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Anti Bullying

Introduction



ABC Care and Education Ltd have achieved the “Big Award” (Bullying Intervention Group). This means we:

- Show we are working to an externally agreed standard
- Employ consistent and updated good practice
- Actively include children and young people
- Work to ensure that every child can fulfil their potential and enjoy community activities, without fear of being bullied.

The Independent School Standards Regulations 2010 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school is required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented.

This policy will provide the guidelines to ensure that all homes operated by ABC Care LTD (ABC) adhere to the requirements of The National Minimum Standards for Children’s Homes. This policy and the relevant sections within it will be made available to all staff and children. ABC will respond to any bullying issues with a consistent and caring approach.

All children and young people have a right to feel confident that this is a safe and healthy environment. We want to ensure that all children, young people and staff remain safe from bullying

behaviour and have the opportunity to thrive and prosper, emotionally and socially within and outside the Home.

The DfE have published guidance "Preventing and tackling bullying" [available here](#). The now archived "Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools" is also [available here](#).

What is bullying?

Bullying means different things to different people. A broad definition is that:

"Bullying is anything a person does deliberately, to cause someone else to feel pain and/or unhappiness."

Some incidents of bullying may be so serious that they should trigger child protection actions. This would apply where a child or young person is at risk of suffering - or has suffered - significant harm as a result of bullying. Any incident that raises child protection concerns must be reported to staff responsible for initiating appropriate action.

Four main types of Bullying:

- Physical – for example, hitting, kicking, theft.
- Verbal/Written – for example, name calling, racist remarks, threats text messages, letters.
- Indirect – for example, spreading rumours, excluding someone from a conversation.
- Cyberbullying - e.g. using mobile phones or social networking sites to intimidate or bully others.

Examples of bullying might include:

- Being ignored or made to feel someone is not good enough.
- Removal of belongings – bags, clothing, personal items, money, sweets, food, homework.
- Teasing/ridiculing – people laughing at someone's clothes, hair or the way they look.
- Use of physical dominance and/or body language to intimidate.
- Peer or 'gang' pressure – for example, to become involved in car crime, smoking, drugs, bullying, and shoplifting.
- Discrimination – race, culture, disability, gender, sexuality.
- Subtle – a look/expression and/or an implied threat.
- Taking advantage – ie "my sweets for your watch".

Understanding why somebody might bully

Different people might sometimes bully others for many reasons. These may include:

- Because they are unhappy
- Because they feel the need to be important.
- Because they have been bullied themselves.
- Because they are frightened.
- Because they are being abused.

- Because they need help/attention.
- Because they are jealous.

Understanding why some people may be bullied

It may be to do with the following things:

- Disability
- Beliefs
- Size
- Sexuality
- Age
- Race/colour
- Appearance/clothing
- Being too clever/finding it difficult to learn
- Likes and dislikes
- For being a looked after child

Recognising bullying

These may be signs that a child is being bullied:

- A change in usual patterns of behaviour and activities.
- Becoming withdrawn
- A change in eating patterns.
- Self-harm
- Having nightmares and/or changes in sleep pattern.
- Unexplained or suspicious marks or bruises.
- Their belongings 'going missing'
- They ask for money
- They become involved in/there is an increase in, criminal activity
- Adults hear from or about 'others' being bullied.
- They give excuses to explain any of the above.

The list is not exhaustive. Other explanations can apply to any of the above, but should be used as a guide only.

Staff need to be vigilant as victims often try to appease the bully by 'siding' with the bully, if the bully behaviour is challenged.

ABC Care and Education Ltd's approach to bullying

- ABC Care and Education Ltd accepts responsibility to deal effectively with Bullying of children that are looked after. This will include working with other Agencies and Organisations as needed.
- We will promote a culture of respect
- We will protect the right of every child looked after to feel safe in a safe place.

- We will actively listen to all and be sensitive to any signs of bullying.
- We will do everything we can to protect and help anyone who is being bullied.
- We will work the person who is bullying to help them recognise and understand their needs and learn from the experience.
- We will make resource available to try to prevent bullying and support anyone affected by bullying.
- We will encourage children that are 'looked -after' to use the children's rights and advocacy services as well as their key workers.
- We will refer to, and use the specific service guidance of this policy in all cases of bullying.
- We will ensure that children that are looked-after understand that staff and carers will treat bullying seriously and that something will be done about it if it happens.

ABC Care and Education Ltd also recognises the importance of staff not being involved in any actions which could be perceived as bullying or encourage other young persons in the house to discriminate against an individual. Obviously it would not be expected or tolerated for a member of staff to call a young person by a racist or sexist name for example, but staff must also be careful not to label the youngsters with negative terms such as trouble causer or bad influence. Such terms could cause the other young people to have their views of each other changed.

While this policy will detail how ABC intends to deal with the problems of bullying the main aim will always be to develop an atmosphere in each of its homes which is likely to prevent the occurrence of bullying as opposed to react to it as it occurs. The next section below will expand on the procedures we will follow to achieve this.

The Anti-Bullying policy will be given a very high profile both with staff and the young persons in the home. ABC will ensure that the very core of all the relevant policies and procedures which dictate everyday life in the homes will reflect a spirit of equality and cooperation and respect for all and their value systems.

Activities will be promoted through both the education and social plans, which encourage group working and shared reward systems which rely on all group members working together.

The [Equal Opportunities Policy](#) for both young persons and staff will reflect just that, the fact that all are perceived and treated equally. As we admit young persons into each home they will be encouraged to contribute to and help to change this policy so it is perceived as a dynamic document, which can be developed as circumstances require.

ABC Care and Education Ltd will not just rely on the positives created by the above practices but we will also have in place a series of procedures which will identify potential problems and suggest appropriate reactions/solutions.

It is of vital importance to identify young persons who for one reason or another may be potentially vulnerable to bullying. Vital information in this respect can be discovered either as the young person is placed, or in many cases in the planning process for this placement in consultation with previous carers or schools.

The National Minimum Standards for Children 10.8 go further and state that:

Risk assessments of the whole children's home environment are carried out, to identify any potential sources of harm to the children are recorded in writing and regularly reviewed.

This risk assessment will be updated as each young person enters the home. In the first instance the

information below will be utilised when the risk of bullying taking place is investigated.

Perhaps quite obviously the greatest risk of bullying is at times or in places when the young persons are under or given the greatest amount of freedom. This needs to be addressed by dynamic involvement of staff in all areas of the home, particularly at times when stress levels may be at their highest such as at meal times and just before the young persons go to bed. This policy must take into account the young persons right to an appropriate amount of privacy.

Even with the most positive of environments and the most vigilant staff there is still the risk that bullying will take place. To prevent this escalating to more serious and or more frequent attacks a real culture of reporting such issues needs to be established. Staff must take all reports of bullying seriously and fully investigate them. This should occur even if the particular incident seems minor to the member of staff it may not seem so innocent to the young person and may also be just the tip of the iceberg when investigated in depth. Any notification or incidents of bullying, whether they were found to have foundation or not should be recorded in an appropriate log and in the young person's individual files. In cases where bullying is established the incidents should be reported to all the young persons involved social workers.

The response of staff towards both the bully and the bullied persons can significantly reduce the risk of the behaviour escalating in terms of level or frequency.

Essentially ABC will seek to address the inappropriateness of the type of behaviour as opposed to personalising the problem on the child displaying the bullying tendencies. This will involve both individual and group work and at least initially will focus on the no blame approach. However young persons found to display bullying tendencies will certainly be afforded discrete but increased supervision.

In cases which move beyond minor and isolated incidents it may be important to draw on additional expertise such as social workers, psychologists and specialist counsellors within the children's services framework.

It is extremely important to ensure the young person who was the victim is not left out of the process. These young persons may need increased support and supervision; even if the strategies to prevent further bullying are successful it will be some time before they may feel confident of this being the case. Staff should consider all of the areas below when counselling the bullied young person:

- Ensure you discover the times and places bullying took place to help to minimise the risk of future occurrences by allowing the home to build in improved supervision patterns.
- Discuss the possibility of using appropriate assertiveness techniques.
- Clarify with the young person they are aware of the ways in which they can get help should some future incident occur.
- Make a judgement as to if the bullying has highlighted a more serious personal issue. If so it may be appropriate to refer the young person to more specialised care from appropriate external providers.
- Discuss the young persons own behaviour to discover if this has some way contributed to the bullying. If this is found to be the case the member of staff should advise the young person of appropriate behaviour modifications to reduce the risk of problems developing in the future.
- Should the situation demand it there may be a case for dealing with the incident(s) through the appropriate sections of the Child Protection Policy

Staff vigilance is the most potent deterrent against bullying. Child/Young people who bully will then know that it will be dealt with, and the victims of bullying will have confidence for the same reason.

Staff recognize that following those who bully to misuse power is not only damaging to the victim, but also gives the opportunities for the development of sub cultures which will hinder their work with the child/young people. We have created a culture and communication network where young people are easily able to confide in each other or staff if they are being bullied. Even with effective communication systems, we realise that the problem will still need to be tackled in a number of different ways, as follows:

Group meetings of child/young people

Key features:

- Open discussion;
- Joint ownership of problem;
- Clear statements about unacceptability of bullying;
- Working to a resolution of the problem;
- No opportunities for revenge.

Arranging a meeting of all those involved

Key features:

- Get the right people there;
- Involve relatives and friends;
- Manage the discussion;
- Aim for an agreed resolution;
- Make a written note of the agreement;
- Arrange to review after a set time.

Confronting the bully or the bullies

Key features:

- Be absolutely certain about the known facts;
- Confront the 'bully' with the allegations;
- Make it clear that the behaviour is unacceptable;
- See each bully separately if necessary;
- Be specific about sanctions if bullying does not stop;
- Follow up to check that behaviour has ceased;
- Staff members will promote at all times anti-oppressive practice both with child/young people, each other and any other person visiting the home either in a professional or personal capacity;
- Staff will report any concerns to the senior manager on duty. After discussion, and agreement is reached that bullying is taking place an action plan will be agreed;
- A full written account of the concerns and the actions that are carried out must be held in each home, and information placed on the relevant children's file.

Response guidelines

- Attend to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief. Be patient, wait during any silences, prompt gently, "And";
- Accept what is said, "believe" is too strong, the allegation may be false, but you must keep an

open mind;

- Annotate, jot down notes. Preferably make some very brief notes at the time, on any paper at hand, and write them up as soon as possible. Keep your original notes. Record the date, time and place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child/young person rather than re-interpreting them yourself.
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations, or assumptions.
- Remember also that the parents of the child/young people may wish to see your notes;
- Allay fears, reassure them that she/he was right to tell you. Do not promise confidentiality as you may/will need to refer to others, i.e. staff/parents, Social worker, police, etc;
- Allay any guilt, reassure them that its not their fault that he/she was bullied, she/he is not the only person to have suffered from being bullied.
- Do not ask leading questions, e.g., "What did he/she do next, (this assumes she/he did), instead ask open questions such as; "Anything else to tell me?". Or prompts such as "yes, and "?
- Do not criticise the perpetrator(s) in personal terms, e.g. naughty, wicked child etc, only their behaviour, e.g. bullying is not acceptable. Remember that reconciliation is one of the main aims, as well as teaching good habits;
- Explain what you will do next, e.g. talk to.....?
- Offer support, explain that they can have you, or another chosen person, child or adult to support them in any later talks if they are needed;
- Try to see the matter through yourself but, whatever happens ensure that you keep in contact with the child;
- A final point. Relax (or try to). If this is a serious, upsetting case, you might need some support for yourself, if so - ask for it.

Recording & Review

All bullying should be notified to the home manager at the first opportunity. Every instance of bullying should be fully investigated and documented throughout the bullying log. This must be cross referenced within the Daily Diary Sheets & an Incident logged.

Where it is recognised, the specific category of bullying e.g. verbal/physical/cyberbullying should be identified and highlighted in the incident records made so that incidents of bullying can be monitored and any pattern or continuation of bullying identified.

The Child's Care Plan & Individual Risk Management Plan should be reviewed with a view to incorporating strategies to reduce or prevent future incidents.

The Registered Manager is responsible for reviewing the incidence and nature of bullying in the home as part regular Quality Audits.

Talking with Children/ Young People who have Allegedly, been Bullying

In dealing with those who bully, there are three positive aims;

1. To stop the bullying behaviour, immediately;
2. To re-educate the persons behaviour and attitude for the future;
3. To reconcile the persons involved, if possible.

Different Approaches To Talking With Children/ Young People.

Common concern method;

Aim; to elicit a feeling of “common concern” for the well being of the bullied child/ young people, (without expressing it directly).

This method is based on the following;

- A non-blame stance towards those who have been bullying;
- Short therapeutic talks (10-20minutes);
- An individual approach, (even when a group has bullied together);
- A conflict-resolution/problem solving approach, rather than a blame/punishment-orientated approach.

Outline sequence of the “therapeutic dialogue”;

1. Non-blame start, “I understand you've been mean to?”.
2. Request information, “What happened?”.
3. Close and move forward, “That's probably enough about it for now”;
4. Resolve conflict/problem. “What can you do to improve thing's?”, “What do you suggest?”.

The aim is for at least a “live and let live” relationship between the children/young people. If not reconciliation;

1. Agree and arrange follow up; agree some approach/action, (apology, recompense, etc.), “We will meet in a weeks time to review”. Arrange a time and place for the review meeting.

The review meeting might begin, “Can you tell me how you've been getting on?”.

An alternative method of talking to those who have allegedly been bullying is the “Self awareness and Responsibility Approach”.

The assumption based on this approach is; that every action has meaning for the actor; that action is driven by a need or want, and that there is always a “pay-off”, a reward based reason why people behave in a particular way.

If the need and the pay-off of any action can be established, alternative positive ways of meeting the need can be found and used to replace the anti-social behaviour. The emphasis is on growing self-awareness and self-responsibility.

Aims;

- To elicit from the person what it is that they get from bullying, their pay off, whether they need it, and how they might get it in an alternative, positive, socially acceptable way to agree a programme to help the person towards achieving their appropriate needs/wants.

A group or individual approach is possible; also, this can be used with a whole group of children as a personal and social education exercise.

Outline dialogue for this approach

1. What do you get out of bullying, e.g. power, money, status, feeling good, feeling superior?
2. Do you really need that, is it an acceptable need/want morally?
3. How else might you get it?
4. What can you/I plan to enable you to work towards getting it?

Anti Bullying Resources



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<http://www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/>

Specialist organisations

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) : Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.

Beatbullying : A bullying prevention charity with an emphasis on working directly with children and young people. In addition to lesson plans and resources for parents, Beatbullying have developed the Cybermentors peer support programme for young people affected by bullying.

Kidscape : Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.

Restorative Justice Council : Includes best practice guidance for practitioners 2011.

ChildNet International : Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and

how to protect themselves

EACH : A training agency for employers and organisations seeking to tackle discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexual orientation.

Schools Out **Schools Out** : Offers practical advice, resources (including lesson plans) and training to schools on LGBT equality in education.

Stonewall : An LGB equality organisation with considerable expertise in LGB bullying in schools, a dedicated youth site, resources for schools, and specialist training for teachers.

This document was printed via ABC Care Inspire. Inspire is our innovative document management system designed to capture the views & ideas from all of ABC Care Staff. This is a constantly evolving document in order to best meet the needs of our young people.

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