**PREVENTION OF BULLYING POLICY**

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## Policy Statement

Silver Line Homes (SLH) - Purley is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for everyone; and all children have the right to be treated with respect and not to be bullied or harassed at any time. SLH-Purley’s aim is to ensure that children do not identify bullying as a problem at any time whilst in our care.

Through its policy and procedures, SLH-Purley also seeks to comply with the Children’s Home (England) Regulations 2015;

**Regulation 34.3** *The registered person must prepare and implement a policy for the prevention of bullying in the home, which must in particular set out the procedure for dealing with an allegation of bullying.*

Bullying may be defined as the activity of repeated, aggressive behavior intended to hurt another individual, physically, mentally or emotionally. Bullying is characterised by an individual behaving in a certain way to gain **power** over another person.

It can be classified into four types:

* Physical (hitting, punching, or kicking)
* Verbal (name-calling or taunting)
* Relational (destroying peer acceptance and friendships)
* Cyber-bullying (using electronic means to harm others)

It is recognised that bullying, both direct and via social media sites, can be hugely detrimental to both a child’s physical and/or mental health and is a form of abuse.

SLH-Purley has a zero tolerance policy towards any type of bullying and all children in our care are encouraged to report any instance of any type of bullying from any source. They are reassured they will be supported in combating this. If the bullying is emanating from another child or children residing in the home and that child(ren) does not respond positively to direction to change their behaviours, it would always be our aim to move the bully not the victim. This would however be a last resort and discussion would always precede such a move with the aim of enabling the bully to recognise the serious nature and negative impact of their actions and make them aware of the potential consequences.

**Examples of Bullying and Harassment**

Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, reducing someone’s effectiveness by withholding information, ostracism, not giving credit where it is due, belittling someone’s opinion, imposing unfair sanctions;

**Physical**: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;

**Racist**: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;

**Sexual**: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;

**Homophobic**: because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality;

**Verbal**: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, being humiliated in front of others, including teasing and taunting, persistent negative comments and criticism, offensive or abusive personal remarks’ making false allegations;

**Cyber**: all areas of the internet, such as internet chat rooms, email misuse etc;

**Mobile phones**: threats by text messaging and calls;

**Technology**: misuse of camera and video facilities.

Other types of bullying/harassment and intimidating behaviour that people can be subject to can be on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, nationality and skin colour, but can also encompass sexual orientation, disability, age, AIDS/HIV or physical characteristics and of course that the child is known to be in care. There is no one checklist as harassment is often specific to the person, relating to his or her feelings of respect and dignity and may cover anything which “hurts or makes anyone feel bad”. It is a question of whether they feel intimidated, or actions of others disrupt harmonious living. It is essential to remember that it is not the intention of the perpetrator that is key in deciding whether harassment has occurred, but whether the behaviour is unacceptable by normal standards and is disadvantageous. It is also important to distinguish harassment from sexual relationships freely entered into an acceptable to those involved.

In exceptional circumstances it may be the case that a child considers that their treatment by a member or members of staff is tantamount to bullying or, a member of staff feels they are being bullied by a colleague or member of the management team.

In such cases the following definition of bullying would apply:

“***Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair penal sanctions which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines their self-confidence and which may cause them to suffer stress.” (Amicus-MSF Union 1994)****.*

This too is deemed unacceptable and not be tolerated. In the case of a child believing they are being bullied by a member of staff, the SLH-Purley Safeguarding Policy would be applied and the allegation would be regarded in the same way as any other allegation of abuse and investigated as such.

Staff must remain vigilant as a child may be reluctant to disclose that they feel they are being bullied as they fear they will not be believed. If it is considered this is the case, the child should be encouraged to confide in their Social Worker, Key-worker or Independent Person in order to obtain support.

Where a member of staff feels they are being subjected to bullying by a colleague their line manager should be alerted. If the line manager is the perpetrator the Registered Manager and/or the Director should be informed. The allegation would be investigated using SLH-Purley’s Complaints Procedures and if found to be true the bully would be dealt with under the SLH-Purley’s Disciplinary Procedures which could result in the termination of their employment.

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| **Date**: | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
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