



Anti-Bullying Policy

Creating an anti-bullying environment

1. Blossom Ireland recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of service-users and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - A positive culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages our service users to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across our services.
 - Effective leadership;
 - An organisation-wide approach;
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in service-users; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of children and vulnerable adults;
 - Supports for staff;
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.



What is Bullying?

2. Bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, by the services co-ordinator.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Bullying can be:

Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being unfriendly, name calling, excluding • Tormenting e.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures • Passing on malicious gossip • Excluding another child from play or activities
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, taunting, 'slagging'
Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile threats by text messaging and calls, social networking • Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities
<p>Identity Based Behaviours</p> <p>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>	
Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment

Who can deal with incidents of bullying?

3. The relevant staff member for investigating and dealing with bullying is the co-ordinator of the service during which the bullying has occurred. Lisa Dunne, services development manager, and Imelda Fitzpatrick, services co-ordinator, will also be available to deal with incidents of bullying if appropriate.

How can we prevent bullying?

4. The following education and prevention strategies will be used to avoid bullying incidents.
 - An organisation-wide approach to the fostering of respect, trust, care, consideration and support for all members of the Blossom community.
 - Promoting tolerance, understanding, respecting and accommodating people’s differences.



- Planned transition times between different activities, etc.
- Rules about bullying are very specific so there can be no misconceptions and service-users are aware of the consequences.
- Explicit teaching of what behaviours and actions that constitute being a good friend.
- Examining good dynamics.
- Providing positive role models and celebrating positive behaviour.
- Tackling cyber bullying.
- Explicit teaching of acceptable and unacceptable ways of expressing feelings, how the behaviour can affect others, calming down as an alternative to expressing their anger and frustration inappropriately.
- Recognising individual achievements in the area of social interactions and reinforcing them through the use of praise and rewards.
- Encouraging a culture of telling or reporting incidents of bullying. Service-users should know that when they report incidents of bullying they are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that all service-users know who to tell and how to tell, e.g. teacher, parent/guardian, and witnesses. Non-verbal service users will be facilitated by using visual supports and Lámh.

Bullying investigation procedure

5. The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).
 - Raising Concern – any staff member who becomes aware of bullying, must report it to the Services co-ordinator.
 - Recording – all incidents of bullying or suspected bullying will be recorded by the services co-ordinator.
 - Investigation – an investigation will be led by the services co-ordinator, involving any appropriate parties, in order to resolve the issues.
 - Intervention – appropriate intervention strategies will be decided upon by the services co-ordinator.

6. Supervision and Monitoring of Service-users

Blossom Ireland confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.



7. Prevention of Harassment

Blossom Ireland confirms that the organisation will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of service users or staff or the harassment of service users or staff on any of the following grounds: i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

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