



ROYAL
BALLET
SCHOOL

SETTING THE STANDARD

ANTI-BULLYING & CYBER-BULLYING POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2025

Aim

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

- a) Prevent bullying of any sort including cyber-bullying, prejudice based and discriminatory 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 students 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 young people's 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 understand 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 students.

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.

The school recognises that bullying (including cyber-bullying) can have a significant impact on boarders as they cannot escape their bullies if they are remaining in school overnight.

This policy is guided by the principles laid out in *Behaviour in schools (DfE Feb 2024) Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE July 2017)*, *Behaviour and discipline in schools: A guide for head teachers and school staff (DfE January 2016)*, *Preventing and Tackling Bullying – advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE July 2017)* and the advice in the withdrawn *Safe to Learn – Embedding Anti-bullying Work in Schools and Bullying at School (DfE November 2018)*.

It should be read in conjunction with the School's policies for:

- a) Safeguarding
- b) Child Protection

- c) Sexual Violence and Harassment
- d) Behaviour
- e) ICT Acceptable Use
- f) 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 teasing, name calling, 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:

Physical (including sexual) assault, for example, hitting, kicking, spitting, removing belongings, damaging property

- a) Verbal abuse, by name-calling, teasing, 'banter', insulting, writing notes or making offensive remarks
- b) 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
- c) Indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours
- d) Initiation ceremonies that cause, or are 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, failed to take action.

Staff should be aware that all students can be the victims of bullying but some students may be more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example those with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of difference. These young people may also need additional support to deal with the impact of bullying. Staff must remember that students with special educational needs or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents so it is important that staff are alert to the potential bullying this group faces.

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 and acting 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) An Anti-bullying week helps to highlight the issues and consequences of bullying to all students whilst also allowing opportunity to discuss the differences between people and promote tolerance.
- f) Anti-Bullying posters will be prominently displayed in boarding Houses and on boarding noticeboards.
- g) Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to the School's actions to prevent bullying. Safeguarding updates sent to parents will include bullying related issues e.g. cyber- bullying and the use of social media.
- h) The Academic & Pastoral Principal and Assistant Principal (Pastoral & Welfare) will regularly review the record of bullying offences to identify patterns and check that the policy is effective.
- i) Incidents of bullying will be reported to governors at the Academic Committee each term.
- j) Regularly reviewing the anti-bullying policy to ensure that it takes account of developments in technology
- k) Appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be set that reflect the seriousness of bullying incidents so that other students see that bullying is unacceptable.

Prevention of Cyber-bullying

In addition to the preventative measures described above, the School expects all students to adhere to its ICT Acceptable Use Policy and:

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

Recording a Concern

The School uses an electronic platform called CPOMS to record and monitor any concerns. All staff have logins to the system which is linked to the School MIS platform, iSAMS, for student data. The DSL (and senior DSL deputies) are able to see all concerns and can invite other members of staff to join teams to investigate and conclude any concern. The system provides an electronic record of all concerns with a detailed audit trail that can be used in any referral.

In September 2024 the School introduced an electronic platform called **Whisper** for students to anonymously report any concerns they may have. Although the initial submission is anonymous the DSL and Deputy DSLs are able to interrogate the system should a safeguarding concern (such as bullying) be logged.

The students also have access to an Independent Person (*see Independent Person Policy*). Details of the Independent Person can be found on the boarding house noticeboards.

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 White Lodge. If the bullied student would rather not go straight to a member of staff, they should talk to friends, older students, the School Counsellor, an 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. If they do not feel comfortable talking about their concern they can make an entry on **Whisper**. 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. Should bullying occur outside school, e.g. then students are advised to report it as soon as possible to someone that they feel able to trust.

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 Academic Tutor or a member of the House staff or the Assistant Principal (Pastoral & Welfare) or the Academic and Pastoral Principal on behalf of the victim.

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 they are required to pass details on to the Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare) or the Academic and Pastoral Principal. The Staff member should then register their concern on **CPOMS**, so the School has a complete record for each student. The member of staff should also write down and pass on their concern either using the Anti-Bullying Record Form **on The Hub**, in hard copy or by email.

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

Choose a place to talk that will not be interrupted but also where the member of staff is safe from allegation.

- a) Listen carefully and patiently to the student, no matter how difficult the member of staff finds what they are saying.
- b) Show the student they believe in him/her and takes his/her disclosure seriously.
- c) Stay calm and reassuring, and maintain neutral body language.
- d) 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.

- e) 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 the student has said.
- f) Ensure the students' immediate safety.
- g) Make careful notes 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. These conversations should not be recorded (audio or video) unless there is explicit written consent from the student and/or the parent of the student.
- h) At the earliest opportunity the concern should be input onto **CPOMS**. Inform the Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare) or the Academic & Pastoral Principal 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 or safeguarding needs. They will coordinate an immediate investigation into the circumstances of the complaint.
- i) 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 on how to proceed.
- j) If the concern involves cyber-bullying, records should be kept of the date, the time of calls, emails or texts. Where possible screen shots should be taken and the evidence should not be deleted.

At White Lodge, a member of House Staff will be informed and asked to accompany any student accused of bullying, whilst they are questioned. Where this is not possible, another member of staff, acceptable to the student, will be asked to stand in. At Upper School the student will be asked if they wish to have another member of staff present.

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 Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare) or the Academic and Pastoral Principal 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. 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 Assistant Principal (Pastoral & Welfare) or the Academic & Pastoral Principal 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. A sanction given as a result of bullying must always take into account the Special Educational Needs or Disabilities of the students involved.

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 school's sanctions file. 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 Academic and Student Welfare Committee (including the Safeguarding Governor) and the Chair of 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 Safeguarding cases.

Where a case of cyber-bullying is suspected, staff may, with the authority of the Principal (Academic and Pastoral) or the Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare), seize the electronic device (such as a mobile phone) and examine data or files.

If the school has reasonable grounds to believe that a student's electronic device contains evidence in relation to an offence, it will be passed to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, must not be deleted prior to being given to the police. If the material found is not suspected to contain evidence in relation to an offence, the school can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

Supporting a victim of bullying

In all cases the school will ensure that they make appropriate provision for the student's needs. Where necessary this may include the involvement of parents, **the school counsellor**, referring to local authority children's services or referring to specialist health services e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Should the bullying have had a severe impact on the student which has led to long term difficulties the support offered will be proportionate and tailored to meet the needs of the individual.

The school will do all it can to ensure that bullied students continue to attend school and that their education is not disrupted. They will be offered appropriate support and this will go alongside measures to tackle the bullying so that the bullied child feels safe at school, and on their way to and from school.

Should the effects of bullying be so severe that it is not possible to reintegrate a student back into the school then the school will abide by the guidance in 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017) and Alternative Provision (February 2025). This will be undertaken with parents, students and other professionals involved in decisions. The aim of such action will always be to support reintegration back into mainstream education, working closely with students and their parents to agree a plan and timetable for return.

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

School staff members 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 or cyber-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 passed on to the Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Welfare) or the Academic and Pastoral Principal, 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. School staff can also choose to report bullying to the Police or Local Council.

Safeguarding

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a Safeguarding 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, School staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will report their concerns to the 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
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

Behaviour in schools February 2024

Sexual Violence and Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges, Sep 2021

Preventing & Tackling Bullying, July 2017

Behaviour and Discipline in School's Guidance, January 2016

Supporting Children and Young people who are bullied: advice for schools, March 2014

Cyber-bullying: Advice for Headteachers and school staff, November 2014

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 (for adults concerned about a child)

Childline: 0800 1111 (for children)

Kidscape: 0207 730 3300 (for parents, children and staff)

Bullying UK 0808 800 2222

The Diana Award 0207 628 7499

CEOP: Advice on how to operate safely on the web, in particular the 'think u know' pages:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

EXTERNAL CONTACT DETAILS

White Lodge

If anyone is concerned that a child is being abused, in need, or at risk contact:

Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership (KRSCP) -The Single Point of Access (SPA) (Richmond Children's Services) 0208 891 7969 and, out of hours, on 0208 770 5000.

Non-emergency calls can be made to the Police by using 101.

Upper School

If anyone is concerned that a child is being abused, in need, or at risk contact:

Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) of Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham, and Kensington & Chelsea - The Front Door (Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Children's Services) on 020 7641 4000 and out of hours 020 7641 2388

Non-emergency calls can be made to the Police by using 101.

Additional contacts:

Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI)

CAP House, 9 - 12 Long Lane

London EC1A 9HA

Telephone: 0207 600 0100

Fax: 0207 776 8849

The ISI number for whistleblowing i.e. raising concerns about child protection is: 020 7600 0100.

The Children's Commissioner for England

The Office of the Children's Commissioner

Sanctuary Buildings

20 Great Smith Street

London SW1P 3BT

Tel: 020 7783 8330

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline 0800 028 0285

This helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding Child Protection failures internally.

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk