



Managing Young People's Behaviour & Sanction Policy with Good Practice Guidelines

Amendment History

Paragraph	Detail	Committee or Town Council	Approval date
Policy	Adopted	Town Council	January 2016
Review date		Personnel Committee	31 st January 2024
Approval date		Town Council	20 th February 2024
Next Review			February 2026

Approved by Town Council

Date:

20/2/2024

Signed.....

Chair of Council

Signed.....

Town Clerk

1. Introduction

Keynsham Youth Service works with young people in a variety of settings and expects everywhere a respectful standard of behaviour from young people and from staff, including volunteers. Staff are expected to set clear standards through their own behaviour and through drawing young people's attention to the Code of Conduct which is on display in TimeOut. Young people are asked to sign this when they register. Adherence to this Code will help foster a safe working environment for everyone. Activities and interventions with young people always include opportunities to reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others and to learn new behaviours and skills.

Where young people's behaviour is disruptive, offensive, dangerous to themselves or others or otherwise unacceptable, staff need to take a consistent approach to addressing it. It is important that we do not become desensitised to challenging behaviour through overexposure. Young people should always be told when their behaviour is unacceptable and be given opportunities to put things right. However, sometimes staff need to intervene promptly to keep the situation safe, and then deal with the consequences afterwards.

This policy and associated guidelines provide clarity for staff about working with young people in all settings, including TimeOut, other Council and community buildings and on residential activities.

2. Purpose and Scope

- a) Commit to a safe working environment for young people and staff alike through positively managing behaviour.
- b) Set out clear guidelines for staff in dealing with difficult situations.
- c) Set out principles for responding afterwards to young people's behaviour.

3. Policy

- a) All staff model positive, respectful behaviour towards young people and each other.
- b) All staff work towards maintaining positive relationships with young people and affirm their good behaviour.
- c) All staff look for opportunities with young people to support the development of new positive behaviours and skills.
- d) Expectations of young people and staff will be clearly displayed in TimeOut and reviewed with young people when planning an activity.
- e) All staff working with young people who present challenging behaviour require induction training.
- f) Staff will never be alone in a building with a young person. Session leaders will plan safe levels of staffing and deployment for sessions so that staff do not find themselves in difficult situations without back-up.

- g) The Service will hold standard risk management plans for activities undertaken with young people. These will include actions for dealing with challenging and uncooperative behaviour.
- h) The Service will undertake risk management plans for any young people who are likely to be significantly challenging to the point where they may place themselves or others at risk. The Youth Worker will bring them to the attention of staff who work with these young people.
- i) The following will not be tolerated and will be appropriately challenged by staff:
- ❖ Disruption to the smooth-running of a session, including refusal to follow instructions.
 - ❖ Threats of or damage to property
 - ❖ Offensive language, including swearing and use of racist, sexist, homophobic or other abusive or devaluing terms.
 - ❖ Threatening language or behaviour
 - ❖ Physical or sexual assault
- j) Staff's priority is to keep young people safe and the response to their unacceptable behaviour and those it impacts on needs to keep this uppermost. Staff also need to be mindful of their own safety.
- k) Challenge will be at the most immediate level possible, taking account of previous behaviour and the needs of all young people and staff present.
- l) If the response to a situation needs to be escalated, a more senior member of staff should be consulted wherever possible. Where a violent offence is being committed or illegal substances are being dealt (or it appears so), Police must be called.
- m) Staff who have dealt with a challenging situation will need opportunity for debrief and support and may even need to leave a session early. A reflective log can be used to support this process. Other staff and young people may also need support. If the incident has been serious, the session can be ended early in order to attend to people's immediate needs.
- n) Where staff have had appropriate training, restorative approaches are to be used in managing and responding to unacceptable behaviour.
- o) If sanctions are to be applied, they should be proportional to the behaviour and take account of the young person's circumstances, age, gender, ethnicity, culture and understanding. Police may be consulted where it is unclear whether they need to be directly involved. Under no circumstances will corporal punishment, imposition of fines or restriction of liberty as a punishment (i.e. locking a young person in a room) be used. In highly exceptional circumstances, a young person may be locked in a room to keep others safe whilst Police are called, but they should be kept under observation to ensure they are safe.
- p) Significant instances of poor behaviour will be recorded in young people's notes and the record of the session. Where there has been harm to property or injury to someone (or a 'near miss'), a Health and Safety notification must be undertaken. A full record must be made of any exceptional action taken. If the situation is of a racist, homophobic or disablist nature this should also be recorded.

- q) Staff Supervision will provide an opportunity for staff to reflect on what has happened and what can be learnt.

4. Practice Guidance

4.1 Promoting Positive Behaviour

The local policy for schools on the use of physical restraint promotes the adoption of primary and secondary preventative strategies.

Keynsham Youth Service approach to primary prevention asks staff to:

- ❖ Actively involve young people in the planning and review of services
- ❖ Maintain a positive culture and ethical practice.
- ❖ Maintain a young person-centred approach.
- ❖ Be clear about our expectations of young people when they first come into our Service, through what is said to them and through posters/leaflets and what we model through our behaviour.
- ❖ Be clear what we can offer young people and what they can expect of us, through what is said and information available about the complaint's procedure.
- ❖ Plan sessions and interventions well, including where necessary, risk management plans for activities and individual young people.
- ❖ Model courteous, respectful behaviour and providing clear information and/or verbal instructions.
- ❖ Affirm positive behaviour – thanking young people and acknowledging what they have done.
- ❖ Give young people opportunities for choice, a sense of achievement, positive encouragement and coaching.
- ❖ Introduce small group discussion.
- ❖ Use individual targeted sessions to encourage new behaviours and skills.
- ❖ Promote staff awareness of their own reactions to aggressive or violent behaviour and the effect of their mood on others.
- ❖ Respond consistently and use authority appropriately.
- ❖ Share information with colleagues and keep records up to date so that colleagues know what has happened before.

4.2 Managing Difficult Situations

When young people do not co-operate with what is asked of them, staff are responsible for maintaining a safe and positive environment for everyone. Secondary prevention involves recognising the early stages of behaviour patterns that may develop into confrontation. The responses to individuals or groups of young people who are challenging will depend on a number of factors including how well we know them, what their previous behaviour has been and the nature of work we are undertaking with them. Staff should always seek to deal with situations promptly, in a low-key way when appropriate, reminding young people of boundaries and expectations. Staff should be actively seeking to de-escalate situations and can be trained in techniques for doing this. The physical presence, perhaps of several staff or a more senior member of staff may help to de-escalate a situation.

Reasonable force can be used to break away from a dangerous physical contact initiated by a young person or to separate a young person from another who is being aggressive and there is a risk of injury or harm. There is no legal definition of reasonable force, and it can only be judged in accordance with the circumstances. Relevant factors may include

whether the response matched the circumstances, the degree of force used, the seriousness of any disciplinary breakdown and evidence that less intrusive methods had been tried beforehand. The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to the young person's behaviour and the seriousness of the harm they may cause. The minimum necessary force must be used, taking account of these circumstances and also the age, cultural background, gender, stature and medical history of the young person.

4.3 Responses to Unacceptable Behaviour

When order has been restored and young people are safe, the session leader will decide on whether any further follow-up or sanction is necessary. This may need to run alongside Police responses where they have been involved. Where possible, this must be implemented promptly, but if it is to include an exclusion, the Youth Worker should be consulted. In some instances, the Youth Worker may advise awaiting the outcome of Police investigations.

Where a young person acknowledges their behaviour, a restorative approach to resolving the situation will always be considered. Other action can be taken to reinforce key messages. Sometimes it is believed that a young person has been responsible for a misdemeanour, but they do not acknowledge this – in these instances, the range of possible responses is more limited.

The response should be clearly recorded and communicated to the young person and to other staff. Responses may include:

- ❖ An apology (written or verbal) NB Not all young people have the emotional capacity to apologise, and it may sometimes be more fitting to work with them towards an acknowledgment or explanation.
- ❖ Personal commitment to good behaviour in the future. This may take the form of a written agreement.
- ❖ Agreement to put things right e.g. return an item of equipment or keys etc. If a young person is asked to pay for something, they must be given a receipt that clearly sets out how much they have paid and the reason for this. If they are aged under 16, their parent/carer must be involved in this.

However, this does not always work so further action may be required:

- ❖ Verbal reprimand
- ❖ Written warning
- ❖ Temporary or longer-term exclusion from the premises or project.

If the Youth Leader makes a decision to exclude a Youth Club user on the night of an incident. The Youth Leader will firstly telephone the young person's parent(s)/carer(s) to inform them that the young person is to be excluded from TimeOut, requesting that they are to be collected or if this is not possible that confirmation is given that there will someone at home to receive them.

When exclusion is the option taken this will be discussed with staff and the Youth Team Leader, who will then inform the Town Clerk of any action taken. If further action needs to be taken it will be the responsibility of the Town Clerk to liaise with the Police and initiate the action on behalf and with approval of the Town Council i.e. Exclusion Order or ABC (Acceptable Behaviour Contract).

4.4 Guidance on when to decide which Permitted Sanction to use:

On most occasions it will be up to the Youth Worker, in liaison with the staff, to decide the best way to manage any unacceptable behaviour.

- ❖ Any unacceptable behaviour that requires a temporary or longer-term exclusion from the premises or project

or

- ❖ Refusal to accept exclusion given by the Youth Worker.

A clear record should be made of the sanction, with an explanation and this should be placed on a young person's file. The Team Leader also needs to communicate the outcome of this to members of their team.

5. Right to Complain

The young person or their parent/carer has the right to complain about how an incident has been managed or a decision taken by the Local Authority.

In the first instance, the young person or their parent/guardian should contact the Youth Worker either verbally or in writing. If it cannot be resolved this way, then they should be advised about the complaint's procedure:

6. Guidance and legislation

- a) The latest Department for Education guidance on the use of reasonable force in schools was published in July 2013. A review was undertaken on the 16th February 2023 with a consultation end date of 11th May 2023. An update of the document is pending.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/355362/use_of_reasonable_force.pdf

- b) The Human Rights Act 1998 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child state that all young people have the following rights:

- ❖ Respect for his/her private life
- ❖ Not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment
- ❖ The right to liberty and security
- ❖ Not to be discriminated against in his/her enjoyment of these rights

In light of this, the use of force should be avoided wherever possible.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO - Safeguarding) is **Victoria Harlin**. As the LADO, she is responsible for managing allegations against persons who work with children. This involves working with Police, children's social care, employers and other

involved professionals. As LADO, she does not conduct investigations directly, but rather oversees and directs them to ensure thoroughness, timeliness and fairness.

To contact LADO, email LADO@bathnes.gov.uk or telephone 01225 396810



