



ELHAP – A SPECIAL NEEDS ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND
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ELHAP ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

(COMBATting BULLYING AND NEGATIVE OR DEVALUING BEHAVIOUR PROCEDURE)

DEFINITION

We aim to work towards combating and preventing negative or devaluing behaviour towards another person – this includes bullying.

The staff, parents, committee and users of ELHAP believe that negative or devaluing behaviour is:

- saying or doing anything which is intended to make another person afraid, uncomfortable, ashamed and angry. This might include racism, sexism, classism, homophobia or discrimination on the grounds of disability.

We also recognise that just as bullying may not only be physical but also psychological in nature, it may also take indirect as well as direct forms. With this in mind, we believe that bullying behaviours might specifically include:

- name calling/teasing;
- spitting;
- hitting/kicking, pushing and shoving;
- threatening;
- demanding money or possessions;
- isolating an individual/group of individuals;
- gossiping/spreading of malicious rumours.

We believe that individuals who observe negative and devaluing behaviour and take no action are colluding and therefore partly responsible. We acknowledge that, in many cases, different children's' levels of understanding are factors to be considered. We also recognise that children who attend ELHAP display a very wide range of abilities, and we advise that this should be kept in mind at all times.

PHILOSOPHY

At ELHAP, we believe that all children have the right to enjoy the centre in a secure, caring and non-threatening environment. Bullying can disrupt play sessions and prevent this enjoyment. Everyone should be able to contribute to sessions (at a level appropriate to them) without intimidation.

For this reason, negative/devaluing behaviour will not be tolerated. Incidents will be treated seriously, and may lead to limiting/prevention of attendance.

We recognise that everybody is capable of negative/devaluing behaviour, staff members as well as children. To prevent such behaviour, we must all work together and all take responsibility.

PREVENTION

ELHAP's aim is thus to prevent bullying and create an atmosphere where all individuals (staff or children) feel safe. A collective, consistent philosophy will thus be built at all levels, from management committee to parents, staff and children, through committee and staff meetings, parent liaisons and play sessions. A copy of this policy will thus be made available to any individual connected with ELHAP at any level. Negative or devaluing behaviour will be dealt with appropriately (see guidelines below).

POSITIVE STEPS TOWARDS PREVENTION

- Staff can be trusted.
- Positive behaviour should be encouraged and praised/rewarded where appropriate. This includes instances of children helping to prevent bullying.
- Regular patrolling, by free members of staff, of areas where bullying can occur.
- Designated area to comfort children.
- Designated person to coordinate the centre's approach to bullying;
- This person should take responsibility for organising child-led establishment of 'ground rules' relating to bullying behaviour, which shall be displayed in a prominent position in the centre.

DEVELOPING A COMMON APPROACH

- All staff have a responsibility in the elimination of bullying.
- One member of staff should take overall control of every incident; this person may vary from situation to situation.
- Victim safety is of prime importance. They must feel safe and know they are in a safe place where they can easily contact an adult. They must feel able to trust the adult. Their safety must be monitored after the incident.
- Every incident is serious to the victim; their anxieties must thus be taken seriously.
- Before any action is taken, it will be discussed with the victim, where appropriate.
- Perpetrators must be dealt with in a sensitive and appropriate fashion.
- Staff are role models and should not bully.
- Ensure, where appropriate, that everyone is aware of the consequences of bullying behaviour.

GUIDELINES

STAFF

ELHAP will not tolerate any negative/devaluing behaviour. If you become aware of a bullying situation, either through direct observation or notification by a child, you must:

- deal with the situation as your priority. If necessary, call upon another member of staff to cover any activity/individual you may be currently supervising while you address the bullying situation. Failing this, report the situation to another staff member who is better placed to address it;
- ensure the victim is safe at all times;
- where possible, gain knowledge of the nature of the bullying from the victim;
- establish whether there are any witnesses;
- if possible, talk to the person accused of bullying; advise them that the incident has been reported and also allow the person to give their version of events;
- withhold any punishment until it is felt that an accurate version of the situation has been established;
- take steps to ensure that perpetrator has limited opportunity to engage in repeat behaviour;
- inform Play Leader/s;
- reach a decision with them upon whether it is necessary to inform parents/carers of the incident; this relates to any injury gained by a victim or the necessity of making parents/carers aware that their child has indulged in negative/devaluing behaviour, thus giving them the option of addressing the incident in their own way.

CHILDREN

Children, where possible, must be aware that negative/devaluing behaviour will not be tolerated. Children must, where applicable;

- report all incidents of bullying (whether they are being bullied or they know of a bullying situation);
- treat all people as you would like to be treated;
- be aware that staff will support you;

PARENTS

- If you have worries about your son/daughter being bullied while they are attending ELHAP, or know of a specific bullying incident involving your child, please contact the Play Leader/s in order to discuss the situation with them;
- Be aware of signs that your child is being bullied; changes in behaviour, being more subdued/more 'boisterous' than normal, being unwilling to attend ELHAP.

PENALTIES

Bullying (negative and devaluing behaviour) is a very serious matter and as such will incur serious penalties. Depending on the circumstances (this includes the nature of the difficulties of involved children), penalties may range from on-site reprimand/removal of privileges to limitation of centre use through to total prevention of centre use. The management committee shall support the ELHAP staff team in any decision that it makes with regard to any bullying incident.

Implemented by the ELHAP Board of Trustees
3rd October 2005