

Dealing with Aggressive and Challenging Behaviour

Reviewed January 2022

Due to the nature and environment of Streetsport sessions there will be times when staff and volunteers will need to address challenging behaviour from primarily but not exclusively young people. However, the risk from such incidents can be minimised by simple precautions outlined in this document.

Please note that this guidance is intended as advice only and is not a substitute for training in techniques for dealing with aggressive or challenging behaviour. It is not exhaustive and is not intended as an authorised procedure.

1. Address behaviour before it gets worse and/or investigate causes
2. Use the Participant Code of Conduct
3. Involve other members of staff
4. Offer solutions; i.e. "it is your choice to come to Streetsport", "if you cannot be here together, then neither of you can attend, you decide?", "it is our job as Streetsport staff to ensure this session is safe for EVERYONE".
5. Terminate Session (Ultimately Session Lead's Decision)
6. Contact Emergency Services
7. Follow up with an incident report procedure under instruction by senior staff members
8. Potentially restrict following weeks activity and address previous weeks issues... i.e. we had to pack up early because of this...this made the session i.e. unsafe

Underlying Causes of Challenging Behaviour

To help the team come to solution regarding behaviour it is important to investigate and try to understand the potential underlying causes of the behaviour. The more you can understand these issues the easier it will be to find more constructive solutions. For best practise involved a second member of the team for one child discussions.

- Personal/medical issues
- Attention seeking
- Low motivation
- Boredom
- Peer pressure
- Reputation

- Lack of Parental Control
- Lack of Encouragement

Continued Challenging Behaviour Constructive Approach

Streetsport can encounter individuals who will continually demonstrate a variety of challenging behaviours. Where appropriate staff/volunteers should work hard to understand these underlying behaviours and possibly discuss the possible consequences of their behaviour outside of Streetsport. Some of the behaviours we experience can be chargeable offences.

Hate crimes can include:

- threatening behaviour
- Verbal abuse or insults including name-calling
- Assault
- Robbery
- Damage to property
- encouraging others to commit hate crimes
- Harassment
- Online abuse

Although all these scenarios are chargeable offences and can lead to a young person having a criminal conviction, the outcome of that criminal conviction and how it is dealt with very much depends on circumstances of offence, severity of offence, information from research (with school/Social Work/family/previous convictions) and can be dealt with in a variety of ways - a warning, referral for Early Intervention/Diversionary work/Social Work/Children's Reporter. It is important we should not be specific, but these behaviours can be used to stimulate conversation.

For Example:

- Discussion about Consequences (perpetrator - person charged)
 - Criminal history - could affect future career/university/college prospects (criminal history does not disappear at 16, a common belief with young people) some places will not employ with criminal convictions
 - Emotional and social impact being involved with the police would have
 - The negative behaviour/attention the incident could create
- Discussion about Consequences (victim)
 - How would the person who is victim to these offences feel
 - How will it impact their life
 - How would they feel if the shoe was on the other foot

General Tips for Dealing with Aggression

- Volunteers/Staff should always try to treat people with respect, regardless of their behaviour and age.
- Volunteers/Staff should stay as calm as possible; it can keep tensions from escalating and may help defuse the situation, if you cannot stay calm remove yourself from the situation and call a member of staff to assist.
- Staff should try to avoid using the phrase “calm down” as this may suggest to the aggressor that the staff member has failed to grasp the gravity or importance of the situation.
- Volunteers/Staff should attempt to show empathy and concern. For example, by saying "I can see your frustration, and I'm frustrated too. Unfortunately, the participant code of conduct (which you have signed) says.....".
- Rather than insisting that they are right and the aggressor is wrong, the volunteer/staff member should let them know they see the situation differently. For example, you could say "I can see we don't see this the same way". They could also consider bringing in another person who can help.
- If someone is verbally abusive, the member of staff/volunteer should tell them they will be able to help them better if they lower their voice and stop attacking. We do not have to tolerate abuse.
- We must not promise or suggest outcomes which are not possible to get out of a difficult situation.
- Staff should trust their intuition and leave the discussion where it appears that the situation might escalate to violence.
- In the event a situation escalates into violence towards a staff/volunteer emergency services should be contacted (**see EAP**).