

# Britain Yearly Meeting Children and Young People's Work



## Event & Activity Management Policy Procedures & Guidance 9

These procedures apply to all Britain Yearly Meeting centrally managed work with children and young people (see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/event-and-activity-management>)

### Anti-Bullying Procedures

#### Introduction

At BYM events for children and young people we aim to create a safe and trusting community, where participants, volunteers and staff are able to interact with each other positively. Negative behaviour towards others whether intentional or otherwise is unacceptable. How these issues are responded to will either condone or condemn the behaviour. Targets of negative behaviour should be enabled to have the confidence that their concerns will be dealt with positively, that their needs are paramount and that they will be listened to. All reported incidents and concerns raised must be taken seriously, investigated, and responded to. Any incidents or concerns and subsequent action should be recorded on an Incident/Accident Reporting Form.

#### Definitions

Negative behaviour within groups and negative interactions between individuals results in pain and distress to the target. These actions may be deliberate (bullying) or unconscious behaviour patterns. Although the intent can differ, the consequence of both is equally destructive. The negative impact on the individual and the community should not be underestimated. Anyone that is the target of bullying or negative behaviour will find it difficult to defend themselves.

- Bullying: behaviour which is an abuse of power, the intent of which is to hurt an individual either physically or emotionally.
- Unconscious behaviour patterns: When an individual or group is unaware of the consequence of their actions. They do not consciously intend harm; however this is the result of their behaviour. Unconscious behaviour patterns will result from unequal power relationships within groups. This may mean that a community has given an individual or group too much power resulting in their negative behaviours going unchecked and being considered the norm.

Negative behaviour and bullying is complex and can be categorised into a number of forms:

- Verbal e.g. name-calling, teasing, misplaced humour
- Non-verbal e.g. menacing looks, exclusive body language
- Physical e.g. hitting, kicking, spitting, inappropriate physical contact
- Exclusion e.g. being left out
- Extortion e.g. taking money or property such as a mobile phone<sup>i</sup>

#### Motivating & contributing factors

The motivating factors; in an aggressors bullying or negative behaviours are often about how their target differs from them. This may include the target's:

- Identity (e.g. sexuality, gender, faith group, social class, heritage, different needs or abilities etc)
- values and beliefs
- behaviour
- ability or otherwise

Contributing factors to an environment where negative behaviour is condoned include situations where:

- targets are ignored or blamed
- targets are not listened to
- targets are told to sort it out themselves
- targets are scared to tell
- policies and procedures for dealing with<sup>ii</sup> negative behaviours are not observed

These contributing factors maintain an environment in which an individual will find it difficult to defend themselves

### **Preventative Steps**

A community where participants, team members and staff believe that bullying and negative behaviour patterns are not a feature is a community where these very behaviours will be able to thrive unchecked.

Within an event all those participating have a responsibility to contribute to creating a safe and trusting community. This means creating community where negative behaviour and interactions are not tolerated.

- Participants witnessing negative behaviour and or bullying have a responsibility to highlight these issues.
- Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to follow the policies and procedures for dealing with bullying and negative behaviours.

A climate where negative behaviour and bullying is recognised and identified can be created through:

- **Training:** Pre-event planning meetings should include training on potential issues within groups and teams. This could include looking at real life scenarios and considering ways to respond. The position that negative behaviours and bullying are not an issue should be challenged. All team members and staff should be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of bullying and should be aware of the motivating and contributing factors.
- **Boundaries and confidentiality:** All participants, team members and staff are expected to sign boundaries and confidentiality forms before coming on any event. At the event these are discussed within the group/s, and should be approached in a way that challenges the default position that negative behaviour is not a feature of the community. Groups could consider examples of experiences where boundaries have not been observed and as a group negotiate potential responses to such behaviour.
- **Raising Concerns:** Participants, team members and staff should know how to raise concerns about bullying and negative behaviour which will receive a quick and effective response. The complaints procedure should be made clear and accessible, including being displayed at events.
- **Session Reviews:** Team members and staff on events should be enabled to reflect on sessions. This should include a record of what happened, reflection on the practice of those involved and consideration of any issues within the group. There should also be space for appropriate responses to be considered. It should be recognised that bullying and negative behaviour by adult volunteers or staff towards their peers as well as towards participants or peer facilitators, is as much a potential issue as with participants and peer facilitators.

### **Procedures for addressing bullying and negative behaviour**

When issues of bullying and negative behaviour are raised they should be dealt with promptly and efficiently. The following outlines the procedure that should be followed in relation to different instances of bullying and negative behaviour:

### **Bullying and negative behaviours by participants:**

- it is preferable that the aggressor/s is removed from the activities of the group rather than the target.
- the pastoral care procedures should be followed by those involved.
- the staff member responsible for pastoral care should ensure they have conversations with both parties to ensure that their needs are recognised and heard
- the aim of the interactions with those involved should be reconciliation
- the staff team should decide on immediate and appropriate action against the aggressor
- the staff member responsible for pastoral care should negotiate with the target about how to deal with the consequences of this behaviour and the action to be taken
- aggressors should be supported in changing their behaviour – if this is not forthcoming exclusion may be considered
- the staff team should decide on any further action required which may include monitoring and record the situation; informing parents, discussing the issue again with participants and/or parents and agreeing appropriate action.
- the incident and any subsequent action should be recorded and records stored in a secure file.

### **Bullying and negative behaviours by team members or staff:**

- participants and team members should be referred to the procedure for complaints made over staff action or responsibilities
- careful consideration should be made as to the seriousness and implications of the behaviour and to the most appropriate response
- this may mean that a senior staff member is required to take immediate and appropriate action against the aggressor.

### **Related Quotations**

Every relationship brings responsibility: be careful not to exploit or belittle the other person through insensitivity to their needs. Enter imaginatively into other people's experience *Questions and Counsel 1988*

Respect the wide diversity among us in our lives and relationships. Refrain from making prejudiced judgements about the life journeys of others. Do you foster the spirit of mutual understanding and forgiveness which our discipleship asks of us? Remember that each one of us is unique, precious, a child of God. *Advices and Queries 1.02:22*

Our peace testimonies and the belief of "that of God in everyone" encourage a heightened awareness of the need for care in our dealings and relationships with one another. However, people in Friends' meetings are not immune to human weaknesses – we are all potentially at risk of error and hurt. Each of us is probably aware that our language and gestures may sometimes be misconstrued. If we are oblivious of, ignore or disregard the responses of other people which indicate their discomfort, and we continue to behave in the same way, it may appear to them as harassment.  
*Quaker Life leaflet: Sexual Harassment – information and guidance*

### **Related documents**

- Policy for Volunteer Involvement
- Equal Opportunities Statement
- Equal Opportunities Checklist

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Sources:

<sup>i</sup> Save the Children – Focus on bullying: [http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/ni20\\_FocusBully.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/ni20_FocusBully.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> Bournemouth Youth Service – Policy on bullying:

[http://www.nya.org.uk/Shared\\_ASP\\_Files/UploadedFiles/0E9B15F6-EBA3-400D-8B11-4AD57756C694\\_BournemouthBullyingPolicy2002.doc](http://www.nya.org.uk/Shared_ASP_Files/UploadedFiles/0E9B15F6-EBA3-400D-8B11-4AD57756C694_BournemouthBullyingPolicy2002.doc)