

## Seton Hill University Dance Academy policy on bullying

The Seton Hill University Dance Academy philosophy states “Instructors approach students with care and commitment to train with excellence, creating a safe, positive and productive environment for everyone.” In accordance with this philosophy, any behavior by dancers that creates a negative environment or causes dancers to feel unsafe will not be tolerated. This includes behaviors that can be classified as “bullying.”

If a student is observed to be engaging in behavior that the instructor believes to be bullying, the following actions will be taken:

1<sup>st</sup> offense -The student will be taken aside and be warned about the behavior.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense – The student will be removed from class and the student’s parent or guardian will be contacted to notify them of the student’s behavior. A meeting with instructors and program director may also be scheduled.

3<sup>rd</sup> offense - The student will be removed from the studio and will not be permitted to return for the remainder of the dance year or participate in any performance. No refunds will be given at the point a dancer is removed from the studio.

### Bullying Definitions

- “Any act that intends to do harm, continued repeatedly within a relationship...” –(dancespirit.com)
- “Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.” - (stopbullying.gov)

### Types of Bullying

1. Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
  - Teasing/taunting
  - Name-calling
  - Inappropriate sexual comments
  - Threatening to cause harm
2. Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone’s reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
  - Leaving someone out on purpose
  - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
  - Spreading rumors about someone
  - Embarrassing someone in public
3. Physical bullying involves hurting a person’s body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
  - Hitting/kicking/pinching/spitting
  - Tripping/pushing
  - Taking or breaking someone’s things
  - Making mean or rude hand gestures

-stopbullying.gov

### What you can do

- Report the behavior to an instructor or trusted adult as soon as you can.
- One of the most effective methods to deal with a bully is to ignore her. If a bully is trying to get a rise out of you, she’ll get frustrated if you don’t react. “It’s like giving a 3-year-old a time-out,” Linda Hamilton, a psychologist specializing in the performing arts says. “You take away the attention the person craves.” If you don’t get visibly upset, the bully may lose interest in you as a target.
- You can also confront a bully directly. For instance, in the face of a nasty rumor, ask, “Where did you hear that?” to put the bully on the spot. Surprise a teasing classmate by responding with a joke, to show that she doesn’t have the power to upset you. Speak up for yourself without stooping to the bully’s level. Avoid teasing her back or starting a new rumor about her, as these actions might lead to further retaliation—and could get you in trouble, too.

## Authority-Figure Bullying

- Your ballet teacher tells you to cut down on the ice cream—in front of your entire class. You've been working on a new step and your teacher says you're lazy for not having mastered it yet. You got the flu and had to miss a rehearsal, and now the choreographer is making pointed comments about how "some people" don't care enough to be present and are going to ruin the dance for everyone.
- In fact, bullying from authority figures often feels like "tough love" gone wrong. Hamilton says that your teacher is bullying you when you're being repeatedly humiliated, "instead of given the constructive feedback you need to improve."
- When you feel like an authority figure is treating you inappropriately, confide in an adult you trust. This might be a parent, another teacher or the program director. These adults can approach the bully about her behavior, so you don't have to.
- The SHU Dance Academy will not tolerate bullying behavior from its dancers OR instructors. If you feel an instructor is engaging in bullying behavior with you or any other students, we ask that you, your parent, or other trusted adult notify the program director or other administrator immediately so that action can be taken to stop the behavior.

## Are You a Bully?

You may not realize how your behavior affects other people. You could be part of the bullying problem if:

- You focus on other dancers—in a negative way. This can include whispering, rolling your eyes or laughing at someone else's expense. Psychologist Lynda Mainwaring recommends removing negative phrases like "look at how she does that" from your vocabulary.
- You leave certain people out of group activities. Whether you're dividing into groups in choreography class or planning social time outside the studio, intentionally making people feel unwelcome or unwanted is bullying behavior.
- You think you're better than other people. Even if you don't express those thoughts verbally, feeling superior to someone else because of race, class, sexuality, appearance or even dance technique can lead you to behave poorly toward that person. Don't dismiss someone because she's different from you.

Whenever you're in doubt about your behavior, defer to the Golden Rule: Ask yourself, "Would I want someone to do this to me?" If the answer is no, don't do it to anyone else.

-dancespirit.com

For Classroom and/or Home discussion:

Has anyone ever been bullied? Is anyone willing to share their experience? How did you handle it?

What are some things you can do in and outside of dance class if you observe someone being bullied?