SIDEMISSION
SOCIAL

BEHAVIOUR & ANTI BULLYING POLICY

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Document owner: David Robinette and Elaine Bell

Applies to: All participants, employees, volunteers, sessional workers and anyone taking part in or supporting Side Mission Social activities

Review frequency: Annually, or following a significant incident or change in activities

Purpose

Side Mission Social aims to provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment where young people can learn, create, socialise and develop their skills.

Everyone has the right to participate without being subjected to bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation or abuse.

This policy explains the behaviour expected at SMS activities and how concerns will be addressed.

Our expectations

Everyone involved with Side Mission Social is expected to:

- Treat others with respect and consideration.
- Respect differences in identity, background, ability, beliefs and experience.
- Listen to others and respect their boundaries.
- Use appropriate language and behaviour.
- Look after shared spaces, equipment and other people's belongings.
- Follow reasonable instructions from staff and volunteers.
- Raise concerns without threatening or intimidating others.
- Respect people's right to participate, contribute and express themselves safely.

Unacceptable behaviour

The following behaviour is not acceptable:

- Bullying, intimidation, threats or deliberate humiliation.
- Physical aggression, fighting or unwanted physical contact.
- Harassment, discrimination or hate-related behaviour.
- Sexual harassment, unwanted sexual attention or inappropriate comments.
- Repeated exclusion or behaviour intended to isolate another participant.
- Spreading malicious rumours or sharing private information to cause harm.
- Damaging or taking another person's belongings.
- Misusing digital platforms, messaging groups, gaming spaces or social media to target others.
- Bringing weapons or other dangerous items to activities.
- Behaviour that places another person at risk of harm.

This list is not exhaustive. Any behaviour that threatens someone's safety, dignity or ability to participate may require action.

Bullying

Bullying may involve repeated behaviour intended to hurt, frighten, control or undermine another person. It can be physical, verbal, emotional, social or digital.

Examples include name-calling, threats, deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, humiliating someone publicly and persistent unwanted messages.

A single serious incident may not meet the usual definition of bullying, but it must still be taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

Staff will consider the circumstances, impact, pattern of behaviour and needs of those involved.

Online behaviour

The same expectations apply online as during face-to-face activities.

Participants must not use SMS-related chats, social media, gaming platforms or other digital spaces to bully, threaten, harass or exploit others.

Personal information, photographs, recordings or private messages must not be shared without appropriate permission.

Concerns involving online abuse, sexual content, threats, exploitation or safeguarding risks must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and handled under the relevant safeguarding procedures.

Staff must maintain professional boundaries when communicating with participants online.

Reporting concerns

Participants are encouraged to speak to a member of staff or volunteer if they experience or witness unacceptable behaviour.

Concerns may also be raised by parents, carers or other people involved with the organisation.

Staff must listen, take concerns seriously and respond calmly. They must not promise complete confidentiality.

Where a concern involves possible abuse, exploitation, serious threats or another safeguarding issue, it must be reported promptly to the DSL in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Immediate danger or a serious emergency must be escalated to the appropriate emergency service.

Responding to incidents

Staff will respond proportionately, taking account of the seriousness of the behaviour, the people involved, any previous incidents and the need to protect participants.

Actions may include:

- Speaking privately with those involved.
- Setting clear expectations and boundaries.
- Supporting participants to understand the impact of their behaviour.
- Separating participants where necessary to prevent further harm.
- Involving parents or carers where appropriate, particularly for participants under 18.
- Recording the incident and any actions taken.
- Referring safeguarding concerns to the DSL or relevant external agency.
- Temporarily restricting participation or removing someone from an activity where necessary to maintain safety.

Any response must be fair and must not humiliate, threaten or discriminate against participants.

Supporting those affected

Anyone affected by bullying or unacceptable behaviour should be listened to and offered appropriate support.

Staff will consider immediate safety, emotional wellbeing and any adjustments needed to help the participant continue accessing activities safely.

Participants must not be pressured to confront the person responsible, take part in mediation or accept an apology.

Where appropriate, staff will agree follow-up arrangements and check whether the behaviour has stopped.

Addressing behaviour

Side Mission Social recognises that young people may be developing social skills, emotional regulation and an understanding of boundaries.

Staff should use incidents as opportunities for learning where appropriate, while maintaining clear expectations and protecting others from harm.

Responses may include a verbal reminder, an agreed behaviour plan, additional supervision, restrictions on particular activities or temporary or permanent exclusion from SMS activities.

Serious incidents may require immediate removal from an activity and external safeguarding or police involvement.

Any decision to restrict or end participation must be proportionate, recorded where appropriate and consider relevant safeguarding, accessibility and individual needs.

Fairness and inclusion

Behaviour expectations apply to everyone.

Staff must consider individual circumstances, communication needs, disability and other relevant factors when responding to behaviour.

No participant should be treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic or because they have raised a concern in good faith.

Reasonable adjustments and additional support should be considered where appropriate, without compromising the safety of others.

Responsibilities

Directors are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and that serious concerns are addressed appropriately.

Staff and volunteers must model respectful behaviour, respond to concerns and report safeguarding issues.

Participants are expected to follow the behaviour standards and respect others' rights and safety.

Parents and carers, where involved, are encouraged to support constructive communication and reinforce appropriate behaviour.

Recording and confidentiality

Significant incidents and repeated concerns must be recorded accurately and stored securely.

Information will only be shared with people who need it to manage the incident, protect participants or fulfil safeguarding responsibilities.

Records will be handled in accordance with applicable data protection requirements and the organisation's recordkeeping arrangements.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and following any significant incident or relevant change in guidance or activities.

Approved By: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Review Date: _____