Safer NEL

Online Safety and Anti-Bullying Strategy 2019 - 2021

Supporting North East Lincolnshire's Children and Young People to Keep Safe

1) Introduction & Summary

Children and young people's relationship to technology is increasingly embedded across all walks of life and as such, we cannot address their wellbeing and safety effectively without considering the potential risks that this can bring. Technology, by its nature is constantly evolving, bringing both new opportunities and new risks for all but particularly, for our children and young people.

The potential risks related to the online world do not recognise geographic borders or boundaries and therefore, our focus to ensure the best possible outcomes should not have an insular or isolated approach. In order to achieve this and to ensure the strategic direction remains effective, collaboration, co-ordination and sharing of good practice is essential to success. Educating our children and young people (and those adults who support them) on how to recognise the potential risks and how to deal with them appropriately, should form the core of an effective Online Safety and Anti-Bullying Strategy. Safer NEL is committed to ensuring that children and young people are supported to use the internet safely by developing a collective framework for all stakeholders across the local area to enable a cohesive focus and common approach.

Safer NEL is committed to the reduction of all forms of bullying, harassment and discriminatory behaviour. We believe that every child and young person has the right to grow, play and learn in a safe environment, and be free from any intimidation and harassment of any kind. We recognise that particular groups of children and young people may be particularly at risk of bullying. However, for any victim, bullying can have far-reaching effects on their emotional wellbeing, social development, health and education and can have life- long consequences.

Bullying is a sensitive issue for all involved, the victim, parents/carers, professionals, witnesses and for perpetrators and their families. Dealing with bullying and harassment requires the highest professional standards and practices. We are committed to ensuring that professionals in all settings are supported and equipped in dealing with bullying in an appropriate and consistent manner.

2) The Aim of the Strategy

There are growing concerns about the prevalence and impact of online bullying or 'cyberbullying' amongst children and young people. We know that bullying is not a new phenomenon, but the digital landscape has fundamentally changed the way that young people are experiencing it. It is increasingly the case that children and young people are being bullied online through social media platforms and the complexity of these social networks means bullying can take on different forms on different platforms.

The Safer NEL Online Safety and Anti-Bullying Strategy sets out the standards and responsibilities proposed for all agencies working in any settings with children and young people.

3) Definitions

Online Safeguarding As the name suggests, is first and foremost a safeguarding issue and when broken down into its constituent elements and areas of risk, is **fundamentally concerned with behaviours**. It is therefore important that we are not side tracked into thinking online safeguarding is an Information Technology (IT) issue or that technical measures are the solution to the issues. Whilst the IT has an integral part to play in contributing to the safeguarding of our children and young people, the IT itself is incidental to the issue.

Typically, individuals often associate online safeguarding with online grooming, cyberbullying or inappropriate images/video. However, there is also a much broader and developing agenda particularly in relation to the growth of social media including information privacy, sexting, gaming addiction, radicalisation, self-generated content and numerous other risk areas. In line with this, online safeguarding is an increasingly common thread running across a number of related and already embedded areas such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), anti-bullying, anti-social behaviour and the radicalisation of young people amongst others.

Bullying The Department of Education (DfE) 2017 definition outlines bullying as a behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities. Children looked after by the Local Authority have an additional vulnerability – not being able to live with their family will impact on their sense of self and bullying about being in care has had a major impact on how young people feel safe in education. It is known to result in young people looked after responding emotionally and physically. It might be motivated by actual differences between children and young people, or perceived differences.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as: **"*The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online".* ** There are four key elements to this definition:
- hurtful
- repetition
- power imbalance
- intentional

Bullying behaviour can be:
- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc. ⬝ Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

Please see Appendix 1 for further information on guidance and standards in respect of online safety and anti- bullying.

4) Associated Risks

Bullying: All forms of bullying cause a serious emotional distress which often leads to anxiety, fear, low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness and depression. Children and young people who are bullied are often also afraid to go to school and fabricate health problems to stay at home. Many, however, develop actual health problems due to the stress such as frequent headaches and stomach-aches, and decline in school performance. The research reveals that bullied children are also more likely to think

about committing suicide. Bullying can take place anywhere – in cities, towns or rural areas, in school and out of school, face–to-face or on-line.

Some groups have potential for increased risk of being bullied such as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) young people; children and young people with disabilities or special needs; young carers; and those that are socially isolated. There are times in children and young people's lives when they may be more vulnerable including times of transition – such as the move between primary and secondary school; moving to a new area; when they first begin to travel around on public transport without an adult; or during puberty when they are dealing with physical and emotional change.

Online Safety: The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:

• **Content**: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;
•**Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
• **Conduct**: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.

SEND
There is a clear recognition of the additional risks that children and young people with SEN and / or disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and the need for practitioners to be confident they have the capability to support SEND children and young people with SEND to stay safe online.

5) Key Legislation and guidance
- Keeping Children safe in Education 2018
- Education for a connected world framework
- Be Internet Legends, safety curriculum with PSHE for Key Stage 2
- UK Safer internet safety – appropriate filtering and monitoring
- National Education Network guidance on E security
- UKCCIS Online safety in schools and colleges: Questions for Governing Board
- DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017
- Anti- Bullying Alliance
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Independent School Standard Regulations 2010

6) Who is this strategy for?

The range of individuals, groups and organisations with a responsibility for safeguarding our children and young people is significant, ranging from parents/carers through to local and national government bodies. As such, this strategy is primarily aimed at (though not limited to), those groups identified below.
- Every child and young person living, attending educational provision and / or being cared for in North East Lincolnshire

- All education establishments and providers (including maintained schools/academies, independent schools, pupil referral units (PRUS), alternative provision, special schools/academies and colleges)
- All Safer NEL Member Organisations
- 3rd Sector organisations, including voluntary, community and faith sectors
- Parents, carers and family members
- Education and health services
- Early help providers, family hubs, social workers
- Youth settings

7) Local developments

The issues of harm and abuse have evolved and become increasingly complex over recent years, particularly with the ever-increasing use of social media, mobile phones and the internet. Bullying is no longer confined to jibes and assaults in the playground but has developed into a much more psychological and emotionally harmful element of communications often taking place on a one-to-one basis and sometimes undercover of social media communications.

In North East Lincolnshire, we recognise that e-safety and on-line abuse now has far wider ranging implications than what used primarily to be 'on-line grooming' and exposure to adult based and child pornography. Children and young people are now vulnerable to being targeted by radicalised or right wing extremists, being drawn into psych-forum self-harm and suicide groups, buying psychoactive substances on line; being encouraged to 'sext' friends, being exposed to violence, inadvertently being drawn into child pornography themselves as the subjects or being criminalised for their part in downloading images of children; being blackmailed or bullied over their social media content or simply becoming the subject or perpetrator of trolling and bullying.

A significant feature of both on-line abuse and bullying - is the link to emotional ill-health and well-being and so the need for parents, carers and professionals to be alert to this, know how to recognise it and help when they identify the problems is vital. Local developments as part of the Online Safety Anti-Bullying Strategy include:
- Local schools/academies/colleges are signed up to the NSPCC programmes, Speak Out, Stay safe and Keeping Safe and Pants.
- All schools/academies/colleges have anti-bullying strategies in place
- All schools/academies/colleges access on-line Anti-Bullying Alliance training
- All educational establishments complete CEOP training
- Safeguarding Supervision Training has been provided to schools/academies/colleges by the LSCB
- NEL has put in place a range of interventions linking to the 0-19 Strategy including Future in Mind programme
- A whole school approach to mental health is being developed, with schools/academies/colleges identifying mental health champions
- NEL has adopted Kooth Online Counselling which is widely used by children and young people for support in respect of emotional well being
- The Safe Relationships 4 Young People (SR4YP) programme that offers advice and support in relation to resilience and relationships through the PSHE curriculum has been revised. The programme has been developed to deliver age appropriate activities to years 5 to 11 and now covers topics such as sexual health, your body,

on line protection through CEOPs, CSE, domestic abuse, drugs and alcohol and healthy relationships.

- A package of primary/ secondary support is being developed based on RSE aligned to SR4YP

8) Principles

Principles of online safety: Whilst we must understand the issues and risks posed, we must be careful not to demonise the technology and ensure that these are balanced with the immense opportunities and benefits that new technologies bring. Managing and mitigating these risks strategically is most appropriately addressed by ensuring we maintain a holistic overview. However, in order to tackle the issues effectively, we must break them down into practical areas to be addressed. As such, the framework used for this strategy is developed from the original and widely-recognised 'PIES Model for limiting e-Safety Risk'. This model quantifies online safeguarding into four inter-related areas.
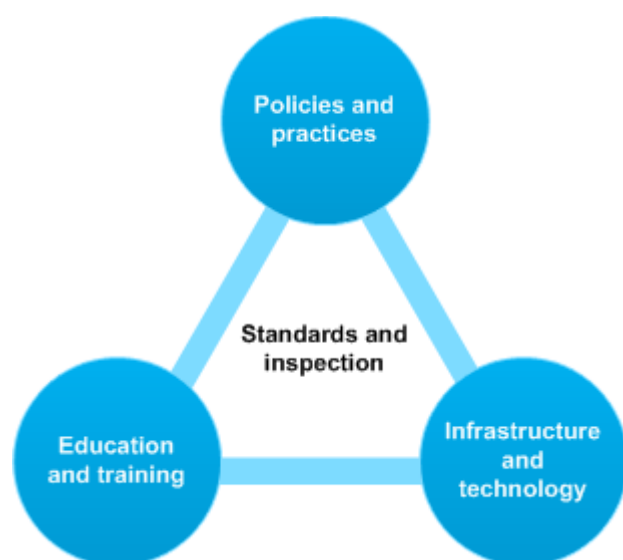
A fundamental principle is that the best people to support children and young people in their online safety are other children and young people; as they understand the risks and issues, and know what children and young people are actually doing online. Children and young people will be helped set up their own structures and resources to help other children and young people and build resilience. Schools/academies/colleges and other young people's organisations will be encouraged and supported to ensure that online safety is at the heart of their efforts to safeguard children and young people, including identification of those who may be vulnerable. In addition, that adults working with children and young people, understand the risks posed by adults or learners who use technology. This should be both as a part of the curriculum, PHSE and other pastoral care.

Zip It, Block It, Flag It – the **Click Clever, Click Safe Code. ZIP IT** means keeping their personal stuff private and thinking about what they say or do online. **BLOCK IT** reminds them to block people who send them nasty messages and not to open any links and attachments they receive by email or through social networks, if they are not 100 per cent sure they are safe.

Principals of Anti Bullying

This overarching strategy and action plan is designed to ensure there are effective processes for keeping children and young people safe on line, and to reduce and respond appropriately to incidents of bullying. The strategy aims to:

- respond to the ongoing concerns raised by children and young people around bullying and personal safety
- support community and school environments to enable children and young people to learn in safety and to reach their full potential
- oversee the delivery an effective coordinated response to reducing bullying across children and young people's services, in line with legislation and guidance
- provide an overarching strategic framework in which all agencies and providers will consistently approach the issue of bullying in any service provided to children and young people

9) Safer NEL's Vision and Aims Online Safety and Anti-Bullying Strategy

This overarching strategy and action plan is designed to achieve the overall aim of reducing incidents of bullying in North East Lincolnshire. It should help to inform the further development of schools/academies/colleges and other organisations' anti-bullying policies and action plans. It aims to:

- Encourage children and young people to support other children and young people and that they are signposted to the best advice in respect of bullying and online safety.
- Ensure parents and carers are signposted to the best advice.
- Ensure professionals are signposted to the best advice, particularly existing safeguarding and IT policies.
- Ensure schools/academies/colleges and all professionals working with children and young people have support in managing risk in online safety, including how to identify potentially vulnerable children and young people.
- Ensure high quality training is available and taken up by professionals and all appropriate people working with children and young people.
- Guide children, young people and others to the best sources of information and support and not duplicate the great range of advice and resources already available.
- Help organisations to develop their own solutions, and incorporate the principles and priorities in this strategy into those.
- Identify those children and young people who are potentially vulnerable.
- Make sure that risk is assessed and managed effectively.
- Make sure that children and young people understand their own risks in using online services.
- Assist agencies to develop a continuing effective response to bullying issues

- Assist agencies to develop procedures which will inform residents, parents, carers, children, young people, visitors and staff of action to take if they are concerned about bullying behaviour
- Encourage agencies and organisations which have a statutory obligation to have policies on bullying, e.g. schools, to have policies which relate and refer to this strategy
- Enable adults working with children and young people to be aware of those particular groups of children and young people who may be targeted or at risk of bullying

10) Strategic objectives

Strategic Objective 1: Safer Management
To support and ensure partner agencies develop robust and effective policies practices and procedures to safeguard children and young people against on line risks and bullying.

Strategic Objective 2: Emotional Health and Well Being Support
Ensure there is appropriate emotional health and well- being support for all children and young people and for those children and young people affected by online safety issues and or bullying.

Strategic Objective 3: Communication and Awareness raising
To develop a communication plan co- produced with children, young people and families, which provides safe/positive messages to children/young people and families through social media in respect of online safety and bullying.

Strategic Objective 4: Workforce Development
To develop clear workforce plan in respect of online safety and bullying which supports agencies to recognise and response appropriately to concerns around online safety and anti-bullying.

11) Who is responsible for overseeing the Action Plan?

The Safeguarding Education Sub Group is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Online Safety and Anti-Bullying Action Plan. Progress against the plan and impact will be reported to the Safer NEL Executive Board.

Appendix 1

Online Safety guidance and Standards

Children and young people need:
- Clear information and guidance especially on building a good online reputation and digital foot print
- Information about risks and dangers of being online.
- People (including children and young people) who are online to be 'good neighbours' and be respectful even when angry and disagreeing with others
- They want people to be aware of and stick to age restrictions which means that children and young people are able to access the right apps, at the right time (in terms of their age) when young people are ready.
- Protection from predators and those who would want to harm or exploit children and young people

Parents/carers are encouraged to set rules and agree boundaries

It is useful to agree on some ground rules together. These will depend on the child or young person's age and what parents feel is right for them, but parents/carers might want to consider:
- the amount of time they can spend online
- when they can go online
- the websites they can visit or activities they can take part in
- sharing images and videos
- how to treat people online and not post anything they would not say face-to-face.
- deploying parental controls (Remembering that filtering is only part of the solution)
- For more information for parents about setting rule and agreeing boundaries, see the family agreement advice that has been published by CHILDNET (http://www.childnet.com/resources/family-agreement).
- If a child plays online games:
- check the age rating before they play
- make sure you know who they're playing with
- talk to them about what information is OK to share with other players
- negotiate the amount of time they spend playing online games.

Ignoring age restrictions

Some websites and games use age restrictions and checks to make sure that children and young people do not see unsuitable content. Age restrictions are in place to protect children and young people from accessing or being exposed to material that is inappropriate, disturbing or upsetting: they should not be ignored. Children must be at least 13 to register on most social networking websites. Nevertheless, there is not a lot standing in the way of children joining at a younger age. Age limits are there to keep children and young people safe so parents/carers should not feel pressurised into letting younger children join these websites.

Sharing personal information

Privacy controls can limit who can see a child/young person's details, like their name, age and where they live. However, when a child/young person connects to someone as a 'friend', that person will have access to your child/young person's personal information.

Some 'free' games might ask children/young people to fill out lots of details before they can play and then illegally rent or sell this data on to others for profit. Children and young people often sign over rights to their private messages and pictures unknowingly by agreeing to terms and conditions without reading them or comprehending their potential consequences. Very often, the long established rights of children and young people are not applied online.

Switch off or adjust settings using GPS or location tracking

Lots of apps and social networking sites use software to locate where the user is. Children and young people can also reveal their location by tagging photos, such as on Instagram, or checking in on Facebook or Foursquare.

This means that people can find out where your child/young person lives, socialises, works or studies.
The strategy covers the following aspects of online safety:

- inappropriate content
- cyber-bullying, including sexual bullying
- online grooming
- youth produced sexual images
- online reputation
- privacy
- self-harm
- online pornography
- radicalisation

Inappropriate content

What sort of inappropriate content might my child/young person see? What you think is inappropriate material for your child/young person will probably differ from your child/young person's view or that of other parents/cares. It will also depend on your child/young person's age and maturity level. Inappropriate content includes information or images that upset your child/young person material that is directed at adults, inaccurate information or information that might lead or tempt your child/young person into unlawful or dangerous behaviour. This could be:

- pornographic material
- content containing swearing
- sites that encourage vandalism, crime, terrorism, racism, eating disorders, even suicide
- pictures, videos or games which show images of violence or cruelty to other people or animals
- dangerous advice encouraging eating disorders, self-harm or suicide
- gambling sites
- unmoderated chat rooms – where there's no one supervising the conversation and barring unsuitable comments
- racist, homophobic and other forms of hate speech

It can be difficult to monitor what your child/young person is viewing as they can access this material through any internet-enabled device, including mobile ones such as a phone or tablet. Sometimes your child/young person may stumble upon unsuitable sites by accident, through apps they have downloaded to their mobile device or through links they have been sent by friends, chatting to others online, or even through inter-device communication systems such as Bluetooth or Apple's Airdrop.

- Publically posting or sending on personal information about another person
- Manipulation

Online Grooming

Groomers may go to a social network used by children and young people and pretend to be one of them. They might attempt to gain trust by using fake profile pictures, pretending to have similar interests, offering gifts and saying nice things to the child/young person.

Once they have the child/young person's trust the groomer often steers the conversation towards their sexual experiences, even asking them to send sexual photographs or videos of themselves. Some may try to set up a meeting or even blackmail children by threatening to share the pictures or videos with the child/young person's family and friends.

Online groomers are not always strangers. In many situations, they may already have met them through their family or social activities, and use the internet to build rapport with them. Sometimes children and young people do not realise they have been groomed, and think that the person is their boyfriend or girlfriend.

Youth Produced Sexual Images (also known as sexting)
The term 'youth produced sexual images' is used to describe the sending and receiving of sexually explicit photos, messages and video clips, by text, email or posting them on social networking sites. It is increasingly done by children and young people who send images and messages to their friends, partners, or even strangers they meet online.

Sharing photos and videos on line is part of daily life for many people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. The increase in speed and ease of sharing imagery has brought about concerns about young people producing and sharing sexual images of themselves. This can expose them to risks, particularly if the images are shared further, including embarrassment, bullying and an increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation.

If a child/young person has shared imagery consensually such as when in a romantic relationship or as a joke, or there is no intended malice, it is usually appropriate for the school/academy/college to manage the incident directly. In contrast, any incident with aggravating factors, for example a child/young person sharing someone else's imagery without consent and with malicious intent, should generally be referred to the Police.

What are the possible consequences of youth produced sexual images? Young people may see youth produced sexual images as a harmless activity but taking, sharing or receiving an image can have a long-lasting impact on a child/young person's self-esteem.

- **It may cause emotional distress:** The sharing of inappropriate content can lead to negative comments and bullying and can be very upsetting.

- **It could affect a child's or young person's reputation:** Explicit content can spread very quickly over the internet and affect the child/young person's reputation at school/academy/college and in their community both now and in the future. It could also affect their education and employment prospects.

- **Youth produced sexual images is illegal:** When children/young people engage in youth produced sexual images they are creating an indecent image of a person under the age of 18, which, even if they take it themselves, is against the law. Distributing an indecent image of a child – e.g. sending it via text – is also illegal. It is very unlikely that a child/young person would be prosecuted for a first offence, but the police might want to investigate.

Online Reputation

The internet keeps a record of everything we do online – the photos we upload, the comments other people make about us and things we buy. This is our online reputation. It's important children and young people understand how to manage their online reputation and the impacts for them of a negative online reputation. How do I know what sort of online reputation my child/young person has?
Parents are encouraged to find out more about their child/young person's online reputation by taking the following steps:

- **Search for their child/young person online** – use different search engines and check using the child/young person's whole name and other identifying information such as town or nickname. Also search on Google images

- **Look at the kind of information these searches reveal** – are the comments, photos, links appropriate? Do they include private information like their school or address? If your child/young person has a blog, what does it say?

- **If the child/young person is a member of a social networking site, parents/carers should consider joining it themselves and asking to be the child/young person's online connection, or get another trusted adult to do this**. Be aware that some children/young people may have two or more profiles, one they share with their parents/carers, and one they use for talking to their friends put all the information together and see what it says about the child/young person. Does the picture it portrays feel right to you?

Online Pornography

As children and young people explore the internet they can sometimes come across sexual content accidentally, and some of what they become exposed to may be unpleasant, hard-core pornography and extreme images. However, there are steps you can take to limit their exposure to this kind of inappropriate content. Links
https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/interactive-guide/
http://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/files/Parents%20Pack_Whats%20the%20problem_11Mar2015.pdf

Radicalisation

There is a chance that children and young people may meet people online or visit websites that could lead them to adopting what would be considered extreme views, and becoming radicalised. Curiosity could lead a child/young person to seek out these people, or they could befriend a child/young person in order to encourage them to adopt beliefs or persuade them to join groups whose views and actions you as a parent/carer would consider extreme.

How could children and young people become radicalised? Children and young people may be vulnerable to a range of risks as they pass through adolescence. They may be exposed to new influences and potentially risky behaviours, influence from peers, influence from older people or the internet as they may begin to explore ideas and issues around their identity.

There is no single driver of radicalisation, nor is there a single journey to becoming radicalised. The internet creates more opportunities to become radicalised, since it is a worldwide 24/7 medium that allows you to find and meet people who share and will reinforce your opinions. Research tells us that the internet and face-to-face communications work in tandem, with online activity allowing a continuous dialogue to take place. (Please see the MSCB's Guidance for Working with Children and Young People who are vulnerable to the messages of Radicalisation and Extremism)

Online Safety guidance and Standards

Vulnerability to Bullying?
Any person can be bullied. Many are bullied for race, religion, sexual orientation and even the types of clothes they are wearing, while some are also bullied for no apparent reason.

Who Can Be a Bully?
Any person who deliberately hurts another person either physically, verbally or via online/phone is a bully. Sometimes, however, they are not aware that their behaviour is perceived as bullying by the victim. Bullies can be other children or young people of the same age or older who live nearby, go to the same class or extracurricular activities but bullies can also be adults and even family members. However, when an adult is physically or verbally harassing a child/young person, it is defined as child abuse.

Protection and action to be taken
All settings in which children and young people are provided with services or are living away from home should have in place anti-bullying strategies and procedures on how to refer to Children's Social Care, if safeguarding concerns are identified. This includes youth clubs and all other children's organisations as well as all schools/academies/colleges.
- Support should be offered to children and young people for whom English is not their first language to communicate needs and concerns;
- Children and young people should be able to approach any member of staff within the organisation with personal concerns.

In order to maintain an effective strategy for dealing with bullying, the traditional ideas about bullying should be challenged, e.g.
- It's only a bit of harmless fun;
- It's all part of growing up;

- Children and young people just have to put up with it;
- Adults getting involved make it worse.

Clear messages must be given that bullying is not acceptable and children and young people must be reassured that significant adults involved in their lives are dealing with bullying seriously. Some acts of bullying could be a criminal offence.

A climate of openness should be established in which children and young people are not afraid to address issues and incidents of bullying.

Consideration should always be given to the existence of any underlying issues in relation to race, gender and sexual orientation. This should be addressed and challenged accordingly.

Support

Where a child/young person is thought to be exposed to bullying, action should be taken to assess the child/young person's needs and provide support services.

If the bullying involves a physical assault, as well as seeking medical attention where necessary, consideration should be given to whether there are any child protection issues to consider and whether there should be a referral to the Police where a criminal offence may have been committed.

Where appropriate, parents/carers should be informed and updated on a regular basis. They should also, when applicable, be involved in supporting programs devised to challenge bullying behavior. Creating an anti-bullying climate that is conducive to equality of opportunity, co-operation and mutual respect for differences can be achieved for example by:
- Low tolerance of minor bullying – dealing with incidents at the earliest sign;
- Never ignoring victims of bullying, always showing an interest/concern;
- Publicly acknowledging the bullied child/young person's distress;
- Organising quality groups/circles, which allow children and young people to work together to identify their own problems, causes and solutions with sensitive facilitators.

Practitioners may often be in the position of having to deal with the perpetrators as well as the victims of bullying. It should be borne in mind that bullying behavior may in itself be indicative of previous abuse or exposure to violence.

It is important when addressing bullying behavior by another child/young person to avoid accusations, threats or any responses that will only lead to the child/young person being uncooperative, and silent.

The focus should be on the bullying behaviour rather than the child/young person and where possible the reasons for the behavior should be explored and dealt with. A clear explanation of the extent of the upset the bullying has caused should be given and encouragement to see the bullied child/young person's points of view.

A restorative approach and the use of restorative enquiry and subsequent mediation between those involved can provide an opportunity to meet the needs of all concerned. The child/young person who has been bullied has the chance to say how he or she has been affected. The opportunity is provided for the child/young person doing the bullying to understand the impact of his or her actions and to make amends.

Both the child/young person engaged in bullying behavior and those who are the target of bullying should then be closely monitored. The times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest should be ascertained and action taken to reduce the risk of recurrence.
Whatever plan of action is implemented, it must be reviewed with regular intervals to ascertain whether actions have been successful by consideration whether the target of bullying now feels safe and whether the bullying behavior has now ceased. Consideration should also be given to lessons learned in order to constantly review and improve practice. Where bullying exists in the context of gang behavior, there should be an institutional, as well as an individual, response to this.