

# VANCOUVER IMPROV FESTIVAL SOCIETY ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY 2021

## OVERVIEW

Vancouver Improv Festival is committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment, where creativity can flourish. We believe that with respect, communication, common sense, and empathy, our festival can both prioritize safety and share work of the highest quality.

All performers, instructors, students, volunteers, hosts, stage managers, board members, and Festival staff (hereby referred to as “festival participants”) are responsible to assure that our festival is as safe an event as possible. It is through this shared responsibility that we can keep our theatre, performances, workshops, after-parties, and all affiliated events welcoming and inclusive.

Vancouver Improv Festival has a zero tolerance policy for harassment, bullying, violence, and discrimination and actively supports the rights of festival participants to work in safe and supportive environments.

We believe that being proactive when it comes to safety is the best way to prevent incidents from occurring. Please be respectful, careful, and perceptive of others’ boundaries. Please report concerning behaviours you experience at the Festival, and hold your fellow participants accountable.

This is a living document that is reviewed annually and we are committed to learning and implementing best practices as they change over time. If you have feedback or questions, please email [info@vancouverimprovfest.com](mailto:info@vancouverimprovfest.com)

The Vancouver Improv Festival would like to acknowledge the support of Blind Tiger Comedy, Ghost River Theatre, The Stumptown Improv Festival, and Rapid Fire Theatre in sharing their policies to form the basis of this one.

## PROHIBITED CONDUCT

This Anti-harassment Policy prohibits harassment, bullying, violence, and discrimination. Harassment includes any form of unwelcome written, oral, or physical conduct that has the purpose or effect of interfering with a person’s ability to participate in Vancouver Improv Festival activities, or which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment.

Harassment can be subtle and is not always readily apparent.

Harassment can include: verbal aggression, insults, derogatory name-calling, harmful hazing or initiation practices, vandalizing personal belongings, and spreading malicious rumours. Harassment can take place in-person, by phone or online. Online Harassment is repeated aggression against an individual or group via the internet through social media, direct messaging or email.

## VANCOUVER IMPROV FESTIVAL SOCIETY ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY 2021

Sexual harassment includes any form of unwelcome written, oral, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including unwelcome sexual advances and requests for sexual favours, that has the purpose or effect of interfering with a person's ability to participate in Vancouver Improv Festival activities, or which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment can include: gender-related comments about a person's physical characteristics or mannerisms, paternalistic comments based on gender which undermine a person's sense of self-respect and responsibility, unwelcome physical contact, suggestive or offensive remarks or innuendoes, propositions of physical intimacy, gender-related verbal abuse, threats or taunts, leering or inappropriate staring, bragging about sexual prowess or questions or discussions about sexual activities, offensive jokes or comments of a sexual nature about a person, display of sexually offensive pictures, graffiti or other materials, including through electronic means, and demands for dates or sexual favours.

Bullying is repeated aggression conducted by an individual or a group against others. Such aggressive behaviour may be written, oral, or physical. Individuals may be bullied by electronic means.

Violence includes the use of force, such as hitting, shoving, pushing, or kicking. Violence also includes inciting others to do physical damage, harm, or injury to an individual or group, or any intentional act that causes, or may cause, physical damage, harm, or injury to an individual or group.

Discrimination means any form of unequal treatment, whether imposing extra burdens or denying benefits, based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or age.

### REPORTING

If any festival participant feels that they have been subject to harassment, bullying, violence, or discrimination, or has witnessed this behaviour toward anyone else they should:

1. Make their unease and/or disapproval directly and immediately known to the alleged harasser, only if they feel safe doing so.
2. Report the incident immediately to a member of the Anti-Harassment Policy Leadership Team:
  - Festival Organizer Brigitte May 604-761-8914 [brigitte@vancouverimprovfest.com](mailto:brigitte@vancouverimprovfest.com)
  - (or)
  - Board President Kristina Maticic 604-732-7771 [kristina@vancouverimprovfest.com](mailto:kristina@vancouverimprovfest.com)
  - (or)
  - to unaffiliated third party representative, Ryan Gladstone of Monster Theatre [ryan@monstertheatre.com](mailto:ryan@monstertheatre.com)

## VANCOUVER IMPROV FESTIVAL SOCIETY ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY 2021

All reports will be promptly and carefully investigated by two members of the Anti-Harassment Policy Leadership Team. In the case that a complaint involves a Leadership Team member, they will be left out of the investigation, and other board members may be engaged in the process. All festival participants who file reports in good faith will be protected from reprisal and retaliation.

### 3. Anonymous Reporting Form

There is an anonymous reporting form at [vancouverimprovfest.com/antiharassment](http://vancouverimprovfest.com/antiharassment). Information shared via the anonymous reporting form will go directly to Festival Organizer Brigitte May and Board President Kristina Maticic.

If the complaint is about the aforementioned members, please contact third party representative Ryan Gladstone of Monster Theatre.

Please note, providing contact information is not required to report an incident. However, if we need to investigate an incident, we require the name and contact information of the individual reporting the incident. If you choose to provide your name, measures will be taken to maintain anonymity if and when possible.

### INVESTIGATION

When The Vancouver Improv Festival receives a report of harassment, bullying, violence, or discrimination, it may conduct an investigation.

If an investigation is conducted, it will be:

- conducted in a manner that is appropriate in the context of each case;
- undertaken promptly and diligently, and be as thorough as necessary, given the circumstances;
- As fair and impartial as possible
- Focused on accountability and reducing harm

The scope of an investigation will depend upon the specific circumstances, but may include interviews with the person making the complaint, the person against whom the complaint is made, potential witnesses identified by either person, and others who may have relevant information. The person making the complaint may be requested to put their complaint in writing.

Where appropriate, the results of the investigation will be discussed with those individuals involved and The Vancouver Improv Festival will determine whether any action is warranted in response. Investigations will take into account complainants' requests to maintain their privacy and anonymity when making a complaint, as well as throughout and after the investigation.

VANCOUVER IMPROV FESTIVAL SOCIETY ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY 2021

If the result of an investigation indicates that this Anti-harassment Policy has been violated, disciplinary action may include measures up to and including immediate expulsion of the offender from all festival activities.

If in the course of an investigation Vancouver Improv Festival learns that a crime may have been committed, Vancouver Improv Festival may report that crime to the police. The Vancouver Improv Festival will comply with any request for records or information as required by law or court order.

CONTACT

If you have any ideas on how we can continue to make The Vancouver Improv Festival a more welcoming environment for all, please email any Leadership Team members listed

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the Vancouver Improv Festival Anti-harassment Policy 2021 and understand my rights and duties.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE SIGNED