

ISAAC-CLARKE ACADEMY OF DANCE

Anti-Bullying Policy – Updated 1st September 2022

We want our students to look forward to dancing at our Academy and to be able to learn and develop to their full potential in a safe and supportive environment. We take pride in being a caring community. Good behaviour is expected from all and students are expected to treat teachers and each other with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed but orderly atmosphere.

We will not tolerate bullying in any form. We strive to treat all of our students and their parents fairly and with consideration; we expect them to reciprocate this towards each other, the teachers and the academy. Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination are the antitheses of our core values and will not be tolerated. Everyone in our community – teachers, volunteers, parents, guardians and all students - is expected to support this policy, to understand what bullying is and what they should do if bullying arises.

The aim of this policy is:

- to maintain and encourage a positive and supportive culture amongst all students and teachers in the academy.
- to deter bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs, and deal with it on a case- by-case basis through counselling and/or disciplinary sanctions and, if necessary, by discontinuing classes.

It is everyone's responsibility to help ensure that, whatever the circumstances, no one becomes the target of bullying. This policy applies to all students, teachers, parents, guardians and volunteers irrespective of their age.

While this policy focuses mainly on the bullying of students by other students, it is recognised that other forms of bullying may occur, and this is addressed below

Definitions

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms, including cyberbullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video. It can happen for a number of reasons motivated by prejudice against particular groups e.g. because of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disability, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It can result from any perceived or actual differences between children. It is important to remember the seriousness of bullying, which is not just physical but can also be emotional and can cause psychological damage.

There are many forms of bullying but it may be:



- **Verbal:** name-calling, unfriendly teasing, sarcastic praise, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, demanding money, spreading hurtful rumours or manipulating others to do so. It includes discriminatory and derogatory language, such as racist, homophobic, disability and mental health intolerant language.
- **Exclusionary Behaviour:** excluding from groups, intimidating, isolating, tormenting (hiding personal items, threatening gestures).
- **General unkindness:** sending nasty notes/emails/text messages, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet.
- **Physical:** hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing.
- **Cyberbullying:** using electronic media, text messages, mobile phone photos/video clips, mobile phone calls, email, chat rooms, instant messaging and websites (blogs), personal websites, social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, AskFM, Twitter, Tumblr, Formspring, YouTube, Rate my Teacher, etc) to deliberately upset someone.

Bullying may also be:

- racist or relating to someone's religion, belief or culture.
- sexist: related to a person's gender or gender reassignment.
- sexual: talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- homophobic: relating to a person's sexual orientation.
- Prejudice-based: any type of direct physical or verbally bullying, indirect bullying or cyberbullying based on a 'protected characteristic' as set out in the Equality Act 2010, namely; age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Focussing in a hurtful way on someone's disability, special educational needs, physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape), health conditions or home circumstances such as being adopted or a young carer.

A one-off incident of unpleasantness or an isolated thoughtless comment is not necessarily deliberately intended to hurt. However, we all have a responsibility to guard against this kind of behaviour and correct it. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as "banter", "teasing", "a game" or "for the good of" the other person. Bullying is often hidden and subtle; it can also be overt and obvious. All these forms of bullying are equally unacceptable. Bullying can involve complicity (silently accepting) which falls short of direct participation. Bullying can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions. However, bullying is a form of peer on peer abuse and can be very serious in nature.

Signs and Symptoms

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being targeted or bullied. It is important to be aware that these signs and behaviours:

- changes his or her usual routine, changes accent or vocabulary.
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, isolated or lacking in confidence; stops communicating with or does not listen to the problems of others.
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone or becomes upset or withdrawn after using electronic devices.
- does not join in fun.
- avoids being alone.
- looks upset, cries a lot.
- cries himself or herself to sleep at night, has difficulty sleeping, experiences nightmares.
- appears depressed, poor eye contact.
- puts himself or herself down.
- begins to produce uncharacteristically poor work.
- is frequently absent, displays erratic attendance, arrives late to class.
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing".
- has private/precious possessions continually "lost".
- has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable; has a change of character.
- stops eating.
- comfort eats.
- is frightened to say what's wrong to anyone
- rushes everywhere with a frightened, nervous look.

- gives improbable excuses for any of the above, acts weirdly, covers up, starts lying.
- is desperate to be friends with the bully.
- shows tension between close friends.
- forms exclusive friendships.
- feels he or she is being stalked.
- chooses the company of adults.
- frequently has symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches.
- threatens to commit suicide or runs away.

Procedures

Isaac-Clarke Academy of Dance treats bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Where possible, it is Isaac-Clarke Academy of Dance's aim to respond to bullying before it starts. Conversations take place about issues of difference and teachers look for intelligence about issues between students which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. All teachers have a responsibility to pass on any issues that they pick up.

Any investigation must invest sufficient time to listen to both sides of the argument and to avoid rushed responses. At the same time, students and parents must not be left at risk or with the impression that nothing is being done.

Isaac-Clarke Academy of Dance endeavours to provide support and understanding. Investigations must include witness statements from other students as appropriate and the involvement of key staff to ensure that a complete picture is obtained. The victim and parents must be made aware of any course of action taken and we are sensitive to issues of confidentiality and the needs of all pupils involved.

We also aim to ensure that the bully understands that he or she must take responsibility for his or her own actions; that he or she knows the seriousness of the offence and that any repetition will result in further action. We will not deal with bullying by a bullying approach; our aim is to use a non-aggressive, positive manner that will achieve outcomes that are constructive for both parties.



Full records must be kept of incidents, investigations and final outcomes by teachers involved in dealing with the situations.

Students

The best way to stop bullying is by involving students so that all understand the academy's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. We actively encourage students who feel they are being bullied, or who are worried another student is being bullied, to report this immediately in any of the following ways:

- inform parents.
- speak to his or her teacher.
- speak with an older student.
- Contact Childline (0800 1111).
- Contact Kidscape (08451 205 204).

Parents

We want to involve parents to ensure that they are clear that we do not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures they should follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. We will take any complaint about bullying seriously and work to resolve the issue in a way that protects the student.

We ask that parents work with us by reinforcing the value of good behaviour at home. Engage with your children and take an active interest in their social life. Chat about friends and activities both in and out of school. You may well learn of disagreements or difficulties as children do fall out from time to time and this is a normal part of exploring how to handle relationships. It is not always the best thing to react to every disagreement. However, do watch for signs of real distress in your children. There may be:

- an unwillingness to attend class
- recurrent headaches, stomach aches, etc.
- equipment going missing.
- requests for extra pocket money.

Parents who are concerned that their child is being bullied should inform the Principal without delay. You can be sure that we will treat the issue seriously and will investigate thoroughly. You will be kept apprised of developments, but please be aware that cases of bullying need to be handled sensitively and can take time to investigate thoroughly. Equally, we would ask you to keep us informed of your child's demeanour and behaviour outside of



school to help us judge the success of our actions. It is also important that the child is aware that the same policy towards the situation is being implemented both at school and at home.

It is our aim to resolve the situation so that the bullying stops. Should you have continuing concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. We do not intend to tolerate bullying of any kind.

Staff

This policy focusses mainly on the bullying of students by students although it is recognised that a staff member could be a target and on occasion may be perceived to be guilty of bullying. Staff members who are concerned about being bullied or harassed should discuss this with the Principal.

Responding to a report of bullying

It is important that a student who raises a bullying concern is reassured and feels safe to ask for help. It is important not to assign blame but focus on keeping the student feeling safe and acting so that the behaviour of the bullies can be changed. The climate should be right for the target to ask for help.

The member of staff to whom bullying is reported, or who first discovers the situation, must act without delay and reassure and support the students involved.

Depending on the severity of the situation, the Principal will be informed as soon as possible.

If at any stage a member of staff thinks that a student may be at risk of harm, the Academy's safeguarding procedures will be implemented as detailed in the Child Protection policy and the appropriate external agencies (such as police/children's social care) will be contacted. If there is a child protection concern, the member of staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Shelley Isaac-Clarke).

Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm". Where this is the case, the DSL will report the incident to the local authority's children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not an issue, the school may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

The action Isaac-Clarke Academy of Dance will take in response to a report of bullying

Assessment

The teacher will normally see the target and any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation. The assessment will consider:

- the nature of the incident(s): physical, verbal, exclusionary, etc.
- is it a "one-off" incident involving an individual or a group?
- is it part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group?
- has physical injury been caused?

Who else should be informed?

Principal? Parents? Social Services? The police? At this stage the possible outcomes of a situation which is not too serious include:

- there has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged target with advice to the alleged bully.
- the complaint is justified in whole or in part, and further action will be needed (see Range of Actions, below).
- If there has been serious bullying behaviour, the Principal will be informed and action will be taken.

Range of Actions

Each situation is treated separately, and the feelings and views of the target will be respected and carefully considered; the right solution for that particular problem will be sought with a range of possible approaches discussed with the target (please see below). Wherever possible, we will adopt an approach with which the target feels most comfortable.

Group mediation - A group of students, not including the target but including the bully/bully group and some 'rescuers', talk and hear through the target's own words about how hurt the target has been and how the member of staff would value the students' help. Each of the group undertakes a positive step to help. Having made the bully/bully group aware of the target's feelings, the focus is on the solution and moving forward rather than dwelling on the past. There are individual follow up conversations with the target, the bully/bully group and the 'rescuers'. The experience should be a positive one for all concerned.

Support for the target - We shall make every effort to ensure that the target will receive sensitive support and understanding so that we may deal with the problem appropriately. This may include:

- advice on self-protection e.g. blocking messages from a particular source or 'buddy lists'.



- advice on preserving evidence in the form of text or email messages, images and other material.
- if it is necessary to inform someone else, the target's agreement will usually be asked for and it will be explained who needs to be told and why.
- positive efforts towards enabling full re-integration of both bully and target.
- keeping the target informed of, and strive to ensure he or she is in agreement with, any steps undertaken to deal with the situation.
- follow up meetings with the target to check on progress and adjust the procedures if not working successfully.

Action taken with the bully/bully group - If a student or group of students is involved in bullying and then responds positively to guidance, they will receive follow up support, encouragement and further guidance on modifying their behaviour. Bullying is usually treated as a serious breach of discipline. Disciplinary measures will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. The motivations behind bullying behaviour will also be considered and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case, the child engaging in bullying may also need support.

- Meeting with target and bully - It may also be suitable, with the target's consent, to bring the target and bully together, each with a friend (optional), in a safe environment, e.g. with their parent, for understanding and reconciliation. It is important that neither bully nor target feels intimidated in such a meeting
- Others involved - Those involved, directly or indirectly as observers, including others in the class (as appropriate) may be interviewed individually as independent witnesses, with their permission. Each person involved will be asked to consider how he or she could improve the situation.

Isaac-Clarke Academy of Dance strives to create a welcoming environment in which every student is able to train in a positive and safe way. We will not tolerate bullying in any form.

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