

## **Prayas Theatre Company**

### **Online Trolling and Bullying Procedure and Policy.**

#### **1. Introduction and Background:**

Prayas Theatre Company is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment, and a zero-tolerance policy towards online trolling and bullying for its practitioners, members, and supporters. This document aims to outline the best practice and guidelines for identifying, responding to, and managing instances of online trolling and bullying. Prayas Theatre Company's existing policies, as found on [www.prayas.co.nz](http://www.prayas.co.nz), should be considered in conjunction with this policy.

#### **2. Definition of Online Trolling and Bullying:**

Online trolling refers to the act of posting inflammatory, derogatory, or offensive messages or comments with the intention of provoking or upsetting others. Online bullying refers to the repeated and intentional harassment, intimidation, or humiliation of individuals through digital platforms.

#### **3. Inclusion:**

The Prayas Theatre Company is committed to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members. We acknowledge that online trolling and bullying can disproportionately affect individuals and groups, and we are committed to empowering these voices and protecting them from harm.

#### **4. Reporting Procedure:**

If a member of Prayas Theatre Company experiences or witnesses online trolling or bullying, they should report it to the assigned member responsible for monitoring online interactions. The report should include details of the incident, including screenshots if possible. The assigned member will then follow the procedure outlined in the policy to respond appropriately.

#### **5. Support for Targeted Individuals and Groups:**

Prayas Theatre Company recognizes that online trolling and bullying can have a significant impact on a person's mental health and well-being. We are committed

to providing support and resources for members who have been targeted, including counselling services and access to other resources.

## **6. Education and Training:**

Prayas Theatre Company is committed to educating our members on how to recognize and respond to online trolling and bullying. We will provide scenario-based training examples and encourage members to share their experiences in a kind and safe environment.

## **7. Review and Revise:**

The Anti-Trolling and Bullying Policy will be reviewed and revised periodically to ensure that it aligns with our values and mission. We welcome feedback from our members on how we can improve the policy and our response to online trolling and bullying.

## **Prayas Theatre Company**

### **Plan and Procedure Dealing with Online Trolling and Bullying**

#### **1. Introduction and Background:**

Prayas Theatre Company is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for its practitioners, members, and supporters. This procedure aims to outline the best practices and guidelines for identifying, responding to, and managing instances of online trolling and bullying. Prayas Theatre Company's existing policies, as found on [www.prayas.co.nz](http://www.prayas.co.nz), should be considered in conjunction with this procedure.

#### **2. Definition of Online Trolling and Bullying:**

For the purpose of this procedure, online trolling refers to the act of posting inflammatory, derogatory, or offensive messages or comments with the intention of provoking, ridiculing, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning, shaming or upsetting others. Online bullying refers to the repeated and intentional behaviour as described above.

#### **3. Identification of Trolling and Bullying:**

##### **3.1. Monitoring and Awareness:**

- a. Designate a dedicated team responsible for monitoring online platforms where Prayas Theatre Company maintains a presence. This team will be responsible for taking suitable action promptly and professionally when a trolling or bullying incident has been identified.
- b. Regularly review comments, posts, and messages on these platforms to identify potential instances of trolling and bullying.
- c. Educate members on common tactics used by trolls and bullies and provide training on how to identify and differentiate them from legitimate feedback or criticism.

##### **3.2. Identifying Trolls and Bullies:**

- a. Trolls often exhibit characteristics such as inflammatory language, personal attacks, off-topic comments, excessive negativity, and an unwillingness to engage in constructive dialogue.
- b. Bullies may engage in persistent targeting of individuals, including spreading rumours, making threats, or using discriminatory language.
- c. Maintain a record of identified trolls and bullies, including screenshots, usernames, and any relevant information for future reference.

#### **4. Response and Responsibility:**

##### **4.1. Immediate Response:**

- a. The primary response should involve maintaining composure and avoiding engaging in an argument or exchanging insults.
- b. Remove or prohibit offensive or inappropriate comments promptly if they violate the existing policies of Prayas Theatre Company.

##### **4.2. Escalation:**

- a. If the trolling or bullying persists despite initial response, escalate the issue to a higher authority such as the President or Secretary to block serial trolls.
- b. Document all interactions and actions taken, including dates, times, and individuals involved.

#### **5. Scenario-Based Training Examples:**

The following scenario-based training examples are provided to reflect real-life scenarios:

##### **Scenario 1: Offensive Comment by a member/ practitioner:**

A person part of the Company or part of an existing production posts an offensive comment on a social media platform, targeting another member's appearance.

Appropriate Response:

- Acknowledge the offensive comment and express concern for the targeted member's well-being. For example speaking with the victim and providing them support.

- Privately message the offending member, asking them to remove the comment and reminding them of Prayas' policies.
- If the member refuses to comply or continues their behaviour, escalate the issue to the designated authority.

### **Scenario 2: Persistent Harassment via Email:**

A member of Prayas Theatre Company receives multiple harassing emails from an unknown sender, making personal attacks and threats.

Appropriate Response:

- Inform the targeted member about the situation and provide emotional support.
- Advise the targeted member to avoid responding to the emails.
- Document the emails and relevant information and report the incident to the designated authority for further action, such as involving law enforcement if necessary.

### **Scenario 3: Derogatory Remarks on an Online Forum:**

During a discussion on an online theatre forum (example Facebook groups etc), a troll makes derogatory remarks about Prayas Theatre Company's mission and performances. This includes any activity organised by Prayas Theatre Company.

Appropriate Response:

- Respond politely to the troll, focusing on correcting any misconceptions or providing accurate information.
- Encourage other members of the forum to engage in a constructive dialogue about Prayas' values and accomplishments.
- If the troll continues to disrupt and offend or becomes increasingly offensive, escalate reporting the behaviour to the appropriate forums.

## **6. Regular Review and Updates:**

Ensure this procedure is reviewed and updated periodically to reflect emerging online trends, technologies, and the needs of Prayas Theatre Company. Regular

training sessions and reminders should be conducted to keep members informed and well-prepared to handle instances of online trolling and bullying.

Overall, the Anti-Trolling and Bullying Policy of Prayas Theatre Company should reflect our values of inclusion, empowerment, relevance, collaboration, and community-focus. By creating a safe and supportive online environment for our members, we can continue to champion South Asian storytelling and serve our wider community.