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Behaviour Statement

"Red Balloon Foundation [RBF] recognises that children who demonstrate challenging behaviour can hinder entire groups from fully engaging with activities and teaching, and that behaviour which can be seen to have those results is unacceptable. We also recognise that the children who demonstrate this behaviour are still part of those groups and can benefit just as much as the rest of the children in that group from the activities and teaching they are disrupting, and that challenging behaviour can often be as a result of external factors and of our own teaching style. This policy seeks to strike a balance between ensuring that the rest of the children in the group are not held back, whilst protecting the children who are displaying the challenging behaviour from becoming ostracised and unable to engage for the rest of the session or in future sessions."

Policy & Procedure

1. Starting Right

- 1.1 It is essential from the outset that the correct tone for any session is established. This will be different for the various groups, but all should recognise that the way that a space is entered and treated will have a large impact on the rest of the session.
- 1.2 Group leaders and assistants [collectively: 'team'] should establish that from the outset the spaces which the children are working in are not the same spaces that they might go to a youth club in or have other social events in, etc. If a group enters a room chatting and mucking about, it's likely that behaviour will continue for the rest of the session.
- 1.3 Team should create a consistent pattern for the start of each session including some or all of the below:
 - 1.3.1 children to assemble in an area outside the space to be used and enter in an orderly fashion;
 - 1.3.2 once children enter a space they should not be allowed to just continue socialising but should be immediately engaged in an activity, even if that activity is simply sitting or standing in a circle while the team talks to them about their week while other children arrive;
 - 1.3.3 when groups arrive in their spaces, the team could encourage up to five minutes of supervised group 'catch up' time so that any issues they are bringing into the space can be dealt with so they do not become a distraction later in the session;
 - 1.3.4 the group should be reminded or be encouraged to remind one another of the "three Bees" (see below);
 - 1.3.5 the group should then go into a warm up/series of warm ups which both prepare the body for movement and the mind to focus;
 - 1.3.6 any children arriving late will be asked to knock at the door of their space, apologise for being late and be invited in at an appropriate moment by the team.

2. Defining Challenging Behaviour

- 2.1 All RBF groups will function with a very simple set of three rules/commitments. Challenging behaviour is anything that breaks one of those rules.
- 2.2 Each group will be supplied with a rules card or similar that can be displayed in their space as something to refer to.

- 2.3 It is appropriate that at the start of each session, the children are asked to remind each other what the rules are so that when disruptive behaviour occurs, the team has something to make reference to when it is challenged.
 - 2.4 The RBF three rules are referred to as the Three Bees, as follows:
 - 2.4.1 be Focussed;
 - 2.4.2 be Respectful;
 - 2.4.3 be Safe.
 - 2.5 In certain groups these may be augmented/supplemented by additional rules agreed by the group as a 'Group Contract' or similar. Where these additional rules are agreed, they should be displayed within the space, signed by all group participants and fall into three categories as follows:
 - 2.4.1 promises made by the group members;
 - 2.4.2 promises made by the group leaders;
 - 2.4.3 promises made by God.
3. Responding to Challenging Behaviour Displayed by a Large Group
- 3.1 It can happen to the best planned sessions that for some reason, a majority of the group are really not engaging with the material. It is up to the group leader to be aware and responsive to this state of affairs and not just soldier on if it is clear that a large amount of the group are starting to disengage.
 - 3.2 An important general principle in this area is that low level disruption is never acceptable in any setting. Low level disruption is where children are carrying on their own conversations or activities when the team have asked them to either be quiet and listen or stop what they are doing. While it can seem harmless at first if the rest of the group are engaged, it has the effect of completely undermining the team's authority because it effectively demonstrates that their instructions are optional. Low level disruption must always be dealt with swiftly and consistently and sessions should not proceed until it has been dealt with.
 - 3.2.1 Low level disruption can be inadvertently caused by team members themselves where they are having side conversations with children while another team member is addressing the whole group. This is equally unacceptable – if it is necessary to talk to a child while another team member is addressing the whole group, the child should be removed from the whole group as it is of vital importance that team members model the behaviour they expect the children to display.
 - 3.2.2 In addition, low level disruption can often be caused by parents/carers or other adults/groups present within the delivery space. Assistants within a delivery space should take it as part of their role to politely address those adults who are causing disruption asking them to help RBF deliver the session by either moving their conversation elsewhere or speaking more quietly.
 - 3.3 A variety of methods that team can use to combat challenging behaviour displayed by a large group or low level disruption include:
 - 3.3.1 rhythm response: a team member claps a rhythm and all children have to stop what they are doing and clap that rhythm back to the team member – useful for getting instant focus;

- 3.3.2 follow the leader: if attention is wandering, playing a quick game of follow the leader is a great way to get everyone focussed again. Just say 'Do This' (action), 'Do This' (action), 'Do This' (action), and a final one that gets them in the position you want to be (e.g., sitting crossed legged with a finger on their lips);
- 3.3.3 changing tack: children can become disengaged because the leader has been talking too long or they are not be challenged by the activity they are doing. There is no problem with, for example, in the middle of a longer explanation, getting the whole group to stand up, run on the spot, do some star jumps, etc., just for a change of pace. It is also good practice to stop and ask the group if something is distracting them, and if it is, explore the issue together to find out more;
- 3.3.4 show me your eyes: if children are not making eye contact, it's usually a sign that their attention is wandering. Telling the group you want to 'see their eyes' and making eye contact with each one in turn often helps to get everyone focussed before you continue. Be aware that some children with particular additional needs find it distressing or even impossible to make direct eye contact so team should ensure they are aware of the needs in their group before deploying this tactic;
- 3.3.5 highlighter: while it is very tempting to isolate a child's challenging behaviour and draw it to the attention of the whole group by publicly telling them off, this is proven to be a very poor way of dealing with many children as what they are craving is attention and that is exactly what they are receiving. Instead, team should highlight good behaviour and challenge everyone to emulate it (e.g., 'Who can I see that's ready to start? I can see Tom is ready – well done' rather than 'George, stand still and get ready to start!');
- 3.3.5 restart: if the challenging behaviour is occurring at the beginning of the session (e.g., so the children couldn't possibly be bored yet) or the distraction is too great to turn it into a discussion and learning opportunity, it is perfectly acceptable to go back to your warm up again and restart the session. If this has to happen twice or even three times in a session, that is also acceptable – it is better to take a whole session establishing the authority of the team rather than letting the children be able to continually take control of the session.
- 3.4 It is important to balance all the approaches in 3.3 by giving lots of praise when children begin to focus appropriately – tell them how much better they were and how pleased you are with them. In addition, if the children at large are re-focussed by these methods save for one or two individuals, do not penalise the whole group again but follow the steps below for dealing with individual challenging behaviour instead.
- 3.5 There is a special role for assistants in guiding the behaviour of the whole group. It is always the assistant's role to be watching the group while the leader is teaching and stopping small issues becoming whole group problems (e.g., by sitting down between two children who are starting to chat, or sitting behind a disruptive young person and whispering to them that they need to settle), and to let the leader know if a whole group intervention such as those listed above is needed in their opinion, although this equally needs to be done in a way that doesn't disrupt the group. For example, the assistant could say at an appropriate moment 'Isn't it a shame [name of leader] that I can't hear your instructions because of all this noise'.
- 3.5.1 It is always tempting for assistants to 'get on with jobs' while group leaders are delivering 'all together' moments during sessions, but their primary role is always to support the main delivery within the session. Before cleaning, tidying, preparing, etc., assistants should always check that the group are fully engaged with the session and, if they are released by the group leader to complete a task or judge themselves that they are not needed, they should check in every 2-3 minutes to ensure they are not needed for behaviour support activities.

4. Responding to Challenging Behaviour Displayed by an Individual/Small Group

- 4.1 It is vitally important that the group leader and their assistant(s) work together to ensure issues are caught early before they become a major problem. A key preventative measure is making good use of the 'chat' time at the beginning of the session because most issues come into the group from what has been happening before the child arrives at the session.
- 4.2 It is good practice to ensure that the team delivers sessions in such a way that they have enough pace and engagement that individuals do not have a chance to exhibit challenging behaviour. At no point should the behaviour management affect the pace and flow of the session. If a child's behaviour or your management of their behaviour is breaking the flow for the rest of the group they should be removed from the situation and dealt with later so that the experience is not diminished for the rest of the group.
- 4.3 It is the firm policy of RBF that team members should never raise their voice when dealing with challenging behaviour. It is a proven psychological fact that the vast majority of children completely stop listening as soon as an adult begins to shout. Calmly expressed authority is always preferable, as it demonstrates to the children you are in control and they are unable to provoke you. This also means that in an emergency situation, a child will be far more likely to listen to a leader's shout of 'everyone line up here quietly and quickly' rather than switching off because they hear the leader shout frequently.
- 4.4 If an individual/small group (e.g., up to three children) are displaying challenging behaviour, team should follow the following pattern on all occasions so there is consistency across all RBF activities:
- 4.4.1 Start by using positive re-enforcement and trying to prevent small challenging moments becoming an issue. This is where the leader compares the behaviour of the children, to encourage those displaying challenging behaviour to aspire to the children who are not. If you have told the children to all sit and be quiet, saying 'Who is ready to start?', and then naming each young person you can see following your instructions, often has the effect getting the disruptive children to join in so their name might be mentioned too rather than having to speak directly to that young person. In a similar way, assistants are important at this point – they should be watching for children who are not complying with instructions and getting alongside them (often physically by sitting beside or behind them) and encouraging them to take part before the leader has to intervene.
- 4.4.2 If the child does not respond to these methods, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable in a non-confrontational, direct manner, using their first name, as soon as possible. Do not ask the child to change their behaviour, tell them that they must. For example, 'Tom, it's time to sit quietly now' is better than 'Tom, could you sit quietly please?' – if an instruction is phrased as a question, it can be answered with a 'no'!
- 4.4.3 If the behaviour continues, the team member should immediately invoke a low level sanction in a positive manner (e.g., in a case where two children are chatting, getting one of them to come and help with a demonstration from the front is a very positive way of diffusing the challenge and affirming the child). If the matter is more serious or a positive sanction is not appropriate, the child should be told that there will be consequences to their actions if they do not comply with your instructions. For example, 'Tom, I have asked you to sit quietly once. If you don't, then you will not be able to take part in the games.' Or, 'Tom and Sam, I have asked you both to sit quietly once. If you don't, I will split you up and you will not be allowed to sit together anymore'.

- 4.4.3.1 Never express consequences as threats, just as statements of fact, and remember to only ever give one warning before implementing a consequence.
- 4.4.3.2 ALWAYS follow up on what you have told the young person the consequence will be if they continue to display the challenging behaviour. It is of vital importance that boundaries that you lay down are adhered to, even if the child is repentant (e.g., never let them off even if they get upset). This may seem harsh, but in the long term you will be preventing other team members having to go through the same process in the future.
- 4.4.4 After one consequence has been enacted, if the young person is still unable to function within the group, the leader or assistant as appropriate should take them outside of the room, or at least away from the other children and ask them what is wrong. It is likely that there will be an underlying issue troubling the young person that needs to be brought to the surface if they are continuing to be disruptive at this point. If they refuse to accompany you, you can tell them that the consequence of that will be that their parent/carer will be contacted after the session, or, possibly more effectively, team members can remove the other children from them if it doesn't disrupt the session too much.
- 4.4.5 If the issue remains unresolved at this point, the young person should be given the choice of returning to the session or having some time out. If they chose to return to the session, let them know this is their last chance, and if they are disruptive again, they will not have a choice and will have to have time out, even if there is only 5 minutes of the session left to go. Time out spaces should be designated for each group with the RBF Safeguarding Policy in mind.
- 4.4.6 At this point, it is up to the session leader to decide whether the child should be allowed to re-join the group or if a call home is required for an early pickup.
- 4.4.7 Any behaviour management issues which require intervention to 4.4.5 or 4.4.6 must be recorded on an Extended End of Session Report [EESR] countersigned by the child's parent/carer. If the parent/carer is not collecting the child, the session leader should make phone contact the same day to explain the situation and note the date/time of the phone call on the EESR.
- 4.5 It is worth emphasising the fact that consistency and follow-through are of paramount importance. There should be no team members who are considered a soft touch so that no leader or assistant is characterised by the children as someone who is 'hard' – everyone needs to apply this policy to the same degree. It is not a failure to have to remove a young person from a group, rather it shows that you are aware of the needs of your group and are willing to face the issues rather than ignoring them.
- 4.6 To allow team members to act consistently, do ensure that any and all instances of challenging behaviour are recorded on End of Session Reports [EOSRs] and if you know a different team member from the person completing it will be leading the next or subsequent sessions involving that child, forward your EOSR to that person so they can apply the same tactics as you in dealing with the child's behaviour.
- 4.7 RBF considers it to be unacceptable practice to allow a pattern of poor behaviour to develop for any child in any setting and where this policy is not followed it may result in disciplinary action being taken against the staff members who have allowed the pattern to develop without adequately reporting it and seeking assistance from senior team members.

5. Strikes

- 5.1 Challenging behaviour which is consistently and deliberately disruptive should result in the child receiving a strike.
- 5.1.1 Consistent and deliberate disruptive behaviour is defined as that which would result in the response laid out in 4.4.5 or 4.4.6, but may also be cumulative low level disruption exhibited over a number of weeks.
- 5.1.2 Strikes can be given by a group leader only and are given at their discretion when they believe that no other course of action can appropriately deal with the situation.
- 5.1.3 Giving a young person a strike is not a sign of failure of the group leader's part.
- 5.1.4 Strikes given must be fully written up on an EEOSR and countersigned by a parent/carer.
- 5.1.5 Parents/carers must be informed if their child receives a strike by the issuing leader at the end of a session. From that first stage, the escalation is as follows:
- 5.1.5.1 for a second strike a child will be asked to miss a session of the activity (a 'cooling off' period);
- 5.1.5.2 if a child receives a third strike after having to miss a session, their parent/carer will be asked to attend a meeting with the session leader and a member of the RBF Leadership Team to discuss their future as part of the group.
- 5.1.5.3 RBF reserves the right to bypass the strikes system where the behaviour exhibited by a child falls into the category defined in section 6, or where the behaviour would be defined as 'peer on peer abuse' as laid out in the RBF Safeguarding (Children) Policy and may suspend/revoke a child's place within a group without notice in this case. Where this clause is activated, RBF reserves the right to not offer any refund of pre-paid monies towards activities.

6. Responding to Challenging Behaviour that becomes Dangerous

- 6.1 It is important to be prepared for the possibility of challenging behaviour where a child becomes a danger to themselves or to others through physical violence or because they are (or are suspected of) carrying illegal substances or offensive weapons. The procedure for dealing with the latter is laid out in the RBF Health & Safety Policy.
- 6.2 In a situation where a young person is demonstrating dangerous behaviour, team:
- 6.2.1 should safeguard themselves and the other children in the space first;
- 6.2.2 if it is possible to get the child being violent to leave the room this course is preferable, otherwise, the most junior team member available should get all of the other out children out of the space as quickly as possible and to a place of safety;
- 6.2.2.1 if any children require first aid, the first aider should be the one to evacuate the rest of the children from the space so they can deal with first aid concerns;
- 6.2.2.2 it is also this team members' role to call the RBF Duty Manager on 020 3086 8186 (Extension 10) as soon as possible so that further assistance can be provided;
- 6.2.3 before help arrives, the group leader and another adult where possible should stay in the room with the child for as long as possible;
- 6.2.4 if the child attacks a team member, they should get themselves to safety;
- 6.2.5 one of the adults should call the parent/carer of the child who is being violent to request their immediate assistance and when they arrive it is their sole responsibility to deal with the child while RBF team care for the rest of the children;

- 6.2.6 it may be appropriate for the parents of all of the children who have been affected to be spoken to before they collect their children at the end of the session to avoid misunderstandings;
- 6.2.7 it will be necessary to complete a full EEO SR and to contact the RBF Safeguarding Officer at the earliest opportunity;
- 6.2.8 where there is a danger to life, emergency services should be called at the earliest opportunity by the team members present and in all other cases referrals to outside agencies, emergency services or partner organisations should be handled by the Duty Manager and/or Safeguarding Officer.

6.3 Some general principles when responding to dangerous challenging behaviour:

- 6.3.1 Team must remember at all times that any physical contact with a child is considered to be assault unless you are acting in self-defence. Self-defence can be very difficult to prove or assess in altercations involving children. The Board of RBF officially advises its team to not intervene in issues of physical violence unless a child's life is in danger.
- 6.3.2 If a child has been isolated and is being destructive towards property, do not intervene. Property can be replaced.

7. Additional Needs

- 7.1 Team should be aware that in some cases, behaviour which we may perceive as challenging is actually the result of an additional need or disability [AND] experienced by the child. It is imperative that team members work with parents/carers who are registering for RBF activities to ensure that as much detail as possible is disclosed about any AND, and that this information is passed quickly and efficiently to the RBF AND Officer to produce appropriate action plans on how the children in question can best participate in the group they wish to attend.
- 7.2 It is the responsibility of team members whether they are running a group on a regular basis or just covering it as a one off to check registration information and AND Action Plans well in advance of sessions taking place so that they are adequately prepared to be able to support every child taking part and have ample opportunity to ask for support from their line manager and/or the AND Officer.

8. Biosecurity

- 8.1 In light of the COVID19 outbreak in UK, team are additionally required to communicate appropriate biosecurity guidance at the beginning of each session, which may include information on:
 - 8.1.1 PPE requirements (e.g., use of face masks where required by risk assessment);
 - 8.1.2 Additional hand washing/sanitising regime;
 - 8.1.3 Effective social distancing.
- 8.2 Due to the potential serious nature of breaching stipulated biosecurity arrangements, participants should be informed that intentionally endangering adults/children within sessions will result in an immediate strike and requirement for parents/carers to collect them from the session.

9. Ask for Help

- 9.1 The Board are aware that working with children is a joy, and that challenging behaviour has the potential to steal that joy away. If RBF team are struggling with challenging behaviour, they should speak to their line manager sooner rather than later as they will be happy to help tailor a solution for a specific situation.

9.2 In summary, the 'Three Bees' for team members are:

- 7.2.1 Be consistent
- 7.2.2 Be authoritative
- 7.2.3 Be safe