



**Five  
Rivers®**

**FIVE RIVERS  
CHILDCARE LTD**

**Anti-Bullying  
Policy &  
Procedure**

*'Five Rivers is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment'*

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## 1. Anti-Bullying Policy

### 1.1 Policy Statement

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our young people so they can live and learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. 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 company. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

This policy has been written with reference to the DfE guidance on Preventing and tackling bullying and should be read in conjunction with the behaviour policy.

### 1.2 Terms and Definitions

The below table sets out a number of terms and definitions used within this document:

Term	Definition
Nil.	

### 1.3 Data Protection

Five Rivers Child Care supports the objectives of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and other legislation relating to Data Processing, including the Human Rights Act 1998, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Five Rivers Child Care has a statutory obligation to process personal data in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018

Every member of Five Rivers Child Care has an obligation to ensure that the information they process (use) is collected, maintained and disclosed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Five Rivers Child Care Data Protection Policy.

### 1.4 Disclosure of Information

Any use or disclosure of information held within Five Rivers Child Care, without there being a legitimate purpose or legal basis, will comply with the requirements of the GDPR & Data Protection Act, 2018.

## Anti-Bullying

### 2. What Is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Cyber – bullying via technology
- Sexual/sexist - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, ostracising children

#### 2.1 Prejudice-based bullying and protected characteristics

Bullying behaviour may arise from prejudice relating to perceived or actual differences between people leading to dislike and hatred of individuals and groups and to behaviour and language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or discriminatory with regards to a person's beliefs, disability, relationship status or other aspects of their identity or perceived identity.

The Equality Act, 2010 supports progress on equality, particularly in relation to the protected characteristics, some which include:

Age

Disability

Gender reassignment

Marriage and civil partnership

Pregnancy and civil partnership

Race

Religion or belief

Sex

Sexual orientation. **Please see Appendix A for all.**

It is important to recognise that some characteristics not covered by the Equalities Act 2010 can also be subject to prejudice-based bullying as they relate to perceived or actual differences, such as children and young people who are care-experienced, are economically disadvantaged or who are Young Carers. See Appendix A

## 2.2 Prevention

We will use various methods for helping young people to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing a set of rules
- signing an anti-bullying contract
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to them
- making up role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters
- lessons regarding internet safety
- taking part in anti-bullying week

## 2.3 Reactive strategies

Strategies will be fair, proportionate, consistent, and reasonable and take account of the pupils needs. Once details are obtained, the purpose should always be that an explanation is given to the bully to reinforce that their action is inappropriate in order that the likelihood of re-occurrence is reduced.

Bullies should always be held to account for their behaviour. Facing up to the consequences of why their actions were inappropriate, and to understand the repercussions of their actions and given the chance to make amends. The victim should be given strategies appropriate to their needs which may include; peer mentoring, extra supervision, befriending, counselling or support group work.

## 2.4 Sign and symptoms

A young person may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a young person:

- is frightened at any time
- does not want to take part in activities with others
- changes their usual routine
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- has clothes torn or property damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)

- has other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or young people
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### 3. Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Young people who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. We all have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

#### 3.1 Cyber Bullying

Cyberbullying is incredibly worrying as it reduces the anonymity of the bully, is increasingly difficult to stop, but has the capacity to reach a massive audience. When cyberbullying is reported to staff they should try to obtain physical evidence from texts or emails in order to have substantiated evidence. It is vital that staff follow the same reactive strategies and procedures as outlined further in this document.

Consequences should be the same as for other types of bullying. As the clarity of cyberbullying may be distorted; there may be many bystanders who become participants and they may not see themselves as being part of the bullying, however, they are still involved and must be instructed that their involvement may accentuate the level of torment for the victim.

There are many types of cyber-bullying. Although here may be some of which we are unaware, here are the more common:

- Text messages —that are threatening or cause discomfort - also included here is "bluejacking" (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using "Bluetooth" wireless technology)
- Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed.
- Mobile phone calls — silent calls or abusive messages; or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible.
- Emails — threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name.
- Chatroom bullying — menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in web-based chatroom.

- Instant messaging (IM) — unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger) or Yahoo Chat – although there are others.
- Bullying via websites/social media — use of blogs and personal websites.

### 3.2 Sexting

Whilst professionals refer to the issue as ‘sexting’ there is no clear definition of ‘sexting’. Many professionals consider sexting to be ‘sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet.’ Yet when young people are asked ‘What does sexting mean to you?’ they are more likely to interpret sexting as ‘writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know’. Similarly, many parents think of sexting as flirty or sexual text messages rather than images.

**NB:** Further guidance: Sexting in schools: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people.

This advice only covers the sharing of sexual imagery by young people. Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal and therefore causes the greatest complexity for schools and other agencies when responding. It also presents a range of risks, which need careful management.

On this basis this advice introduces the phrase ‘youth produced sexual imagery’ and uses this instead of ‘sexting.’ This is to ensure clarity about the issues this advice addresses.

‘Youth produced sexual imagery’ best describes the practice because:

- ‘Youth produced’ includes young people sharing images that they, or another young person, have created of themselves.
- ‘Sexual’ is clearer than ‘indecent.’ A judgement of whether something is ‘decent’ is both a value judgement and dependent on context.
- ‘Imagery’ covers both still photos and moving videos

Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Cyber-bullying leaves no physical scars so it is, perhaps, less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe. Young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology, an area that can seem a closed world to adults.

Our pupils are taught how to:

- Understand how to use these technologies safely and know about the risks and consequences of misusing them.
- Know what to do if they or someone they know are being cyberbullied.
- Report any problems with cyberbullying.
- If they do have a problem, they can talk to the school, parents, the police, the mobile network (for phone) or the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to do something about it.

At our school, we take this bullying as seriously as other types of bullying and, therefore, will deal with each situation individually. The Consequences agreed throughout the home/school/company are to be used as Consequences for cyberbullies in the same way as any other act of bullying. An episode may result in a simple verbal warning. It might result in further agreed Consequences.

Clearly, more serious cases will result in further Consequences.

**NB. Further guidance:** Cyberbullying: Advice for head teachers and school staff.

## 4. Whole school

All students will be taught the importance of reporting bullying and the impact that bullying has on people. Events, such as anti-bullying week, online safety will also be incorporated into the curriculum.

### 4.1 On and offsite premises

Pupils will be educated about the impact of bullying and the importance of reporting it, whether it happens on site, off the school premises or online.

School staff will keep an open ear at all times and close eye on any known hot spots on the school premises where bullying may take place.

All pupils are supervised at all times throughout the day.

### 4.2 Responding to Bullying

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Young people who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. We all have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### 4.3 Reporting Bullying

All staff will receive training on Preventing Bullying and will sign to say that they have read the schools anti-bullying policy.

Report bullying incidents to the Head teacher. The Head teacher will investigate the incident and decide on the next best course of action.

In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff and social workers will be informed and a meeting will be held. If necessary and appropriate, other authorities will be consulted.

The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.



#### 4.4 Investigating Incidents

Staff will take time to listen to all children involved, including the victim, the bully and any witnesses.

Our school adopts a culture to ensure all school members feel confident to report bullying and it is not thought to be snitching when ensuring all pupils safety. Pupils will know who they can speak to.

#### 4.5 Working with victims

- Listen carefully to the child and look out for the signs.
- Never label the bullied child as a problem.
- Reassure the child that you will help it to stop.
- Ask them what they need you to do in the short and long term.
- Agree an action plan together and regularly check in with them.

#### 4.6 Working with bullies

- Listen to their side of the story.
- Consider whether there is a history of bullying and aggressive behaviour.
- Who else was involved, was it retaliation?
- What is their intention with bullying?
- Educate them to understand the impact bullying has.
- Refer to policy with regards to sanctions imposed.

#### 4.7 Working with reinforcers

- Listen to their side of the story.
- Explore the ways in which they were involved.
- Explore what they could have done differently.
- Educate them to understand the impact bullying has.
- Refer to policy with regards to sanctions imposed.

#### 4.8 Defenders

- Listen to their side of the story.
- Explore the ways in which they supported the victim of bullying and how it has made a difference.
- Praise them for their behaviour and discuss ways forward in defending victims of bullying and influencing change in the bullies.

#### 4.9 Consequences

Consequences available should depend on the severity of the situation and be hierarchal. All cases should be treated individually depending on the effect and circumstances. Actions

can be changed but feelings are a personal issue. Those investigating should judge the situation using their own professional feelings as well as those of the victim. They may not always be punitive. Consequences could include:

- Mediation with victim
- Restorative Justice Programs: Restorative practice plays a large part in preventing and helping to resolve the conflict.

In serious cases, a consequence will be considered and agreed with the registered manager. If possible, the young people will be reconciled. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be continuously monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

## 5. Advice for Students

The internet can be a fantastic resource but it can also be a dangerous place if you don't keep yourself safe and secure online. It is important to remember that not everyone you may meet on the internet will be who they say they are. So think very carefully about how you use the internet. Never give out your passwords or any private information for example. You must certainly never agree to meet anyone you've met online – always speak to your parents if you are asked to do so.

The internet is also a place where bullying can easily occur. You need to think very carefully about any of the pictures or videos that you post of yourself. This includes items that you may send via text message. If you ever receive any kind of abuse online you must tell someone about it, your parents, a family member, a teacher or a friend for example.

If you're being bullied by phone or the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent, or call an advice line.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible.
- Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Don't give out your personal details online - if you're in a chatroom, watch what you say about where you live, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to your carer or teacher as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender.
- There's plenty of online advice on how to react to cyberbullying.

### 5.1 Text/video Messaging

You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number. To find out how to do this, visit [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org).

If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider.

Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages. Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.

Don't delete messages from cyberbullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

Text harassment is a crime. If the calls are simply annoying, tell a teacher, or carer. If they are threatening or malicious and they persist, report them to the police, taking with you all the messages you've received.

### 5.2 Phone Calls

If you get an abusive or silent phone call, don't hang up immediately. Instead, put the phone down and walk away for a few minutes. Then hang up or turn your phone off. Once they realise they can't get you rattled, callers usually get bored and stop bothering you. Always tell someone else: a teacher, key worker, or carer. Get them to support you and monitor what's going on.

Don't give out personal details such as your phone number to just anyone. And never leave your phone lying around. When you answer your phone, just say 'hello', not your name. If they ask you to confirm your phone number, ask what number they want and then tell them if they've got the right number or not.

Use your voicemail to vet your calls. A lot of mobiles display the caller's number. See if you recognise it. If you don't, let it divert to voicemail instead of answering it. And don't leave your name on your voicemail greeting. You could get an adult to record your greeting. Their voice might stop the caller ringing again. Almost all calls nowadays can be traced. If the problem continues, think about changing your phone number.

If you receive calls that scare or trouble you, make a note of the times and dates and report them to the police. If your mobile can record calls, take the recording too.

### 5.3 Emails

Never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails ('flames') — the sender wants a response, so don't give them that satisfaction. Keep the emails as evidence. And tell an adult about them.

Never reply to someone you don't know, even if there's an option to 'unsubscribe'.  
Replying simply confirms your email address as a real one.

#### 5.4 Web Bullying

If the bullying is on a website, tell a teacher or parent/carer, just as you would if the bullying was face-to-face – even if you don't actually know the bully's identity.

Serious bullying should be reported to the police - for example threats of a physical or sexual nature.

Your carer or teacher will help you do this.

#### 5.5 Chat Rooms and Instant Messaging

Never give out your name, address, phone number, or password online. It's a good idea to use a nickname. And don't give out photos of yourself.

Don't accept emails or open files from people you don't know. Remember it might not just be people your own age in a chat room.

Stick to public areas in chat rooms and get out if you feel uncomfortable. Tell your carers if you feel uncomfortable or worried about anything that happens in a chat room.

Think carefully about what you write; don't leave yourself open to bullying. Don't ever give out passwords to your mobile or email account.

## Appendix A

*The following explanations of Prejudice-based bullying are from Appendix 2 of Respect For All: A National approach to bullying.*

**Additional Support Needs:** These can arise for any reason and be of short or long-term duration. Additional support may be required to overcome needs arising from learning environment; health or disability; family circumstances or social and emotional factors, and therefore may relate to a protected characteristic. A child or young person may be bullied because they have an additional support need and crucially being bullied can also lead to an additional support need.

**Age:** Age is a protected characteristic although prejudice and discrimination based on age is not applicable in school settings, it can affect children and young people in a variety of other settings. For example, in workplaces, further and higher education and in wider society.

**Asylum Seekers and Refugees:** Children and Young people who are asylum seekers or refugees may be at greater risk of bullying directly and indirectly. Some bullying behaviour against these groups may be of a racist nature which, given that race is a protected characteristic, can contravene equality legislation and have hate crime implications. Stigma, due to lack of knowledge and, given that race is a protected characteristic, understanding of asylum seekers and refugees, and reluctance to burden parents with extra worries can allow bullying to go undetected and continue.

**Body Image and Physical Appearance:** This can be hugely important to children and young people with bullying because of body image having the potential to negatively impact on their wellbeing. In some cases, body image and physical appearance may relate to a protected characteristic, such as race or disability.

**Disability:** Disability is a Protected Characteristic. People who bully others may see disabled children and young people as being less able to defend themselves and less able to tell an adult about the bullying. The language and behaviour used may be a result of a lack of understanding about the nature of a person's disability. Increased understanding about disability and the impact it can have can help reduce bullying.

**Gender Identity and Transphobic Bullying:** The term 'transgender' is an umbrella term for those whose gender identity or expression differs in some way from the sex that was assigned to them at birth. Gender identity reflects an individual's internal sense of self as being male, female, neither or aspects of both. Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic. Transgender people face significant societal prejudice largely because they are perceived as not conforming to gender stereotypes, expectations and norms. As a result, transgender children and young people can be particularly vulnerable to bullying.

This can manifest in many ways including transphobic name calling or deliberately misgendering them. An individual may also experience transphobic bullying if someone is perceived to be transgender or someone they are associate with, is transgender, i.e. a

parent, relative or other significant figure. The term 'gender reassignment' is a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010 and refers to those who propose to go through, are going through, or have gone through a process of gender re-assignment.

**Gypsy/Travellers:** Children and young people who are Gypsy/Travellers may be at greater risk of bullying directly and indirectly. Some bullying behaviour against these groups may be of a racist nature which, given that race is a protected characteristic, can contravene equality legislation and have hate crime implications. Perceived risks about bullying and given that race is a protected characteristic parents' own experiences of discriminatory behaviour may lead to low levels of enrolment and poor attendance for Gypsy/Traveller children and young people as well as early exit from formal education. Other Traveller families, such as Roma, may have similar concerns.

**Sexual Orientation, Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying:** Sexual orientation is a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010. Bullying based on sexual orientation is largely motivated by prejudice towards lesbian, gay or bisexual people. Homophobic bullying is when a young person's actual or perceived sexual orientation is used to exclude, threaten, hurt, or humiliate them. Any young person can be homophobic bullied, whether they are LGBT or not. Sometimes young people can be homophobic bullied because others think that they are LGBT, because they have LGBT family or friends or often because they are seen as different or not conforming to traditional gender stereotypes. Transgender children and young people can therefore also experience homophobic bullying. Homophobic language and jokes around the school can create a climate of homophobia; for example, the use of the word 'gay' to mean sub-standard or uncool. This type of language should therefore be addressed.

**Intersectionality:** Understanding the different and unequal social and economic outcomes for particular groups, based on intersections between race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and age. In the context of anti-bullying, it is important to understand the connection between the experience of belonging to one or more of these groups and a resultant inequality in attainment and wellbeing.

**Care experienced Children and Young People:** Care experienced children and young people can be particularly vulnerable to bullying. Children can face bullying behaviour simply because they are care-experienced and seen in some way as 'different'. Children who are looked after away from home can also experience bullying behaviour in their residential care home, at school and in their community. Care-experienced children and young people may not always have a stable support network to turn to when experiencing bullying. For some children forming positive relationships with peers and adults can be more difficult due to their early childhood adversity. Developing trusting and supportive relationships between children and practitioners is required to address bullying of all forms and in all settings.

**Marriage/Civil Partnership:** Marriage and civil partnership is a protected characteristic. Whilst it is unlikely that a school-aged pupil will be in a same sex marriage or civil partnership and directly experience prejudice and discrimination as a result, there could be

instances of indirect discrimination, for example, if the child or young person is associated with someone (parent, sibling, etc.) who is in a same sex marriage or civil partnership or in a same sex relationship. Marriage and civil partnership discrimination and prejudice can also affect children and young people in a variety of other settings, for example, in workplaces, further and higher education and in wider society.

**Racism and Race:** Race is a protected characteristic. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups often experience bullying based on perceived differences in dress, communication, appearance, beliefs and/or culture as well as their skin colour and accent. The status of the ethnic group a child belongs to (or people assume they belong to) in a school, community or organisation can often lead to a child or young person experiencing bullying behaviour. This can arise from a misguided and/or learned belief that they are less valued and 'deserve' to be treated differently, or with less respect.

**Religion or Belief:** Religion or belief is a protected characteristic. Lack of knowledge and understanding about the traditions, beliefs and etiquette of different faiths can lead to religious intolerance. Lack of awareness about the differences in practices of religions such as prayer times, dietary requirements, fasting and the wearing of religious clothing or articles of faith can result in misunderstandings and stereotyping, which may lead to bullying. People who have a religion or belief as well as those who do not, are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

**Sectarianism:** Most people understandably associate sectarianism with religion, which is a protected characteristic. The reality of prejudice however means that your family background, the football team you support, the community you live in, the school you attend and even the colour of your clothing can mark you out for sectarian abuse whatever your beliefs may be. In Scotland, sectarianism is most often related to Protestant and Roman Catholic divisions within Christianity but can also relate to other religions, for example Sunni and Shia Muslims within Islam, and Orthodox and Reform Jews within Judaism.

**Sexism and Gender:** Sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment are all protected characteristics. Bullying in the form of derogatory language and the spreading of malicious rumours can be used to regulate both girls' and boys' behaviour – suggesting that they are not being a real man or a real woman. These terms can be of an explicit sexual nature and it is worth noting that many can involve using terms for people who are gay and lesbian as a negative towards a person's masculinity or femininity. Sexism and gender stereotypes feed into homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Gender stereotyping, based on the notion of acceptable and unacceptable male and female behaviour, can leave children and young people who are perceived not to conform to these notions vulnerable to indirect and direct bullying. Personality traits that do not fit into the unwritten rules of 'appropriate' male and female behaviour can lead to bullying because of the prejudice towards their perceived difference.

**Socio-economic Prejudice:** Bullying due to socio-economic status can take place in any community. Small differences in perceived family income/family living arrangements/ social circumstances or values can be used as a basis for bullying behaviours. These

behaviours, such as mocking speech patterns, accents, belongings, clothing, etc can become widespread through those considering themselves to be in the dominant socioeconomic group. Bullying of children who endure parental substance misuse can also be prevalent.

**Young Carers:** The lives of young carers can be significantly affected by their responsibility to care for a family member who has a physical illness or disability, mental health problem, sensory or learning disability or issues with the misuse of drugs or alcohol. Young carers are at risk of bullying for a variety of reasons. Depending on responsibilities at home, they may find themselves being unable to fully participate in school or after-school activities or 'fun stuff'. This can make it difficult for them to form relationships; it can hinder successful transitions or lead to educational difficulties.