

The Academy of Northern Ballet Anti-Bullying policy

# **Information relating to this Policy**

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Date of implementation: June 2018

Reviewed by Annemarie Donoghue: June 2019

Next Review Date: August 2020

# Introduction

The Academy believes that children and young people have the right to go about their daily lives without the fear of being threatened, assaulted or harassed. No one should underestimate the impact that bullying can have on a person’s life. It can cause high levels of distress, affecting young people’s well-being, behaviour, academic and social development right through into adulthood.

The Academy is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can enjoy dancing and learning in a relaxed and secure atmosphere free from oppression and abuse.

The Academy will:

* Develop and maintain effective listening systems for students
* Ensure all staff deal with incidents of bullying, including cyber-bullying, in an effective, prompt and appropriate manner
* Support all staff through training and CPD in developing the skills necessary to deal with incidents of bullying
* Communicate effectively with parents on issues around bullying
* Acknowledge the key role of all members of the Academy (students/staff/parents/carers) in identifying and dealing with bullying
* Ensure all incidents of bullying are accurately recorded
* Promote the emotional health and wellbeing of all students across the Academy

# What Is Bullying?

“Bullying behaviour abuses an imbalance of power to repeatedly and intentionally cause emotional or physical harm to another person or group of people. Isolated instances of hurtful behaviour, teasing or arguments between individuals would not be seen as bullying”

Torfaen definition 2008

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour and affects everyone. All types of bullying are unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the Academy. All students and parents/carers are encouraged to feel able to inform the Academy at the earliest possible opportunity should they feel victim of or witness to bullying behaviour. On disclosure of any information the Academy will act promptly and efficiently to ensure effective action will be taken.

## Bullying generally takes one of four forms

* Indirectly being unfriendly, spreading rumours, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding bags or books)
* Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, slapping or any form of violence
* Verbal name-calling, teasing, threats, sarcasm
* Cyber-bullying - all areas of internet misuse, such as nasty and/or threatening emails, misuse of blogs, gaming websites, social media platforms, internet chat rooms and instant messaging. Mobile threats by text messaging & calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

Although not an exhaustive list, common examples of bullying include

* Racial bullying
* Homophobic bullying
* Bullying based on disability, ability, gender, appearance or circumstance

# Objectives of this Policy

* All staff, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is
* All staff, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents/carers should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
* All students and parents/carers should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
* The Academy takes bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
* Bullying will not be tolerated. This policy outlines the ways in which the Academy may deal with bullying

# Consequences of Bullying

The Academy will always support victims of bullying. Where possible and appropriate the Academy will also support bullies to change their ways. However, the issue is paramount importance will remain the safety of all students.

It is likely that most incidents of bullying can and will be dealt with using the Academy’s internal systems and policies and procedures. In extreme cases, the bullying may lead to internal or external fixed term exclusions, or even permanent exclusion. Parents retain the right to involve the police should they wish to do so; whilst bullying is not in itself a specific criminal offence in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour are.

The Equalities Act 2010 also gives specific protection to people who are victimised because of specific characteristics – it covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Academy is committed to protecting all members from harassment or bullying in line with this legislation. The Children’s Act 1989 states that bullying should be treated as a child protection concern when there is ‘reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.’ In such an instance the school will, as appropriate, involve the local authority children’s social care.

## Dealing with incidents

The following steps may be taken by the Academy when dealing with incidents:

* If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached, a Designated Safeguarding Leader will be made aware of any reports or incidents at the initial stage of reporting
* A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded and given to a Designated Safeguarding Officer
* A Designated Safeguarding Officer/Leader and appropriate Programme Manager will interview all concerned parties and will record the incident
* Parents/carers will be informed of any incidents that directly relate to their child and invited to meet with the Designated Safeguarding Officer/leader and appropriate and relevant Programme Manager
* Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned
* If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted

# Reporting incidents

The Academy is committed to ensuring each and every student feels safe and happy whilst training with the Academy. Although we are not a full time educational institution we are very aware of the pressures young people face and want to be proactive in addressing any issues at any early stage. The Academy encourages all students/parents/carers to feel they can approach the Academy at the earliest opportunity should they have any concerns relating to bullying.

## Reports can be made either in conversation with or in writing to

* Individual Programme Managers
* Academy Pastoral Team
* Teaching staff

All reports will be recorded and overseen by the Designated Safeguarding Leaders.

# Student support

## Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

* Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of the Academy team
* Reassuring the pupil
* Offering continuous support
* Restoring self-esteem and confidence

## Pupils who have bullied will be supported by:

* Discussing what happened
* Discovering why the pupil became involved
* Establishing the wrong-doing and the need to change
* Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child

## Disciplinary Steps

In the event of a report made regarding bullying a thorough investigation will be carried out and as a result the Academy may follow the disciplinary steps below:

1. A meeting with students/parent/carer with the appropriate Programme Manager to discuss the issues raised
2. A verbal warning
3. An email/formal written warning should it be decided that there has been enough evidence to suggest behaviour falls short of adhering to the Academy’s standards to promote good behaviour
4. A Positive Behaviour Agreement may be put in place should the Academy decide this is required
5. Internal exclusion from classes
6. Permanent exclusion following a thorough investigation carried out by the Designated Safeguarding leaders in conjunction with support from Northern Ballet’s Board of Directors. All exclusions must be approved by the Artistic Director and a member Board Level Representative

# Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Academy will review this policy annually, in conjunction with the ‘Policy on Promoting Good Behaviour’ and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy across all programmes.

## Prevention

We will use some or all of the following to help raise awareness of and prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

* Friendly, approachable staff who make time to listen to any concerns raised by students/parents/carers
* Discussions during study sessions for Professional level students
* Transparency to all students/parents/carers of this policy and the Academy’s ‘Policy on Promoting Good Behaviour’

# Signs and Symptoms

Many children and young people do not speak out when being bullied and may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

* Shows a sudden and uncharacteristic fear of attending classes
* Noticeable changes to their usual routine
* Begins to truant
* Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
* Starts stammering
* Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
* Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
* Uses excuses to miss classes (headache, stomach-ache etc)
* Begins to suffer either in classes or academically
* Comes home with damaged belongings or has belongings which ‘go missing’
* Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
* Has unexplained cuts or bruises or shows signs of being in a fight
* Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
* Is bullying other children or siblings
* Changes their eating habits (stops eating or over eats)
* Goes to bed earlier than usual
* Is unable to sleep
* Appears frightened to say what's wrong
* Gives unlikely excuses for any of the above
* Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
* Is nervous and jumpy when a text message or email is received

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