



## BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

All of the children/vulnerable adults we work with have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. It is the responsibility of senior staff to ensure that behaviour by any child/young person or member of staff does not have a negative effect on other users of the project, and to address any unacceptable behaviour/incidents that arise. When children/vulnerable adults are presenting behaviours which staff/volunteers find challenging, these rights are just as important. This policy, and the guidelines with it, are designed to support staff and volunteers, so they can respond confidently and competently in these situations, whilst maintaining the dignity of all involved.

### Be Pro-active:-

- Get to know each child well: A strong relationship based on trust and respect is one of the most effective preventative measures.
- Involve the children/vulnerable adult in decisions about activities which are available, and about reasonable limits, appropriate to each child's age and understanding.
- Lead by example: Model respect for children and young people and for each other in all of your work.
- Encourage good behaviour: Notice and respond when children are being helpful or constructive or friendly or just quiet and co-operative.
- All children/vulnerable adults should be encouraged not to hit out or hit back, but to resolve disputes.
- Be consistent as far as you can, set consistent limits within your team and find out about the limits the child/vulnerable adult is used to at home and elsewhere. Familiarise yourself with any information available on the individuals you are working with, both within health forms and obtained from schools and other agencies. Plan together with others involved with the child/ vulnerable adult.
- Be clear: Children/vulnerable adults need to be aware of what is expected of them. Problems often occur when expectations are unclear or unreasonable. Ensure you are using a method of communication the child/young person understands.
- A clear set of rules should be consistently applied and positive feedback for good behaviour is essential.
- Consult with Parents: Whenever possible, parents will be asked about behaviours expected of their child and how they handle them. Parents must also be kept informed of any challenging behaviours (outside the normal pattern) that have occurred within a session, and any plans should be shared with them. Senior staff have responsibility for this liaison with parents, but can delegate this to individual staff members/volunteers.
- With the permission of parents, other organisations involved with the child/vulnerable adult (eg school, social care, health professionals) can be contacted to ensure that a consistent approach is taken.
- Avoid situations which are likely to upset an individual child/ vulnerable adult whenever possible, reasonable and appropriate.
- Incidents of challenging behaviour, and tactics for addressing such behaviour, will be discussed with all involved staff on a regular basis.
- Every child/vulnerable adult has the right to be treated fairly in all circumstances and situations and in accordance with their individual needs.
- All children/vulnerable adults have the right to have a say in anything that affects them.
- Every child/vulnerable adult has the right to be respected, listened to and have their needs taken into account.
- Every child/vulnerable adult has the right to be protected from all forms of abuse or threatening behaviour, whether physical, mental, verbal or emotional.

### In challenging situations:-

- Try to avoid head on conflict: Try distraction or compromise – diffuse the situation wherever you can, and attempt to prevent escalation.
- Use the opportunity for the child/vulnerable adult to learn: Try and teach a positive alternative to an unacceptable behaviour, i.e. “Let’s do this” rather than “don’t do that!” always aiming to increase the child’s own self control.
- All children/young people should be encouraged not to hit back, but to resolve disputes in a non-aggressive way
- Make a distinction between the child and the behaviour, “I do not like things being thrown” rather than “I don’t like you now you’ve thrown that”.
- Avoid confrontation: Offer the child/young person a way out of a confrontation without losing face, and make sure there are positive responses to acceptable behaviour.
- Where possible make yourself aware of individual ‘triggers’, what somebody’s base-line looks like, how they present when starting to get agitated, so that steps can be made to avoid the child getting upset/angry/distressed.
- Strategic Capitulation, re-direct the young person to an activity before they reach ‘crisis point’
- Whenever possible avoid sanctions. If you have to remove a privilege make this immediate, fair, relatable and reasonable – ideally use strategies agreed with the child/young person and with other members of the team in advance, wherever possible in liaison with parents.
- Children/young people may need space and time to ‘cool down’ on occasions; respect this.
- Recognise the child’s feelings: It might be unreasonable to kick or bite or scream, but it is not unreasonable to feel cross or unhappy: help children find acceptable ways to express their feelings.
- Keep your own self-control: Be ready to ask for help from another person. If you feel it necessary ‘walk away’ from the situation, but remembering that not all children can safely be left unsupervised even for short periods of time.
- A change of stimulus or staff/volunteer can sometimes diffuse a situation – recognise that this is not an indication of failure, it is often a way to give a child/young person a way out of a difficult situation without ‘losing face’.
- No child/vulnerable adult should be publicly disciplined but should be talked to on a one-to-one basis.
- If a child/vulnerable adult is presenting a risk to themselves, to others or to property, volunteers are not expected to use physical intervention, but to send for a senior staff member whilst ensuring that others who might be at risk are removed from the situation. Staff who are trained in positive intervention techniques may, if all else fails, restrain the child/young person gently, with the minimum force necessary and for just long enough for them to calm down, or to prevent the action which would cause risk. Any such physical intervention must be recorded and appropriate actions considered to avoid recurrence.
- Parents will be kept informed of any incidents requiring physical intervention, and any subsequent action plans formulated by the staff team in response to their child’s behaviour. Parents will not necessarily be notified of challenging behaviours which are consistently displayed, but escalations or changes in behaviour pattern should always be recorded and reported to parents by senior staff.

#### **When you are unsure of what action to take:-**

- Do not go it alone: Ask for help, ideas or advice, or just talk things over with someone.
- Do not offer alternatives or promise something unless you are sure you can follow through.
- Do not smack or threaten or use any physical punishment.
- Do not use sarcasm, tease, belittle or shame a child/vulnerable adult.
- Do not inhibit a child’s freedom of movement unless they or others are at risk, or there is risk of serious damage to property.
- Do not expect a child to communicate when they are upset; be patient and wait until they are calm. Once the situation has resolved, it is usually best to avoid discussing the incident further with the child. Discuss with senior staff strategies to avoid the situation recurring.
- Do not leave a child alone when they are upset unless you are sure they are safe, and only use ‘time out’ when this has been agreed with senior staff as appropriate for the child.
- Always ensure an incident record sheet is completed. This may be completed by a senior staff member for you to sign.

## GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF POSITIVE INTERVENTION

Physical restraint is only permissible in circumstances where staff/volunteers trained in positive intervention techniques are attempting:-

- to avoid immediate danger of injury to the child
- to avoid immediate danger of injury to another individual
- to avoid immediate and serious damage to property
- to ensure the safety and well being of any individual where any other course of action would be likely to fail.

Forest Pulse does not permit the use of corporal punishment. The term "corporal punishment" should be taken to cover any intentional application of force as punishment, including slapping, throwing missiles and rough handling. However, staff are permitted to take physical action where this is necessary to avert an immediate danger of personal injury to the child, to another person, or serious damage to property, when any other course of action would be likely to fail. This physical intervention should be kept to the minimum and staff trained in positive intervention techniques should be summoned urgently.

Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort. If a child/vulnerable adult is presenting a risk to himself or others, any restraint should be gentle, with the minimum force necessary and for just long enough for them to calm down.

### ALWAYS:

- try other approaches first, e.g. talking, explaining, offering options. Use only the minimum physical intervention necessary.
- think about maintaining your own balance.
- move with the direction of the child's movement.
- use your own body weight, but carefully.
- stay in 'safe' places.
- talk to the child/vulnerable adult, seeking to calm him/her down. gradually relax and let go as soon as you can.
- make a clear written record in the Incident Book.
- talk to senior staff about how you feel.
- initiate positive rapport with child at the earliest appropriate time.
- try to identify precipitating factors for behaviour, and plan with others how to avoid a recurrence of the situation.

### NEVER:

- use restraint as a punishment; never grab or twist extremities.
- apply pressure to the head, neck or chest.
- try to cope alone if you need help
- show anger.

Forest Pulse has a responsibility to ensure the safety and well being of all staff/volunteers as well as that of the children we work with. Any staff member/volunteer working with a child/young person who is presenting or is likely to present challenging behaviour should ensure they do not become isolated in that situation. Walkie Talkies are provided to ensure contact with senior staff can be maintained, and two to one staffing is provided when judged to be required. If neither of these are available the staff member should remain in an area where other staff are present to assist, or if the situation is such that they have to leave this area they ask another staff member to accompany them, or to notify senior staff. However, as this is not always possible there is a responsibility on all staff to be aware of any situation involving a child who is demonstrating challenging behaviour and to intervene/provide support/alert senior staff as appropriate.

The Charity Manager and the Activity Manager will ensure that a sufficient number of staff are trained in positive intervention techniques, and that this training is updated as required. Behaviour plans will be drawn up for any young person if it is anticipated positive intervention might be necessary, and all situations requiring positive intervention will be recorded as per the guidelines within relevant training.

Reviewed and Approved by Trustees 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Signed of Behalf of Trustees ..... Position .....