



HOPEWELL THEATRE POLICIES 7.14.2020

Standard I is based on concepts from the Chicago Theatre Standards (notinourhouse.org), grovo.com, and Tools for Life Resources

Working Draft

Standard I Sexual Misconduct

Hopewell Theatre expects courteous, mutually respectful, pleasant, non-coercive interactions among all volunteers at all times. Acts of sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is defined by the U.U. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) as:

“unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.”

Hopewell Theatre recognizes the challenges of the theatre setting, especially if the production features adult themes and violence. The Chicago Theatre Standards “recognize the potential for harassment in rehearsal, during performances... theatre environments can court confusion about the difference between chemistry, artistic freedom, and harassment; we believe participants can be bold and can live “in the moment” of theatrical material while maintaining choreography, fellow participants’ safety, and agreed upon boundaries.”

Goal Hopewell Theatre will adopt procedures to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual harassment. We want to provide a safe environment for all volunteers so they can enjoy their participation in theatrical productions. In order to prevent sexual misconduct, we need to cultivate a culture where inclusion, diversity, and equity are valued and respected. In order to reach this goal, Hopewell proposes policies and procedures that will foster respectful communication and positive interactions among volunteers.

Objectives Hopewell Theatre will:

- assure that volunteers understand sexual harassment as it pertains to the theatre
- establish procedures to deter harassment
- handle incidents of harassment fairly and promptly
- provide volunteers with information and in-service activities regarding sexual harassment that will engage volunteers in discussions to define and clarify boundaries regarding personal interactions
- create a positive environment so volunteers feel safe, valued, and respected
- provide non-threatening ways for people to report harassment that will maintain their dignity and self-esteem
- eliminate offenders from activities at Hopewell
- create an Education Coordinator position and a “go to” team to support volunteers

Implementation

Education Coordinator: Hopewell Theatre will provide a proactive approach to harassment issues. To this end we will designate an Education Coordinator to guide the process. This professional will create training materials

and provide training for the “go to” team, board members, and volunteers. The Education Coordinator will also serve as the advisor to the “go to” team.

“Go to Team”: It is important for individuals who have experienced harassment to be able to report incidents without fear of reprisal. Trained volunteers will serve as a go to team to whom cast and crew members can voice their concerns. Names and contact information of team members will be made available to cast and crew. Although a person with a concern is free to speak to the director of the play, a member of the team should be contacted as well. Provisions will be made for complainants who wish to remain anonymous. When an incident of harassment is reported the following steps will be taken:

1. Complainant will contact a member of the team and explain the problem. The team member will complete a report to verify the date, nature of complaint, etc.
2. Complainant will determine how he/she wants to proceed.
If the complainant feels that the issue reported is minor (e.g. feeling uncomfortable because someone told a crude joke), choices may include mediation or a discussion with the offender by either the team member or complainant and team member. The offender is expected to make restitution by some act of restorative action. Whatever choice the complainant makes will result in a warning to the offender. This will be noted on the report. Although the misconduct might have been minor, and the complainant is satisfied with the resolution of the problem, a second offense will result in the elimination of the offender from the current and future productions at the Hopewell.
3. If a major act of harassment is reported, (an act that is physically and/or verbally threatening) the team member will meet with the offender. All physical incidents are considered major. If an investigation of the harassment proves the offender’s guilt, the offender will be eliminated from the current and future productions at the Hopewell. All physical incidents are considered major.
4. During the complaint and investigation process, the confidentiality of the information received, the privacy of the individuals involved, and the wishes of the complainant will be protected as much as possible. Any notes or documents written or received by the team member(s) conducting the investigation will be kept as confidential.
5. In the case of continued harassment, or a major act of harassment, the complainant may choose to press charges. The matter will then be turned over to the Police.

In the case of minors, the parent/guardian will be called when the complaint is made. The parent and child will work with the team member to determine the direction of the procedure.

The Training

Because sexual misconduct is usually more about power than sex, creating a culture where everyone feels safe, equal, respected, and vital to the production is important. The rehearsal and production may last 8-10 weeks. During that time, volunteers must feel empowered to interact with fellow cast and crew members, while learning lines and blocking. The training session is the key to the success of the program as it sets the tone for social interaction throughout the production. Emphasis will be placed on identifying sexual harassment and Hopewell policies regarding misconduct. It is vital for all volunteers to understand the devastating effects that sexual harassment has on others’ lives. It is also important for volunteers to learn the underlying causes of harassment and how to help create an atmosphere of respect in order to eliminate a possible breeding ground for misconduct at the theatre. Participants must understand that in order to participate in activities at Hopewell, they must meet high expectations that require them to adhere to a code of ethics.

Before each production, cast, crew, and director will be required to attend a 30-minute in-service session at or before the first rehearsal. The interactive session will be conducted by the Education Coordinator. The training session will focus on three main areas:

- sexual harassment
- Hopewell’s policies regarding harassment

- Social and emotional concepts such as building interpersonal relationships and respectful communication

This interactive session will allow participants to engage in discussion and activities that encourage them to express their opinions and feelings. This session will be considered complete if all participants acknowledge their understanding of sexual harassment and promise to engage in respectful communication and interactions with all volunteers to help create a positive environment during rehearsals and performances. If the education coordinator considers that the session was incomplete or unsuccessful, another session will be scheduled. Upon completion of the session, participants will acknowledge in writing. Community theatre should be enjoyable. It can only be so when everyone respects each other.

To this end Hopewell will create written information that details aspects of sexual harassment, explains Hopewell's policies, and provides information regarding interpersonal relationships. This document will be created with the guidance of the Education Coordinator.

The policy for sexual harassment extends to children under the age of 18 who have been cast in a production. This policy includes general safety concerns for each child. In order for a child to be cast in a production, the parent/guardian (or person designated by parent) must agree to be present at all rehearsals. When there are several children in the cast (up to 3) one adult can act as supervisor. This way parents can take turns supervising. Parents must come into the building when dropping off and picking up their child. They will sign their child in and out of the building. Parents must also provide the names of anyone else who is permitted to transport the child. Hopewell will provide an age appropriate version of the training for children and parents. Parents are also invited to attend the adult training. There will be additional age appropriate policies for young adolescents forthcoming.

Note:

Hopewell is in the process of creating content for the training sessions, forms required for the process, and step by step procedures for investigations.

This Standard will be reevaluated frequently so adjustments and amendments can be made to better serve the volunteers. Hopewell does not currently have a specific youth program. Occasionally, a production might call for a child in the cast. If Hopewell chooses to include a youth program, additional procedures will be added. Children under 18 will not be cast in a role intended for an adult.