

## **Social Services & Wellbeing Directorate**

# **Anti-Bullying Policy Children's Residential Services**

**November 2023**

Updates, Revisions and Amendments		
Version	Details of Change	Date
v.2	Full review and update completed	27.07.2022
v.3	Document transitioned to policy format	November 2023

## Contents

Section	Details	Page
1	Introduction	3
2	Definition of Bullying	4
3	Legislation	5
4	Policy Statement	5
5	Anti-Bullying Strategies	6
6	Risk Assessment and Placement Planning	6
7	Countering Bullying on a day-to-day basis	7
8	Kinds of Bullies	8
9	Changing the Bully's Behaviour	9
10	Notifications	10
11	Involving and Supporting Young People	11
12	Recording	11
13	Management Review	12

## 1) Introduction

- 1.1 *'Bullying is often hidden torment to children and young people living in residential establishments. It is a major factor identified by young people as contributing to running away from residential care' (Rees, 1995: Stein and Frost, 1994).*

Bridgend County Borough Council is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all children and young people accommodated within the Authority, so they can develop in a relaxed, therapeutic and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in all establishments. If bullying does occur, all residents should be able to tell a trusted adult and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

### 1.2 The Need for an Anti-Bullying Policy

In looking at what the characteristics and background of those who become a bully or a victim of bullying, it becomes apparent that children and young people coming into the Looked After System are prime candidates to fulfil these roles. The long and short-term effects for both bully and victim are bleak if there is no intervention.

### 1.3 Immediate Consequences of Bullying

The victims may:

- Lose confidence
- Have their self-esteem diminished
- Become withdrawn, nervous
- Be unable to concentrate
- Begin to do badly in their academic work
- Truant, develop school phobia, attempt suicide

The bully may:

- Learn that using aggression/violence is a successful strategy for getting what they want and the lesson will not be lost on other children
- Realise that they can get away with violent and cruel behaviour and establishment discipline will be continually eroded
- Become divisive as a dominant group coalesces around bully – those not in the main group are left out and ignored
- Become more disruptive – perhaps eventually teasing members of staff to see how far they can push them

## 4 Long Term Consequences of Bullying

### Victim

- Depression
- Low self esteem
- Fear of meeting strangers
- Guilt, shame
- Social isolation
- Psychosomatic diseases
- Agoraphobia
- Anxiety/panic attacks
- Exceptional timidity

### Bully

- Uncontrollable and aggressive behaviour
- Criminal convictions
- Alcohol abuse
- Childcare problems
- Employment problems
- Unable to maintain long term relationships - marital breakdown
- Psychiatric disorders

## 2) Definition of Bullying

2.1 Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying can take many forms, but the four main types are:

- physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft, sexual harassment or aggression)
- verbal (e.g. name calling, racist remarks)
- indirect/emotional (e.g. spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups) or
- cyberbullying (misuse of technology, games, social networks and mobile phones to bully others).

2.2 This guidance also includes any situation or context in which a young person experiences bullying. For instance, if a young person is believed to be experiencing bullying within their school, the Home must address this in partnership with colleagues working in the Education Department.

2.3 Additionally the definition of bullying includes harassment perpetrated by anyone, including staff, on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, disability and sexual orientation.

2.4 Children looked after are particularly vulnerable to being bullied. Bullies will target victims by focusing on something about the victim that is different, in order to try and justify their behaviour. By definition, children looked after in residential care are different as they do not live at home with their parents. They may also have additional characteristics that increase their potential for being bullied which include:

- Young People with a disability
- Young People who are seen to be lesbian, gay or bisexual
- Young People from a particular race, religion or culture
- Young people who may have experienced prior abuse and lack in self-confidence and communication skills
- Young people who have been isolated from their family, peers and other support systems, such as change of school

### **3) Legislation**

3.1 The following set of Legislation has been considered in the production of this policy:

- Equalities Act 2010
- Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016; Regulations 12, 26, 27, 30, 31, 64, 65, 74, 80
- Children and Young People: Rights to Action (2005)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Anti-Bullying Guidance for Parents and Carers (2019) – Welsh Government

### **4) Policy Statement**

4.1 Everyone involved in looking after children shares 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 should be taken within the Home and by staff to counter it. Essentially, all staff should be clear what measures they should take if they suspect bullying or it is reported to them.

4.2 It is imperative that staff develop clear, proactive anti-bullying strategies that can counter and deal with the damaging effects that such behaviour can have within the lives of both the 'bullied' and those that 'bully'.

4.3 The starting place is with the staff team and there is a need to consider the team culture with respect to the issue of bullying. The staff team should create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable. All young people should feel safe where they live, and staff have a responsibility to create an ethos where bullying is not tolerated and where everyone:

- Feels valued for herself/ himself
- Is treated with kindness and respect
- Learns respect for others
- Is able to feel safe from intimidation, threat or harm

## **5) Anti-bullying Strategies**

- 5.1 Anti-bullying strategies must be put in place before it happens or before it becomes part of the established culture. Anti-bullying strategies need to be based on a non-judgemental approach. It is important that staff and young people discuss, share and own strategies. The aim of these anti-bullying strategies and discussions with young people is to define acceptable standards of behaviour between individuals and that they make clear exactly what is expected of residents. This creates an ethos which encourages all individuals to develop to their full potential, and which encourages racial and cultural pride along with the commitment to the overall good of the establishment. They make it clear that victimising others for whatever reason will not be tolerated and that all incidents of bullying will be followed up.
- 5.2 All young people are expected to respect and value each other. Should staff become aware that an individual is experiencing bullying they will offer immediate support and promptly address the needs of all concerned.
- 5.3 No form of bullying will be tolerated by the staff team. Managers will take seriously any concerns raised by staff and/or children and young people that are resident at the home, about bullying. Anti-bullying measures in place include:
- Careful observation and monitoring
  - Staff guidance on bullying
  - Being vigilant in the Link Worker role
  - Being aware of the signs and symptoms
  - Raising concerns with parents /schools
- 5.4 All staff should receive awareness of and the development of effective strategies to counter bullying. This will form an essential part of the supervision, development and training for residential staff.

## **6) Risk Assessment and Placement Planning**

- 6.1 There may be identified risks of a child/young person being vulnerable to and/or being a victim or perpetrator of bullying before they are provided with a placement. Risks identified prior to placement will be included within the Placement Referral form. These should be fully discussed within the Placement Planning meeting and reflected within the child/young person's care and support plan, personal plan and risk assessment.

6.2 On admission the child/ young person receives an induction pack, a member of staff will explain the Home's zero tolerance to bullying and complaints procedure. All children / young people are expected to sign up to the anti-bullying policy.

6.3 Where it is deemed appropriate, in regard to age and the level of understanding, the personal plan and risk assessment should be developed in co-production with the child or young person, and they should actively contribute to the plans to minimise risks.

## **7) Countering Bullying on a Day-to-Day Basis**

7.1 If staff have any concerns, they must discuss them with the Residential Manager and with the key worker for the young person, and take what actions are necessary to reduce or prevent it.

7.2 All staff have a responsibility to minimise the risk of bullying occurring within the home. In order to help staff to be vigilant, the following aspects should be regularly discussed and any concerns addressed in individual supervision, in team meetings, and form an essential part of development and training for residential staff:

- Observations of young people's interactions with one another
- Supervision of young people
- Supervision and support of staff
- Physical contact between staff and young people
- Intimate care and invasive procedures

7.3 If bullying is persistent or serious, the young person's social worker should be consulted, and it may be necessary to conduct a Child Experiencing Care Review or hold a strategy meeting.

7.4 Helping Victims - In case of the chronic victims, those children and young people who have developed a way of dealing with life, we have to work with the individuals to try to help them modify their expectations and in some cases their behaviour. Otherwise, they could go through life with a victim mentality.

7.5 The following lists some of the basic steps, which can be taken to help victims:

- Encourage them to talk about their feelings
- Eliminate obvious causes of bullying
- Build up low self esteem
- Teach them to cope with teasing
- Help them to make a list of what to say
- Act out role play ways to cope
- Practice shouting 'NO' really confidently
- Practice walking and standing confidently



- Have them draw or write about feelings in order to eliminate tension
- Ask them to keep a diary of progress

7.6 In case of different, special needs and racial or cultural victims, we need to work with all the children and teach them to respect other individuals, even when those individuals differ in some way from the majority. Children and young people should also be taught about positive aspects of different cultures.

7.7 Sexual harassment is another area that should be brought into the open. As children can be bullied with sexual comments, and or teased about being gay, it is vital to tell all the children that these kinds of comments will not be tolerated, and that this kind of bullying should be reported and will be severely dealt with.

7.8 Many children who are victims of bullying feel very isolated and lonely. Taking time to sit and talk to them can be very rewarding for the child. If their self-worth is low, the fact that a member of staff is engaging with them positively can help their morale.

## **8) Kinds of Bullies**

### **8.1 Physical bullies**

Physical bullies are action orientated. This type of bullying includes hitting or kicking the victim or damaging the victim's property. This is the least sophisticated type of bullying because it is so easy to identify. As they get older, their attacks usually becoming more aggressive.

### **8.2 Verbal Bullies**

Verbal bullies use words to hurt or humiliate another person. Verbal bullying includes name calling, insulting, making racist comments and constant teasing. This type of bullying is the easiest to inflict on children. It is quick and to the point. It can occur in the least amount of time available, and its effect can be more devastating in some ways than physical bullying because there are no visible scars.

### **8.3 Relational Bullies**

Relational or relationship bullies try to convince their peers to exclude or reject a certain person or people and cut the victims off from their social connections. This type of bullying is linked to verbal bullying and usually occurs when children (most often girls) spread nasty rumours about others or exclude an ex-friend from the peer group. This most devastating effect with this type of bullying is the rejection by the peer group at a time when children most need their social connections.



## 8.4 Reactive Victims

Reactive victims straddle a fence of being a bully and/or victim. They are often the most difficult to identify because at first glance they seem to be targets for other bullies. However, reactive victims often taunt bullies, and bully other people themselves. Most incidents are physical in nature. These victims begin as victims and become bullies as they try to retaliate. A reactive victim will approach a person who has been bullying him/her and say something like 'You better not bug me today, otherwise I'll tell the teacher and boy, will you be in trouble, and so you better watch out'.

### 9) Changing the bully's behaviour

- 9.1 It must be emphasised that getting the child who bullies to change his/her behaviour works best in the context of a clearly formulated establishment policy in which the children feel they have a say. Peer pressure is one of the most effective ways of stamping out bullying amongst themselves after they have decided that bullying is loser behaviour and that it is safe to stand up to bullying. This kind of attitude may come about through discussions in residents' meetings, role plays, and understanding what is and what is not acceptable behaviour between individuals and groups.
- 9.2 There are no definitive solutions or strategies for changing the bully's behaviour, which always work. Each child who bullies is an individual with his/her own problems and there is no general cure for bullying. However, guidelines as to what has worked with bullies elsewhere can be helpful.
- 9.3 The following list is not exhaustive, but is a useful starting point when devising effective ways of dealing with bullying behaviour:
- Discuss with the child or young person the behaviour that is expected of them. Give them clear guidelines as to their future behaviour. This will help eliminate any future misunderstandings.
  - Before you can change the child's behaviour, the child has to admit that what they have done is wrong. They need to acknowledge in some way that their behaviour has been hurtful and unkind. This might be very difficult for some children or young people to do, but it is important that we teach them that taking responsibility for their actions is a positive step forward.
  - Children and young people who bully need to begin to realise that it is important to apologise to the victim and to try and make up in some way for what they have done. It may not happen at first, keep trying

and even role-play with bullies because they may not know how to apologise if their family does not use or value such behaviour.

- Discuss the next steps with the child or young person and set him/her realistic short-term goals. Make sure that these goals are attainable, even if you set something like 'No fighting or saying anything mean for the next ten minutes'. It is better to give the person an easy target, even if you think it is ludicrously simple, thus virtually guaranteeing their success, rather than set them a hard task, which they might fail and which might discourage them.
- Be prepared for setbacks and for discouragement. Keeping the child motivated is often very difficult and you will need all your reserves of patience and persistence.
- Discuss with the child or young person the difference between aggressive and assertive behaviour. Work out verbal responses that are assertive rather than aggressive.
- Encourage the child to persist with the 'behaviour changing' programme by giving lots of praise and rewards for good behaviour.
- Make sure all the staff team is aware the child or young person is trying to change their behaviour.
- Sometimes, if children know that a child who has been a bully is trying to reform, they will try to provoke them into displaying their old, aggressive behaviour and will tease and taunt them until he/she loses control and reacts angrily. Staff should be on the lookout for this sort of bully baiting.
- One of the best ways of helping children who bully to change their behaviour is by setting an example of the right way to behave towards other people. If bullying children see members of staff shouting at residents, using sarcasm as a weapon, and picking on particular individuals, they will assume that, whatever anybody says to them, bullying is acceptable and they will have no reason to change their behaviour.

9.4 Do not expect instant results. It can take anything from six months to two years to change their behaviour of a child who persistently bullies others and there are likely to be many setbacks along the way. The older the child, the harder it is to change ingrained behaviour patterns, and there will always be some children whose behaviour never changes in spite of the efforts of those around.

## **10) Notifications**

10.1 There are different notifications procedures depending on the persistence and seriousness of the bullying:

- Notification of Minor or Non-Persistent Bullying - where bullying is not persistent or not serious, it should be notified to the Residential Manager and Key worker at the first opportunity. The Manager will decide whether to inform the child's social worker, unless it has previously been agreed this is not necessary.
- Notifications of Persistent or Serious Bullying – serious one-off episodes of bullying are deemed to be incidents and must be notified to the Residential Manager, key worker and the child's social worker as soon as possible, but within 24 hours. The young person's social worker should decide whether to inform the young person's parent(s) and, if so, who should do so.

10.2 Where serious bullying persists, the social worker, Residential Manager, Key worker and staff member should come to a decision about whether it is deemed to be an 'incident' and ensure that the young person's social worker is notified on each occasion or at specified intervals. It will also be necessary to decide whether to notify the young person's parent(s). These arrangements must be outlined in the young person's risk management plan.

10.3 If the bullying is serious or persists, the young person's social worker should consider whether the bullying constitutes significant harm. If this is likely, a strategy discussion or strategy meeting should be convened under the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

## **11) Involving and Supporting Young People**

11.1 Bullying behaviour should never be tolerated and it is important that staff offer appropriate support and reassurance to young people who are bullied by communicating well with them. Staff should listen to the child or young person and allow her/him to tell the problem in her/his own words and treat all allegations seriously, no matter how trivial the incident may seem. Counselling should also be offered.

11.2 Where young people have bullied others, the focus should be on the behaviour rather than the young person and full explorations made of reasons for the behaviour. They should receive a clear message that it is the behaviour and not the person that is unacceptable and encouraged to see the bullied young person's point of view.

11.3 An action plan will be required to address the individual circumstances of the bullying and any additional work with the perpetrator as well as an outline of the strategies to be employed by staff to challenge and modify the behaviour.

## **12) Recording**

12.1 All incidents of bullying must be recorded, identifying any known triggers, the details of the incident and the outcome. There are different recording procedures depending on the persistence and seriousness of the bullying:

- Recording of Minor or Non-Persistent Bullying – Minor or non-persistent bullying should be recorded in the daily record and case file of the young person who is bullied and/or the alleged bully. The record should include details of staff intervention and outcomes
- Recording of Persistent or Serious Bullying – Unless otherwise agreed between the social worker, the Residential Manager and staff member, and set out in the young person's Personal Plan, incidents of persistent or serious bullying must always be recorded as incident(s) and are subject to a management review.

### **13) Management Review**

- 13.1 The Residential Manager is responsible for the overall monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the countering bullying strategy in the Home.
- 13.2 The Residential Manager will regularly carry out risk assessments as part of the homes Safe Systems of Working, which are recorded for health and safety purposes, of the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying, including bullying amounting to abuse by other young people, is greatest, and take action where feasible to reduce or counteract the risk of bullying.
- 13.3 Any bullying issues and concerns should be addressed in the young person's Personal Plan. The Residential Manager should monitor the situation via case file management and staff supervision and feeding back the progress on countering bullying to the Responsible Individual.