



# **Elmhurst School For Dance**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Revised and Updated April 2008**



## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY STATEMENT**

Bullying is the intimidation of an individual or group by another individual or group. This may be verbal, physical or mental abuse and includes gossiping, sending to Coventry, spreading malicious rumours, sexist, homophobic or racist comments and the sending of unpleasant text or email messages.

Bullying implies a wilful and conscious desire to hurt, threaten, or frighten someone with an intention to cause distress.

Bullying is often done for the bully's personal gain or gratification. It is often aimed at impressing others.

Bullying can take place in school but it can also happen during out-of-school events (shopping, trips, leave-outs etc.) On these occasions, the Principal of the school remains responsible for the welfare of all pupils.

**SUCH (BULLYING) BEHAVIOUR IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE AT ELMHURST** where we aim to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential within a caring environment.

**All staff encourage pupils to disclose incidents of bullying and allegations are taken seriously and investigated.** The policy of the school is explained within the PSHE curriculum, assemblies and the wider curriculum where appropriate.

**Parents will be involved at an early stage when it is felt to be necessary.**

Parents will help and support the victim and work with the perpetrator on changing their behaviour. A range of methods is used with offenders and to support victims.

### **BACKGROUND TO THE POLICY STATEMENT**

National surveys in England, Scotland and Norway indicate that about 6% of children are victims of bullying. Tutors and boarding/pastoral staff often deal with allegations of bullying and sometimes discover bullying among pupils.

## **RECOGNISING BULLIES**

Bullying includes the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else. To do this the bully has to have some sort of power over someone. This power is not always recognisable to the teacher.

Bullying can be hard to distinguish from 'tit-for-tat' behaviour, which is also unacceptable.

Children and young people who bully others often have the following characteristics:

- They enjoy the sense of power it gives them. There is often a wish to 'dominate'
- They tend to be assertive and aggressive (to peers, parents, teachers, and siblings) in attitude and often lack self-control.
- They tend to lack empathy and cannot imagine what the victim feels.
- They lack a sense of guilt and rationalise their actions. They convince themselves and sometimes the victim that the bullying treatment was/is 'deserved'.
- They may be victims of troubled domestic circumstances.
- They can be of any age.
- They often have an inflated sense of self-esteem.
- They may be physically strong and many act impulsively.
- Many children may have experienced bullying themselves – from parents, siblings or peers. Some children may have been abused.
- They may often feel that they are different, inadequate, have no sense of achievement or...

...may just be spoilt rotten.

## **RECOGNISING POTENTIAL VICTIMS**

The following pupils may be particularly vulnerable to bullying:

- New pupils and younger pupils.
- Pupils who show differences in appearance, accent, background or interests.
- Pupils with poor social skills.
- Those with low self esteem who react nervously or dramatically to baiting.
- Children who are very clever/talented.
- Children who are anxious and/or insecure, sensitive and quiet.
- Pupils who are lonely and isolated but close to parents.

However, any pupils who find themselves “in the wrong place at the wrong time” could be potential targets.

## **PREVENTION OF BULLYING**

A proven way to reduce bullying is to publicise the Anti-Bullying Policy within the school through posters, PSHE, assemblies, etc. as this allows victims of bullying to know that their allegations will be taken seriously by ALL members of staff.

### **PSHE/TUTORIAL POLICY**

This will seek to prevent bullying by:

- Encouraging pupil consultation and involvement, for example, in identifying ‘Danger Areas’.
- Helping to develop empathy with likely victims.
- Teaching pupils strategies for dealing with incidents of attempted bullying.
- Recognising the rights and responsibilities of all members of the Elmhurst Community.

Bullying is discussed within form groups in Years 7 & 8 and will be followed up with further work in other year groups.

## SUPERVISION

There must be adequate supervision of potential 'danger areas'. It is very likely that an amount of bullying occurs within the boarding environment, communal rest areas, corridors etc. Many schools have also found that classrooms can be prime areas for bullying. Toilets, washing and shower areas are also identified by leading child-care agencies as areas in which bullying may regularly occur.

Elmhurst staff will remain vigilant at all times. Teachers, House Parents, and all ancillary staff will be alerted should any particular area of the school be identified by a member of staff or students as a potential "bullying zone". If a student experiences or witnesses bullying, he/she should report it to a responsible adult e.g. a prefect or a member of House staff. All suspicious incidents WILL be reported.

## CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

Academic and Dance teachers alike will be alert to the possibility of covert/sly bullying in the classroom or dance studio. Changes in behaviour will be noted as will any deterioration in a student's classroom/studio performance which may be attributable to bullying.

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU ENCOUNTER BULLYING**

- Remain calm. An emotional response may add to the bully's enjoyment of the situation and add to his/her sense of control.
- Take the allegations seriously.
- Report the incident immediately to the Head of Boarding and Pastoral Care or another member of the Senior Management Team or the students' Houseparent/Resident Tutor. Where more than one Houseparent, is involved there will need to be some liaison between the appropriate members of the resident staff.
- The incident should be reported to all staff the next day so that everyone can be on the alert for a repetition or reprisals.
- It is important to get both the victim and the bully to put their accounts in writing as soon as possible after the alleged incident. This may be done by the teacher (if time allows) or the Houseparent (as available) or a member of the Senior Management Team.

## **WHAT NOT TO DO IF BULLYING IS ENCOUNTERED**

- DO NOT be over protective. Encourage the “victim” to talk about what has happened and how he/she feels about it.
- DO NOT assume that the “bully” is bad through and through. Try to look objectively at the behaviour of/with the alleged bully.
- DO NOT try to hide the incident from the parents of the victim or bully.

## **STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING**

Firstly, any incident will be thoroughly investigated to decide how serious the incident is, i.e. how persistent the behaviour has been, how ‘nasty’, whether it is ‘tit-for-tat’ behaviour that has gone too far etc.

The identified ‘bully’ will receive a verbal warning about concerns for his/her behaviour. Any incident will be noted and dated and recorded on the pupil’s record. A period of being ‘on report’ (covering both in-school and in-house times in the case of a boarding pupil) will follow any such warning and all staff will be alerted to the reason for this sanction.

An after-school session with the pupil’s Tutor and/or Houseparent will be arranged during which the bully will be asked to write an account of the incident from the victim’s point of view. This will form the basis for further action and/or professional counselling.

- Ways may be devised to reward non-violent/bullying behaviour for the period of ‘report’ and immediately afterwards.
- Parents of both the bully and victim will be notified as soon as possible.
- Counselling may be required for all the parties involved in a serious or long-term form of bullying.

## **PERSISTENT BULLYING OR INCIDENTS OF AN EXTREMELY VIOLENT NATURE**

Following two verbal warnings (noted on the pupil’s record) and at least one written communication to his/her parents, a persistent bully will be suspended from school.

Re-admission following suspension will be subject to a contract, drawn up in a consultative manner in such a way as to encourage a change in the behaviour of the bully as well as defining clearly what will happen if the bullying occurs again.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE VICTIM**

1. Communication to all staff so that the situation can be monitored in a comprehensive way.
2. Follow-up monitoring/being 'on report' even after the situation seems to have been resolved.
3. Encourage supportive attitudes from pupils towards those who have been bullied.
4. One-to-one discussion with the Tutor or Houseparent or a discussion with staff and parents, following which a referral to a visiting professional (Doctor, Educational Psychologist, Child Counsellor) may be appropriate.

## **SUPPORT FOR STAFF**

It is recognised that the counselling of both bullies and victims is a special skill that needs to be developed by INSET training. This would be particularly appropriate for Tutors and Houseparents.

INSET will be introduced for other members of school staff and will focus on a whole school approach to the prevention of bullying. This will be of particular benefit to all/any staff who may feel uneasy about their skills in dealing with this area.

## **WORKING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

A good working partnership between Elmhurst staff and parents/guardians will be facilitated if parents/guardians would inform the school:

- If their child reports being bullied.
- Of any family circumstances e.g. home pressures, separation, bereavement etc that may adversely affect the behaviour of their child.