

Standards for the Protection of Minors at the Polish Royal Opera

abridged version for minors

INTRODUCTION

To ensure your safety, the Polish Royal Opera has developed a **very important document** aimed at protecting children and teenagers from harm – **"Standards for the protection of minors"**.

It is an expression of our commitment to protecting you in situations in which you feel harmed. We understand this protection as special care for your dignity and your physical and mental well-being.

In the standards, you will find principles that will help both us and you create an institution that is friendly, safe, and free from violence. Their aim is to create conditions for effective assistance in situations that are challenging for you; in situations where you may experience harm or violence, as well as when you witness such behavior towards your colleagues.

Remember that:

- You have the right to protect your life and health.
- You have the right to freedom of conscience, thought, and religion, as well as the right to personal development.
- You have the right to be respected and recognized by others.
- You have the right to be protected from physical and mental violence and neglect. The right to be protected from violence means that beatings and humiliation, psychological harm, abuse, and cruel and degrading treatment are unacceptable and punishable.
- You have the right to be protected from all forms of sexual abuse. No one has the right to touch you in a way you do not consent to or to persuade or force you into sexual contact.
- No one has the right to force you to use alcohol, tobacco products, or intoxicants (including drugs).
- You have the right to protect your image. No one can take photos of you without your consent for private purposes. No one can post your photos online without your consent.
- You have the right to seek all possible help whenever you are being harmed.

While at the Opera, you are asked to:

- behave politely;
- respect others, including your peers;
- observe the applicable rules and regulations.

We would like you to know that:

If something happens to you at home or at the Opera that you find unacceptable—something that worries or saddens you, or if someone hurt you or acted in a way that you find inappropriate—you have the right to speak up. You can ask any Opera employee for help, and we will do our best to resolve the issue in a way that ensures your safety.

Violence can take many forms:

Physical violence

- refers to any action that causes actual or potential physical harm, including hitting, pulling, pushing, throwing objects, kicking, shaking, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or ears, forcing someone into uncomfortable positions, scalding, or forcing someone to eat or swallow something;
- harm that occurs as a result of an action or failure to act by a parent or other person responsible for the child.

Emotional abuse

- refers to chronic, non-physical harmful interactions between you and your caregiver, which may include both actions and neglect;
- encompasses various behaviors, such as emotional unavailability, ignoring emotional needs, maintaining a relationship rooted in hostility, blaming, denigration, rejection, humiliation, intimidation, and attributing negative traits to you.

Sexual violence

- any sexual activity undertaken with a child under the age of 15;
- involving a child in sexual activity: which they are not able to fully understand and give informed consent to, and/or to which they are not developmentally mature and cannot consent in a legally valid manner, and/or which is inconsistent with the legal or moral norms of a given society;
- physical contact (touching private parts of the body);
- without physical contact — all forms of verbal harassment and inducing contact with pornographic content.

Neglect

- failure to meet your basic needs and/or failure to respect your basic rights by parents, guardians, or other individuals responsible for your care, upbringing, and protection. This includes both isolated incidents and ongoing patterns in which a parent or guardian does not provide appropriate conditions for your development and well-being.
- this may concern areas such as health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions.

RULES FOR SAFE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN OPERA STAFF AND MINOR PARTICIPANTS

General rules:

1. The Staff takes care of the safety of minors during their stay at the Opera.
2. The rules of safe interactions with minors apply to all Staff members.

Opera Staff:

1. Does not violate applicable laws, established norms, or principles. The Staff treats everyone fairly and does not engage in discrimination based on origin, identity, age, gender, financial status, appearance, or knowledge and skills.
2. Does not use power or physical advantage against minors (intimidation, coercion, threats).
3. Does not use any form of physical, psychological, or sexual violence against participants.
4. Does not use statements with sexual overtones that undermine dignity and does not make references to sexual activity or attractiveness.
5. Does not violate personal integrity.
6. Does not provoke inappropriate contact. As a rule, contact with a minor should take place only for work-related purposes and using official channels and means of communication.

RULES OF SAFE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MINORS AT THE OPERA

1. Minors have the right to stay in a safe environment.
2. Minors are obliged to comply with the rules and standards of conduct specified by the Opera.
3. Minors are obliged to respect the rights and personal freedoms of their colleagues.
4. Minors are not permitted to use physical or psychological aggression against other minors under any circumstances.
5. Minors are required to oppose all forms of violence and report any dangers to the Staff.

RULES OF YOUR CONDUCT IN A SITUATION IN WHICH YOU ARE HARMED

1. If you feel unsafe or have been harmed either within the Opera or outside it, whether through physical, psychological, or sexual violence, you can report it to a member of the Opera Staff. Request a reaction, support, and assistance. Describe the situation and ask them to notify the director of the Opera.
2. If you witness physical, psychological, or sexual violence being used against other minors, report it to a member of the Opera Staff. Request a reaction, support, and assistance. Describe the situation and ask them to notify the director of the Opera.
3. The member of Opera Staff you contacted will take action to clarify the situation. This action may be taken in cooperation with your parents/legal guardians if they express their willingness to participate in the investigation.
4. At the same time, inform your parents/legal guardians of the incident.
5. The Opera will immediately take action to stop and eliminate this behavior. It is the duty of every employee who observes or is informed of any violence or aggression against you to stop it.
6. If Opera Staff members notice symptoms or signs of violence in your behavior or appearance, even if you have not disclosed it, they are required by law to take protective action and/or report it to institutions that can provide you with assistance. In such cases, the director of Opera will arrange a meeting with you and your parents or legal guardians to address and verify the concerns.

SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Helpline for Children and Youth: 116 111

Police helpline: 800 120 226

"Blue Line" for Victims of Domestic Violence: 800 120 002

Anti-Depression Helpline of the Forum Against Depression: 22 594 91 00

The Children's Rights Ombudsman runs a free 24/7 Children's Helpline, where both children and their parents or guardians can obtain professional psychological and legal support at any time.

If you need assistance, please call the toll-free number: 800 12 12 12