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# Behaviour Policy

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Adopted by Utopia - for review by the Board of Directors
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Updated September 2019
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For review - Annually
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## **Policy Overview**

The aims of this policy are to set out Utopia's approach to dealing with all aspects of behaviour. Utopia's ethos is to encourage all young people who enrol on the programme to develop their ability to make more effective choices in life and in their education. Utopia was formed to provide support to young people who are struggling to access mainstream education and are exhibiting challenging or difficult behaviour. We believe that all young people deserve to be treated with respect and fairness. As such Utopia will endeavour to treat all young people as individuals, recognising that everybody has differing needs.

It is important to note that this policy has not been called a 'Behaviour Management' policy. It is our belief that simply managing behaviour of individuals does not bring about effective long-term change. This policy should therefore be viewed as a point of reference for the strategies that Utopia employ to modify behaviour in both the short and long term.

We aim to provide young people with

- A greater understanding of how to manage their emotions, behaviour and interactions with others
- The opportunity to develop their ability to empathise with others and have a broader outlook on their local community
- A sense of empowerment- it is crucial that all young people feel involved in the process of their education.
- An understanding that all behaviour whether positive or negative has a consequence
- A safe and secure environment that encourages young people to challenge themselves

## **Multi Agency Involvement**

An essential component of this behaviour policy involves working collaboratively with all relevant parties who have influence on a young persons development. The parties will almost certainly include parents/carers and school, however other agencies such as children's social care, YOT or CAMHS may also be involved in the process of our young people's education. As such Utopia aim to communicate the progress of all its participants effectively to enable a holistic approach to improving the behaviour of its young people. Where appropriate Utopia staff will attend any relevant meetings and will always seek to act as an advocate on behalf of the young person.

## **Building Positive Relationships**

It is important that the young people who attend Utopia understand that the company and its staff mean what they say and follow through with their actions. If we say that we will phone a school or parent/ carer to praise a piece of work, it is essential that this action be carried out. This commitment helps engender positive relationships between staff and young people and encourages positive behaviour. Utopia staff will, in all elements of their delivery provide controlled choices to its participants. It is important that the young people who attend realise that it is their choice to do so. At no point during the delivery of the programme will Utopia staff attempt to force participants to do things, however it is likely that any refusal to complete elements of the course will result in a consequence (for example failure to complete work will result in a qualification not being achieved).

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

Utopia will monitor attendance and punctuality closely and will communicate this accurately and promptly to all relevant agencies. Regular attendance is essential to achieve the most out of the Utopia programme. It is also a key to developing the skills needed for progressing to education, employment or training. Utopia will work closely with schools and attendance officers to encourage all its participants to attend and gain the most from the programme.

## **Strategies to Improve Behaviour**

Utopia staff have a wealth of experience in dealing with challenging behaviour. Our ethos centres around building positive relationships with young people, allowing them to take responsibility for their own behaviour. However Utopia do not exist to be friends with its participants, we are a professional organisation that strives to enable young people to achieve the best possible outcomes for themselves. As such there are numerous strategies and techniques that will be employed depending on the individual needs of the young people who attend. These include

- Providing positive role models
- Modelling good or desired behaviour
- Providing fair and effective consequences that are immediate
- Providing a clean slate following said consequence
- Positive reinforcement
- Ignoring negative behaviour
- Allowing time for young people to de-escalate following an incident
- Regular and effective contact with parent's and schools
- Regular feedback, discussion and reflection with participants to review behaviour
- Negotiating limits and boundaries

- Providing appropriate and achievable work tasks to enable success
- Having high standards and expectations of our young people
- Respecting all participants
- Including participants in the process of their education
- When circumstances require, being sent home or asked to work from home

## **Expectations of Young People**

As stated above Utopia staff set high expectations for all participants. We believe in doing this it encourages young people to have respect for themselves and others around them. All elements of our programmes involve practical activities and placements, which may involve interactions other members of the community. We therefore require all young people to conduct themselves appropriately. Some expectations are listed below.

- To attend all sessions at Utopia
- To ensure they are on time and equipped for the day
- To treat others with respect and tolerance
- To not swear, use verbal aggression or physical violence against anyone else whether they are a member of staff or another young person
- To not smoke on site
- To respect the beliefs and opinions of others
- To adhere the rules set by other organisations or companies we may visit
- To respect the premises and the property of others
- To ask for and accept help from others when I need it
- To support others in the group and understand that no form of bullying will be tolerated
- To do my best at all times

## **Smoking**

It is illegal to smoke on any premises in England and as such any person found smoking in the Utopia centre would face a suitable consequence. Utopia does not condone or encourage smoking. Where possible Utopia will provide support, advice, guidance and referrals to enable young people to quit smoking. However Utopia recognise that some of it's young people will be smokers. Utopia will encourage all participants to make positive life choices, however it is important to recognise that young people require a degree of autonomy and it is Utopia's position to not pass judgement on any decision made by it's young people. Therefore during sanctioned break periods young people will be given free time and encouraged to use this time positively in order to enable them to engage effectively with the days activities. Any young person smoking during none allocated break times will face a suitable consequence.

## Drugs and Alcohol

Utopia operates a zero tolerance policy on drugs and alcohol. In the event of the following:

- A young person being under the influence, or suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- A young person being in possession of, or suspected of being in possession of drugs or alcohol

The following procedure will be followed.

- Contact made with referring school to inform them of suspicions
- Contact made with parents or carers to inform them of suspicions
- Young person removed from the days activity
- Contact with referring school and parents/carers to agree mechanisms of young persons departure from Utopia. (This may include being collected by school or parents, being given permission to travel home independently or other such arrangements as specified by the referring school and agreed by parents)

A reintegration meeting will take place as soon as possible to discuss the issues and ensure that the incident is not repeated. Continued issues regarding use of drugs or alcohol will result in removal from the programme in conjunction with our disciplinary procedures outlined below.

## Bullying

Utopia does not tolerate bullying in any way shape or form. This section of the policy should be read in conjunction with Wirral Borough Councils whole school approach to bullying policy. In this document bullying is defined as

*‘a form of aggressive behaviour which is usually hurtful and deliberate: it is often persistent, sometimes continuing for weeks, months or even years and it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Underlying most bullying behaviour is an abuse of power and a desire to intimidate and dominate’ S Sharp 1994 (Tackling Bullying in your School)*

Utopia will in all instances of bullying seek to come to a positive outcome whereby all people affected, including the organisation itself can learn from the incident.

*“Bullying takes different forms. Good school policies and training for staff analyse the different forms of bullying that pupils may experience. Unpleasant territory though it is, understanding bullying is the starting point for effective detection and response.*

*Defining and analysing bullying can help pupils, as well as staff, to combat it.” OfSTED 2003 ‘Bullying: effective action in secondary schools’*

## Forms of Bullying

PHYSICAL	Hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings
VERBAL	Name calling, insulting, repeated teasing, racist remarks, threats
INDIRECT	Psychological’, spreading nasty rumours, excluding someone from groups, moving away as a person approaches, leaving notes, failure to speak to or acknowledge a person
MOBILE PHONES	Text bullying, whatsapp, BBM and photographs being sent
CYBER BULLYING	Sending threatening, abusive or upsetting messages by computer

## Effects of Bullying

Research has shown that there are numerous negative effects associated with being bullied. These range from

- Low self esteem
- Truancy/poor attendance
- Physical injury
- Avoiding social or group situations
- Negative impact on mental health
- Negative impact on attainment

## Responding and reporting of Bullying

Utopia recognise that when young people are placed together in-group situations bullying is likely to occur. It is essential that as a company we tackle this issue head on and respond accordingly. We exist as a vehicle to improve and modify behaviour and as a result it is necessary to conduct work with both the victim and the bully in order to try to affect positive long term change. All young people face varying issues and those who engage in bullying others often have historical reasons for doing so, Utopia have a responsibility to work through these issues with participants. Outlined below is some of the responses that Utopia staff may use when responding to incidents of bullying.

- Use of Restorative Practice if appropriate
- 1-1 sessions to discuss issues

- Contact with parents/carers if appropriate
- Contact with schools if appropriate
- In extreme cases person is removed from Utopia Programme
- All incidents of bullying will be recorded in Utopia Project's behaviour tracking system and this will be available to both schools and parents

### **Confidentiality (To be read in conjunction with Safeguarding Policy)**

Utopia places a massive emphasis on personal development and as such some sensitive information is likely to be shared by young people to its staff. Utopia staff want its young people to feel comfortable in sharing information that may be troubling or concerning them. Therefore Utopia will only share information to parents, carers, schools or other relevant agencies when there is a risk associated with not doing so. Examples of this risk may include but are not limited to

- Safeguarding referrals
- Threats of violence towards others
- Criminal investigations

If a member of staff is required to break a young person's confidence for any reason Utopia staff will endeavour to inform and explain the process of doing so to the young person. Throughout the referral process staff will communicate any relevant information to the young person unless prevented from doing so by law.

### **Physical Intervention and Use of Reasonable Force**

Utopia's ethos is to encourage all young people to make positive choices and take responsibility for their own behaviour. It is the company's belief that physical intervention takes away the choice young people have in effectively managing their own behaviour, therefore physical intervention will not be routinely used as part of Utopia's ongoing behaviour management strategy.

However, Utopia recognise the nature of the young people who engage on the programme may result in incidents where staff are required to intervene. In the case of fights between young people staff will always take reasonable and proportionate steps to ensure the safety of all participants on the programme, which in exceptional cases may require physical intervention. It is important to note that this will always be regarded as a last resort, once all other behaviour management options have been explored and it is felt that there is a real danger of the young person involved in the incident becoming at risk of harm. Staff have a duty to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that they do not take any action, or make any omission, that creates a risk, or increases an existing risk, to the health or safety of themselves, or other persons.

In the event of physical intervention or reasonable force being used for the safety of participants, robust and effective debrief must take place with the young person involved, in addition to debrief with parents/carers and referral agencies. In the event

of a serious incident the disciplinary procedures below may be bypassed and removal from the programme considered.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

There may be times during the Utopia programme when staff thinks it necessary to apply a consequence to a young person that involves removing them from the programme for the day. This will be dealt with by contacting schools and parents to discuss the reasons for this; we will always endeavour to work collaboratively with both to provide the highest level of service.

In the event of sustained periods of dangerous, extreme or unacceptable behaviour a meeting will be sought between Utopia staff, schools and parents. In this meeting clear boundaries and expectations will be set and a behaviour contract will be stipulated with the expectation that this will be adhered to.

If this behaviour contract is unsuccessful then young person may be removed from the programme following another formal meeting with schools and parents. See Procedure outlined below.

- Isolated behavioural issues where young person has been unable to respond to advice and feedback given to him by staff- Consequence sent home or removed from the following days session
- Persistent behavioural issues where removal from programme has proved ineffective- Meeting arranged with schools and parents/carers to implement behaviour contract.
- Persistent behavioural issues still proving problematic- Final warning and reiteration of behaviour contract- Reduced timetable if necessary
- Removal from the programme entirely