



**AMERICAN  
STAGE**

## **AMERICAN STAGE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT POLICY**

American Stage is committed to providing a conscious, healthy, and respectful work environment for everyone involved in bringing its work to life. As an organization we recognize that the effects of racism, sexism, and other systemic biases are throughout our national culture, including in the theater world. These behaviors are contrary to who we are and what we aspire to be. The purpose of this document is to aid in creating a workplace where we all feel safe and are given the respect we deserve — where our differences can be celebrated.

Because the spaces in which we work are varied and can at times move beyond the American Stage's physical walls — from administration, auditions, rehearsals, technical work, late nights, parties, award events, public-facing frontline work, and more — we must acknowledge, and not exploit, the blurred boundaries between work and social spaces.

American Stage is committed to providing a workplace that is free of unprofessional and hurtful conduct, including discrimination and harassment. Actions, words, jokes or comments based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), age, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, medical information gained through group coverage, disability or any other characteristic protected by law will not be tolerated.

All artists and employees must treat each other with the courtesy, consideration, and respect expected of professionals. American Stage will not tolerate unprofessional conduct, discrimination, harassment, or threats directed at any employee, supervisor, independent contractor, board member, member of the public, patron, volunteer, student, visitor, supplier or vendor by anyone for any reason. This policy applies to all situations that occur during the workday or at any time during activities related to American Stage, on or off the premises owned by American Stage.

Additionally, this applies to postings or comments on any social media outlet, both on official American Stage accounts as well as on personal accounts, if such accounts are accessible by students, parents, patrons, other employees, or the general public. This includes but is not limited to: use of profane, obscene, or discriminatory language, slurs, jokes, epithets or harassing/threatening remarks.

Sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any other visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, is strictly prohibited. Submission to such unwelcome conduct will never be an explicit or implicit condition or term of employment at American Stage. American Stage does not tolerate this type of conduct from any employee or independent contractor and any such activities should be immediately reported as outlined below.

**REPORTING VIOLATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT POLICY:**

1. Full time staff and part time hourly staff: Any activity/conduct in violation of the professional conduct policy should be reported to the employee's direct supervisor. In cases where the employee feels that is not appropriate, they may report to human resources or to leadership staff.
2. Educational Artists: Any activity/conduct in violation of the professional conduct policy should be reported to the Director of Education. In cases where the student or employee feels that is not appropriate, they may report to leadership staff.
3. Artistic Production Teams (Stage Managers, Designers, and/or visiting Directors): Any activity/conduct in violation of the professional conduct policy should be reported to the Stage Manager or General Manager. In cases where the employee feels that is not appropriate, they may report to the Producing Artistic Director.
4. Actors and Performers: Any activity/conduct in violation of the professional conduct policy should be reported to the Stage Manager. It is understood that certain conversations may involve designers, stage management or directors and in such cases where the employee feels uncomfortable taking it to the Stage Manager, they may report to the General Manager.

All reported violations of the professional conduct policy will be fully and promptly investigated, and if found to have merit, disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including termination.

No director, board member, employee, or independent contractor who, in good faith, reports a violation of ethical conduct shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence. This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within American Stage prior to seeking resolution outside of American Stage.

**WE SHOULD ALL**

- Know bullying and address bullying when we see it.
- Know sexual harassment and address sexual harassment when we see it.
- Know racism and address racism when we see it.
- Know homophobia and transphobia and address homophobia and transphobia when we see it.
- Know ableism and address ableism when we see it.
- Know ageism and address ageism when we see it.
- Know xenophobia and address xenophobia when we see it.
- Be aware that many assumptions are grounded in cultural or other stereotypes. Changing our behavior requires that we stay open to seeing the world in new ways.
- Examine our current practices regularly.
- Make sure that everyone at American Stage knows whom they can talk to if they encounter an instance of discrimination, harassment, or other oppressive behavior.
- Understand and uphold reporting standards and guidelines for employees, contractors, and guests.

## What does oppressive, and inappropriate behavior look like?

Oppressive behavior is any behavior that marginalizes or diminishes your colleagues. The list of potentially inappropriate or uninformed behaviors below is not all-inclusive, and it is meant to provide you with examples.

### *Inappropriate Physical Touch*

- If in doubt, don't do it. If someone pulls away or asks you to stop it, STOP IT. Hugging and touching can imply a sense of intimacy that is not shared.
- Ex. Being asked to engage in intimate scene work without first talking through it and establishing boundaries.
- Ex. Touching a coworker's hair without verbal consent
- Ex. Touching a coworker's pregnant midsection without consent.
- Ex. During a fight rehearsal too much force is used or something hurts.

### *Inappropriate Language*

- Ex. Using slurs or derogatory slang of any kind. - This includes slurs or derogatory slang that is used within the context of a play we are working on out of the scene work.
- Ex. Colleagues should not be subject to a judgmental gaze or commentary on clothing, bodies, sexiness, racial attributes, weight, prettiness, or personality characteristics.
- Ex. Co-workers are here to work, not to discuss your or their personal lives or to engage in flirtatious behavior. You can be friendly and caring, but discussion about intimate lives should be done with consent and/or saved for a different place and time.

### *Dismissive or Disrespectful Behaviors*

- Ex. Purposefully using the wrong pronouns for someone, especially after they stated their pronouns.
- Ex. Dismissing issues surrounding the color of hosiery for darker skin tones, the need for different lighting on darker skin tones
- Ex. Shaming or public outbursts that stop work, intimidate, or disrespect others

## How to Handle Inappropriate Or Uninformed Behavior

There are ways to respond when you experience discriminatory, harassment, or other inappropriate or uninformed behavior, including "privately checking in" and "checking in with the group." To clarify, this is not about retribution, cancel culture or taking an individual down.

***This is about resolution and understanding, and being able to get back to the work of making our art in a safe space.***

**Private Check in:** If a colleague does something that you find inappropriate or uninformed, pull them to the side and take the time to foster an open and honest conversation about what transpired. It is helpful to only speak about what you feel, rather than assume another's intent. *Ex. I felt uncomfortable when you said my outfit was way too tight. It would help if you could refrain from making those comments, even as a joke.*

**Group Check In:** If a colleague does something that you find inappropriate, address the issue outwardly, including bringing it to the attention of people listed in the Professional Conduct Policy. If you feel comfortable, you can respectfully address inappropriate or uninformed conduct in front of others, especially if you believe it will protect yourself and/or your colleagues from further harm. *Ex. Hi, everyone. I actually would like to be referred to as 'she', not 'he'. Thanks!*

In many cases, you may find that a "private check in" can be what is needed to solve a conflict. However, there may be times when you may need to do a "group check in" and

reach out to the people in the room, or those listed in the “Reporting Violations” section of this document. Feel free to choose the method that works best for you. Know that you may always report a concern or complaint regardless of whether you have first advised someone privately that their behavior is inappropriate.

**What if that doesn’t fix it?**

American Stage is committed to responding to your concerns in a timely, thorough, and impartial manner. Employees wishing to report a concern or complaint regarding discrimination, harassment, or retaliation as described in the Professional Conduct Policy should utilize the procedures set forth, namely to reach out Stage Management and the General Manager.

American Stage is committed to treating all complaints seriously. Therefore, the representative you approach will treat all issues raised sensitively and with appropriate discretion. Confidentiality will be respected to the greatest extent practicable consistent with the American Stage’s obligation to properly investigate and resolve concerns.

Because of the sensitive and personal nature of these incidents, we ask that any individuals who are not directly involved in the investigation and/or resolution respectfully limit discussion and that all individuals refrain from engaging in rumors, gossip, and/or speculation.

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*Florida Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*  
501 East Polk Street, Suite 1000  
Tampa, FL 33602  
813-710-9340

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City of St Petersburg HUMAN RESOURCES  
**Jobs** 727-893-7311  
**Admin** 727-893-7481  
(727) 893-7481  
One 4th St N, MSC – 3rd floor,  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

**PINELLAS COUNTY OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS**  
400 S. Ft. Harrison Avenue, Suite 300  
Clearwater, FL 34616  
Leon W. Russell, Human Rights/EEO Officer  
Tel: (813) 464-4880

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