

ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLET SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all students and staff at English National Ballet School feel valued and have the confidence to contribute to the aims and core values of the School. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our School. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to inform the School and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a “TELLING” School. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims but others who can see what is happening and all who come into contact with them. Bullying is not a necessary part of growing up and unfortunately rarely sorts itself out. We hope that everyone involved with English National Ballet School will work together to make our Anti-Bullying Policy successful.

This policy applies to all students and staff on site-based (Carlyle Building) and community provision (theatre trips, work experience, School trips). English National Ballet School is not directly responsible for bullying or harassment that takes place outside the learning environment and off-School premises but will take appropriate action if activities out of the School have an impact on students' safety at School.

This Anti-Bullying Policy is to be used in conjunction with the Code of Conduct.

Aim of Anti-Bullying Policy

To ensure that all students learn in a supportive, friendly, emotionally and physically safe environment without fear of being bullied.

To provide an emotionally and physically safe environment where all members of staff can enjoy School life and achieve their potential.

Bullying: A Definition

Bullying is repeated behaviour that consciously hurts someone physically or emotionally. This is often aimed at certain groups for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

There are different types of bullying, this may include, but may not be limited to: harassment; physical assault, teasing, making threats, name calling, cyberbullying (including instant messaging or any form of social media), and sexual harassment. Sexual harassment can include unwanted or unwelcome physical contact or assault, sexual comments, and remarks. Sexual harassment can also take place online.

Bullying also includes prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, and abuse within intimate personal relationships.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.

Intent: The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.

Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Passive bullying: being a bystander, not informing a teacher, not getting help, not telling. It is important to realise that passive bullying reinforces the power of the bully and makes the bystander partly responsible.

Vulnerable students are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.

Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Students who are adopted.
- Students suffering from a health problem.
- Students with caring responsibilities.
- Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Students with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:
 - Students who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
 - Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students.
 - Students with SEND.

Our Approach is:

- To provide a School environment where students can learn happily and safely and staff can work happily and safely
- To promote an atmosphere that allows students and staff to talk openly and confidently about concerns
- To encourage our students to develop positive and co-operative relationships with each other
- To oppose all forms of bullying and demonstrate that such behaviour is not tolerated
- To take each allegation of bullying seriously, for example, not dismissing behaviours as 'just having a laugh' or 'banter'. This attitude can lead to an unsafe environment where bullying and abuse is normalised (young people come to accept this behaviour as normal and do not report it).
- To listen and support students and staff who experience bullying
- To work with the perpetrator to change their behaviour

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Bullying:

Signs and symptoms that a student is being bullied may include:

- Frequently feeling frightened or in danger

- Deterioration of work
- Feigned illness
- Unusual shyness and nervousness
- Isolated and withdrawn behaviour
- A desire to remain with adults
- Erratic attendance
- Fear of the journey to School
- Clothes, possessions, books, files and or food regularly go missing or damaged
- Unexplained bruises, scratches or cuts
- Having nightmares or crying themselves to sleep
- Asking for money or beginning to steal money (to pay the bully)
- Expressing low self-esteem
- Giving improbable excuses to explain any of the above

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Students who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a student is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated
- They have been the victim of abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall and they are showing signs of stress

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

English National Ballet School's Approach to the Prevention of Bullying:

- To raise awareness of what is already in place i.e., Code of Conduct and Anti-Bullying Policy
- To ensure all policies are clearly understood, reinforced and evaluated, especially during Induction week and, where appropriate, through tutorial process and/or Student Representatives Committee (SRC)
- Lectures which are part of the Professional and Personal Development Curriculum will provide opportunities to explore bullying as a topic. Issues to be covered include, why bullying happens, alternative ways of behaving and strategies for dealing with difficulties. Self-esteem will be covered in a separate session.
- Curriculum areas such as Personal Development offer opportunities to explore relationships with bullying as one theme
- Extra-curricular activities provide opportunities for encouraging better co-operation and understanding between students, such as the annual Choreography Competition.
- Where appropriate, tutors to provide time for class groups to discuss issues related to relationships and consider strategies for dealing with difficulties
- Assemblies to be recognised as an important forum in which to raise awareness and restate expectations of behaviour
- Positive behaviour and mutual respect to be encouraged and expected at all times
- English National Ballet School visits to the theatre and to English National Ballet are seen as an excellent way of developing positive relationships and mutual understanding.

Key advice:

- All students must believe and know that they will be listened to and believed, and that the School's response will be swift, effective and sensitive to their concern
- Anyone who suspects bullying may be happening must inform the relevant tutor or Head of Studies of these suspicions
- If a student discloses to a teacher that they are being bullied or that bullying is taking place, that teacher must listen carefully and record the information. This information must be passed on directly to the tutor or Head of Studies
- All members of staff need to be vigilant at breaks, warmups, in corridors between lessons, changing rooms, in the Common Room and in and around Carlyle Building and Tesco. These are times and places where victims are more vulnerable, and bullying is not easily seen. If a member of staff has suspicions that bullying is taking place, they must always inform the tutor or Head of Studies.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately
- Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the students being interviewed, including electronic communication
- If a student is injured, members of staff take the student immediately to a first aider and/or arrange for medical care.
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
- The Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is complete
- All students involved are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other students
- Due to the potential for some specific forms of bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any students on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that all governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
- Ensuring that the School adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the School is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Ensuring the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.

- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that students are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

The Executive and Artistic Directors are responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures. · Keeping a note of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

The Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing is responsible for:

- investigating thoroughly all officially reported allegations of bullying. If a student complains of bullying or harassment, their complaint will be taken seriously and treated sensitively. The student will be kept informed of any action that has been taken to investigate the complaint, through discussion and written communication. The student will be supported by:
 - Student guidance, and arranging counselling support as required
 - Getting those involved together to discuss the situation
 - Utilising complaints and disciplinary procedures
 - Informing and involving parents/guardians.

Teachers and Tutors are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for students who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the student's heads of year of such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of student groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a student for support.
- Parents are responsible for:
 - Informing their child's tutor if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway.
 - Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.
- Students are responsible for:
 - Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
 - Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
 - Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other students in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying

There are different systems that tackle bullying but not all prove to be successful. English National Ballet School adopts the “Telling” Schools’ system as this is the only system that appears to work according to the charity Bullying Online.

“Telling” Schools

This system basically means that even if the victim is too afraid to tell a teacher, all the bystanders know that it’s their duty to do so and that they won’t be accused of telling tales. It’s a deterrent because the bully knows that he/she won’t get away with it. The underlying thought is that bystanders are the key to resolving bullying.

Sanctions

If the Executive Director is satisfied that bullying did take place, the perpetrator will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The Executive Director will inform the perpetrator of the type of sanction to be used in this instance, e.g., detentions or service-based activities, and future sanctions if the bullying continues.

If possible, the Executive Director will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. This will either be in writing to the victim, and/or witnesses if appropriate, or face-to-face, but only with the victim’s full consent. Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator.

Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

All staff involved in managing instances of bullying will be aware that taking disciplinary action and providing support are not mutually exclusive actions and should be conducted simultaneously to encourage more positive behaviour in future.

The School will avoid unnecessarily criminalising students for bullying or abusive behaviour where possible, as young people with criminal records face stigma and discrimination in future aspects of their lives. The School’s focus when handling perpetrators will be supporting them to develop more positive behaviours and to refrain from abusive and bullying behaviours in the future.

The Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing informally monitors the students involved over the next half-term.

The School will remain cognisant of the fact that continued access to School can be important for rehabilitation of harmful behaviour and will not exclude students unless as a last resort – where there have been serious or consistent incidents of bullying, the School will act in line with the Disciplinary Procedures and Exclusion Policy.

Statutory Requirements

The School understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The School understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of students to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The Executive and Artistic Directors will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; they understand that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

Record keeping

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

The Executive Director and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain students that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.
- Responding to any complaints about how cases have been handled.

The School will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Document Change History

This is version 3.0 of the English National Ballet School Anti-Bullying Policy. This policy is for internal and external use.

This statement is subject to regular revision and maintained electronically. Electronic copies are version controlled.

Version: 1.0	Date: 01.03.2022
Section Title	Change
Whole Document	Policy updated to include cyber bullying
Version: 2.0	Date: 31.07.23
Section Title	Change
Whole Document	Reviewed for updated student handbook
Version: 3.0	Date: 21.09.23
Section Title	Change
Whole Document	Reviewed bully 'description' and 'our approach'