

RMITV/SCT Inc. BULLYING POLICY [23rd October 2018]

Policy Name: SCT Inc. Bullying Policy

Date Authorised: 23/10/2018

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Review Cycle: Annual

Authorising Body: Student Community Television Inc. Board

Responsible Party: SCT Secretary

Related Department: RMITV Membership

Continuity - RMITV / SCT Inc.

Introduction

RMITV SCT Inc. regards the dignity and autonomy of all people as a core value of the organisation. Bullying behaviour is based on the misuse of power in human relationships, and negates the dignity and autonomy of its victims. Bullying can affect health and wellbeing.

RMITV/SCT Inc. regards the health and safety of its members, Management Team, Producers and Board Members as a primary responsibility.

RMITV/SCT Inc. is fully committed to eliminating, as far as possible, all forms of bullying in the workplace through a culture of openness, support, and accountability.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline RMITV/SCT Inc.'s position on bullying and to document the process which is to be followed should any instances of bullying be reported.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure RMITV/SCT Inc. is an environment free of bullying.
- To ensure that RMITV/SCT Inc. Members are aware of what constitutes bullying behaviour, and their responsibilities in maintaining an environment free of bullying.
- To define what constitutes forms of bullying and help Members identify this type of behaviour.

3. Definitions

“Board”; **“Board Members”** shall mean the Board of Directors of Student Community Television Inc.

“Management Team”; **“Managers”** shall mean the management team appointed by the Board of Directors.

“Member” and **“Volunteer”** shall mean a member of the Association.

“Producer” shall mean a member of the Association who is in charge of running an RMITV show.

“Bullying” is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person or group of persons. Unreasonable behaviour is behaviour which victimises, humiliates, undermines or threatens the person being bullied, or behaviour which would reasonably be expected to do so. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical or verbal abuse (including being yelled at, name calling, offensive language or insults);
- Excluding or isolating someone (socially or physically);
- Deliberately withholding information that is vital for effective performance;
- Spreading rumours, misinformation, or innuendo about someone (including through emails or social media);
- Unjustified persistent criticism or complaints;
- Physical or verbal intimidation;
- Assigning someone an impossible task, or meaningless tasks unrelated to their role;
- Interfering with someone’s personal property or equipment;
- Deliberately changing production arrangements to inconvenience particular members;
- Putting someone down in public or in private (includes the use of electronic equipment and social networks);
- Aggressive, demeaning or threatening emails, texts, etc.;
- Deliberately excluding someone from activities related to a production

“Repeated behaviour” refers to the nature of the behaviour, not the specific form of that behaviour.

“Repeated unreasonable behaviour” may thus be a pattern of diverse incidents, including but not limited to those outlined above, subjected by more than one person.

Formerly agreed behaviour may be found to be bullying when it continues after a request from the recipient for the behaviour to stop, or at the point it becomes intimidating, offensive or humiliating.

Relatively low level offensive behaviour perpetrated by several individuals can have a cumulative effects and result in an individual or individuals feeling bullied.

Reasonable performance management is not bullying. The exercise of legitimate authority through the direction and control of responsibilities, monitoring of workflow, and giving feedback on performance is not bullying insofar as the supervisor's actions are intended to assist the member to improve their tasks, performance, or standard of their behaviour.

4. Scope

This policy is applicable to all board members, managers, members, service providers, clients, customers and visitors when they are engaged in the Association's activities and is applicable to all RMITV productions and activities including outside events.

5. Policy Provisions

RMITV will not tolerate bullying under any circumstances. All persons covered by the scope of this policy are expected to behave in a manner that does not constitute bullying. This policy applies to all members of the organisation.

RMITV has a responsibility to prevent bullying where practicable. All persons covered by the scope of this policy are required to:

- Comply with this policy
- Behave appropriately
- Promote a climate of mutual respect
- Maintain confidentiality concerning any complaint or investigation

In accordance with its obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, RMITV is committed to providing Members, Management Team and Board Members, so far as is reasonably practicable, with an environment that is safe and free from risks associated with bullying.

Board Members, Managers, Producers and Volunteers will actively participate in complying with and promoting the policy by:

- Maintaining an environment that encourages communication between all members of a crew or production.
- Assessing and monitoring the environment to ensure that bullying risk factors (organisational change, negative leadership styles, poor work systems, poor relationships and vulnerable members), that may exist are appropriately managed
- Practising behaviours that are not bullying in type
- Responsibly acting upon any behaviour within the environment that may be construed as bullying
- Identifying, preventing and redressing problems expeditiously, without prejudice or victimisation
- Ensuring that this policy is applied fairly and consistently;
- Act upon any complaints that any members of the association may make or lodge.

- Providing ongoing support, guidance, confidential advice and information to any complainant and respondent

6. Reporting incidence of bullying

Bullying may be identified and reported by those subject to the behaviour or by those who witness bullying behaviour.

RMITV members experiencing violence, assault, and stalking are encouraged to report the incident to the police as well as RMITV/SCT Inc.

RMITV members or Producers can raise or report bullying verbally or in writing (including electronically) by:

- informing a Board Member, Producer or Management Team member

An RMITV Producer or Management Team member experiencing bullying behaviour is encouraged to notify the RMITV General Manager or a Board Member.

7. The role of board members, managers and producers

Board Members, Managers and Producers should intervene when they observe unreasonable behaviour towards members or if they are requested to intervene by a volunteer. If a Board Member, Manager or Producer approaches an individual directly about their behaviour they should record the actions taken, and follow the procedures outlined below.

8. Procedures for Breaches of this Policy

Effectively responding to issues when they are raised can stop the situation happening again and reinforce that bullying is treated seriously and consistently by the organisation.

A person may choose to resolve issues by self-managing the situation. This usually involves telling the other person the unreasonable behaviour is not welcome and asking for it to stop.

If an individual does not feel safe, comfortable or confident approaching the other person or they are unsuccessful in resolving the matter themselves, they can seek further assistance of a Board Member, Manager or Producer, who may investigate the situation. Producers, Managers and Board Members are required to notify the General Manager. Anyone asked to advise or act on behalf of an individual should use a confidential and non-confrontational approach.

9. Investigations

An RMITV/SCT Inc. Producer, Management Team Member or Board Member who believes a person is being bullied must notify the General Manager as soon as possible. The General Manager will inform the Board of Directors, who may discuss the course of action through in-camera discussion. The General Manager will keep a confidential record of the complaint.

The Producer, Management Team member or Board member to whom the complaint was made will seek to discuss the matter with the complainant at the earliest opportunity, acting on advice of the Board and General Manager.

The complaint and any discussion held in relation to the complaint will remain confidential unless:

- The complainant consents for the information to be disclosed;
- The Management Team or Board Members believe disclosure necessary to ensure the safety or prevent harm to the complainant or any other person.

In most cases, the person who is alleged to have perpetrated the bullying behaviour must be notified of the report as soon as possible in writing (this includes electronically). The respondent must be given a chance to explain their version of events.

Once a report has been made, the parties involved should be told what support is available and an impartial third party as decided by the board should be present at any meetings that may be required.

Determination of whether bullying has occurred will rest solely on the weight of evidence. Complaints will be assessed against the following key criteria, and as “bullying” is defined in section 3 above:

- Was the behaviour unreasonable behaviour?, and
- Was the behaviour repeated?, and
- Did the behaviour create a risk to the health and safety, physical or mental wellbeing of the complainant?

If it is determined that bullying has taken place, then the consequences may depend upon factors such as:

- The severity and frequency of the bullying
- Input from the person who was subjected to the bullying behaviours (where appropriate)
- Whether the bully could have been expected to know that such behaviour was a breach of policy
- The level of contrition shown by the bully
- If there have been any prior incidents or warnings.

Possible courses of action or consequences may include the following. If the bullying behaviour should continue to occur the severity of the consequences will escalate:

- The perpetrator of the bullying behaviour will receive an official warning.
- Formal apologies may be required, and undertakings that the behaviour will cease.
 - Producers and/or the person who investigated the claims should discreetly contact the complainant two – four weeks after the apology has been issued to discuss progress of the situation.

- Providing information/reiterating to Members, Managers and Board Members to raise the awareness of bullying and standards of behaviour expected;
- Mediation/conciliation conducted by an impartial third party
- Barred from official RMITV Members Facebook Group for up to 7 days, in accordance with the RMITV Members Facebook Group Guidelines
- Restrictions/conditions on events they can attend (eg. wrap parties)
- Being barred/removed from an RMITV/SCT Inc. production for the remainder of a specific production period
- Suspension from the membership of RMITV/SCT Inc. for a specified period, or;
- Expulsion from RMITV/SCT Inc.

All suspensions or expulsions are only determined by the Board, following procedure outlined in the Constitution (**Clause 18. Disciplinary Subcommittee**).

It is likely that a combination of strategies outlined above will be appropriate to prevent bullying from re-occurring (such as warning and formal apology).

It is important to ensure anyone who reports bullying is not victimised for doing so.

10. Unsubstantiated claims

If an investigation finds a report of workplace bullying is not substantiated, the Producer or Manager concerned may still need to offer the following to resolve outstanding issues:

- Offering/Suggesting Mediation (as per mediation process outlined in the RMITV/SCT Inc. Constitution)
- Providing information for support and counselling services;

or

- Changing working arrangements.

The relevant Producer, Management Team Member or Board Member will monitor the outcome to ensure that the offensive behaviour has ceased, and that neither party has been victimised. This may involve follow-up conversations with the complainant. If there has been any substantiated victimisation, appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed.

11. Victimisation

No person will be treated unfairly as a result of reporting reasonable concerns of bullying. Disciplinary action may be taken against anyone who victimises or retaliates against a person

who has complained of being subjected to or witnessing bullying or harassment, or against any person under the scope of this policy who has been alleged to be a harasser.

12. Records

Records must be kept of all complaints. Records of all reports and evidence are to be kept in a confidential and secure folder of the SCT Inc. Global Drive.

These records should be kept for a period of seven years.

The following should be recorded:

- The person who made the report;
- When the report was made;
- Who the report was made to;
- The details of the issue reported;
- Action taken to respond to the issue; and
- Any further action required.

Records should also be made of conversations, meetings and interviews detailing who was present and the agreed outcomes.

13. Dealing with Criminal Conduct

Some forms of severe bullying (physical attack, for example, or obscene phone calls) may constitute criminal conduct. While RMITV/SCT Inc. is committed to treat most complaints about bullying at an organisational level as far as possible, this type of conduct is not suited to resolution through internal processes. Such complaints should also be treated by the criminal justice system. Complainants should be advised of the option of police support or intervention.

This policy and its procedures are at all times subject to the legal rights of the parties.

Authorised on Date: 23rd October 2018

Motioned: Ruth Richards

Seconded: Paul Ryan

RMITV/SCT Inc. 2018/2019 Board