Audition Policy and Procedure: Whanganui Amateur Musical and Dramatic Society (Amdram)

1. Purpose

To ensure a fair, transparent, and inclusive audition process that upholds the integrity of casting decisions and manages any potential conflicts of interest, particularly within the context of a close-knit community.

The policy exists to ensure casting decisions are made in the best interest of the production and the community, with a commitment to fairness, transparency, and respect for all participants.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all auditions conducted by Amdram and all individuals involved in the audition process, including panel members, auditionees, and support staff.

3. Definitions

-**Potential Conflict of Interest**: A situation where a panel member has a personal, professional, or financial relationship with an auditionee that *could* compromise impartiality.

-**Actual Conflict of Interest**: A personal relationship where impartiality is clearly compromised or could be reasonably be perceived as being compromised. Examples of actual conflicts include (but are not limited to):

- Familial relationships
- Romantic relationships
- Close personal friendships

-**Audition Panel**: A group of individuals responsible for evaluating auditionees and making casting decisions.

4. Acknowledging Community Dynamics

As a community-based theatre group, we acknowledge that personal, professional, and social relationships between auditionees and panel members are common and often unavoidable. This policy aims to manage these relationships transparently and fairly, rather than eliminate them.

5. Audition Panel Composition

- Panels should consist of at least three members, ideally including the director, a producer or production team representative, and another independent member. For musical productions the addition of the Musical Director will be a necessary inclusion.

- Panel membership should be rotated across productions to reduce the potential of recurring biases and broaden community engagement.

- Panel members will not be excluded from auditioning for the show as long as they are removed from the auditions and any decisions relating to the part(s) they are auditioning for

6. Conflict of Interest Guidelines

- Panel members must declare any potential conflicts of interest as auditionees become known. Panel members should be provided a list of auditionees as soon as is practical ahead of auditions.

-The panel will collectively determine if these conflicts are *actual conflicts* for the purpose of this policy.

- If an actual conflict is identified, the panel member must recuse themselves from evaluating the relevant auditionee. It may be appropriate to bring in additional panel members to assist in the auditions of individual roles.

- A record of declared conflicts and actions taken must be kept confidentially by the panel.

7. Optional Decision Frameworks

The below frameworks are provided as options for the director and production team to consider when approaching auditions. Both are valid approached under this policy though it is expected that a specific approach is chosen ahead of auditions and remains consistent throughout that process.

7.1 Director-Led Decision Framework

- The audition panel provides input and feedback based on agreed criteria, contributing to a well-rounded assessment of each auditionee.

- The director considers all panel input but retains final authority over casting decisions.

- Panel members are encouraged to share perspectives openly, but the director's vision for the production guides the final selection.

- In cases of disagreement, the director is not expected to be bound by consensus.

7.2 Balance of Voices Framework

- The audition panel provides input and feedback based on agreed criteria, contributing to a well-rounded assessment of each auditionee.

- Decisions are made by consensus or, in the absence thereof, a majority vote of the panel.

8. Audition Procedure

- Audition notices must be publicly posted with clear criteria and expectations.

- Auditionees will be evaluated based on predetermined criteria (e.g., performance, suitability for role, availability).

- As a best practice approach panel members should score or comment independently before group discussion.

9. Youth Auditions (Under 16)

- A parent or legal guardian must accompany auditionees under the age of 16 to the audition.

- Consent forms must be signed by the parent or guardian prior to the audition.

- Youth auditionees must be supervised at all times during the audition process.

- Panel members must take extra care to provide a supportive and age-appropriate audition environment.

- Any feedback provided to youth auditionees must be constructive and delivered with additional sensitivity.

10. Confidentiality and Conduct

- All audition deliberations are confidential.

- Panel members must treat all auditionees in line with Amdram's values.

- Feedback may be offered upon request, and should be constructive and impartial.

11. Challenging the Process

- Auditionees may raise concerns about the process or perceived bias to an Amdram Committee member within 7 days of a casting announcement.

- Such a concern or challenge must outline the basis of the concern including which part of this policy has not been followed.

- Upon receipt of any concerns a committee member will be assigned to investigate the matter and will aim to respond within 15 working days.

12. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually or after each production cycle to ensure relevance and effectiveness.