



THE PUBLISHERS
ASSOCIATION



An industry-wide commitment to **PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR** **IN BOOKSELLING AND PUBLISHING**

Written and endorsed by the Booksellers Association, The Society of Authors,
The Publishers Association and the Association of Authors' Agents.

PRINCIPLES

1. We in the books industry support creative expression and freedom of speech. However, our creative realm is also a professional one and we expect high standards of behaviour from everyone we encounter in the course of our work, including colleagues and customers.
2. We will protect the passion, imagination and creativity of everyone in the books industry. We will celebrate and promote diversity and inclusion so that all voices can be heard.
3. We will recognise our influence and make a commitment to work together to prevent abuse of power, creating a work environment free of discrimination, harassment including sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation.
4. We will ensure that everyone in our industry is treated with dignity and respect so that individuals are supported and able to speak out.

COMMITMENT

1. We share a united vision of professionalism for publishing, bookselling and literary performance.
 - Authors, publishers, agents and booksellers are colleagues and collaborators in business and all parties can expect a high standard of professional behaviour from one another.
 - Our professional behaviour is thoughtful and anticipates consequences – and is required in every environment where people interact for work reasons, including but not limited to: offices, bookshops, parties, committees, lunch meetings, awards ceremonies, rights fairs, festivals and any other venue, formal or informal; as well as online and in all communications.
 - Creative collaboration often necessitates the sharing of personal experience but we will understand that such collaboration is a professional act and not an invitation to inappropriate intimacy.
 - In a professional context we will never make unwanted personal or sexual propositions, suggestive remarks or gestures, or instigate unwanted physical contact.
 - We acknowledge that it's not appropriate to use humour or 'banter' to make comments that have the effect of isolating or humiliating others.
 - Our professional communication will focus on facts, not emotion, and be respectful to all parties.
 - We have a right to retain our privacy, and to feel safe and valued in the working environment. No colleague should feel obliged to use personal social media accounts for work purposes.

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2. We celebrate and actively promote diversity and inclusion in all its forms, including and not limited to the nine protected characteristics cited in The Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment (including trans), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
 - We want all voices to be heard. Inclusivity is crucial to the future success of our industry. We look to writers to continue to explore ways to reflect and test us in their work.
 - It is not acceptable to make dismissive or hostile remarks about a person on any basis or to make assumptions about someone's lifestyle, interests or abilities.
 - We will be sensitive to our potential vulnerabilities and differences. For example, no one should feel pressured to drink alcohol within a work environment, even if the work environment is a party.
3. We will recognise our position and influence. We will act appropriately and with responsibility and recognise that professional behaviour never allows for abuse of power.
 - We recognise that power is situational and that we can all be in a position of greater relative power. For example, when we have greater experience or are in a more senior role; where there is privilege inherent in our cultural heritage, education or socio-economic status; when we have access to somebody or something that is highly valued; when we are in a position where it is somebody's job to 'look after' us; then we will recognise the power we have and use it responsibly.
 - We acknowledge that behaviour we might perceive as commonplace or sociable can feel inappropriate to someone, even if they don't express their discomfort.
 - When we are in a position of greater influence, it is our responsibility to foster a working environment in which everyone in both formal and more relaxed situations is treated with professionalism, integrity and respect.

4. We will support one another and take action by:

LISTENING: If someone tells us that they find something racist, sexist, threatening, or uncomfortable, they have a right to that judgment and that feeling. We will behave with empathy, respect and understanding.

SPEAKING UP: If we experience unwanted behaviour, we will clearly explain what makes us uncomfortable and ask for the behaviour to stop.

BEING ALLIES: We will not remain silent in the face of unacceptable behaviour. We will listen to and empower those who have experienced such behaviour. We will bear witness and support appropriate action being taken, regardless of the status or the relative 'importance' of the individuals involved.

Be aware of your company policy. If you do not think there is one, ask. As industry associations, we encourage our members to promote and implement the standards of professional behaviour set out in this document and to create and endorse company policies which reflect these principles.

USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Harassment is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as 'unwanted conduct ... which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'.

Bullying is defined by ACAS as 'offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient'.

Discrimination is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex'.

Author: where 'author' is used, it is implied to include creators including but not limited to illustrators, translators, spoken word performers, graphic novelists and writers of books of all kinds.