

Date of issue	2013	Reviewed	March 2023	Next review	March 2025	Approved by	Board of Trustees
For	Employees, volunteers, students, referrers, members						



Behaviour Policy

Introduction

This Policy demonstrates Ride High's commitment to the inclusion of all children and young people (together referred to as "young persons") and our belief that they should fulfil their full potential whilst in our care.

Young persons need to understand the need to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. This aim, to which Ride High is committed, requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the right example.

In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour Ride High acknowledges that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations which are either fulfilled or not. Ride High also acknowledges that young persons bring with them a wide variety of behavioural patterns based on differences in, for example, home values and personal attitudes. At Ride High we will work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, mutual respect, consideration and responsibility. Acceptable standards of behaviour are those which reflect these principles.

Our members sign a Member's Agreement on arrival; in this they commit to good behaviour, showing respect and following instructions when at Ride High.

Policy aims

- To create an environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- To ensure that Ride High employees, volunteers and young people understand what behaviour is unacceptable.
- To encourage consistency of response by Ride High employees and volunteers to both good and bad behaviour.
- To promote self-esteem, self-discipline, feelings of competence and positive relationships.

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Objectives

The adults encountered by young persons at Ride High have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with Ride High members and with each other, as their example has an important influence on young persons. Our objectives are therefore to:

- make it clear to all young persons on joining Ride High the standards of behaviour expected of them and that the ultimate sanction for failing to meet those standards is exclusion from Ride High in accordance with the procedures set out in this Policy and our Entrance, Progression and Exit Policies;
- create a positive environment with realistic expectations;
- emphasise the importance of being valued as an individual within a group;
- promote positive behaviour, honesty and courtesy;
- encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding the needs of others;
- ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, or ability;
- show appreciation of the efforts and contributions of others.

Ride High employees and volunteers will never attempt to change a young person's behaviour by:

- physical punishment or the threat thereof;
- any form of humiliating practice; or
- shouting or frightening the young person in any way.

Clubroom sessions

Appropriately structured clubroom sessions contribute to good behaviour. Thorough planning for the needs of individual young persons, active involvement in their own learning and structured feedback all help to avoid the alienation and disaffection which can lie at the root of poor behaviour.

Clubroom sessions should therefore have clear objectives which are understood by the young persons and differentiated to meet the needs of those with different abilities. Records of performance will be kept for use as a supportive activity to provide feedback to young persons on their progress and as a signal that their efforts are valued and that progress matters.

Our teaching methods will encourage enthusiasm and active participation. Clubroom sessions will aim to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding which will enable the young people to work and socialise better with others both now and in their adult lives.

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Behaviour Management

In the first instance club leaders discuss unacceptable behaviour with parents/carers and often deal with it entirely. This the most appropriate course in the majority of cases since they are the people who know those involved and what has occurred best. Incidents are discussed with the Children's Manager who will speak to parents/carers when appropriate but does not do so as a matter of course.

Poor behaviour

Minor incidences of poor behaviour will be dealt with by the session leader at the time. The session leader will help the young person find solutions to their poor behaviour; such solutions might include for example acknowledgment of feelings, an explanation as to what was not acceptable and supporting the young person to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response to a situation.

If the unacceptable behaviour takes place on the Ride High minibus or people carrier or a car driven by an employee or volunteer, the matter will be discussed either during the clubroom session immediately following the occurrence during the pick-up journey or the following session if the behaviour took place on the homeward bound journey.

Wherever possible, criticism of a young person's poor behaviour in such circumstances should be in private to avoid resentment.

Repetition of poor behaviour over time will result in the young person being warned that action may be taken along the lines set out in the following paragraph.

Unacceptable behaviour

Persistent poor behaviour or incidents of unacceptable behaviour will be recorded in the Incident Book.

When a young person breaches the terms of their Member's Agreement, or where considered necessary, employees/volunteers may issue a Cause for Concern Notice. The young person's behaviour will be discussed with them and their parents/carers when considered appropriate to resolve the matter informally at this stage but setting out clear expectations of future conduct. If the behaviour is particularly poor, the young person may be asked to stay away from Ride High for one or more sessions.

When two or more Cause for Concern Notices about behaviour are issued to a young person, or where behaviour is sufficiently poor as to warrant a short period of suspension from Ride High as above, the young person's behaviour will be discussed with the Children's Manager (or in his/her absence, the Centre Manager), the young person and their parents/carers/referrer as appropriate. During this process, a decision will be made as to

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whether the young person's membership of Ride High can continue and if so, whether any conditions should be imposed. The decision is entirely at the Children's Manager's (or in his/her absence, the Centre Manager's) discretion in discussion with the Children's Committee (a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees).

Extreme behaviour

If a young person demonstrates behaviour interpreted as severe aggression, violence or defiance (whether towards other young persons, Ride High employees/volunteers, staff from The Ride High Equestrian Centre, or other people whilst the young person is under Ride High's care), or behaviour of a criminal nature, the Children's Manager (or in his/her absence, the Centre Manager) must be informed and the young person suspended from Ride High immediately. A record of the behaviour and the circumstances leading to the suspension will be made in the Incident Book. Decisions about re-admission to Ride High are entirely at the discretion of the Children's Committee, following discussion between the Club Leader, Children's Manager (or Centre Manager) and the young person and the parent/carer/referrer as appropriate taking all circumstances and needs of individuals into consideration.

Persistent bullying, racism and religious intimidation will be treated in the same way as severe aggression, violent, defiant or criminal behaviour. Repeated racist or bullying incidents may also result in action being taken under our Safeguarding Children Policy.

Bullying

If a young person bullies another, we:

- show the young person who has been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them;
- intervene to stop the young person who is bullying from harming the other young person;
- explain to the young person doing the bullying why their behaviour is not acceptable and help them to recognise the impact of their actions on themselves and on the young person being bullied;
- make sure that any young person who bullies receives positive feedback for considerate behaviour and is given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour.

We recognise that young persons who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves or be subject to abuse or other circumstances causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others. Where we suspect this to be the case, we will follow the procedures set out in our Safeguarding Children Policy.

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Parent/carer concerns

A parent or carer who has concerns about unacceptable behaviour by other young persons, or about possible abuse by other young persons, should contact the Children’s Manager who if appropriate will deal with the concern in accordance with our Safeguarding Children Policy or refer the concern to the Centre Manager to deal with in accordance with the relevant policies.

Requirement for carer to accompany young person

If a young person is known to have behavioural issues or a history of violence, or there is any risk that their behaviour will have a negative impact on people or activities at Ride High, Ride High may require a carer to accompany the young person to all Ride High sessions until such time as the risk of poor behaviour is considered by the Children’s Manager (or in his/her absence, the Centre Manager), in discussion with the Children’s Committee, to have ceased.

Training and awareness

A copy of this Policy will be shown to all employees and volunteers, and each must sign the list attached to the original to indicate they have read and understood it. It will also be made available to all referrers and members and/or their parents/carers, and shown to all students undergoing training with Ride High.

Approval and review

This Behaviour Policy was approved at a Board Meeting of the Trustees. It will be reviewed bi-annually, or more frequently if appropriate.