



A Stepping Stone to a Brighter Future

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

4. ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Scotland





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Principles

Bullying badly affects its victims and can seriously disrupt their lives.

All children/young people have an **absolute right** to be cared for and educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them.

All children/young people have a responsibility to modify their behaviour so they do not infringe the right of others to be safe and secure.

There is **no justification** whatsoever for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form, including name-calling. Differences of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability are absolutely repudiated as reasons for bullying.

Bullying behaviour is a problem for both the bully and the victim and should be addressed in pro-active and constructive ways, which provide opportunities for change, growth and development for the bully and victim alike.

It is wrong to deal with bullies in an oppressive (bullying) way as this merely reinforces the belief that "might is right".

The effective management of bullying is an adult responsibility. Best outcomes are achieved if parents, education staff and placing social workers all work together to develop strategies to keep victims safe and deter bullying behaviour.

Information about policies and procedures in relation to bullying should be readily available in 'user friendly' form to children/young people and their parents. (I.e. Children's guide/statement of purpose)





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Aims

To clarify issues of responsibility for responding to incidents of bullying and to emphasise to staff, children/young people, parents and other interested parties the company's 'zero tolerance' attitudes towards bullying behaviour.

To eliminate intimidating behaviour and promote an ethos in which each child/young person is safe and able to realise their full potential.

To reassure parents and placing social workers that Partners in Care, Pebbles Care & Radical Services Ltd (will be referred to as 'the company') takes the issue of bullying seriously and will take the necessary action to minimise its impact on the children/young people who live therein.

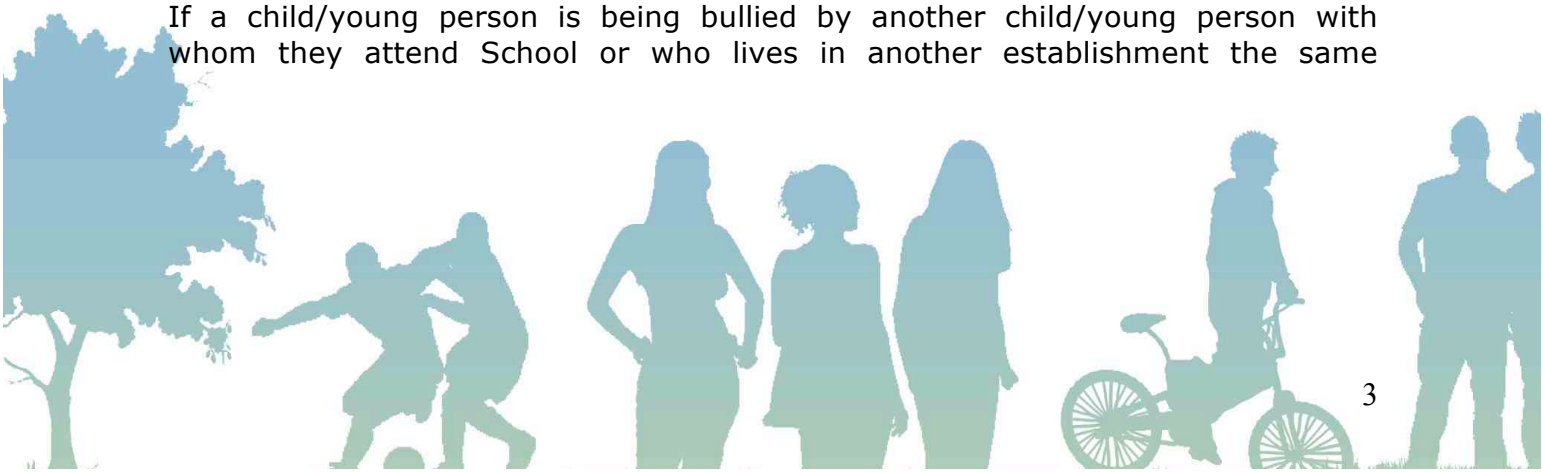
Objectives

- For staff at all levels to address issues of bullying in a consistent manner.
- To be proactive in the prevention of bullying.
- To make children/young people, parents, significant others and staff, aware of what steps to take when an incident of bullying has occurred.
- To demonstrate to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and to reassure victims that action will be taken to keep them safe, which includes strategies to address bullies' problematic behaviour in a fair, firm, non-oppressive manner and to provide them with support to enable them to change their behaviour.

Scope

This policy applies to all incidents of bullying between children/young people whether they occur within or outside the setting. If there are concerns about children/young people being bullied by staff, these will be addressed through the Whistle-blowing/child Protection Policies.

If a child/young person is being bullied by another child/young person with whom they attend School or who lives in another establishment the same





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procedures apply. If a child/young person is bullied or bullies others while on contact visits this information will be shared with the child/young person's Social Worker and a strategy agreed to manage/prevent further incidents. Where there are concerns around staff on staff bullying, these will be addressed through the Whistle Blowing policy and Code of Conduct and Policy and Procedures.

Definition

Bullying is an interaction between an individual or group of people with a more powerful individual or group which is **perceived** or **intended** to cause hurt, pain, suffering, humiliation or degradation.

Bullying behaviour may be direct or indirect. Direct forms include physical violence or threats; verbal assaults and taunts; the destruction of property; extortion and unwanted sexual interest or contact. Examples of indirect forms of bullying include ignoring and withdrawal of friendships; excluding and isolating children/young people; malicious gossip; offensive and threatening texting; spreading rumours and abusive or offensive graffiti. Bullying may also include being forced to become involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour.

'the company' takes all form of bullying seriously and is particularly concerned to take action in relation to incidents which include racist, sexist, disability or homophobic elements. In these cases such issues will be specifically addressed with the bully (and his/her parent staff as appropriate) in the course of incident management.

Countering Bullying

All children/young people need to be aware that staff **want** to be informed of any incidents of concerns and that action will be taken when bullying is reported.

All staff working with children/young people will be made aware of the issue of bullying and the need to apply the policy of 'zero tolerance' consistently when incidents of bullying are witnessed or reported. Staff will reinforce the message to children/young people that bullying is unacceptable and will take positive action to prevent and control it.





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The subject of bullying will be raised at both group and individual level. Children/young people will be given an opportunity to discuss the issue of bullying in house meetings and be invited to contribute ideas to how the 'zero tolerance' policy can be implemented. At the individual level children/young people who are felt to be at risk of bullying (or have suffered bullying in the past) will be offered additional support and guidance. Those children/young people who have bullied others will be given advice and support and provided with strategies to enable them to bring their unacceptable behaviour under control to prevent further incidents. Risk assessments will be completed and regularly reviewed for effectiveness on both victims and perpetrators of bullying. Risk assessments will be for individual children/young people and also for the home (generic).

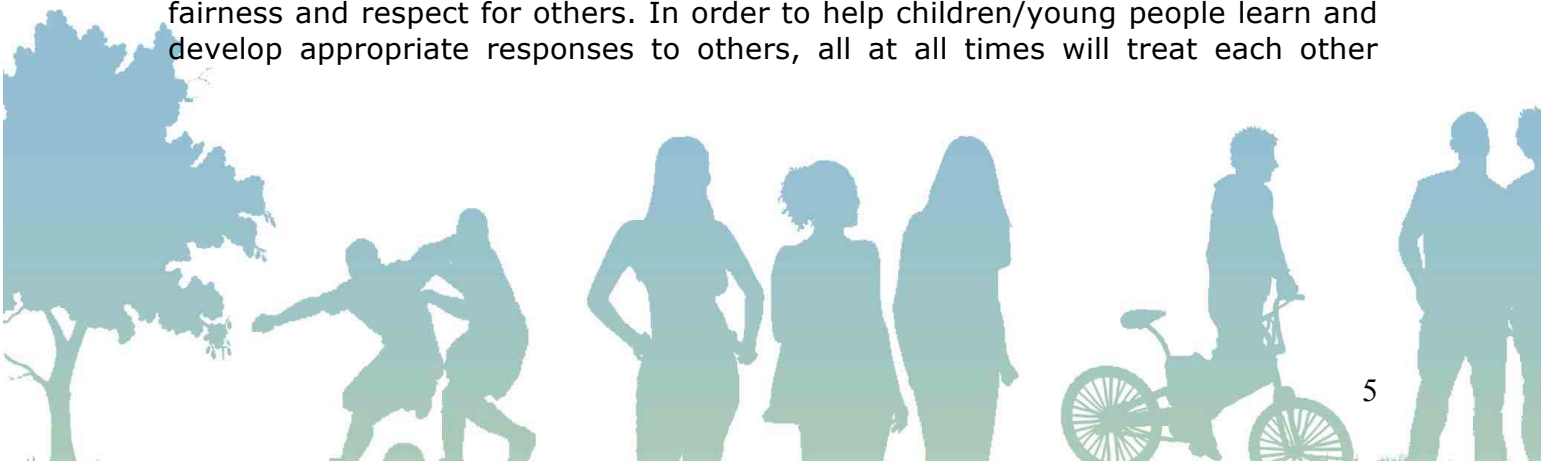
It is acknowledged that there are particular times in the day when children/young people may be more vulnerable to bullying – breakfast, travelling to school, at the end of the school day and bedtime. Arrangements will be made to ensure that at such times adequate supervision is available to reduce the risk of bullying incidents (as per staffing agreements at the home i.e. 1:1/2:1)(A risk assessment will be in place regarding times and places that bullying is likely to occur and how this will be managed by staff).

Also there are locations about the setting in which incidents of bullying are more likely to occur (leisure areas, games rooms, shower rooms, bathing areas) and again arrangements will be made to ensure that they are properly supervised and children/young people's access to them is appropriately managed.

Children/young people will be encouraged to talk to staff about incidents of bullying which they experience or of which they may be aware. In these situations staff will respond positively, take the expression of concern seriously and ensure the matter is thoroughly investigated.

Others who believe children/young people are being bullied or are bullying others will be encouraged to talk to staff about these concerns. Again the expression of concern will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

All of these proactive strategies operate within an ethos founded on equality, fairness and respect for others. In order to help children/young people learn and develop appropriate responses to others, all at all times will treat each other





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(and children/young people, parents and other professionals) with courtesy and respect and will model appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

Signs/Symptoms a child/young person is being bullied

- Changes in "normal" behaviour – moodiness/clingy/emotional outbursts/truancy/school refusal/poor performance
- Bed wetting/soiling/nightmares/sleep problems
- Anxiety attacks; fear of going out; being left alone
- Stealing
- Losing" property/having clothing or stuff destroyed
- Arriving home hungry
- Unexplained bruising / frequent "accidents"
- Poor peer relationships
- A tendency to be aggressive and bully others
- Unexplained/psychosomatic illnesses (stomach/headaches)
- Obsessive washing/stop eating
- Self harming
- Children who are generally isolated and excluded
- Children who receive lots of negative attention (allegedly in fun)
- Unhappy, distressed and withdrawn children/young people





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Pro-Active Management of Bullying

The subject of bullying must be an open one with regular discussion held around the topic so children/young people are aware that staff understand the nature of the problem. As such:

- Bullying should be discussed at both children/young people's resident meetings and staff meetings.
- Discussions about bullying should be held informally over dinner, watching TV, during activities etc.
- Care plans and risk assessments should be completed with those where there are concerns around bullying behaviour or being bullied.
- Children/young people should be told that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated and will be managed in a timely manner.
- There should be posters up on the wall in the home detailing the steps that are taken by the home when an incident of bullying is either witnessed or disclosed, which may include:
 - Opportunity to complain offered.
 - Meeting with the alleged victim, to ascertain details of the behaviours.
 - Meeting with the alleged perpetrator of the bullying behaviour to raise concerns and discuss the homes zero-tolerance stance on bullying.
 - Increased supervision, where feasible, around the alleged bully and victim.
 - Involvement of Homes, Key-workers, Social Workers, Education staff, Parents (if applicable) and any significant others.
 - Potential consequences for the bully (separation plans, not earning rewards through the behaviour management system etc).





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- Staff should generally be observant around the home and report/record any concerns no matter how small they may seem.
- Key-workers should look for patterns in the key-child's behaviour to see if there is any indication of bullying/being bullied.
- The homes staff should use children/young people's questionnaires to find out about bullying if it is not witnessed or disclosed.
- All children/young people should have access to an independent visitor with whom they can share any concerns.
- All children/young people have access to phone numbers/websites should they wish to share bullying experiences externally (i.e. Childline, Respectme etc).
- Develop and share information packs with the children/young people, so they also become aware of the types of bullying behaviours and the impacts of bullying on both the bully and the victim alike.

Incident Management

The company will take firm and decisive action to deal with any incident of bullying, which is witnessed by or reported to any member of staff.

Post Incident Responses

For the Victim

Staff will offer a positive, sympathetic and supportive response to children/young people who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will vary according to the particular needs of the child/young person and may include:

- Immediate action to stop the incident and secure the child/young person's safety.
- Talk to the child/young person, get the full story, listen to what's actually being said and empathise with how the behaviour has made them feel.





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- Reassure the child/young person they were right to tell you.
- Explain to the child/young person the steps that will now be taken.
- Reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the bully's behaviour (i.e. no justification for bullying).
- Strategies to prevent further incidents.
- Support children/young people to learn and practice the skills of assertiveness so they can become more able to resist negative peer pressure.
- Practice assertiveness
- Help the Child/young person with simple responses to the most frequent taunts, support them with strategies to help them resolve conflicts before relationships are damaged or ill feelings escalate.
- Inform all staff and implement extra supervision/monitoring (where applicable).
- Ensure all information is recorded/updated onto the individual risk assessment and generic risk assessment, and care plan if applicable.
- Informing parents/social workers/teachers/significant others.
- Ensure social workers involvement, as a minimum by email and then call and discuss situation, strategies, outcomes etc.
- Adult mediation between the victim and the bully (providing this does not increase the victim's vulnerability).
- Arrangements to review progress.





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For the Bully

Staff take bullying behaviour very seriously and will adopt a supportive, pragmatic, problem solving approach to enable bullies to behave in a more acceptable way. The use of punishment is not helpful in managing this problem, but the positive use of consequences can be useful in demonstrating to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and in promoting change.

Staff will respond to incidents of bullying in a proportionate way – the more serious cause for concern the more serious the response. When the application of consequences felt to be necessary they will be applied consistently and fairly.

In managing incidents of bullying the following options will be considered:

- Immediate action to stop an incident of bullying in progress
- Talk to the child/young person, get the full story, listen to what's actually being said and empathise with the child/young person.
- Reinforce the message that their behaviour is not acceptable; don't get into a discussion about the justifications for the behaviour. Adopt the approach that there is no justification for bullying.
- Explain that bullying takes many forms, and isn't **just** physical aggression.
- Time out (for the bully – this should be discussed with the Area Manager).
- Inform all staff and implement extra supervision/monitoring (where applicable).
- The use of consequences.
- Informing parents social workers/teachers/significant others.
- Make an effort to understand the reasons for the bullying behaviour (*The 3 Domains, Behaviour meets Need, Emotional Funnel*).
- Counselling/instruction in alternative ways of behaving.



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- Adult mediation with the victim (providing it does not increase victim vulnerability).
- Give the perpetrator other ways to deal with the need to bully – redirect anger in a positive way and risk assess activities appropriately (sports, boxing, punch bag*, anger management counselling etc).
- Rewards/positive reinforcement for children/young people to promote change and bring unacceptable behaviour under control (*Confrontation/Collaboration*).
- Ensure all information is reported on the Information Record/Incident Sheet/Care Plan if applicable.
- Key worker sessions to reinforce inappropriateness of bullying behaviours take place.
- Be prepared to implement separation plans if bullying is/becomes serious.
- Review of viability of placement (for seriously violent children/young people).

* Always provide boxing lessons on how to use a punch bag and appropriate equipment (i.e. gloves) to minimise damage or injury to wrists, fists and knuckles.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Each incident of bullying will be recorded on a Detailed Recording Sheet clearly referencing Bullying. Any incidents with a racist, sexist, disability or homophobic element will be identified. This Detailed Recording Sheet will be cross-referenced in the Child/young person's Observation Book/Log book.

A photocopy of the Detailed Recording Incident Sheet is to be placed in the Homes Bullying file, which is split into 12 monthly dividers so that incidents of bullying can be audited. The original Detailed Recording Incident Sheet is filed into the child/young persons Case File.





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Cross Reference

Radical Service, Pebbles Care, Partnership Care:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Code of Conduct

ChildLine pack: *Dealing with bullying and the importance of friends*

respectme: Scotland's Anti bullying Service. <http://www.respectme.org.uk/>

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