

Bullying
Policy

December

2019

1. Our Commitment

- 1.1 We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our children so they can live a relaxed and secure, happy home. Bullying and harassment of any kind is unacceptable in our homes, whether it is in the home or in off-site activities. If bullying or harassment does occur, all children should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying or harassment is happening is expected to tell the staff.
- 1.2 All members of the residential services staff, children and parents should have an understanding of what bullying/ harassment is and what the homes procedures are for responding to bullying/ harassment.
- 1.3 Residential services take bullying and harassment very seriously. Children, staff and parents and anyone associated with the home, should be assured that we do not tolerate bullying/harassment and that they will be supported when such behaviour is reported.

2. Defining bullying and / or harassment

Bullying or harassment is the use of deliberate aggression with the intention of hurting another person.

- 2.1 Bullying/ harassment can be:
 - Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures);
 - Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
 - Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
 - Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
 - Homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality;
 - Because of learning or physical disabilities
 - Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing because of appearance etc.

- Cyber: all areas of internet use, such as e-mail and internet chat room misuse
- Mobile threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities, MSN, Snapchat etc.
- Isolating people

3. Why is it important to respond to bullying/harassment?

3.1 Bullying hurts. No one deserves to suffer from bullying or harassment. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children and staff who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving, and also need support, guidance and understanding.

3.2 **Examples of behaviour changes brought about by bullying are:**

- Being frightened of being in the home
- Not wanting to go to school by public/school transport
- Insisting on being driven to school
- Changing usual routines
- Being unwilling to go to school after previously enjoying being part of the school community Beginning to truant
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starting to stammer;
- Attempting or threatening to run away or self-harm
- Crying themselves to sleep at night
- Having nightmares
- Feeling ill in the morning
- Beginning to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Having possessions which are damaged or unexpectedly go missing
- Asking for money or starting to steal money (to pay bully)
- Having dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- Having unexplained cuts or bruises
- Coming home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- Becoming unusually aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Starts to bully or harass other children or siblings
- Stopping eating

- Being frightened to say what's wrong
- Being afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Becoming nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message is received
- Giving improbable excuses for any of the above

3.3 These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying/ harassment should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. Other signs may also manifest themselves not sited here.

4. How we respond to Bullying

The responsibility of residential services

4.1 The Registered Manager will have overall oversight of all anti-bullying/ harassment strategies and all individual cases.

The Registered Manager

4.2 The Registered Manager has a legal duty to draw up procedures to prevent bullying/ harassment among children they care for. In doing this he / she will:

- Ensure that all the children and staff have an opportunity of discussing the home strategies and reviewing them;
- Determine the appropriate home strategies and procedures;
- Discuss development of the strategies and procedures with the home.

Management team

4.3 Managers are to ensure that there are various methods in which people can raise a bullying concern, including a variety of different formats and use of communication methods, also to ensure that people have support if require to document their concern.

They should:

- Ensure appropriate training is available to all relevant staff
- Ensure that a system for recording bullying / harassment incidents is in place
- Ensure that the procedures are brought to the attention of the children and that they understand, this will also be the case for all professionals and parents.

The Responsible Individual

4.4 The responsible individual will nominate a manager who will:

- be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems
- ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both those being bullied and the bullies
- maintain the homes record of incidents of bullying
- keep the responsible individual informed of incidents
- arrange relevant staff training
- determine how best to involve children and parents in the solution of individual problems
- promote a culture of anti-bullying/harassment

All Staff will:

- Ensure that all incidents of bullying are properly recorded and are reported to the Registered Manager.
- Take part in the homes anti-bullying/ harassment training.
- Know the policy and procedures;
- Be observant and ask children what is happening to them;
- Deal with incidents according to the policy; and
- Never let any incidences of bullying / harassment pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site from the home.
- To ensure all children are living in a safe and nurturing home

4.5 The home will raise the awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying/ harassment through direct works and care plans, and how this can impact of everyone's emotional wellbeing.

4.6 Anti-bullying / harassment messages will be delivered through:

- Providing a caring and nurturing environment based upon mutual respect for one another and restorative Justice.

5. Changing the attitudes of those who bully

5.1 Changing the attitude and behaviour of children who bully will play a major part in the strategies used by the home, if everyone understands also that bullies need support

and guidance, but really understanding the impact of bullying on everyone. Resources for this can be found on the NSPCC website <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

6. Children

- 6.1 The home will encourage all children who think they are being bullied to tell an adult, parent or a member of staff and to explain what form the bullying/ harassment is taking and how it affects them. Children will be supported and encouraged to report possible incidents of bullying/ harassment to any professional they feel comfortable with.

7. The processes and strategies that the home will use in tackling incidents of bullying / harassment

- 7.1 If bullying/ harassment is reported to a member of staff they must record the details as presented to them on an incident log or file and pass these on to Registered Manager /Assistant Manager. No promise of confidentiality can be given, especially if this is a safeguarding concern.
- 7.2 In serious cases parents/social worker should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- 7.3 All incidents of bullying are kept within an incident and investigation folder, this also includes bullying outside the home, the staff team will support all children, if they suffer and experience bullying within the community or different environments such as school/college, as this will not be tolerated, and the emotional wellbeing of our children is paramount.
- 7.4 If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted or involved.

8. Resolving the Issues

Children who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with an appropriate member of staff of their choice, using the correct communication methods.
- Reassuring the child.
- Offering continuous support with a designated member of staff.
- Restoring self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Offering continuous support and advice to parents.
- Being informed about the outcome of the investigation.
- Completing direct work to support the child and to help them to understand they have done nothing wrong.

Children who are bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the child became involved
- Establishing the wrong-doing and the need for change
- Informing parents and social workers to help change the attitude of the child.

Strategy to be used in resolving the issue

- 8.1 Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the individual home. However, the home recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies;
- 8.1.1 Following a reported incident staff will investigate using the '3R Strategy' strategy, with the support of other members of staff as appropriate:
- **Reflection – What has happened? Could it have been different?**
 - **Resolution – How can we try to ensure this doesn't happen again?**
Reconciliation – How we put things right between those involved?
- 8.1.2 Time out/ reflection time may be used if deemed appropriate. The level of time out will be determined by the success of the 3Rs process and at the discretion of the member of staff involved.
- 8.1.3 Referral to a counsellor/ outside agencies if required.
- 8.1.4 If required attendance at a mediation (restorative justice) meeting with the effected child to resolve issues and prevent recurrence
- 8.1.5 If a child continues to inform that they are being bullied, they should be provided with a log book to record this and further investigation must take place, and will be dealt with as a safeguarding concern.

9. Sanctions

Children who have bullied will receive appropriate consequences, according to their behaviour, in line with the behaviour support policy. For persistent offenders or incidents considered as gross acts of aggression. Formal meetings will take place with parents and social workers

10. Complaints

If a child, parent, social worker or carer is dissatisfied with the response made by the home following a reported incident of bullying/harassment, he/she may make a complaint in accordance with the homes/councils compliant procedure.

11. Equal Opportunities

In implementing this policy all members of staff must take into account the Council's Equal Opportunities policy. Staff must ensure that no child involved in any incident of bullying/harassment is disadvantaged on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, must ensure that the correct communication methods for all children to voice and log their complaint is available for them to use, and that staff fully understand how to use this too.

12. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Registered Managers and Responsible individuals will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness.