BRITISH DANCE COUNCIL

Since 1929

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Our commitment

The British Dance Council (BDC) is committed to ensuring that everyone involved with our work is treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

Bullying, harassment, intimidation, discrimination, victimisation and sexual harassment are not acceptable.

The BDC will take concerns seriously and will seek to deal with them fairly, proportionately and promptly.

This policy applies to everyone involved in BDC activities, including directors, officials, licensed teachers and adjudicators, competitors, volunteers, parents and guardians, contractors, event attendees and others whose behaviour affects people involved with the BDC.

It applies to behaviour at competitions, events, meetings, training and other BDC activities, as well as relevant online, social-media and other BDC-related interactions.

What is bullying and harassment?

Bullying is behaviour that is offensive, intimidating, abusive, threatening, humiliating, malicious or insulting. It may be repeated, but a single serious incident may also constitute bullying.

Harassment is unwanted conduct which violates, or is intended or likely to violate, a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Harassment may be sexual, discriminatory or related to a protected characteristic, but unacceptable behaviour does not have to relate to a protected characteristic to fall within this policy.

Examples include:

- threatening, aggressive or intimidating behaviour;
- repeated humiliation, insults or undermining;
- deliberate exclusion or isolation;
- offensive, discriminatory or inappropriate comments or jokes;
- unwanted physical or sexual contact;
- unwanted sexual attention or messages;
- offensive online or social-media behaviour;
- deliberately targeting an individual; and
- retaliation or victimisation following a complaint or concern.

A reasonable disagreement, legitimate decision or appropriate performance feedback will not normally constitute bullying or harassment.

Where should a complaint be made?

The first point of contact depends on where and by whom the alleged behaviour has occurred.

Complaints about teachers belonging to a BDC member organisation

Where a complaint concerns a teacher who is a member of, licensed by, or otherwise affiliated with a BDC member organisation, the complaint should, in the first instance, be referred to that member organisation.

Member organisations retain the right and responsibility to consider and deal with allegations concerning their teaching members in accordance with their own procedures.

The BDC expects the relevant member organisation to lead on such concerns wherever it is appropriate and able to do so.

The BDC will not normally duplicate or replace the member organisation's investigation or disciplinary process.

The BDC may become directly involved where:

- the member organisation is unable or unwilling to deal with the matter appropriately;
- there is a conflict of interest or other reason why the member organisation cannot act independently;
- the matter raises a significant BDC-wide concern;
- immediate action is necessary to protect someone or maintain safety;
- the matter involves BDC rules, licensing or membership which require BDC action; or
- intervention by the BDC is otherwise considered necessary or proportionate.

Where the BDC does become involved, it will seek to work with the relevant member organisation and avoid unnecessary duplication.

The BDC will only take action that differs from or duplicates the action of a member organisation where it is absolutely necessary to do so.

Complaints at competitions and events

Where bullying, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour occurs at a competition, event or activity, the concern should normally be reported in the first instance to the event organiser or designated event official.

This is intended to allow the matter to be addressed promptly on the day, protect those involved and prevent the situation from escalating.

The event organiser should:

1. listen to the concern;
2. consider immediate safety and welfare;
3. take reasonable and proportionate action to address the situation;
4. record the matter where appropriate; and
5. refer or escalate the matter to the appropriate organisation where necessary.

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Serious matters, safeguarding concerns, threats of violence or circumstances requiring immediate BDC intervention should be escalated without delay.

Reporting an incident to the event organiser does not prevent a person from subsequently making a formal complaint to the relevant member organisation or BDC where appropriate.

Raising a concern

Anyone may raise a concern about bullying or harassment. You do not need to decide whether behaviour meets a legal definition or have all the evidence before reporting it.

A concern may be raised verbally or in writing.

Anyone receiving a concern should:

- listen calmly and take it seriously;
- avoid making assumptions or promises about the outcome;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- record the concern accurately where appropriate; and
- refer it promptly to the organisation or person responsible for dealing with it.

A complaint that is not upheld is not automatically a false or malicious complaint.

Action against a complainant should only be considered where there is clear evidence that a complaint was deliberately dishonest or malicious.

How concerns will be dealt with

The organisation responsible for dealing with the complaint will determine the appropriate process.

Depending on the circumstances, this may involve:

- informal resolution;
- mediation or a facilitated discussion;
- guidance, training or agreed changes in behaviour;
- a formal investigation;
- disciplinary or membership procedures;
- safeguarding procedures; or
- referral to another appropriate authority.

Informal resolution will not normally be appropriate for serious allegations, sexual harassment or assault, safeguarding concerns, significant power imbalances, threats to safety or continuing behaviour.

Where a formal investigation is required, it should be fair, impartial and proportionate. The person complained about should be given an appropriate opportunity to respond.

Immediate safety and safeguarding

The safety and welfare of those involved must always be considered.

Reasonable temporary measures may be taken where necessary, including changes to event arrangements, duties, contact or supervision.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, the appropriate emergency or statutory services should be contacted.

Safeguarding concerns must be dealt with under the BDC Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

Confidentiality and victimisation

Information will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who have a legitimate reason to receive it. Absolute confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed.

Nobody should be disadvantaged, threatened or victimised because they:

- raise a concern;
- make a complaint;
- support someone who has raised a concern;
- provide information or act as a witness; or
- participate in an investigation.

Retaliation, intimidation or victimisation may itself result in disciplinary or membership action.

Those involved should respect the privacy of others and should not discuss or comment publicly or on social media about an ongoing complaint.

Possible outcomes

Any action taken will depend on the circumstances, the available evidence and the organisation responsible for the matter.

Possible outcomes may include:

- an apology or agreed change in behaviour;
- guidance, training or education;
- a warning;
- restrictions on contact or participation;
- removal from an event or activity;
- suspension;
- action under membership or licensing rules;
- removal of a BDC licence;
- termination of membership; or
- referral to another appropriate authority.

The purpose of any action is to protect people, stop inappropriate behaviour, prevent recurrence and maintain a safe and respectful environment.

Criminal matters

Some behaviour may constitute both a breach of this policy and a criminal offence.

The BDC will not replace the role of the police or other statutory authorities. Where appropriate, matters may be referred to the relevant authority and the BDC will cooperate as required.

Records and data protection

Appropriate records of complaints, investigations and actions will be maintained securely and handled in accordance with applicable data-protection requirements.

Information will be retained only for as long as there is a legitimate reason to do so.

Prevention

The BDC will take reasonable and proportionate steps to prevent bullying and harassment, including:

- maintaining clear policies and reporting arrangements;
- providing appropriate training;
- considering risks at competitions and events;
- monitoring concerns and identifying patterns;
- reviewing event arrangements; and
- reviewing this policy and its effectiveness regularly.

Related policies and procedures

This policy should be read alongside the relevant BDC policies and procedures, including:

- BDC Safeguarding Policy;
- BDC Disciplinary Procedure;
- BDC Grievance Procedure;
- BDC Complaints Procedure;
- BDC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion arrangements;
- BDC Data Protection/Privacy Policy; and
- BDC Membership and Licensing Rules.

Where a matter falls within the BDC Safeguarding Policy, that policy and procedure will take precedence.

Quick guide

Situation	First point of contact

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Quick guide

Situation	First point of contact
Complaint about a teacher belonging to a BDC member organisation	Relevant member organisation
Bullying or harassment at a competition/event	Event organiser or designated event official
Serious or immediate safety concern	Appropriate emergency services
Safeguarding concern	BDC Safeguarding Policy and procedure
Matter that a member organisation cannot appropriately deal with	BDC, where intervention is necessary

Key principle

Member organisations should lead on complaints concerning their teaching members wherever possible. The BDC will support, monitor or intervene only where necessary and will avoid duplicating a member organisation's process unless there is a clear and compelling reason to do so.

Bullying and harassment are never acceptable. Concerns should be raised promptly so that they can be addressed fairly, proportionately and, wherever possible, before they escalate.