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1 - Scope and Purpose

1.1 This policy relates to all students of MetFilm School (the School). The School has a firm commitment to equality and diversity and will not tolerate the harassment or bullying of one member of its community by another or others.

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to promote the development of a working and learning environment in which harassment and bullying are known to be unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to complain about harassment and bullying, should they arise, in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with appropriately and fairly.

1.3 The policy outlines procedures to be followed if a student feels they are being

harassed or bullied during their period of study at the School.

1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following MetFilm School policies:

- 1.4.1 Student Charter and Code of Conduct
- 1.4.2 Student Disciplinary Policy
- 1.4.3 Student Disciplinary Appeals Policy
- 1.4.4 Student Concerns, Complaints and Appeals Policy

2. MetFilm School's Commitment

2.1 MetFilm School, as part of its commitment to equality and diversity, believes that every student has a right to work and study in an environment which encourages harmonious relationships. The School is committed to preventing harassment and bullying and its commitment to equal opportunity is enshrined in the principles on which it was founded.

2.2 Every student is also personally liable under the Equality Act 2010 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. Allegations of harassment and bullying will be treated very seriously by the School and could result in disciplinary action being taken against the perpetrator.

2.3 The School will ensure that any student raising a genuine concern under this policy is not victimised as a result.

2.4 As allegations of harassment and bullying are very serious, the School will also treat very seriously any such allegations proven to be malicious and these are also likely to be the subject of disciplinary action.

3. Harassment and Bullying: Definitions

3.1 Harassment and bullying can take a variety of different forms, ranging from repeatedly ignoring a person or subjecting them to unwelcome attention, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule or offence. This includes via the use of social media platforms. More extreme forms of harassment and bullying include physical threats or violence.

3.2 Behaviour that may appear trivial as a single incident can constitute harassment or bullying when repeated, or in the context of the staff/student relationship. Harassment and bullying may not always be intentional but are always unacceptable, whether intentional or not.

3.3 Some of the most prevalent forms of harassment and bullying include the following:

Sexual harassment can take the form of ridicule, sexually provocative remarks or jokes, offensive comments about dress or appearance, the display or distribution of sexually explicit material, unwelcome sexual advances or

physical contact, demands for sexual favours or assault.

Racial harassment is usually, although not exclusively, directed at people from ethnic minorities. It may include jokes about, or gratuitous references to, a person's colour, race, religion or nationality. It can also include offensive remarks about dress, culture, or customs which have the effect of ridiculing or undermining an individual or fostering hatred and/or prejudice towards individuals or particular groups.

Harassment of people with disabilities can take the form of individuals being ignored, disparaged or ridiculed because of mistaken assumptions about their capabilities. Their disability rather than their ability can become the focus of attention and harassment can include inappropriate personal remarks, jokes or inappropriate reference to an individual's appearance.

Harassment on the grounds of a person's sexuality may be aimed at heterosexuals but is more usually experienced by lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgendered or queer people (often referred to as the LGBTQ+ community). Examples of harassment relating to sexuality are homophobic remarks or jokes, offensive comments relating to a person's sexuality, threats to disclose a person's sexuality to others or offensive behaviour/abuse relating to HIV or AIDS status. The European Commission code of practice on sexual harassment points out that lesbians and gay men often encounter disproportionate levels of harassment relating to their sexuality. The response of lesbians and gay men to harassment may also be complicated by the fact that in order to complain about it, or confront it, they may have to be open about their sexuality with other people, perhaps for the first time.

Bullying is the exercise of power over another person through negative acts or behaviour that undermines him/her personally and/or academically. Bullying can involve threatening, insulting, abusive, disparaging or intimidating behaviour which places inappropriate pressure on the recipient or has the effect of isolating or excluding them. Bullying can take the form of shouting, sarcasm, derogatory remarks concerning academic performance or constant criticism and undermining. Bullying is to be distinguished from vigorous academic debate or the actions of a teacher or supervisor making reasonable (but perhaps unpopular) requests of his/her students.

3.4 The above list of examples is not exhaustive and harassment can also take place which is on the grounds of a person's age, style of dress or any other characteristic that makes them different from the majority or from the person who harasses or bullies them.

3.5 Although the terms 'harassment' and 'bullying' are not synonymous, the guidance in this policy document relates to both issues and the term 'harassment' will be used from this point onwards to encompass both.

4. Harassment: General Principles

- 4.1 The over-riding principles in dealing with allegations or concerns of harassment are that they must be taken seriously, considered carefully and addressed speedily and, where possible, in confidence.
- 4.2 Any student who feels that they are the subject of harassment, either by a fellow student, a member of staff or anyone else with whom they come into contact in the course of their period of study at MetFilm School, may wish to make a note of incidents, dates, times and any witnesses, for future reference.
- 4.3 Any student who considers themselves to have been the subject of harassment has the right to be listened to and to be given informed advice on how the matter may be resolved. There are usually a number of options. Anyone who feels they have been harassed is likely to wish to speak to someone with whom they feel they share something in common. For this reason, they should be able to approach one of a number of different people within MetFilm School.

5. How to Report Bullying or Harassment

- 5.1 If a student feels that they are being bullied or harassed they can choose to raise a concern or make a complaint using the School's informal or formal complaints process [MetFilm School Complaints Policy](#).
- 5.2 Students are encouraged to use the informal process in the first instance to seek resolution. However, the School recognises that a bullying and harassment complaint may be so complex or serious that informal resolution would be inappropriate, and an immediate formal approach is required.
- 5.3 Students can also report matters anonymously through the Anonymous Reporting form. Anonymous reports may limit the degree to which the School is able to follow this matter up with the individuals involved, but it can help with tracking patterns of behaviour and making generalized interventions to support the School community.

Informal Process

- 5.4 If a student feels that they are being bullied or harassed, they should raise their concerns with their Programme Leader, other trusted member of their Programme team a member of the Wellbeing team (wellbeing@metfilmschool.ac.uk). They will provide guidance and advice on how to proceed.
- 5.5 He/she/they will agree a time to discuss and agree a way of addressing them with the student. This may include discussing concerns with the person a student feels are bullying or harassing them.
- 5.6 Should harassment occur in a group situation, the person in authority within the group has the responsibility to recognise harassment when it occurs and

to take speedy action to stop it. Our Student Charter asks members of our community to stand up for the values of equality, diversity and inclusion and support each other in calling out inappropriate behaviours, if they feel safe to do so.

Formal Process

- 5.7 The formal stage of the procedure may be used where a student is not satisfied with informal attempts to resolve their concerns.
- 5.8 This stage may also be used if the concern is so complex or serious that informal resolution would be inappropriate. The full formal complaints process can be found in the [MetFilm School Complaints Policy](#).
- 5.9 Students should contact their Programme Leader or complaints@metfilmschool.ac.uk for advice and guidance on submitting a formal complaint.
- 5.10 Formal complaints should be made in writing, using the [MetFilm School Complaint Form](#). The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days and an Investigating Officer appointed as soon as possible. For additional detail on timelines, review the [Student Concerns, Complaints and Appeals Policy](#).
- 5.11 Where it is considered that the student complained about poses a risk to themselves, other students or staff, the School, or the conduct of an investigation, the School may suspend the student complained about in line with the [MetFilm School Student Disciplinary Policy](#) during the investigation period.
- 5.12 The investigation may include requests for interviews, documents and any other evidence relevant to the matter complained of.
- 5.13 Following completion of the investigation, the Investigating Officer will report on their findings and make recommendations for any further action. This may include referring the subject of the complaint into the School Disciplinary process, but may also be a recommendation for further mediation or adjustments to the teaching and learning structure (such as group membership, timetable).

6 - Review Procedure

- 6.1 Per the [MetFilm School Complaints Policy](#), if a student has reason to believe that their complaint has not been handled fairly, objectively or in accordance with the procedures described above, the student may write to the Complaints team (complaints@metfilmschool.ac.uk) **within 10 working days** of the outcome letter,

to request a review of the matter. The student must set out their reasons for requesting the review. The grounds for review are set out in the Complaints Policy.

6.2 The MetFilm School Director, or suitably senior nominee, will review the handling of the complaint in light of the student's written statement and report in writing. The MetFilm School Director or nominee may confirm or rescind an earlier decision in light of this report. A formal outcome will be sent to the student within 25 working days of receiving a request for review of the handling of the complaint.

6.3 On completion of School procedures, students will be issued with a completion of procedures letter that will allow them to take their concern to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provided the concern is eligible under their rules. You can find out more about the OIA's scheme and which complaints are eligible for review by visiting the [OIA website](#).

6.3 Responding students (students against whom a complaint is made), have the right to appeal against a disciplinary outcome, including making representations against the way the matter was investigated, through the Disciplinary Appeals Policy.

7 - Counselling & Support

7.1. It is recognised that being the subject of bullying or harassment and making a complaint can be an extremely distressing experience. The School has a responsibility to ensure that its departments, courses and related activities are free from bullying and harassment.

7.2. Students can also seek support from the School's Counselling Service, Student Services and Wellbeing team or Programme Team, as appropriate. The [student handbook](#) contains details of key contacts.

7.3. The same sources of support are available to students for whom a complaint of bullying or harassment has been made against.

8 - Confidentiality

8.1 All complaints (informal or formal) will be treated confidentially. Information shall only be divulged on a need-to-know basis..

8.2 It should be recognised, however, that maintaining anonymity of the complainant may limit the extent to which the procedure can be progressed. There may also be rare occasions when the legal duty of care means that the School is unable to maintain an individual's anonymity, for example where there may be risk to the individual or others.