

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### 1 Introduction

Angel Shed acknowledges that bullying is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We endeavour to ensure that a secure and caring environment is provided for every child and young person who wishes to participate in the performing arts. All members of Angel Shed also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. Angel Shed acknowledges that bullying can take place and may need to be addressed amongst any combination of persons that are present at Angel Shed, regardless of their role: member, volunteer, staff or trustee.

#### Principles

- Angel Shed members have a right to participate free from intimidation and fear.
- The needs of the bullied participant are paramount.
- Angel Shed will not tolerate bullying behaviour.
- Bullied participants will be listened to.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

### 2 Definition of Bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, it is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated;
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally;
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation or any other aspect such as appearance or disability.

### 3 Forms of Bullying

Bullying can take several forms:

- physical (hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, damaging or hiding property);
- verbal (teasing, making threats, name-calling, spreading rumours, belittling abilities and achievements);
- cyberbullying (via mobile phone or online – email, games, social networks, direct/private messaging);
- making gestures (threatening signs, negative facial or physical gestures/looks, mimicking unkindly);
- extortion (getting someone to do something they don't want to, blackmail);
- exclusion (leaving someone out, ignoring someone on purpose).

Bullying is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of participants.

### 4 Implementation

Angel Shed's Artistic/Executive Director oversees the implementation and review of the Anti-Bullying Policy. The Artistic Team, volunteer team, and member representatives on the Youth Board are used as a forum to discuss the problem of bullying and to agree systems to tackle unacceptable behaviour. These groups endeavour to raise awareness about bullying through all appropriate channels, including discussions with each membership group, conversations with individual Members, communication with parents/carers, and posters on the Angel Shed pin board.

Angel Shed 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.

### 5 Responsibilities

#### Our staff and volunteers will:

- Foster self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others in all members.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour Angel Shed expects of our participants.
- Provide age-appropriate information (e.g. posters) on bullying to all membership groups, so that every participant learns about the damage it causes (to both the child who is bullied and to the bully) and the importance of telling an adult about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.

- Listen to children who have been bullied, take them seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the Artistic Director or a Lead Facilitator.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

**Angel Shed expects its members to:**

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect any participant who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

**Angel Shed asks parents and carers of our members to support their children by:**

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to Angel Shed staff or volunteers and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other participants.
- Advising their children not to retaliate to any forms of bullying.
- Informing Angel Shed of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.
- Co-operate with Angel Shed if their children are accused of bullying and try to ascertain the truth.

## **6 Preventative Measures**

Angel Shed has a written Positive Behaviour Support Policy. Its key principles are promoted to members each term and is reiterated when ad hoc situations arise. Angel Shed sessions demonstrate examples of positive behaviour and acknowledge participants who exhibit positive behaviour in workshops.

## **7 Procedures**

- Incidents should be reported to staff and subsequently to the Artistic Director.
- Incidents will be recorded by staff and saved securely.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- In serious cases, parents/carers should be informed and will be asked to visit to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (or bullies) change their behaviour.

## **8 Outcomes**

- The bully (bullies) may be asked to reflect on their behaviour and genuinely apologise and other consequences may take place
- In very serious cases, suspension or exclusion could be considered
- If possible, the participants will be reconciled
- 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

## **9 Monitoring, Record-keeping and Evaluation**

- All incidents should, ideally, be written up within 24 hours.
- Reports should be signed by the staff/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
- Records of incidents are kept and used to inform future practice. Evaluation and review will ensure that Angel Shed remains responsive to changing needs whilst striving to protect members from bullying.

## **10 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 members that bullying will be tackled;
- Raised awareness about bullying and the forms it can take;
- A greater proportion of members informing an adult if they are being bullied;
- The involvement of staff, volunteers, parents/carers and members in implementing the Anti-Bullying Policy.