



Break Tha Cycle Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy

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Applies to	Children, young people, adults at risk, participants, parents/carers, trustees, employees, volunteers, contractors, visitors and partners involved in charity activities.
Covers	Behaviour expectations, positive support, de-escalation, incidents, sanctions, physical intervention, bullying, discrimination, records and review.

This policy is written for a charity/community activity setting. It should be used alongside Break Tha Cycle's Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, SEN/SEND Behaviour Support Policy, Volunteer Management Policy and Complaints Policy. Where Break Tha Cycle works on a school site or partner site, the relevant site rules and safeguarding procedures must also be followed.

1. Purpose

Break Tha Cycle aims to provide safe, inclusive, respectful and supportive activities where everyone understands expected behaviour and where staff and volunteers respond to behaviour consistently, fairly and proportionately. This policy sets out how the charity promotes positive behaviour, prevents harm, responds to incidents and learns from concerns.

The policy recognises that behaviour is communication. Behaviour may be affected by age, development, trauma, unmet needs, disability, neurodivergence, communication needs, mental health, safeguarding concerns, peer pressure, environmental stress, hunger, tiredness, substance misuse, bereavement or other life events. Boundaries remain important, but responses must be safe, respectful and proportionate.

2. Scope

- Applies to all activities delivered by or on behalf of the charity, including group sessions, mentoring, outreach, events, residentials, trips, online activities, partner activities and travel linked to charity activities.
- Applies to behaviour by participants, staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors, parents/carers, visitors and partners where the behaviour affects charity activity, safety, wellbeing or reputation.
- Does not replace safeguarding, child protection, police, mental health crisis, complaint, disciplinary or employment procedures; those routes must be used where relevant.

3. Behaviour principles

- Safety comes first. Staff and volunteers must act promptly where behaviour creates risk of harm.
- Relationships matter. Positive, predictable, respectful relationships are the main foundation for good behaviour.
- Expectations must be clear, age-appropriate, accessible and consistently reinforced.
- Responses should be fair, proportionate and focused on repairing harm, learning and preventing recurrence.
- Humiliation, intimidation, sarcasm, threats, shouting as a routine response, corporal punishment, degrading treatment, group punishment and unnecessary exclusion are not acceptable.
- Reasonable adjustments must be considered where behaviour may be linked to disability, neurodivergence, communication needs, SEN/SEND, trauma or health needs.
- Serious or repeated behaviour concerns should trigger review of supervision, risk assessment, support plans, safeguarding concerns and activity suitability.

4. Expected behaviour

Group	Behaviour expectation
Everyone	Treat others with respect, keep hands and objects safe, follow agreed rules, use language that does not threaten or discriminate, respect property, privacy and personal space, and report concerns.
Participants	Take part safely, follow instructions needed for safety, tell a trusted adult when struggling, avoid bullying or intimidation, and help repair harm when things go wrong.
Staff and volunteers	Model calm and respectful conduct, use positive language, apply rules consistently, avoid power misuse, record incidents and seek support when behaviour creates risk.
Parents/carers	Support agreed behaviour expectations, share relevant needs or risks, collect or support a participant if safety requires it, and engage constructively with review meetings.
Partners/visitors	Follow the charity's standards, safeguarding procedures and site-specific rules when attending or supporting charity activities.

5. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Board of Trustees	Approve the policy, ensure safeguarding and equality duties are considered, receive assurance on serious incidents and monitor whether behaviour practice remains safe and inclusive.
Chief Executive / Senior Lead	Ensure implementation, training, supervision, resources, reporting routes and partnership arrangements are in place.
Safeguarding Lead	Advise where behaviour may indicate harm, abuse, exploitation, neglect, bullying, mental health crisis or risk to others; decide safeguarding referrals or escalation.
Programme Lead / Activity Lead	Plan activities safely, brief staff and volunteers, set expectations, make adjustments, manage incidents and review support needs.
Staff and volunteers	Use this policy in practice, maintain professional boundaries, record concerns, report incidents promptly and take part in debriefs and learning.
Participants	Follow the behaviour agreement as far as they are able, ask for help when struggling and take part in restorative or review processes where appropriate.

6. Promoting positive behaviour

- Set a small number of clear, positive rules at the start of sessions and revisit them regularly.
- Use welcoming routines, visual prompts, accessible language and predictable session structures.
- Recognise and praise safe, respectful and helpful behaviour specifically and sincerely.
- Offer choices where possible, such as where to sit, whether to take a break, how to communicate or how to rejoin the group.
- Notice early signs of stress or escalation and intervene early with calm support.
- Plan for high-risk times such as arrival, transitions, unstructured breaks, travel, competitive activities, online discussions and leaving the venue.
- Adapt activities to meet age, developmental stage, disability, language, cultural and communication needs.
- Use reflection and restorative conversations after incidents, rather than relying only on punishment.

7. Behaviour concerns and levels of response

Level	Examples and response
Low-level concerns	Examples: calling out, refusing an instruction, minor disruption, low-level unkindness, inappropriate language without targeted abuse. Response: reminder, redirection, private check-in, choice, break, reset, record if repeated.
Moderate concerns	Examples: repeated disruption, targeted unkindness, unsafe play, leaving a supervised area, verbal aggression, discriminatory comments, online conflict. Response: separate from trigger, de-escalate, inform activity lead, record, speak with parent/carer if relevant, review support and boundaries.
High-risk concerns	Examples: violence, threat of serious harm, weapons, sexualised behaviour, exploitation concerns, significant bullying, hate incident, self-harm risk, absconding, serious property damage, intoxication. Response: immediate safety action, safeguarding lead involvement, incident record,

	parent/carer or emergency contact, external agency or police where necessary, risk assessment before return.
Repeated concerns	Repeated low or moderate concerns may indicate unmet need or safeguarding concern. Response: review pattern, triggers, reasonable adjustments, SEN/SEND support, staff allocation, risk assessment and whether the activity remains safe without additional controls.

8. De-escalation procedure

1. Stay calm, keep voice low and use the person's name if this is helpful.
2. Reduce audience, pressure and stimulation where safe to do so.
3. Give simple choices and clear limits: "You can sit with me for two minutes or take a quiet break; we need hands to stay safe."
4. Avoid arguing, public confrontation, sarcasm, cornering, blocking exits unnecessarily or making threats that cannot be followed through.
5. Use known communication supports such as visual prompts, break cards, written instructions, trusted adult support or sensory tools.
6. Create space and time, while maintaining safe supervision.
7. Move other participants away if needed for safety.
8. Call for support from the activity lead, safeguarding lead, venue lead or emergency services where risk cannot be managed safely.
9. Once calm, use a short restorative conversation and agree what happens next.

9. Sanctions, consequences and restorative practice

Consequences should be proportionate, connected to the behaviour, explained clearly, applied consistently and reviewed where disability, SEN/SEND, communication needs or safeguarding concerns may be relevant.

- Appropriate responses may include reminder of expectations, moving seat, supervised break, loss of a specific privilege linked to the behaviour, apology or repair, parent/carer discussion, support plan, risk assessment, temporary pause from a specific activity or agreed return plan.
- Restorative practice may include asking what happened, who was affected, what the person was feeling or needing, how harm can be repaired and what support will help next time.
- Suspension or exclusion from an activity should be used only where needed for safety or serious disruption, after considering reasonable adjustments and alternative support. Decisions should be recorded and reviewed by a senior lead.
- Permanent exclusion from charity activity should be a last resort where risk cannot be safely managed, support has been considered, the decision is proportionate and trustees or senior leaders have oversight.

The following are not permitted

- Physical punishment, threats of physical punishment or rough handling.
- Humiliation, shaming, ridicule, degrading treatment or deliberate embarrassment.
- Withholding food, drink, medication, toilet access, required care or agreed support.
- Punishing a whole group for the behaviour of one person unless a group reflection is genuinely proportionate and safe.
- Locking someone in a room, seclusion, unnecessary isolation or leaving a distressed person without safe supervision.
- Informal "bans" without recording, review and a clear route for return or appeal where appropriate.

10. Physical intervention and reasonable force

The charity's approach is prevention and de-escalation. Physical intervention should be avoided wherever possible. It may only be used as a last resort where necessary, reasonable and proportionate to prevent immediate harm to the person or others, serious damage to property, or another serious safety risk. Staff and volunteers must not use physical intervention as punishment, compliance, convenience or retaliation.

- Only trained and authorised staff should use planned physical intervention. In an emergency, any intervention must be the minimum necessary to protect safety.
- Physical intervention must stop as soon as the immediate risk has passed.
- Medical needs, disability, trauma history, age, size, gender, cultural factors and known risks must be considered.
- Every physical intervention must be recorded the same day, reported to the safeguarding lead and reviewed with the person, parent/carer where appropriate, and staff involved.
- Any injury, allegation, distress, repeated intervention or concerning pattern must be escalated under safeguarding and incident procedures.

11. Bullying, discrimination, sexual behaviour and online behaviour

- Bullying, discriminatory behaviour, hate incidents, sexual harassment, sexualised bullying and online abuse are serious behaviour and safeguarding concerns.

- The charity will act to protect the person affected, record the concern, assess safeguarding risk and take proportionate action with the person responsible.
- Sexual behaviour between children or young people must be assessed using safeguarding procedures, considering age, consent, coercion, power imbalance, disability, vulnerability, exploitation and whether behaviour is developmentally appropriate.
- Online behaviour linked to charity activity, including group chats, social media, gaming platforms, direct messages or sharing images, may be addressed under this policy and safeguarding procedures.
- Discriminatory incidents should also be reviewed under the Equal Opportunities Policy and EDI/Anti-Harassment Policy.

12. Incident recording and escalation

- Record all moderate, high-risk, repeated or safeguarding-related behaviour concerns as soon as possible and normally the same day.
- Records should include facts, time, location, people involved, witnesses, antecedents/triggers, actions taken, injuries, support given, notifications, follow-up and learning.
- Do not include speculation or judgemental language. Use the person's own words where relevant.
- Notify the safeguarding lead immediately where there is risk of harm, abuse, exploitation, sexual behaviour concern, self-harm, significant bullying, discriminatory abuse, absconding, weapon, substance concern or allegation against an adult.
- Notify parents/carers or emergency contacts where appropriate, unless doing so would increase safeguarding risk.
- Significant incidents should be reviewed to identify learning, changes to risk assessment, support plans, staffing, training or activity design.

13. Training, supervision and communication

- Staff and volunteers must receive induction on behaviour expectations, safeguarding, boundaries, reporting, de-escalation and reasonable adjustments.
- People leading higher-risk activities should receive additional training in behaviour support, trauma-informed practice, SEND awareness, restorative practice and incident recording.
- Session teams should hold brief pre-session and post-session check-ins for activities where behaviour needs or risks are known.
- Behaviour information should be shared only with people who need it for safety, support or safeguarding and in line with data protection rules.

14. Implementation checklist

Check	Record / action
Participant behaviour agreement or session rules agreed and communicated.	
Staff and volunteers briefed on de-escalation and prohibited sanctions.	
Incident recording form available and used consistently.	
Safeguarding escalation route clear for all staff and volunteers.	
Physical intervention position agreed: prevention first, last resort only, same-day recording.	
Process agreed for parent/carer communication and return-to-activity meetings.	
Reasonable adjustment and SEN/SEND support route linked to this policy.	
Trustees receive reporting on serious or repeated behaviour incidents.	

15. Working templates and records

Behaviour incident record

Field	Entry / notes
Date, time and location	
Activity / session	
Name or reference of person involved	
Staff / volunteers present	
What happened - factual account	
Possible triggers or context	

Immediate action taken	
Any injury, first aid or medical support	
Whether physical intervention was used and why	
Person affected and support offered	
Parent/carer/emergency contact notified	
Safeguarding Lead notified / decision	
External agencies contacted	
Follow-up actions and responsible person	
Review date	

Restorative conversation record

Field	Entry / notes
What happened?	
What were you thinking or feeling at the time?	
Who has been affected and how?	
What needs to happen to repair harm?	
What support would help next time?	
Agreed actions	
Date to review	

Review and version history

Version	Date	Changes made	Approved by
1.0	25/06/2026	Approved for use	Board of Trustees

Official guidance and source material

This policy was drafted with reference to the following official guidance. The policy owner should check the latest versions before each review or after any significant incident.

- GOV.UK: Behaviour in schools - advice for headteachers and school staff, used as a reference for behaviour policy principles where work involves children and young people.
- GOV.UK: Use of reasonable force in schools, used as a reference point for last-resort physical intervention principles.
- GOV.UK: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 statutory guidance.
- GOV.UK: Equality Act 2010 guidance.
- GOV.UK: SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years.