

# SLDS Anti-Bullying policy

## Anti-Bullying Statement

South London Dance School (SLDS) is committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all students, staff, volunteers, and families within the SLDS community, so they can participate in dance training and activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at SLDS and we have a zero-tolerance policy towards it.

SLDS wants all of our community to be able to recognise bullying and understand why it is important to prevent and take action against it.

We want everyone to feel comfortable with telling us if they themselves or someone else is experiencing bullying in any way, so that we can take action and make everyone feel safe and welcome at the dance school.

## SLDS Policy Towards Bullying

Physical, verbal, or emotional harassment in any form, by **anyone** towards any member of SLDS whether student, staff, volunteer, or family member is unacceptable and will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

If bullying does occur, all members of the dance school (whether staff, student, or other) should be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **TELLING** organisation, this means that **anyone** who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell one of the staff or volunteers, and preferably the Designated Safe Guarding Lead.

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'.

## Responding to bullying at SLDS

Bullying is hurtful, and no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children, young people, and anyone else who is bullying need to learn different ways of behaving and may well have serious issues themselves, which affect their behaviour.

SLDS has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying, in order to carry out our duty of care to safeguard all children involved in SLDS from harm, as well as safeguarding any other members of the dance school, and creating a safe and welcome environment for all.

All members of SLDS, children in particular, have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

### If bullying is suspected, the following procedures should be:

- Report bullying incidents to staff
- In cases of serious bullying (i.e., physical harm, or other actions resulting in severe distress), the incidents will be recorded by staff
- In serious cases parents should be informed and may be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you **cannot promise to tell no-one else**.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when)
- Report any concerns to the SLDS Designated Safe Guarding Lead

### An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour by:

- Talking with the bully(ies), explaining the situation, and trying to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).

- Informing the bully(ies)'s parents.
- Insisting on the return of any 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Imposing sanctions as necessary.
- Encouraging and supporting the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Holding meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Informing all organisation members of action taken where necessary.
- Keeping a written record of action taken.
- Looking at supporting the bully(ies) with any issues they may have, linking with existing support services in your area

### **Outcomes**

- The bully(ies) may be asked to genuinely apologise and sometimes other consequences may take place
- In serious cases, exclusion from the group/organization may be considered
- If possible, those involved and affected by the incident will be reconciled
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place

### **Signs and Symptoms of Bullying**

A person (children in particular) may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults, volunteers, and staff should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child or other member of SLDS:

- Is frightened of coming to the group or participating in certain activities
- Doesn't want to go to the group/organization on their own
- Changes their usual routine
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill before coming to the group/organization
- Begins to behave negatively within the group/organisation
- Comes home with clothes torn or personal possessions damaged or missing
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has money that is continually 'lost'
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (money or lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Prevention of Bullying at SLDS**

SLDS will aim to prevent bullying at the dance school through methods such as:

- Having open discussions about bullying and the effects it can have
- Encouraging friendly behaviour and kindness towards all members of SLDS
- Ensuring staff and volunteers look out for any signs or symptoms of bullying and take necessary action
- Creating an open and welcoming environment where students, staff, and volunteers feel safe expressing their concerns
- Working with students and families to ensure everyone is looked after

## Help and Support

Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. Some useful organizations are:

- KIDSCAPE parents Helpline (Mon-Fri 10-4) 0845 1 205 204
- Childline 0800 1111
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
- Youth Access 020 8772 9900
- Childline [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- Bullying Online [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)
- Kidscape [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)