

Anti - Bullying Policy

Aims and Objectives

Bullying is extremely damaging to young people. Lewisham Youth Theatre (LYT) aims to create an environment in which young people are psychologically and physically safe, and where bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

This policy aims to produce a consistent approach to bullying and make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the prevention, reporting and eradication of bullying within the organisation.

This policy should be used alongside LYT's Safeguarding, Equal Opportunities and Social Media policies. It is supported by LYT's Terms and Conditions, Inclusion Statement and group contracts for each project.

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years and updated if necessary.

Definitions

Government guidance defines bullying as actions that are meant to be hurtful, and which happen on a regular basis. Bullying can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect (for example, being ignored or not spoken to).

The five essential components of bullying:

- Intention to harm: bullying is deliberate, with the intention to cause harm. For example, friends teasing each other in a 'good-natured' way is not bullying, but a person teasing another with the intention to deliberately upset them is bullying.
- Harmful outcome: one or more persons are hurt physically or emotionally
- Direct or indirect acts: bullying can involve direct aggression, such as hitting someone, as well as indirect acts, such as spreading rumours.
- Repetition: bullying involves repeated acts of aggression. An isolated aggressive act, like a fight, is not bullying.
- Unequal power: bullying involves the abuse of power by one or several persons who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, or psychological resilience.

LYT's Approach to Bullying or Hurtful Behaviour

LYT workers will immediately challenge bullying or hurtful behaviour, including verbal, physical acts and gestures or body language. In the first instance, workers are encouraged to reinforce the positive culture of LYT and to refer to standards of behaviours expected of all.

Phrases that might be useful include: "We don't act like that here at LYT"; "Everyone works together at LYT"; "We don't talk about people who aren't in the room".

All participants sign LYT's Terms and Conditions, which set out unacceptable behaviours and their consequences:

There is some behaviour that is considered unacceptable for all LYT projects, including:

- *Persistent and serious disruption of workshops or rehearsals*
- *Violence – towards people or property*
- *Prejudiced remarks or behaviour*

If you are unable to work at your best, your tutor will speak to you and your parent/carer about:

- *Your behaviour and how this affects the group*
- *And encourage you to think about what you need to do to help you to continue with the project*

If you continue to behave in ways that we find unacceptable, you may be asked to leave the group.

Responsibilities

Parent/Carers are responsible for supporting their child to abide by LYT's Terms and Conditions, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of their group.

Staff, Tutors and Volunteers must take bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place. They are responsible for:

- Challenging bullying or hurtful behaviour, or behaviour that may become hurtful, immediately
- Speaking to individuals and/or to the group as a whole about the consequences of hurtful or bullying behaviour, and the expectations of taking part at LYT
- Reporting hurtful or bullying behaviour in post-session debriefs and, when possible, agreeing an action plan for addressing the behaviour

The Lead Tutor(s) will report hurtful or bullying behaviour to the Artistic Director. If the behaviour hasn't stopped through initial intervention in the session, the lead tutor, in consultation with the Artistic Director, will:

- Investigate any reported incident of bullying
- Speak to the young person's parents/carers to address the behaviour
- Ask the young person to leave the project if bullying or hurtful behaviour cannot be addressed, explaining the reasons they have been asked to leave and what they will need to do to re-join an LYT project in the future
- Speak to the victim of bullying or hurtful behaviour to assess their needs
- Refer the victim of bullying or hurtful behaviour to additional support (eg counselling), if necessary

The Artistic Director is responsible for implementing the anti-bullying policy across the organisation. The Artistic Director will:

- Ensure that all staff know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying through appropriate induction and training.
- Set the supportive tone of the organisation, making bullying less likely.
- Address issues arising around bullying, record incidents and report them to the Council of Management, as appropriate
- Support the Lead Tutor in investigating and addressing issues of bullying that cannot be challenged within the session activities
- In extreme cases, where significant physical or emotional harm has occurred, contact external authorities and manage the incident in line with LYT's Safeguarding Policy

The Council of Management is responsible for overseeing an organisational culture that does not condone bullying or behaviour that may lead to bullying. The Council of Management will:

- Support the Artistic Director in all attempts to eliminate bullying from LYT.
- Take seriously any incidents of bullying that occur, and support the Artistic Director in managing them
- Monitor any incidents of bullying that occur, and review the effectiveness of this policy.

Reporting Bullying or Hurtful Behaviour

1. Contact the Lead Tutor

Participants and Parent/Carers who feel they/their child have been bullied or who are upset about the behaviour of another child or LYT worker should report their concerns as soon as possible to the Lead Tutor on their project, who will follow the responsibilities as laid out above.

2. Contact the Artistic Director

If participants or parent/carers are not satisfied with the action taken by the lead tutor, they should in the first instance with the Artistic Director. Concerns should ideally be raised in person or over the phone so the Artistic Director can get a good understanding of the concern.

The Artistic Director will discuss the concern with the parent/carer and the tutor team to find a mutually agreeable resolution. The Artistic Director will agree with the parent/carer and the young person further actions.

If an LYT staff member is accused of bullying, the Artistic Director will share this accusation immediately with the Council of Management, who will be involved in addressing the concerns from the beginning.

3. Raising Concerns with the Council of Management

If participants or parent/carers are unsatisfied with the actions taken by LYT staff and the Artistic Director, they can raise a formal complaint with the Council of Management. Concerns should be written down and emailed or posted to the Artistic Director. The Artistic Director will forward to complaint to the Council of Management.

If the Artistic Director is accused of bullying, the complaint should be sent directly to the attention of the Council of Management by post or email at info@lewishamyouththeatre.com.

The Council of Management will invite the complainant to a meeting to discuss concerns. Following this meeting, they will consider the complaint and provide a response in a written reply.

Dated: April 2018

To be reviewed: April 2021