

Anti-Bullying Policy (revised 2019)

Principles & Values

As a school we take bullying and its impact seriously. Students and parents should be assured that known incidents of bullying will be responded to. Bullying will not be tolerated. The school will seek ways to counter the effects of bullying that may occur within the school. The ethos of our school fosters high expectations of outstanding behaviour and we will consistently challenge any behaviour that falls below this.

Objectives of this Policy

- All teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises. The aim of this policy is to ensure that our school is a safe place for children and adults to be; whether the school community is directly or indirectly affected by bullying or not.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour used by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can be defined in many ways:

- Emotionally – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Physical – pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, punching.....
- Racial – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic – because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality direct or indirect
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber-bullying – all areas of internet such as email/internet chat, social media misuse, mobile texts
- Misuse of associated technology – phones, Ipads etc...

Bullying may be related to:

- Race
- Gender
- Religion
- Culture
- SEN or disability
- Appearance or health conditions
- Home circumstances

- Sexual Orientation, sexism, homophobia

Bullying could take place in the dance studio, changing rooms, toilets, on the journey to and from dance school and online.

Perpetrators and Victims

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one person or persons over another. This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual
- The strength of the individual
- The number or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying or using email, social media sites, texts etc...

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of child abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with this matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs which means that they may be unable to realise what others may do to them.

Staff must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable students; those coming from troubled families, or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues which may bring about a propensity to be unkind to others, or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.

What is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

- Bullying hurts.
- No one deserves to be the victim of bullying.
- Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim
- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect
- Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs of behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to go to classes
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Changes their usual routine
- Begins to truant
- Is frightened of walking to or from dance school
- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to make less effort with school work
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children/siblings
- Lack of eye contact
- Change in attitude

Outcomes & Sanctions

- All known/reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by the class teacher or by a Principal
- Parents of the perpetrator may also be questioned about the incident or about any concerns they may be having
- The person displaying unacceptable behaviour may be asked to genuinely apologise (as appropriate to the age and level of their understanding)
- Other consequences may take place and a request that the school is supported with any sanctions that it takes.

LESTA operates a zero tolerance approach to any form of bullying, however we must be certain it has occurred within class time and at the school for us to take action. Any initial offence will be dealt with and recorded immediately by a member of staff and Principals will be notified. The Principals will decide what further action is required depending on the nature of the bullying and the seriousness of the offence. Should the Principals deem the action serious enough, they will discuss this with the person/persons in question and their parent/guardian and an official warning will be given **any repeat bullying will result in being asked to leave the school with immediate effect.**

Staff will be vigilant regarding groups of friends together. Friendship groups may bring about the imbalance of power and must be led towards welcoming others to join them and not excluding others from their group. Staff must reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.

Advice to Parents

As the parent of a child whom you suspect is being bullied –

1. Report bullying incidents to the class teacher
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff and the Principals notified
3. In serious cases the parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem. Any meetings or discussions may be voice recorded for training and monitoring purposes.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the person using unacceptable behaviour towards others, to change their behaviour

Do Not:

1. Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the person involved whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents.
2. Encourage your child to be a 'bully' back.

Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve.