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Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

Bedford Academy of Dance is committed to providing a dance environment that is free of harassment and bullying and where everyone is treated, and treats others, with dignity and respect and we will not permit or condone any form of bullying or harassment.

This policy covers Bullying and/or Harassment of/or by anyone engaged with dance classes, both students and teachers and also by third parties such as site or school staff. The policy encompasses bullying or harassment that occurs in dance classes and also during shows or social events related to the Bedford Academy of Dance.

Every Child Matters and has the right to:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution

What is Bullying?

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 our 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 harassment or threatening behaviour may, in some circumstances, be regarded as such.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, and tormenting (e.g. hiding clothing/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.



Document Ref:	BAoD – 007
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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. Bedford Academy of Dance understands that some students, those with disabilities or special educational needs, can be more of a target for bullying, and watch for this.

Bedford Academy of Dance accepts that as well as students bullying students, teachers can be bullies, or the victims of bullying, as can parents. The dance school sees all incidents of bullying as unacceptable, and all known incidents will be addressed with equal importance.

All members of the dance school community (parents, students 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 if you suspect an incident is occurring or has occurred:

- Your dance teacher.
- A member of the site or school faculty (as appropriate).

Our Aims

- To promote a consistent approach to managing behaviour with the emphasis on preventing bullying.
- 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 and prevent further episodes.
- To ensure all concerns and reports of bullying of all kinds are recorded fully.

Objectives

To communicate the contents of this policy clearly in order that;

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



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The Equality Act 2010 – Bedford Academy of Dance 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 all who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- We promote and foster good relations between all who share a protected characteristic and those 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 will follow our Safeguarding Policy and report their concerns immediately to nominated child protection lead, who will then inform the local authority children's social care officer.

Roles and Responsibilities

Bedford Academy of Dance will deal quickly and effectively with incidents. All teachers and students have a vital role in preventing bullying within the dance school.

Recording of Incidents

A record of all incidents of bullying will be kept by the Principal dancer. All relevant incidents occurring at any time will be recorded.

Cyber Bullying

The dance school 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 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>

We will also treat cyber bullying of its teachers by any parent or student in the same manner.



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Revision No.:	1
Last Review:	01/10/2025
Next Review:	30/09/2026

Procedures

What will we do if bullying is suspected?

Signs to look for include: withdrawal, low self-esteem, poor attendance, children flying into tempers (usually at home) weight loss, bursting into tears at the slightest criticism.

Teachers should develop positive relationships with students so that they feel confident enough to report bullying. When bullying is reported, it is important to act quickly and to get the facts right noting times, names, places, witnesses, theft, damage, injuries.

It may be advisable to ask the victim to keep a diary of events. All reports of bullying must be taken seriously. Any meetings with parents, copies of letters and the action agreed upon will also be recorded. We believe it is important to fully investigate and hear 'both sides of the story'.

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

When a bullying incident is witnessed the teacher should remove both parties from the situation and hear both sides of the story. As soon as possible a written record of the incident should be made.

Minor incidents may be dealt with swiftly and verbally, and may require no further action – nonetheless positive action by teachers is necessary and a record made of the conversation. When a student 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 students' general feelings. When a parent raises an initial concern, the same process applies.

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

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

All parties will meet at the earliest possible opportunity to try and find a solution, and agree a plan of action to prevent such incidents happening again. It is often helpful to have an impartial witness at such meetings, such as another teacher. All incidents of bullying should be reported to the teachers concerned, via a written report. In addition, a copy will be sent to the Principal Dancer for the bullying central file.

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



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Next Review:	30/09/2026

Parents

Parents will be involved early in the process and their support requested. All incidents of bullying will be reported to parents/guardians. Parents' support will be requested to help 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.

What is Harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. A single incident of this nature can amount to harassment if sufficiently serious.

Unlawful harassment may involve sexual harassment, or it may be related to any other of the Protected Characteristics detailed under Equal Opportunities best practices (age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation). Bedford Academy of Dance's stance is that harassment is unacceptable, whether or not it is targeted at any of these categories.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Display or circulation of sexually suggestive material or material with racial overtones;
- Use of slang names for racial groups, or age groups, or for disabled persons;
- Professional or social exclusion;
- Unwanted physical conduct, such as touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour;
- Offensive emails, text messages or social media content.

It is important to note that harassment occurs even if the harasser perceives his/her behaviour as being harmless and without malice, or 'just a bit of fun'. What matters is how the behaviour makes the recipient feel, and not what the perpetrator's intentions were. Also, a person may be harassed even if they were not the intended 'target' of the behaviour. For example, a man or woman may be harassed by sexist jokes about men/women if the jokes create an environment that is offensive to him/her.



Document Ref:	BAoD – 007
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Next Review:	30/09/2026

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a sustained form of psychological abuse. It is defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, involving the abuse or misuse of power, which has the purpose or effect of belittling, humiliating or threatening the recipient.

Bullying usually takes one of three forms: physical, verbal or indirect. It can range from extreme forms such as violence and intimidation, to less obvious actions, such as professional or social exclusion.

Examples of bullying may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Shouting or swearing at people in public or private
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's demeanour or performance
- Physical or psychological threats
- Constantly undervaluing effort
- Rages, often over trivial matters
- Ignoring or deliberately excluding people
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision
- Deliberately sabotaging or impeding performance.

Please note that managers/senior teaching staff are duty-bound to give their students/team members feedback and to generally manage their performance. Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a student/team member's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to an employee in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

What to do if you are being harassed or bullied

Informal Approach

You may be able to sort out matters informally. The person may not know that their behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting, so an informal discussion may help them to understand the effects of their behaviour and agree to change it.

If you feel able to, tell the person what behaviour you find offensive and unwelcome, and say that you would like it to stop immediately. You should keep a note of the date and what was said and done. This will be useful if the unacceptable behaviour continues and you wish to make a formal complaint.

If this is too difficult for you, then please talk to your manager, or a trusted colleague, for advice and assistance. They may for example speak to the person concerned on your behalf, or accompany you when you speak to them.

If the informal approach is not appropriate, or has not been successful, you should raise a formal grievance.



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Revision No.:	1
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Formal Procedure

When a team member feels that they need to deal with an issue of harassment or bullying formally, they should do so according to Bedford Academy of Dance grievance procedure.

We will investigate complaints in a timely, confidential and sensitive manner. The investigation will be conducted where possible by someone with appropriate seniority and experience, and no prior involvement in the complaint.

Details of the investigation, and the names of the people involved, will only be disclosed on a 'need to know' basis. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage the ongoing working relationship between you and the person accused during the investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, we will inform both parties (separately) of our decision. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.

Consequences of a breach of this policy

If after due investigation we consider that a student/team member has been harassed or bullied by an employee the matter will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. The person concerned may be suspended on full pay during the disciplinary investigation until any eventual disciplinary proceedings have been concluded. If the complaint of bullying or harassment is upheld, a disciplinary penalty may be imposed up to and including dismissal, depending on the seriousness of the offence and all relevant circumstances.

Some bullying or harassment will constitute unlawful discrimination if it relates to any of the Protected Characteristics as detailed above. Such behaviour could constitute a criminal offence, punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment.

Where it is found that an employee has been harassed by a third party, such as a customer, supplier or independent contractor, Bedford Academy of Dance will take such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent any recurrence.

If someone makes a complaint which is not upheld, and Bedford Academy of Dance has good grounds for believing that the complaint was not made in good faith, Bedford Academy of Dance will take disciplinary action against the person making the false complaint.

Protection and support for those involved

Students/Team members who make complaints in good faith, or who participate in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Any employee engaged in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

Record-keeping

Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on either party's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and any other notes or documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection policy.



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How we can all help to stop bullying and harassment

We all have a shared responsibility to help create and maintain a working environment free of bullying and harassment. You can do this by:

- Considering how your own behaviour may affect others, and changing it
- Being receptive, rather than defensive, if asked to change your behaviour
- Treating your colleagues with dignity and respect
- Taking a stand if you think inappropriate jokes or comments are being made
- Making it clear to others when you find their behaviour unacceptable
- Intervening, if possible, to stop harassment or bullying, and giving support to victims
- Reporting harassment or bullying to your manager or another appropriate officer of Bedford Academy of Dance
- Being open, honest and objective in any investigation of complaints.

Teachers have a particular responsibility to:

- Set a good example by their own behaviour
- Ensure that there is a supportive working environment in their team
- Communicate to team members what standards of behaviour are expected from them
- Intervene to stop bullying or harassment
- Report promptly to senior teaching staff/management any complaint of bullying or harassment.

How to contact us

If you have any general questions about any information in this policy you can contact us at bedfordacademyofdance@gmail.com.

Signature:

Name:

Hannah D'Arcy

Role:

Principal

Date:

01/10/2025