

A group of diverse children and young people are smiling and looking towards the camera. The image is a close-up, low-angle shot of several children of various ethnicities and ages, all appearing happy and engaged. They are arranged in a circle, with their faces filling most of the frame. The background is bright and out of focus.

Anti-Bullying Policy

for services who work with children
and young people



Foreword

I am pleased to recommend this updated Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance to you.

This document has been produced to inform and support anti-bullying work in all children's settings across the borough including our schools, youth services, children's homes and nurseries.

When children and young people are asked about what matters to them bullying often comes up as an issue.

Children and young people can't learn and grow in confidence unless they feel safe and I know that we all share a commitment to help children and young people in the borough achieve their potential.

I hope you find this policy and guidance useful in ensuring that we all play our part in dealing with bullying effectively.



Cheryl Eastwood

Executive Director: Children's Services

Anti-Bullying Policy and guidance supporting children and young people in all Rochdale settings

Bullying can happen anywhere. To tackle bullying successfully, the whole community and all services for children and young people need to work together to change the culture so that bullying is unacceptable.

1. Our vision is:

- to promote emotional health and well-being in all settings for children and young people in Rochdale so that bullying behaviour is unlikely to prosper
- for all citizens of Rochdale to recognise bullying as an unacceptable, anti-social behaviour, and actively work together to challenge it
- that schools, children and young people's settings and other associated organisations working with children and young people should recognise and state categorically in their Anti-Bullying Policy that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- to make everyone aware that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. This means that it is the responsibility of all staff working with children and young people in Rochdale to take responsibility to prevent, challenge and respond to bullying wherever it occurs. It is also expected that no staff will exhibit bullying behaviour in their own working practice and that all staff will model behaviour that is supportive and encouraging. **Bullying is not somebody else's problem.**

2. Our aims:

The Aims of this policy are:

- to raise awareness of the nature and impact of bullying and what systems are in place to deal with this
- to promote a consistent and coherent approach towards identifying, challenging and responding to bullying
- to promote the emotional resilience of children and young people to deal more effectively with bullying in all settings
- to encourage all settings to promote a culture of openness to deal more effectively with bullying
- to promote the understanding that the management of bullying is the responsibility of us all.

3. Definitions

Bullying can be described as:

“Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”

Refer to: ‘Safe to Learn’ 2007, Department for Children Schools and Families -

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn/



4. Children and young people in the Borough of Rochdale say (Tell Us survey and Children and Young People's Plan consultations 2010/11):

'We need more police for protection and to feel safe on the streets'.

'We need more Community Cohesion between schools so that children and young people get on better out of school'.

'Should be focusing on keeping children/young people safe across the borough by tackling drug dealers, teenage gangs, robbers and dogs off a lead'.

'Living in Rochdale would be made better if there were more bicycle lanes, more high quality play areas, less racism, more litter collections and more bins for the litter, every alleyway having a gate to stop bad things happening'.

For more information on the nature and impact of bullying, please refer to:

► **Appendix 1 - What Do We Mean by Bullying?**



5. What is the effect of bullying?

Bullying can seriously damage children and young people's confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. It can lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage for an individual. Those who bully or witness the bullying can also experience emotional harm, and the impact on parents and staff can be significant.



The most common effects of bullying are:

- Anxiety and depression that can lead to intermittent and long-term absence from school, physical illness, psychosomatic complaints or even suicide
- Poor self-esteem, which inhibits pupils from forming positive relationships, leads to feelings of worthlessness and betrayal, and causes some to lower their expectations, standards of work and therefore their academic attainments
- Withdrawal, which may lead to low participation in school and other activities
- The effects of bullying can last well into adulthood.

Possible indicators of bullying are:

disturbed sleep, bed-wetting, head and stomach aches, problems with concentration, changes in behaviour and attitude, truanting, bullying other children, damaged or missing clothes/money/ property, asking for more money than usual or stealing money, eating disorders, nervous when receiving cyber messages and self-harm or risk of suicide. All adults need to be aware of these potential indicators and investigate any they notice.

6. How can we recognise bullying?

Identifying bullying is not easy and the following messages should be considered when determining whether a situation is a bullying one:

- perceptions of the victim – their feelings and interpretation
- those being bullied are not in a position to stop the process and it is up to those adults working with children & young people to recognise bullying and to respond
- it is not usually as noticeable or obvious to others
- it is the effect that is the key determining factor, not the action
- it is a persistent situation, not isolated incidents
- it has the intent to hurt or upset the victim
- it is not limited to physical hurt - it can be social and/or psychological.

7. The National Context

Guidance from Central Government

Anti-bullying has risen in priority during the last decade. The Department for Children, Schools & Families (now Department for Education) published a comprehensive set of guidance for all settings where children and young people access services – **Safe To Learn; embedding Anti-Bullying work in schools, and Safe From Bullying; Anti-Bullying in the community.**

A number of related initiatives are being promoted in the school curriculum, including Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning 'SEAL', Healthy Schools, Rights Respecting Schools and Restorative Approaches.

The Legal Context

Anti-bullying is a major priority in keeping children safe and therefore all settings where children and young people are involved have a duty to respond to bullying issues. Local Authorities are required to have an Anti-Bullying Policy, as are schools and other Children's settings.

For more information on the National & Legal Context please refer to:

► **Appendix 2 - The National Context & Legal Responsibilities**

8. The Local Context

Anti-Bullying in Rochdale

The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is an interim one year plan that will ensure a clear strategic lead for continuing to improve the wellbeing of children and young people, whilst working to develop the CYPP for 2011-2014.

In Rochdale, we believe that all children and young people have the right to a safe and happy upbringing, to be loved and to be respected and understood, regardless of their background or circumstances. We want our children and young people to accept responsibility, make positive choices, participate in a wide range of opportunities and experiences, to have high aspirations for their own futures and to enjoy and achieve at every level. We are committed to developing our workforce to achieve this vision. Through effective integrated working, early identification of need and strategies for prevention, we will focus on the needs of the most vulnerable and on closing the gap so that children and young people do not fall behind in achieving their full potential.

Under 'Staying Safe' a key priority of the CYPP is that 'Children and young people are protected from harm, feel safe and are safe within their communities.'

The outcomes we are expecting to achieve for all children & young people include:

- children and young people are able to tell us that they feel safe
- identify and deal effectively with bullying and support all children, young people and families who have been affected by it
- fewer children and young people experience bullying
- children and young people are protected from harm, abuse and neglect.

Rochdale is working to address bullying as a community concern, promoting a consistent approach across all organised settings where children and young people are involved. All settings need to acknowledge that problems exist and that bullying occurs everywhere – the duty to tackle bullying does not rest with one agency or one person alone, it is everyone's responsibility.

Rochdale's Anti-Bullying steering group involves representatives from a range of settings, including schools, school support services, FE settings, youth services, voluntary and community organisations, early years' settings, health professionals, transport and the police.

Children, young people and parents/carers are consulted on strategic decisions and Anti-Bullying Policy development through existing forums, for example, The Children's Society, Anti-Bullying Alliance, The Big Listen, Youth Council, Children's Council, Children's Forums, and Children's Empowerment Team and School Councils.

Rights Responsibility Respect

We seek to teach the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 3 (best interests of the child) which states that:

"The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers".



Article 4 of the convention (Protection of rights) states:

"Governments have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

When countries ratify the Convention, they agree to review their laws relating to children. This involves assessing their social services, legal, health and educational systems, as well as levels of funding for these services. Governments are then obliged to take all necessary steps to ensure that the minimum standards set by the Convention in these areas are being met. They must help families protect children's rights and create an environment where they can grow and reach their potential."

It is the understanding that any act of bullying will contravene the UNCRC and is therefore unacceptable, whether this is between children and young people, between adults and children and young people or by children and young people to adults.

This policy addresses bullying between children and young people.

Within Rochdale we are promoting Rights, Responsibility and Respect in schools and other settings where children & young people access services. We believe that we endeavour to work together to “Grow” all our Children and Young People to be rightful, responsible and respectful.

We seek to teach our children and young people the skills to ensure responsibility, social emotional and behavioural skills. This includes self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and the skills to build self-esteem by having a sense of self, sense of personal power and the sense of belonging and thinking skills.

These come together to be termed ‘Personal Learning and Thinking skills’.

Roles and Responsibilities

Children’s Trust - Children and Young People’s Plan

- To review, monitor and report on the performance, impact and achievement of Anti-bullying actions set out in the Rochdale Children and Young People’s Plan
- To support the implementation and monitoring of Rochdale’s Anti-bullying Guidance.

Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Board

- To ensure that any issues identified in respect of bullying through Child Death Overview processes or Serious Case Reviews are addressed.



All People Working with Children and Young People should:

- familiarise themselves with this and their own organisation's Anti-Bullying Policy and have an awareness of how their work contributes to its implementation
- work to promote the principles and ethos of the Anti-Bullying Policy through their own work with and around children and young people
- recognise Anti-bullying as a shared responsibility

- refuse to be a bystander if bullying is witnessed. Bystanding is not passive; witnesses to bullying play very different roles, some more active than others and these contribute significantly to what takes place. 'Doing nothing' has a real impact on events and may cause harm
- ensure that all individual Children's settings develop and communicate a written anti-bullying policy and guidance in line with Rochdale's Anti-Bullying Policy and that staff in these settings have read and understood the policy.

Please refer to:

- ▶ **Appendix 3 - Effective Anti-Bullying Policy checklist for all settings**
- ▶ **Appendix 4 - Model Anti-Bullying Policy, schools & settings**



Adults who bully

If an adult bullies a child, procedures should be in place to enable the child to complain about the bullying to a trusted adult within the children's setting or school. The relevant complaints and disciplinary procedures should be implemented immediately, with support arrangements in place for the child victim whilst the complaint is being investigated.

When there is a concern that an adult employed by or accredited as a volunteer by any public, private or voluntary agency and who is entrusted with the care or control of a child or has contact with a child in the course of their work, has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children (which may include allegations of bullying from a child against an adult) the incident should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer following the procedures for Allegations against Staff, Carers and Volunteers.

Each service and school within the Council has a designated lead Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer. Any concerns about staff conduct, should, in the first instance, be discussed with the designated CP/Safeguarding lead within that service or school for advice.

Adults who are bullied

Although we are considering bullying mainly in the context of children being bullied by other children or by adults, it is necessary to recognise that adults within our children's settings and schools may also be subject to bullying. This bullying may be by another adult in the same way as children bully other children, but there are also situations where an adult may be bullied by a child or a group of children. Examples of this form of bullying are name-calling, using threatening gestures and signs/symbols, misuse of technology, e.g. camera & video facilities used to record "happy slapping" and assaults on mobile phones, etc.

When an adult is being bullied by another adult, there are procedures within the workplace which can be used to deal with the situation. However, when the context is of an adult being bullied by a child or group of children, the response will be similar to that applying to child-to-child bullying, i.e. the safety and support of the victim will be the primary concern whilst the behaviour of the bully/bullies is challenged and addressed.

The children's setting/school needs to adopt firm measures to protect staff from bullying by children/pupils both on and off site.

When facing bullying off site, staff need to be made aware that they have the same rights of protection from threats as any citizen in a public place and that their first concern must be for their personal safety. Staff should be advised to:

- make it known to the child/children that they have been recognised
- use their judgement as to how best to get away safely from the situation without escalating the confrontation
- consult and discuss with designated safeguarding/CP lead in the service/school
- ensure that staff comply with 'Safe Working Practice' protocols especially those around social networking sites and the use of electronic equipment and mobile phones.

The children's setting/school should address bullying behaviour with the child/ren when they are next in the setting/school.

9. Key Guidance and Support networks

In Rochdale there are a number of support services/partnerships working together to minimise the effects of bullying. These are:

- The Children's Society, Anti-Bullying Team – Provide training to school staff/other organisations and signpost to support networks
- Safer Schools Partnership – (Police, YOT, Education and Youth Service) includes professionals trained in Restorative Practice approaches to deal with incidents of bullying and other associated practice
- Healthy Schools – promotes physical and emotional health and wellbeing of students both in and out of school, (including incidents of bullying which features prominently in the Enhanced Healthy School model)
- Safeguarding/Child Protection designated staff in schools and services – Each service and school has a nominated Safeguarding/CP lead to deal with issues of abuse and bullying against children, young people and adults in that setting. They should be consulted in the first instance for support and advice.

► **Appendix 5 - Key Guidance & Support**

► **Appendix 6 - Useful resources**

10. The Local Authority

Anti-Bullying Steering Group has extended its membership and developed this Anti-Bullying Policy over the last year for all children's settings. This is in response to the government policy suite of guidance 'Safe from Bullying' in the community.

The group consists of representation from:

- The Attendance & Safeguarding Team
- Healthy Schools Team
- The Children's Society
- North West Regional Anti-Bullying Alliance
- Behaviour Management Development Team
- Children and Family Empowerment Team
- Extended Schools
- Rochdale 6th Form
- Hopwood Hall College
- Safer Schools Partnership
- School Travel
- Community Cohesion
- Children in Care
- Educational Psychology
- Youth Service.



**Appendices available from www.rochdale.gov.uk
on the bullying and harassment policy page.**

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