

Date of issue	2013	Reviewed	March 2025	Next review	March 2027	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 people 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.

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

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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.

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

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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.

Supporting Positive Behaviour

Ride High is committed to promoting and supporting positive behaviour in all young people. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and that children and young people may require different levels of support to understand expectations, regulate their emotions and develop positive relationships with others.

We seek to create an environment in which positive behaviour is encouraged, recognised and reinforced through:

- Clear and consistent expectations set out in the Member's Agreement and communicated regularly by employees and volunteers.
- Positive role modelling by employees, volunteers and trustees.
- Building trusting and respectful relationships with young people.
- Recognising and celebrating effort, achievement, personal growth and positive contributions.
- Providing structured activities that are engaging, inclusive and appropriate to the age, needs and abilities of participants.
- Encouraging young people to reflect on their behaviour, understand the impact of their actions on others and develop problem-solving skills.
- Working collaboratively with parents/carers, referrers and relevant professionals where additional support may be required.
- Making reasonable adjustments and providing additional support where behavioural difficulties arise from identified needs, disabilities, special educational needs, trauma, adverse childhood experiences or other vulnerabilities.

Where behavioural concerns emerge, Ride High will seek wherever possible to understand the underlying causes and identify supportive strategies to help the young person succeed. Exclusion or suspension will always be considered a last resort after appropriate support and interventions have been explored, except where immediate action is required to protect the safety and wellbeing of others.

Procedure for Handling and Addressing Negative Behaviour

Ride High will respond to negative behaviour in a fair, proportionate, consistent and restorative manner. The aim of any intervention is to help the young person understand the impact of their behaviour, repair relationships where appropriate and support positive behavioural change.

The following stepped approach will normally be followed:

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Stage 1: Immediate Response

For minor incidents, the Club Leader or volunteer present will:

- Address the behaviour calmly and respectfully.
- Remind the young person of expected standards of behaviour.
- Listen to the young person's perspective and acknowledge any relevant feelings or concerns.
- Explain why the behaviour is unacceptable and the impact it may have on others.
- Support the young person to identify a more appropriate response or solution.

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.

Stage 2: Informal Support and Monitoring

Where concerns persist, Club Leaders or volunteers may:

- Discuss the behaviour with the young person in greater detail.
- Agree expectations and behavioural goals.
- Inform and involve parents/carers, referrers or other relevant professionals where appropriate.
- Monitor behaviour over a period of time and provide additional support and guidance.

Stage 3: Serious or Persistent Behaviour Concerns

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 and volunteers may issue a Cause for Concern Notice. The behaviour will be discussed with the young person and, where appropriate, their parents/carers to help resolve the matter, set clear expectations for future conduct, and identify any support that may be required to promote positive change. If the behaviour is particularly poor, the young person may be asked to stay away from Ride High for one or more sessions.

Where behaviour remains unacceptable despite previous interventions, where two or more Cause for Concern Notices have been issued, or where a serious incident occurs, the matter will be referred to the Children's Manager (or, in their absence, the CEO). A review meeting will be held with the young person, parents/carers, referrer and relevant Ride High staff as appropriate to

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assess risks, consider support needs, review the circumstances and determine whether continued participation at Ride High is appropriate.

Following this review, decisions may include:

- Continued participation with agreed conditions.
- A formal behaviour agreement or support plan.
- Temporary suspension from activities or attendance.
- Withdrawal of membership from Ride High.

Any decision regarding the continuation of a young person's membership, together with any conditions imposed, will be at the discretion of the Children's Manager (or, in their absence, the CEO) in consultation with the Children's Committee, taking into account all relevant circumstances, support needs, risks and the welfare of those involved.

Stage 4: Extreme Behaviour

Behaviour involving violence, severe aggression, serious defiance, criminal activity, significant threats, serious bullying, discriminatory behaviour, racism, religious intimidation, safeguarding concerns, or any conduct that places others at risk will be treated as an extreme behavioural incident.

If a young person demonstrates behaviour interpreted as severe aggression, violence or defiance (whether towards other young persons, Ride High employees or volunteers, staff from The Ride High Equestrian Centre, or any other person whilst under Ride High's care), or behaviour of a criminal nature, the Children's Manager (or in their absence, the CEO) must be informed immediately and the young person may be suspended from Ride High pending review. A record of the behaviour, the circumstances leading to the suspension and any actions taken will be recorded in the Incident Book.

Persistent bullying, racism, religious intimidation, discriminatory behaviour or repeated incidents that place others at risk will be treated in the same way as severe aggression, violent, defiant or criminal behaviour. Where appropriate, such incidents may also result in action being taken under the Safeguarding Children Policy.

Following suspension, decisions regarding re-admission to Ride High will be made at the discretion of the Children's Committee, following discussion between the Club Leader, Children's Manager (or CEO), the young person and their parent/carer/referrer, taking into account all relevant circumstances, risks, support needs and the welfare of those involved.

At all stages, Ride High will maintain appropriate records of incidents, actions taken and outcomes to ensure consistency, accountability, safeguarding and the welfare of all young people involved.

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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.

Parent/carers 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 Children's 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 CEO), 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.

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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.