

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd** has a duty of care towards all children who attend the service. We support children's development in ways which foster security, confidence and independence. The prevention of bullying is a principle of this. Staff, parents and children work together to create a happy, safe and caring environment. Bullying whether verbal, physical or indirect is not tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

### **Principle**

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 and the Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework.

### **Aim**

- To protect children from all forms of bullying
- To encourage children towards having and maintaining a positive self-image
- To help children view themselves as part of the service and form positive relationships with their peers.
- To provide opportunities for children to discuss bullying with staff members and to equip staff with strategies to recognise and prevent bullying effectively.
- To offer advice and support to all children and parents/carers involved in bullying incidents.

### **Definition**

Bullying can be described as being a persistent attempt to hurt or humiliate someone over a period of time.

### **Types of Bullying**

- Physical (hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, threatening looks, theft and or interference with personal property)
- Verbal (name-calling, teasing, threats, racist remarks)
- Indirect (spreading rumours, exclusion from social groups)

### **Prevention of Bullying**

Staff members are trained to:

- Know the children in their group and familiarise themselves with each child's personality.
- Take into account age and stage of development of the child.
- Constantly monitor children's behaviour during play and meal-times.
- Be vigilant and not tolerate any inappropriate behaviour either inside or outside the setting.
- Give support if a child is being bullied by helping a child to develop coping strategies e.g. by saying 'Stop it' and 'I don't like that'
- Encourage a child to make friends with children who give them support.
- Encourage children to speak out, and to tell a parent or staff member what has happened.
- Discourage any child who displays bullying tendencies and explain to them the inappropriateness of their actions and encourage them to act more politely and

constructively, pointing out the advantages of doing so. Watch for early signs of distress in children.

- Listen, and act appropriately when a child or parent informs them of inappropriate behaviour.

### **Possible signs and symptoms of bullying behaviour**

- Child may display unwillingness to go to the service.
- Loss of concentration, enthusiasm and interest in going to the service.
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.

### **Procedures for dealing with bullying behaviour**

- Incidences of bullying behaviour will be reviewed in the context of the expected general behaviour for the child's age.
- If the bullying incident is of low severity an informal approach may be more appropriate. The group leader may discuss with other staff members and the manager how best to appropriately deal with the bullying behaviour.
- The focus will be to try to discourage and explain to the offending child and to protect and reassure the child being targeted.
- However, with repeated and more serious offences, a more formal approach may be necessary.
- Specific incidences of bullying may be recorded in the children's records.
- The room leader and or manager may discuss the situation with the parents of the child acting inappropriately and will focus on how the staff and parents can improve the behaviour together.
- The situation will be monitored and regular feedback will be given.
- Staff members are also trained to ensure that the child who has bullied someone is not isolated or stigmatised by other children, parents or staff members (e.g. "Johnny is bold again today").
- If after a reasonable amount of time the situation has not improved, the child may be required to follow procedures outlined in the Behavioural Management Policy.
- The parents of the child being victimised will also be informed about the situation and have explained to them how their child is being protected and supported.
- The parents will be assured that the situation will be carefully monitored.

### **Procedure if a parent or child expresses concern regarding alleged bullying behaviour**

- The manager will investigate all concerns raised and decide what necessary measures are to be taken to prevent re-occurrences.
- Both sets of parents will be informed of the actions necessary to improve the situation.
- A time frame will be set for further meetings with parents to discuss, review and modify, where appropriate, the actions being taken.
- The children will be continually monitored.

### **Educating children about bullying**

As part of the curriculum, age-appropriate discussions will take place regarding what the children's understanding of bullying is, why it is wrong, what can be done to discourage it and how to react if they are being bullied and how to help others who are being bullied.

**Communication**

All parents/guardians are informed of this policy on enrolment. Staff members will check with parents that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

A summary of this policy will be included in the parent handbook. This policy will also be reviewed with staff members at induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents in the Policy Folder located in the setting.

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the full policy and procedures at any time upon request. Parents/guardians and all relevant staff members will receive written notification of any updates to this policy.

This policy was adopted by **Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd** on:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
co-Manager

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_