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 **Peer on Peer Abuse Policy**

Relevant Regulations and standards

Regulation 6: The Quality and Purpose of Care Standard

Regulation 11: The Positive Relationships Standard

Regulation 12: The Protection of Children Standard

Guide to the Positive Relationships Standard

 Guide to the Quality and Purpose of Care Standard

 Guide to the Protection of Children Standard

Regulation 19: Behaviour Management and Discipline

Regulation 34: Policies for the Protection of Children

Regulation 45: Review of the Quality of Care

**Policy Aim-**

For children and young people residing within Shropshire Council Residential homes to be protected from abuse including bullying and that any incidents of peer on peer abuse or bullying are dealt with appropriately and effectively.

**Additional reading and relevant policy/guidance-**

*West Mercia Consortium (Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures)- 6.2 Anti-Bullying*

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1. **Policy**

Shropshire Council are committed to providing young people with an environment in which they feel safe and protected from harm.

We aim to make sure that all children, young people and staff are protected from discrimination and abusive behaviour. This includes peer on peer abuse, which some may refer to as Bullying, in this document we shall talk about the different ways in which this may present and how we can protect children and young people from this, and what to do if such abuse occurs, within, as well as outside of, the Home.

We aim to ensure robust procedures in relation to peer on peer abuse:

• Reporting of any incident of peer on peer abuse;

• Clear recording of any incident of peer on peer abuse;

• Monitoring of any issues relating to peer on peer abuse;

• Appropriate and effective action is taken in response to incidents of peer on peer abuse.

Each Home values respect and dignity and this is promoted throughout with both, members of staff and the young people. Staff and young people receive guidance that helps understanding of what constitutes peer on peer abuse, the impact of this and appropriate behaviour.

These values are passed on to visitors to the home and outside agency’s through positive role-modelling, advocation and challenging of any concerns in regards to behaviour and language.

We strive to ensure that anyone raising concerns feels understood, listened to and taken seriously.

1. **Peer on peer abuse definition**

Bullying may also be known as “Peer on Peer Abuse” and is regarded as this within Contextual Safeguarding. Peer on Peer Abuse involves someone who abuses a ‘vulnerability’ or power imbalance to harm another; and have the opportunity, or be in an environment, where this is possible. While perpetrators of Peer on Peer Abuse pose a risk to others they are often victims of abuse themselves.

Bullying is defined as ‘behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally’. Bullying is a 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.

Categories of peer on peer abuse include but are not limited to:

* Physical – for example: hitting, kicking, shoving;
* Verbal – for example: threats, name calling, racist or homophobic remarks;
* Emotional – for example: isolation of an individual from activities/games and the social acceptance of their peer group;
* Sexual – for example: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
* Homophobic -for example: because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality;
* Online/cyber-bullying – for example: the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

1. **Prevention of Peer on Peer abuse**

Staff must be alert to the risk of peer on peer abuse and the signs of this such as:

* Unexplainable injuries
* Lost or destroyed personal items
* Frequent illness
* Changes in eating habits
* Loss of interest in school, or not wanting to go to school
* Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations/groups
* Decreased self esteem
* Running away from home
* Self-harm or talking about suicide

Everyone has a responsibility to take reasonable action to prevent abusive behaviour. This includes:

* Implementing a clear policy, culture and ethos in the home that abuse is not acceptable;
* Assessing the risk of peer on peer abuse at the point of referral in the Impact Risk Assessment;
* Providing Children with information and guidance;
* Assessing the risk of peer on peer abuse in a Child or Young Person’s Individual Risk Assessment;
* Implementing a Positive Handling Plan for the Child or Young Person.
* Providing opportunities for children to explore issues of abusive behaviours or difficult peer relationships; for example in Key Work Sessions, Children’s meetings and consultations.
* Having discussions about bullying and peer on peer abuse and why it matters.

Everyone has a responsibility to take action in regard to abuse and for adhering to a culture which maintains and encourages acceptable behaviour to minimise and prevent the probability of peer on peer abuse.

Everyone must understand what peer on peer abuse means and what measures should be taken within the home and by individual staff to counter it.

Everyone should be clear what measures they should take if they suspect peer on peer abuse or if it is reported to them.

Peer on peer abuse may constitute as Significant Harm and, if so, must be reported under the Child and Adult Protection Procedure.

1. **Risk assessment and planning**

Each home should give priority to the subject peer on peer abuse and how it is tackled, this should be clearly documented within the homes Statement of Purpose.

The homes policy in regard to tackling peer on peer abuse should be explained within the children’s guide for the home in a way each Child or Young Person can understand. The care team should ensure the Child has a clear understanding of this at the point of referral including how the Child or Young Person can raise concerns or complaints.

At the point of referral an Impact Risk Assessment should be completed for each Child or Young Person. This should document any historic risk of peer on peer abuse by the Child or Young Person, as well as any risk of abuse towards the Child or Young Person by the existing resident group. It should also include any strategies being put in place to mitigate the risk.

Peer on peer abuse should be risk assessed within the Child or Young Person’s Individual Risk Assessment to ascertain whether the Child or Young Person is at risk of being the victim or perpetrator of such abuse.

If there is any risk, it should be addressed in all of the Child or Young Person’s relevant plans including their Placement Plan and Positive Handling Plan; giving details of the strategies that must be adopted to prevent or reduce the abusive behaviours.

1. **Tackling Peer on Peer Abuse Procedure**

Any concerns in regards to peer on peer abuse should be raised to the Home’s Manager without delay. Members of staff must take what immediate actions are needed to prevent peer on peer abuse from occurring and then inform the Manager as soon as practicable.

All episodes of peer on peer abuse must be recorded within the Child or Young Person’s relevant paperwork including daily reporting and a Case Note on Liquid Logic, in serious or persistent cases this may also be recorded as an incident.

The Child or Young Person’s Social worker will be informed if their allocated child is involved in peer on peer abuse as either the victim or perpetrator.

The Home Manager and social worker should consider whether the abuse may constitute Significant Harm; if this is likely, a referral should be made under the Child and Adult Protection Procedure. If the peer on peer abuse is persistent or serious it may be necessary to conduct a Placement Plan Review or a Strategy Discussion in line with Child Protection Referral Procedures.

Each incident of peer on peer abuse will be reviewed by the Home’s Management to ensure that appropriate and necessary action has been taken to reduce or prevent further peer on peer abuse. This should include a review of the Young Person’s relevant Risk Assessments.

Whenever appropriate and practical a meeting should be held with both young people present to address the issue and support the young people to reflect, restore the relationship and create strategies to prevent any further occurrences. This should be documented within a Making It Right Form.

Restorative Practice tools and techniques should be considered with any perpetrator of peer on peer abuse and appropriate sanctions will be considered in line with relevant regulations.

Key Work should be completed with the perpetrator of the peer on peer abuse to ensure they have a clear understanding of any incident, why it is seen to be abusive and how it can be prevented moving forwards.

1. **Ongoing Monitoring**

After any concerns or incidents in relation to bullying occur; the home has a responsibility to continuously monitor to ensure that any issues have been resolved and prevent a re-occurrence.

Relevant risk assesments should be reviewed regularly, at least monthly, and prevention strategies should also be reviewed in regard to effectiveness.

Any ongoing work should be addressed through the Child or Young Person’s Placement Plan or Short Breaks Plan with relevant outcomes and challenges clearly documented in monthly reporting.

As required, peer on peer abuse should continue to be addressed in planned key work sessions with the Child or Young Person.

If peer on peer abuse continues despite multiple strategies being employed to prevent it then a Care Planning Meeting or LAC Review will be held to review the suitability of the placement.