



The Cherries Children's Home

Anti-Bullying Procedure



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1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to create an environment within the home where bullying is universally regarded as unacceptable, so that everyone can live without fear of being bullied.

The procedure sets out how employees can help to create positive relationships among the young people living in the home, and the steps that they will take to ensure that any suspected incident of bullying by one resident against another is taken seriously, investigated and any future occurrences prevented.

We recognise the importance of working with the person who has experienced bullying, and in a manner and at a pace that they are comfortable with.

Employees will work with the consent of the young person who has experienced bullying wherever possible; however, there may be occasions where they must take steps without consent to prevent the possibility of further harm to the young person or to others.

2. Definition of Bullying

2.1 There is no legal definition of bullying. However, it is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation¹

2.2 Examples of bullying behaviour are:

- Hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting

¹ Definition from Bullying at School, [Bullying at school: Bullying - a definition - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bullying-at-school-a-definition), viewed February 2023

- Name calling, taunting, teasing, or insulting
- Intimidating, isolating, or excluding from a group
- Spreading rumours
- Taking, damaging, or hiding possessions
- Demanding money

2.3 This guidance uses the term 'young person who is bullying' to describe the person who is bullying, and describes the young person affected as 'the young person being bullied.' The terms 'bully' and 'victim' should be avoided, as they label young people; our aim should be the correct identification of actions that can cause significant harm and therefore require a professional response.

2.4 The home recognises that bullying can occur from staff to staff, from staff to young people and from young person to young person. While the home considers all forms of bullying unacceptable, this procedure focuses on bullying that may occur between young people. Dorset Council has specific policies regarding bullying that may occur between staff.

3. Implications of bullying

3.1 The home recognises that all forms of bullying are detrimental to the young person being bullied. Bullying can lead to:

- Low self-esteem, self-worth, or confidence
- Poor resilience
- Mental health issues such as anxiety or depression
- Negative changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- Loss of interest in previously liked activities
- Increased disengagement with education
- Health issues such as scratching or self-harm
- Increased risk-taking behaviour

3.2 This list is not exhaustive, and the home also recognises that every incident of bullying is unique to the young people involved.

4. Unacceptability of Bullying

4.1 All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that so far as it is possible, every young person feels safe and happy at the home and always feels supported and protected.

4.2 The home expects everybody, staff, and young people to abide by the following code:

- Every young person has the right to enjoy their learning and leisure time free from intimidation

- The home will not tolerate unkind actions or remarks, even when these are not intended to hurt
- To stand by and ignore, when someone else is being bullied, is to support bullying
- Young people should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying to a member of staff
- Bullying will always be taken seriously

5. Ways of preventing or reducing the incidence of bullying

5.1 An open, positive, caring and trusting atmosphere is nurtured within the home. To achieve this, staff will –

- Praise achievement
- Provide support
- Anticipate problems
- Discipline sensibly and fairly
- Make opportunities to listen to the young people
- Act as advocates

5.2 Young people are encouraged to feel able to share problems with staff feel they can turn to anyone they trust if they have a problem. Young people must also be supported to not feel guilty about airing complaints. Young people receive information on all these points from the home's Guide for Children; employees reinforce these messages on a regular basis.

5.3 Mealtimes should always be made a pleasant and social occasion; children choose where they sit, and who they sit with.

5.4 Equal opportunities and practices are always to be observed within the home.

5.5 Discriminating words and behaviour are always treated as unacceptable, staff have a duty to model pro-social attitudes in respects of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or any other diversity issue.

5.6 The home must always be adequately staffed and there must be a space that enables the young person to withdraw to if they feel the need to.

6. Monitoring Young People's behaviour including bullying

6.1 Staff should always be vigilant and alert to the possibility of bullying within the home. They should regularly and sensitively discuss relationships, including the topic of bullying, with young people to keep the subject current and addressed. This should be done in a natural and nurturing way, so it is not overwhelming or intimidating for the young person.

- 6.2 Staff will keep daily case recordings on the welfare and development of the young people in the home, the case recordings should:
- Be efficient and well maintained
 - Be sensitive to individual changes
 - Provide relevant information for all staff
 - Enable staff to spot changes in the emotional wellbeing of an individual in time to take appropriate action
- 6.3 Staff will make sure that safeguarding is ingrained within their practice, any incidents, including bullying, must be reported immediately so that appropriate action can be taken.

7. Procedures to deal with alleged incidents of bullying

- 7.1 Any young person who is being bullied or believes that someone else is being bullied should report what is happening as soon as possible. This is made clear in the home's Guide for Children.
- 7.2 Any employee who believes that a young person is being bullied should report their concerns as soon as possible.
- 7.3 Young people and employees should report their concerns to one of the following:
- Homes manager
 - Staff or shift leader
 - Advocacy
 - Social worker
 - Quality Assurance Reviewing Officer (QARO)
 - Parent
 - Responsible Individual

- 7.4 Young people who are affected by bullying may also wish to contact:

Ofsted: Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or call us on 0300 123 1231

Childline: Phone 0800 1111

Further details of independent agencies with whom children and young people may share their experiences are given in the Appendix.

- 7.5 A young person who has experienced or witnessed bullying may be uncertain about reporting it for a variety of reasons, which may include:
- Not wanting to 'tell tales'
 - Not wanting the young person who is bullying to be punished
 - Being afraid of retaliation by the young person who is bullying
 - They have become demoralised and believe they deserve to be bullied

- 7.6 To reduce these risks the home should provide an atmosphere where the young person is encouraged to be completely open regarding bullying. Young people should be encouraged to realise that it is always better to tell someone, as this can:
- Help the person affected by bullying to share and get help with their response to bullying
 - Disrupt the secrecy on which bullying thrives
 - Prevent other young people from experiencing bullying
- 7.7 Any employee who learns of alleged bullying should provide support to the young person affected as well as reporting the allegation to the manager as soon as possible.
- 7.8 The Home Manager will then decide the best way to address the alleged behaviour, as all instances are individual to the young people involved. For example, in some cases, the young person who is bullying may not recognise that they are causing distress to the young person being bullied so there will be key work sessions to be done around this.
- 7.9 Wherever possible, the young person affected by bullying will be consulted about the proposed steps to be taken, and encouraged to share their own ideas, so that they have as much influence as possible in the management of the young person who is bullying.
- 7.10 The home manager will open a record for all allegations of bullying. The record will document the steps the manager takes to investigate, their findings, and any action plan they implement to stop the young person who is bullying.
- 7.11 Where an action plan is implemented, the home manager will monitor this until its completion; they will then evaluate the effectiveness of the action plan and take further steps as required.
- 7.12 All records relating to alleged bullying incidents will be shared with the child's Social Worker.
- 7.13 Employees will never use bullying tactics (threats, intimidation, belittling, for example) to deal with bullying by young people.

Appendix

Independent organisations children and young people can contact to share their concerns about bullying:

Ofsted: Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or call us on 0300 123 1231

Childline: Phone 0800 1111

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS): Tel. 0808 808 1001, email help@nyas.net

NSPCC Helpline: Tel. 0800 389 5347

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