

Complaint Handling and Investigation Procedure – Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Bullying

1. Purpose	2
2. Who this procedure applies to	2
3. Related documents	3
4. Raising a complaint	3
4.1. Who can raise a complaint?	3
4.2. How to raise a complaint	3
5. Key considerations when dealing with complaints	4
5.1. Confidentiality	4
5.2. Natural justice and impartiality	5
5.3. No victimisation	5
5.4. Availability of a support person	5
6. Dealing with complaints	6
6.1. Deciding the most appropriate course of action	6
6.1.1. Complainants wishing to remain anonymous	7
6.1.2. Dealing with complaints which may constitute a criminal offence	7
6.2. Incident report	7
6.3. Informal complaint procedure	8
6.4. Formal complaint procedure	9
6.4.1. Steps involved in a formal complaint and investigation	9
6.4.2. Variation to the timeframe	12
6.4.3. Work arrangements	12
6.4.4. Outcomes from the investigation	13
6.5. Dealing with complaints that involve workers from another organisation	14
7. Frivolous, vexatious or malicious complaints	14
8. Additional information, support and advice	15
9. Review details	15

1. Purpose

This document outlines the procedure La Mama Theatre will use to deal with a complaint regarding discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, vilification or victimisation.

La Mama Theatre encourages any worker who believes they have been subjected to or have witnessed another worker being subjected to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying to report the behaviour to the CEO & Manager/Producer; Caitlin Dullard.

La Mama Theatre will usually deal with a complaint regarding discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying in accordance with this procedure. However, where it is considered appropriate to do so, La Mama Theatre may deal with the complaint in an alternative way, in order to resolve the complaint in a confidential, efficient and sensitive manner. In those circumstances, La Mama Theatre will provide details of the process for dealing with the complaint, and ensure that is fair procedurally.

2. Who this procedure applies to

This procedure applies to all workers engaged by La Mama Theatre which includes, but is not limited to:

- Leadership and management personnel, all office and technical staff and all front of house staff (including all full-time, part-time, seasonal and casual employees)
- The La Mama Committee of Management
- All individuals connected to a specific production, whether through a company or as an independent (e.g. producers, actors, dancers, directors, choreographers, writers, stage management, technical crew);
- Job candidates;
- Student placements, apprentices, work experience students/interns; and
- Volunteers and anyone working in an unpaid capacity.

All workers must comply with the procedures set out in this document, which may be amended from time to time. While all workers are required to comply with these procedures, these procedures are not incorporated as a term of any worker's contract and do not create any rights enforceable by a worker against La Mama Theatre.

This procedure extends to every associated entity of La Mama Theatre within the meaning of section 50AAA of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth).

3. Related documents

All workers are required to read this procedure in conjunction with La Mama Theatre's other relevant policies, procedures, documents and agreements, including:

- Complaint handling and investigation procedure: workplace discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.
- Code of conduct: workplace discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.
- Work health and safety policy
- La Mama's vision - <http://lamama.com.au/about-la-mama/la-mama-vision>)

4. Raising a complaint

4.1. Who can raise a complaint?

Any worker can raise a concern or complaint if they believe there has been a breach of La Mama Theatre's Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Bullying Policy.

A complaint may be raised by a worker who is experiencing, or is a witness to, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying.

This Complaints Handling and Investigation Procedure only applies to complaints raised concerning a breach of La Mama Theatre's Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Bullying Policy.

4.2. How to raise a complaint

If you need to raise a complaint, follow these steps:

- Step 1: Ask the person to stop
- Step 2: If the behaviour hasn't stopped, or you don't feel comfortable talking to the person directly, report the conduct
- Step 3: Together, with appropriate nominated people, determine a course of action (see list below)
- Step 4: Informal investigation
- Step 5: Formal investigation
- Step 6: The CEO, or appropriate nominated person will meet with the person against whom the complaints/reports are brought
- Step 7: Actions are agreed and communicated to both parties. A timeline for resolution is decided and communicated

For more detailed instructions on these steps, please refer to La Mama's Reporting, Complaints and Investigation Procedures (available from La Mama's website or in person at the venue).

Workers should raise any concerns or complaints with Caitlin Dullard CEO & Manager/Producer (caitlin@lamama.com.au 0430 033 495). Where Caitlin Dullard is unavailable or it is not appropriate for them to be involved in the process, the complainant should contact one of the following people:

- A nominated member of your production team (director, producer, stage manager)
- Hayley Fox, La Mama Venue Technical Manager: hayley@lamama.com.au 9347 6948
- Richard Watts, La Mama Committee Chair: rwatts@artshub.com.au 0433 369 089
- Caroline Lee, La Mama Committee Member: pruli@alphalink.com.au 0416 060 317
- If you are not comfortable approaching any of these people, but there's someone else on La Mama staff or committee you do feel comfortable approaching, please do so.

If workers do not feel comfortable raising a complaint with people on this list, they could seek independent legal advice or raise the complaint with one of the following organisations:

- Australian Human Rights Commission;
- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission;
- Fair Work Commission (for complaints related to bullying);
- Relevant union (e.g. Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance); or
- The police (if the allegations are of a criminal nature such as physical or sexual assault, some instances of sexual harassment).

While workers may choose to raise a concern or complaint with one of the organisations listed above, it is La Mama Theatre's preference that any concern or complaint is raised internally with the appropriate person in the first instance, so that it can be dealt with as quickly and thoroughly as possible.

Workers may raise concerns or complaints verbally or in writing. Depending on the nature of the complaint, Caitlin Dullard may ask the complainant to document the complaint in writing (e.g. in an email or using La Mama Theatre's complaint form).

5. Key considerations when dealing with complaints

5.1. Confidentiality

When a complaint is raised, La Mama Theatre will maintain confidentiality to the maximum extent possible, taking into account its obligation to provide a safe work environment and to afford natural justice to those against whom a complaint is made (respondent).

Workers who are directly involved in a complaint or an accompanying investigation (whether as a complainant, respondent, witnesses or support person) MUST maintain confidentiality. A failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

5.2. Natural justice and impartiality

Where an allegation is made against another person, that person is entitled to be afforded natural justice – a right to have their side of the story heard and respond to those allegations.

When a complaint is raised, La Mama Theatre will appoint someone (internal or external to the company) to investigate the complaint. This person will collect and consider all relevant evidence before making a determination. This person is referred to in this document as ‘The Complaints Person’.

Complaints Persons are to remain impartial, as far as is reasonably practicable.

5.3. No victimisation

Victimisation means adversely treating a worker who has raised a complaint or has assisted someone in raising a complaint.

Victimisation is unlawful and will not be tolerated at La Mama Theatre. Any incidents of victimisation should be immediately reported to Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer.

A worker who makes a complaint under this procedure will be treated with respect and the matter will be dealt with in the strictest confidence possible. La Mama Theatre will take all reasonable steps so that no worker is treated poorly, victimised or disadvantaged as a result of:

- Making or intending to make a complaint;
- Providing information as a witness; or
- Providing support to a person who has made a complaint.

5.4. Availability of a support person

A participant in an investigation may wish to have a support person present during the process, such as another worker, a friend, family member or union representative. The support person should not be a party to the complaint or a witness to the behaviour that is the subject of the complaint.

A support person’s role is to provide emotional support; they should not act as an advocate or speak for the participant. A support person is required to keep all details of the complaint and investigation confidential.

The participant should notify the Complaints Person, as soon as practicable, if they would like to have a support person present during an investigation. The participant should provide the Complaints Person with the details of the support person, so that the request can be considered. A request for a support person to be present will not be unreasonably refused. Reasonable efforts will be made to

accommodate the availability of a participant's support person. However, if the support person's availability unreasonably delays the formal complaint process, the participant will be advised to nominate another support person.

If a participant does not request to have a support person present during meetings, this should be recorded as well as whether the participant was offered a support person.

6. Dealing with complaints

6.1. Deciding the most appropriate course of action

If a worker believes they are experiencing discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying, and they feel comfortable doing so, they may wish to deal with the situation themselves – that is, the worker tells the other person(s) that the behaviour is unreasonable or unacceptable, they are offended by the behaviour and want it to stop.

In many cases, while it may be uncomfortable raising the issue directly with the person(s) concerned, explaining why the behaviour is unwelcomed and asking for it to stop will be sufficient, particularly if the person(s) was/were unaware of the impact of their behaviour.

If a worker's concerns remain unresolved or the worker is not comfortable dealing with the situation themselves, the concern or complaint can be raised with Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer.

Once a concern or a complaint has been raised, Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer will outline to the complainant the options available for dealing with the concern or complaint. Options include following La Mama Theatre's internal informal or formal procedure, or raising the complaint with an external agency such as the Australian Human Rights Commission, Fair Work Commission, or the police if the allegations are of a criminal nature.

Informal procedures emphasise resolution rather than factual proof or substantiating a complaint.

Formal procedures focus on proving whether a complaint is substantiated. A formal complaint procedure will be more appropriate where the alleged behaviour is of a serious nature and, if substantiated, would lead to disciplinary action (e.g. termination of employment).

It will not always be appropriate for the complainant to determine whether to use the informal or formal complaint procedure. For example, La Mama Theatre may determine that the nature of the complaint is serious and warrants a formal investigation.

It is important to note that a worker cannot 'own' a complaint. La Mama Theatre recognises that sometimes a worker may wish to inform La Mama Theatre of an issue or concern but not wish for La Mama Theatre to take any action in relation to the issue or concern. However, when La Mama Theatre is made aware of an issue, it may have a duty of care to act, regardless of whether or not a worker has made a formal complaint, as other workers may be at risk.

6.1.1. Complainants wishing to remain anonymous

Where the complainant advises they wish to remain anonymous, La Mama Theatre will seek to establish why the complainant does not want their identity disclosed. La Mama Theatre will use its best endeavours to manage the complainant's concerns, while ensuring there is an appropriate balance in fairness to all parties concerned. In some cases, it will not be possible for the complainant to remain anonymous due to the right of the respondent to natural justice and to know the nature of the allegation(s) being made against them. While the complainant's wishes will be taken into account, they do not determine whether or how the complaint should be investigated. That is the responsibility of La Mama Theatre.

6.1.2. Dealing with complaints which may constitute a criminal offence

Some instances of unlawful conduct can also be criminal offences, including physical assault, sexual assault, stalking or cybercrime, which is where a carriage service is used to menace, harass or cause offence. This can include conduct that occurs over the phone, in text messages or online.

Where a worker considers that the conduct involves a criminal offence, La Mama Theatre will provide appropriate support to the worker to report the matter to the police. In situations where La Mama Theatre becomes aware of or has reasonable grounds to believe that a criminal offence has been committed against a child or young person, La Mama Theatre has an obligation to, and will, report the matter to the police or relevant authority.

Under Work Health and Safety laws, La Mama Theatre also has an obligation to notify the relevant regulator of certain types of workplace incidents.

If a complainant does not wish to report the matter to the police, La Mama Theatre will:

- respect this decision, unless La Mama Theatre is required by law to report the incident;
- enquire whether the complainant would like access to counselling or other support;
- if appropriate, consider whether it is necessary to implement any changes to the workplace to provide the worker with a safe work environment, while the complaint is being investigated; and
- deal with the complaint consistent with the procedures outlined in this section.

6.2. Incident report

Where a worker raises concerns with La Mama Theatre and it is determined by La Mama Theatre that no action is required, as the situation has already been resolved or adequately dealt with, La Mama Theatre may record details of the concerns. Caitlin Dullard CEO & Manager/Producer will record essential information about the incident in a report including:

- time, date, location of the alleged incident;
- nature of the alleged incident;

- the people involved;
- what action was taken to resolve the alleged incident;
- why no further action was considered necessary; and
- that the matter was not investigated and no findings were made in relation to the alleged conduct.

If La Mama Theatre becomes aware of an incident (e.g. unusual tension in the rehearsal room) and believes it is necessary, an incident report may be prepared.

La Mama Theatre will only use this option if the incident is not serious and does not pose an immediate health and safety risk to workers.

6.3. Informal complaint procedure

There is no one-size-fits-all response to deal with complaints informally. The most appropriate response for dealing with complaints informally will depend on each individual circumstance and the nature of the complaint.

6.3.1. When will a complaint be dealt with informally?

La Mama Theatre may decide to deal with a complaint informally if:

- the complaint is of a less serious nature and can be most effectively dealt with informally;
- Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer considers the complaint can be most effectively dealt with informally and the complainant agrees;
- the complainant requests that the matter be dealt with informally and Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer considers this appropriate; and
- the complaint has arisen from a misunderstanding or lack of, or unclear, communication.

6.3.2. How will a complaint be dealt with informally?

Informal ways of dealing with complaints will emphasise resolution rather than factual proof or substantiating of a complaint and can include, but are not limited to the following actions:

- A direct private discussion is held or mediated between the complainant and the respondent (where the parties agree to participate);
- An impartial third person conveys information between those involved;
- An impartial third person helps those involved to talk to each other and find a resolution;
- A complaint is made, the respondent admits the behaviour, investigation is not required, and the complaint can be resolved through conciliation or counselling;
- The complainant wants to deal with the situation themselves but may seek advice on possible strategies from Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer;

- The complainant asks Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer to speak to the respondent on their behalf – Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer privately conveys the complainant’s concerns and reiterates La Mama Theatre’s policy to the respondent without assessing the merits of the case; or
- Any worker observes unacceptable conduct and takes action even though no formal complaint has been made.

An informal complaint may also be dealt with without individually identifying a respondent. Informal ways of dealing with the complaint can also include collective actions such as:

- Providing a refresher induction to all workers;
- Redistributing and again explaining the policies;
- Requiring workers to complete appropriate training; and
- Making alterations to working arrangements to reduce the risk.

In some instances, La Mama Theatre may engage an independent mediator.

Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer will document steps taken to address and resolve a complaint using an informal process.

An informal process may be formalised at any point where Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer considers it appropriate, particularly where an informal process has been ineffective or new information is received.

6.4. Formal complaint procedure

6.4.1. Steps involved in a formal complaint and investigation

The usual process for dealing with formal complaints is set out below. However, where it is considered appropriate to do so, La Mama Theatre may alter the process and advise the complainant of the new complaint handling and investigation process.

As part of a formal complaint process, La Mama Theatre will appoint an impartial person to investigate the complaint (Complaints Person). This may be a person employed by La Mama Theatre or an external investigator.

Please note that La Mama Theatre will use its best endeavours to adhere to the timeframes outlined in this procedure. If changes to the timeframes need to be made, La Mama Theatre will advise the complainant and respondent of these changes.

Step 1: Obtain information from the complainant

As soon as practicable but within one week of receiving the complaint, the Complaints Person will contact the complainant to better understand the complaint and obtain any additional information. At this time, the Complaints Person will also:

- Provide or confirm that the complainant has received a copy of La Mama Theatre's Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Bullying Policy and Complaint Handling and Investigation Procedure;
- Provide information about the complaint process, potential outcomes, options for assistance/support and protections from victimisation;
- Ensure the allegations are documented in writing, either by the complainant or the Complaints Person;
- Explain that the process is confidential, what this means and why it is important;
- Explain what records of the complaint will be kept, for how long and where;
- Explain the action that may be taken if the complaint is found to be vexatious or malicious; and
- Ask the complainant to provide relevant documents or details of witnesses that may support the allegations.

Where there is a concern about supporting information being destroyed or compromised, the Complaints Person should try to obtain this information before taking any further action.

Step 2: Advise the respondent about the complaint

As soon as practicable but within one week after receiving all necessary information from the complainant and understanding the scope of the complaint, the Complaints Person will inform the respondent that a complaint has been made. The Complaints Person will provide the respondent with details of the allegations, and if the Complaints Person considers it appropriate and necessary to do so, supporting information. The allegations may be provided to the respondent either in writing or verbally.

When the Complaints Person informs the respondent of the complaint, the Complaints Person will also:

- Provide or confirm that the respondent has received a copy of La Mama Theatre's Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Bullying Policy and Complaint Handling and Investigation Procedure;
- Confirm that the respondent will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations;
- Provide information about the complaint process, potential outcomes and options for assistance/support;
- Explain that the process is confidential, what this means and why it is important;
- Explain what records of the complaints will be kept, for how long and where; and

- Explain that it is unacceptable to victimise someone who has made a complaint.

If it is considered necessary to the investigation, La Mama Theatre may direct either the respondent or the complainant or both to remain away from the workplace and not be involved in La Mama Theatre. Where La Mama Theatre does not direct the parties to remain away from work, La Mama Theatre may monitor the interactions between the complainant and the respondent to identify whether there are any issues that need to be addressed.

Step 3: Provide the respondent with the opportunity to respond to the allegation(s)

The respondent will be provided with an opportunity to respond to the allegation(s). This will normally occur within three (3) working days of the respondent being notified of the allegation(s).

The Complaints Person will document the information obtained from the respondent, if it is not provided in writing, and the respondent will be asked to review and confirm the accuracy of the information.

Step 4: Interview any relevant witnesses

If the Complaints Person considers it necessary or appropriate, they will interview any relevant witnesses to the alleged conduct. To maintain confidentiality, witnesses should only be advised of the nature of the investigation insofar as it relates to them providing accurate and truthful evidence.

Step 5: Clarify contradictory or new evidence

If new or contradictory evidence comes to light during the investigation, the Complaints Person will hold further discussions with the respondent and/or complainant to clarify information.

If either the respondent or complainant disputes any of the new or contradictory evidence, the Complaints Person may:

- Seek further information from the respondent and/or complainant;
- Seek further statements/information from any witnesses; and
- Gather any other relevant evidence.

The Complaints Person may continue to seek additional information or clarification from the respondent, complainant or witnesses on any outstanding matters until the Complaints Person is satisfied that there is no additional evidence to be collected or no further clarification is required.

Step 6: Assess the evidence and make a determination

The Complaints Person will assess the information and evidence gathered and form an opinion about the complaint. The Complaints Person may find one of the following:

- The complaint is substantiated;

- The complaint is not substantiated; or
- It is not possible to make a conclusive finding about whether discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and/or bullying occurred.

The Complaints Person's findings and the standard of proof in the investigation are based on 'the balance of probabilities' – which means it is more likely than not that the conduct occurred.

If the respondent confirms the alleged conduct occurred, the Complaints Person should provide the respondent with the opportunity to comment on any proposed decision and outcome before a final decision is made.

Where the complaint is substantiated, the Complaints Person may recommend disciplinary action. If the Complaints Person identifies an area that could be improved to reduce or avoid such complaints in the future, the Complaints Person may recommend that La Mama Theatre consider implementing those improvements.

Step 7: Notify the complainant and respondent of the outcome

As soon as practicable and within one week of being notified of the Complaints Officer's determination, the decision-maker will notify the complainant and the respondent of the outcome of the complaint. A copy of the decision will be placed on the respondent's employment file.

6.4.2. Variation to the timeframe

There may be occasions, when having regard to the complexity of the facts and the seriousness of the allegations, that the process takes longer or there is a departure from the process.

If the timeframes for the investigation are likely to differ greatly from those outlined above, the complainant and the respondent will be informed of this during the course of the investigation. However, La Mama Theatre will take all practicable steps to undertake and conclude investigations in a timely way.

6.4.3. Work arrangements

When a complaint is lodged, La Mama Theatre will determine whether the complainant and respondent are required to continue work as normal, or alternative arrangements need to be put in place. For example, either the complainant or the respondent may be asked to take leave without loss of pay or be transferred to another part of the business or a different location, so that a fair and efficient investigation can occur. In the event that it is safe for the complainant and respondent to work together during the complaints process, a representative of the organisation will work closely and actively amongst them to monitor their relationship and ensure that safety, wellbeing and respect are maintained.

The complainant and respondent have a responsibility to:

- Participate in the investigation process and the implementation of this policy in good faith;
- Co-operate fully in the investigation process and the implementation of this policy;
- Not make vexatious or malicious complaints; and
- Maintain confidentiality as described above.

6.4.4. Outcomes from the investigation

Substantiated complaints

Where the complaint is substantiated, the decision-maker will make a decision on the appropriate action to take, based on the Complaints Person's findings.

Outcomes of a formal investigation can include any combination of the following:

- Counselling, coaching or mentoring;
- Formal written warning;
- Termination of employment (including without notice or pay in lieu of notice);
- La Mama Theatre facilitating a meeting between the complainant and the respondent to attempt to resolve the matter by direct discussion;
- Developing a process for 'moving forward';
- Regular monitoring of behaviour;
- Further training and education;
- A commitment by the respondent to change the behaviour or conduct that was the subject of the complaint;
- A change in working arrangements; and
- An apology.

The most appropriate outcome in each case will depend upon factors such as:

- The severity and frequency of the conduct;
- The weight of the evidence against the respondent;
- The wishes of the complainant (however this will not be determinative of the matter);
- Whether the respondent has been given any prior warnings for the same or similar conduct; and
- Training previously provided to the respondent, specifically related to the subject matter of the complaint.

The disciplinary procedure will be applied in a manner that is consistent, clearly explained, fair and proportionate.

Unsubstantiated complaints

Where allegations have not been admitted or substantiated, La Mama Theatre may decide to take some action as a result of the complaint. For example, La Mama Theatre may:

- Provide refresher training for workers regarding appropriate workplace behaviour; or
- Re-issue the workplace discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and bullying policy, the code of conduct and other related policies to all workers.

6.5. Dealing with complaints that involve workers from another organisation

Workers should not be deterred from raising complaints with Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer that involve a worker from another organisation while working at the same workplace. Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer will explain the options available to deal with the complaint.

If Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer deems that the matter requires further action, La Mama Theatre will raise the matter with an appropriate representative from the other organisation. La Mama Theatre will work with the other organisation and determine an appropriate response to the deal with the complaint – either informally or formally, and consistent with the complaints handling policies and procedures of both organisations.

7. Frivolous, vexatious or malicious complaints

La Mama Theatre encourages the reporting of behaviour that a worker genuinely believes to be discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying. Further, any such worker must not be disadvantaged or treated unfairly for making a complaint.

However, if a complaint is found to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious, then appropriate disciplinary action up to dismissal may be taken against the complainant. The purpose of this is not to prevent a worker from making a legitimate complaint, where they consider they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying behaviour, but rather to prevent a worker from making a complaint in order to create difficulties for another person.

Examples of frivolous, vexatious or malicious complaints include, but are not limited to:

- Fabricating a complaint;
- Making a complaint for the malicious purpose of deliberately harming another person;
- Seeking to re-agitate issues that have already been addressed or determined; and
- Making a complaint that the complainant does not genuinely believe to be true.

8. Additional information, support and advice

If you have a query about this procedure or would like to raise a concern or complaint, please contact

Caitlin Dullard, CEO & Manager/Producer (caitlin@lamama.com.au 0430 033 495)

Richard Watts, Chair, Committee of Management (rwatts@artshub.com.au 0433 369 089)

Caroline Lee, Committee of Management representative (pruli@alphalink.com.au 0416 060 317)

9. Review details

This procedure was adopted by La Mama Theatre on 11th October 2019