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**Northfields & District Play Association**

Sanction and Behaviour Policy

Northfields and District Play Association

Version 1.0

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# Version Control

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# Introduction

Northfield and District Play Association ("The Playbarn") is a safe and engaging environment where young people from 6 - 15 years old can enjoy themselves. There is a focus on; socialising, informal education, fun and engaging physical activities, life skills and inclusivity.

Indoor activities include arts and crafts, a pool table, table tennis and football, cooking and a tuck shop. A separate youth club is on-site for young people aged 10-15 years, and The Playbarn also runs holiday playschemes throughout the year.

Making The Playbarn a safe and comfortable environment for our service users, staff, and others with whom we work is a priority, and it is, therefore, essential that we foster a culture of mutual trust and respect.

To attain this, The Playbarn will ensure that the expectations around behaviour are understood by all and that positive behaviours will be reinforced via supportive staff. Service users will be encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour through education and restorative conversations, and we will, wherever possible, avoid formal sanctions.

It is our aim that this policy and procedure:

* Informs all stakeholder of what good behaviour looks like.
* Act as a guide to our service users and their parents and guardians as to our rules and expectations and what constitutes misconduct.
* Acts as a guide to all stakeholders on how we manage unacceptable behaviour.
* Act as a guide to our staff, outlining a fair and transparent process for managing misconduct.
* Outlines where temporary and permanent exclusion from the service will be implemented.
* Be seen by our students as a way to promote positive action and never as a means to control their every move or punish them.

# Scope

This policy applies to all stakeholders of The Playbarn and is available on request.

# Definitions

## Normal Misconduct

Normal misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:

* Aggression towards staff and other service users.
* Non-compliance with rules or reasonable instruction.
* Behaviour that could cause mild to moderate harm to self or others.
* Anti-social behaviour (e.g., swearing and name calling).
* Disruptive behaviour (e.g., spoiling an activity for others).
* Destructive behaviour or disrespect of property (e.g., damaging equipment, littering, spitting).
* Trespass (e.g., refusing to leave when a session is over or where the individual is excluded).

## Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is any behaviour which is serious enough to warrant immediate and permanent exclusion and includes but is not limited to:

* Breaches of Equal Opportunity Rules and Laws (racism, homophobia, etc.).
* Bullying.
* Theft.
* Possession of stolen property with intent to sell.
* Possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, weapons, or other banned items/substances.
* Serious and willful damage to property.
* Serious breaches of health and safety rules (e.g., setting off fire alarms, extremely unsafe behaviour).
* Obscene or explicit behaviour or other behaviour which constitutes a crime (e.g., deliberate defecation or urination not in a toilet, possession of inappropriate material, sexual offences such as touching, indecent exposure, or sexual harassment).

# Roles and Responsibilities

The **Management Committee** must:

* Oversee this policy and embed it into daily practice.
* Manage escalations where the health and safety of individuals are at risk.
* Manage and implement sanctions, liaising with the relevant stakeholders.

All **staff** must:

* Help service users to develop socially aware behaviour.
* Develop and nurture a professional relationship built on mutual respect and trust.
* Communicate and reinforce expectations about behaviour and ensure that each service user understands those expectations in accordance with their age and understanding.
* Encourage each service user to take responsibility for their behaviour, taking into account their age and understanding.
* Be able to empathise with the needs of the service user(s) in order to de-escalate stressful and difficult situations.
* Be aware of how their behaviour and actions can affect others and act as a role model for good behaviour.
* Be confident in dealing with potentially harmful behaviour and know the procedure for escalation.

Our **service users** are expected to:

* Follow our Rules (see below).

We ask that the **parents and guardians** of our service users:

* Positively reinforce our rules and assist us in instilling a sense of trust in our service.
* Engage with us where behavioural issues are raised and help us to problem solve.

# Policy

## Understanding Challenging Behaviour

We recognise that our service users may have faced difficulties in their past, may face a difficult present, or have a medical condition or other additional needs which can affect their attitudes, behaviours, and/or ability to control their emotions.

A child’s challenging behaviour should never be viewed in isolation but rather seen in the context of their experiences to date.

Difficult or challenging behaviour in children can occur for several reasons, for example:

* As a way of expressing emotions.
* As a result of developmental delays or learning disabilities.
* As a result of attachment/relationship difficulties with staff/carers.
* Learned behaviours in which challenging responses have become a habit in the face of frustration or anxiety.

When working with children with challenging behaviour, it is useful to bear in mind the following principles:

* The age and emotional maturity of the child.
* That any positive behaviour management aims to help the child learn how to behave more appropriately and not to punish or purely keep the child under control.
* Challenging or undesirable behaviour should not result in emotional distance between the child and the staff member.
* No matter how difficult or challenging a child's behaviour, staff should never resort to similar behaviour or punishment but resolve situations wherever possible through positive reinforcement and de-escalation.
* The more staff can understand a child's behaviour and can consistently meet their needs, the less likely they are to encounter difficulties with control.
* A consistent and clear message around rules and expectations must be maintained.
* Rules should be more do’s than do nots’.

## Behavioural Rules and Expectations

Our rules and expectations should be seen as a way to grow, develop, thrive, and have a safe and enjoyable time with our service.

All service users and stakeholders should:

* Respect staff and other service users.
* Respect the property at the centre and other people’s property, and not cause any damage and/or steal.
* Respect visitors to The Playbarn, parents and guardians, the general public, and the people we work with.
* Listen to staff and follow instructions.
* Act sensibly at all times and not put themselves or others in danger.
* Not bully or take part in bullying behaviour.
* Not bring any banned items to The Playbarn.
* Participate in activities in a positive way and not disrupt or spoil the activities for others.

## Banned Items

The following items must not be brought to the centre:

* Weapons (blades, clubs, bats, knuckle dusters, or any other items classed as a weapon).
* Alcohol.
* Illegal drugs, including legal highs.

## Praising Good Behaviour

Our policy is built on mutual trust and respect, and we know that acknowledging good behaviour encourages repetition and communicates our expectations and values to all service users.

To promote and reinforce positive behaviours, staff will fairly and equally congratulate, praise, and thank service users for their positive contributions to the service and for meeting our standards.

## Parent and Guardian Behaviour Expectations

Whilst on the premises, parents and guardians of service users are expected to adhere to the same behavioural standards as our service users.

Parents or guardians who are abusive to staff, service users, other visitors, or any stakeholder will be asked to leave the premises immediately.

No parent or guardian is permitted to threaten or strike any child on the premises, and any person seen doing so will be warned that if such behaviour recurs, there will be no option but to permanently exclude them from attending the premises. In serious cases where an action is considered to be abusive, the individual will also be reported to the local safeguarding team.

## Trespass

Any person on the premises with no right to be so will be politely asked to leave immediately.

If this polite request is not adhered to, a member of staff will contact the Police to have the individual removed from the premises.

# Procedure

## Principles of Behaviour Management

* A restorative approach will be our first approach to behaviour management where appropriate.
* All behaviour management interventions will be initiated as a means to protect our service users, staff, and other stakeholders and promote better behaviour.
* All sanctions will be applied fairly depending on the circumstances.
* Behavioural issues and the sanctions applied will be communicated to the service user, their parents or guardians, and, where appropriate, the social worker who referred them.
* Where we have serious concerns about the health and safety of our service users, staff, or other stakeholders, we will contact the Police and/or make a safeguarding referral as appropriate.
* A permanent exclusion will be the last resort.

## Managing Potentially Volatile, Violent, or Aggressive Situations

De-escalation of a potentially volatile situation is essential to prevent situations from escalating.

To ensure the safety of others, staff must complete the following prior to and during de-escalation:

* Clear the area of other service users and visitors.
* Make sure the area is safe.
* Remove any known or suspected triggers.
* Think – should the emergency services be notified at this point?
* Inform a colleague if they are alone, and seek help from another member of staff.
* Ask one question at a time to gain an understanding of what the issue is.
* Ensure understanding by paraphrasing.
* Avoid invalidation.
* Keep the conversation focused on the student and actively listen to what they say.
* Avoid blame!
* Face the service user.
* Keep a calm demeanour.
* Keep eye contact.
* Smile where appropriate.
* Go slow.
* Keep plenty of space between themself and the service user.

Staff must not:

* Promise to keep a secret that they cannot.
* Promise to do something that they cannot.
* Use threats to de-escalate a situation.

## Use of Physical Restraint

The safety of our service users, staff, and visitors is paramount, and whilst we are opposed to using force, in certain circumstances, a member of staff may use minimum force to restrain a service user where those pose a significant threat to themselves or others.

Use of force will only apply where de-escalation and all other non-contact methods have been unsuccessful in managing the incident and/or where the danger to a person or persons is so imminent that there would be no time for another course of action.

All such incidents will be recorded in an incident report and reported to the manager and service user’s parents or guardians.

## Calling the Emergency Services

Whilst The Playbarn aims to reduce unnecessary involvement of the emergency services, we will call the Police if:

* Serious threats of harm are made.
* Anyone poses an imminent danger to themselves or others.
* There is proof of criminality (Possession of Drugs, Stolen Property, Weapons).

## Recording Incidents

The member of staff who has dealt with the misconduct will note the details of the infraction in the incident book and sign it. Where appropriate, another member of staff will also sign to witness the veracity of the report.

Records should provide the following information:

* What happened?
* Who was involved?
* What was happening before the incident, and what led up to the incident?
* What was seen/heard/captured as evidence?
* Did harm, damage, or a crime occur?
* Which authorities were contacted, if applicable?

## Escalation to the Manager

Where gross misconduct occurs, where a service user should be removed from the group for the remainder of the session, or where a service user has previously been issued with a second warning, the incident should immediately be reported to the manager.

## Escalation to the Management Committee Chair

If the exclusion of more than two weeks is deemed necessary (including permanent exclusion), or if the service user is repeatedly excluded with no signs of improvement, the Chair of the management committee will be informed.

## Applying Sanctions

### Stage 1 – First Warning (First Occurrence of Normal Misconduct)

Restorative approaches enable those who have been harmed to convey the impact of the harm to those responsible and for those responsible for acknowledging this impact and taking steps to put it right.

As a first step, we will:

* Inform the service user of how they have breached the rules and what the consequences of their actions are; and
* Talk through what happened and try to help them to learn and develop by taking accountability for their actions and recognising what they might do differently next time; and
* Encouraging the student to apologise; and
* Warn them that a recurrence may lead to a formal warning or exclusion.

### Stage 2 – Second Formal Warning (Second Occurrence of Normal Misconduct)

In more serious situations or where a restorative conversation has not been effective, we may verbally warn the service user that their behaviour has breached the rules and inform them that a further breach will lead to a formal meeting and possible exclusion.

### Stage 3 – Temporary Exclusion

To safeguard the welfare of our stakeholders in more serious situations or where any of the following stages have not been successful in managing behaviour, the service user will be temporarily excluded.

On the day of the incident, whereby a temporary exclusion is warranted, a child over the age of eight (8) who makes their way home independently will be asked to leave the premises immediately. A child under the age of eight (8) will either start their exclusion from the following session or, if the misconduct is serious, be removed from the session, where we will contact the emergency contact and ask that they pick the service user up early.

The length of a temporary exclusion will depend on the nature of the misconduct and the number of previous warnings given. However, the following principles will apply:

* In all cases, the parents or guardians will be informed of the reason for the exclusion and asked to reinforce our rules so that the service user is aware of how they may meet our standards and avoid permanent exclusion on their return.
* In cases of theft, the service user will be excluded until the stolen item(s) are returned.
* Where exclusion is over two weeks in length or where the behaviour is particularly concerning, the Chair of the management committee will arrange a formal meeting with the service user, their parents or guardians, and, where appropriate, the referrer. During this meeting, the parties should attempt to devise strategies whereby behaviour and integration into the service can be improved.
* The service user and the relevant parties will be warned that further breaches may lead to permanent exclusion.

### Stage 4 – Permanent Exclusion

In particularly serious cases, such as criminal acts or gross misconduct, a service user will be immediately removed from the session and permanently excluded from the service. In such cases, all relevant parties, including the parents or guardians and, where appropriate, the referrer, will be informed in writing of the decision.

The letter will also outline the right of appeal, which must be submitted in writing within 28 days of the notification of permanent exclusion. Appeals will be heard by the management committee at the next full management meeting.

# Monitoring and Reviewing

The Playbarn is committed to ensuring that our policies are effective and up-to-date. To do this, we have a process for regularly monitoring and reviewing them. The management committee is responsible for this process and will review the policies at least once a year or more frequently if needed due to changes in legislation, best practice, or organisational change.

Reviewing our policies includes identifying which ones need to be looked at, gathering input from employees and stakeholders, reviewing the policies, and communicating any updates.