

Anti - Bullying Policy

Dorchester Youth Theatre acknowledges that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We endeavour to ensure that a secure environment is provided for every young person who wishes to participate in the performing arts.

Dorchester Youth Theatre acknowledges that bullying can take place and may need to be addressed amongst any combination of persons that are present at Dorchester Youth Theatre, regardless of their role: participant, volunteer, staff or committee member.

Dorchester Youth Theatre's Anti- Bullying Policy should be clearly displayed in its premises with a contact name and number for confidential support.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person.

Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions, using threatening gestures).
- Physical: Pushing, hitting, kicking or any use of violence.
- Racist: Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic: because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Religious: because of or focusing on the issue of faith
- Verbal: Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours
- Cyber: All areas of internet, such as e-mail and internet chat room misuse mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

Implementation

Dorchester Youth Theatre's artistic team oversees the implementation and review of the Anti - Bullying Policy. Artistic Leaders and Participant Reps are used as a forum to discuss the problem of bullying and to agree systems to tackle unacceptable behaviour with young people. Participant Reps are offered as an initial contact point

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for a young person being bullied but Reps must not attempt to address the offending behaviour. Reps should inform a member of staff or a volunteer without necessarily betraying a confidence.

These groups endeavour to raise awareness about bullying through all appropriate channels including specifically the participants' handbook, induction procedures, posters and leaflets.

The group is also responsible for establishing procedures for the reporting of specific incidents of bullying. These will be dealt with on an individual basis and confidentially by the group unless more serious cases require the involvement of the Steering Committee and if sanctions are required.

Dorchester Youth Theatre will provide appropriate awareness raising and training to all relevant staff and volunteers to reinforce this policy and to provide skills and techniques to counter bullying behaviour.

All staff and volunteers should be informed of what to do when an incident of bullying is reported.

Procedures

1. Incidents should be reported to staff and subsequently to the Artistic Director
2. Incidents will be recorded by staff
3. In serious cases, parents should be informed and will be asked to visit to discuss the problem
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 bully (bullies) change their behaviour

Outcomes

1. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise and other consequences may take place.
2. In very serious cases, suspension or exclusion could be considered.
3. If possible, the participants will be reconciled.
4. After the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored in striving to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

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Monitoring and Record keeping

- . All incidents should, ideally, be written up within 24 hours.
- . Reports should be signed by the staff member/volunteer, with the name printed and designation.
- . Reports and records should be passed to the Artistic Director who in turn will take responsibility for the safe storage and processing of this information.
- . All information gathered should be treated with strict confidentiality.

Evaluation

Records of incidents are kept and used to inform future practice. Spot checks and occasional surveys are also used. Evaluation and review will ensure that the Youth Theatre remains responsible to changing needs whilst striving to protect young people from bullying.

What we intend to achieve

Our Anti-Bullying Policy aims to achieve a reduction in bullying due to:

- . The vigilance and responsiveness of staff and volunteers to bullying behaviour
- . Acknowledgment by young people that bullying **will** be tackled
- . Raised awareness about bullying and the forms it can take
- . A greater proportion of young people informing an adult if they are being bullied
- . The involvement of staff, volunteers, parents and young people in implementing the Anti-Bullying Policy