 1. Informal Procedure

Minor issues can often be handled effectively through informal counselling and advice. An informal discussion aimed at pointing out shortcomings and setting expectations of the society can sometimes be more appropriate than a formal disciplinary meeting. This approach will normally take the form of a discussion, led by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the society.

It is hoped that most matters can speedily and effectively resolved at this level. However, if it becomes obvious that the matter is more serious, the discussion should be adjourned and the individual will be advised that the matter will be pursued under the formal procedure.

## 2. Formal Procedure

Where the informal procedure has not succeeded or is not appropriate because of the seriousness of the conduct issue, formal action will be considered.

### 2.1 Investigation

Before any formal action takes place, a full investigation will take place. This will be completed by a member of the Executive Committee. This may involve gathering and documenting relevant facts and interviewing potential witnesses. Full details of the alleged offence will be issued to the individual. Once the investigation has been completed, the decision will be made by the Executive Committee as to whether to continue with formal action.

### 2.2 Suspension

In cases of potential gross misconduct, it may be appropriate for the individual to be suspended from the society. In the case of a paid member of staff, they would be suspended on full pay pending the investigation. Any period of suspension will last for a minimum period that the society considers reasonable in light of the particular facts and circumstances of each case, but no longer than is deemed essential. If an individual is suspended, they are not permitted to attend rehearsals, performances, meetings or society social events during the period of that time.

Suspension would normally take place in the following circumstances:

- Where children / under 16's are put at risk.
- Where the individual needs protection themselves.
- Where the allegations amount to gross misconduct.
- Where the society's reputation may suffer unduly.
- Where the presence of the person may impede investigation.
- Where the Police may be involved in dealing with the offence.

At all stages of the procedure, the individual may be accompanied by another colleague (i.e. member, staff member etc). Only those associated with the society are permitted to act as an accompanying person. The accompanying person is obliged to keep all discussions confidential in which they have been requested to participate.

### **2.3 Formal Meeting**

The Formal Meeting will be conducted by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman in most cases, but other 'Officers' of the Executive Committee (i.e. Treasurer or Secretary) can also hold the meeting if need be, including the President of the Society. The complaint against the individual will be confirmed and details of the investigation will be discussed. The individual will be given an opportunity to respond to allegations/complaints and can put across their comments including any mitigating circumstances they would like taken in to account. If new evidence warrants further investigation then the meeting should be adjourned and reconvened as soon as possible.

If an individual fails to attend a Disciplinary Meeting on two occasions, without providing good reason, the society will take a decision based on the information available to them at that time.

### **2.4 Misconduct**

This is conduct which is sufficiently serious that it requires formal action. In order to warrant dismissal from the society, misconduct must be extremely serious or repeated on more than one occasion. Misconduct can include persistent lateness, poor attitude, attendance issues, misuse of props, not adhering to specific instructions (insubordination) etc.

### **2.5 Gross Misconduct**

This is the term used for serious misconduct, which may lead to instant dismissal from the society. Acts that constitute gross misconduct are those resulting in a serious breach of society rules and will be for the society to decide in the light of their own circumstances. They might include the following:

- Breach of the CAODS Safeguarding Policy, including falsification of chaperone/ disclosure documentation
- Theft, fraud or deliberate falsification of records
- Bribery or inappropriate inducement, financial or otherwise
- Acts of threats of violence or physical violence
- Serious bullying or harassment
- Sexual harassment, inappropriate behaviour or assault
- Serious insubordination
- Serious incapability brought about by alcohol or illegal drugs
- Serious negligence which causes unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- Internet/email abuse including downloading, circulating or sending pornographic, racist, sexist or unsuitable material from a society system (including social media)
- Serious breach of confidentiality relating to the society's affairs
- Endangering themselves or others through deliberate breach of Health & Safety instructions
- A Criminal conviction relevant to the society.

The examples listed are not definitive or exhaustive.

### **2.6 Type of Warning**

If a warning is deemed necessary, there are various levels of warning that may be applied.

#### First Verbal Warning:

In the case of a minor infringement, the individual may be given a formal verbal warning by the Executive Committee. The individual will be told of the reasons for the warning, that it is the first step in the Code of Conduct process and that they have the right of appeal.

#### First Written Warning:

If the infringement is regarded as more serious, the individual may be given a formal written warning by the Executive Committee, giving the details of the complaint, the improvement required, the timescale allowed for this and the right of appeal. The warning should also state that a final written warning might be considered if the desired change doesn't occur.

#### Final Written Warning:

Where there is failure to improve the behaviour, or an infringement which is considered sufficiently serious, the individual may be given a final written warning by the Executive Committee. This will include details of the offence and that failure to improve may result in dismissal and the right of appeal.

#### Dismissal or other sanction:

If the behaviour remains unchanged then the sanction imposed may include suspension, demotion, loss of seniority or dismissal from the society, relevant to the nature of the society.

The decision to dismiss from the society must be taken by the Chairman, and the person should be informed as soon as is reasonably practicable and told how to make an appeal. The decision to dismiss will be confirmed in writing and the individual has the right on request to have a written statement of the reasons for dismissal.

### **2.7 Recording**

The society will ensure that a record is kept of all written warnings. However, any formal action taken (other than dismissal) will be disregarded after a specified period of time.

Once the time limits have been passed, warnings will be disregarded in any further disciplinary proceedings. These records will be kept confidential and retained by the Secretary of the society.

### **2.8 Appeals**

The individual has the right to appeal against any outcome. Appeals will be dealt with as promptly as possible and all appeals should be lodged within 14 days of receipt of the warning or dismissal. Individuals will be informed of arrangements for appeal hearings and have the right to be accompanied. The appeal will be heard by another senior member of the Executive Committee (who has not yet been involved in the process) or by the President of the society. They have the right to reverse or confirm the disciplinary outcome. The individual will be informed of the result of the hearing as soon as possible and this will be confirmed in writing. The decision of the appeal is final.