



# Breakaway

## Countering Bullying

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### **Policy Summary:**

Regulations 6, 10, 12, 14, 19, 34, 35 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 including the Quality Standards

**Policy Aim:**

The policy aim is to outline to children and young people, parents/carers, social workers and significant others, Breakaway's policy on responding to bullying within the unit.

**Breakaway References**

- Child's individual Care Plan ("This is Me")
- Child's individual Risk Assessments
- Child's individual Positive Handling Plan

**Policy**

All children and young people, staff members and visitors to Breakaway have the right to feel safe and secure within the unit and the wider community.

**Statutory Framework**

The Quality Standard 'The Quality and Purpose of Care Standard' 2 (b) (ii) states that staff ensure that they protect and promote each child's welfare. Through staff training, staff are made aware of the particular vulnerability of children with learning difficulties/disabilities and their susceptibility to bullying. Management have put this policy in place and any incidents of bullying will be recorded clearly and factually.

**Why Looked After Children are at Particular Risk**

All bullies will target victims by focusing on something about the victim that is different in order to try to justify their behaviour. This may be the victim's appearance, weight, height or other physical feature, or it may be something else that makes the victim stand out from the majority of their peers, social class, religion or ethnicity. Having a disability could also make individuals a potential victim.

**Who are the Bullies?**

There are many reasons why children and adults bully. Some may do it to cope with a difficult situation in their own life such as a family breakdown. Others will see it as a way of gaining status from their peers. Some are just used to getting their own way and may not even recognise the effect of their actions on their victims.

Some children and adults will become bullies as a result of being victims themselves. It therefore needs to be recognised that the reason for some children becoming victims are also reasons for others becoming bullies.

This will have potential implications for residential staff caring for a group of children and needs to be borne in mind if it is suspected that any child is being bullied.

**Bullying**

Bullying can be defined as the behaviour and/or actions of one person or group, which causes distress to another person or group as a result of physical threat, assault, verbal threats or abuse e.g. teasing, horseplay, isolation, blackmail etc.

Most bullying will include:-

- Deliberate hostility and aggression to the victim
- A victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bullies
- Distress and pain for the victim

Bullying is often ongoing but can also be a one off incident and might include:-

- Verbal abuse, including persistent teasing or name calling, rumours being spread.
- Physical abuse, including actual or threatened harm, including being pulled/pushed.
- Sexual abuse, including unwanted physical contact or verbal abuse including abusive comments on the victim's sexuality.
- Racial abuse, which may be physical, written or verbal.
- Emotional abuse, including, tormenting or subjecting the victim to persistent ridicule or humiliation, having things taken and/or thrown around, being isolated, being forced to do something you do not want to do.
- Abuse of authority or responsibility by a member of staff towards children/young people.

### **Possible Signs of Bullying**

Any of the following behaviours may include that an individual is the victim of bullying. Equally, there may be other explanations that should also be considered.

- Change their usual routine
- Be unwilling to go to school/Breakaway/work
- Feel ill in the mornings
- Begin to deteriorate at school work
- Become withdrawn, start stammering and lack confidence
- Attempt or threaten suicide
- Cry themselves to sleep, have nightmares
- Have their possessions go missing.
- Refuse to say what is wrong (too frightened of the bully)
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts
- Begin to bully others
- Become aggressive and unreasonable

**Procedure:****Breakaway's Measures to Counter Bullying**

All suspected or actual incidents of bullying will be taken seriously by Breakaway and Slough Children's Services. It is not an acceptable part of growing up. Everyone has a right to live in an environment free from intimidation. They will be fully investigated and support provided to all involved.

We all agree that Bullying is Wrong and will Not be Accepted

- Create a culture in which individuals are able to tell when they are being bullied.
- Make available to all individuals at Breakaway (young people, staff and visitors) verbally and in writing, advice and information about countering bullying.
- Ensuring bullying is a subject that is regularly discussed at children's and staff meetings.
- Any concerns about bullying behaviour should be relayed to the shift leader immediately. The manager and head of service should also be informed.
- Any child/young person, staff member or visitor to the unit that wants to report or make a complaint about being bullied should be given an opportunity to give a full account of their concerns in confidence and be protected from any retribution.
- Whenever a child/young person is involved in a bullying incident, parents and social worker will be informed as soon as possible.
- Staff can advocate on behalf of children (eps. non-verbal) and complete a child friendly complaints sheet (electronic copy available on shared drive), inform the child of the outcomes and get their feedback.

**Recording**

Staff should record all suspected and actual incidents of bullying against or by any individual within the unit. A complaints form (child friendly) can be submitted on behalf of children. These should be reported to the manager. If a young person is involved, their social worker/parent or carer must be informed as soon as possible.

**Training**

Breakaway staff have to undertake the following:-

- Safeguarding Levels 1 & 2 and other training that covers managing behaviour and recognising sign of abuse.
- Diversity and Equality training
- Team Teach
- Neglect Training
- Autism Awareness
- Makaton Training