

Behaviour management policy

Effective date: June 2025

Next revision due: June 2027

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support staff of Eastside Community Trust to provide a consistent approach in how we manage the behaviour of children (those under age of 18 years old) and adults in our spaces or at our events.

Guiding principles

Part of our role in managing community spaces is to ensure that the atmosphere within them is welcoming to all. It is therefore important that we challenge any behaviours that create a threatening or unwelcoming atmosphere.

Children have a right to express themselves through their play. Sometimes this involves noise, mess, risk taking and testing boundaries. Children benefit from learning to manage risk and relationships for themselves. If children are not causing physical or emotional harm to themselves or others or destroying equipment, staff should always consider whether children are best placed to manage their own behaviour and support them to do this, if necessary.

Children will often sort out their own differences through play and this provides valuable learning opportunities. Where there are any concerns about bullying or ongoing behaviour difficulties that pose a risk to other children's physical or emotional wellbeing, then these must be addressed quickly so that they do not affect children's enjoyment of the space.

We understand that all situations are different and that there may be complex reasons why children or adults act in ways we deem unacceptable. We will take this into account when deciding upon consequences and take care to consider the individual needs of the person. We also believe that some children who behave in ways that are deemed unacceptable have high levels of needs that mean exclusion from our spaces is not the desired outcome. These needs may relate to things such as safeguarding concerns, experience of trauma, poor emotional health or being disabled. With these children we understand that changes may not happen overnight and we will adopt a long term approach to managing their behaviour that is aimed at supporting their continued access to our spaces whilst reducing unacceptable behaviours over time.

It is important we also celebrate the general behaviour of children and adults that use our spaces. Adventure playgrounds and community centres in particular can be spaces in



which very challenging behaviours occur. We have remarkably few incidents of seriously unacceptable behaviour and this is in large part due to the culture of expected behaviours that has been established over the many years the adventure playground and community centre have been operating.

Unacceptable behaviours

We have deemed the below behaviours to be unacceptable in our spaces or at our events. Toward our spaces:

- Breaking equipment, structures or parts of the building without permission
- Stealing
- Smoking, vaping or drug use on site
- Carrying weapons*
- Going into areas that are out of bounds (such as the back and side passages of Felix Road and offices and occupied meetings rooms at Easton Community Centre)
- Climbing over the fence into Raised in Felix Road nursery
- Trying to come into the space during a private session

*Due to the nature of our sites, staff will decide what is deemed to be a weapon. For example a large stick or bat might be used for play but could also be deemed a weapon when used inappropriately.

Toward other users, including children, young people and adults:

- Fighting or attempting to start/encourage fights
- Bullying
- Verbal abuse
- Aggressive behaviour and intimidation
- Racism, sexism, homophobia or discrimination of any kind
- Stealing
- Filming or taking photos without consent
- Swearing loudly, particularly in the presence of younger children

Toward staff:

- Ignoring staff instructions
- Swearing at and being rude to staff
- Aggressive behaviour and intimidation
- Racism, sexism, homophobia or discrimination of any kind
- Stealing from staff
- Filming or taking photos of staff without consent



All of these behaviours toward staff apply outside of our spaces as well.



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Discussing unacceptable behaviours

When staff do have to manage challenging behaviour they should:

- Try not to take it personally.
- Let the person know that it is the behaviour they are displaying that is wrong and not the person themselves.
- Avoid confrontation and power struggles. Getting into one of these means that the situation cannot be resolved unless someone backs down, which will make matters worse rather than better. The person will see you as an opponent rather than as someone to be trusted.
- Speak calmly and slowly. This is particularly important with people who may have difficulties in comprehending speech. They may be attending more to your tone than to the words you are using.
- Be aware of the impact of violating someone's personal space. Never put your face 'in' theirs.
- Remove immediate pressures and any background distractions where possible. Try to talk to the person away from others.
- Be confident and assertive, but never aggressive.
- Make sure that what you say to the person, or ask them to do, is clear.
- Offer choices, and be prepared to negotiate and to compromise. You may need to give the situation time to de-escalate.
- Never use physical punishment, however, appropriate physical intervention may be necessary to prevent accident or harm to the person, e.g. restraining a child who is about to run into the road or stopping someone from seriously harming another. If an incident like this takes place it must be recorded on the positive handling log. Eastside Community Trust has a Positive Handling Policy which sets out when this type of action should be used.
- Staff should be able to call on each other for support when dealing with challenging behaviour.

Process for managing unacceptable behaviours

Staff will follow the below process when dealing with unacceptable behaviour. If at any point, the staff member believes that there is a serious risk of harm, they should alert other staff and contact 999 for further support.

1. Staff member observes or is told about unacceptable behaviour.



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2. The staff member's initial priority should be to check the wellbeing of all people involved and deal with any immediate concerns such as injuries, distress or risk of escalation/further incidents.
3. Staff member speaks to the people concerned to attempt to get a full picture of what happened.
4. Staff member explains why the behaviour is unacceptable. If the behaviour is relatively minor, and the staff member is convinced that the person accepts and takes responsibility for their actions (for instance by offering a genuine apology and agreeing not to repeat the behaviour), no further consequence may be necessary. Otherwise, they should let the person know that they will have to speak to a senior staff member.
5. Staff member reports the incident to a senior staff member as soon as possible.
6. Senior staff member to decide whether further consequences are required. This may be if the behaviour is extreme, there have been repeated minor unacceptable behaviours in recent weeks, the person refuses to accept their actions are unacceptable, or the person cannot convince staff that they will not repeat the behaviour.
7. Senior staff member informs the person who has exhibited the behaviour of the consequences at the earliest possible convenience. If they are a child, we will only inform the parents if we want to seek their support in managing the behaviour.
8. Senior staff member informs any people who were negatively affected by the behaviour of any actions taken if appropriate. If the people affected are children and the incident is particularly severe, we will endeavour to inform their parents. If they are not satisfied with how we have resolved the issue, the senior staff member should explain the reasons behind the decision without revealing any personal information about other individuals involved. If they are still not satisfied, they can be referred to this policy and our complaints policy.
9. If the behaviour involves children and is particularly concerning, the senior staff member may choose to inform their parents or school or make a First Response referral.
10. Senior staff member records the incident and actions taken on the incident log on Sharepoint. These records are used to keep track of incidents so that we can identify frequency of minor unacceptable behaviours becoming a more serious concern. It is also used to inform lead staff which people have been excluded and what conditions are placed on their return.

There may be times when staff are unable to immediately address an incident with some people due to the person's current emotional state. If that is the case, monitor the person to





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ensure there is no further risk and wait for them to have calmed sufficiently before discussing the incident.

On rare occasions there are some actions which are criminal in intent and will mean that calling the police is unavoidable.

There will be times when an incident occurs when a staff member is not present. Children and/or adults may present different versions of the event and make accusations about each other about something that was not witnessed first hand by a staff member.

When this happens, a senior staff member will listen to both 'sides' of the incident separately and discuss what happened with the children/adult. If there were any independent witnesses, then the staff member will also speak to them.

If the staff member concludes there is strong evidence to support an accusation (e.g. of physical harm, bullying or verbal abuse) then they will follow the process set out above.

If the staff member concludes that there is not enough evidence to take action, they will give a verbal warning to the person accused and explain to the 'victim' that they will monitor the situation. Staff will then pay close attention to the individuals to ensure no further incidents occur. Decisions will be documented in the incident log.

Consequences for unacceptable behaviours

Depending on the severity or frequency of the behaviour and previous incidents, as well as the age of the person, there may be different types of consequence such as:

- Being asked to stay away from particular individuals.
- Having restricted access to certain areas or resources.
- Being asked to leave.
- Being asked to spend a period away from our spaces

If we ask people to leave or spend a period away from our spaces, there might be different conditions for their return. For children, they might:

- Return on any future day, as long as they come to speak to the lead staff member on that session about the incident and that staff member is convinced that the child accepts and takes responsibility for their actions and is committed to not repeating the behaviour. The child must have a completed registration form to return. A lead staff member may also speak to the parents about the incident if there have been repeated incidents of unacceptable behaviour or an incident of severely unacceptable behaviour. This will only be used as a way of seeking support from the



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family in finding a solution that will address the behaviour, not as a punishment or threat.

- Return after an agreed time period following repeated or severely unacceptable behaviours. An exclusion over an extended period will only be given for the following reasons:
 - If there is a conflict between children that needs time to deescalate
 - If staff require time to consider and discuss appropriate actions
 - If staff feel the behaviour can be interrupted by a break and less likely to reoccur
 - If staff feel the child needs to realise the severity of the behaviour
 - If staff feel other children in our spaces need to see that there are appropriate consequences for the displayed behaviour
- Not return until they have had a meeting with their parent/carer and a lead staff member to discuss the incident. If it is not possible to have a meeting with a parent or carer, we may instead have a meeting with a staff member from their school or another appropriate professional. We will only resort to this if previous attempts at addressing similar behaviours have not worked and we are not convinced the child will not repeat the behaviour. At this meeting, a suitable consequence for the behaviour will be agreed. This might be a longer exclusion from the playground or an agreed action plan for their return to the playground. This may also include a behaviour 'contract' in which the child will agree not to do anything that we have agreed is unacceptable.
- Not return during open access play sessions and instead only be permitted to attend the Felix Nights session for children aged 10-14. They may then be able to return to the play sessions if their behaviour improves over an agreed time period.

For adults, they might:

- Return on any future day as long as they offer an apology to the member of staff and the staff member is convinced that the adult accepts and takes responsibility for their actions.
- Not return for a period of time agreed by the senior management team.
- Not return indefinitely if the behaviour is serious enough or the police have been involved in the incident. This will be agreed by the senior management team.

We discourage non-senior staff from giving out exclusions for unacceptable behaviour. We feel keeping the decision within the senior staff team helps with consistency and fairness. Senior staff members are also more likely to be aware of other factors that may impact upon the consequences for unacceptable behaviour. We do however encourage all staff to



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report any unacceptable behaviour to a senior staff member as soon as possible.

We record all exclusions, the length of the exclusion and the reason for the exclusion on our incident log which is reviewed regularly by senior management. This is to monitor trends over time, identify any additional action needed and to ensure we are treating everyone fairly.

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the way an incident has been dealt with by a member of staff please refer to our complaints policy. This is on our website or a member of the team can supply a printed copy.



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