



## **Braintree Youth Project Charity**

### **Anti-Bullying Policy (including Cyber Bullying)**

#### **Equalities statement**

BYPC is committed to improving the life chances of young people in Braintree. An important aspect of our vision is to provide them with a safe, secure environment within which to flourish. BYPC believes that all people are of equal value and are entitled to equality of opportunity irrespective of ability, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, age, social class, appearance or sexual orientation.

#### **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is an instance of behaviour which is used to intimidate or make another individual feel weaker in a situation or context, either by direct interaction or via any form of technology.

Cyber-bullying the term used to describe the use of any form of technology (computer, mobile phone, internet, social networking) to abuse or threaten another individual. It can be used to inflict all types of bullying on others and is a deliberate way of targeting others.

#### **Ground rules of behaviour**

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the BYPC Staff/Volunteer Managing and Challenging Behaviour Policy, which states that: **“The key question to ask in every situation is: Is the individual experiencing discomfort, distress, or unhappiness as a result of the actions of another person?”** and includes a list of examples of unacceptable behaviour, many, if not all, of which can be perceived as bullying if directed at an individual or group.

Young people using BYPC premise agree to be bound by the Code of Conduct. The Youth Worker, Centre Manager and volunteers will remind users of these ground rules for acceptable behaviour, including the avoidance of all forms of bullying.

#### **Dealing with bullying**

All kinds of bullying are unacceptable within BYPC premises. The victim should be able to tell somebody about it and it will be dealt with accordingly and promptly by a responsible adult. Anybody who suspects that an individual is being bullied must report this immediately to an adult member of staff, volunteer team or the board, who will deal with it in accordance with the Managing Challenging Behaviour Policy. Some forms of Bullying are a safeguarding risk and must be treated as such.



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## **Signs and symptoms**

There are various signs which everybody should look out for and which could be an indication that an individual is being bullied. If a volunteer or young person notices any of the following symptoms or changes in a person's behaviour, then they should report their concerns to the Youth Worker or Centre Manager immediately (in the event that they feel the Youth Worker or Centre Manager is responsible, a member of the Board).

Things to look out for in an individual:

- If the person is concerned about walking to or from places on their own;
- Is unusually anxious, withdrawn and a loss of confidence;
- Attempts or threatens suicide or to run away;
- Becomes aggressive, abusive, unresponsive and unreasonable in their behaviour and attitude;
- Performance in school work begins to drop or they get excluded from school;
- Turns up with clothes or property damaged and a generally bad appearance;
- Asks for money or starts stealing money;
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- Changes in their eating patterns;
- Is frightened to explain what is wrong;
- Gives improbable excuses for their behaviour;
- Is anxious about using their mobile phone or the internet; This list is not exhaustive.

## **Procedures for bullying**

- An individual or group reports the incident(s) to the Youth Worker, Centre Manager or an adult member of BYPC
- Youth Worker, Centre Manager/adult will give the victim and the perpetrator an opportunity to tell their side of the story
- In most cases an attempt to work with the bully in order to help them recognise, apologise and put right their behaviour will be given before any further actions are taken
- A brief note of the incident will be kept by the Centre Manager as a paper record and a copy placed on the BYPC Staff Portal (All data kept must be within the guidelines of the GDPR).

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- In dealing with incidences of bullying, the Youth Worker / Centre Manager will use a graduated approach in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy, including the possible involvement of parents/carers.
- In extreme cases, where hate crime is suspected, Police advice/involvement will be sought by the Youth Worker, Centre Manager/adult.
- Any Cases of bullying should be dealt with in line with the BYPC Safeguarding Policy.

### **What can BYPC do to help with cyber-bullying?**

At all times, the young people are our paramount consideration and we strive to ensure that their safety and wellbeing. BYPC will ensure that all of its staff, volunteers and young people who attend its facilities will be made aware of and understand what cyber-bullying is.

BYPC will ensure that:

- Everybody is aware of this policy and that it is reviewed and changed accordingly, to reflect new technologies;
- Monitor computer and internet usage whilst on BYPC premises.
- Introduce a clear policy on the usage of the BYPC computers, including the duration of use, the purpose of use and the consequences if there is a breach of use;
- Work with other agencies in order to ensure that cyber-bullying is easier managed and everybody is kept up to date.

### **Responding to cyber-bullying**

Cyber-bullying is different from other forms of bullying for a number of reasons. BYPC does not tolerate bullying of any type.

The main differences are:

- The impact of cyber bullying can be greater than other forms;
- The people behind the bullying may have a different profile to traditional bullies;
- Unlike physical bullying which only happens when you come face to face with the bully, cyber bullying can happen 24/7;
- The victim will not always know who it is who is bullying them;
- Some individuals may not be aware that their actions constitute bullying;
- It will often be easier to gain evidence of the bullying if it is cyber as it will be written as opposed to just verbal.

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## **Support for the victim**

- For a person to admit that they are being bullied is a massive step for them and they should be reassured that they have done the right thing by telling someone;
- The victim should be advised not to retaliate or to reply. Instead, keep the messages as evidence and show them to a parent or to a staff member or volunteer at BYPC;
- If there is hurtful or embarrassing content about the victim on a website, then try to assist in getting this removed as soon as possible;
- May be worthwhile to advise the victim to get their mobile number changed;
- If the person is known to BYPC, they will need to be spoken to regarding the incident. If the victim is willing to be at the meeting, then this should be allowed. Each individual will need to be accompanied by a parent or a friend at the meeting and there should be at least two BYPC adults present;
- If the content is a real cause for concern, then the police should be contacted;

## **Investigation**

- The youth centre manager will keep a record of the incident using the incident report forms. Any forwarded content which is for the purposes of evidence will be kept alongside the forms and filed securely;
- If images are involved, determine whether they are illegal or raise issues of child protection. If this is the case, then the Safeguarding Co-ordinator must be informed immediately.



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## **Sanctions and working with the bully**

Once the perpetrator is identified, if they are a member of BYPC also, then two adult members should speak to the individual about the allegations and give them the opportunity to give their side of the story.

The aims of the sanctions will be:

- To make the victim feel safe and to assure them that BYPC will do everything it can to stop the bullying;
- To ensure that the bully recognises their behaviour and the consequences of it;
- To try and keep both individuals a part of BYPC, but if this is not possible, to find an alternative solution;
- If the situation is not resolved and the perpetrator does not recognise their mistake and is unwilling to apologise, then they should be excluded and a follow up meeting will need to be held in order to determine the next steps;
- In applying the sanction, BYPC will look at the type of bullying, the impact of it, the situation as a whole and the possibility that it may not have been intentional;
- The outcome must be to ensure that the victim feels safe and is not deterred from coming to BYPC anymore, but at the same time that the bully receives the support to try and enable them to change their attitude.

Approved: June 2021