



Huntington's
Disease
Association

Children and young people anti-bullying policy

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Introduction

The Huntington's Disease Association is committed to providing a friendly, inclusive, and safe environment for children and young people participating in our activities and events, accessing our services and preventing bullying behaviour happening.

The charity recognises the harm and distress caused by bullying. When we become aware of any incidents of bullying, we commit to swift action to prevent escalation and to supporting those involved.

This policy outlines the signs and indicators of bullying, the action expected from Huntington's Disease Association employees and the process they are required to follow in recognising, managing and dealing with incidents of bullying between children and young people, or between children, young people and adults.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees and volunteers who are volunteering with children on behalf of the Huntington's Disease Association who observe bullying, have concerns that bullying may be occurring, or have incidents or concerns of bullying reported to them whilst supporting in the delivery of charity services, activities and events.

It applies in all circumstances where children and young people are accessing the services of the Huntington's Disease Association and / or are taking part in events and activities organised by the charity.

This policy does not cover incidents of bullying among staff members and volunteers. In this instance, the anti-discrimination, bullying and harassment policy should be referred to instead.

Definition

Bullying is deliberately hurtful, intimidating and/or coercive behaviour that is repeated over a period of time. Bullying can cause considerable distress and affect an individual's health, development, wellbeing and can cause significant harm. Bullying can be carried out by one person, or a by a group of people, and it can occur face to face or online. Bullying can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- verbal teasing or making fun of someone;
- excluding children from games and conversations;
- pressurising other children not to be friends with the person who is being bullied;
- spreading hurtful rumours or passing around inappropriate photographs, images or drawings;
- cyberbullying (using online platforms as a means to bully someone);
- shouting at or verbally abusing someone;
- stealing or damaging someone's possessions;
- making threats;
- forcing someone to do something embarrassing, harmful or dangerous;
- harassment on the basis of race, gender, sexuality or disability;
- physical or sexual assault (although all sexual incidents and all but very minor physical incidents constitute abuse and must be dealt with in accordance with child protection procedures).

Signs and indicators of bullying

If a child or young person is being bullied, they might not tell anyone directly. This could be because they have been threatened and are afraid to say anything because of the consequences from the bully. They may believe that nothing can be done to help and that telling someone will only make it worse. It could also be because they don't recognise that what is happening to them is bullying.

Signs that someone may be being bullied could include:

- being unhappy, withdrawn and unwilling to spend time in a group, especially during unstructured periods;
- being isolated from others;
- seeking to spend excessive time with adults/activity leaders;
- appearing to lose possessions or money (things that may have really been stolen by or given away to bullies);
- unexplained injuries;
- uncharacteristic illness or aggression.

Some of these signs might also indicate abuse at the hands of adults or other negative experiences, so it is important that they are explored sensitively.

Our commitment

The charity commits to:

- having a clear anti-bullying procedure in place (included below).
- providing support and some guidance on dealing with bullying for all staff and volunteers prior to attending events with children and young people.
- addressing the issue from the point of view of the person being bullied, the bully, any bystanders and the Huntington's Disease Association as a whole.
- developing and reviewing a plan to address the bullying, in order to ensure that the problem is appropriately handled.
- avoiding any punishments that make the individuals concerned seem small, or look or feel foolish in front of others.

Responsibilities

Executive Council

- Reviewing and approving the Children and Young People anti-bullying policy;
- Authorising the provision of resources to allow the policy to be put into practice.

Management Team

- Ensuring that all relevant risk assessments have taken place and are reviewed regularly to identify and control risks;
- Ensuring there are arrangements for recording and monitoring incidents of bullying and that the policy is reviewed regularly, in line with the charity's wider policy review schedule;
- Ensuring that staff and relevant volunteers are aware of the policy and processes that they should follow and understand their responsibilities to prevent bullying.

Staff and volunteers attending events with children and young people

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to:

- promote a safe environment and protect all children and young people from harm, including bullying;
- Read and adhere to the relevant codes of conduct;
- Ensure all incidents of bullying are dealt with in accordance with this policy and procedure.

Anti-bullying procedure

The following procedure aims to support staff and relevant volunteers in what to do if an incident of bullying occurs between children and young people, or between children and young people and an employee or volunteer. By following the same procedure, it is expected that a fair and consistent approach is taken in dealing with incidents of bullying and in supporting those involved, both the person being bullied, and those who bully.

It is to be noted that if an adult is bullying a child/young person or if a child is bullying an adult at risk, this should be reported under the relevant Safeguarding Policy/Procedure.

Additionally, if a child or young person is bullying another child to the extent that it may cause significant harm (for example, sexual abuse), then it will also need to be dealt with under the relevant Safeguarding Policy/Procedure.

A child / young person is being bullied in person

Process to follow

If a child reveals that they are being bullied, staff and volunteers must take the child seriously. It is important that the child or young person is not told to stop being silly or to keep out of the way of the bullies. This will not help and will make the child feel let down and less inclined to seek help. Staff and volunteers must listen to the child's full account of what is going on and record everything. Staff must record on their FileMaker record at the earliest opportunity. Volunteers must pass their concerns and records onto the relevant staff member at the event they are attending. Both staff and volunteers must destroy any written record of the incident once they are formally logged.

Unless the incident is minor and can be dealt with informally, the child's parent or carer should be informed by the event leader or relevant staff member. Details of what happened should be shared and what steps were taken to support their child and stop the bullying from continuing. Staff should aim to work in partnership with the family and other professionals to find a resolution.

The child should be reassured that it will be dealt with as a priority. Children and young people's views should be considered as to what would be helpful to deal with the situation.

Having spoken to the child who has been bullied, staff should then speak to the bully (or bullies) and obtain their account of what has happened or is happening. This should be recorded on their FileMaker record at the earliest convenience (or passed on to the relevant Youth Worker / Specialist Huntington's Disease Adviser if the staff member does not use FileMaker). Staff are encouraged to make notes in the meantime but these must be destroyed once they are on FileMaker. If appropriate, the parents/carers of the bully (or bullies) will be informed of the incident(s) and what actions have been taken in line with the charity's Code of Conduct for children and young people. The bully and their parents/carers should be asked for their views and recorded on their FileMaker record.

Staff and volunteers at a Huntington's Disease Association event should do this in consultation with the relevant code of conduct and the escalation procedures in place.

Recording the incident on FileMaker

Staff should make clear and concise notes of any discussions or meetings that take place following the bullying incident. This should be kept on the file of the child/young person being bullied. A log must be made on each child/young person's file who has been involved, outlining their involvement and action taken. Any contact with parents/carers should be logged on their FileMaker record with details of the conversation, their thoughts and the outcome.

A child / young person is being bullied online (cyberbullying)

Cyberbullying may occur on a wide range of platforms, including but not limited to:

Social networking sites - Social networking sites/apps have become an integral part of how young people communicate with each other. Children and young people can be bullied or exposed to harmful content by other social media users. There are reporting functions on the sites/apps which can be used to report this to the platform provider in addition to any actions the charity takes.

Video and picture hosting sites - If there are moving images or static pictures posted that are of a bullying nature, they should be reported to the platform that is hosting the videos or pictures. It may sometimes be necessary to create an account before the images can be reported. When making the report, staff should remember to flag things that are deemed inappropriate in the website's own policy.

Instant Messaging and Audio recordings - It's important that if bullying has occurred in this context, all available messages/images/voice clips are recorded as evidence. This means that if a report needs to be made or evidence needs to be shared, then there is a clear record. As with other online services, reports should refer to breaches in the provider's terms of service.

Process to follow

Online bullying should be addressed by staff in the same way it would be addressed had the bullying occurred in person/at an event. If a volunteer becomes aware of cyberbullying, they should alert the relevant staff member. Steps to protect the person from the online bullying must be taken without restricting their use of the internet or social media. If appropriate, this should be reported to all parents/carers of the children involved and recorded on their FileMaker record.

It is important for all staff and volunteers to:

- Give reassurance to the child or young person that they have done the right thing by coming forward;
- In the same way they would for bullying in person/at an event, they must keep an evidence trail to ensure there is a clear record of the cyberbullying;

In addition, staff should:

- Help the child or young person to keep the evidence and offer support - emails, messages, screen shots and noting web addresses or other relevant information;
- Support the child or young person in sharing guidance on how to block people, change details or leave certain services where appropriate;
- Support the child or young person in preventing the spread of material - if they or the child/young person know the person and it's appropriate, ask them to remove the harmful content;
- If appropriate, support the child or young person to contact the relevant service provider, e.g. the social media platform to get the content taken down. Go through the appropriate reporting channels and follow up with the service provider as necessary;
- If the content is illegal or they have suspicions that it may be, contact the relevant authorities;
- Follow up the incident in the same way as they would for any other type of bullying, using the guidance above.

An adult is being bullied by a child or young person

Process to follow

Children and young people do sometimes bully adults, either face to face or online. It is important that where a member of staff or volunteer believes that this is happening to them, or others that they keep an evidence trail and report the incident to the relevant member of staff. The person being bullied may need support and there may be additional measures that need to be put in place. If the adult is being bullied by a child or young person online, the adult will need to contact the relevant service provider, e.g. social media provider, to get the content taken down via their reporting channels. In addition, the young person who is acting as the bully may have needs that should be addressed. If staff are unsure on the support available for adults being bullied or the child/young person bullying, they should contact the Youth Team for guidance.

Recording the incident

Staff should complete an accidents and incidents form for any cases of bullying. A log must be made on each child/young person's file that has been involved, outlining their involvement and action taken. This should include any parents contacted throughout this process.

Additional support

Childline is a service for children and young people to talk to. They can support with bullying concerns and can be contacted on 0800 1111 or help can be accessed via their website www.childline.org.uk.

For staff, an additional resource is the charity's Employee Assistance Programme. Speak to the Human Resources Manager for more information on this.