

Aequitas Singers Society

Statement of Principles and Values

Justice

We base our principles on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the BC Human Rights Code. In particular, we support and celebrate Section 15 of the Charter which states:

Equality Rights

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

And the BC Human Rights Code which states in part:

That it is against the law in BC to discriminate against or harass a person because of their

- Race, colour, ancestry, place of origin
- Religion
- Marital status
- Family status
- Physical or mental disability
- Sex (includes being a man, woman, inter-sexed or transgender)
- Sexual orientation (includes being heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual)

Where two rights are in conflict, we believe that one human right can never be used to impede another human right. For example, the freedom of religion can not be used as a protection to discriminate against or harass someone based on their sex or sexual orientation.

We believe that the only way to achieve justice for all is to achieve equality for all. Until we reach that goal, we believe our purpose is to highlight, support and align ourselves with groups of people who are not being treated equally.

Equality

We believe that Equality is not something to simply be observed, but something to be upheld, enforced, and celebrated.

Equality means that no person can be seen or believed to be less than anyone else based on any of the rights described above.

We are aware that there are still groups in society that do not feel safe or equal. We recognize that part of our role is to help people within those groups feel supported and equal. As such, we do not feel that paying special attention to certain groups lessens the equality of others.

We do not believe that “tolerance” is an acceptable version of equal. In order for all people to be equal, they must be accepted and supported, not just “tolerated”.

Respect

We believe that this choir must be a safe space for all members.

We believe in investigating and discussing all aspects of social justice but not at the expense of making the space feel unsafe for any members.

Our definition of safe space is as follows:

A place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.

As such, we ask that all members adhere to the following Code of Conduct:

- No offensive language is to be used in discussions or conversations at rehearsals or concerts. Offensive language is determined by the offended party, not the person speaking it. For example, it is up to indigenous people to determine what language would be deemed offensive when referring to indigenous people. We accept that language is constantly growing and changing. If you have unknowingly used offensive language, simply apologize and ask for clarification on an acceptable substitute.
- All members of the choir are to be referred to with their preferred pronouns.
- Choir rehearsals and concerts are not to be used for personal commercial or political gain. Examples: Yes, you can bring in raffle tickets to sell for a fundraiser but no, you can't try to sell someone life insurance. Yes, we can discuss current political topics and policies but no, you can't campaign or hand out information for a particular party or candidate.
- While our choir may choose to support or not support particular political policies, we do not align our choir with any political party.
- We ask that any organizations that you belong to outside of the choir, do not conflict with the principles of our choir. For example, a member of our choir should not also be a member of an organization that promotes discrimination against a charter protected group.
- If you feel another choir member is behaving in contravention to the choir's code of conduct, we believe a quiet conversation is preferred to calling out the individual in front of a group.
- We accept that all choir members are at different places on their path of understanding when it comes to social justice. Our goal is not to shame those who may not be aware of certain language choices or societal trends. Our goal is to educate and support the sharing of this information.