

## **Harassment Prevention and Complaint Resolution Guidelines**

Updated: Jun 3, 2025

### **Overview**

The Grindstone Theatre Society; The Grindstone Comedy Theatre and Bistro ("Grindstone") are committed to creating professional opportunities for local emerging performing artists. We strive to provide intelligent, funny, and engaging theatre. This pursuit of comedy should first and foremost do no harm. We believe artists can push boundaries, create dialogue, and pursue creative expression without hurting others. Grindstone is committed to the pursuit of safe and respectful performance spaces for its producers, actors, staff, volunteers, students and audiences by promoting equality and positive behaviour from those engaged in our space, by working to provide opportunities for everyone to access, enjoy and participate in all events and activities whenever possible, and by proactively responding to incidents of discrimination, harm and harassment in all their forms. We strive to follow principles of Transformative Justice, and adopt a Survivor Centred Approach to resolving disclosed incidents of harm.

We also hope to create a safer space by educating all members of our community on best practices and by encouraging dialogue. We aim to provide tools and processes to prevent and address harassment and discrimination in our theatre.

In the interest of ensuring this is a living, practical policy, we commit to on-going review and welcome feedback from the community.

The following document describes our desired objectives and guidelines to follow in an on-going way as we address inappropriate behaviour, conflict resolution and related complaints.

### **Intent & Application**

- We expect all members of the Grindstone community to abide by our Community Standards Policy.
- All community members are to be treated with respect and dignity.
- Any community members having displayed inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour may be given a warning and/or reprimanded, including, but not limited to, being asked to leave our space by Grindstone staff or Producers.
- Inappropriate behaviour is not limited to actions displayed at The Grindstone.
- The Grindstone may choose to work with, or not to work with anyone we choose.

- The Grindstone may choose to allow entrance, or not to allow entrance to anyone we choose.
- Intent is not impact, and The Grindstone may respond to the impact reported, even when there was no specific intent to harm.
- We ask that community members give others the benefit of the doubt, and strive for learning, growth and the prevention of further harm.
- Healthy relationships and a healthy community begins with open and healthy communication.
- We acknowledge that safety, learning and growth is a collective and ongoing responsibility, and we welcome all members of our community to help us prevent and address harassment and discrimination.

### ***Show Warnings and Artistic Expression***

Freedom of artistic expression is a vital component to the fabric of our community. Providing new and young artists opportunities to experiment and showcase their work without jury or censor is a major part of our mandate. We support artists and their freedom to perform on stage. Grindstone Comedy Theatre Artist's artistic content may sometimes include language, characters, situations, and other elements that may be perceived as inappropriate, offensive, or triggering. By purchasing a ticket, audiences are opting to participate in a theatrical experience, including a diverse exploration of stories, vantage points, and delivery. Artists may not extend this artistic policy beyond a performance. At no time may artistic expression or freedom violate any local, provincial, or federal law. When possible, each show or event produced by Grindstone Theatre provides content warnings and ratings, noting the audience that may be best suited for a performance. These are available in the event description online, or at the box office. Reports related to misconduct occurring during a performance or in relation to the marketing and publicity of a show will be investigated with an understanding of the context and social cues. Reports of rude, offensive or discriminatory performances will be communicated to the Producer of that show. Grindstone Theatre may ask Producers to discontinue the use of certain remarks, actions, props or characters in future performances, and may decide to cancel further performances altogether if those requests are not adhered to.

### ***Unacceptable Behaviours***

Grindstone Theatre Society considers the following behaviours unacceptable. If any of these unacceptable behaviours are reported, it will result in an investigation and/or being asked to leave, at the discretion of Grindstone Theatre Society and its management. The ability to return to The Grindstone again in the future will be decided by Grindstone Theatre Society board and management based on the severity of the incident.

**Abuse:** Physical, sexual or emotional abuse of any kind, including threats, attempts or actions that cause harm or injury.

**Violence:** the use of intentional force to cause physical damage, harm or injury to an individual, group or property

**Harassment:** Harassment is any unwelcome behaviour that offends or intimidates. Harassment is any conduct or comment, either one time or repeating, whether in person or by other means of communication that are known or ought to be known as unwelcome by an individual or group as they are insulting, threatening, offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning, or unwelcome. Harassment also includes any conduct or comment, that:

- persistently disregards or disrespects a specific request or communication.
- serves no legitimate purpose for the environment.
- undermines authority or respect in the environment, limits opportunities for advancement, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
- creates a negative psychological and/or emotional environment that humiliates, excludes, or isolates an individual or group.

The impact on the person(s) being harassed, not the intent of the harasser, defines harassment. Harassment also includes bullying, whether in person or online, which is a form of aggression that may include physical, verbal, written, or emotional abuse. It can include persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behavior, abuse of power, and/or unfair sanctions which make the individual feel threatened, humiliated, and/or vulnerable.

**Threats:** any act, gesture or language that insinuates or directly communicates the intended harm of another individual, group or property. Yelling, swearing or showing signs of aggression may constitute a threat and make others feel unsafe.

**Discrimination:** Any comment, behaviour or act that is humiliating, offensive, traumatic, excluding, treats differently or unfairly, disparages or otherwise diminishes an individual or group's dignity and/or well-being. Grindstone will not tolerate discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, ability, a conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspension has been ordered, trauma history, or any other identity factors.

**Solicitation:** any comment, behaviour or act that can be perceived as soliciting sexual favours, or placing sexual conditions onto any persons involvement.

**Unsafe Behaviour:** any behaviour that risks or threatens the safety of others, or the individual themselves.

## **Offensive Attire**

Community members are encouraged to be thoughtful about the attire they wear. Attire containing offensive images or words, such as hate symbols or culturally appropriative attire, is not tolerated at Grindstone Theatre events or property.

## **Supervision**

It is the responsibility of all Supervisors (Managers, Producers, Instructors or any person within the organization supervising the Grindstone venue or supervising one or more employees/volunteers/artists) to take immediate and appropriate action to stop and prevent harm, and to record, report and follow up with any incident of harassment, violence, discrimination, bullying, abuse, solicitation or unsafe behaviour that is witnessed, disclosed, or reported. It is also the responsibility of all Supervisors to call for support as required, this may include involving other Grindstone team members, calling 2-1-1 for mental health support and related issues, or calling 9-1-1 for crime and safety related issues. Supervisors must send all Incident Reports to the Artistic Director and/or General Manager.

## **Reporting**

Below are the ways a person may notify Grindstone Theatre of an incident and file a report. Please note that anonymous disclosures limit our ability to conduct a thorough investigation.

### **1. Online Submission**

Any person may file a report by completing our online submission form located at

[www.grindstonetheatre.ca/report-an-incident](http://www.grindstonetheatre.ca/report-an-incident). The form outlines who will receive and read the submission, as well as options for the person to submit anonymously. Additionally, the person can choose whether they are disclosing information or filing a formal complaint.

### **2. Fill out an Incident Report in Person**

Any person may file a Complaint/Incident Report in person by asking for a form at The Grindstone Box Office. The form which is similar to the online form, outlines who will receive and read the submission, as well as options for the person to submit anonymously. Additionally, the person can choose whether they are disclosing information or filing a formal complaint.

### **3. In Person**

Any person may request a meeting to make a personal statement to Grindstone Theatre Management or Supervisors. The reporting individual is welcome to bring a support person to the meeting. The Management or Supervisor may request to bring a second individual as well. The staff will listen first, and ask any pertinent questions for them to make a formal report. The staff will determine whether the individual wishes to remain anonymous, whether they are choosing to disclose information or file a formal complaint, and what information is able to be shared with the complained-of individual(s).

#### ***Processing a Formal Report***

Following the reporting of an incident, the person the concern was reported to will engage with other Grindstone Theatre staff or board members (not directly associated with the claim) to develop a plan for addressing and resolving the situation as soon as possible. Those persons providing their contact information or filing a formal complaint will receive follow up, and the proposed plan will be shared with them.

Complaints or disclosures will be taken seriously, recorded and responded to, to the extent that is reasonably practicable, using the following guidelines:

- First and foremost our goal is to prevent immediate and future harm, and no formal process should delay this immediately necessary response.
- Assume belief in people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination.
- Providing support and resources to persons who have experienced harm or who have been affected by the incident.
- Speak to all those involved in the incident to gain as much information as is possible, and to share that a report of unacceptable behaviour was made.
- To the best of our ability, ensure the safety and privacy of all those affected by the incident, respecting the dignity of all individuals in the process.
- Respect and follow the reasonable wishes of the person who experienced harm assuming no others are in immediate danger.
- If agreed to by all parties, create a plan for mediation which could include an in person meeting supervised by Grindstone supervisors or management.
- When necessary, create a plan for investigation and/or adjudication in collaboration with Grindstone Theatre leadership, the person disclosing, and with respect for people who have been affected. Reports of inappropriate behaviour by Grindstone staff will likely require a formal investigation to be conducted.
- When necessary, impose interim measures, which may include warnings or “flagging” an individuals behaviour, or a temporary ban while further investigation and conflict resolution occurs.

- If required, Grindstone Theatre may consult Grindstone Theatre Society's Board of Directors, representatives from community partners (such as the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton), and professional experts (such as doctors, psychologists, and lawyers). In these instances, we will strive to maintain confidentiality and anonymity as we are able.
- Always strive to find a resolution that includes the needs of the people who have been affected.
- Our goal whenever possible is to see positive changes through the resolution process, growth and healing through open communication where harm is acknowledged, responsibility is taken by all individuals for their own actions (including responsibility by the whole community for creating a culture where harm can happen), and ultimately behaviours are changed so that no further harm is caused.

For an individual to take responsibility for their own actions ideally we would be able to share with them:

- What specifically the individual has done.
- How this has harmed or made an affected person to feel.
- What this means (what disciplinary action is necessary, what continued behaviour might mean, or what the affected individual would like to see.)

We understand that this may not always be possible, and it is in no way required of an individual who is making a report to share all of these elements.

## ***Disciplinary Action***

After speaking to all individuals involved in an incident, if a report of unacceptable behaviour is reasonably substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, as decided by Grindstone Theatre. This may include, but is not limited to, formal reprimand, suspension, demotion, dismissal, and/or banning from events, activities, employment, or property. Action resulting from a Complaint/Incident Report may also be informal, such as preventing an individual from renewing a contract, or booking future events with The Grindstone.

Additionally, Grindstone Theatre may offer steps towards accountability to people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination, including but not limited to, an oral or written apology or compensation for lost wages or lost benefits. Both parties to the incident will be advised, verbally and/or in writing, of the decision.

## ***Privacy & Confidentiality***

All parties to an incident are expected to respect the privacy and confidentiality of all other parties involved, limiting the discussion related to the incident to those that need to know.

## ***Paths to Restoration***

Our first concern for healing and restoration is for the person(s) who experienced harm, through establishing a feeling of safety at The Grindstone, seeing responsibility taken for harmful actions, and accessing any necessary support.

For the person who has received disciplinary action such as a full ban there may be steps available towards reintegration and restoration into the Grindstone community at the discretion of Grindstone Theatre Society board and management, with consultation of those affected by the harmful actions of the individual. These steps may include but is not limited to - presenting a formal apology to the Grindstone or those harmed, receiving a formal forgiveness from those harmed, the approval of reintegration by those who were affected by harmful action, and specific evidence of changed behaviour.

## ***Accessing Support***

Every person's journey to recovery and wellness looks different, and we allow people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination to shape that journey - providing support as we are able. Below are a few resources that may be helpful to you.

### **1. Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE): (780)-423-4121 or [www.sace.ca](http://www.sace.ca)**

Provides free services, including their support and information line, counselling, court support, diversity and inclusion training, and public education.

### **2. Edmonton Distress Line: (780)-482-HELP (4357)**

The Edmonton Distress Line is a confidential supportive listening service that provides 24-hour support if you are in distress and want to talk. They are equipped to talk about any topic that is causing you distress, including relationships, mental health, finances, abusive/violent situations, and thoughts of suicide.

### **3. Alberta 211: Dial 211**

Alberta 211 is an information and referral service for government and non-profit agencies. If you live in the greater Edmonton area, call 211 to speak with an Information and Referral Specialist.

### **4. Edmonton Non - Emergency Police Line: (780) 423-4567**

If it is not urgent, call for support.

## **Definitions**

**Consent:** A voluntary, ongoing, active, and conscious agreement to engage in the activity in question. Consent or a “yes” that is obtained through pressure, coercion, force, threats, or by inducing intoxication, impairment, or incapacity is not consent. Silence or ambiguity do not constitute consent. Additionally, there is no consent when:

- it is given by someone else.
- the person is unconscious, sleeping, or lacks the capacity to consent.
- it was obtained through the abuse of a position of power, trust, or authority.
- the person does not indicate “yes”, says “no”, or implies “no” through words or behaviours.
- the person changes their mind and withdraws their consent.

It is the responsibility of all parties wanting to engage in an activity to obtain clear consent from the other, and to recognize that consent can be withdrawn at any time.

**Disclose/Disclosure:** A verbal or written report by any person to a member of the Grindstone Theatre community that they have experienced abuse, harassment, or misconduct.

**Formal Complaint:** A written report or statement alleging abuse, harassment, or misconduct by any person to a Grindstone staff under the Grindstone Theatre process for the purpose of initiating an investigation and resolution process.

**Sexual Violence:** Any sexual act or act of a sexual nature, or act targeting sexuality, whether physical or psychological, committed without consent. This includes, but is not limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, distribution of intimate images, inducing intoxication, impairment or incapacity for the purpose of making another person vulnerable to non-consensual sexual activity, and other analogous conduct.

**Sexual Assault:** Any form of sexual contact without consent. This can include unwanted or forced kissing, fondling, grabbing, touching, vaginal or anal penetration, or oral sexual contact.

**Retaliation:** Taking, attempting to take, or threatening to take any adverse action or retribution of any kind against anyone involved in a report of harassment, abuse, or misconduct process. Protection from retaliation is for both an individual making a report and also an individual who may be being accused of inappropriate action. This includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, pressuring, harassment made in person, electronically, or through third parties.