Interim Code of Conduct

(For use by Staff and Board of Trustees)

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1. Introduction

This is an interim version of CDS' Code of Conduct, a working document about the values and culture that CDS Staff and Trustees want to nurture at CDS and a roadmap to making these changes operational. It lays out the commitments that individuals make when engaging within the organisation and is the primary way the Members, Staff and Board of Trustees can be accountable for their actions and behaviours.

This interim version of the document will be in use by Staff and Board of Trustees (not Members) from 17th August 2021, until a full version can be reached. CDS is seeking support from an external policy consultant to determine how this document will integrate with other policy documents currently in progress. Following this, the document will be disseminated within the CDS Membership for feedback and development, with the aim that a complete working document can be agreed on by the Staff, Board of Trustees, and Members before the next round of Membership recruitment, in April 2022.

All words which are in purple throughout the text are defined in Section 5.

Section 2 (**CDS' Context with anti-racist changemaking)** outlines how this document emerges from ongoing change-making processes to address racism at CDS.

Section 3 (**Code of Conduct)** introduces the broad intentions of the Code of Conduct towards inclusion and allyship with marginalised people. It lays out the behaviours that will not be tolerated and includes suggestions towards how to practice active allyship through thoughts, words and actions. In future versions this section will also include additional specific additional commitments towards anti-racism, gender equality, anti-ableism, and consent.

Section 4 **(Procedure for Breaches of this Policy)** lays out what should happen when a Staff Member or Trustee acts in contravention of these commitments. This is a temporary process until a full version of this document can be reached.

Section 5 (**Definitions and Language)** lists key terms used within the Code of Conduct and beyond. All words which are defined in this section are in purple throughout the text. Some key definitions will be added in the future edition of this document.

This document was created by Es Morgan (Producer: Membership) and Janine Harrington (Trustee), with support from the broader Staff and Board of Trustee teams.

2. CDS' Context with anti-racist changemaking

In late 2018, CDS began ongoing work to understand, dismantle and redress the racial inequalities and injustices that have existed in the structures and communities of our organisation - today and in the context of our 40-year history. At the point of writing, 4th August 2021, CDS is reckoning with a period of disharmony relating to anti-racist change-making.

CDS Staff and Trustees acknowledge that the underrepresentation of people from the global majority within our Membership, Board of Trustees and Staff team is one example of this systemic erasure. We acknowledge that this is a long-term problem that is our responsibility to address.

CDS have also come to understand some of the ways in which white supremacy operates in our organisation. Historically we have not had many of the policies and procedures in place that organisations like ours should do; the policies and procedures that allow complaints to be made, accountability to be held, and that explain how to navigate the organisation and how decisions are made. CDS is currently in the process of writing these documents, of which the Code of Conduct is one of the first.

Recently uncovered CDS archive materials suggest that inclusion was an intention of the founders of CDS, but 40 years later we are still far from equality, let alone from achieving racial justice in the organisation.

At the level of CDS staff and board of trustees, there is a commitment to understand the impacts of intersecting privilege and oppression as these are expressed in our organisation and wider field. We are committed to doing better to understand, challenge and dismantle the racism within the organisation. This needs to be integrated into everything we do, from the way we hold meetings, make decisions, appoint people to roles and responsibilities, and the programmes and opportunities that we create.

This document is one part of the work that is currently underway to acknowledge the harm we have caused and address the organisation's systemic racism and anti-blackness. Other work being developed includes a feedback and complaints procedure, anti-racism training for all staff and Trustees, clarified Trustee induction processes, and a re-visioning of the Membership structure.

We commit to being brave, in the knowledge that there will be periods of discomfort when confronting issues of race, privilege and oppression. We value the safety of marginalised people over the comfort of those with privilege.

3. Code Of Conduct
a. Headlines

CDS aims to be a welcoming space for all of the present and future communities that benefit from our resources: Members, hirers, class participants, visiting artists and audiences. We seek to actively prioritise the safety and championing of those who are marginalised from other arts spaces, platforms and communities.

CDS does not tolerate any behaviour or language that shows intolerance or hostility towards, or may have an oppressive impact on others, including (but not limited to): racism, colourism, ableism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, misogyny, classism, xenophobia, fatphobia, body-shaming, or slut-shaming.

CDS will not tolerate:
- Physical or verbal assault, or threats of violence
- Microaggressions related to a person's identity
- Non-consensual touch, or inappropriate/unwanted sexual attention
- Intrusion by pestering, spying or stalking
- Deliberate or repeated misgendering or use of deadnames
- Deliberate "outing" of any aspect of a person's identity without their consent
- Sharing hate speech by other people online
- Humiliating, excluding, isolating or undermining a person's self esteem.
- Sustained disruption to someone's ability to speak, participate, or do their job.

b. Declaration

I will not discriminate against, abuse or belittle anyone, their opinions or actions, on the basis of any aspect of their identity, experiences or perceived difference from myself.

I will…
- Communicate and express myself with care, kindness and respect for all.
- Work to consider the impact that my actions may have towards others.
- Welcome and accept feedback on my behaviour and ideas, and learn from it.
- Respect and honour other people's wishes about the ways they wish to be referred to.

c. Active Allyship

If I witness or learn of discrimination or acts of harm of any kind (whether it is perceived to be intentional or otherwise…) or if someone tells me they feel unsafe, I will be an active ally by:

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- Remembering that just because I feel safe does not mean that others also feel safe. I acknowledge the role that race, class, gender, and disability play into individual experiences of safety and agree to respect each person's agency regarding their own feelings of safety.
- Listening to the person who has experienced harm, believing them and offering my support.
- Intervening if the situation is ongoing. This will look different in different situations and could involve challenging the harmful behaviour in front of the group, asking to take a break in the meeting, or 'calling in' by speaking to the person privately.
- Afterwards, reporting the incident using CDS's Interim anonymous Feedback and Reporting Process (see Section 4.), and/or speaking to a member of Staff.

If I experience discrimination or harm of any kind, regardless of its severity or intent, I will…
- Remember that I have the right to leave any situation if it is not safe, and will be supported in this decision by CDS Staff.
- Remember I can ask for allyship or support from those around me, if I feel able.
- Consider reporting the incident using CDS's anonymous Feedback and Reporting Process (see Section 4.)

If I am someone who exists with multiple forms of privilege, such as class, proximity to whiteness, or are nondisabled, I will...
- Listen to the lived experiences of people who are marginalised in ways I am not
- Work privately to understand my privileges and learn about racism and other systems of oppression.
- Understand that my intentions and the impacts of my actions might be different. Just because I didn't mean to cause harm, does not mean harm was not done.
- Be brave when challenged on my behaviour, and understand that there may be periods of discomfort when exploring issues of privilege and oppression.
- Seek to ensure marginalised people are represented and given the opportunity to speak in the platforms, events and processes I am part of.

4. **Procedure for Breaches of this Policy**

If any CDS staff or trustee is believed to be in contravention of this Code of Conduct, any other CDS staff member or trustee is encouraged to take actions they deem appropriate, including challenging their behaviour in the moment, asking them to stop, or asking them to leave the meeting or space.

If you believe you have experienced, been party to, or have witnessed a breach of CDS' Code of Conduct, we encourage you to speak to a Member of Staff at the earliest opportunity. They will listen to you and advise the best course of action, and assist in reporting the incident using CDS' Feedback and Complaints Procedure. This offers a number of informal routes and secure processes to share confidential information anonymously:

1. Completing the CDS Feedback Form linked **here**. This offers you the opportunity to select the area of which your feedback or complaint is related to and the option to provide anonymous feedback.
2. Sending an email to **feedback@chisenhaledancespace.co.uk**. This will be received by Operations Manager (Jessica Richards) and The Board of Trustees, to be sent on to the most relevant team member unless otherwise requested.

Please refer to our full Feedback and Complaints Procedure for more information on the process, including what happens after you make a complaint.

CDS has a zero tolerance attitude towards breaches of the Code of Conduct and will take all complaints extremely seriously, ensuring adequate action is taken.

5. Definitions and Language

We selected these particular definitions in order to introduce key ideas that the Code of Conduct relies on. These are not the only possible definitions of these terms - language related to identity and inclusion is always in flux and there is often no consensus on the meaning of a term. Some key definitions are currently missing, particularly related to disability, neurodiversity, misogyny and xenophobia. These will be added in future versions of this text.

Ableism/disablism - Physical barriers, policies, practices and institutions that exclude disabled people from full participation and equal opportunity in society. This includes obvious barriers such as buildings which are not accessible to wheelchair users, but also the ways that education and welfare systems, for example, restrict the autonomy of disabled people, or assume they can't do certain things.

Allyship - An Ally is a member of a dominant group who works to resist a form of oppression which gives them privilege, for example a white person speaking up about racism. It is often useful to say 'acting in solidarity' with reference to the fact that 'ally' is not an identity but a lifelong practice that involves active and ongoing engagement. (Anti-Racism Digital Library: Glossary)

Anti-Blackness - The specific exclusion and prejudice against people visibly (or perceived to be) of African or African Caribbean descent. There is a tendency to classify all those who experience racism under the label "people of colour" or BAME. However, this generalist approach fails to account for the varied ways that racism affects Black people specificallydifferently, and is rooted in legacies of slavery and colonialism.

Braver space/ brave - This is an environment that seeks to cultivate productive dialogues; where different experiences can be articulated honestly and are heard respectfully. The braver space approach focuses on creating a culture of support and self-criticality where points of view rooted in different lived experiences can be shared safely. It is a space where discomfort and challenge can be worked through rather than used to shut down conversation. Braver spaces can support people to work towards the entwined goals of mutual learning and liberation.

Calling out/ in - "calling out" is publicly pointing out that another person is being oppressive, either in person or online. This is often very useful to hold a person accountable and let others know about their behavior, particularly if they are in a position of power. However, If the ultimate goal is to get someone to change their problematic behavior, it might be both more strategic and caring to 'call in' instead, if you believe their actions to be a mistake or through lack of awareness. This means approaching them privately and patiently, and might include a conversation, an email, or sending links to articles or videos to help them learn.

Deadname - The act of calling a trans, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming person by their birth or given name, rather than their affirmed name. This includes sharing the deadname with other people without the person's consent.

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Global Majority - A collective term that does not centre racism or 'whiteness'. It references African diaspora people, South, East, and South East Asian diaspora people, Middle East and North African diaspora people and Latinx people. These people represent over 80% of the world's population, and are therefore not a 'minority'.

Intersectionality - The crossover of two or more experiences of marginalisation distinct discriminations. For example a black woman may experience racism, sexism and colourism, and endure specific forms of discrimination that black men, or white women, do not.

Marginalisation - The condition of being excluded or placed on the 'margins' of something. Those who are marginalised in society are made to feel powerless and systematically denied access to resources by a dominant group.

Microaggression - The everyday slights, indignities, put downs and insults that people who are marginalised experience in their day-to-day interactions with people. These are often subtle, going unnoticed by members of the dominant or majority group, but the cumulative effect over time can be devastating, damaging a person's ability to thrive in an environment.

Misgendering - Misgendering occurs when you intentionally or unintentionally refer to a person, relate to a person, or use language to describe a person that doesn't align with their affirmed gender. For example, referring to a woman as "he" or calling her a "guy" is an act of misgendering.

People who experience racism - In line with IncArts' 'BAMEOver' statement, CDS acknowledges that people do not want to be grouped into a meaningless, collective term, or reduced to acronyms such as BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) which define identity in relation to whiteness. The expression "people who experience racism' provides acknowledgement of the harm caused by racism, and gives context in many instances where a collective term is sought.

Privilege - An absence of the negative consequences of a specific form of marginalisation such as racism, ableism or homophobia, or the presence of… For example, White privilege is the fact that if a person is white, their race will positively impact their life's trajectory, even if they suffer from other kinds of discrimination or exclusion.

Pronouns - Gender pronouns are the words that are used to refer to a person instead of their name, usually "he/him/his", "she/her/hers", or "they/them/theirs". There has been a shift away from the term 'preferred gender pronouns' towards simply saying 'pronouns.' This is because a person's pronouns are not just preferred; using the wrong pronoun is considered misgendering and can be harmful, particularly to trans, nonbinary and gender nonconforming people.

Systemic Racism - A political, economic and cultural system in which white people overwhelmingly control power and resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white marginalisation are daily reenacted across a broad range of institutions and social settings.

Institutional racism - The collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage global majority people.

Racist discrimination - when a person is treated worse, excluded, disadvantaged, harassed, bullied, humiliated or degraded because of their race or ethnicity. Racist discrimination may not be recognised by those perpetuating it. It may be subtle, covert and coded. Living in a white supremacist system, it is sometimes difficult to understand the ways in which whiteness and racism operate. Therefore it is very important to listen to and take seriously the feedback of people who experience racism. Racism does not need to be deliberate. Someone may discriminate against you without realising it or meaning to, but this might still count as racism.

Safe space/ safe - This is a well-intentioned but practically problematic ideal that all people should feel safe from harm caused by others' actions and speech acts. Considering the overwhelming prevalence of systemic oppressions, it is impossible to create a space which is perfectly 'safe' for everybody and the 'safe space' rhetoric can actually be deployed to silence difficult and necessary conversations, particularly around race. In terms of racism, this upholds white supremacy by prioritising the comfort of white people and silencing the voices of those who experience racism, especially black people. CDS commits instead to the creation of braver spaces (see below).

Social model of disability - The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by disabled people. The model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their difference or impairment, as is the case with the medical model. From a social model perspective, using the term 'disabled people' is not a value judgment on what people can or cannot do, but rather a political description of the disabling experience that people with impairments face in society. "Disabled person" should be used instead of "a person with disabilities" as it implies disability is an individual matter - something a person 'has'.

Transphobia - Discrimination, violence, and the policing of the behaviour of transgender people and others who don't conform to social gender norms. Transphobia includes portraying trans people as a threat, arguing that their identities are not 'real', or misgendering them (deliberately using the wrong pronouns or name for a trans person). It also describes the ways that trans people face increased levels of harassment and violence when visible in public.

Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists (sometimes called TERFS) - A minority of feminists who reject the assertion that trans women are women, and oppose transgender rights. Recently in the UK there has been a significant surge in mainstream instances of transphobia and many have gained significant visibility campaigning to restrict trans people's (particularly trans women's) access to services such as toilets, domestic violence refuges and healthcare. Many TERFS use the phrase Gender Critical to describe this same set of beliefs.