



Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Statement

Play Inclusion Project is committed to providing a caring, supportive and friendly environment where children and young people learn to value and respect each other and are challenged to reach their full potential through active participation. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to contribute in whatever way they can to promote and protect such an environment.

Play Inclusion Project also:

- Respects every child and young person's need for, and rights to, an environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available
- Respects every individual's feelings and views
- Recognises that everyone is important and that our differences make us unique
- Shows appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress

Definition

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. It is an abuse of power that results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures)
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Discrimination** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, homophobic comments, jokes about someone's disability, sexist comments
- **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber bullying** - using online spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging. Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to actions that

may cause women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, or people who follow specific religions or beliefs, to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued.

Signs and Indicators

A child 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 child:

- says he or she is being bullied
- is unwilling to go to sessions
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- feels ill before sessions
- comes home with clothes torn or belongings damaged
- has possessions go “missing”
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- is frightened to say what’s wrong
- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stopping eating
- attempting or threatening suicide or running away
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

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

Bullying as a Result of any Form of Discrimination

Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability.

Generally, these forms of bullying look like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include:

- Verbal abuse – derogatory remarks about girls or women, suggesting girls and women are inferior to boys and men, or that black, Asian and ethnic minority people are not as capable as white people; spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are “gay” – for example, “you’re such a gay boy!” or “those trainers are so

gay!” Ridiculing someone because of a disability or mental health related issue

- Physical abuse – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour

Racist and Religious Bullying

Racist bullying can be defined as ‘A range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status’.

No young person should be made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion. Forms of racism which are the result of ignorance are nevertheless hurtful to the recipient and other members of that group. It is vital that all young people are valued and learn to respect others. Adults should make their stance on racist behaviour clear to all young people so as to discourage racist behaviour and to encourage reporting if it does take place.

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, all public bodies have a duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good race relations. Tackling racist bullying is a key part of fulfilling this duty.

Sexual, Sexist and Transphobic Bullying

Sexual bullying includes any behaviour, whether physical or non-physical, where sexuality is used as a weapon by boys or by girls. It can be carried out to a person’s face, behind their back or by use of technology. Sexist bullying refers to bullying simply because the victim is a girl or a boy, based on singling out something specifically gender linked.

Transphobic bullying refers to bullying because someone is, or is thought to be, transgender. While young people may express an acceptance of sexual/sexist or transphobic insults because they are widely used, such insults are often used to bully someone.

Inappropriate touching can also be a form of bullying or harassment and may escalate into abuse. Similarly, ‘jokes’ about sexual assault, or rape, if unchallenged, can create an atmosphere in which this behaviour is seen as more acceptable.

Homophobic Bullying

Homophobic bullying targets someone because of their sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation). It can be particularly difficult for a young person to

report and is often directed at them at a very sensitive phase of their lives when identity is being developed. What might be called banter can be deemed harassment if it is at the expense of someone's dignity and meant offensively.

The term 'gay' as an insult is unacceptable and should always be challenged, as such use can create an atmosphere in which a young person feels denigrated and even hounded. The term 'gay' is sometimes used as a proxy for racist or disablist bullying because young people may believe they can get away with using these words in an abusive way, whereas racist insults would be challenged by staff.

Bullying on the Grounds of Disability

Bullying involving young people with disabilities employs many of the same forms as other types of bullying, with name calling and pushing and shoving being common.

Additional forms include:

- Manipulative bullying, where the perpetrator tries to get the victim to act in a certain way – do something they should not do – steal from a newsagent for example, when they may not be able to recognise that they should not do this.
- Bullying that exploits a particular aspect of a condition such as sensitivity to sensory stimuli, lights and sounds.

Cyberbullying

When bullying happens online it can involve social networks, games and mobile devices. Online bullying can also be known as cyberbullying. Cyberbullying can include videos, pictures and text messages.

Cyberbullying includes:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- spreading rumours about someone
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.

Procedures

- Any reported incidents or suspicions of bullying should be reported to the relevant Area Manager.
- The Area Manager will investigate the complaint objectively and will listen carefully to all those involved, explaining the inappropriateness and consequences of reported behaviours. Where possible, the parties will be brought together to see if the issue can be resolved with a (genuine) apology.
- If the issue cannot be resolved as outlined above the matter will be passed to the CEO who will then investigate further.
- If appropriate, parents of those involved will be informed and asked to meet with the CEO to discuss the situation.
- If the issue is not resolved, the CEO will bring together a small panel (Board member, Chairman, Area Manager) to meet with the parties both together and separately to try and resolve the issue.
- If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached, the small panel will decide on the course of action to be taken.
- If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
- All reported cases will be recorded on an incident form and filed appropriately.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club under 18

- The CEO should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate, this may include action following the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.
- It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a member of staff or volunteer, safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Social Care