

## Prevention of Bullying Policy

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Publication Date:	24 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
Review Date:	September 25
Target Audience:	All Employees

### Policy Statement

All children and young people have a right to feel confident that Lighthouse Collaborative Care promotes a safe and healthy environment. They need to be able to thrive and prosper, emotionally and socially within and outside the home. It is crucial to their progress to ensure they feel comfortable, relaxed, safe and secure in their home and other environments within which they find themselves. Every effort will be made to ensure that positive relationships are developed and maintained between the children and young people living in the home to ensure a harmonious, positive atmosphere is maintained. The home takes a no-tolerance approach to any form of bullying and will take the appropriate action to address such. Children and young people will also be supported to understand the various forms of bullying and the impact of bullying to ensure this is a crucial part of their personal development.

When bullying is encountered, we will ensure that the procedures are in place to allow:

- Reporting of the incident
- Having incidents of bullying properly recorded
- Having concerns or incidents of bullying properly monitored
- Ensuring appropriate action is taken in response to incidents of bullying and that action is followed up.

This will ensure that children/ young people feel listened to and understand that their concerns have been and will be taken seriously.

A culture of respect and dignity is agreed upon and promoted amongst the adults working in the home, children/ young people, and any visitors to the home, and a set of shared standards of what behaviour and language is acceptable across the home will be advocated.

### Legislative Context

The policy is in line with:

- DfE: Bullying: Don't suffer in silence
- National strategy for school improvement
- National Healthy Schools status
- PSHE National Framework
- Inspecting Schools Framework
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 3, 19, 3
- Human Rights Act 1988, Article
- The Children Home (England) Regulations 2015 Regulation 43(3)

Concerning residential care, the Care Standards Act 2000 Standard 18 states that there should be recorded risk assessments highlighting where bullying is an issue and what action should be taken to reduce or counteract the risk of bullying.

## Definition of Bullying

The DfE “Don’t Suffer in Silence” pack states that there are many definitions of bullying, but most consider bullying to be:

**“Deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated over some time and in circumstances where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.”**

This definition was recognised and accepted in case law (in Hansen v. Isle of White Council)

Bullying is, therefore:

- **Repetitive and persistent.** Bullying is usually experienced as part of a continuous pattern, and it can be extremely threatening and intimidating even when very subtle. Nevertheless, sometimes a single incident can have precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time.
- **Intentionally harmful.** The act of bullying intends harm to another individual although occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are present.
- **Involves an imbalance of power.** Bullying leaves someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it. In some cases, an imbalance of power may mean that bullying crosses the threshold into abuse requiring the implementation of safeguarding procedures.

Bullying is often aimed at certain people because of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or any other aspect such as appearance or disability. This policy should therefore be adopted alongside the Lighthouse Collaborative Cares Equalities Policy.

Bullying can take different forms. It could include:

- Physical bullying: hitting, slapping, or pushing someone.
- Verbal bullying: name calling, gossiping, or threatening someone.
- Non-verbal abuse: hand signs or text messages.
- Emotional abuse: threatening, intimidating, or humiliating someone.
- Exclusion: ignoring or isolating someone.
- Undermining, constant criticism or spreading rumours.
- Controlling or manipulating someone.
- Making silent, hoax or abusive calls.
- Cyberbullying: using mobile phones or social networking sites to intimidate or bully others.

The following types of bullying are also hate crimes:

- Racial, sexual, transphobic, or homophobic bullying.
- Bullying someone because they have a disability.

## Warning Signs for Bullying

No single sign will indicate for certain that a child or young person is being bullied, however, signs could include:

- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged.
- Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises.

- Being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school.
- Not doing as well at school.
- Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever is bullying them).
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn.
- Problems with eating or sleeping.
- Bullying others.

## Effects of Bullying

The effects of bullying can last into adulthood. At its worst, bullying has driven children and young people to self-harm and even suicide.

Children/ young people who are bullied may:

- Develop mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.
- Have fewer friendships.
- Not be accepted by their peers.
- Be wary and suspicious of others.
- Have problems adjusting to school and not do as well.

All children/ young people who are affected by bullying can suffer harm – whether they are bullied, they bully others, or they witness bullying.

The seriousness of the bullying depends on several factors:

- How much hurt was intended?
- The effect on the bullied child
- How often does it happen?
- For how long it has been happening
- How much threat was involved?
- How personal it was.
- How many people were involved?
- The ability of the bullying child to see the impact of his/her actions
- Whether it was planned
- The perceived status of the bully
- The reaction of onlookers

## Prevention

The Registered Manager must be alert to the risk of bullying and should take all reasonable steps to prevent such behaviour. This includes:

- Implementing a clear policy within the home that bullying is not acceptable.
- Undertaking risk assessments at the point of referral and appropriate stages thereafter.
- Providing information and guidance to children/ young people.
- Providing clarity to children/ young people on acceptable behaviour.
- Having regular discussions about bullying and why it matters.
- Maintaining close partnerships with relevant agencies.
- Ensuring all adults working in the home are suitably trained in Anti-Bullying and continually assessing any gaps in knowledge.

Everyone involved in caring for children/ young people shares responsibility for countering bullying and for creating a culture which positively encourages acceptable behaviour and 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 individual adults to counter it.

Everyone should also be clear about what measures they should take if they suspect bullying, or if it is reported to them.

In this respect, everyone should be alert to the fact that bullying may constitute significant harm and, if so, must be reported in line with the Lighthouse Collaborative Cares Safeguarding Policy.

## Risk Assessment and Planning

Bullying is prevented and addressed through effective matching at the time that children/ young people are referred to ensure that any risks of bullying arising within the group are safely managed.

If there is any risk, it should be addressed in the child/ young person's Care Plan and Risk Assessment with details of the strategies that must be adopted to prevent bullying.

Children and young people will be made aware of our Prevention of Bullying Policy as part of their introduction, thus helping to provide positive guidelines on respecting and treating others. Details of how children/ young people can report an incident of bullying will be included in the Child/ Young Person's Guide. This guide will also make children/ young people aware that they can file a complaint in line with the Lighthouse Collaborative Cares Complaints Procedure about the action or inaction taken in response to an allegation of bullying within the home. Such information includes an explanation of the role of an advocate and provides contact details for independent advocacy services that can help children/ young people make complaints or make a complaint on their behalf.

## Responding to an Allegation of Bullying

When bullying does occur, a clear consistent response is essential. There are many different ways in which adults can respond to bullying. However, the goals of any intervention should always be the same:

- To make the victim feel safe.
- To stop the bullying from taking place.
- To make clear to every child/ young person that bullying is unacceptable.
- To learn lessons from the experience that can be applied in future.

Any allegation or suspected form of bullying must be discussed with the Registered Manager who should take the necessary actions to eradicate it. If the Registered Manager is unavailable, adults working in the home and/or any relevant other professional, i.e., Responsible Individual/ social worker, should investigate to understand the nature of the concern and safeguard the immediate situation and then inform the Registered Manager as soon as practicable.

Sometimes adults can unwittingly put up roadblocks on children trying to talk about bullying by being, for example:

- **The belittler** devaluing the problem - What is all the fuss about?
- **The doctor** diagnosing the problem - I know what you need.
- **The undertaker** burying the problem - Take no notice.
- **The brick wall blocking it** - Not giving the child a chance to explain.
- **The interrogator** persistently asks questions- I want to know everything.
- **The bully** blaming the child - Why is it you they pick on?
- **The rescuer** taking over the problem - Leave it to me.
- **The magician** is looking for a quick fix - We will sort it out in no time.
- **The judge** expressing rigid preconceived ideas - I know exactly what you should do.

A range of active listening techniques provides a more helpful response including:

- **The listener** listens patiently with full attention, encouraging, clarifying, restating, reflecting, validating, summarising.
- **The detective** investigates the situation sensitively and patiently through the use of professional curiosity.
- **The supporters** see their side, acknowledging and allowing expression of feelings.
- **The coach** checks out what help is being asked for and offers practical help.

The starting point for any intervention should be to talk to the young person who has been bullied, establish what has happened, and agree on a way forward. The adult involved should be available to listen to the child/ young person calmly and remind them that all instances of bullying will be taken seriously. If possible, an action plan should be agreed upon with the child/ young person's consent.

Action planning in response to bullying may include:

- Conflict resolution or restorative justice work to help the children/ young people understand how each other feels.
- Undertaking a session with the bully (bullies), making it clear that it is the behaviour that is 'unwanted,' not the child/ young person.
- The bully (bullies) may be asked to offer an apology, either verbally or in writing.
- In serious cases, some form of sanction will be considered.
- If appropriate, bullying could be added as an agenda topic for the children/ young people's house meeting, being careful not to shame any child/ young person involved.
- Providing opportunities for children/ young people to explore issues of bullying e.g., writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying.
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to them.
- Making use of role-plays to help educate young people on bullying.

Instances of bullying in any form perpetrated by an adult working in the home or other environment either towards a child/ young person or another adult will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's Complaints Procedure, Safeguarding Policy, and or Disciplinary Procedure.

Any suspected or formal allegations of bullying perpetrated by an adult in the wider community will be dealt with in line with the Lighthouse Collaborative Care's Safeguarding Policy.

Failure on the part of an employee to report an incident of bullying, or suspected bullying of a child/ young person to an appropriate person is a ground on which disciplinary proceedings may be instituted.

## Recording and Monitoring

All forms of bullying must be recorded under the relevant tab on each child/ young person's ClearCare record e.g., Incident Report or Safeguarding Concern, within 24 hours. The incident should also be referenced within the young person's Daily Log.

Where the specific category of bullying e.g., verbal/physical/ sexual/ cyberbullying may be identified and highlighted so that different incidents of bullying can be monitored as required.

The child's Care Plan and Risk Assessment should be reviewed with a view to incorporating strategies to prevent future incidents.

After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be continuously monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. The Registered Manager is responsible for reviewing the

incidence and nature of bullying in the home. This should include discretely following up with the victim to make certain the bullying has stopped and that they feel safe.

Key learning points should also be extracted from all incidents of bullying within the home to help inform and improve future practices.

### **Persistent or Serious Bullying**

Serious or persistent bullying must be notified immediately to the Registered Manager, and the relevant Social Worker informed within one working day.

The Social Worker should be consulted, and consideration given to whether safeguarding procedures need to be implemented. It may be necessary to hold a Strategy Discussion.

All incidents of physical aggression within the home will be managed in line with Lighthouse Collaborative Cares Behavioural Response (Including Restraint) Policy.

The Registered Manager should consider whether the incident is a Notifiable Event.

Bullying behaviour may involve criminal offences, such as assault, theft, criminal damage, harassment offences, misuse of communication offences, hate crime offences, or sexual offences. Where bullying is particularly serious or persistent, it may be necessary – to protect the victim – to involve the police in dealing with offences that have been committed. The Registered Manager should decide as to whether to involve the police. Local police may also be contacted in the absence of an offence being committed. For example, explaining to children how bullying behaviour may constitute a crime.

In exceptional cases where all attempts to resolve persistent bullying behaviour have proved unsuccessful, it may need to be considered whether a move from the home might be in the best interests of the child/ young person carrying out the bullying behaviour and of the other children/young people in the home. In such cases, the Registered Manager must discuss this option with the child/ young person's Social Worker to ensure that this option is considered in the context of the child/ young person's holistic needs and of the Care Plan. Children/ young people who are the victims of bullying should not be removed from the home for their protection.

### **Bullying Involving Adults.**

There may be instances of bullying between adults and children. Whilst high standards of practice are expected of adults, there could be an occasion where an adult bullies a child living in the home.

If there is reason to suspect that an adult within the home is bullying a child, this must be reported to the Registered Manager immediately. Safeguarding procedures are in place to deal with incidents like this, and these can be found within the Lighthouse Collaborative Care Safeguarding Policy.

In cases where the allegation is about the Registered Manager then the information must be passed immediately to the Responsible Individual.

Where there is reason to believe that a child is being bullied by another professional outside the home then the same procedures apply. The Registered Manager must be informed, along with the child's social worker. When a child is being bullied by a member of their family or another adult known to the child, a professional meeting should be arranged involving all those relevant people involved with the child who can help address and deal with the situation.