

MSPA Anti-Bullying Policy

The Moore School of Performing Arts has a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying. The scope, definition and aims of our policies and the measures we take relating to bullying and the school's strategy to prevent bullying behaviour are outlined below.

Scope

The policy addresses bullying behaviour, harassment, and sexual harassment.

While this policy addresses issues related to bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim(s) of bullying), the policy applies to teaching and other school staff, parents/guardians, and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them.

The policy will apply during time periods/activities as follows:

- Class Times (including break times)
- School tours/trips
- Rehearsals and Performance Periods

Rationale for The Moore School of Performing Arts Anti Bullying Policy

An Anti-Bullying Policy is a priority issue identified by the staff, students and parents since no school is immune from the problem of bullying.

Ethos

MSPA's primary objective is to build confidence and creativity and to provide a social forum for our students to make friends for life. Our younger students build vocabulary, imagination, confidence and co-ordination in creative drama and lively dance classes. Our older students benefit from more advanced classes and drama exams.

We hope to encourage a love of the arts in all its forms. Our teaching staff are all experienced and motivated and are chosen for their ability to bring out the best in our students, with a real interest in each and every child's development.

Conduct

All students are expected to act in a polite and courteous manner with the older students setting a good example for the younger ones.

The positive atmosphere in our classes is best served by punctual, enthusiastic students and can be seriously undermined by disruptive and unreliable members.

Students acting in an inappropriate manner or whose conduct could cause hurt or injury to others may not be admitted to class.

Goals/Objectives of MSPA's Anti-Bullying Policy

1. To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
2. To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management, teachers, students, parents/guardians.
3. To create a school that acknowledges, accommodates, and respects a diversity of students across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation. Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race, membership of the traveller community.
4. To take practical actions to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour e.g. to ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
5. To develop procedures for reporting and recording incidents of bullying behaviour.
6. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.

MSPA Definition of Bullying

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying is repeated aggression conducted by an individual or a group against others - such aggressive behaviour may be verbal, cyber, psychological, or physical.

For the purposes of this policy, the term bullying also encompasses harassment and sexual harassment, defined as follows:

- Harassment: any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in the equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.
- Sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

Types of Behaviour that are not tolerated:

- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Intimidation
- Gestures
- Silent telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email/Facebook/Social media messaging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Isolation & exclusion
- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc
- Name calling

- Slagging
- A combination of any of the types listed

MSPA's Actions to prevent bullying behaviour

1. Publishing and Publicising an Anti-Bullying Code

2. Supervision and Monitoring

- Classes are always supervised by teachers and/or teaching assistants.
- Bullying danger spots have been identified in collaboration with students
- Both teaching and non-teaching staff involved.
- Trained classroom assistants are involved as a resource to assist in countering bullying

Anti-Bullying Procedures

These procedures are intended to reassure any student who is being bullied that he/she will be listened to, and his/her case will be dealt with seriously. They are also intended to enable those involved to recognise the serious nature of bullying and to dissuade them from participating in or supporting bullying behaviour.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the Class Teacher/Management immediately if they suspect or know that a child is being bullied. Parents are encouraged to keep a record of any incidents of bullying, noting who, what, when and where.

Investigation of incidents of alleged bullying will be conducted in a manner that affords full rights to those concerned in accordance with natural justice.

While every case will be dealt with sensitively no absolute guarantee of confidentiality can be given to a person making a complaint.

The steps that are taken in dealing with bullying incidents

Where an incident of bullying is observed by or reported to a member of staff the following measures will be taken:

The class teacher/assistant will speak with the accuser to ascertain what has taken place.

The class teacher and assistant (if present) will monitor closely the activities of the respective students and their classmates.

Persons involved in or witnessing alleged incidents of bullying are asked to write an account of the incident. This does not necessarily imply that these persons have engaged in bullying behaviour.

The investigation and questioning will be sensitive to the needs of those involved.

The teachers will bring their findings to the attention of the management who will then take appropriate action.

Those who have been found to have engaged in bullying will be encouraged to recognise the inappropriateness of such behaviour and the seriousness of its effects on others.

They will also be encouraged to apologise for their behaviour to the victim in question. MSPA recognizes that often bullying is the result of a thoughtless action and once brought to the attention of the perpetrator can be simply resolved.

A record of bullying incidents will be maintained and recorded in the Child Protection/Incident Report book, which is retained in the school's files.

Where bullying behaviour has been established as having taken place and where there is a repeated or serious offence, the parents/guardians will be notified.

Parents/Guardians are expected to co-operate with these policies and to re-enforce them in the home.

Appropriate sanctions will be imposed which may ultimately result in exclusion from the school.

Sanctions and disciplinary procedures imposed in instances of bullying behaviour will have as their priority:

- The health and safety of all students
- Preservation of the anti-bullying ethos of the school
- Prevention of further occurrences
- Reconciliation between the parties to the bullying incident
- The effect on the perpetrator

Retaliation against students or others, following or during an investigation will be regarded as a serious breach of discipline and will merit the most serious of sanctions.

3. Education and Enlightenment

The nature of the Drama and Speech & Drama class gives rise to opportunities to discuss and explore bullying issues among many topics. MSPA use this platform on occasion and when necessary to highlight issues and to provoke debate. Our teachers are aware of the issues and seek to reinforce our code of good conduct in this respect.