

## BDA's Anti-Bullying Policy



Every Child at Bovingdon Dance Academy has a right to enjoy dance in a safe and secure environment.

**BDA expects our students to follow these rules:**

- **To abide by this anti-bullying policy.**
- **To report incidents of bullying to a trusted member of BDA's teaching team.**
- **To stand up for victims of bullying.**
- **To treat each other with respect and courtesy.**
- **To help make BDA a place where everyone feels safe and respected.**

Our Anti-Bullying Policy covers all students in attendance.

**Any form of bullying, whether verbal, physical or psychological or cyber, and whether one-off, occasional or repeated, is completely unacceptable at Bovingdon Dance Academy.**

### **Definition**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time (or possibly one serious incident) that intentionally hurts another. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice, for example on grounds of ability, special need, race, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the academy's first priority. 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 may in some circumstances be regarded as such.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, and tormenting (e.g. hiding uniform, threatening gestures).
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually explicit and/or abusive comments.
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Disability – because of, or focusing on, a disability.
- Cyber – using electronic means such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs or e-mail to cause pain and distress to a victim.
- Religious/Cultural – religious or cultural intolerance of any sort.

Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and sense of self-worth. It can lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage for an individual, and, at its most extreme, suicide. Those who conduct the bullying or witness the bullying can also experience emotional harm, and the impact on parents and teachers can be significant. BDA understands that some students, those with disabilities or special educational needs, can be more of a target for bullying, and watch for this.

Bovingdon Dance Academy accepts that as well as pupils bullying pupils, teachers can be bullies, or the victims of bullying, as can parents. The academy sees all incidents of bullying as unacceptable, and all known incidents are addressed with equal importance.

All members of the BDA community (parents, pupils, and teachers) have a responsibility to ensure that, in so far as it reasonably practicable, bullying is prevented, and when it does occur, it is dealt with effectively and in accordance with this policy.

Who to Contact:

- **Nikki Stewart or Karen Tower**

This policy will be published on our website and updated annually, unless new information or legislation requires an update before this time.

### **Aims**

- To promote a consistent approach to managing behaviour with the emphasis on preventing bullying throughout the whole academy.
- For teachers to take the lead in ensuring policies are implemented effectively.
- To create an atmosphere of trust and openness.
- To promote strongly positive behaviour of all types.
- To ensure that concerns of all types are raised at an early stage and dealt with swiftly, fairly and with consistency.
- To ensure both bullies and those being bullied are supported appropriately and systems put into place to monitor progress.
- To ensure all concerns and reports of bullying of all kinds are recorded fully.
- To set out a structure of consequences.

### **Objectives**

To communicate the contents clearly to all so that;

- All teachers, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All teachers know what the academy policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents know what the academy policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Everyone takes bullying seriously at all times, so that pupils and parents are assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

The Equality Act 2010 – the academy complies with the aims of this act as follows:

- We aim to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- We work to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- We promote and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

### **Safeguarding Children and Young People**

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, teachers should follow the safeguarding policy and report their concerns immediately to the academy's DSL, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Nikki Stewart, who will then inform the local authority children's social care officer.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The DSL and teachers will deal quickly and effectively with incidents. All teachers and pupils have a vital role in preventing bullying within the academy.

### **Recording of incidents**

A record of all incidents of bullying (register) is kept by Nikki Stewart, Principal. All relevant incidents occurring at any time are recorded.

### **Cyber Bullying**

The academy considers online safety a part of both safeguarding, anti-bullying and mobile devices. This includes the use of cyber technology to bully, including social media, websites, mobile telephones, text messages, photographs and emails. The Department for Education offers advice documents for both parents and academy teachers on Cyber Bullying and these documents are available on the Department for Education Website. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying> The academy would also treat seriously cyber bullying of its teachers by any parent or student.

### **Procedures**

If we suspect bullying, we will look for signs that include withdrawal, low self-esteem, poor attendance, children flying into tempers (usually at home) weight loss, bursting into tears at the slightest criticism.

As teachers of BDA, we will always develop positive relationships with pupils so that they feel confident enough to report bullying. When bullying is reported, we will act quickly to get the facts right noting times, names, places, witnesses, theft, damage, injuries. We may ask the pupil being bullied to keep a diary if the events.

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously. Any meetings with parents, copies of letters and the action agreed upon will also be recorded. We will fully investigate and hear 'both sides of the story'.

If complaints of bullying are the result of normal, albeit distressing, changes in friendships, they may be best resolved in a low-key manner, with a minimum of disruption to pupil's progress. In such situations, parents may not be automatically informed.

When a bullying incident is witnessed, we will remove both parties from the situation and hear both sides of the story. A written record of the event will be recorded.

Minor incidents may be dealt with swiftly and verbally, and may require no further action – nonetheless, positive action will be taken by BDA’s teachers and a record made of the conversation.

When a pupil complains of being bullied, he or she will be taken seriously and listened to. Any specific incidents will be noted down in writing, as well as a record of the pupil’s general feelings. When a parent raises an initial concern, the same process applies.

At all times a calm, unbiased and reflective investigation is carried out of any allegations made, in consultation with all parties involved. The academy will remain impartial, and make any decision regarding further action based on the evidence. If possible both parties should be reintegrated into the group/classroom as soon as possible. If not the parties should be taken to a safe place where a suitable adult can stay with them until a teacher attends.

In cases of cyber-bullying, any evidence in the form of text messages or other postings should be retained. The principal should be involved in all such instances.

All parties will meet at the earliest possible opportunity to try to find a solution, and agree a plan of action to prevent such incidents happening again.

More severe cases of bullying will be reported to the Principal who will inform the parents and hold an investigation. If decided necessary, the Principal will decide whether to inform the Police or other agencies as needed.

## **Parents**

Parents will be involved early in the process, and their support requested and desired. All incidents of bullying will be reported to parents/guardians. Parents’ support will be asked for, to help to prevent further incidents of bullying or anti-social behaviour. Regular communication will play a key part in resolving an incident. In low key issues as highlighted above parents may not be informed unless it becomes clear that the situation remains an issue.

## **Consequences of bullying**

BDA students must understand that any incident of bullying will be fully investigated. Consequences of bullying will vary depending on the results of the investigation, however, they may follow this structure:

1. First report of bullying – Student/Parent/Teacher meeting.
2. Second report of bullying – Student/Parent/Teachers meeting. Class, competition and/or show consequence.
3. Third report of bullying – Student/Parent/Teacher meeting. Student will be asked to leave the academy.