

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 (whether online or face to face). 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

Cyberbullying takes place via a mobile phone or online through emails, messaging or social networking. It includes:

- exclusion, threats, intimidation, harassment and blackmail
- sharing embarrassing humiliating or inappropriate images/videos/recordings, spreading secrets,
- persuading or threatening young people to act in inappropriate ways,
- luring someone into an online relationship through creating a fictional profile,
- hacking an account for the purpose of any of the above

Motivating & contributing factors

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 negative behaviours are not observed

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

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

It is good to make all young people aware of the online "disinhibition effect" this is where the perceived invisibility of online communication can contribute to a climate where perpetrators are shielded from the impacts of their behaviour. Young people should also be made aware that although you can delete messages, it is not possible to completely erase them, what you have said and done online can always be traced.

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 compassionately. The following outlines the procedure that should be followed in relation to different instances of bullying and negative behaviour:

Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. These include:

- violence or assault (including 'happy' slapping)
- theft
- repeated harassment or intimidation, for example name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- hate crimes, including discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
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Bullying and negative behaviours by participants:

- the pastoral care procedures should be followed by those involved, listen and reassure the target that they have done the right thing by telling you
- 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 member responsible for pastoral care should negotiate with the target about how to deal with the consequences of the behaviour and the action to be taken
- the staff team should decide on immediate and appropriate action
- aggressors should be supported in changing their behaviour – if change is not forthcoming exclusion may be considered
 - seek to understand why they are doing this
 - explore the impact of the behaviour
 - explain the consequences and what will happen next
- it is preferable that the aggressor/s is removed from the activities of the group rather than the target. The staff team should decide on any further action required which may include monitoring and recording 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.

Cyberbullying

If the bullying is happening online, advise the target to 'block' the aggressor. If the target would find it helpful they can delete or 'hide' the content (they won't be able to see but other people will still be able to see it). There are also steps can be taken on social media sites, such as Facebook, where they can report language or behaviour which is offensive or aggressive.ⁱ

- Listen and learn, decide a plan of action with the young person.
- Go through any messages that they have received and kept.
- Ask them not to open any further online or text messages from the addresses and phone numbers, but to allow you to open them instead (agree what will happen once they go home).
- Encourage them to change their mobile phone number. Encourage them to change their online profile.
- Involve other agencies. Support the young person.ⁱⁱ

Staying Safe Onlineⁱⁱⁱ

Most bullying still takes place face to face, but it can happen online, or online and face to face at the same time. Although the behaviour and impact may be the same, regardless of where the bullying is happening, there are some things that you can do to help young people to stay safe when they're online.

Encourage them to be aware of what they post and share online, and treat people with the same respect as they would do if they were in the room. Invite them to think about the impact that their comments might have on others and how these might make others feel. It can be easy to get caught up in gossip or 'banter', but think about what is being said and the impact.

Remind them to be careful about the information that they share online. Never give away personal details, such as address, phone number and email address – and don't share anyone else's private information either. Keep passwords safe and, while it might be appropriate to share them with parents/carers, don't share them with others, including friends and people they trust. Sharing passwords allows others to access accounts, where they can change information or post messages. Make sure that social media settings are set to private, so that only those people who are known and trusted can see posts. Most of these things are set up as a public rather than private profile, so encourage them to check settings and change them.

Everything young people send and post online or through text message can be traced – including deleted posts. Even if they give a fake email account and information, they will have a unique IP address from their service provider, which can be traced. Everything that's posted online can be viewed, copied and shared, and you can never know who could read your posts. This goes for future potential employers and staff in colleges or universities they might be interested in applying to in the future, so be aware.

If they are being bullied, their options for dealing with it is the same as if it's happening face to face. But they can also take some practical steps, such as unfriending or blocking people from their page and blocking numbers from their phone. They can 'report abuse' on social networking sites and take screen shots and create a log of any messages or texts they receive can also be useful, if they wish to report it to someone. Turning off their phone, laptop or tablet might also help to give them a break from online platforms, but this isn't a long term solution.

Remind them that if they're being pressured to send images, or are being coerced into doing something they don't want to do online – they should speak to an adult (remind them of the confidentiality policy). There are laws to protect them from this sort of behaviour. Staff and volunteers should also be aware that is more than bullying and is potentially grooming and pornography and should speak to the person responsible for safeguarding.

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

ⁱ Adapted from Respect Me Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service Staying safe online <http://respectme.org.uk/page-3/page-4/> accessed on 26 November 2019.

ⁱⁱ Page 9 of Methodist Social Media Guidance for Workers <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/3990/social-media-guidelines-for-workers.pdf> accessed on 26 November 2019.

ⁱⁱⁱ Adapted from Respect Me Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service Staying safe online <http://respectme.org.uk/page-3/page-4/> accessed on 26 November 2019.