

6 Skelmersdale Walk to 20-22 Wenlock Road, London N1 7GU

Anti-bullying Policy

Summary	<p>The policy aims to give clear guidance on how to both reduce and deal with incidents of bullying and to ensure that we are meeting our statutory responsibilities in this area.</p> <p>The policy also complies with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Homes National Minimum Standards 2002 • Key Lines of Regulatory Assessment. • Children’s Workforce Development Council Induction Standards for Children’s Social Care. • Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. • Department for Children Schools and Families. • Every Child Matters
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This policy applies to all staff within This Service in respect of bullying within the service
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Policy Statement

Bullying

Bullying is not acceptable behaviour and will not be tolerated. All members of the community, adults and children have rights and responsibilities towards each other. There are clear guidelines on what to do if there are concerns around a young person being bullied. Staff should continually reflect on how they respond to individuals on a personal level. **Care Quality Support** is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for everyone, and all young people in our service, and staff, have the right to be treated with respect and not to be bullied or harassed at any time. Our aim is to ensure that young people do not identify bullying as a problem at **Care Quality Support**.

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All persons who live in, or are connected to **Care Quality Support** (either as suppliers, visitors, employees etc.) are required to conduct themselves in a manner that is entirely consistent with this general principle. There are a range of strategies that are used in dealing with behaviours that challenge. They are based around Safe Handling training.

If bullying or harassment does occur, children and young people should be able to tell someone, in confidence and know that the incident will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Staff in the service are trained to recognise and deal with any indications or incidents of bullying, to act proactively and intervene positively, engaging with those who bully as well as those who are bullied. Children and young people must also know how the matter is to be dealt with, from that point on, and have confidence that planned actions will not make matters worse.

Responsibilities

- All staff are to follow the procedures and responsibilities within this document.
- This Service identifies a member of staff as the designated person who is responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring incidents of bullying.
- Designated co-ordinator to ensure all incidents of bullying are followed up. That the monitoring is completed and that this is passed on to the Manager of the home.

Introduction

Despite a large amount of work being done into preventing bullying from happening, it remains a very high-profile problem that affects Children and Young People's lives and their abilities to develop and achieve the best outcomes possible for them.

At any one time, around 39,000 school-aged children are cared for away from home. For most young people this is intended to be time-limited with the aim that the child will return home as soon as possible. All Cared for children have distinct backgrounds, identities, aspirations and needs, and only a very small percentage of children are looked after due to their own behaviour.

Cared for Children deserve the same life chances as any other child:

- To be healthy
- To stay safe
- To enjoy and achieve
- To make a positive contribution
- To achieve economic well being

Cared for children as a group are no less able than their peers, but often they under achieve. Their lives are often characterized by instability and as a result, they may fall behind and often do not receive the support that they need. As such they are easily identified by their peers as different and this can make them vulnerable to bullying.

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Carers should be particularly alert to this danger and closely monitor the well-being and progress of the children they look after from this extremely vulnerable group.

“Bullying and the harm it causes – such as low self-esteem, truancy, anxiety, substance misuse, suicide and self-harm – is now recognized as endemic. It blights lives here and now, and will continue to do so in the future unless positive steps are taken to tackle it.”(*National Children’s Bureau November 2004 – ‘Spotlight’ publication*)

The case then is well made, bullying causes distress, misery and damage to Children and Young People and it exists in all areas of the UK. Staff working in settings such as residential homes, schools, children’s centres, nurseries, youth clubs and foster homes have both a moral and a legal duty to address all forms of bullying.

National and Legal Framework

Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children (and young people) have the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence.

The Outcomes Framework from Every Child Matters and the subsequent Children Act 2004 identifies within ‘Staying Safe’ the specific aim of ensuring that all Children and Young People are ‘safe from bullying and discrimination. In addition, the Outcomes Framework includes a key indicator.

This aim is supported through the other key themes of:

- ‘Be healthy’: sustaining positive mental health.
- ‘Enjoy and achieve’: enjoying the social experience provided in various settings and that achievement is not inhibited.
- ‘Make a positive contribution’: developing positive relationships; and,
- ‘Achieve economic well-being’: taking positive relationships into the workplace

Definition of bullying

The Department of Children, Schools and Families define bullying as:

“Behaviour by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or a group either physically or emotionally”.

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are.

- physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, theft)
- verbal (e.g., name-calling, racist remarks)
- indirect (e.g., spreading rumours, excluding someone from special groups and as is more frequently occurring cyberbullying where information technology is used).

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Single incidents of verbal or physical attack and behaviour that are hurtful but claimed to be unintentional must also be taken seriously and dealt with according to the principles outlined in this guidance.

These are some of the ways that our Children and Young People have described bullying:

- Being called names
- Being persistently teased or ridiculed
- Being pushed or pulled about
- Being hit or attacked
- Being intimidated by being sworn at, shouted at, and treated aggressively in several ways including threatening looks over a period of time.
- Having possessions taken and thrown about
- Being left out of activities
- Having nasty text messages sent
- Being deliberately got into trouble by other young people

Examples of Bullying and Harassment

- **Emotional** – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g., hiding books, threatening gestures), setting unattainable targets, reducing someone's effectiveness by withholding information, ostracism, not giving credit where it is due, belittling someone's opinion, imposing unfair sanctions;
- **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;
- **Verbal** – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, humiliating someone in front of others, including teasing and taunting, persistent negative comments, and criticism, offensive or abusive personal remarks' making false allegations;
- **Cyber** – All areas of the internet, such as internet chat rooms, email misuse etc.;
- **Mobile phones** – threats by text messaging and calls;
- **Technology** – misuse of the camera and video facilities.

Other types of bullying/harassment and intimidating behaviour that people can be subject to can be on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, nationality and skin colour, but can also encompass sexual orientation, disability, age, AIDS/HIV or physical characteristics and of course that the child is known

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to be in care. There is no one checklist as harassment is often specific to the person, relating to his or her feelings of respect and dignity and may cover anything which “hurts or makes anyone feel bad”. It is a question of whether they feel intimidated, or actions of others disrupt harmonious living. It is essential to remember that it is not the intention of the perpetrator that is key in deciding whether harassment has occurred, but whether the behaviour is unacceptable by normal standards and is disadvantageous. It is also important to distinguish harassment from sexual relationships freely entered into an acceptable to those involved.

What bullying is not

Legitimate, constructive and fair criticism of a child’s or young person’s behaviour is not bullying. An occasional raised voice or argument is not bullying.

How bullying can start

Bullying often starts with apparently trivial events such as teasing and name-calling, which nevertheless rely on an abuse of power. The effects of verbal and emotional bullying should not be underestimated as they can blight a child’s life and cause serious, long, term damage. Such abuses of power, if left unchallenged, can lead to the perpetrator subsequently inflicting more serious forms of abuse, e.g., domestic violence, racial attacks and sexual offences.

Children and young people who are likely to be bullied

Any child or young person may be bullied but bullying often occurs if a child or young person has been identified in some way as vulnerable or different from the majority, e.g., socially, culturally, ethnically, or physically. They may also be inclined to spend more time on their own. Children with few friends are particularly vulnerable, possibly having poor social skills and bullies often victimise those who have no one to support them.

Children living away from home are particularly vulnerable to bullying and abuse by their peers.

The damage inflicted by bullying can often be under-estimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm including being associated with self-harm. The impact of bullying can have both short-term and long-term effects.

Children are often held back from telling anyone about their experience either by threats or a feeling that nothing can change their situation.

Parents, carers and agencies need to be alert to any changes in behaviour such as refusing to attend school or a particular place or activity or becoming withdrawn and isolated.

Children who are likely to bully

Children who bully have often been bullied themselves and suffered considerable disruption in their own lives, but bullying may occur because the child is unhappy, jealous or lacking in confidence.

Work with children who bully, including those who sexually offend, should recognise that they are likely to have significant needs themselves and may be suffering or be at risk of significant harm as well as posing a risk of significant harm to other children

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The first step in dealing with bullying is to be able to know it is happening; this is often difficult as the majority of bullying is carried out away from the supervision of carers. Because of this, it is important that we are able to recognise the more subtle signs that bullying may be occurring.

Common symptoms include:

- Headaches
- Stomach-aches
- Anxiety and irritability
- Fear of walking to or from school
- Unwilling to go to school or getting in the vehicle to school
- Sudden changes in routine behaviour
- Has 'lost' personal possessions or they are damaged
- Asking for increased dinner money/pocket money
- Starting to take money/belongings from other people
- Running away
- Feels ill in the morning;
- Begins to do poorly in schoolwork;
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing";
- Asks for money or starts stealing money;
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost";
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- Comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen?);
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable;
- Is bullying other children;
- Stops eating;
- Is frightened to say what's wrong;
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above;
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone;

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- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be reported to the Manager of the home. Where bullying/harassment is suspected, then the matter will be discussed, sensitively and in confidence, with the child or young person.

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. This means that it is the responsibility of all staff working within **Care Quality Support** to prevent, challenge and respond to bullying wherever it occurs. It is also expected that no member of staff will exhibit bullying behaviour in their own working practice and that all staff will model behaviour that is supportive and encouraging. Bullying is not somebody else's problem.

In order to maintain an effective strategy for dealing with bullying, the traditional ideas about bullying should be challenged, for example:

- It's only a bit of harmless fun.
- It's all part of growing up.
- Children just have to put up with it.
- Adults getting involved make it worse.

Clear messages must be given that bullying is not acceptable, and children must be reassured that significant adults involved in their lives are dealing with bullying seriously.

Factors that would help reduce bullying from developing are generally acknowledged to be:

- Developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our organisation is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities
- Achieving a sense of community by ensuring organisations take seriously behaviour that upsets children.
- Reducing the likelihood of children becoming isolated and vulnerable by recognising each child's needs, and in residential settings, supporting them to adapt to their living arrangements.
- Nurturing friendships between children.
- Supporting children for whom English is not their first language and others who may have difficulty communicating their needs and concerns as a result of learning or physical disabilities.
- Supporting children who have any difficulties in communicating as a result of a learning and/or physical disability.
- Enabling children with personal concerns to feel they can approach any member of staff within the organisation in the knowledge that the staff will respond appropriately.

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- holding regular discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people and families who use our organisation about bullying and how to prevent it. These discussions will focus on:
- group members' responsibilities to look after one another and uphold the behaviour code - practising skills such as listening to each other

-respecting the fact that we are all different

- making sure that no one is without friends

- dealing with problems in a positive way

- checking that our anti-bullying measures are working well

- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racial, sexist, homophobic and sexual bullying
- putting clear and robust anti-bullying procedures in place
- making sure our response to incidents of bullying takes into account: - the needs of the person being bullied - the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour - needs of any bystanders - our organisation as a whole.
- reviewing the plan developed to address any incidents of bullying at regular intervals, in order to ensure that the problem has been resolved in the long term

Creating an anti-bullying climate that is conducive to equality of opportunity, cooperation and mutual respect for differences can be achieved by:

- Having a low tolerance of minor bullying – “Nipping in the bud” the incidents at the earliest sign.
- Never ignoring victims of bullying, always showing an interest/concern.
- When appropriate, publicly acknowledge the bullying child’s distress.
- Organising quality groups/circles, which allow children to work together to identify their own problems, causes and solutions with sensitive facilitators.
- Involving children, parents and staff – perhaps setting up a working group to monitor bullying and to develop ways to combat it.

Strategies for dealing with bullying

There are many responses that can be used to deal with bullying.

These include:

Sanctions for the bullies; it should be clear what the sanctions are, and in what circumstances they will apply. Strong sanctions may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

No Blame Approach - this has some similarities with the Pikas Approach and uses social dynamics to take away the implicit approval by the peer group for bullying to take place.

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Restorative Justice - an approach used to address harmful behaviour and conflict in a community. The approach sees wrongdoing as essentially a violation of people and relationships. The principles of Restorative Justice are that the victim's needs are addressed; bullies are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and all those affected by the incident are involved in the reparation process.

What to do when bullying occurs

If bullying or harassment does occur, children should be able to tell someone, in confidence and know that the incident will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Staff in the home are trained to recognise and deal with any indications or incidents of bullying, to act proactively and intervene positively, engaging with those who bully as well as those who are bullied. Children must also know how the matter is to be dealt with, from that point on, and have confidence that planned actions will not make matters worse.

All staff employed in the home, as well as children and young people staying in the home, will be given guidance as to the acceptable standards of behaviour expected at all times, what conduct constitutes bullying and harassment, (unacceptable behaviour) and given instruction on the existence of this policy, and the procedures to be followed. An employee whose wilful and deliberate conduct is in contravention of this policy may be disciplined, and may also, as a result of this process, be issued with a formal warning, or be dismissed, as merited by the facts of the case. Other children and young people who after appropriate investigation are found to have conducted themselves in violation of this policy may be warned as to their future conduct, or, in exceptional or repeated cases, may be required to leave the home.

The home regularly reviews incidents of challenging behaviour, examines trends or issues emerging from this, enabling staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice.

The home's approach to care minimises the need for police involvement to deal with challenging behaviour and avoids criminalising children unnecessarily.

If the young person, you support has been bullied:

- Make a note of what the young person says – particularly who was said to be involved, how often the bullying has occurred, where it happened and what has happened.
- Reassure the child that telling you about the bullying was the right thing to do.
- Explain that any further incidents that occur should be reported immediately.
- Make sure that the child's parents (or carer) and Social Worker are informed of the situation.

In some cases, counselling for the child or young person may be seen as helpful. If you witness an incident of bullying it is important that this is challenged immediately. However, it is also important that the interventions that we do are not going to make the situation worse. This may include taking the person who was bullying aside to talk to them in private rather than challenging it in front of others.

We recognise that bullying is closely related to how we respect and recognise the value of diversity. We will be proactive about:

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- seeking opportunities to learn about and celebrate difference
- increasing diversity within our staff, volunteers, children, and young people
- welcoming new members to our organisation.

Roles and responsibilities

All incidents of bullying should be immediately discussed with your supervisor who will report this to the Manager.

Consideration must be given to:

- Where has the bullying taken place?
- Dependent on the situation and who is involved who is the best person to deal with the situation?
- Does the child/young person wish to discuss this with someone other than staff?
- Do they wish to make a complaint?
- How is the child/young person going to be supported and given possible advice on how to handle the situation?
- Do any other professionals need to be involved?
- Manager to make a decision if there are child protection issues that need to be reported to the safeguarding team.
- Teaching the young person assertiveness skills and having the right to say no
- supervisors to ensure that any plans drawn up as a result of bullying are presented at reviews and planning meetings if the young person, you support is being accused of bullying.

People bully for lots of reasons. This could be that:

- They have family problems
- They are being bullied themselves
- They are being abused
- They feel unimportant
- To gain acceptance
- They have heard other people being called names – be more specific
- To belong to a particular group or gang
- They are selfish and always want to get their own way

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- They don't know it is wrong
- They are copying family members or other people that they admire
- They are copying other young people at the centre
- They haven't learnt other, better ways of mixing with their friends
- Their friends encourage them to bully
- They are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings

All forms of bullying should be challenged immediately. Discuss with the manager how the situation can best be dealt with. The child's Social Worker also needs to be involved in the process.

- It is important to try and work out with the child/young person why they are bullying and how to make things better for them.
- The child/young person should be encouraged to consider responses and other ways of behaving where they will not feel like they are losing face.
- Consider anger management techniques. Consider direct work as appropriate.
- The child/young person should be encouraged to apologise to the victim of the bullying and helped to think of ways of making things better.

Any repeated incidents of bullying and how they have been dealt with should be recorded by staff and kept under review by the manager until everyone including the young person feel that this is no longer a cause for concern. This decision must be made in Planning Meetings or Review

Bullying is a very serious problem and will not be tolerated. We expect staff and children to work together all of the time to recognise when bullying is going on and do their utmost to stop it.

Bullying Risk Assessment and Action Planning

On admittance to this Service, each Young Person will be discussed in relation to their potential to bully. This will be reviewed on a regular basis at Staff Meetings and young people's Meetings.

Bullying can mean many different things:

- Being called names
- Being teased
- Being pushed or pulled about
- Being hit or attacked
- Having your bag and possessions taken and thrown around
- Having rumours spread about you
- Being ignored and left out

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- Being forced to hand over money
- Being attacked because of your religion or colour

Bullying hurts. It makes you scared and upset.

Every situation will be different and here are some of the ways we will use to tackle it: -

- All staff will help young people understand what bullying is and how it is happening.
- Bullying behaviour will be challenged and monitored.
- We will help people who bully have their needs met in other ways.
- We will help those being bullied to say 'no' and be more confident.
- We will support the individual who is bullying while they change.
- We will offer support and protection to those being bullied.

We will do this through: -

- Group work at young people's meetings.
- Individual counselling.
- Getting the individuals involved in a bullying incident together to talk about it with members of staff as soon as possible.
- The provision of reading materials, literature and DVD's.
- Thinking and time out from the group.
- Confronting perpetrators.
- Having a no secrets policy.
- Appropriate sanctioning.
- Recording bullying formally on the Violence and Aggression Forms.
- Weekly appraisal of bullying behaviour by management in a formal setting.
- Involving, if possible, the appropriate parents/Social worker.

Young people will be given the choice of support but, if the situation is felt to be unmanageable for them, staff will step in and take responsibility for dealing with it. If bullying becomes extreme for one person, we will endeavour to find respite care for them in an alternative provision if possible. Every incident of bullying will be regarded as serious and will carry consequences.

Bullying outside of the home

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It is possible that bullying may occur outside of the home, e.g. at school, on the way to school, on the school bus etc. In such situations, the home will work diligently with the school, and the Police, in order to identify the cause of the problem and to implement a satisfactory solution.

Safeguards

- All children and young people entering the home will be subject to a risk assessment which will embrace a number of areas, and will include any evidence of previous bullying, and/or the child's or young person's assessed risk of being targeted. Any special risk avoidance measures will be recorded in individual placement plans. A "buddy" will be assigned to each new child or young person, with specific responsibilities to monitor any actual/potential bullying issues.
- The home will, as part of its regular routine, include bullying and harassment issues as a standing topic on the agenda for all regular home meetings, and seek opinions on the matter in confidential surveys.
- This procedure is to be confidential to all parties and the home will not disclose information except where disclosure is necessary for the purposes of investigating the complaint or taking relevant disciplinary measures. Records will be kept of all complaints, both formal and informal, together with details of outcomes/sanctions etc.
- No child, young person or staff member will be made to suffer as a consequence of taking any action under this procedure.
- Follow up is important, and the child or children will be invited to discuss the situation at 1-, 2- and 3-month intervals following the resolution of the matter. This discussion will focus on any items of concern that remain outstanding or have been caused by the investigation and outcomes, together with a discussion about the need for continued support and the restoration of self-esteem and confidence.

Finally, please remember that it's the behaviour, which we disapprove of, not the person.

Contact details:

Nominated Anti-Bullying Lead: Care Quality Support

Phone:

Email address:

Associated Documents and References

- This Service Staff Handbook
- This Service Behaviour, Discipline and Sanction Policy
- Children's Homes National Minimum Standards 2002
- Key Lines of Regulatory Assessment.

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- Children's Workforce Development Council Induction Standards for Children's Social Care.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- Department for Children Schools and Families.
- Every Child Matters.

Getting Help

If you require any help with any matters relating to this policy and procedure, please speak to your This Service Care line manager or Senior Manager.

It is the responsibility of every member of staff to ensure that they are working within this policy and keep up to date with changes in policy that may affect their practice at work.