

Antibullying Policy

ACE Ltd.

Ratification

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Azalea Care and Education (ACE) is committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all service users so they can be cared for in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our organisation. If bullying does occur, there is an expectation that it will be reported so that it can be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure we care for service users in a safe environment.
- To demonstrate that the organisation takes bullying seriously and that bullying will not be tolerated.
- To identify and protect anyone who might be bullied.
- To create an environment where people feel they can trust and tell adults if they are being bullied or know about any bullying.
- To make clear the procedures for reporting concerns about bullying, including what action to take when an incident of bullying is identified.
- To identify the individual roles and responsibilities of those working in the service in identifying, receiving and reporting allegations of bullying.

Definition

Definition of bullying (Anti-bullying Guidance parents and carers-gov.wales) Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, which intentionally hurts others either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can be:

- emotional: being unfriendly; excluding; and/or tormenting.
- physical: pushing; hitting; punching; kicking; and/or any use of violence.
- verbal: name calling; sarcasm; spreading rumours; and/or teasing.
- racial: racial taunts; graffiti; and/or gestures.
- sexual: unwanted physical contact; and/or sexually abusive comments.
- homophobic: because of or focussing on the issue of sexuality.

Signs of Bullying

Vulnerable service users may indicate through signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Many of the service users ACE cares for may have communication difficulties so spotting these behaviours is vital. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a service user exhibits them or if their behaviour changes.

They might:

- become withdrawn, anxious, or begin to lack confidence.
- change their usual routine.
- cry themselves to sleep at night or have nightmares.

- is unwilling to attend ACE or school.
- begins truanting.
- self-harms, attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.
- Is frightened of travelling to or from school.
- Begins to do poorly in schoolwork.
- Becomes withdrawn, starts stammering, etc.
- Regularly has books, clothes damaged.
- Becomes distressed, stops eating.
- Has injuries which are often difficult to explain.
- Has difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Cries easily
- Becomes disruptive or aggressive.
- Has possessions that “go missing”.
- Has dinner or other monies continually “lost”.
- Starts stealing money.
- Is frightened to say what’s wrong.
- Attempts self-harm or runs away.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. Many of these signs could be observed at home or in school so good communication between them and our setting is vital.

Staff members who are experiencing bullying may also exhibit some of these behavioural changes and staff are encouraged to be aware of the effects on colleagues of being bullied at work.

Procedures and Outcomes

As an organisation, we will not allow cases of bullying to go unreported but will speak up. All staff have a duty of candour and a responsibility to act in an open and transparent manner.

The culture of candour we promote includes:

- being open and honest when engaging with individuals and their representatives when things go wrong,
- providing information about incidents which happen and the outcome of any investigations that have taken place,
- offering an apology for what has happened, where it is appropriate to do so,
- take action to prevent and appropriately address bullying, victimisation and/or harassment in relation to the duty of candour, and investigate any instances where a board member, responsible individual or member of staff may have obstructed another in exercising their duty of candour.

Service users should:

- Trust that the staff will act if a vulnerable person is being bullied.
- Understand that there is a consequence to their actions.
- Inform members of staff if they or their friends are being bullied.
- Not ignore any incidents of bullying.
- Try and be kind and to help others.

This requires staff to:

- Be role models in word and action at all times.
- Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- Higher risk times/places will be staffed appropriately.
- Report suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member and record in central record.
- Praise good behaviour regularly.
- Ensure that everything done by ACE sends the message that “bullying is not right”.
- Make time to listen to service users, taking what they hear seriously, validating their feelings, ensuring dignity.
- Investigate incidents carefully by interviewing the alleged victim, the alleged bully/bullies, and any bystanders, in the spirit of finding a solution to the problem for all concerned.
- Take short term measures while the incident is being investigated by separating the alleged victim and alleged bully if necessary.
- Ensure that the appropriate communication is maintained at all times between ACE, social services and all the parents/ guardians involved.
- Avoid labelling service users at all costs i.e., he/she is a victim, he/she is a bully.
- Keep records of alleged bullying.

Management Team/Responsible Individual

- Ensure that all allegations are noted and filed.
- Using information collated, management team to discuss any arising issues within a team meeting.
- Follow the same procedures as those noted above for staff.
- Have an initial discussion with the service user.
- Speak to the parents/guardians of the alleged victim and the alleged bully.
- Use restorative practices to provide support for the victim and guidance for the bully to prevent this happening again.

Parents/carers should:

- Inform ACE whenever they have concerns about their child’s well-being.

- When an incident of bullying occurs, parents and staff should agree a timetable so that adequate time is given to the service to investigate and deal with any problems effectively and so that parents know when they can expect a response.
- Parents of the alleged bullies will be involved in positive ways to help resolve the problems. (All parents need to accept that their child could be the perpetrator of bullying)
- Be aware that many incidents of cyber bullying take place away from ACE but impact upon the individuals' wellbeing.
- Inform ACE of any instances of cyber bullying
- Go back to ACE and discuss their concerns if they continue to have concerns.
- Write to the management team to make a formal complaint if they are not satisfied with the way the situation has been dealt with.
- Write to the Responsible Individual asking that the situation be formally reviewed if they are still dissatisfied after the management team has investigated.

Bullying of staff

Bullying of staff at work refers to any repeated, unwanted behaviour that causes physical or psychological harm to an individual or creates a hostile work environment. This behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- verbal abuse,
- threats,
- intimidation,
- humiliation,
- exclusion, or sabotage directed towards a staff member by another staff member or group of staff members,
- pressuring individuals not to perform their roles correctly.

Bullying undermines the dignity, self-esteem, and wellbeing of the targeted individual, and it can significantly impact their ability to perform their duties effectively and maintain a positive work environment.

All of the responsibilities on staff to prevent and/or report bullying of service users is also reflected in their responsibility to prevent and /or report bullying of colleagues.

Breaches of Candour

It is the responsibility of ACE to identify and deal with possible breaches of candour or incidences of bullying behaviour by professionally registered staff. The RI will thoroughly investigate any suspected breaches and the action taken could include dismissal and referral to the individual's professional regulator or other relevant body.



All staff are given a copy of our whistle blowing policy and are encouraged to report any concern to the RI. Where the RI is the individual accused, the staff will have access the contact information for the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Staff Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the care manager (Megan Gledhill), the Responsible Individual (Thomas Gledhill) and the whole ACE management team (Frances Gledhill and Mimi Halfpenny) to maintain the organisation's ethos of openness and candour. The contacts for all of these individuals are available to all of the staff along with those of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

All staff members are to be made aware of the responsibility of these members of the organisation to investigate any allegation of bullying. Time will be set aside in supervision meeting to discuss any concerns of this nature and staff will be made aware of their right to independent professional advocacy services. The organisation is a "union supporting" organisation and staff will be made aware of the support they can receive with these types of concern from their union.