

Religious Belief and Religious Observance

Our Approach to Inclusion

The School is committed to ensuring the inclusion of students and staff from all faiths and none. This Policy is intended to support and facilitate a student with religious belief or observance to engage positively and fully with their course of study and to fulfil the expectations of the training. It also aims to support and facilitate the experience of current and prospective staff of the School.

Scope of the Policy

For the purposes of this policy, religion and belief are defined as they are in the Equality Act 2010. In this legislation, 'religion' means any religious belief, including lack of belief. This policy therefore references various types of religiously motivated discriminations such as islamophobia and antisemitism. However, political beliefs are not included in this policy. While the overall aim of the Policy is to be as inclusive as possible, it covers only those aspects of religious observance directly related to learning, teaching, assessment, and employment at the School.

This policy applies to students studying on a course of Higher Education who are registered students of the School. This policy also applies to staff employed by the School, particularly those who manage staff or support or teach students. Whatever the individual circumstances, the School is committed to being flexible, supportive, and making clear that discrimination and harassment on the ground of religious belief will not be tolerated.

The School is a secular institution that is committed to diversity. We recognise that we operate in a multi-cultural and multi-faith environment and respond to the increasing breadth of awareness needed to ensure an inclusive community where potential discrimination and misunderstandings are avoided.

Application and Audition

The School welcomes all applicants with religious belief. The School will always aim to be as inclusive and flexible as possible in our admissions processes so as to not create artificial barriers within the institution.

Clothing and other worn items

The School has a uniform policy for students that should be upheld. Similarly, there may be occasions when a person is expected to remove religious clothing for reasons that may include but are not restricted to:

- Costuming
- Health and safety
- Ease of movement
- Enactment of a role
- Tradition and custom of a particular art form

There is likely to be little room for adaptation in the costume/clothing required in performing certain roles in a dance performance. However, we would attempt to accommodate personal circumstances as appropriate.

It is important that everyone in the School community recognises that there will be great variety in the way that any member of any faith wishes to present themselves. Even within the same faith, 'religious dress' will vary widely by denomination, gender, age, cultural or national background and personal preference.

Whenever possible, students and staff will not be asked to wear anything which makes them feel uncomfortable for religious or other reasons.

Dietary Requirements

Some religions and belief systems have dietary requirements. When holding learning activities where refreshments are offered, we will take into account meeting the dietary requirements of those invited to attend wherever possible.

Where the School is unable to accommodate a person's dietary requirements for learning activities, the School would notify them in advance if feasible, to allow sufficient time for the person to make their own arrangements.

Prayer, Contemplation, and Worship

The School acknowledges that there may be times when students want or need to take time out from academic study and training for a variety of reasons including religious observance. Therefore we will endeavour to ensure that the manner in which these requests are responded to is consistent with the response to requests for absence on other grounds.

It is important to bear in mind that for undergraduate students, the course has a busy timetable designed to ensure that teaching and learning requirements are delivered efficiently and effectively within the available time and space. For these reasons, there is often little, if any room for the timetable to accommodate the diversity of religious observance requirements. For example, the normal teaching day runs from 8:30am to 6pm from Monday to Saturday. Weekend attendance is also a necessary part of the rehearsal schedule in some circumstances.

The Executive Director and/or The Artistic Director have the authority to agree to requests for leave/absence on the basis of religious observance but may limit the number or regularity of absences when there are defensible pedagogic reasons.

Assessments, deadlines, and taught sessions

Students should inform the School far in advance if religious observance affects their ability to participate fully in any assessment so that reasonable adjustments can be made where possible. If religious observance affects a student's ability to participate fully in any learning activity, it is the student's responsibility to catch up on any material missed.

Staff application and Interview

The School welcomes employment applications from applicants from all faiths and none. The School will always aim to be as inclusive and flexible as possible so as to not create artificial barriers within the institution.

It is best practice to ask all visitors if they have any specific needs or requirements when visiting our sites. This can include dietary requirements as well as the needs for a prayer room or similar contemplative space (particularly for all day sessions).

Staff Prayer, Contemplation, and Worship

All staff of the School are required to work in accordance with their contract. The School, however, will always be sympathetic toward staff members who request to pray or worship during the working day or who request to alter their working patterns for religious reasons and attempt to accommodate such requests although this will not always be possible.

Staff may request to use their annual leave entitlement to participate in religious festivals, celebrations, or ceremonies. If a staff member requests extended leave at a particular time for the purpose of, for example, going on a pilgrimage, the manager should consider the request sympathetically. If any such extended leave exceeding the annual holiday entitlement is granted, the excess days should be taken as unpaid leave.

Protection Against Harassment and Bullying

Our staff, students and other stakeholders should expect to be treated with respect at all times. All complaints of harassment or bullying will be treated seriously and thoroughly investigated. Any act of harassment or bullying toward a person based on their religious belief will normally, in first instances, be dealt with under the school's [Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours Policy](#). Disciplinary action can be taken in cases where bullying/harassment have been proved.

The school is committed to supporting those who call out unacceptable behaviours, practices and structures both within the school and elsewhere. A complaint can be raised under the following policies:

- Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours
- Non-Academic Misconduct Policy
- Student Complaints Procedure (students only)

The school also understands that raising a complaint may be complicated and will always strive to protect confidentiality where we can. Unfortunately, the school is usually unable to investigate anonymous complaints or those made of behalf of a complainant.

However, where anonymous allegations are made or allegations are raised by third parties, these will be handled under Stage 1 of the Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours and referred to the quality team. The quality team will determine whether there are any matters arising from the allegations that the school should endeavour to follow up, though there may be limitations to possible action be.

We will use the data we receive to further our understanding of the experiences of our student, alumni, and staff communities, and help us to identify patterns of unconscious or implicit bias in our community. In the event of a complaint, a detailed record will be kept and a report of this data will be compiled and reviewed by the Academic Board and other institutional committees as appropriate. We will treat the data confidentially and remove the names of any individuals before the data is compiled into report form. We may also use the data received to drive improvements to relevant institutional policies.

In conclusion

This policy demonstrates Central School of Ballet's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment that supports the diverse needs of its community, ensuring all students and staff can achieve their full potential.

Reviewed by: Dr Jamieson Dryburgh

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