



Behaviour Management Policy

Policy Statement

Cottage Autism Network (CAN) aims to support and guide all children to manage their own behaviour and learn to resolve conflicts that arise. Children attending CAN activities are here for new learning experiences which may test their own coping strategies. All staff (facilitators and volunteers) will support the children to regulate their behaviour and will have a number of strategies to deal with both positive and challenging behaviour.

Principle

- Volunteers, where necessary, will be given necessary information from the child's parents/guardians about specific likes, dislikes, medical conditions, needs, abilities and situations that they may find difficult and information on how to deal with difficult situations.
- Volunteers and Board members will be role models of positive behaviour and how they play, speak and interact with the children is a key part of their role.
- Role modelling will include explaining feelings, using a calm tone of voice, getting down to the child's eye level, giving choice to the children, using language or visual aids to help children understand positive decisions, waiting and checking for the child's understanding.
- CAN has a Code of conduct for facilitators and volunteers relating to behaviour.
- CAN has a procedure around monitoring and recording any incidents, accidents or issues in relation to supporting children with managing their own behaviour.
- In cases where supporting children's behaviour becomes a reason for concern or is beyond the abilities of our staff, we will consult with parents/guardians on how to best support their child's needs and continue their involvement in a club/camp/activity.
- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings will be acknowledged by sincere encouragement leading to growth in self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Any rules will be kept clear, simple and age appropriate.
- Volunteers will always comfort an upset child in an appropriate manner.
- Children will not have to sit for long periods of time allowing them to have a choice and to move from an activity which does not interest them.

- Children are encouraged to move freely throughout the activity space under the supervision of staff. Areas that are not safe for access for children are kept securely locked, so children are encouraged to explore their surroundings.

Strategies for Supporting Children

CAN recognises that all behaviours, even behaviours that are considered challenging to others, are a form of communication for children. However, at times this behaviour may be difficult or pose a danger to the child or other children. For minor behaviour issues a conflict resolution approach will be used:

- Approach calmly - put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child's eye level.
- Acknowledge feelings - describe how the child/children are feeling; children often don't have the language to explain how they are feeling, leading to more frustration. Help the child by describing it for them, e.g. you look very sad and upset.
- Gather information - remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to tell their side of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words out so take your time.
- Restate the problem - after listening to the children, describe the problem using simple language so all can understand both sides of the story.
- Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together (or for younger children give a solution) – give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can take a bit of time but its giving the children lots of practice compromising with one another which are vital skills they will need.
- Be prepared to give follow up support - it is important that the staff follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in the approach.
- It is so important that all volunteers use a consistent approach to support children – it can be confusing and harmful for children to hear or experience different responses to their behaviours.

Managing moderate behaviour issues

This type of behaviour can be recognised when the behaviour that challenges is becoming a more regular occurrence:

- When a situation arises, a staff member will ask the parent to bring their child to a safe space. This is not a punitive measure but one designed to help the child become calm.
- The parent will be supported to help guide them with their behaviour. The parent and volunteer will determine if the child is able to re-enter the activity. Above steps will be discussed with the child to determine how they can be supported. If the child is not able to regulate themselves, the child will be told that they are welcomed back next week, without the issue being raised again.
- If the behaviour is reoccurring, staff will discuss with the parent/ guardian strategies that can be put in place.
- Volunteer will observe the child to identify any triggers of the behaviour.
- When the behaviour happens the steps above will be used with the child.

- The matter will be discussed in detail with the child's family.

Managing Behaviours that Challenge issues

If a child's behaviour is considered a risk to themselves or others, a staff member will notify the parent onsite to carefully remove the child from the situation. If this is not possible, staff will calmly remove the other children from the situation and bring them to their parent/guardian. This is in order to protect all using the service. All attempts will be made to ensure the safety of the children by using supporting strategies.

The child will be given time to become calm and the parent will be supported to help guide them with their behaviour. The incident will be recorded .If a child's behaviour is ongoing or becomes severely challenging, CAN will implement the following strategies:

- A designated board member will hold a meeting to discuss the behaviour and develop an action plan for going forward to help the child overcome the issues.
- A plan will be drawn up in collaboration with the staff and the family of the child.
- If necessary, the family will be supported to contact any relevant external professionals.
- If the behaviour is a child protection concern the Child Protection Policy will be implemented.
- All information gathered and discussed will be stored securely and all conversations are highly confidential.
- All members and volunteers of CAN will always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement in situations which can be demanding and stressful on all involved.

Practices Prohibited

- Corporal or physical punishment.
- Any practices that are disrespectful, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful.
- The use of bolt chairs.

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