



## **The Little Theatre of Alexandria's Code of Conduct**

The Little Theatre of Alexandria (LTA) is a non-profit community theater based on an all-volunteer organization dedicated to providing live entertainment and educational opportunities. LTA provides a venue for those seeking both onstage and offstage opportunities. Volunteering at LTA is a privilege, and all participants are subject to LTA's rules and procedures; specifically, our Code of Conduct outlined in this document.

LTA is committed to fostering a performing arts community where people can work and learn with physical and emotional safety, respect, dignity, freedom from abuse and ensuring the highest ethical standards. LTA does not tolerate discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment of anyone or by anyone. All employees, contractors, Governors, students, and volunteers – including actors, directors, producers, designers, stage crew, front of house and box office volunteers – are expected to value each other regardless of their ability, gender, cultural background, religion, age, sexual orientation, race, national origin, or having physical or psychological disabilities. Plain and simple - This policy applies to all who enter LTA's welcoming doors, including our patrons and students. Therefore, LTA has the right to warn, remove, report, or take any other appropriate action against those found to have engaged in conduct prohibited by this policy or which otherwise is deemed inappropriate.

### **A Note for Our Patrons**

Our dedicated Office staff and wonderful volunteers at the Box Office and Front of House devote their time to make it possible for our patrons to safely experience our community theatre productions. If you have any questions about our theatre, a show, tickets, parking, public transportation, local dining, and more, we are here to help. We only ask that you be patient, polite, and respectful on the phone and in person, comply with our safety procedures, and enjoy your time at LTA. We are all here because we love theatre, and we want the only drama of the day to be the one performed on the stage.

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**This policy prohibits but is certainly not limited to categories outlined below:**

**Discrimination** is unfair treatment based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious creed, color, national origin, or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, domestic partner status, and veteran or military status. Giving or withholding benefits such as casting will not be tolerated.

Note: We as a theatre do recognize there are social and artistic obligations to specific casting appropriate to specific scripts.

**Bullying** is extreme rudeness, insulting, belittling, threatening (actual or threatened violence), humiliation, physical and/or emotional intimidation, or use of offensive language.

**Note:** Possession of dangerous, unauthorized, or illegal materials such as explosives, real firearms, weapons, drugs, or other similar items are prohibited on LTA premises.

**Sexual Harassment** is unwelcomed sexual advances or touching; displaying sexually explicit objects or messages; commenting on someone's looks (dress, sexuality, or gender) in a derogatory manner; making comments, jokes, or gestures that humiliate or offend someone; requests for sexual favors or making benefits contingent on sexual contact; lewd conduct or statements, by which a reasonable person would be offended, intimidated or humiliated; or any behavior that would interfere with the enjoyment of the volunteer experience.

**Note:** LTA may involve stories in which characters interact in abusive or intimate ways. Directors and performers are expected to *go slow; check in verbally; ask permission; remain professional* as these scenes are rehearsed to ensure all participants remain comfortable and safe. Combat scenes should be staged by a trained fight choreographer, and involved intimate scenes, by an Intimacy Choreographer. Experienced directors may be approved by the Safety Committee to stage such events.

**Misuse of Authority** is any person who could be seen as a person of power/control such as a producer, director, teacher, or board governor leveraging his/her position to improperly influence someone he/she supervises, oversees, teaches, or directs.

**Retaliation** against anyone making a complaint, and knowingly *making a false complaint* under this policy are also prohibited.

### **Complaint Process**

LTA encourages immediate reporting of any incidents of alleged abusive behaviors inconsistent with the policy outlined above, so that they may be quickly and fairly resolved.

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Anyone who is the target or witness of such abuse should make a complaint directly to the Safety Committee.

The Safety Committee, assigned to the President, is made up of a Chair, the President, Board Members and concerned members of the theatre.

When a complaint is made to a Committee Member, the Committee will decide appropriate next steps which could include a Committee Member making reasonable inquiries regarding the specific issue. The LTA Safety Committee is committed to undertaking prompt, thorough, objective, and good faith investigations of any complaints. In handling a complaint, the Committee member will maintain confidentiality for all parties to the extent practical, but we cannot guarantee to process purely anonymous complaints.

The Safety Committee will then meet to render appropriate arbitration or decide the need for Board Involvement. This removes any bias from one person towards the accused as well as ensuring consistent resolution for similar offenses. The Committee can decide if the President can render resolution or if the issue must go to the Board. If it has been agreed the issue should be included on the BOG agenda, and the President fails to do so, the Chair should request Board time.

**Informal Approach** – If the abused feels comfortable going directly to the producer for action the producer may discuss the issue with the accused and attempt to broker a resolution. However, the producer must share the incident with the committee in case there are repeat offenses for future discipline. If the accuser does not feel the issue has been addressed, the accuser may go directly to the Safety Committee.

**Formal Approach** - Failing a suitable resolution the incident must be elevated to the Safety Committee for appropriate resolution.

### Levels of Resolution

- a) Imposing a warning, receiving adequate assurance that the abuse will not recur.
- b) Suspending the rights, privileges, and benefits for a specific period of time.
- c) Terminating membership and eliminating responsibilities and/or privileges of the offending individual.
- d) Notify surrounding theatre(s) that they may have an offender of egregious behavior on their cast and or crew.

### Minors

LTA takes its responsibility to protect minors participating in its productions and programs very seriously and will report abuse of minors by adults to legal authorities as required by law. Romantic or sexual relationships between adult LTA participants with anyone under the age of eighteen are by definition abusive, illegal, and prohibited.

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It is also LTA's policy to confidentially contact a minor's parent or guardian if we observe behavior or issues that might be of concern.

To ensure the safety of a minor (under the age of 18) while participating in a production, a background-checked chaperoning adult will be available during performances, rehearsals, and in dressing rooms. No adult (except with parental permission) will be alone with a minor behind closed doors. If an adult finds him or herself alone with a minor they are to go to an open area. Background checks will be conducted for cast and crew who work directly with acting and production minors.

If an actor under eighteen is in a production all actors and Artistic Staff will require a background check. This includes but not limited to all producing and directing staff, SMs and ASMs, all choreographers, costume, makeup, and hair staff. The producers will ensure appropriate background checked chaperones are in place.

If a show has over five children, "wranglers" will be in place with background checks. If a production designer or crew lead recruits a crew member under the age of eighteen, then that designer or lead must have a background check. And the young crew member must work the schedule of the designer/crew lead or be in the presence of a background checked artistic staff member at all times, ideally a producer, director, SM, or parent.

**Conclusion** – Everyone is responsible for ensuring an enjoyable and safe volunteering and learning experience. If you see something, say something.

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