



## Challenging Behaviour Policy

### 1. Policy:

- 1.1 Reach4Reality offers a service to young people aged between 9 and 18 years who have been diagnosed with a social and communication disorder (primarily autism).
- 1.2 Reach4Reality aims to provide a service tailored to the individual needs of the young people concerned.

### 2. Challenging behaviour:

- 2.1 Reach4Reality recognises that some of our young people may present challenging behaviour, or have meltdowns, due to their social communication difficulties. Reach4Reality aims to minimise the risk of this by finding out beforehand from the young person and his/her carer about any triggers or situations likely to cause or exacerbate challenging behaviour, any warning signs or indicators that the young person is becoming stressed, how the challenging behaviour is likely to manifest itself, and any strategies used successfully at home or at school to minimise and deal with the challenging behaviour. The likelihood of any challenging behaviour and any specific measures to be taken will be identified in an individual young person's risk assessment. Staff and volunteers on activities will be made aware of this and will aim to de-escalate a situation before the challenging behaviour presents itself. However despite this Reach4Reality is aware that occasional instances of challenging behaviour will occur and will respond in the following ways:

#### 2.2 Specific Strategies:

##### 2.2.1 Methods where self-control is encouraged:

- i. Positive ignoring and avoidance of confrontational eye contact: must be obvious to the person
- ii. Non-verbal gesture or sign eg frown, touch
- iii. Humour
- iv. Distraction or deflection: do something to boost the person's self-worth or to distract them

##### 2.2.2 Methods by which a reminder is given of the reality of the situation and values of the event:

- i. Direct appeal: to the individual or to others
- ii. Encouragement
- iii. Realistic limit setting: "if you....then...."
- iv. Authoritative forbidding: a loud or firm "no"
- v. Interpretation: encourage the young person to look at the result of their actions

##### 2.2.3 Methods in which the situation is used or changed to resolve the issue:



- i. Encourage the young person to take time out or allow them some quiet space in which to calm down
- ii. Provide them with extra help at difficult times
- iii. Give them a positive way out of the situation eg “Come and do this with me”
- iv. Change the environment to eliminate the source of trouble or things preventing a resolution eg take away the audience
- v. Support the routines: “but we always...”
- vi. Restructuring: change the activity
- vii. Regrouping: change the personnel of the group

In all the above responses and strategies, the safety of the young person and others in the group is of paramount importance.

2.2.4 In all the above the staff or volunteer involved should:

- i. Stay calm and listen to the child
- ii. Keep talking in a soothing manner
- iii. Be aware of their body language
- iv. Avoid any sudden moves
- v. Be aware of their surroundings
- vi. Give the young person a way out of the situation
- vii. After the young person has calmed down, give him/her the opportunity to reflect on the situation by talking to a member of staff or volunteer

2.3 Following an incident of challenging behaviour an incident report will be completed as soon as possible by the member of staff or volunteer dealing with the incident. The incident will be reported to the Project Coordinator at the earliest opportunity and dealt with accordingly. Incident report forms will be kept on the young person’s file and in the Incident report file in the office.

### **3. Sanctions:**

3.1 Reach4Reality through it’s Vision, Values and Vocation aims to promote positive behaviour and limit the need for sanctions in the following ways:

- i. Staff and volunteers to act in a fair and equitable way.
- ii. Staff and volunteers to recognise and reward young people’s achievements and provide regular opportunities for praise and approval

3.2 However, Reach4Reality recognises that occasionally sanctions are required as a result of the behaviour of a young person. If a sanction is required it must be:

- i. Appropriate to that individual and understandable to that individual
- ii. Directly related to the incident.
- iii. Time limited.
- iv. Consistent with any individual care or support plan for that young person



- v. Noted on an incident report form

### 3.3 Sanctions used would be:

- i. Verbal reprimand
- ii. Increased supervision
- iii. Separating the young person from the group or situation, in a room of his/her own, or in a quiet, safe space, until self-control has been regained. The door should not be locked and adults must monitor and/or appropriately accompany the young person during the period of separation.

Other sanctions would not be considered unless previously agreed with the young person and primary carer and included in the young person's personal plan and individual risk assessment.

- 3.4 Group sanctions will only be appropriate as a response to behaviour which has involved the whole group, and not as a means for getting an unknown culprit to own up.

- 3.5 No sanction should involve the humiliation of a young person, and staff and volunteers should ensure that young people are able to maintain their dignity and self-respect.

## 4. Restraint:

- 4.1 Restraint may be defined as "any device that limits an individual's freedom for voluntary movement" (Sullivan-Marx, 1995). It can be described as an intervention that prevents a person from causing harm to themselves, others or property (Duff et al, 1996).

- 4.2 Reach4Reality staff and volunteers are not trained to use restraint: its' use will therefore be prohibited.

- 4.3 Should Reach4Reality receive an application for a young person who is likely to need restraint, we will aim to work with carers to see whether arrangements can be made for the young person to access our services safely without the use of restraint. Decisions will be made on an individual basis following detailed discussions and risk assessments.

- 4.3 If a situation arises requiring a young person to be protected from harm (e.g. near roads or other hazards), Reach4Reality will use all methods available to ensure the young person is kept safe from harm.

## 4. Bullying

- 4.1 Definition of bullying:

Bullying can be understood as behaviour which leaves people feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed, humiliated or angry. Bullying behaviours may include:

- name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening
- ignoring, leaving out or spreading rumours
- hitting, tripping, kicking
- stealing and damaging belongings



- sending abusive text, email or other messages
  - making people feel like they are being bullied or fearful of being bullied
  - targeting someone because of who they are or are perceived to be
- 4.2 Reach4 Reality expects that all activity breaks it offers create a positive social environment which builds self-esteem and confidence in young people. Reach4Reality therefore aims to have zero tolerance to bullying on activities and camps, and positive behaviour will be supported, maintained and rewarded appropriately at all times. This will be communicated to young people, families and others before and at the start of any Reach4Reality activity or camp as appropriate.
- 4.3 When dealing with any observed or alleged incidents of bullying, Reach4Reality will:
- Aim to put a stop to any bullying by direct appeal to the young person who is bullying, or by distracting or separating the two young people as appropriate
  - The member of staff or volunteer who has witnessed the incident of bullying will meet with both parties separately to clarify the situation and to gain greater insight into the nature of the incident. See Appendix 1 for further details.
  - If the incident is serious or continues despite this, a meeting with the two young people will be arranged with two adults on the camp leadership team, as soon as possible and at a time and place where there are no other young people. Notes will be taken by one adult for the incident report. The young people will be advised that the reason for the meeting is the breakdown of relationships between them which is detrimental to the running of the camp and Reach4Reality's wish to make it better for all. (See Appendix 1 for more details).
  - As a result of this meeting an action plan will be agreed on between the two parties and camp leaders and the situation will be monitored thereafter to ensure the plan is adhered to.
  - If both parties agree, the agreed action should be carried out and the young people should return to their programme. The camp leaders should write up the Incident Report and let the other Team members know at a suitable time as soon as possible.
  - If there is no sign of any wish or agreement to work through this meeting or carry out the decision and there are no alternative actions either available or suggested, it is reasonable to discuss sanctions including a young person no longer staying on camp.



## APPENDIX 1: Bullying

### Meeting with young people separately:

Things to take into account:

**The young person being bullied:** Keep an open mind, telling someone about the bullying is not an easy step for the young person, so listen and give the young person your full attention (even if it is not a convenient moment). Find a safe and comfortable place where there will be no interruptions. Let the young person know that bullying is never acceptable and they deserve to feel safe; they have done the best thing by coming to speak to you. Try to show them that you believe them and are taking them seriously. Gently encourage them to talk, finding out what happened, who was involved, where and when. Ask questions and make notes if necessary. Find out what they want you to do and try to take into account their views when planning how to deal with any allegations. Keep the young person involved and up to date. Reinforce that you are glad they came to talk to you and that you are always there to listen. Promise to check back with them to make sure that whatever agreements you have made are happening and make sure that you do it.

**The young person who is bullying:** Listen and try and discover the reasons why they are displaying bullying behaviour, the bigger picture for this person and what shapes them. Do not label the individual as a bully. Name the behaviour and the natural consequences should it continue, for example, when you act like that people are upset and may not want to spend time with you. State clearly the behaviour you would like to see change and what behaviour you would like to see instead (this gives clarity and makes it easier to address negative behaviour and reward positive behaviour). Support the young person to find a positive resolution and be prepared to address prejudicial attitudes that may be behind the behaviour.

### Joint meeting with both young people:

- The Camp leader will explain that although the camp leaders are impartial (no favourites and not having already decided), it will be necessary for them all to deal with this matter and find a way forward which is helpful to them and others at the camp. There are no winners or losers. The Camp leader will come to a decision about this matter and will have to ask the young people concerned to accept this decision.
- Each young person will be invited in turn (and without interruption), starting with the 'victim' to explain what they think has happened/taken place, why and how they are left feeling. At the end of each statement the Camp leader may ask for further explanations or clarification to be able to obtain the full picture. Neither party will use their statement to refute the other's and each party will pay fullest attention to what the other is saying, however bad or hurtful or wrong they think it is.
- After this the camp leaders will come to a decision about what should happen next (ideally go for a win-win solution); explain it to the young



people, ensuring that they fully understand it and ask them if they are willing to agree to it.

- Confidentiality is important during the meeting ie what is said and agreed in the meeting stays in the meeting ie no gossiping with other young people.
- Aim for all parties to remain cool, and remind all that being honest is the only and best way of dealing with this. Lies will never work and only make a liar less and less trusted.
- The camp leadership will keep an eye on both parties after this meeting to make sure that the agreed actions are being carried out.

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