

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

LYT MISSION STATEMENT

All young people have a powerful voice and a right to be heard. Lewisham Youth Theatre (LYT) nurtures and inspires young people's voices through free participatory theatre activities, helping them to develop enduring and transferable skills that lead to increased life chances and long term well-being. We bring young people together from across the Lewisham community to create outstanding theatre in an environment of high expectations and collaboration. We work from the core belief that artistic excellence is key to expanding young people's horizons and creating lasting transformation.

Aims and Objectives

Bullying is extremely damaging to young people. LYT aims to create an environment in which young people are psychologically and physically safe, where bullying is unacceptable, and young people are treated equally regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

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. It is written in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

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.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Look for specific changes as detailed below in a young people, but be aware that not all young people who are bullied exhibit warning signs.

Some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Feelings of depression, loneliness, or increased anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Headaches, stomachaches, tiredness, or poor eating habits
- Missing sessions, a sudden disliking of LYT, or a lack of concentration or performance than previously
- Self-destructive behaviors, such as abruptly leaving sessions or inflicting harm on oneself others
- Mentioning methods of suicide
- Unexplained injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
- Increased tiredness in sessions
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations i.e. games.

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 the consequences of bullying. T&Cs are in Appendix A.

If a young person makes an accusation of bullying:

- Listen carefully to what is being said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information might need to be shared with others. **Do not promise to keep secrets.**
- Allow the young person to continue at their own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only. Try to use the **TED** method, asking questions that start with "Tell", "Explain" or "Describe". Avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.

Responsibilities

Parent/Carers are responsible for supporting their young person to abide by LYT's Terms and Conditions, actively encouraging their young person 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If the behaviour hasn't stopped through initial intervention in the session, the lead tutor, in consultation with the DSL, 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 (e.g. counselling), if necessary.

The DSL is responsible for implementing the anti-bullying policy across the organisation. The DSL 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 DSL in all attempts to eliminate bullying from LYT.
- Take seriously any incidents of bullying that occur, and support the DSL 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 their young person have been bullied or who are upset about the behaviour of another young person 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 DSL

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

The DSL 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 DSL 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 DSL, they can raise a formal complaint with the Council of Management. Concerns should be written down and emailed or posted to the DSL. The DSL will forward to complaint to the Council of Management.

If the DSL is accused of bullying, the complaint should be sent directly to the attention of the Council of Management by email or 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.

Document Control Sheet

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

	NAME	TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
Author	Victoria Shaskan	CEO	<i>Victoria Shaskan</i>	24/10/2023
Reviewer	Filiz Ozcan	Creative Director (DSL)	<i>Filiz Ozcan</i>	11/03/2024
Authoriser	Mairi Hayes	Safeguarding Lead (Council of Management)	<i>Mairi Hayes</i>	11/03/2024

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PREVIOUS POLICY UPDATES
Policy updated January 2010
Policy updated May 2013
Policy updated April 2018
Policy updated October 2023

TAKING PART IN LEWISHAM YOUTH THEATRE (LYT) TERMS & CONDITIONS

LYT has been running since 1987. Taking part in our projects is free and you need no previous theatre experience. Our aim is to provide a safe environment in which young people can develop skills and explore ideas, producing performances to a professional standard.

In order to fulfil these aims and for everyone to enjoy and succeed in our projects, we ask everyone taking part to agree to the Terms & Conditions below. These Terms & Conditions are for members and parents/carers.

Please read and discuss the terms below together before the start of the project.

In order to take part in LYT, young people need to:

- Live or learn in Lewisham
- Take part in no other out of school drama activities
- Be able to commit to attend all sessions
- Be willing to learn
- Be respectful of other members, tutors and directors
- Priority is given to those in state/free schools, academies or home schooling

If you are unable to attend a session:

You must let us know as soon as you know that you will not be able to attend a session. You can report an absence, by telephone or text on **07435 969 157**.

Please note: Repeated absence or absence during intensive periods may jeopardise your place on the project or the role that you are able to play.

Timekeeping

In order to be respectful to all members of the group and to ensure we have as much rehearsal time as possible, it is essential that you arrive in good time for your session and are ready to begin at the appointed session time. If you will be delayed, please call or text Lewisham Youth Theatre on **07435 969 157** and make sure to let us know when you will arrive.

Behaviour

Your group will agree on what behaviours the group needs in order for everyone to work at their best, and you will be asked to sign a group agreement once the project starts.

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

- Persistent and serious disruption of workshops or rehearsals
- Bullying or causing intentional physical or emotional harm to others
- 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.

Working Together

LYT brings young people together from across the Lewisham community to take part in exciting theatre projects. Participants come from diverse social and economic backgrounds, and have different levels of experience with drama. We are committed to providing a space where every participant can feel welcome, valued and effective. By taking part in LYT, you agree to work with and act respectfully towards people who may be different to you.

What to Wear

You are expected to dress in comfortable clothing and shoes for each session. Because you will be taking part in drama activities, you should be able to move easily and sit down on the floor in your clothing.

Personal Possessions

We recommend phones and personal electronic equipment be switched to do not disturb or similar at the beginning of the session. If a parent/carer needs contact a young person during session time, they should call LYT on **07435 969 157 or 020 83182508**.

LYT is unable to take responsibility for any personal possessions, therefore we ask members to leave any valuables at home.

Use of Phones During Break:

LYT encourages young people to interact with their peers at break times, rather than being on their phones. To keep everyone safe, we ask that they do not post pictures of each other online without their consent. Make sure you're using your phone and social media in a way that keeps everyone at LYT feeling safe and like they belong. Remember to follow your group's contract even when you're outside the session, this includes in public or private group chats e.g. on Whatsapp or similar.

Dropping Off/Collecting Young People

You will be asked on the consent form if your young person can make their own way home or needs to be picked up. If your young person cannot make their own way home, you must drop them off and meet them at the session location. For safety, young people will not be permitted to leave until we have seen the known adult who is meeting them. If someone other than yourself is due to pick up your young person, please let LYT know in advance.

For health & safety reasons, family and friends who are not registered with LYT *cannot* attend the sessions.

Extra Support

If you feel you or your young person needs extra support to take part in LYT, please let us know. We are happy to meet with members and parents/carers before sessions to help you understand what to expect and get to know the space.

How we use your information:

By returning a project consent form, you consent to LYT using your information to communicate with you about our programmes and make sure all members receive the support they need to access our activities. To learn more about how we use this information, download our full privacy statement at: www.lewishamyouththeatre.com/about-us/policies/

If you have a problem or have any questions about LYT's programmes, you can speak to:

Pauline Nakirya of Lewisham Youth Theatre

M: 07435 969 157 E: participation@lewishamyouththeatre.com

Filiz Ozcan, Creative Director of Lewisham Youth Theatre

M: 07960 095 064 E: creativedirector@lewishamyouththeatre.com

*You can read our policies, including our Complaints Procedure on our website:
<http://www.lewishamyouththeatre.com/about-us/policies/>*