

# Norwich Theatre

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

### **AIMS**

- To raise awareness of bullying
- To bring about conditions in which bullying is less likely to happen in the future
- To reduce and if possible to eradicate instances of all types of bullying
- To ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and fulfil their obligations in relation to it.

### **STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

1. Norwich Theatre seeks to provide a safe, secure and positive environment in which children and young people can develop and grow making full use of the range of facilities available to them.

2. Norwich Theatre's policy is committed to a programme within which children, young people, and the adults involved with them are entitled to be treated with respect and understanding, and to participate in any activity without fear of intimidation. Any behaviour which undermines this is unacceptable.

3. All children and young people have a right to feel secure; to be able to trust without fear; and to expect protection from adults in positions of care and responsibility. They also have a basic right to take full part in the arts, in an environment that does not subject them to cruelty or create despair.

4. All bullying is unacceptable, regardless of how it is delivered or what excuses are given to justify it.

5. Victims of bullying will be treated in a supportive manner, and their case heard in an atmosphere of positive concern.

### **NATURE OF BULLYING**

1. There are a number of definitions of bullying but all definitions include the following characteristics:

- That it tends to be repetitive or prolonged
- That it involves an imbalance of power
- That it may be verbal, physical or psychological.

2. Hence, bullying may be defined as the intentional abuse of power by an individual or group with the intent and motivation to cause distress to another individual or group. It may be physical, sexual, verbal or psychological in nature. It may occur frequently or infrequently, regularly or irregularly, but it should be taken seriously even if it has occurred on only one occasion.

3. Many children experience bullying at some point. The fact that incidents are not reported does not necessarily mean that bullying is not taking place. Bullying is as much an attitude as an act and it can only be identified by assessing the effects it has on the victim.

4. There are different types of bully, e.g.:

- Aggressive bullies - physically aggressive individuals - or bully gangs
- Anxious bullies - children recruited into bully gangs by intimidation
- Victim bullies - children often victims at home and bullies at school.

5. Bullying can mean many different things to children and can include any of the following descriptions:

- Being called names
- Being teased
- Being pushed or pulled about
- Being hit or attacked
- Having their bag or possessions taken or thrown around
- Having rumours spread about you
- Being ignored or left out
- Being forced to hand over money or possessions
- Being attacked because of their religion, colour or gender

6. It should be stated that usually victims of bullying become so through no fault or action of their own. However, on occasions it is important to recognise that there can be different types of victims, they may be children who:

- Are new to the environment
- Are different in appearance, speech or background from other pupils
- Suffer from low self-esteem (but it is not clear whether this is a cause or effect of bullying)
- Are more anxious or nervous.

All of these possibilities are simply possibilities, not predictions of victimisation. The victim may be the child who is in the wrong place at the wrong time, and who reacts wrongly. Whatever the reason is for a child becoming a victim, the problem has to be addressed; it cannot be ignored.

7. Sexual harassment and racial abuse are bullying. Sexual harassment is most often, but not always, conducted by boys against girls and is an example of the abuse of physical power.

8. In more serious instances where adults continuously abuse their power over a child or a child over another child, such bullying may be viewed as child abuse and should be seen within this context.

9. Not all aggressive behaviour is bullying. Behaviour, which appears to be bullying, may be exhibited by some children, especially very young children, without the intention or awareness that it causes distress. Some individuals may feel they are being bullied, even when there is no intention from others to cause them distress. Such perceptions of bullying should nevertheless be taken seriously as a reflection of the individual's vulnerability, but adults need to be clear about the distinctions between bullying and isolated acts of aggression.

10. Bullying is not a phenomenon that occurs solely between children, it can take place at all levels within society.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

1. Norwich Theatre respect's every child's need for, and rights to, an arts environment where safety, security, and their welfare is paramount.

2. Norwich Theatre recognises that every child is important and that every child's individual feelings and views are to be respected.

3. Norwich Theatre will not accept or condone bullying and that all forms of bullying will be addressed.

4. Norwich Theatre education department, the management at The Garage and any other Norwich Theatre employee, whose role primarily involves children, will receive training on anti-bullying.

5. All Norwich Theatre employees should be aware of the anti-bullying policy and if they discover any concerns regarding bullying happening within Norwich Theatre they should:

a. Treat any incident(s) of bullying as important.

b. If approached by a child, listen to what the child has to say in a calm and supportive manner. This is whether it is the child being bullied or the child who is bullying.

c. Record what they saw or heard and when and where the incident(s) took place.

d. Immediately inform the child protection officer who will make a report of the incident(s) and, if appropriate, take steps to deal with the incident(s) by discussing the issue with the child and if necessary inform either the child's school and/or parents.

6. Where a child is found to be exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour to another child, it is important to involve the child protection officer as soon as possible. The procedures for dealing with abuse will then be initiated (See *Procedure for dealing with abuse that has been discovered*).

7. Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively by Norwich Theatre. If, after consultation, the perpetrators of any reported incident do not desist from their actions, and in doing so breach the policy's principles, they will be subject to disciplinary measures which will culminate in their removal from Norwich Theatre and the cessation of their participation in any education activities they may be involved in.

8. Norwich Theatre is committed to reviewing our policy at regular intervals.