



RFL POLICY ON MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Coaches & other volunteers may have to deal with challenging behaviour from the children or young people in their care. These guidelines aim to encourage good practice, suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions never to be used.

Principles

The guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All those involved in the sport including children, coaches & volunteers should have clear guidelines about the standard of behaviour which is expected and the processes for dealing with behaviour which is unacceptable.
- Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading.
- Some children's behaviour may be caused by medical or psychological conditions. Coaches & volunteers may need additional help including discussing the child's needs with parents and/or carers and possibly from external agencies that already support that child (see the RFL Safeguarding Disabled Children in Rugby League).
- Rugby League can be a beneficial experience for all children and children should only be excluded from the sport in exceptional cases.

Planning

Coaches should plan their sessions to take into account the needs of all of the group. If there are any children who pose any difficulties, strategies to deal with those difficulties should be considered in advance.

Agreeing Acceptable & Unacceptable Behaviour

Coaches, volunteers, parents & children should be involved in developing an agreed statement of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and the sanctions to be applied. This should be done at the start of a season. Children should be involved in making the 'team rules'.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

The response to challenging behaviour should always be proportionate to the behaviour and should be explained to the child and their parents. The following may be considered:

- Time out - from the training session 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 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 a training session or match.
- Seeking additional/specialist support through working in partnership with other agencies to ensure a child's needs are met (this requires parental consent unless the child is felt to be 'at risk' or 'in need of protection').
- Temporary or permanent exclusion.

The following should never be permitted as a means of managing a child's behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such.
- Refusal to speak to or interact with the child.
- Denial of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essentials.
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.
- Exclusion as a first response to challenging behaviour.

Coaches & volunteers should involve parents if sanctions are needed regularly. As a last resort if a child presents a high level of danger to him or herself or others, he or she may need to be suspended from the Club's activities but this should be after all other options have been exhausted.

Physical Intervention

Physical intervention should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent a child injuring themselves or others or causing serious damage to property.

Physical contact to prevent or stop something happening should always be conscious decision making rather than a reaction ie coaches should ask themselves if this is the only option to manage the situation.

The following must always be considered:

- Contact should be avoided with buttocks, genitals and breasts. Staff/volunteers should never behave in a way which could be interpreted as sexual.
- Any form of physical intervention should achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern and/or other children involved in the incident.
- 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 -i.e. 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.
- Physical intervention should NOT involve inflicting pain
- Where children are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require physical intervention this should be discussed with parents/carers and where necessary it may be necessary to have suitably trained support to allow the child to participate safely.

Physical intervention should be recorded and notified to the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible.

Views of the Child

There should always be a debriefing session for coaches, volunteers, parents and children after an incident where physical intervention was used. This should include an opportunity to talk about the incident and about how the child can continue to participate safely.