

9. MANAGING DIFFICULT BEHAVIOURS

GUIDELINES ON MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Staff/volunteers who deliver activities to children may, from time to time, be required to deal with a child's challenging behaviour.

Planning Activities

Good coaching practice requires planning sessions around the group as a whole but also involves taking into consideration the needs of each individual athlete within that group. As part of a risk assessment, coaches should consider whether any members of the group have presented in the past or are likely to present any difficulties in relation to either, the tasks involved, the other participants or the environment.

Where staff/volunteers identify any potential risks, strategies to manage those risks should be agreed in advance of the session, event or activity. The risk assessment should also identify the appropriate number of adults required to safely manage and support the session including being able to adequately respond to any challenging behaviour and to safeguard other members of the group and the staff/volunteers involved.

All those delivering activities to children should receive training on these guidelines and should be supported to address issues of challenging behaviour through regular supervision.

Agreeing Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff, volunteers, children and parents should be involved in developing an agreed statement of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and the range of sanctions which may be applied in response to unacceptable behaviour. This can be done at the start of the season, in advance of a trip away from home or as part of a welcome session at a residential camp.

Issues of behaviour and control should regularly be discussed with staff, volunteers, parents and children in the context of rights and responsibilities. When children are specifically asked, as a group, to draw up a 'List of Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours and Sanctions for Unacceptable Behaviour' that will govern their participation in the group/team, they tend to arrive at a very sensible and working set of 'rules'. If and when such a list is compiled, every member of the group can be asked to sign it, as can new members as they join.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

In dealing with children who display risk-taking or challenging behaviours, staff and volunteers might consider the following options:

- Time out - from the activity, group or individual work
- Reparation - the act or process of making amends
- Restitution - the act of giving something back
- Behavioural reinforcement - rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour
- De-escalation of the situation - talking through it with the child
- Increased supervision by staff/volunteers
- Use of individual 'contracts' or agreements for their future or continued participation
- Sanctions or consequences e.g. missing an outing

Adults and children shall **NEVER** be permitted to use any of the following as a means of managing a child's behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such
- The withdrawal of communication with the child
- Being deprived of food, water or access to changing facilities or toilets
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation

Staff and volunteers should review the needs of any child for whom sanctions are frequently necessary. This review should involve the child and parents to ensure an informed decision is made about the child's future or continued participation in the group or activity. Whilst it would always be against the wishes of everyone involved in curling, ultimately, if a child continues to present a high level of risk or danger to him or herself, or others, he or she may have to be debarred from activity in the sport.

Physical Interventions

The use of physical interventions should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary in order to prevent a child injuring themselves, injuring others or causing serious damage to property. All forms of physical intervention shall form part of a broader approach to the management of challenging behaviour.

Physical contact to prevent something happening should always be the result of conscious decision-making and not a reaction. Before physically intervening, the member of staff or volunteer should ask themselves, 'Is this the only option in order to manage the situation and ensure safety?'

The following must always be considered:

- Staff/volunteers should never behave in a way which could be interpreted as sexual. Contact should be avoided with buttocks, genitals and breasts
- Any form of physical intervention should achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern
- Staff/volunteers should consider the circumstances, the risks associated with employing physical intervention compared with the risks of not employing physical intervention
- The scale and nature of physical intervention must always be proportionate to the behaviour of the young person and the nature of harm/ damage they might cause
- All forms of physical intervention should employ only a reasonable amount of force - the minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property - applied for the shortest period of time
- Staff/volunteers should never employ physical interventions which are deemed to present an unreasonable risk to children or staff/volunteers
- Staff/volunteers shall never use physical intervention as a form of punishment

Any physical intervention used should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident by the staff/volunteers involved using the Ice Rink Incident Form and passed to the Lead or Rink Child Protection Officer as soon as possible.

A timely debrief for staff/volunteers, the child and parents should always take place following an incident where physical intervention has been used. This should include ensuring that the physical and emotional wellbeing of those involved has been addressed and ongoing support offered where necessary. Staff/volunteers, children and parents should be given an opportunity to talk about what happened in a calm and safe environment.

There should also be a discussion with the child and parents about the child's needs and continued safe participation in the group or activity.