



Maria Anderson School of Dance

Anti-bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members so they can participate in dance and drama in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all school members or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING dance school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Safeguarding Lead (Lisa Shepherd) or any dance teacher. The school is committed to playing its part to teach those accessing the dance school to treat each other with respect.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** – being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, threatening gestures
- **Physical** – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Sexual** – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Discrimination** – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, homophobic comments, jokes about disabled people, sexist comments
- **Verbal** – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and teasing

Signs and Indicators

A child may indicate by signs of behaviour that he / she / they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Says he / she / they is being bullied
- Is unwilling to attend dance / drama classes
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Feels ill before classes
- Comes home with dance wear torn or equipment damaged
- Has possessions go 'missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing money to pay the bully
- Has unexplained injuries
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

Our Commitment

The dance school commits to ensure our website and social media networking pages are being used appropriately and any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with procedures detailed in this policy.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. The school has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All dance school members including teachers and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is
- All dance school members including teachers and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported
- All school members and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises
- As a school we take bullying seriously. School members and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying is not tolerated

Signs and Indicators

In more extreme cases:

- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Attempts to threaten suicide or runs away

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and investigated.

Bullying as a result of any form of discrimination

Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability.

Generally, these forms of bullying look like other sorts of bullying, but in particular can include:

- Verbal abuse – Derogatory remarks, suggestions that minority people are not as capable as white people, spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are 'gay'. Ridiculing someone because of a disability or mental health related issue or because they have a physical, mental or emotional developmental delay. Referring to someone by the colour of their skin, rather than their name. Using nicknames that have racial connotations. Isolating someone because they come from another country or social background etc.
- Physical abuse – Including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault and threatening behaviour.
- Cyberbullying – Using online spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them, It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging.

Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to actions that may cause women, men, ethnic minorities, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people or people following specific religions or beliefs to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued. We aim to ensure that all school members know that discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated.

- If an incident occurs, school members should be informed that discriminatory language is offensive and will not be tolerated. If a member continues to make discriminatory remarks, explain in detail the effects that discrimination and bullying has on people. If it is a young person making the remarks their parents should be informed just as in any breach of the schools Code of Conduct and this Anti-Bullying policy.
- If a member makes persistent remarks, they should be removed from the studio for the Lead Safeguarding Officer to discuss in more detail about why the remarks are unacceptable.
- If the problem persists, the member should be made to understand what sanctions will apply if they continue to use discriminatory language or behaviour.
- Consider inviting the parents/carers in to the studio to discuss the attitudes of the member in line with procedures detailed in this policy.

Procedures

1. Report any bullying incidents to the Lead Safeguarding Officer (Lisa Shepherd) or to a dance teacher
2. Parents will be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the concerns
3. The bullying behaviour or threats will be investigated and an action plan will be agreed to stop the bullying quickly
4. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
5. If mediation fails and the bullying persists, action will be taken to prevent any further incidents

Recommended School Action

If the dance school decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, the following procedure will be followed:

- Reconciliation by getting the members together. It may be a genuine apology that solves the problem
- If this fails, the Lead Safeguarding Officer (Lisa Shepherd) will meet with the parent and child alleging the bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken to clarify and agreed by all parties present.
- A meeting will then take place with the alleged bully and their parents and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view on the allegation.
- If the allegation is substantiated, the member should be warned that temporary or permanent suspension will follow if the bullying continues.
- It will be agreed whether a reconciliation meeting would be appropriate.
- All teachers will be made aware of the concerns and the outcome

Prevention

All members of the school will be asked to read the anti-bullying policy and the school will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters. If issues of bullying arise in the school, a meeting will be considered with all members to discuss the issue openly and constructively. If any member of the school has any questions with regards to the policy, they must seek advice from the DSL.

This policy is based on guidance provided to schools by KIDSCAPE. KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying. KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300 or you can access their website via www.kidscape.org.uk

You may wish to access any of the following websites to give you advice and guidance to parents and children who are faced with dealing with bullying:

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.stonewall.org.uk

www.bullying.co.uk

Guidance for young people:

www.youngstonewall.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk