

Youth Club Appropriate Behaviour Policy

Context

Autism Support Louth & Meath runs weekly youth clubs which provide a social space for autistic children and young people to mix with their peers, have fun and participate. Our youth clubs are a place for everyone to feel a sense of belonging and ownership. The youth clubs are characterised by respectful and positive relationships supporting the dignity of each individual. We are committed to ensuring a safe environment where young people can maximise their potential. This policy aims to define acceptable standards of behaviour, supporting children and young people to forge meaningful relationships with other young people and all involved helping to create opportunities to learn, grow and participate.

All youth club members are required to adhere to the Appropriate Behaviour Policy. However, Autism Support Louth&Meath understands that children and young people with autism or other needs may need help in understanding certain rules. Autism Support Louth&Meath also recognises that the language and cognitive development of the members may influence their behaviour. Therefore, the developmental, cognitive, and language needs of each youth club member will be taken into account at all times. It is important to note that the standards of behaviour outlined in the policy are goals to be worked towards, not expectations that are either fulfilled or not.

Rationale

We work towards standards of behaviour based on the principles of honesty, respect and consideration. This Appropriate Behaviour Policy will ensure:

- A positive, non-confrontational and autism-friendly environment
- An environment where our youth club members and staff feel and are safe.
- Best practice in relation to promoting positive behaviour across all youth clubs.
- That the youth clubs function in an orderly and harmonious way.

The Appropriate Behaviour Policy ensures that each youth club member's individuality is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each young person to a disruption-free environment.

Aims of the Policy

- To create a positive environment.
- To respect and safeguard the rights and dignity of all youth club members and staff members.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all youth club members and staff
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships.
- To create a positive atmosphere and culture where all youth club and staff members feel valued
- To encourage consistency of response to both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- To allow the youth clubs to function in an orderly way where young people can enjoy and participate in all activities.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others
- To assist staff, parents/guardians and young people in understanding the systems and procedures that form this Appropriate Behaviour Policy and to seek the cooperation of all in applying these procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

Youth Club Staff

All staff have the responsibility of setting an example of good behaviour in their interactions with youth club members and colleagues. Additionally, they should work towards fostering a positive environment, encouraging positive behaviour, and enforcing The Appropriate Behaviour Policy in a fair, consistent and reasonable manner.

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors are responsible for providing a safe environment. They are also responsible for supporting the staff in implementing The Appropriate Behaviour Policy.

Youth Club Members

Youth club members are expected to follow and understand The Appropriate Behaviour Policy and help maintain a positive and safe environment. They should also cooperate with staff, and treat other youth club members and staff with respect.

Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians are responsible for supporting their child's understanding and adherence to The Appropriate Behaviour Policy. They should communicate with the youth club staff regarding any issues that may impact their child's behaviour or well-being. Additionally, they are expected to show respect to all members of staff.

Guidelines for Good Behaviour for all Youth Club Members.

Given the diverse range of needs of our youth club members, we aim to maintain a high standard of behaviour within our club. We actively promote and encourage the following desirable standards of behaviour:

- Respect yourself and all youth club staff members.
- Follow The Appropriate Behaviour Policy.
- Cooperate with youth club staff.
- Respect your own property and the property of others.
- Respect other club members and their enjoyment.
- Be kind and willing to help others.
- Show courtesy and good manners.
- Try to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.

These Guidelines can be summed up as 4 main Rules:

1. Respect each other/ be nice
2. Do your best
3. Be safe
4. Listen and learn

Safety

Our staff members are expected to engage and interact with youth club members positively. New rules may be introduced as and when circumstances arise. Unacceptable Incidents /Behaviour. We strive to promote good behaviour among our members. However, we understand that when enforcing our policies, we must take into account the individual club member's level of understanding.

Minor Incidents of Misbehaviour

All incidents of minor misbehaviour are addressed by the appropriate youth club staff member as they arise. Examples of **minor incidents** include, but are not limited to:

- Not following the directions, where appropriate.
- Repeated and continued disregard for youth club policies and procedures.

Challenging behaviour and Serious Incidents

Examples of challenging behaviour serious incidents include, but are not limited to:

- Any behaviour that poses a risk to the welfare of another youth club or staff member.
- Threatening, aggressive or violent behaviour towards staff or other youth club members.
- Causing physical hurt to others by pushing, kicking, biting, spitting, punching or any form of assault.
- Continuous disruption of the youth club environment.
- Property damage.
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- Bullying (physical, verbal or emotional).
- Theft.

Bullying Definition

Bullying refers to repeated physical, verbal, or emotional aggression conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

- Physical aggression includes but is not limited to, pushing, kicking, poking, tripping, grabbing or biting.
- Verbal aggression includes but is not limited to, name-calling, insults or humiliation.
- Emotional aggression includes but is not limited to, threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding sensitive areas (i.e. appearance, dress, progress, race, culture or disability) or isolating peers.

Sanctions for challenging behaviour and serious Incidents

In situations where challenging behaviour or serious incidents occur, we will consider all possible actions, including contacting the parent(s)/guardian(s) immediately to collect the youth club member after the incident or suspending the youth club member from the club, depending on the specific circumstances of the misbehaviour. Any action

taken will be proportionate to the nature of the behaviour to restore and ensure the safety and security of all members of staff and the youth club.

Autism Support Louth & Meath takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of club members in a sensitive manner.

Raising Concerns

If Staff, parents and youth club members have concerns about a behaviour matter they can contact Jacinta Walsh on 087 2407431 or info@autismsupportlouth.com

I confirm that I have read and agreed to the guidelines for good behaviour in this Appropriate Behaviour Policy.

Name of child _____

The person legally authorised to sign on behalf of the individual if the individual is unable to give informed consent

Full Name _____

Signed _____

Relationship to the person being featured _____

Date _____