Behaviour Policy

It's important to us that each student has access to the best possible outcomes from their participation in our activities. This means that they are able to realise their potential to learn, grow and develop to the best of their abilities.

To support this aim and to ensure the safety, wellbeing and happiness of all our students, we implement a Behaviour Policy. It applies to all students taking part in Sparks activities and aims to make sure that every student can benefit from a positive, safe and happy environment.

Our Approach to Behaviour

We believe that our students thrive when supported by (and contributing to) a positive and happy environment. When participating in our activities, they should feel safe, secure and valued.

We actively promote and model friendly, caring and polite behaviour, which extends to students, colleagues, partners and our environment. We promote the spirit of teamwork, collaboration and friendship. We champion equality and celebrate our differences.

Our approach to behaviour management focuses on encouraging consistently positive behaviours by establishing clear expectations, open communication and building a foundation of trust and mutual respect.

We aim to:

- Encourage consideration for each other, our surroundings, equipment and belongings
- Acknowledge and praise positive actions and attitudes

- Challenge any behaviours that do not contribute positively to our environment or to the group
- Provide activities to help students learn and understand about the importance and impact of behaviour, including opportunities for students to contribute to decisions and group behaviour policies/contracts
- Encourage participation in a wide range of group activities to support the growth of social and communication skills
- Ensure that all staff act as positive role models
- Work in partnership with students, families and partners by communicating openly
- Support and encourage students to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviours
- Recognise individuality and personal efforts
- Have a named person who has overall responsibility for behaviour management.

Restorative Approaches

We use a reconciliatory system called 'Restorative Approaches' to respond to behavioural incidents (McCluskey et al, 2008).

This is a system developed out of Restorative Justice approaches and aims to work towards a mutual, constructive solution to resolve issues of conflict. It consults the individuals affected by any behavioural incidents in the process and places their needs at the heart of the solution.

Team members will all receive training in using this approach as part of their introductory Safeguarding Training.

Reference:
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gillean_Mccluskey/publication/248998963_%27I_Was_Dead_Restorative_Today%27_From_Restorative_Justice_to_Restorative_Approaches_in_School/links/53f46f7f0cf2888a7490f18c.pdf

Variations for Age Appropriateness

We recognise that various behaviours are consistent with a student's age and level of maturity or development. For instance, we expect greater levels of individual and personal responsibility in our older students, where we understand that younger students may still be learning and may require more support.

We will always consider the individual behaviour, their intentions, or any patterns, when managing behaviour and applying behaviour management measures.

Variations for SEND

In the case of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, we understand that students have individual needs and we will always try to take these into account and make reasonable adjustments, where any additional needs are relevant to behaviour and behaviour management.

We will work in partnership with parents and other support agencies to implement any existing personalised strategies and we will also work to add to these and develop our own within the context of our sessions.

Other Considerations:

Depending on the circumstances, we may also take other factors into consideration. These include:

- Any earlier incidents or behaviour record of an individual
- Other events or circumstances in a student's life that may be affecting them, e.g. bullying at school; family separations; health issues etc
- Existing involvement with any external agencies, e.g. CAMHS, therapies, LADO etc

Team Member Responsibilities:

Behaviour management is the responsibility of all team members. It's important to us that everybody shares in this responsibility and that every team member is good role model for our students.

Instructors, including Assistants and Volunteers*:

Team Members are responsible for:

- Management of group behaviour and individual behaviours during sessions and during student break times whilst on duty
- Setting good examples to students, especially around listening, communication and showing respect
- Establishing co-authored group contracts including rules and responsibilities
- Setting clear expectations of behaviour and responsibility
- Acknowledging and praising positive behaviours and interactions
- Reminding students of these expectations
- Individual and group interventions when the may be required
- Completing Incident Reports where there are behavioural incidents
- Seeking advice and liaising with the Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead when required

*Volunteers: as a rule, we don't work with volunteers. All our team members are highly skilled, talented and dedicated professionals, who we believe deserve to be paid properly for their work, and who also must undergo Safer Recruitment practices. Where Volunteers are present, they will usually be Sparks students undertaking leadership qualifications or work experience, or students taking part in a professional work experience placement with us (in partnership with their school, university or training organisation.) We do not expect for them to take an active role with any disciplinary measures, but they should offer encouragement and support, as well as set a good example to all students.

Managers:

Team Members are responsible for:

- Implementing this behaviour policy across the activity
- Sharing information with the relevant team members, including briefing, training and delegating where relevant
- Acknowledging and praising positive behaviours and interactions
- Individual and group interventions which require a senior level of involvement
- Ensuring Incident Report procedures are followed, according to the Safeguarding Policy
- Communication with parents/guardians where necessary
- Seeking advice from the DSL or external agencies where required

Designated Safeguarding Officer:

Responsible for:
- Involvement where there is a potential risk of harm to any student as a result of behavioural incidents, actions or concerns
- Sharing relevant information with external organisations, in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy
- Providing support, advice and guidance to other team members where required

Named Team Member with Overall Responsibility for Behaviour Management:

This will typically be the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the location or branch. To find out how to contact your named person, please speak to a Manager or a member of staff, who will advise you of your nominated person.

The Team Member will:

- Advise and support other staff on behaviour issues
- Will keep up to date with best practices, legislation and research relating to behaviour
- Contribute to the development of policies and procedures
- Access relevant sources of expertise where required and act as a central information source
- Attend regular training events and share updates and training insight with other members of their team

Code of Conduct for Students

Our Code of Conduct is based on a spirit of fun and fair participation, where students are considerate towards the needs of others, participate actively and take responsibility.

Each group can add to the code below with their own 'group contract', where they set out and agree to their own expectations of themselves and others.

Do:

- Have fun and share happiness
- Be friendly and welcoming to other students
- Be polite to other students and team members
- Actively contribute towards activities
- Listen to others
- Give everybody an opportunity to share or contribute
- Focus on the activity
- Pose questions
- Offer constructive feedback (where appropriate to do so)
- Take care of the equipment and handle things carefully
- Take care of our surroundings
- Put things back in their place ready for someone else to use
- Let someone know if you have a problem
- Compliment others on their ideas and contributions
- Praise other people's work
- Try your best
- Be prepared: be on time and bring the right things with you
- Be open to new ideas and possibilities
- Experiment creatively
- Work as part of a team
- Speak out and share your feelings if you feel something is wrong
- Take an interest in other people's lives
- Celebrate differences and individuality
- Respect everybody's right to take part safely
- Represent yourself with pride and integrity
- Show consideration for others and their happiness

Don't:

- Act violently or show physical aggression towards another student or team member
- Call anyone else hurtful 'names' or say hurtful things
- Use 'bad' language: swear words, threats or expressions of aggressions, discriminatory or offensive terms
- Exclude anyone from participating in an activity
- Show discrimination to others
- Interrupt others when they are speaking
- Belittle other people's ideas or points of view with non-constructive criticisms
- Be silly or distract from the task or activity
- Cause any deliberate damage to our surroundings, environment or equipment, or to other people's belongings
- Take something that doesn't belong to you
- Make judgements before knowing all the facts
- Arrive unprepared to give your best, e.g. under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Make physical contact without prior consent
- Use phones or personal devices within sessions or activities (unless specifically approved as part of the activity)
- Capture images or videos of other students or team members on any personal devices
- Engage in any behaviour that could be considered bullying
- Take, store, share or send any inappropriate or harmful material
- Engage in any criminal activity

Behaviour Management Systems & Measures

Where we identify that behaviours have not lived up to these expectations, we will take steps to manage this and improve behaviours in the future. We will always try to support students as much as possible, whilst balancing the need the safety and positive environments for the group.

We will categorise behaviour incidents into levels, taking into account any contextual information, such as records of any previous incidents or patterns of behaviour. We will also reference any steps already taken and consider how successful these have been.

Unacceptable behaviours and measures are categorised under the following levels:

Level 1:
Level 1 incidents can often take place in sessions, especially amongst younger students. They are responded to at a local level by the Instructor, who receives training on how to positively challenge these behaviours.

- Minor demonstrations of 'low level' poor behaviour that can be managed locally, in the moment, with minimal intervention from team members
- Do not represent a significant risk of harm to others
- E.g. interrupting another student; low level disruptions or distractions

Measures may include:
- Verbal reminders of our expectations
- Asking students to apologise to those affected
- Presenting opportunities for students to demonstrate improved behaviours, with subsequent acknowledgement and praise of the improvements
- One-to-one conversations around specific behaviours and why these are not acceptable
- Listening to the student's account and offering advice on how to respond to any challenges more positively
- Giving 'formal' warnings – on a 'three strike' basis
- Asking students to 'sit out' of an activity
- Reallocating short term production responsibilities

- Engaging students in a 'Restorative Approach' based consultation process

Level 2:

Level 2 incidents will mostly be responded to at a local level by the Instructor, but may also include involvement from a manager and/or the DSL. These are slightly more serious incidents that may require additional management.

Level 2 Incidents may:

- Present a meaningful pattern of Level 1 behaviours, or consistent disruption over a prolonged period of time
- Represent a possible risk of harm to others
- Already have prior involvement from the DSL
- E.g. Minor bullying, such as repeat name calling; isolated incidents of physical aggression; repeated use of phone within sessions.

Measures may include:
- Verbal reminders of our expectations
- Asking students to apologise to those affected
- Presenting opportunities for students to demonstrate improved behaviours, with subsequent acknowledgement and praise of the improvements
- One-to-one conversations around specific behaviours and why these are not acceptable
- Listening to the student's account and offering advice on how to respond to any challenges more positively
- Giving 'formal' warnings – on a 'three strike' basis
- Asking students to 'sit out' of an activity
- Reallocating short term production responsibilities
- Engaging students in a 'Restorative Approach' based consultation process
- Referrals to Managers
- Informing parents/guardians about behavioural issues

Level 3:

Level 3 incidents will most likely be managed at Manager and/or DSL level, but in some cases where the behaviour can be managed more locally by an Instructor, then this

approach will be taken (e.g. if any risk of harm is a short term Health & Safety concern that corresponds directly to a specific activity or location, where it can be suitably managed at the time and reported later). Wherever a Level 3 incident takes place, an Incident Report should be made and the Manager/DSL informed, in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

Level 3 Incidents may:

- Jeopardise the safety of themselves or others
- Present a significant risk of harm to others
- Form a prolonged pattern of Level 1 or Level 2 behaviours that have not been successfully addressed over an extended period of time
- E.g. Serious or long term bullying; physical violence towards others; discriminatory behaviour.

Measures may include:
- Verbal reminders of our expectations
- Asking students to apologise to those affected
- Presenting opportunities for students to demonstrate improved behaviours
- One-to-one conversations around specific behaviours and why these are not acceptable
- Referrals to Managers
- Informing parents/guardians about behavioural issues
- A Behaviour Management Plan with involvement from the DSL (alongside involvement by any relevant agencies)
- Suspending a student from participation

Level 4:
Level 4 incidents are very rare and are taken very seriously.

It is highly likely that the DSL will be involved and it may also require involvement from external agencies, such as the LADO or the police.

Level 4 incidents may:

- Constitute serious breaches of the behaviour policy or safeguarding policy

- Be linked to criminal or violent intentions towards others

- Present a serious and immediate risk of harm to others

- Include specific irresponsible behaviour that threatens the safety of others, or poses a threat to life

- E.g. possession of a dangerous weapon; possession of illegal or dangerous substances.

Measures include:
- Referrals to the DSL and external agencies

- Informing parents/guardians

- Suspending a student from participation

- Excluding a student from participation

Links to Other Policies

This policy is designed to act in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy, which outline additional practices and procedures designed to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of our students.

For more details, please see:
- Our Anti-Bullying Policy

- Safeguarding Policy

- Equality & Diversity Policy