



Managing Challenging Behaviour Procedure

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Board of Trustees

Managing Challenging Behaviour Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure sets out how challenging, distressed or disruptive behaviour is managed during activities delivered by Both Sides Foundation. The aim is to promote safety, respect and wellbeing for everyone involved while responding calmly, proportionately and appropriately.

Both Sides Foundation works with children and young people aged 15–19, and responses to behaviour must always be age-appropriate, safeguarding-focused and supportive.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all individuals working with or on behalf of Both Sides Foundation, including trustees, staff, volunteers, practitioners, facilitators, contractors and delivery partners.

It applies to all activities, including retreats, workshops, outreach activities, events and online engagement.

3. Understanding Challenging Behaviour

Challenging behaviour may arise for many reasons, particularly when working with young people. This may include emotional distress, anxiety, trauma, frustration, misunderstanding, peer dynamics or unmet needs.

Behaviour may include:

- Raised voices, agitation or visible distress
- Withdrawal, shutdown or disengagement
- Disruptive, confrontational or oppositional behaviour
- Behaviour that impacts the safety, wellbeing or experience of others

Behaviour should always be understood in context and responded to with care, patience and sensitivity wherever possible.

4. Principles for Responding

When responding to challenging behaviour, individuals should:

- Remain calm, patient and non-judgemental
- Treat the young person with dignity and respect
- Prioritise safety for everyone involved
- Avoid escalating the situation
- Be mindful of power dynamics, boundaries and age differences

5. Early Response and De-escalation

Where early signs of distress or agitation are observed:

- Acknowledge the young person's feelings without judgement
- Use clear, calm and age-appropriate communication
- Offer space, time out or access to a quieter area if appropriate
- Encourage grounding or self-regulation techniques
- Involve a second facilitator or senior lead if helpful

Many situations can be resolved at this stage without further escalation.

6. Setting Boundaries

If behaviour begins to impact others or the safe running of an activity:

- Clearly and calmly explain expected boundaries
- Focus on behaviour, not the individual
- Offer choices and options where possible
- Make it clear what needs to change to continue safely

Boundaries should always be proportionate, supportive and respectful.

7. Escalation and Safeguarding

If behaviour escalates or poses a risk:

- Prioritise the safety of all participants and staff
- Pause or stop the activity if necessary
- Seek support from a senior lead or the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Follow the Emergency Procedure if there is immediate risk

If behaviour raises a safeguarding concern (for example, risk of harm to self or others, disclosure of abuse, or behaviour indicating vulnerability), the Safeguarding Procedure must be followed without delay.

8. After the Incident

Once the situation is safe:

- Offer appropriate support to those affected
- Record the incident factually and promptly
- Reflect on whether any follow-up action is required

- Consider whether risk assessments or procedures need updating

Learning from incidents helps improve future practice and support.

9. What Not to Do

Individuals should not:

- Use physical intervention except to prevent immediate harm
- Shame, threaten or humiliate young people
- Argue, challenge aggressively or escalate conflict
- Promise confidentiality where safeguarding concerns arise

10. Related Procedures and Policies

This procedure should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Procedure
- Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults Procedure
- Emergency Procedure
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Whistleblowing Policies