

Countering Bullying Policy

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Regulations and Standards:

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015:

- Regulation 11 - The positive relationship standard.
- Regulation 12 - The protection of children standard.
- Regulation 34 - Policies for the protection of children.

Policies for the protection of children

34. (1) *The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which —*

- (a) *is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and*
- (b) *sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect.*

(2) *The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular (a) provide for liaison and co-operation with any local authority which are, or may be, making a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated in the home.*

(b) *provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located;*

(c) *provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about past abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the alleged abuse or neglect occurred;*

(d) *provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response;*

(e) *describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect; and*

(f) *describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child.*

(3) *The registered person must prepare and implement a policy for the prevention of bullying in the home, which must in particular set out the procedure for dealing with an allegation of bullying.*

(4) *The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the missing child policy") setting out —*

(a) *the steps taken, and to be taken, to prevent children from being absent without permission; and*

(b) *the procedures to be followed, and the roles and responsibilities of persons working at the home, in relation to a child who is, or has been, so absent.*

(5) *Before implementing, or making an amendment which the registered person considers to be substantive to, the missing child policy, the registered person must —*

(a) *consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person; and*

(b) *have regard to any relevant local authority or police protocols on missing children.*

(6) *The registered person must keep under review and, as necessary, revise the home's child protection policies.*



Please also refer to the following internal policies and procedures:

‘Safeguarding – Child Protection Policy’.

‘Positive Behaviour Support Policy’.

Introduction:

All children have a right to feel confident that they reside in a safe, welcoming, and healthy environment.

HND Children’s Care Ltd wants to ensure that all children and staff remain safe from bullying behaviour and have the opportunity to thrive and prosper, emotionally and socially within and outside the home.

When bullying is encountered, we will ensure that the procedures are in place to encourage:

- Reporting of the incident.
- Ensuring that incidents of bullying are properly recorded.
- Ensuring that concerns or incidents of bullying are properly monitored.
- Ensuring appropriate action is taken in response to incidents of bullying and that is followed up.

As a result of these actions, people will feel listened to and understand that their concerns have been, and will be, taken seriously. Within the home, a culture of respect and dignity is agreed and promoted amongst the staff, children, and any visitors into the home, and a set of shared standards of what behaviour and language is acceptable across the home will be advocated.

Staff and children will receive guidance and training that encourages an understanding and appreciation of what bullying is, and how it impacts on self and others.

Staff are also expected to familiarise themselves with localised and national guidance regarding bullying via the links identified with ‘Further Advice / Information and Guidance’.

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1. Definition of Bullying:



Bullying is defined as repeated behaviour or actions of a person, group of people or a whole organisation designed to cause distress or to hurt a person or group of people.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g., hiding possessions, threatening gestures).
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Homophobic - because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Cyberbullying - e.g., using mobile phones or social networking sites to intimidate or bully others.

It is important to consider that bullying can take many forms, i.e., face-to-face, electronically (via social media or messages for example), ignoring or intentionally leaving somebody out etc.

2. General / Prevention:

Staff must be alert to the risk of bullying and should take all reasonable steps to prevent such behaviour. This includes:

- Implementing a clear policy within the home that bullying is not acceptable and there will be a zero tolerance.
- Undertaking risk assessments at point of referral, and at appropriate stages thereafter. Such assessments will inform the matching process for admissions.
- Providing information and guidance to children including signing of an anti-bullying agreement (where appropriate).
- Providing clarity to children on acceptable behaviours
- Drafting Individual Behaviour Support Plans / agreements with relevant children.
- Providing opportunities for children to explore issues of bullying.
- Reading stories about dealing with bullying behaviours or having them read to them.
- Making use of role-play in discussions
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

All staff employed by HND Children's Care Ltd have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Everyone involved in looking after children shares responsibility for countering bullying and for creating a culture which positively encourages acceptable behaviour and reduces or prevents the likelihood of bullying.

As part of this ethos, everyone must understand what bullying means and what measures should be taken within the home and by individual staff to counter it. Everyone should also be clear what measures they should take if they suspect bullying, or it is reported to them.



In this respect, everyone should be alert to the fact that bullying may constitute Significant Harm and, if so, must be reported under a child protection referral.

3. Risk Assessment and Planning:

3.1 Homes Strategies:

Each HND Children's Care Ltd home will have its own strategies for countering bullying, depending on the purpose of the home and the needs of children living there. Risk assessments must be in place to clearly outline risks between children within the home, and arrangements to counter bullying must be clearly outlined in the homes Statement of Purpose, in addition to the Children's Guide.

3.2 Individual Plans for Children:

As part of the assessment and planning process, the manager of the home must ensure that a risk assessment is conducted on each child to ascertain whether s/he may be a victim or perpetrator of bullying.

If there is any risk, it should be addressed in the child's placement plan with details of the strategies that must be adopted to prevent or reduce the bullying.

4. Countering Bullying Day-to-Day:

Staff must be always alert to the possibility of bullying. If there are any concerns, they must be discussed with colleagues and the homes manager, who should take what actions are necessary to reduce or prevent further issues and distress. All staff involved in looking after children share responsibility for countering bullying and for creating a culture that positively encourages acceptable behaviour and reduces or prevents the likelihood of bullying. As part of this ethos, everyone must understand what bullying means and what measures must be taken within the home setting by staff to counter it. An inclusive environment in which bullying is not tolerated would:

- Encourage and model behaviour that is respectful and fair.
- Challenge prejudice and promote equality.
- Provide positive praise / reward for positive behaviour.
- Discourage children from colluding with bullying behaviours of others.

It may be appropriate to convene a meeting, preferably with the children concerned, to discuss strategies to prevent or reduce the bullying. This may include the following:

- The bully (bullies) would be encouraged to genuinely apologise.
- In serious cases (see next paragraph), some form of consequence or exclusion from the other child will be considered.
- Wherever possible, the children will be reconciled.
- After the incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be continuously monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.



If the bullying is persistent or serious, the social worker should be consulted, and it may be necessary to conduct a Placement Planning Meetings or a Strategy Discussion.

If the manager is unavailable, staff must take what immediate actions are necessary to reduce or prevent bullying from occurring and then inform the manager as soon as practicable. In any event, incidents of bullying should always be reporting to an on-call manager, the home's manager, and the responsible Individual.

5. Notifications, Recording and Review:

5.1 Minor or Non-Persistent Bullying:

Where bullying is not persistent or not serious it should be accurately recorded and be reviewed including notifying the home manager at the first opportunity; the manager will decide whether to inform the social worker and what further actions to take.

5.2 Persistent or Serious Bullying:

Serious or persistent bullying must be notified immediately to the home's manager and the relevant social worker should be notified within 1 working day - the social worker should be consulted, and consideration given to whether a Child Protection Referral should be made. The child's social worker should decide whether to inform the child's parent(s) and, if so, who should do so.

The manager should also consider whether the incident is a Notifiable Event via a Regulation 40 Notification; guidance is available below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-ofsted-means-by-a-serious-incident>

Where serious bullying persists, the social worker, manager and staff should come to a decision about whether it is deemed to be an incident and whether the child's social worker should be notified on each occasion or at specified intervals.

It will also be necessary to decide whether to notify the child's parent(s). These arrangements must be outlined in the child's internal care plans and / or risk assessments. If the bullying is serious or persists, the child's social worker should consider whether the bullying constitutes Significant Harm. If this is likely, a referral should be considered under the local Child Protection Procedures.

5.3 Recording and Review:

- All incidents of bullying must be recorded on the correct format, this may be a daily record, incident report or bullying log.
- An incident report must also be completed.
- The child's placement plan and risk assessments should be reviewed with a view to incorporating strategies to reduce or prevent future incidents.



The home's Registered Manager is responsible for reviewing the incidence and nature of bullying in the home as part of regular quality assurance / monitoring audits.

Further advice / information and Guidance:

NSPCC – Bullying and Cyber Bullying:

[https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/)

[cyberbullying/](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/) **Anti-Bullying Alliance – Find Help and Support:**

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/advice-and-support/if-youre-being-bullied/find-help-and-support>

Children Society – Bullying:

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/information/young-people/well-being/resources/bullying>

End.