

Countering Bullying Practice Guidance:



PREVENTING AND TACKLING BULLYING IN DERBYSHIRE



The Positive Relationships Standard

The Quality and Purpose of Care Standard

Outcome:

Children enjoy sound relationships, interact positively with others and behave appropriately

Children live in well designed, safe and pleasant homes with adequate space in a suitable location where there is access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which will promote their development

Index

Introduction

Background

Purpose

Identifying and Preventing Bullying

Ethos

Training

Responding to Bullying

Supporting the Child or Young Person Who is Being Bullied

Working with Children or Young Person Who is Bullying

Working with Children or Young People who are Bullying as a Group

Responding to Serious or Persistent Bullying

Involving the Police

Placements

Systems, Recording, Monitoring and Analysis

Key Principals for Good Practice

Introduction:

This guidance has been written with a number of professionals, including the departments Safeguarding Manager, and Lead Anti Bullying Officer who has taken account of the relevant legislation, regulations, policies and procedures, for example:

- Children Act (1989), revised Children Act (2004)
- Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Boards Procedures
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)
- Children's Homes Regulations and Quality Standards (2015)
- Derbyshire County Council Managers Guidance: Equality Act 2010 (January 2013)

Please read in line with:

- Online Tri.x Residential Procedures for Derbyshire County Council Children's Homes Service (Section 5: Personal Care, Safeguarding and Protection)
- Derbyshire County Council Safer Working Practice Guidance: Safe Care/Safe Touch (2013)
- Derbyshire County Council Relationship Management Policy (to follow)
- Derbyshire County Council Reducing Offending Policy

Background:

Children in care who are looked after and living away from home have possibly had several placements and have repeatedly had to adapt to many new situations and people. They can lose contact with friends and often with extended family members and so become among the most vulnerable groups. They may face bullying and discrimination from others at school and in the community, simply because they are looked after.

Purpose:

Effective anti-bullying practice gives all children and young people the assurance that they are cared for in a safe and friendly environment. It upholds their fundamental right to be safe. Bullying can only be stopped through a combination of prevention and response. Preventative work is on-going and sustained. This guidance aims to provide consistency and a clear framework through Derbyshire County Council's Prevent and Tackle Programme, i.e. when an incident occurs, a response is required to deal with the bullying behaviour and support the victim.

An anti-bullying policy is an important way for everyone in the home to understand what behaviour is acceptable, what is unacceptable and how bullying will be dealt with.

- The children and young people should be Involved in setting rules and developing policies, e.g. discuss in the homes children and young people's meetings, activities and competitions and poster
- Ensure that the policy covers different kinds of bullying, (e.g. sexual bullying, cyber bullying and prejudice driven bullying).
- Consider any other forms of bullying that are particularly likely in the children's home, such as taking money, or deliberately getting someone into trouble.

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- Publicise anti-bullying policies and rules, e.g. make sure all children/young people and staff are fully aware of this policy and how it is put into practice, for example, in the Homes Statement of Purpose, i.e. a child friendly version, such as, the Children and Young Person's Guide/Welcome Pack, display it or invite children/young people to design posters, communicate ideas and suggestions from children and young people via an ideas board/displays.
- Ensure that the policy is revised and updated regularly in consultation with children and young people.

Identifying and Preventing Bullying:

Tackling bullying is the responsibility of all who work with children, however, the homes manager and deputy manager will take the lead within the children's home with support from the departments anti bullying lead coordinator and the homes anti bullying coordinator (allocated in each of the homes in Derbyshire). This leadership role should include responsibility for:

- Following the DCC Children's Home Prevent and Tackle Bullying Procedure
- Maintaining policies (DCC Preventing and Tackling Bullying Award for Children's Homes)
- Attending regular quarterly anti-bullying coordination meetings and adhering to the terms of reference (agreed by the group)
- Arranging training for the staff team within their home (Derbyshire Preventing and Tackling Strategy 2012 - 2014 (Anti Bullying Award Scheme for Children's Homes)
- Assisting in responding to bullying incidents
- Ensuring that records/data are kept within the children's home, including data
- Linking with the local authority anti-bullying lead coordinator and other partners.
- Providing links to useful helplines, websites and local voluntary sector groups
- Ensuring the agreed systems for the policies and procedures within the home are up to date, in place and shared with the staff team and that the information is available for children and young people, their families and the staff group

There are a number of specific practical steps which homes can take to reduce the likelihood of bullying happening (refer to key principles for good practice later in this section)

Ethos:

The ethos of children's homes is important in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment in which bullying is not tolerated. To create a welcoming, safe ethos we expect all staff to:

- Encourage values such as team spirit and respect.
- Model fair and respectful behaviour and leadership.
- Challenge all forms of prejudice and promote equality.
- Discourage children from colluding with bullying – bystanders and those who reinforce the bullying behaviour are contributing to it.
- Extend these values to everybody in the home, such as reserve staff, house keepers and clerical support and short term workers, such as students/volunteers or visitors.

Regular consultation with children and young people is the most effective way to find out if anti-bullying interventions are working and young people feel safe. There are three key questions to ask about intervention:

- Does the victim feel safe?
- Did the bully's behaviour change?
- What have we learned?

Training:

Staff training for all children's homes within Derbyshire County Council includes restorative practice/approaches in residential care, this includes mediation and conflict resolution techniques provided by the Horizon's Service, as well as other supporting theories, such as brief solution focused work and motivational interviewing. All staff is trained to:

- Understand the home's anti-bullying policy and role in implementing it.
- Know how to spot bullying, including understanding different types of bullying (e.g. the different ways boys and girls tend to bully).
- Know how to respond appropriately if witnessing bullying or if a child/young person reports bullying.
- Know which agencies may be able to offer help and know how to access that help.

Responding to Bullying:

When bullying does occur, a clear consistent response is essential and the goals of any intervention should always be the same:

- To make the victim safe and ensure that they are supported during and after the event.
- To stop the bullying and change the bully's behaviour.
- To make clear to every other child that bullying is unacceptable.
- To learn lessons from the experience that can be applied in future.

This will include ensuring good communication between all staff to ensure consistency in handovers, by updating the child's/young person's safe care plan and if necessary their individual placement care plan in terms of putting strategies into place to reduce and stop the bullying (refer to the Countering Bullying Procedure http://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/ch_homes/chapters/p_bullying.html)

N.B: If bullying is reported about a member of staff then the member of staff to whom it is reported, they should listen to what is being said as to understand the nature of the concern and immediately contact the manager of the home

Supporting the Child or Young Person Who is Being Bullied:

Talk to the person who has been bullied, establish what has happened and agree a way forward:

- Make time to listen to the victim calmly, using effective listening techniques.
- Take bullying seriously and avoid telling children and young people to 'just ignore it'.
- Agree an action plan with his or her consent.
- Avoid humiliating the victim by taking actions which make them seem weaker, powerless or a 'grass'.
- Help the victim become more resilient, for example by building up their self-confidence, emphasising their strengths and helping them to develop protective friendships.
- Cyber bullying can be traced and tracked to find proof of the bullying, so it becomes less of a question about one person's word over another.

Working with a Child or Young Person Who is Bullying:

Work with the bully to help them understand their behaviour and its effects on others. The overall goal is to ensure the bullying stops and the bully's behaviour changes:

- Make it clear that it is the behaviour that is 'bad', not the child/young person.
- How does bullying make them feel? Why do they need to do this?
- Help children/young people to find other ways than bullying to feel recognised and ways to manage their emotions. Help a child/young person to learn to recognise their emotions, perhaps marking on a chart how he or she feels today. Is there a warning moment before they 'kick off'? What skills can be used before it all becomes 'too much'?
- Are there patterns when a good relationship is established, try to elicit some understanding of the feelings of the victim, and challenge prejudice such as racism. Prejudiced views might be shared among the community in which they live or be driven by anxieties about identity and territory. Children/young people may adopt these views in order to be accepted into a group. By engaging with these concerns rather than dismissing them, it may be possible to help all the children/ young people as well as the one leading bullying.
- How can this person make amends or compensate the victim for the distress caused? Can the child offer some ideas?
- Be aware that many people who bully others have been victims at some point themselves and may still be one. These cases might be more complex and 'bully victims' as they are known may need professional help and counselling.
- Avoid granting the bully hero status or marginalising them so that you have no influence.

Sometimes a child who bullies will be relieved to change their behaviour because they have been uncomfortable with it. They may have been pressured by a group into behaving this way. Others may alter their behaviour because they understand the harm they have caused and wish to change.

Working with Children or Young People Who are Bullying as a Group

Address any prejudice exhibited with the whole group, both individually in a one to one session and as group – whether within the children's home or outside it. If a group of children are behaving in a prejudice driven way – perhaps against disabled people or in a racist way – this needs to be addressed with the whole group. They may be doing this outside the home or inside it. But in either case it requires sensitive work with them all. A guest may be invited in to talk to them, a film chosen or some other form of challenge to their accepted view presented to them.

Responding to Serious or Persistent Bullying:

Sometimes bullying involves a specific serious incident, such as a serious physical or sexual assault. Bullying might persist despite attempts to intervene. In this kind of situation, a different response may be required, but the goals of the intervention remain the same: to make the victim safe and to stop the bullying behaviour. Even when bullying has been serious or persistent, the most effective response may be to resolve matters between the

victim and the bully. Consider using conflict resolution or restorative justice techniques to help the children understand how each other feels, make amends and move on, but only if both parties agree to this approach. In serious situations staff would:

- Discuss the incident with a member of the management team (homes manager/deputy manager), or on call manager. Thought will need to be given to the situation and levels risks/safety and strategies put into place (dependent upon the severity), i.e. how can we make the situation immediately safe, what do we need to do to reduce the immediate risk? Can this be contained within the home with strategies in place to resolve (time out/additional staffing/separation of victim/perpetrator to get a better picture) or do we need to look at alternatives (breathing space, i.e. taking someone out of the situation to away from the home for a longer period of time)
N.B: Whatever action is taken, staff involved should make sure that all bullying incidents and actions are recorded as soon as possible on an Incident form, which could require a notification to Ofsted (dependent on the criteria).
- The homes manager/deputy/on call manager will decide with the staff team on duty (usually the shift coordinator) what actions need to be taken. This may include discussion with the Operations Manager
- In deciding best outcomes it may be necessary to discuss with the child's/young person's social worker/youth offending officer (in their absence the duty team or service manager or district manager) or out of office hours, the emergency duty team and the child's/young person's parent/carer
- Strategies may include advice from local safeguarding officer allocated to the home and/or the departments safeguarding manager and inclusion of the departments anti bullying officer or child's advocate or children's right's officer.
- It may be that there is another significant other that can help to support and thought needs to be given to having the right person involved, but not losing sight of the person/staff member involved in the incident, as in most cases, it is best if that person can resolved the situation having witnessed or been party to the incident.

Involving the Police:

Bullying behaviour may involve criminal offences, such as assault, theft, criminal damage, harassment offences, and the misuse of communication offences, hate crime offences or sexual offences. Where bullying is particularly serious or persistent, it may be necessary – in order to protect the victim or get the bully to change their behaviour – to involve the police in dealing with offences that have been committed.

The home's manager should make the decision as to whether to involve the police with the support with consent from the operations management. Unless the offence needs immediate police assistance due to a serious life threatening offence being committed the police should not be called (refer to the DCC reducing offending behaviour policy – flow chart for police intervention) Although it will be necessary to involve the police in some serious cases, it may be valuable to involve the police in other aspects of your anti-bullying work. For example, in explaining to children how bullying behaviour may constitute crime, which is a more effective way of building a partnership with local police and Community Support Officers (which all homes should do), than only bringing them in once an offence has been committed. Other than in urgent/unsafe situations then there should always be a 24 cooling off period if possible and ideally a multi-agency meeting to discuss whether or not the police will be called due to recurring themes where it is agreed that police involvement is warranted.

Placements:

In exceptional cases where all attempts to resolve persistent bullying behaviour have proved unsuccessful, it may need to be considered whether a change of placement might be in the best interests of the child carrying out the bullying behaviour and of the other residents of the home. In such cases, staff at the home must discuss this option with the child's/young person's social worker and the homes manager and a multi-agency meeting must be held (unless the situation is so dangerous that the child/young person cannot be returned). These types of situations would need careful thought and discussion with Senior Managers to ensure that this option is considered in the context of the child's/young person's holistic needs and of their Care Plan. Children and young people who are the victims of bullying should not be removed from the home for their own protection, unless they express a wish to move away from all the children/young people in the home and start afresh.

Systems, Recording, Monitoring and Analysis:

Bullies will often appear to comply – but may bully someone else, or bully more secretly so that they do not get caught. They can appear to comply because of strong controls strictly enforced, but it is unclear whether or not their behaviour and prejudices have really changed. So consider whether your intervention has secured lasting change and check from time to time. Encourage and praise any positive behaviour by the bullying child/young person:

- Monitor the situation.
- Record any bullying incidents and action taken.
- Report back to the victim.
- Follow up, discreetly, with the victim to make certain the bullying has actually stopped and that they feel safe.
- Do nothing to perpetuate the image of a child/young person as a permanently weak victim, but try to put across a positive strong image of them instead.
- Help the victim to come to believe in themselves starting with small steps.
- Use an incident as a learning opportunity for everyone.

In order to ensure that all staff do prevent and tackle bullying within Derbyshire Children's Homes ensuring children and young people living in the homes are safe and any issues are addressed swiftly with appropriate outcomes, it is important to have good systems in place for staff to follow and for children and young people to understand to feel able to report any issues of bullying. Details of what information is provided in each home for the children and young people will include the following and can be located in all the children's homes:

- Children's Home Preventing and Tackling Bullying File in Derbyshire
- Statement of Purpose for the Home
- Homes Children and Young Person's Guide
- Prevent and Tackle: Children and Young Person's Information/Welcome Pack
- Prevent and Tackle Procedures for Dealing with Bullying Procedures Between Children and Young People within the Home
- Prevent and Tackle Countering Bullying Flow Chart

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- Prevent and Tackle Children's Home Equality Policy
- Prevent and Tackle Internet Safety For Providers
- DCC Incident Template
- Prevent and Tackle Children Homes Monitoring Bullying Behaviour Statistic's Template

Key Principals for Good Practice:

Staff should:

- Ensure effective communication is key to creating an environment within the home where bullying is not tolerated and rewarding good behaviour by praising.
- Think about their listening skills - Invite and encourage talk, consider your body language – sit down, make eye contact, repeat and clarify what the child/young person tells you, be comfortable with silence, summarise the problem, encourage the young person to come up with ideas about next steps.
- Make sure everyone knows what bullying is and what they can do if they see it or experience it by ensuring all staff complete the Derbyshire Prevent and Tackle training and by discussing anti bullying strategies in team meetings and with children and young people
- Make it clear that bullying and harassment are unacceptable, and set out what the consequences are for those who bully.
- Be clear about strategies and inform children, young people, carers and staff of the anti-bullying policy.
- Discuss the section on bullying in the homes children and young person's guide/welcome pack.
- Use and promote positive images and language. Positive language seeks to praise what a child can do rather than humiliate them for what they cannot do. Positive images of disability and diversity celebrate difference and pride.
- Consult children and young people about bullying, whether they feel safe, and if there are places where they feel unsafe (at the home, at school or travelling between the two).
- Be alert after any home visits. This is a time when children may be distressed, or feel sensitive and vulnerable. Some may bully others due to their own unresolved anger or problems resulting from an emotional visit.
- Be vigilant if a young person has clothing or equipment damaged.
- Hold regular review/children's meetings at which children can raise their worries.
- Provide private quiet times alone with a child/young person to explore bullying experiences as a parent might. This may involve going out of the home for privacy.
- Support children and young people to build the capacity, emotional well-being and resilience to respond to bullying themselves through one to one work, activities and group work/role play

Do remember to:

- Make sure that individuals are not ridiculed in front of others?
- Give constructive criticism?
- Notice if one child or a group is being targeted?
- Look at seemingly small incidents to see if there is a pattern
- Know where to get help if a serious case of bullying emerges
- Ensure you never leave children/young people unsupervised for long periods of time
- Encourage all children to make sure that all children develop emotional resilience

