



## **Guidance for dealing with challenging behaviour**

Staff and volunteers of OPM, who deliver rugby activities to children may, on occasions, be required to deal with challenging behaviour.

These guidelines aim to promote good practice and to encourage a proactive response to supporting children to manage their own behaviour. They suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and also identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions which must never be used by staff or volunteers.

Some children exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of specific circumstances, e.g. a medical or psychological condition, and coaches may therefore require specific or additional guidance. These and any other specific needs the child may have should be discussed with parents/carers and the child in planning for the activity, to ensure that an appropriate approach is agreed and, where necessary, additional support provided.

We at OPM believe that every child should be supported to participate and, only in exceptional circumstances, where the safety of a child or of other children cannot be maintained, should they be excluded from club activities.

### **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 within that group. As part of session planning, coaches should consider whether any members of the group have presented in the past or are likely to present any difficulties in relation to the tasks involved, the other participants or the environment.

Where staff/volunteers identify potential risks, strategies to manage those risks should be agreed in advance of the session, event or activity. The planning 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 coaches/volunteers involved.

When children have been identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require additional supervision or support, this should be discussed with parents/carers and where appropriate, the young person.

### **Agreeing Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours**

Coaches, volunteers, children, parents/carers should be involved in developing an agreed statement of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (code of conduct) and the range of sanctions which may be applied in response to unacceptable behaviour.

In responding to challenging behaviour the response should always be proportionate to the actions, be imposed as soon as is practicable and be fully explained to the child and their parents/carers. In dealing with children who display negative or challenging behaviours, coaches 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 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. starting on the bench

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
- Being deprived of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essential facilities
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation



## OPM JUNIOR RFC



Coaches and volunteers should review the needs of any child for whom sanctions are frequently necessary. This review should involve the child, parents/carers and any others involved.

As a last resort, 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 suspended or barred from the club.