Bullying Allegation
Early Years

When dropping off her three year old grandson at your setting, a grandparent explains that her grandson is being bullied by another child, also aged three, who attends the setting. She says that the other child is repeatedly hitting him and she wants something to be done about this.

- What would you do immediately?
- Would you record the incident, and if so where?
- What actions would you take in the longer term?
- If you felt that you needed to take further advice who would you speak to?

Firstly, check if the Grandparent has parental responsibility for the boy. If she doesn’t explain that you will need to speak with the person who does.

Explain that bullying is a repeated behaviour which is intended to harm or humiliate. There is also a power imbalance between victim and bully. Bullying happens within a stable social group. Children of such a young age rarely meet this criterion as they are not developmentally able to manipulate a social situation to gain power within a group. The situation therefore needs to be dealt with as a behavioural issue and recorded accordingly.

Work could be done through story telling and modelling behaviours, helping the child who is displaying inappropriate behaviours to improve his social skills. Discuss the aims of this work with his parent/s and provide them with an opportunity to share any concerns they may have. It could be that they too have problems handling his behaviour and need signposting to additional support.

Staff should continue to monitor the situation in the setting.

Further information and support can be found at: Safeguarding Children In Education
Primary:

The Y6 parent of a child has called the school to share concerns that her daughter is being bullied by two other pupils in her class. The boy and girl repeatedly say mean things to her daughter and will use playtimes as an opportunity to knock and shove her, dismissing this as “….just being part of the game.” The alleged victim has a Special Education Need.

- What would you do immediately?
- Would you record the incident, and if so where?
- What actions would you take in the longer term?
- If you felt that you needed to take further advice who would you speak to?
- Would your actions be the same if this was a male victim?
- Would your actions be the same if the alleged victim did not have a Special Education Need?

Screen the situation, using three basic criteria (this can be found on the SCiES webpage under ‘Paperwork’) is this a repeated behaviour, intended to harm or humiliate and crucially is there a power imbalance. If in doubt, treat as a potential bullying situation until you can prove that it isn’t.

Talk to the victim about the situation; reassure her that you will do everything to end the bullying. Allow her to describe her version of events. Document what has happened and record the names of other bystanders to the bullying.

Speak with those who are involved in the bullying as soon as possible after receiving the call from the parent. Depending on your school’s approach to bullying (confrontational [using negative consequences to address bullying behaviour] or non-confrontational [not describing the behaviour as bullying, but instead focusing on a solution based approach]) will determine if there are immediate sanctions to the bullying behaviour. Ensure that those involved in the bullying identify positive actions they can take to improve the situation.

Ensure that all discussions and agreed actions are recorded in a centralised recording system which is monitored by the person who is responsible for this area of school policy and practice. Do not disclose that the victim has a SEN as this is confidential information.
Agree some ‘check-in’ times to ensure that the situation is improving for the victim and that those involved in the bullying are following through with the positive actions they have agreed to take.

Identify some pro-social children in the class who are not identified as being involved in the bullying who can offer some additional support to the victim, eg. being with them at break times, going to after school clubs with them.

Ensure your bullying prevention policy is up to date and reflects the latest thinking on this issue and it is in line with the legal requirements on schools to prevent all forms of bullying.

Ensure you have a robust preventive curriculum which helps children understand what to do if they are being bullied or know that someone is being bullied. Building empathy with peers and knowing how to become a ‘defender’ of a victim are important aims of a bullying prevention curriculum. Given the ages of the children involved, highlighting ‘Hate Crime’ awareness would also be necessary.

Avoid the use of peer mediation or counselling when trying to tackle bullying as studies have shown that this can significantly increase the risk of victimisation to the bully. Sitting the victim and the bully down together to sort the problem out is another strategy that should not be used. Restorative approaches should be considered, but these meetings need to be carefully planned and facilitated by a trained practitioner.

Ensure that the situation is shared with the transition co-ordinator. This can then be shared with the relevant members of staff at the secondary school, in line with your data sharing protocols.

Further information and support can be found at: Safeguarding Children In Education
Secondary and College:

The parent of a male pupil has called the school to tell you that her son is being targeted by a group of boys in his year and the year above. He has had money stolen from his bag, his homework trashed and he’s been physically assaulted. He is now refusing to go to school. There is police involvement in this case because of the assault.

- What would you do immediately?
- Would you record the incident, and if so where?
- What actions should be taken in the longer term?
- If you felt that you needed to take further advice who would you speak to?
- Would your actions be any different if this was:
  - A group of girls targeting the boy?
  - A girl being targeted by a group of boys?
  - A group of girls targeting another girl?

Screen the situation, using three basic criteria; is this a repeated behaviour, intended to harm or humiliate and crucially is there a power imbalance. If in doubt, treat as a potential bullying situation until you can prove that it isn’t.

Complete a risk assessment and draw up a safety plan to support the pupils return to school. Ask the parent to speak with her son to help identify what actions school needs to take to help him feel safe in school. Liaise with your schools Education Welfare Service to support his return to school.

Talk to the victim and reassure him that you will do everything to end the bullying. Allow him to describe his version of events. Document what has happened and record the names of other bystanders to the bullying.

Speak with those who are involved in the bullying as soon as possible after receiving the call from the parent. Depending on your schools approach to bullying (confrontational or non confrontational) will determine if there are immediate sanctions to the bullying behaviour. Ensure that those involved in the bullying identify positive actions they can take to improve the situation.

Ensure that all discussions and agreed actions are recorded in a centralised recording system which is monitored by the person who is responsible for this area of school policy and practice.
Agree some ‘check-in’ times to ensure that the situation is improving for the victim and that those involved in the bullying are following through with the positive actions they have agreed to take.

Identify some pro-social peers who are not identified as being involved in the bullying who can offer some additional support to the victim, eg. being with him at break times, involving him in activities.

Ensure your bullying prevention policy is up to date and reflects the latest thinking on this issue and it is in line with the legal requirements on schools to prevent all forms of bullying.

Ensure you have a robust preventive curriculum which helps pupils understand what to do if they are being bullied or know that someone is being bullied. Building empathy with peers and knowing how to become a ‘defender’ of a victim are important aims of a bullying prevention curriculum.

Avoid the use of peer mediation or counselling when trying to tackle bullying as studies have shown that this can significantly increase the risk of victimisation to the bully. Sitting the victim and the bully down together to sort the problem out is another strategy that should not be used. Restorative approaches should be considered, but these meetings need to be carefully planned and facilitated by a trained practitioner. Given that there is already police involvement in this case, liaise with your relevant police officer who may be able to support a restorative approach. Restorative work should only be done with the consent of all parties.

Further information and support can be found at: Safeguarding Children In Education