



Leading Therapeutic Education

POPLAR HOUSE SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Signed by:

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Date: January 2023

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Teacher

January 2023
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Statement of Intent

Poplar House School is committed to developing and maintaining an ethos of mutual respect. 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. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a safe and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a telling school, this means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

All staff have a responsibility to address concerns and incidents of bullying to ensure that children and young people are protected and safeguarded to support and promote their emotional wellbeing and welfare. Poplar House School will ensure that all staff take account of the requirements set out in legislation and statutory guidance to protect children and young people from bullying and harassment. For example, section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, provides that every school must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils.

Poplar House School will ensure that parents and placing social workers understand Poplar House School Anti-Bullying policy, and it takes the issue of bullying seriously and has a 'zero tolerance' attitude towards bullying behaviour. The organisation will be rigorous in its actions to minimise the impact of bullying on the children/young people.

This policy applies to all incidents of bullying between children and young people and adults. If there are concerns about children and young people being bullied by staff, these will be addressed through the safeguarding and disciplinary procedures.

Mission Statement

Our approach is grounded in the lived experience of the children and young people we support and by valuing their contribution. As experts by experience, we ensure the services they receive is personal to them.

Introduction

This Anti-Bullying Policy is underpinned by the Essential Standards below. Along with Educ8's Mission Statement, these Essential Standards set out the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.

Essential Standards

- **Individualised care** - Children and young people will receive care and support that is tailored to meet their specific needs and any diverse needs.
- **Dignity and respect** - Educ8 will ensure children and young people have privacy when needed and appropriate, are treated as equals, are given appropriate support to help them to be independent to fulfil their potential, and to be involved in their respective local communities.
- **Equality** - Educ8 is an inclusive organisation that works hard to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded and have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Educ8 is committed to anti-

discriminatory practice. In so doing, Educ8 recognise the additional needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children including the barriers they face.'

- **Safety** - Educ8 will ensure that appropriate safeguarding practice is in place so that children and young people do not receive unsafe care or treatment or be put at risk of any potential harm. A robust risk assessment strategy will be in place to minimise harm during activities and delivery of care and support. Educ8 will ensure children and staff have the appropriate knowledge, qualifications, experience, competence and skills to keep children and young people safe through appropriate learning and development opportunities.
- **Safeguarding from abuse** - Children and young people have an absolute entitlement to receive care and support without suffering any form of abuse or improper care. This includes disproportionate restraint, unnecessary or inappropriate restrictions on freedom, bullying, neglect and free from abuse from their peers, carers and all professionals involved in their care.
- **Complaints** - Educ8 will ensure that the systems in place for handling complaints are followed by staff to make sure that all complaints are monitored and considered seriously, handled and responded to sensitively. Complaints investigation will be comprehensive and conducted in a timely manner including informing the complainant about the outcome of their complaint. Any areas for learning will be identified and discussed so that appropriate action can be taken.
- **Whistleblowing** - Educ8 have a robust whistleblowing policy and staff have a duty of care to raise and report concerns. That it is known by all staff and is supported by staff training. We encourage the active reporting of any concerns raised by our staff, our children and young people and third parties and we ensure that all such concerns are addressed in a timely manner. Any learning from such reports will be embedded into continuing professional development and will inform professional practice.
- **Good governance** - Educ8 has an Independent Safeguarding and Quality Improvement Committee (ISQIC) to ensure that a robust governance framework is in place, including scrutiny and oversight of internal and external service audits. Good governance will help to improve the delivery of services, as well as identify and minimise risk to children and young people's health, safety and wellbeing.
- **Legislative framework** - Educ8 will ensure that it complies with regulatory standards, regulations and government guidance that underpins its services relating to children's homes, fostering service and schools in England and Wales.
- **Staffing** - Educ8 will ensure that its staff comply with these essential standards through appropriate levels of support, culturally appropriate training and supervision that is reflective, empowering and insightful to effectively assist them in their role.
- **Fitness to practice** - Educ8 will seek to recruit and retain a staff that can evidence their competence, knowledge and professional practice to provide safe and appropriate care in line with their roles and responsibilities.

Bullying can be a complex issue when groups of children and young people with different needs and challenges come together. Children and young people from outside the school may be involved. There

may be allegations of bullying by staff. It is therefore important that bullying is not seen exclusively as a peer on peer problem but recognise that adults working with children and young people can be the perpetrators as well as the victim of bullying. Additionally, where there is evidence of staff on staff bullying, this will be managed through Educ8's Code of Conduct. Further information can be found here '

<http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/r/l/Bullying-and-harassment-at-work-a-guide-for-employees.pdf>

Often, children with additional needs, are more at risk of being bullied and may present with low self-esteem. One of the main challenges for children and young people and staff, is finding the right strategies to support children and young people to develop the resilience needed to help them to manage and deal with bullying.

The Policy

Definition of bullying

"Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally." (DfE, Preventing and Tackling Bullying, July 2017).

- Bullying can include - name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening, or undermining someone, taking their belongings, producing offensive graffiti and excluding someone from the group.
- It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online.
- Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games, and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying.
- Bullying can be a form of peer-on-peer abuse, with sexual harassment being emotionally abusive.
- It can make a young person feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.
- Bullying can have an adverse effect on a young person's emotional development.

Examples of bullying

Bullying includes:

- verbal abuse, such as name calling and gossiping
- non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or text messages
- emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating, or humiliating someone
- exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone
- undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours
- controlling or manipulating someone
- racial, sexual, or homophobic bullying
- physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls
- online or cyberbullying
- manipulation such as staff bullying children to comply with their instructions
- isolating young people / children.

NB this list is not exhaustive

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 young people
- malicious gossip
- offensive and threatening texting
- spreading rumours
- abusive or offensive graffiti.

Bullying may also include being forced to become involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour.

Forms of bullying covered by this policy

Gov.uk defines bullying as 'Bullying and harassment is behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated or offended. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010'.

Poplar House School takes all forms of bullying seriously and will take the necessary action to address concerns, for example bullying because of someone's race, disability, or sexuality. There is no justification whatsoever for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form. Differences of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability are absolutely repudiated as reasons for bullying.

Responding to bullying

Bullying behaviour is a problem for both the perpetrator of bullying and the victim. Poplar House School expects that all incidents of bullying will be addressed in a pro-active and constructive ways, which provide opportunities for change, growth and development for the perpetrator and victim alike.

It is wrong to deal with perpetrators 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 education staff, parents/carers and placing social workers all work together to develop strategies to keep victims safe and deter bullying behaviour through Restorative Justice principles.

Poplar House School will ensure that information about policies and procedures in relation to bullying can be made available in 'user friendly' form at the request of children/young people, and parents/carers.

Countering Bullying

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

All education staff working with children and 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. Education staff will reinforce the message to children and young people that bullying is unacceptable and will take positive action to prevent and control it.

The subject of bullying will be raised at both group and individual level. Children and young people will be given an opportunity to discuss the issue of bullying in student voice at school. Children and young people will be invited to contribute ideas on how the 'zero tolerance' policy can be implemented. At the individual level children and young people who are at risk of bullying (or have suffered bullying in the past) will be offered additional support and guidance. Those children and 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 management plans will be regularly reviewed for effectiveness on both victims and perpetrators of bullying.

Children and young people can be vulnerable to bullying at certain times and education staff need to be aware of this and be vigilant. Furthermore, there are locations in which incidents of bullying are more likely to occur such as when on school trips or Leisure Centre. It is therefore important that where necessary arrangements are made to ensure that at such times adequate supervision is available to reduce the risk of bullying incidents. Risk assessments should be completed by the Lead Teachers, highlighting bullying hotspots etc. within school setting.

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

Children and young people should be encouraged to 'sign up' to an anti-bullying contract; if this is done at the point of admission, it gives a strong message about the culture and everyone aware that bullying will not be ignored or tolerated.

Signs that a child/young person is being bullied:

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

Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again, (including working in partnership with parents or carers).
- Encourage the person being bullied (and parents/ carers) to keep any evidence (screenshots) of bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation.
- Ensure that consequences are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include: advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply, providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists and helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including prejudice-driven bullying.

Management of Bullying

The subject of bullying should be an open one and there should be regular discussions in lessons held around the topic, so children and young people are aware that staff understand the nature of the problem. As such:

- Bullying should be discussed at both young people's, education staff meetings and Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting.
- Discussions about bullying should be held also informally whenever the opportunity.
- Placement and risk management plans should be reviewed and updated involving children and young people experiencing bullying as well as perpetrators where there are concerns about bullying behaviour
- Posters on bullying should be displayed around the school and should detail school/children approach to managing incidents of Bullying.

Information should signpost children and young to other people/agencies they can contact if they are being bullied. This include Childline, Kidscape, and OFSTED.

Headteachers should make sure that:

- Children/young people are aware they can complain.
- Meet with the victim to establish the impact and details of the behaviour causing concern.
- Meet with the children/individuals involved to establish the impact and details of the behaviour causing concern.

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- To determine the reasons for the behaviour, and to discuss the strategies to support the child/young person to address the behaviour
 - Increase supervision, where necessary to ensure all individuals are effectively safeguarded:
 - Potential consequences for the bullying behaviours known to children and young people, for example, (not earning rewards through the behaviour management system etc)
 - Education Staff should look for patterns in children/young people's behaviour to determine and identify evidence of bullying and impact.

Involvement of children and young people

Poplar House School will:

- Canvass children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure children and young people know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure all children and young people are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve children and young people in anti-bullying campaigns.
- Publicise the details of help lines and websites in the child/young person's guide and statement of purpose.
- Offer support to children and young people who have been bullied through several routes including counselling, independent listeners, and access to their social worker if applicable
- Work with children and young people who have been bullying to address the problems they have.
- Ensure that children and young people have access to an independent visitor with whom they can share any concerns.

Post Incident Responses

For the victim of bullying

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

- Immediate action to stop the incident and secure the child/young person's safety
- Reassure the child/young person they were right to tell you
- Explain to the child/young person the steps that will be taken
- Support children and young people to learn and practice the skills of assertiveness so they can become more able to resist negative peer pressure.

Mediation between the victim and the perpetrator (providing this does not increase the victim's vulnerability and what the victim wants).

Individuals who Perpetrate Bullying

Education Staff will adopt a supportive, pragmatic, problem solving approach to enable children and young people who perpetrate bullying 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 that bullying is unacceptable.

Education 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 is necessary, they will be applied consistently and fairly.

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

- Talk to the young person, get the full story, listen to what's being said and empathise with the young person
- Reinforce the message that their behaviour is not acceptable
- Adopt the approach that there is no justification for bullying
- Explain that bullying takes many forms, and isn't just physical aggression
- Implement extra supervision and monitoring of the behaviour and situations (where applicable)
- Ensure if relevant that parents, supervising social workers, social workers and teachers are informed about any incidents of bullying behaviour
- Education Staff should try to understand the reasons for the bullying behaviour and consider the impact of the behaviour for the perpetrator.
- Ensure support is provided such as counselling, mentoring or relevant awareness training
- Mediation with the victim (if the child who has been bullied agrees to this and the process is fully explained).
- Identify with the perpetrator, strategies, and other ways to deal with the behaviour.
- Use of rewards / positive reinforcement to promote change
- Review of viability of placement, where the behaviour of the child requires more intensive support and where after change strategies, the behaviour continue to present risks of harm to self and other children and young people.

Recording

Each incident of bullying should be recorded in the bullying log. The record should include details of the date, time, location and the nature of the bullying incident and should also details whether the bullying took place one child to another or as part of a group. The record, should, as far as possible, be a verbatim account of what the child/young person said. The records should be legible, clear, concise, and free from jargon and abbreviations. The young person must be given the opportunity to read the record and sign it off to be factually accurate. The staff member should record the child / young person's response.

Disclosures about bullying must be reported immediately and where applicable via notification to the regulator and or red flag to the Headteacher/Regional Head Teacher/Director of Education/Designated Safeguarding Officer. The record must be written up within 24 hours after the information has been received.

If the bullying incidents take place within the education environment it is important that reference is made on managing incidents of bullying set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education 'Behaviour and discipline in school – a guide to headteachers and school staff', 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022.

Training

Your Chapter will ensure that all educational staff are trained in recognising, understanding and management of incidents of bullying.

Cross references

Behaviour Management Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Missing Child Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Code of Conduct

Child Line pack: Dealing with bullying and the importance of friends

Complaints Policy

Policies are reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. However, where there are changes to legislation/guidance or in response to recommendations from any significant incidents, a review of the policies will take place immediately. Key Safeguarding policies are reviewed annually as a minimum.