



## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROCEDURES**

**SERVICE AREA:** FOSTERING

**TITLE:** BULLYING POLICY (FOSTER CARE)

### **INTRODUCTION**

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services states that fostering services should ensure that foster carers are aware of the particular vulnerability of looked after children and their susceptibility to bullying and put in place procedures to help foster carers to recognise, record and address any instance of bullying and cope with the traumatic effect it may have on any child placed with them.

This policy provides guidance for foster carers on how to deal appropriately with bullying of children placed in their care. That is who to inform and how to record such instances.

<b>LEGISLATION, REGULATIONS, GUIDANCE, REPORTS:</b>	<b>KEY WORDS:</b> BULLYING FOSTERCARE
Care Standards Act 2000 The Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003 The Fostering Services (Wales)(Amendment) Regulations 2003 National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services Children Act 89 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3 Family Placements UK National Standards for Foster Care	PROCEDURE NO: 81  ISSUE: 1  DATE: 14/03/2011

# **BULLYING POLICY**

## **GUIDANCE FOR FOSTER CARERS**

### **CAERPHILLY CBC**

#### **1 Statement of Intent**

- 1.1 Caerphilly CBC is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment in its foster homes and to supporting children and young people who are being bullied.
- 1.2 Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and any incidents or disclosure will be taken seriously and allegations will be investigated. Children who are being bullied will be supported and action will be taken to prevent further incidents of bullying.

#### **2 What is bullying**

- 2.1 Bullying is the use of verbal or physical aggression with the intention of hurting another person which results in pain and distress to the victim.
- 2.2 Bullying can take place anywhere; in school, through the internet, parks, playgrounds, clubs and on the street. Bullying can also happen in foster homes involving foster children, foster carers own children and foster carers.
- 2.3 Bullying can be:
  - Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, ridicule, humiliation
  - Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
  - Racist Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
  - Sexual Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
  - Homophobic Any hostile or offensive action focussing on the issue of sexuality
  - Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
  - Cyberbullying

#### **3 Signs and symptoms**

- 3.1 A child may indicate by their behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:
  - Is frightened of walking home from school
  - Doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
  - Begs to be driven to school
  - Changes their usual routine
  - Is unwilling to go to school
  - Begins truanting
  - Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence

- Starts stammering
  - Attempts or threatens suicide to runs away
  - Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
  - Feels ill in the morning
  - Begins to do poorly in school work
  - Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
  - Has possessions go 'missing'
  - Asks for money or start stealing money (to pay bully)
  - Has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
  - Has unexplained cuts or bruises
  - Comes home hungry (money/lunch has been stolen)
  - Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
  - Stops eating
  - Is frightened to say what's wrong
  - Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
  - Distressed/withdrawn after receiving texts, spending time on the computer
- 3.2 These signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.
- 4 Procedure to be followed
- 4.1 Children who are being bullied are often frightened to tell about what is happening, so be prepared for the child/young person to deny at first that there is anything wrong.
- 4.2 The child/young person should be encouraged to discuss any bullying, they should be assured that they will be supported and that the foster carer is concerned about their wellbeing.
- 4.3 In the event of an incident or disclosure of bullying to a foster carer, the carer should listen carefully to what the child is saying and take their allegation seriously. They should never promise to keep the bullying secret
- 4.4 The foster carer should report the bullying to their family placement social worker or in their absence the duty officer in the family placement team.
- 4.5 The supervising social worker and foster carer should agree what action should be taken and discussion should include:-
- Notifying the child's social worker and parents
  - action needed to resolve the situation and to support the child/young person
  - Involving the school
  - Whether a full investigation should be carried out
  - Whether a child protection referral needs to be made
- 4.6 The foster carer should record any incidences of bullying in their diary.

- 4.7 The child's social worker must record any incidences of bullying in the child's file, with action taken and the outcomes.
- 4.8 If the bullying is happening in school, the school should be informed. All schools are required by the Department For Education and Skills to implement anti-bullying policies and procedures
- 4.9 Foster carers should obtain a copy of the anti-bullying policy from the school/s attended by a child/young person placed with them

5 Why is it important to respond to bullying?

- 5.1 Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect
- 5.2 The victim can be helped by learning coping strategies
- 5.2 If bullying continues it can result in
- depression
  - low self esteem
  - poor academic achievement
  - isolation
  - threatened or attempted suicide
- 5.3 Unchecked bullying also damages the bully who learns that he or she can get away with violence, aggression and threats and that this sort of behaviour gets them what they want. Children who bully need to learn different ways of behaving