

## **Tackling Racial Inequality**

### **Our Approach to Inclusion**

The School's Inclusivity Policies are a key part of the School's approach to fostering an inclusive culture. They are designed to embed and support an inclusive environment for all members of staff and students.

The School is committed to ensuring the inclusion of students and staff from all backgrounds, ethnicities, and races. The School recognises that staff and students are impacted by structural racism in the arts, education, and society more broadly due to their perceived ethnic, racial, or cultural identity.

The inclusion policy is intended to address the structural inequalities that impact a student's ability to engage positively and fully with their course of study. It also aims to address the structural inequalities that impact the experience of prospective and current staff of the School.

The School judges student applicants solely on their talent and potential to develop the skills required for their chosen profession. We support applicants from all backgrounds. We warmly encourage all applicants to inform the School of any specific support they might need so that this can be put into place as soon as possible.

In terms of staffing, the School welcomes and encourages employment applications from all ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. The School is committed to ensuring no employment advertisement and job description presents unnecessary barriers to individuals and that candidates are only assessed on their individual capacity to undertake the role in question and nothing more.

Everyone is responsible for creating and maintaining an inclusive community that is positive and supportive for all its members.

### **Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to students studying on a course of Higher Education who are registered students at the School. This policy also applies to staff employed by the School, particularly those who manage staff or support or teach students. The Policy is intended to provide staff and students with tools to have open and respectful conversations about topics that can be challenging.

The Policy guides all stages of the student recruitment and application, study, and student life cycle within the School. Similarly, it guides all stages of the staff recruitment, application, and employment cycle. This provides a framework within which the School can strive to be anti-racist and ensure that all people in our community have equal agency. Anti-racism is an ongoing process of learning and implementation of that learning.

## **Anti-racist Practices**

The School operates under an anti-racist ethos. This takes the view that it is simply not enough to not be racist; institutions and individuals must be involved in a continual process of focused actions against racism. The School understands and acknowledges its position as a higher education provider that plays a direct role in shaping Ballet culture and the wider arts and cultural sectors. The School also recognises the lack of diversity at all levels permeating these sectors, including our own institution, and how this lack perpetuates the existing systems of oppression.

As an institution, the School aspires to be better and do better by being proactive in contributing to the dismantling of these structures so that all members of the School community, students, staff, and visitors feel seen, heard, and valued. To practice anti-racism it is essential that we are humble to criticism and become accustomed to hearing and addressing potentially uncomfortable issues. To make progressive change requires radical action to dismantle systemic racism and the structures that support its continuation.

## **Building awareness at Central**

We aim to foster an environment that is, first and foremost, a safe space for staff and students from across the School. The School believes the dismantling of white supremacy within our institution needs to be informed by the lived experiences of the people who are oppressed by it. Having open and honest conversations is important to this endeavour.

## **Being an Active Bystander**

Active Bystanders intervene to provide help in such scenarios where it is safe and appropriate. It is important to be an Active Bystander as far as possible because it indicates to both the offending person and the person being offended where the larger community stands. Everyone is a Bystander at one time or another. A Bystander is a person who observes a conflict or unacceptable behaviour. It might be something serious or minor, one-time or repeated, but the Bystander knows that the behaviour is destructive or likely to make a bad situation worse.

Ignoring offensive and unacceptable behaviour often only reinforces acceptability of such behaviours. Anyone can be an anti-racist Active Bystander in any kind of situation, including ones where no targeted groups are present.

## **Curriculum**

The School is aware that Ballet and Western Theatre Dance more generally, are white-dominated fields and that this is reflected in the curricula of the school. Students are likely to be taught by mostly white staff, to be presented with mostly white faces in the studio/seminar room, other resources, and choreography by predominately white artists. This is limiting and stifles both the sector and anti-racist advocacy at large. The School is actively rebalancing the curriculum to ensure greater representation of ballet artists from global majority heritage among our teachers, visiting artist and those studied.

## **Practical performance issues**

Make-up, hairstyling and costume design must be cultural and racially sensitive. For example, Blackface and racial caricatures are unacceptable. Similarly, lighting for dance

works needs to be appropriate for all skin tones. At Central we recognise that tradition is not an excuse for racist action and despite ballet's troubling heritage, there are important ways in which our practices can be more inclusive.

### **Decolonising ourselves**

Decolonising is often only referred to in institutions in the context of the curriculum, but Decolonising the curriculum is not enough. The School is working to Decolonise ourselves at all levels. This means ensuring that a range of people are represented in both the practice and theory of our art forms.

It is crucial that care is taken to reflect the diversity of a school and art form without being misleading or tokenistic. Tackling and dismantling racial inequality is not a performative action relegated to certain points in the year. It is an ongoing mission requiring a continuous process of review and assurance.

We acknowledge that implementing structural change may take time and that mistakes will likely be made. However, we remain committed to tackling systems of racial inequality.

### **Protection Against Harassment and Bullying**

All staff, students and other stakeholders should expect to be treated with respect at all times. This is part of our [Code of Behaviour](#). All complaints of harassment or bullying will be treated seriously and thoroughly investigated. Disciplinary action can be taken in cases where bullying/harassment have been proved.

Any act of harassment or bullying toward a person based on their race or ethnicity will normally, in first instances, be dealt with under the School's [Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours Policy](#). And/or any other policies as relevant to the situations, including but not limited to the School's Non-Academic Misconduct Policy (for students) and School HR procedures (for staff).

### **Disclosure and Confidentiality**

The School is committed to supporting those who call out racist 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)
- These policies are available on the School website and are available [here](#).

The School also understands that raising a concern may be complicated, particularly for people who have directly or indirectly faced racism and will 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.

When a complaint or case is made, details as to the nature and outcome of the complaint or case are kept on record. This may include the logging and monitoring of special category data where appropriate. A report of this data will be compiled and reviewed annually 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

Last Updated: 20 May 2024

Review Due: May 2025