

Elite Development Coaching

Behaviour

Whilst providing or putting on activities for children, we will unfortunately at some point need to deal with a child's challenging behaviour. We have therefore developed this guidance to assist and help managing challenging behaviour with children.

This guidance is based on the following principles and aims to provide, support, and promote safer practice:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading.
- A child's specific needs should be discussed with their parent/carer and, where appropriate, the child before activities start. Details of any plan or approach agreed between the coach, parents/carers, the child, and our Welfare Officer should be recorded and provided to all parties by email.
- Every child should be supported to participate in sport. Excluding a child from an activity because of their behaviour should only be used in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort after all efforts to address any challenge have been exhausted; for example, where a child's challenging behaviour means that the safety of that child or of other children cannot be maintained, we may consider it appropriate to exclude that child.
- Parents/carers must be kept informed of incidents of challenging behaviour as soon as is reasonably possible.

WHAT IS CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR?

Challenging behaviour has been defined as behaviour that is "of such an intensity, frequency, or duration as to threaten the quality of life and/or the physical safety of the individual or others and it is likely to lead to responses that are restrictive, aversive or result in exclusion".

PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Always consider if any child needs, or may need, additional support or supervision to participate safely, because of their behaviour. To do this effectively ensure always we follow these four key steps:

1. An assessment of any additional risk associated with a child's potential behaviour.
2. Identification of suitable ratios of adults to children to meet any additional needs. There may need to be greater adult supervision depending on the outcome of the assessment at point 1 above.
3. Give guidance to all supervising adults on how to manage challenging behaviour to ensure a consistent approach.
4. Consider using specialist expertise or support that may be needed from carers or outside agencies. This is particularly relevant where it is identified that a child may need a level of physical intervention to participate safely.

AGREEING ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

Our officials and those leading the activity are required to work with the participating children and their parents/carers to agree:

- What constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour?
- The range of sanctions which may be applied in response to unacceptable behaviour.

Where challenges are anticipated, for example because of a child's impairment or other medical condition, a clear plan needs to be made and written down.

For our teams this can be done at the start of the season, and it should involve the views of children to encourage buy-in and understanding.

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

When responding to challenging behaviour, the response must always be:

- Proportionate to the challenging behaviour or actions.
- Imposed as soon as is practicable; and
- Fully explained to the child and their parents/carers.

When dealing with children who display negative or challenging behaviours, the nature of the behaviour and the age of the child must be considered when determining the action(s) to take. Consider making use of the following actions:

- Continue to praise appropriate behaviour of those positively completing the task/activity.
- Offer extra responsibility to a child to help refocus their energy e.g., leading a part of the activity.
- Increase the number of coaches/staff/ volunteers involved in overseeing the task/activity.
- Reason with the child, including advising them about the consequences of their actions.
- De-escalate the situation, for example by talking with the child and distracting them from challenging behaviour.
- Use a verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
- Implement a time out from the current activity.
- Implement a temporary removal from subsequent training session.

For our teams a child's behaviour may result in :

- Not being selected for the next match starting line-up but placed on the bench for substitution (alongside an explanation as to why the child has not been selected).
- Not selecting the child to play any part in the next match (alongside an explanation as to why the child has not been selected).
- Not selecting the child to play any part in the next two/three matches (alongside an explanation as to why the child has not been selected).
- Require completion of another a task or activity to make amends.
- Use individual agreements with the child (and/or their parents/carers) to determine the basis upon which the child will be permitted to continue participating.
- Us having to seek additional/specialist support through working in partnership with other agencies.

THE FOLLOWING SHOULD NEVER BE PERMITTED AS A MEANS OF MANAGING A CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such.
- Refusal to speak to or interact with the child.
- Depriving the child of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essential facilities.
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule, or humiliation.

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Our officials, or those leading activities and volunteers must consider the risks associated with employing physical intervention compared with the risks of not doing so. The use of physical intervention must always:

- Be avoided unless it is necessary to prevent a child injuring themselves or others or causing serious damage to property.
- Be aimed at achieving an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern.
- Employ the minimum force needed to avoid injury to a person or serious damage to property and applied for the shortest period.
- Do not cover a child's mouth.
- Stay in control of your actions; and
- Consider swapping club officials during the intervention to reduce the tension and stress.
- Used only after all other strategies have been exhausted.
- Be recorded as soon as possible using the appropriate reporting form and procedure.

Parents should always be informed following an incident where an official, or someone leading an activity or volunteer has had to physically intervene with a child.

Physical intervention must not:

- Involve contact with the head, neck, buttocks, genitals, or breasts.
- Be used as a form of punishment.
- Involve inflicting pain.

VIEWS OF THE CHILD

A timely de-brief for staff/volunteers, the child and parents/carers should always take place in a calm environment following an incident where physical intervention has been used. Even children who haven't directly been involved in the situation may need to talk about what they have witnessed. There should also be a discussion with the child and their parents about the child's needs and continued safe participation in the group or activity.

CHILDREN AT HIGH RISK

Where children are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require physical intervention, this must be discussed with parents/carers and, where necessary, we will seek advice from, or work in partnership with,

external agencies (e.g. Children's Social Care) to ensure that the child or young person can be supported to participate safely.

This may include asking for the provision of a suitably trained support worker/volunteer or accessing staff/volunteer training in physical intervention or parent/ carer support.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STAFF MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

All that work with children must implement procedures on managing challenging behaviour that include, at a minimum, the following:

- We must always adhere to this policy and our bullying guidelines set out to help managing challenging behaviour.
- The standard of our staff should always be directly in line with our coaches code of conduct and in line with our ethos and values.
- Use of our behaviour reporting tool so common themed behaviour can be picked up on, dealt with and changes can be made if necessary.
- Thinking of circumstances in which physical interventions will be used.
- Using continual guidance, support and/or training available.
- The circumstances where external agencies will be contacted for support or in response to concerns e.g. Children's Social Care services, the Police.
- What will happen after an incident with regards to a debrief.

11 Tips to help

Our language

Kids need to understand what the expectations are at our sessions. Use of language like, "when you're training with us, this is what we do...". Or this is what we expect...". This gives your players a consistent framework.

It is important to be clear at the start of training sessions about these messages and using positive reinforcements when children are doing well.

Better training sessions mean fewer problems

It's true, the better the practice the better behaved they will be.

Children want to feel engaged always within their training and by being engaged in their training gives them less opportunities to miss behave.

Delivering better training sessions is also fun for them and that is value we always promote.

Create training sessions where children are active and, on the move, the moment children become bored or a constantly queuing they are likely to seek attention and act up.

Follow consistent coaching routines

Having a routine creates an excellent learning framework for dealing with behaviours. An excellent way is to plan arrival activities, so children become engaged from the moment they arrive. Develop a clear focus for the session and smooth transitions from one game to the next without having to pick up or change the session lay out too much.

A recommendation is to colour coordinate your cones, so children can pick up the colour on drinks break so that the next part is all set to go with only a small amount of cones being picked up.

Spending less time talking to your players as a large group is also important, speaking to children individually has far greater impact on them.

Set boundaries – and stick to them

As a coach you don't need a long, complicated list. Instead, focus on safety, learning and respect. Make these your non-negotiables and communicate them at the start of every session. If any of the three areas is threatened, it's time to intervene.

Build in time to chat

It's unrealistic to expect players to just turn up and be ready to listen. This is especially true with our younger players. Rather than fighting for quiet, build in time for players to catch up, this could be part of our arrival activity or as part of the exercise where our players can communicate through player cards or as part of an exercise.

Notice good player behaviour

If an individual demonstrates safety, learning or respect, take the time to notice their effort. This helps to reinforce these desirable behaviours. However, be mindful not to over-praise as, over time, this can make positive feedback mean less. Instead, simply acknowledge your players' actions. For example, say, "You're ready to listen" – rather than "Well done, brilliant, you're ready to listen."

Ask the winning team to collect the cones

Reverse the thought process and use it as a reward, the winning team get to do it because it's a privilege. It shows you respect your environment and want to help your mates.

The cones can be looked as points for winning and the number of cones collected by each player can be a small win for them individually.

Think about copycats

If a player acts up, the rest of your group is watching to see how you handle their behaviour. If you bend the rules, you risk other children becoming 'copycats' and replicating the bad behaviour. Instead, stick to your boundaries. This lets players know that you mean what you say.

Be clear about unacceptable behaviour

Recognise that it's not your players who are unacceptable – it's their behaviour. Making a distinction between the person and their actions is crucial. For example, John isn't bad, but his behaviour is. Try to make this clear in your communication. For example, "rude language is disrespectful and using it is unacceptable".

Singling bad behaviour in front of the group

Addressing bad behaviour and singling the individual out in front of the group is punishing the individual in front of their peers.

Now their behaviour may have been bad, but we should use the right steps to deal with this before ever thinking of doing this.

Singling them out, would have a huge effect on their attitude towards you and this will probably lead to more negative behaviour.

Remember that the only behaviour you can control is your own

As a coach, you're there to help. But it isn't your job to solve every problem. The tips we've mentioned here are designed to help you manage behaviour. But, at the end of the day, the only reactions you can control are your own.