



## Anti-Bullying Policy

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### Aim

The aim of The Royal Ballet School's Anti-Bullying Policy is to:

- a) Prevent bullying of any sort including cyber-bullying.
- b) Make it clear to all students and staff that bullying is always unacceptable.
- c) Ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.
- d) Create an ethos of good behaviour within the school where pupils treat each other and the school staff with respect.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at and on the way to and from School. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem, and destroys their sense of security. Bullying can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in student suicide. Bullying is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated.

All members of the community, including Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers, students, parents guardians and carers should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the School policy on anti-bullying; and all have a responsibility to help create an atmosphere in which students can report any incident of bullying knowing that these reports will always be taken seriously. This policy is applicable to all students at The Royal Ballet School, whether boarders or day.

The School acknowledges that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. However, the School also recognises that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victim. All students deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. Students who are being bullied will be supported, and students who may bully others will also be given suitable help and guidance.

This policy is guided by the principles laid out in *Behaviour and discipline in schools: A guide for head teachers and school staff* (DfE March 2012), *Preventing and Tackling Bullying – advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies* (DfE October 2014) and the advice in the withdrawn *Safe to Learn – Embedding Anti-bullying Work in Schools*. It should be read in conjunction with the School's policies for:

- a) Safeguarding
- b) Child Protection
- c) Behaviour
- d) ICT Acceptable Use
- e) Health & Safety.

## **Definition:**

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 (for instance, cyberbullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, sexual orientation, homophobia, special educational needs or disabilities, appearance or health conditions, home conditions, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a School's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and Schools have to make their own judgments about each specific case. Bullying often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological, derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

## **Cyber-bullying**

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

All types of bullying can take place between students, between students and staff, or between staff; by individuals or groups; face-to-face or indirectly.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- a) Physical (including sexual) assault, for example, hitting, kicking, spitting, removing belongings, damaging property
- b) Verbal abuse, by name-calling, teasing, 'banter', insulting, writing notes or making offensive remarks
- c) Cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour intended to harm others. Examples include using social websites (such as Facebook or Twitter), mobile 'phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail
- d) Indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours
- e) Initiation ceremonies intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidating but is often hidden and subtle.

## **What to look for**

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from School.

All members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with School policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, most people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on, fail to take action.

## **What to do**

The best way to stamp out bullying is for people to be aware of the issues involved, to be involved in prevention and to be clear in their own minds what action to take should cases arise. In the procedures that follow, the word 'bullying' is used to cover all forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying.

## **Prevention**

The most effective way to combat bullying is by creating a community based on respect, with an ethos celebrating success and promoting good behaviour. Awareness and discussion of questions to do with bullying are also vital to prevention. The School will take the following approaches:

- a) Staff and student awareness will be raised through training, taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur
- b) The key points from this policy will be prominently displayed on School notice boards
- c) Anti-bullying will feature as a discussion point for the School Council.
- d) Anti-bullying will be discussed during PSHE and tutoring sessions to all years and reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves e.g. drama, physical education, and in assemblies.
- e) Anti-Bullying posters will be prominently displayed in boarding Houses and on Boarding Noticeboards.
- f) Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to the School's actions to prevent bullying
- g) The Principal (Academic and Pastoral) and Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare) will regularly review the record of bullying offences to identify patterns and check that the policy is effective.
- h) Incidents of bullying will be reported to governors at the Academic and Pastoral Committee each term.

## **Prevention of Cyber-bullying**

In addition to the preventative measures described above, the School:

- a) Expects all students to adhere to its ICT Acceptable Use Policy.
- b) Blocks access to certain sites by a robust filtering system but also educates students to act sensibly online.
- c) Monitors students' use of the internet
- d) Expects staff to be vigilant when students are using the internet
- e) Encourages parents to play a part in the safeguarding and protection of pupils online through providing them with guidance and through discussion.
- f) May impose sanctions for the misuse or attempted misuse of the internet or email
- g) Cyber-safety is covered in PSHE sessions and assemblies.
- h) The use of cameras within the school is subject to the terms of the Acceptable Use of ICT Policy.

## **If a student is the victim**

If they feel able to, the bullied student should confront the bully by verbally making him/her aware that the bullied student thinks that what she/he is doing is wrong. The bullied student should share their feelings with someone else. If possible they should talk to any member of Staff with whom they feel comfortable. 'Who can I talk to at the Royal Ballet School' posters detailing those to whom students might speak are displayed throughout the School. If the bullied student would rather not go straight to a member of staff, they should talk to friends, older students, the School Counsellor, Independent Listener, Nurse or any trusted adult; they may well be able to advise on an appropriate course of action or will be able to involve other people who can. Any boarder or day student has the right to inform an outside agency of their concerns. Contact details for these are given at the end of this document.

### **If a student witnesses bullying behaviour**

They should support the victim by offering friendship and making it clear that in their opinion what is happening to them is wrong. They should encourage them to speak out on their own behalf by confronting the bully, or with their permission, confront the bully themselves. They should accompany the victim to a trusted adult, or suggest that they see their tutor or a member of the House staff or the Academic and Pastoral Head on their behalf.

### **If a member of Staff witnesses an incident of bullying or it is reported to them**

They must reassure and support the students involved; advise them that you are required to pass details on to the Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare) or The Principal (Academic and Pastoral); and ask them to write down their allegation. The Staff member concerned should write down their concern on the Anti-Bullying Record Form which can be found on the U drive.

The same procedures must be followed as for a Child Protection case; the member of staff must:

- a) Choose a place to talk where the talk will not be interrupted but also where the member of staff is safe from allegation.
- b) Listen carefully and patiently to the student, no matter how difficult the member of staff finds what they are saying.
- c) Show the student they believe in him/her and takes his/her disclosure seriously.
- d) Stay calm and reassuring, and maintains neutral body language.
- e) Not promise to keep the conversation secret, no matter how insistent the student may be. The staff member must explain that they are ready to listen but that when they have heard the account there may be parts that they have to tell somebody else in order to get the help required.
- f) Not press for information, cross-examine or lead the student, as well-intentioned questions could prejudice further investigations. It is particularly important not to use leading questions or to put words into the student's mouth. If the member of staff needs to respond verbally, they should feed back to the student what they have said.
- g) Ensure the students' immediate safety.
- h) Make careful notes on the Anti- Bullying Record Form immediately after the conversation, giving an accurate and full account of what was said. These notes should include all relevant information regarding the setting and circumstances of the communication, including the time and the persons present.
- i) Inform the Principal (Academic and Pastoral) or the Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare) immediately of the disclosure, allegations or suspicion, give them a copy of the written notes and ensure that they are aware of any immediate medical needs. They will coordinate an immediate investigation into the circumstances of the complaint.
- j) Take no further action, including discussing their suspicions with the parent or anyone else involved in the care of the child, until the decision has been taken how to proceed.

At White Lodge, a member of House Staff will be informed and asked to accompany the student, whilst they are questioned. Where this is not possible, another member of staff, acceptable to the student, will be asked to stand in.

The victim will have the process for dealing with bullying clearly explained to them. The victim will also be given the opportunity to discuss his/her own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim is given support and advice, and counselling is suggested if deemed appropriate.

Once the Principal (Academic and Pastoral) or the Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare) is clear that a bullying offence has been committed, the bully and any others involved will be interviewed individually and written notes will be kept of the accounts of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained

clearly to them. If the complaint regards a group, every effort will be made to prevent collusion during the investigation.

The Principal (Academic and Pastoral) or Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare) will decide whether to involve parents in the next stages.

It is the School's intention to try, in the first case, to resolve such issues by getting all the parties together, to discuss the events and their causes and to seek reconciliation. If the events are such that this is not considered appropriate, or where bullying has been repeated after previous attempts at reconciliation, sanctions may be considered appropriate, as outlined in the Behaviour Policy.

Details of any sanctions applied will be sent to parents in a letter informing them of the circumstances of the bullying incident and warning them of the consequences which might follow any further similar incidents. Details of the incident will be recorded in the individual student's files. Should the sanctions involve exclusion they will be dealt with in accordance with the School's published Behaviour Policy. It is the policy of the School to attempt to resolve such issues internally using our own disciplinary sanctions, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely. The Chair of the Academic and Pastoral Sub-Committee of the Governors will be informed of any major bullying issues. If the bullying amounts to abuse, contact will be made with Social Services or the Police within 24 hours, as for all Child Protection cases.

### **Criminal Law**

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If School staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

### **Bullying Outside School Premises**

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the School premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on School premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of School staff. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the School premises, such as on School or public transport or in the local town.

Where bullying outside School is reported to School staff, it should be reported on to the Principal (Academic and Pastoral) or Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare), who will investigate and act on the report. They will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the actions taken against a student. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

### **Child Protection**

Under 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 School staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, Schools may need to draw on a range of external services to

support the student who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child doing the bullying.

### **Further Sources of Information**

*The DfE guidance and advice can be found at:*

DfE Behaviour and Discipline in School's Guidance: October 2014  
Supporting Children and Young people who are bullied: advice for schools.

#### *Legislative Links*

Power to tackle poor behaviour outside school  
The Equality Act 2010  
The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)  
Kidscape

#### *Cyber- bullying*

Childnet International  
Think U Know

#### *LGBT*

Each  
Schools out  
Stonewall

#### *SEND*

Mencap  
Changing Faces  
Cyber-bullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities.

#### *Racism*

Show racism the red card  
Kick it out  
Anne- Frank Trust

### **Advice**

If a student, parent or member of staff is unsure about a situation or events, several organisations will speak in confidence to advise what would be the best thing to do:

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000  
Childline: 0800 1111  
Kidscape: 08451 295

CEOP: Advice on how to operate safely on the web, in particular the think u know pages:  
<http://ceop.police.uk/>

## **External Contact details**

### **Emergency**

If someone is in immediate danger always phone **999** and report the matter to the Police. Non- emergency calls to the Police can be made dialling **101**.

### **White Lodge**

#### **Contacts for Richmond-Upon-Thames Social Services**

If anyone is concerned that a child is being abused they can phone the LADO via the Single Point of Access Team on 020 8891 7969.

### **Upper School**

#### **Contacts for the LSCB for Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster.**

If anyone is concerned that a child is being abused they can phone the LSBC on 020 8753 3914

### **Additional Contacts**

Independent Schools' Inspectorate  
CAP House, 9 - 12 Long Lane,  
London EC1A 9HA  
Telephone: 0207 600 0100  
Fax: 0207 776 8849

The Children's Commissioner for England  
Anne Longfield OBE  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London.  
SW1P 3BT  
Tel: 020 7783 8330  
Email: [info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)