

POLICY ON BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) Regulations 2018, require School Age services to have a policy that supports young people's positive behaviour.

To achieve this, MYFRC strive to ensure that the emotional, social and general wellbeing of all of the young people attending our service is positively supported in a happy, safe, well-planned and controlled environment.

MYFRC aims to support young people to be able to: relate well to other young people and adults; make friends and get on with others; feel secure and valued; explore and learn confidently and feel good about themselves. All young people regardless of race, religion, family background, culture, gender or ability are treated with respect at all times.

All limits are clearly related to the safety, welfare and protection of the young people and staff in the service. It is age appropriate to discuss these rules and boundaries with young people in order for them to self-regulate behaviours within the service. MYFRC will support Children and Young People around setting up their own set of guidelines through the development of group contracts

Corporal punishment is prohibited as are any practices or the threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, isolating, emotionally and/or physically harmful or neglectful. Children/young people are never humiliated, segregated or have food withheld. At MYFRC bullying of any form and restraining a child by unapproved methods are not allowed at our service.

This document also includes a summary of the MYFRC Code of Behaviour and Bullying Procedures. In conjunction with the Policy on Behaviour Management, these procedures are communicated with parents, children and Young People during the registration phase, and on an annual basis thereafter.

Legislation and regulatory requirements

- The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) Regulations 2018, require that a policy relating to supporting children with their behaviour skills is written and implemented.

Children's needs

Children/young people need to have the freedom and scope to learn through hands-on exploration and experimentation in a well-planned, well-resourced and well-ordered age appropriate environment.

Parents'/Families' needs

We ensure that parents/guardians know that their afterschool child/young person's needs are appropriately met and that their child will be safe and happy. We provide open channels of communication between parents/guardians and the service. It is essential that families inform the service if there is an event that may be impacting negatively on a child/young persons behaviour. Likewise, if there is an event or issue observed in the service staff have a duty of care to inform families.

Staff

Staff members are clear and trained on all policies and procedures in supporting afterschool children/young people with their social, emotional and behavioural development at induction and following policy review.

Management

Management ensure that parents and children/young people are clearly informed about the service's approach to supporting each child/young person's social, emotional and behavioural development. Management ensure that they are compliant with regulation by implementing a policy on managing behaviour.

Policy Statement

On enrolment we inform parents/guardians/children/young people about this policy and the procedure which we implement to support positive behavioural management.

Procedures & Practices**Minor Incidents**

- Staff will assess the behaviour and where it is deemed to be minor, they will support the children/Young People by allowing them to resolve the conflict on their own.
- Staff will stay near the children/young people but will not intervene only if the situation escalates.
- Most minor incidents when resolved by children/young people will promote positive co-operative relationships and self-discipline

Escalation of Incidents

Staff will assess the behaviour and where it is deemed to be more serious and it is observed that children/young people are not resolving the issue they may have to intervene.

- Staff will approach the situation calmly and remain neutral not taking sides.
- Children/young people will be encouraged to explain the situation and express how they are feeling
- Staff will explain the reasons behind why something cannot happen or why some behaviour is inappropriate.
- They will remind the children/young people of the rules they agreed to and encourage them to look at the consequences of their actions and think about what they can do to make things better.
- Dependent on the behaviours or if it is ongoing repeated behaviour staff will complete an incident report, which must be signed by families/service.
- Follow up support may be required with families

Serious Incident

- When a child/young person becomes so angry, anxious or frustrated to the extent that they themselves and others have been unsettled, staff will remain calm and settle the situation for this child and the others around.
- Staff will stop a child/young person's aggressive or destructive behaviour such as kicking or hitting and give a reason for their action such as 'hitting must stop, hitting hurts'.
- Staff will model positive behaviour to the children/young people and will never mirror the child/young persons behaviour by raising their tone of voice or acting inappropriately.
- Staff will complete an incident report which will be signed by the service and families/parent/guardian.
- Follow up support may be required with families.
- An observational plan may be required if behaviours are repetitive.
- Staff will use physical proximity where the physical well-being of children/Young People is at risk

Persistent Serious Behavioural Issues

When a child/young person's serious behaviour issues are causing disruption and problems for the other children/young people in the group, the following approaches will be considered:

- Reviewing the programme to ensure that it is meeting the child/young person's care, learning and development needs
- Reviewing the service's approaches to addressing the child/young person's behaviour
- Discussing with the child/young person's parents/guardians to help to develop a specific plan for that child/young person. The purpose of the plan will be to help ensure that the reason the child/young person is having difficulty with regulating their behaviour, is identified if possible and addressed. It is also to provide whatever support they need to be able to relate well to other children/young people and adults, make friends, feel secure and valued, explore and learn confidently and feel good about themselves.

An individualised plan that takes a positive, learning approach, will be developed. This plan will include:

- Observing and recording the behaviour
- Identifying the triggers for the challenging behaviour
- Considering ways to make the events/interactions that the child/young person seems to find difficult, easier to manage (e.g. less difficult, less confusing, more engaging)
- Skills to teach the child/young person to be able to deal with the situation without resorting to the problem behaviour
- Ways in which the adults will respond when the problem behaviour occurs - to ensure a consistent response
- Ways that parents can help the child/young person at home
- Ways to review and evaluate the plan.

Recurring problems are dealt with in an inclusive manner following observations and involving the child/young person's parents/guardians and, where necessary, other appropriate adults (with parents'/guardians' consent).

Bullying and Cyber-bullying

Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity.

E-bullying/Cyber-bullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behaviour. Children/young people will be given access to information around cyberbullying as well as an awareness programme. The recommendations outlined in this information and awareness programme include...

- Unplugging from technology
- Find others who share your same values and interests
- Share your feelings about bullying with a trusted adult
- Boost your confidence
- Don't respond to any messages or posts
- Don't seek revenge
- Save the evidence of the cyberbullying

- Report threats of harm
- Prevent communication from the cyberbully, by blocking or/and reporting

MYFRC have developed guidelines on bullying to support staff parents/guardians and children/young people, this guidance is located at the end of this policy.

Procedures for dealing with bullying including cyber bullying

All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the MYFRC Manager. It is hoped that the young people will gain confidence in informing staff members of instances of bullying which have taken place. Non-MYDC staffs are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to the appropriate MYDC staff member.

All incidents of bullying will be investigated outside of the group activities to avoid public humiliation of the victim or perpetrator. If a young person in the MYDC outlines that they are experiencing bullying the following steps will be taken:

- The child/young person communicates their concerns around bullying to a relevant staff member. They will be supported in recording their concerns in an incident report form. This will provide the staff member with the answers to the questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- The incident report will be communicated to the MYFRC Manager and an appropriate course of action will be agreed. The staff member discusses the issue with the Project Leader.
- In the event of an incident a verbal warning will be issued to the participant.
- In serious cases of bullying suspension from club(s) may be justified.
- The staff member with the approval of the Manager contacts the parents/ guardians of all the young persons involved.
- The staff member meets with all young people and outlines that bullying is not acceptable in the MYDC and it is a breach of the code of behaviour. They will be encouraged to see the situation from the victim's perspective.
- Arrange a follow up meeting with the involved parties separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date when the victim is ready.

There are circumstances where reconciliation between the parties is possible. In practice it may be more effective to tell the young people involved to leave each other alone. The same instruction should apply to friends on both sides.

Holding or restraining a child/young person to prevent harm

- Physical holding as prevention will only be used as a last resort:
 - To prevent an accident such as a child/young person running across a road.
 - To prevent injury.
- No matter what age the child/young person is, physical restraint will only ever be used for immediate safety reasons, with the minimum force and for the minimum amount of time. The purpose of this intervention is to prevent injury to the child/young person, another child/young person or to an adult, or to prevent serious damage to property.
- Where a child/young person is expressing feelings of anger, anxiety or frustration, in a way which is unsafe for themselves and others and where reasoning has not stopped the behaviour, a staff member may assist the child/young person in re-establishing control by holding them, to contain their feelings safely, as a last resort and for the minimum length of time.

- Parent/guardians will be informed of the incident, by phone or in person.
- An incident record will be completed by staff, a parent/guardian must sign this also.

Staff will physically intervene to prevent injury to a child/young person and to prevent significant damage to equipment or property.

- Staff will access this on a case by case basis, as there are many factors to be taken into consideration such as the child/young persons age, strength, the scenario. Staff will physically intervene as a last resort.
- Staff will intervene to ensure that no one gets hurt.
- Staff will ensure that an incident record is completed in our incident book.
- Parents/guardians will be advised of the incident on collection and/or by phone. (depending on the severity of the incident).
- Staff will be trained in this method of intervention during induction and updated as needed.

Responding to challenging behaviour

We recognise that some of the ways children/young people tell us they are stressed and overwhelmed are when they show the following behaviours on a regular basis. For example, they:

- are overactive
- have difficulty focusing on or completing a task
- become easily frustrated
- have difficulty making decisions
- have difficulty following directions
- solve problems by hitting, grabbing or pushing
- have tantrums
- cling to adults
- avoid new tasks
- do not play with other children/young people
- do not eat

Adults always respond supportively to children/young people's distress.

Guidance for conflict management and resolving an incident

- Approach the situation calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.
- Remain neutral rather than taking sides.
- Focus on the behaviour, rather than the child/young person.
- Acknowledge the children/young person's feelings with open statements, e.g. 'You seem upset...' and ask them if they agree with the observation and if so, do they want to talk about it? Start the negotiations with them by reflecting back their behaviour and involving them in checking out the details.
- Restate the problem
- Ask for ideas for solutions and decide on them together, e.g. 'What can we do to solve this problem?' Encourage the children/young people to think of a solution and check to make sure that the solution is acceptable to the children/young people involved and realistically achievable. Clarify all the feelings with the children/young people involved so that you are aware of anything that remains unresolved for them.
- If a child/young person uses positive problem-solving behaviour, reinforce this, for example by saying 'You solved the problem...' then state what they did.
- Stay near the child/children/young person so that you are prepared to give follow up support and clarification.

- Follow through with your decisions but be prepared to change them if they prove inappropriate for the individual needs of the child/children.
- Explain the reasons behind why something cannot happen or why some behaviour is inappropriate.

Procedure to be followed if a child/young person leaves the service unaccompanied, if and without authorisation:

- On registration parents/guardians must complete nominated collection and emergency contacts.
- If a child/young person leaves our service unaccompanied and unauthorised, staff will firstly search the premises.
- If the child/young person is not on the premises, we will contact the parent/guardian immediately.
- Our critical incident plan will then come into place.
- The manager/staff in charge will contact the Gardaí to notify them that a child/young person has left our service unaccompanied and unauthorised.
- Staff will give all details to Gardaí, last time of attendance, description of child/young person.
- Once the child/young person is located all staff must individually complete an incident form.
- The manager/person in charge must notify our insurance company and Tusla that a child/young person has been reported missing/left the service unauthorised.
- A report will be completed for Tusla within 3 working days.
- The incident will be reviewed by all staff to ensure that this does not happen again, re-assess service risk assessments.

Communication Strategy:

This policy will be communicated to all stakeholders of MYFRC, parents/guardians/children/young people/staff on enrollment and induction and as the policy is updated and reviewed.

Review and Evaluation of Policy.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Manager of the MYFRC.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Review History

- Draft 1, December 2019
- Draft 2, January 2020

MYFRC's Code of Behaviour for working with children/young people

The following are a statement of required behaviour standards:

1. Absenteeism to be communicated.
2. Wear comfortable and appropriate clothes. Safe footwear must be worn to activities
3. Work to the best of your ability and present your work neatly.
 - a. Listen carefully to the staff. Be polite.
 - b. Walk safely – in rooms and between activities.
 - c. Do not return to a room or to the bathroom from the yard or the hall, without permission.
4. Do not play dangerous/inappropriate games i.e. cartwheels, fast chasing, trains, lifting/swinging others, playing with scarves/blind folds or any games banned by MYFRC must not be played.
5. No use of devices with access to social media during group time.
6. Technology: Internet use in the centre is for educational purposes only and is supervised closely. Unapproved Internet use is transgressing this rule. Cyber bullying 'e-bullying' is banned.
7. In the interest of safety, pupils must remain seated for the duration of meals.
8. Property: Do not steal, interfere with, write on or damage other participant's, staff or school/centre property.
 - a. Inappropriate reading materials/unauthorized goods are banned on the school premises.
 - b. Possession, consumption or use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, aerosols, tippex, solvents, deodorants and dangerous implements on the school/centre campus is banned.
 - c. In serious cases (as deemed by the Board of Management) the Gardai will be notified.

Please note:

1. Breaches of rules concerning banned items will lead to a confiscation for a given time or until an item/s can be handed over to a parent.
2. In very serious circumstances breaches regarding banned items or serious damage to property will lead to serious consequences up to and including suspension for a given time.
3. The centre reserves the right to add / alter these rules as circumstances dictate.
4. Through the STAR SYSTEM the young people will be required to reflect on their behaviour, attendance and participation while at the MYFRC groups.

Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the young people and to individual difference. Where differences arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Promotion of mutual respect and integrity

1. Participants are encouraged to ask questions/provide input by taking turns to share their thoughts/opinions.
2. The participants are encouraged to be proud of their work. Unacceptable or offensive work is frowned upon.
3. Respect for property used or owned by the Mountmellick Youth and Family Resource Centre

The role of parents/guardians

At the start of each new year all parents are invited to attend a meeting where details of the project and policies will be presented to parents. Parents will be required to discuss the code of behaviour with their child/young person. Prior to starting in the centre parents and participants will be required

to sign the code of behaviour and return this form signed by a parent/guardian and the participant to the Mountmellick Youth Development Centre.

MYFRC recognises and appreciates the important role of parents/guardians in the successful operation of any code of behaviour. We welcome and encourage open, honest relations between the centre and parents/guardians as this is central to creating an atmosphere of friendship and goodwill.

It is important that parents be made aware of any challenging behaviours at an early stage, as early intervention may offset an escalation of any problems which may arise.

In such cases it is envisioned that meetings with parents/guardians would be held regularly, whether on a formal or informal basis. A short note will be issued from the Project Leader/Project Youth Workers requesting such a meeting. It is hoped that such meetings will be positive and friendly with the welfare of the child/young person being a priority.

In the event of continuous challenging behaviour, parents/guardians will be asked to give a written undertaking that they will do their utmost to encourage positive behaviour from their child/young person and support the centre code of behaviour.

In cases where a child/young person's challenging behaviour requires sanction, parents/guardians will be advised of the procedure which will be followed to bring about a speedy and positive response to the behaviour in question.

Communicating with parents/guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children/young people. Parents/guardians and staff are encouraged to develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in MYFRC. A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the centre. Parents/guardians will be encouraged to talk in confidence to our youth workers about any significant developments in a child/young person's life, in the past or present, which may affect a child/young person's behaviour.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the centre:

- Informal and formal meetings
- Letters/notes from centre to home and from home to the centre
- Text messages
- Phone calls

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between staff and parents/guardians will be utilised. Communication with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the office to discuss their child/young person's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a youth worker or participant will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Removal of suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/guardian may apply to have the participant reinstated to the centre. The parent/guardian must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended participant will behave in accordance with the centre code and the Manager must be satisfied that

the participant's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the participant's own safety or that of the others. A relevant staff member will facilitate the preparation of a behavioural plan for the participant if required and will re-admit the participant formally to the programme.

Children/young people with Additional Needs

All children/young people are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the centre recognises that children/young people with additional needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Where possible, specialised behavioural plans will be put in place in consultation with parents/guardians and youth workers. The children/young people in the centre may be taught strategies to assist a participant with additional needs to adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference of all individuals.

MYFRC's Guidelines on Bullying

The aim of the policy is to ensure that all staff and young people feel safe and happy in the MYFRC. We would expect that the staff can work effectively in a safe environment and with regard to the young people and that they can attend activities in the knowledge that they are safe.

The objectives of the policy are to:

1. create an ethos which encourages the participants to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
2. To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with management, leaders, participants, parents/guardians.
3. To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
4. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
5. To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
6. To work with various agencies in countering all forms of bullying behaviour.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity.

There are six types of bullying as outlined by the Anti Bullying Centre in Trinity College Dublin.

1 Verbal Bullying

Is shouting or using aggressive or obscene language, in public or in private, to humiliate or intimidate.

- Making offensive comments about the same person regularly.
- Unfair and excessive criticism.
- Personal insults, name calling.
- Threatening the individual.
- Spreading false or malicious information about someone.
- Ridiculing someone in front of others.
- Persistent name calling directed at the same individual which hurts, insults or humiliates the individual.
- "Slagging" which extends to very personal remarks aimed again and again at one individual. It involves references of an uncomplimentary nature.
- Abusive and/or anonymous telephone calls/text messages.

2 Physical Bullying

- Hitting or kicking someone.
- Bodily contact that is abusive in nature.
- Intimidation based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as the weapon.

3 Gesture Bullying

There are many different forms of non-verbal threatening gestures which can convey intimidator and frightening messages, i.e. the state or look which accompanies bullying behaviour

4 Exclusion Bullying

This is where a child/young person is isolated from his/her peer group and is very hard for the child/young person to combat as it directly attacks their self-confidence/self-image.

5 Extortion Bullying

Demands for money, possessions or equipment, lunch vouchers or food may be made, often accompanied by threats.

6 E-bullying/Cyber-bullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behaviour. Children/young people will be given access to information around cyberbullying as well as an awareness programme. The recommendations outlined in this information and awareness programme include...

- Unplugging from technology
- Find others who share your same values and interests
- Share your feelings about bullying with a trusted adult
- Boost your confidence
- Don't respond to any messages or posts
- Don't seek revenge
- Save the evidence of the cyberbullying
- Report threats of harm
- Prevent communication from the cyberbully, by blocking or/and reporting

Procedures for dealing with bullying

All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the MYFRC Manager. It is hoped that the young people will gain confidence in informing staff members of instances of bullying which have taken place. Non-MYDC staffs are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to the appropriate MYDC staff member.

All incidents of bullying will be investigated outside of the group activities to avoid public humiliation of the victim or perpetrator. If a young person in the MYDC outlines that they are experiencing bullying the following steps will be taken:

- The child/young person communicates their concerns around bullying to a relevant staff member. They will be supported in recording their concerns in an incident report form. This will provide the staff member with the answers to the questions of what, where, when, who

and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

- The incident report will be communicated to the MYFRC Manager and an appropriate course of action will be agreed. The staff member discusses the issue with the Project Leader.
- In the event of an incident a verbal warning will be issued to the participant.
- In serious cases of bullying suspension from club(s) may be justified.
- The staff member with the approval of the Manager contacts the parents/ guardians of all the young persons involved.
- The staff member meets with all young people and outlines that bullying is not acceptable in the MYDC and it is a breach of the code of behaviour. They will be encouraged to see the situation from the victim's perspective.
- Arrange a follow up meeting with the involved parties separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date when the victim is ready.

There are circumstances where reconciliation between the parties is possible. In practice it may be more effective to tell the young people involved to leave each other alone. The same instruction should apply to friends on both sides.

MYDC Educational Programmes

The MYDC will incorporate an anti-bullying programme during the year. Agreements around anti-bullying will be recorded in group contracts. The programme will cover a number of areas of the topic of bullying such as:

- What is bullying?
- Why do people bully?
- How to deal with a bully?
- The dangers of bullying people.

Staff Training

Staff will be trained in learning to deal with situations of bullying. They will be informed on this policy through team meetings and supervision. New staff will be informed of this policy during induction. This policy will also be included in the Parental/Guardian Handbook.

Communication Strategy:

This policy will be communicated to all stakeholders of MYFRC, parents/guardians/children/young people/staff on enrollment and induction and as the policy is updated and reviewed.

Review and Evaluation of Policy.

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