

Preventing and Tackling Bullying in Schools and Children's Services - Practice Guidance

What is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has some caring responsibilities.

It might be motivated by actual differences, or by perceived differences between children. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying. Teachers and schools, children's homes managers and care/support staff have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

The children and young people in the care of Hesley Group may be more susceptible and vulnerable to bullying behaviour than other people because of the nature of their complex needs.

Cyber-Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for bullies. 'Virtual' bullying can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying can happen 24/7, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. For more information on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how pupils can keep themselves safe, please refer to the Childnet International and Beatbullying links under 'further resources' section of the DfE Guidance, [ReS 2.10.2](#).

Prevention of Bullying

Services should develop a proactive approach that does not start when a child has been bullied, but work to prevent this from happening. Staff should be vigilant and collect information on issues that may, if ignored, lead to bullying taking place. This applies whether the child is in school or in their home, or is participating in activities off site.

Children will receive education and care that is appropriate to their understanding in relation to difference and people's diverse cultures and needs with the aim of helping develop an understanding of others. Any lack of capacity on the part of a child to understand the impact of their own behaviour may present some challenges to the service, but should not prevent the development of an ethos of respect for others, or the need to identify situations that need addressing.

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All Hesley Group staff working with children, in or out of school, must demonstrate respect and value for others throughout their working practices to model and help create an ethos of good behaviour across our services.

Staff will receive training in relation to bullying and discrimination.

Staff must be fully aware of the absolute duty to report immediately instances or suspicions of bullying without exception and consider the needs of the person being bullied and those of the child or young person engaging in the bullying behaviour.

Intervention

All staff must ensure the child/young person's physical safety is protected.

For some children and young people their disability will mean that they will find it very difficult to identify bullying behaviour or may not be able to report it. They should be equipped as well as possible with the means to communicate distress so they can alert staff to the fact they are being bullied. This should be worked on in conjunction with Hesley Group Speech and Language practitioners.

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child or young person is, or is likely to suffer significant harm, as bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. In this case procedures must be followed by Hesley Group staff as outlined in Fullerton House School and Children's Home Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, [ReS 2.1A](#), Wilsic Hall School and Children's Home Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, [ReS 2.1B](#), and Wheatley House Children's Home Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, [ReS 2.1C](#).

Appropriate disciplinary measures that are fair and consistent must be taken to show children and young people who bully that their behaviour is wrong. This will of course need to be undertaken in a way that meets the individual's learning and communication needs and will be in line with any existing methodology for supporting people to manage their behaviour.

Victims of bullying and those who engage in bullying behaviour may both be at risk as a result of the bullying behaviour and its consequences or of the reasons behind the bullying in the first place. Staff will need to be alert to this possibility and work to protect and support all parties throughout the intervention process.

Post incident support must be carefully considered and put in place, including support for parents where needed.

Evaluation

There should be formal evaluation of bullying incidents across the staff team – what happened, what are the likely precursors; could it have been prevented; does a young

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person's risk assessment require review; does the young person's support plan require updating?

We should be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of our anti bullying policy and ensure it links to our Policies and guidance "Positive Behaviour Support", [ReS 5.1A/ReS 5.1B](#), the Single Equality Scheme, [Corp 9.1](#), the Safeguarding Adults At Risk - Policy and Guidance, [ReS 2.1](#), and Safeguarding and Protection of Children - Policy and Guidance, ([ReS 2.1A](#), [ReS 2.1B](#), and [ReS 2.1C](#)) as relevant to the service.

Procedures

The following procedures should be followed, taking account of the practice guidance above and the DfE Guidance in respect of "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" (DfE July 2017) at [ReS 2.10.2](#).

Printed posters, [ReS 2.10.3b](#), are available for placing on notice boards in schools and a leaflet, [ReS 2.10.3a](#), which is a brief summary of this policy will be sent to families of children and young people in Hesley Group Children's Services.

If an allegation of bullying a child or young person is made against an adult, i.e. member of staff, visitor, contractor, etc., this should be followed through using the relevant Safeguarding and Protection of Children - Policy and Guidance, [ReS 2.1A](#), [ReS 2.1B](#) or [ReS 2.1C](#).

When an allegation of bullying by another child or young person is made the staff member to whom it is made, or who witnessed or suspects bullying is taking place **must** report it immediately to their line manager, other manager on duty, or teacher in charge at the time. The relevant manager or teacher must try and establish the nature of the incident. If it is immediately evident the incident does not constitute bullying, in that it is assessed as being a single isolated act or threat of aggression, or the action has been misinterpreted, appropriate action can be taken by that manager. This may involve an apology or some type of sanction depending on the level of understanding of the child or young person involved.

The young person who is being bullied must be made safe and supported through the process by staff who are trusted by them and have the appropriate skills.

If, on investigation, there is evidence of bullying behaviour or a possibility this is taking place, it must be reported immediately to the Head/General Manager for the service or a designated person acting on their behalf. A decision must be made as soon as is feasible whether or not to alert the Safeguarding Children Team.

Action should be taken to inform the appropriate parent/guardian and placing authority.

If an internal investigation is agreed upon, the manager designated to investigate should complete a written record giving full details of what happened and the findings of the investigation.

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Our managers and staff must co-operate with any external investigation as outlined in our Safeguarding Children Policy and Guidance, [ReS 2.1A](#), [ReS 2.1B](#) or [ReS 2.1C](#). If the matter is treated as an alert but an internal investigation is agreed upon, the senior manager for the service will agree, on the basis of the outcomes, and with the Safeguarding Team at the local authority what further action to take.

The incidence of bullying behaviour must be evaluated as to how and why, what lessons can be learned. All staff must ensure any Action Plan agreed is followed and implemented in full.

The senior manager for the service should ensure that all the relevant records dealing with bullying behaviour are kept in a format which allows for the easy identification of trends and longer-term implications for children and young people using our services. This includes any review or evaluation of Risk Assessments and Support Plans.