



# **BULLYING & CYBER BULLYING POLICY**

Date: May 2026

## **Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy – Contents**

1. Introduction to the Policy
2. How this Policy Benefits the Home
3. Definitions & Legislation
  - 3.1 Definitions
  - 3.2 Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance (table)
4. The Policy
  - 4.1 Policy Statement
  - 4.2 Regulations – Positive Relationships Standard (Children’s Homes Regulations 2015)
  - 4.3 Roles and Responsibilities (Staff and Managers)
  - 4.4 Reporting and Referral
  - 4.5 Cyber Bullying – Specific Provisions
  - 4.6 Recording and Reviewing
  - 4.7 Bullying as Significant Harm – Child Protection Referrals
5. How the Home Trains its Staff About this Policy
6. Related Policies and Guidance
7. Policy Approval and Review Details

# BULLYING & CYBER BULLYING POLICY

## 1. Introduction to the Policy

This policy sets out the framework, principles, and procedures that **Byram House** follows to prevent, identify, and respond to all forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, among children and young people looked after in our residential home. The policy applies to all staff, volunteers, agency workers, and anyone acting on behalf of Byram House, whether at 62 Deighton Road, 66 Deighton Road, online, or in any other setting.

Everyone at Byram House shares the responsibility to prevent bullying and to create a culture which promotes acceptable behaviour and reduces the likelihood of bullying occurring. All staff will be clear about the measures to take if they suspect bullying or if it is reported to them. Staff will be alert to the fact that bullying may constitute **Significant Harm** and, if so, must be reported following the child protection referrals process set out in the Safeguarding Policy.

**The Home is Byram House, which comprises the two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.** This policy applies equally across both residences and in all online interactions.

Byram House is committed to:

- Creating an environment where bullying is not tolerated, and where children feel safe to report concerns.
- Ensuring staff have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and know how to deal with them.
- Taking every step to ensure children are not subject to discrimination, marginalisation, or bullying from their peers by virtue of their gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, disability, or for any other reason.
- Recognising that persistent bullying can cause Significant Harm – including depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicidal ideation – and responding accordingly.

## 2. How this Policy Benefits the Home

This Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy benefits Byram House in the following ways:

- **Legal Compliance** – It ensures the home meets the requirements of the Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 (Regulation 11 – Positive Relationships Standard) and the Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations (paragraphs 3.12-3.13). It also aligns with the **Online Safety Act 2023** (fully implemented from 25 July 2025), **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (proposed)**, **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, and the **Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) 2026**.
- **Child Safety** – It provides clear definitions and examples of bullying (physical, verbal, emotional, racist, sexual, homophobic, cyber, abuse in intimate relationships, and hazing) so staff can recognise and act upon all forms.
- **Cyber Bullying Focus** – It addresses the unique challenges of online bullying (anonymity, 24/7 intrusion, adult unfamiliarity with technology) and incorporates duties under the Online Safety Act 2023, including the requirement for regulated services to implement Ofcom’s Children’s Safety Codes of Practice.
- **Clarity for Staff** – It sets out specific actions staff **must** take when bullying is suspected or reported, including reporting to management, recording, risk assessing contextual factors, and notifying social workers within one working day.
- **Multi-Agency Working** – It establishes links with placing authorities, police, and child protection processes where bullying amounts to Significant Harm.
- **Inspection Readiness** – The SCCIF 2026 places a strong emphasis on children’s lived experience and the quality of relationships. This policy demonstrates how the home promotes mutual respect and addresses peer-on-peer abuse.
- **Training Framework** – It sets out regular training for all staff on recognising, preventing, and responding to bullying and cyber bullying, including the provisions of the Online Safety Act 2023.

### 3. Definitions & Legislation

#### 3.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Home</b>	Byram House, the children’s home registered with Ofsted, comprising two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.
<b>Company</b>	IMS Care LTD, the registered provider and legal entity responsible for operating Byram House.
<b>Byram House</b>	The name used throughout this policy to refer to the home and its staff.
<b>Bullying</b>	Behaviour that hurts someone else, including name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening, or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere (school, home, online) and is usually repeated over time.
<b>Cyber Bullying</b>	The sending or posting of harmful or cruel text or images using the internet, mobile phones, or other digital communication devices. It includes threatening messages, sharing embarrassing images, trolling, exclusion, shaming, hate sites, identity theft, sexting, and encouraging self-harm.
<b>Significant Harm</b>	The threshold defined in the Children Act 1989 that justifies compulsory intervention. Persistent bullying may constitute Significant Harm.
<b>Peer-on-Peer Abuse</b>	Abuse committed by one child against another, including bullying, cyber bullying, sexual violence, and sexual harassment. Under KCSIE, this is never to be dismissed as “banter” or “growing up”.

<b>Upskirting</b>	Taking a picture under a person's clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks for sexual gratification or to cause distress. A criminal offence under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019.
<b>Sexting (Youth Produced Sexual Imagery)</b>	The creation and sharing of sexual imagery by young people under the age of 18. Staff must follow the home's Harmful Sexual Behaviours Policy and local safeguarding procedures.
<b>Trolling</b>	Sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms, or online games.
<b>Contextual Safeguarding</b>	An approach recognising that children may be at risk of harm outside their family, including online and in peer groups.

### 3.2 Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance (presented in a table)

Legislation / Guidance	Key Provisions	Relevance to this Policy
<b>Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015</b>	<b>Regulation 11 – Positive Relationships Standard</b> – requires that children are helped to develop relationships based on mutual respect and trust, understanding of acceptable behaviour, and positive responses to others. Staff must understand and communicate that bullying is unacceptable, and have skills to recognise and deal with bullying. <b>Guide to the</b>	Forms the core regulatory basis for this policy. All staff must comply.

	<b>Regulations (3.12-3.13)</b> – homes must ensure children are not subject to discrimination, marginalisation, or bullying by peers for any reason, and must support children to talk about concerns.	
<b>Equality Act 2010</b>	Protects individuals from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on the basis of protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, etc.).	Bullying based on any protected characteristic is unlawful harassment. Staff must challenge racist, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, or disablist language and behaviour.
<b>Online Safety Act 2023</b>	Fully implemented from 25 July 2025. Requires regulated online services (social media, gaming, messaging apps) to implement Ofcom’s Children’s Safety Codes of Practice, with duties to protect children from illegal and harmful content, including cyber bullying, grooming, and image-based abuse.	Reinforces the home’s responsibility to educate children about online safety and to respond to cyber bullying. Staff must understand the duties on technology companies and support children in reporting online abuse.
<b>Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019</b>	Created a specific criminal offence of “upskirting” (taking images under clothing without consent for sexual gratification or to cause distress).	Staff must treat upskirting as a serious form of bullying/abuse and report to police.

<b>Serious Crime Act 2015</b>	Section 67 – criminalises the disclosure of private sexual photographs or films with intent to cause distress (so-called “revenge porn”).	Relevant where cyber bullying involves sharing explicit images without consent. Staff must act immediately.
<b>Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026</b>	Published March 2026. Emphasises anti-racist, anti-discriminatory and culturally informed practice. Strengthens responses to child sexual abuse and extra-familial harms, including peer-on-peer abuse.	Bullying is a form of peer-on-peer abuse. The home must actively challenge discrimination and ensure that bullying based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability is addressed robustly.
<b>Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 (proposed)</b>	Expected implementation September 2026. Reinforces that abuse is abuse and should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, or “part of growing up”. Addresses peer-on-peer abuse, sexual violence and harassment, and online safety.	Adopted as best practice for children’s homes. Staff must not dismiss bullying as “banter”.
<b>Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children’s Homes 2026</b>	Effective 1 April 2026. Focuses on children’s lived experience, quality of relationships, and whether the home actively promotes safety and mutual respect.	Inspectors will evaluate how effectively the home prevents and responds to bullying and cyber bullying, and whether children feel safe.

<b>Children Act 1989</b>	Section 47 – duty to investigate where a child is suffering or likely to suffer Significant Harm. Persistent bullying can constitute Significant Harm.	Where bullying meets the Significant Harm threshold, the home must make a child protection referral to the local authority.
<b>Data Protection Act 2018 &amp; UK GDPR</b>	Governs sharing of information about bullying incidents, including online evidence (screenshots, messages).	Not a barrier to sharing safeguarding information. Staff may collect and share evidence of cyber bullying for safeguarding purposes.

## 4. The Policy

### 4.1 Policy Statement

Byram House is committed to ensuring that children and young people are able to live free from bullying and cyber bullying. We recognise that persistent bullying can have a serious impact on victims, resulting in depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, isolation, self-harm, and suicidal ideation. Bullying also damages bullies, teaching them that violence and aggression are effective ways to control people.

**No single sign will indicate for certain that a child is being bullied, but staff must be alert to:**

- Physical/unexplained injuries.

- Negative changes in mood or behaviour (nervousness, lack of confidence, distress, withdrawal).
- Changes to routines (eating, sleeping, avoidance).
- Bullying behaviours towards others.
- Sudden disinterest in school or online activities.

**Bullying can take many forms, including:**

- **Physical** – pushing, kicking, threats of physical violence.
- **Verbal** – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours.
- **Emotional** – exclusion, tormenting, humiliation.
- **Racist** – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- **Sexual** – unwanted physical contact, verbal abuse, upskirting, sexting.
- **Homophobic** – physical or verbal abuse based on stereotyping sexual orientation.
- **Cyber bullying** – using technology to bully.
- **Abuse in intimate relationships** – controlling behaviour, threats, emotional abuse.
- **Group initiation/hazing** – violence and rituals as part of a group.

**Reasons why young people may be reluctant to discuss bullying include:**

- Fear they won't be believed.
- Fear that nothing will be done.
- Fear the bullying will become worse.
- No witnesses, or witnesses afraid to support the victim.
- Embarrassment or shame.

Staff must therefore create an open, trusting environment where children feel safe to report concerns.

## **4.2 Regulations – Positive Relationships Standard (Children's Homes Regulations 2015)**

Regulation 11 requires that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on:

- Mutual respect and trust.
- An understanding about acceptable behaviour.
- Positive responses to other children and adults.

In particular, the Registered Person must ensure that staff:

- Understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable.
- Have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying, and how to deal with them.

Additionally, the Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations (3.12-3.13) states:

- Staff should take every step to make sure children are not subject to discrimination, marginalisation, or bullying from their peers by virtue of gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, disability, or any other reason.
- The home's environment and care should be designed to take account of stigmatisation, and staff should support children to talk about and address any concerns.

Byram House fully complies with these requirements.

## 4.3 Roles and Responsibilities

### Staff must:

- Challenge any young person seen bullying another person, in a non-aggressive and non-confrontational way.
- **Risk assess the impact of contextual safeguarding** – consider peer dynamics, online influences, and the wider environment.
- Report incidents of bullying immediately to the management team or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- **Ensure they log instances of bullying and the actions taken** on the home's electronic recording system (Clear Care) within the same day.
- Work with young people in a way that enables them to complain about being bullied – ensure they know about the complaints procedure and who they can complain to.
- Work with young people who are bullies to enable and encourage them to alter their behaviour.
- Spend time with young people who have been victims of bullying.
- Work with young people to enable them to report serious incidents to the police.
- Never dismiss bullying as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, or “part of growing up” (KCSIE 2026 principle).

#### **Managers (Registered Manager and DSL) must:**

- Ensure staff are aware of all issues surrounding bullying and the impact it has.
- Ensure staff are trained to counsel young people, resolve conflict, and use the complaints procedure.
- Take action when bullying is reported.
- Monitor incidents of bullying and the actions taken.
- Foster an open and honest culture that allows bullying to be discussed.
- Maintain good working relationships with local police to facilitate reporting of serious incidents.
- In cases of serious and persistent bullying, in consultation with placing authorities, consider the movement of a young person from the home to protect those being bullied.

#### **Consequences for staff:**

- Any staff member who is thought to be bullying young people will be disciplined.
- Bullying by an adult is **child abuse** and will be treated as gross misconduct. A staff member could be dismissed if found guilty at a disciplinary hearing, and the matter will be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

## **4.4 Reporting and Referral**

- **All bullying incidents** must be notified immediately to the Home's Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The relevant Social Worker must be notified **within one working day**.
- The social worker should be consulted, and consideration given to whether a **Child Protection Referral** should be made (where the bullying constitutes Significant Harm).
- Where there are immediate concerns about serious harm (e.g., threats of violence, sexual abuse, self-harm), staff must contact the police (999) and the local authority MASH (01484 456858).

## 4.5 Cyber Bullying – Specific Provisions

Cyber bullying particularly affects young people because of the widespread use of modern technologies. It can be anonymous, pervasive (24/7), and difficult for adults to detect.

### Examples of cyber bullying include:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages.
- Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos.
- **Trolling** – sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms, or online games.
- Excluding children from online games, activities, or friendship groups.
- Shaming someone online.
- Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child.
- Encouraging young people to self-harm.
- Voting for or against someone in an abusive poll.
- Creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities.
- Sending explicit messages – **sexting** (youth produced sexual imagery).
- Pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

### Factors that differentiate cyber bullying:

- **Anonymity** – can be from an unknown location or using fake identities.
- **24/7 intrusion** – no place provides sanctuary.
- **Closed world** – adults may be unfamiliar with the technology, acronyms, and platforms used by young people.

#### **Staff responsibilities for cyber bullying:**

- Educate children about online safety, including how to block and report users, save evidence (screenshots), and who to talk to.
- Regularly discuss online behaviour and risks as part of key working sessions.
- Where a child reports cyber bullying, **preserve evidence** (screenshots, message logs) without deleting content.
- Report cyber bullying to the DSL, who will assess whether the online service provider's reporting mechanisms have been used and whether police involvement is required.
- In line with the **Online Safety Act 2023**, staff should be aware that regulated online services have duties to protect children. Where a service fails to act on a report of cyber bullying, this can be escalated to Ofcom.

## **4.6 Recording and Reviewing**

All incidents of bullying (including cyber bullying) must be:

- Recorded in each child's **daily summary** on the home's electronic recording system.
- Documented using an **incident report** (including nature, those involved, actions taken, and outcome).
- Included in the child's chronology to identify patterns.

Following an incident, the child's **Individual Safety Plan (ISP)** must be reviewed with the aim of planning strategies to reduce or prevent further incidents. This may include:

- Restrictions on access to certain online platforms or devices (as part of a risk management plan).
- Increased supervision or support during vulnerable times.

- Targeted key working sessions on friendships, assertiveness, and online safety.

The **Registered Manager** will review all incident reports regularly and work with the team to develop supportive strategies for both victims and those who bully.

Where patterns of serious or persistent bullying are identified, the Registered Manager will convene a multi-agency meeting with the placing authority, social worker, and (if appropriate) police or youth offending team to develop a coordinated response.

#### **4.7 Bullying as Significant Harm – Child Protection Referrals**

If bullying is persistent and severe – for example, leading to self-harm, suicidal ideation, serious physical injury, or sexual assault – it constitutes **Significant Harm** under the Children Act 1989.

In such cases:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead must make a **child protection referral** to the local authority MASH within one working day.
- The police must be notified if a criminal offence has occurred (e.g., assault, threats to kill, upskirting, disclosure of private sexual images, hate crime).
- The incident will be managed under the home's Safeguarding Policy and local safeguarding partnership procedures.

## 5. How the Home Trains its Staff About this Policy

Byram House provides structured training to ensure all staff understand and can implement this Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy effectively.

Training Element	Frequency	Method / Content
<b>Induction</b>	Upon appointment	Face-to-face training covering: definitions of bullying and cyber bullying, the Positive Relationships Standard (Regulation 11), signs and indicators, reporting procedures, recording requirements, and the dual-site operation (62 & 66 Deighton Road).
<b>Annual refresher</b>	Every 12 months	Classroom or virtual session covering updates to legislation (Online Safety Act 2023 implementation, KCSIE 2026, SCCIF 2026), emerging online risks (new apps, gaming platforms), and case studies.
<b>Cyber bullying and online safety</b>	Annually	Training on the Online Safety Act 2023, Ofcom's Children's Safety Codes, how to recognise and respond to cyber bullying, preserving evidence, using service provider reporting mechanisms, and supporting children to stay safe online.
<b>Peer-on-peer abuse prevention</b>	Annually	Training aligned with KCSIE 2026 principles: not dismissing bullying as "banter", understanding sexual harassment, upskirting, and sexting, and using contextual safeguarding approaches.

<b>Anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice</b>	Annually	Working Together 2026 expects staff to actively challenge racism and discrimination. Training covers how to recognise and address bullying based on protected characteristics.
<b>Recording and review</b>	At induction and as needed	Training on completing incident reports, updating ISPs, maintaining chronologies, and using data to identify patterns.
<b>Record keeping</b>	Ongoing	All training is recorded on staff personnel files. Managers monitor compliance.

**Staff are required to:**

- Read and sign this policy annually.
- Complete all mandatory training sessions.
- Know how to report bullying (verbally and in writing) and the one-working-day notification to social workers.
- Actively challenge bullying when observed, even at a low level.

## **6. Related Policies and Guidance**

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Harmful Sexual Behaviours Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Internet Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (proposed)
- Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026
- Local safeguarding partnership procedures (Kirklees)



Byram House

<b>Policy Name</b>	Bullying &.Cyberbullying Policy	
<b>Home</b>	Byram House	
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Danyaal Iqbal / Mustafa Amin	Deputy Manager / Registered Manager
<b>Approved by</b>	Stacey Wagstaffe	Responsible Individual
<b>Date</b>	May 2026	