



# **YOUNG PEOPLE MATTER CHARITY'S**

## **Behaviour Policy (Adults)**

**Dated: May 2023**

**The Policy will be reviewed every year or in  
line with changes in government legislation  
and updated guidance**

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## **Background**

This policy was written with the aim of giving staff, parents/carers and all adults that have a cause to come into YPM's After School Club provisions clear guidelines when dealing with difficult adults or situations.

Very few individuals would be considered "difficult" however in the event of such situations occurring this policy is in place to provide staff with management strategies to help in achieving outcomes that are effective for both parent/carers and staff members.

In applying administrative controls to deal with difficult adults, the policy identifies response protocols in circumstances where it is appropriate to restrict, withhold or withdraw the provision of rights that other difficult adults may reasonably be expected to hold e.g. the right to come on site when dropping off and picking up the children, the right to request meetings with staff members, the right to have their letters responded to. (Furthermore termed as "the provision of services").

Before implementing the appropriate response protocol to restrict, withhold or withdraw the provision of services, management will consider two important aspects:

- It must be established that the complaints procedure has been correctly implemented so far as possible to a given point and that no material element of the enquiry/complaint has been overlooked or inadequately addressed.
- It must be determined that the behaviour of the parent/carer has become so habitual, obsessive or intimidating that it constitutes an unreasonable demand on Young People Matters resources.

These important aspects would be made by the CEO of Young People Matter and thereafter, the administrative controls provided in the policy would be applied in accordance with the CEO's direction.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following:

- Complaints procedure
- Behaviour policy

## **Policy Statement**

Young People Matter is committed to:

- Ensuring that all difficult adults are treated fairly and reasonably.
- Providing guidance, education and training as appropriate for staff members in dealing with difficult adults.
- Ensuring that Young People Matters resources are used efficiently and effectively when dealing with difficult adults.

## Scope

This policy relates to all dealings with difficult adults by Young People Matters staff and in particular those difficult adults who:

- Cannot be satisfied.
- Make unreasonable demands.
- Constantly raise the same issue with different staff members.
- Are rude, abusive or aggressive.

## Variation and Review

Young People Matter reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy, it will be reviewed as and when needed or at least on a yearly basis.

## Service Commitment

Young People Matters staff aims to meet the needs of all difficult adults in a professional and ethical manner with a polite and efficient service. All Young People Matter staff will:

- Treat all difficult adults with respect and courtesy.
- Listen to what difficulties the adult has.
- Respond to enquiries as promptly and efficiently as possible.
- Act with integrity and honesty when liaising with difficult adults.
- Consult difficult adults about service needs.

## Vexatious Complaints

Young People Matter uphold the right of any adult who's child attends our provisions to express their views or opinions, however it is paramount that this is done in the correct manner following positive constructive and open communication channels. Any attempt to undermine this process and bring Young People Matter into disrepute through the use of social media may well result in Young People Matter considering whether or not a site ban will be issued. Young People Matter does not seek to suppress the views or opinions of any individuals however, we take seriously any attempt to create hysteria or unnecessary emotional harm or anxiety to other parents/carers or children.

Below is examples of behaviours made by unreasonably persistent complainants, this is not an exhaustive list and local factors will vary.

- Persistently refusing to specify the precise grounds of a complaint, despite offers of assistance from Young People Matter.
- Refusing to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved, this includes cases where there is a "scattergun" approach across different communication channels.
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are not compatible with Young People Matters complaints procedure or general good practise.

- Making groundless complaints about the staff dealing with the complaint.
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds or denying statements made at an earlier stage.
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information which the complainant expects to be taken into account, or raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insisting they are fully answered.
- Making unnecessary excessive demands on the time and resources of staff whilst a complaint is being looked into, for example by excessive telephoning or sending emails to numerous Young People Matter staff, or writing lengthy complex letters every few days and expecting immediate responses.
- Submitting repeat complaints after an investigation has been completed, essentially about the same issues but with additions or variations whereby the complainant insists on making them “new” complaints, the new complaint should be put through the full complaints procedure.
- Refusing to accept the decision, repeatedly arguing the point and complaining about the decision.
- Combinations of some or all of these.

### **Difficult Adults Who Cannot be satisfied**

Difficult adults who cannot be satisfied or do not accept that Young People Matter is unable to assist them, provide further assistance or level or service than has been provided already or disagree with the action Young People Matter has taken in relation to their complaint or concern.

If it is the opinion of Young People Matter that an adult cannot be satisfied and all appropriate avenues of internal review or appeal have been exhausted and the adult continues to write, telephone, email or visit any of the Young People Matters sites the following actions may be taken:

- a) The CEO of Young People Matter may write to the adult restating Young People Matters position on the matter and advising that if he/she continues to contact Young People Mater regarding the situation, Young People Matter may:
  - Not accept any further telephone calls.
  - Not grant any further reviews.
  - Require all further communications to be put in writing.
  - Continue to receive, read and file correspondence but only acknowledge or otherwise respond to it if:
    - i) The person provides significant new information relating to their complaint or concern: or
    - ii) The person raises new issues which in the CEO’s opinion warrant fresh action.
- b) The CEO shall advise staff of a person who is deemed to be “a difficult adult who cannot be satisfied” that persons concerns and any proposed management strategy by Young People Matter staff.

- c) The difficult adult shall be given the opportunity to make representations about the CEO's proposed course of action.
- d) If the difficult adult continues to contact Young People Matter after being advised of Young People Matters proposed course of action, the CEO may, after considering any representations from that person, advise him/her that any or all of the points (noted above) will now apply.

## **People Who Make Unreasonable Demands**

Difficult adults who make unreasonable demands include those whose demands on Young People Matter start to significantly and unreasonably divert resources away from core functions, or create an inequitable allocation of resources to other adults. Such demands may result from the amount of information requested, the nature, scale, services sought or the number of approaches seeking information assistance or service. Such difficult adults will engage in what is called "vexatious complaining".

If in the opinion of the manager, a person is making unreasonable demands (vexatious complaints) on Young People Matter and they continue to write, telephone or visit any of Young People Matters sites, the following actions may be taken:

- a) The manager may write to the person advising them of YPM's concern and requesting that they limit and focus their request and that if they continue to place unreasonable demands on YPM, then YPM may:
  - i) Not respond to any future correspondence and only take action where, in the opinion of management, the correspondence raises substantial and serious issues or;
  - ii) Only respond to a certain number of requests in a given period
- b) The individual shall be given the opportunity to make representations about YPM's proposed course of action.
- c) If the individual continues to contact YPM after being advised of YPM's proposed course of action, management may, after considering any representations from the difficult adult, advise the parent/carer that any or all of the points (bulleted above) will now apply.

Not all response protocols will be identical; it will depend on the characteristics of the difficult parent/carer.

## **Difficult Adults who constantly raise the same issue with different staff members.**

If, in the opinion of management, a person is constantly raising the same issues with different staff, the following actions may be taken:

- a) Management may notify that difficult adult that:
  - Only a nominated staff member will deal with them in the future.
  - They must make an appointment with that person if they wish to discuss their matter, or
  - All future contact with YPM must be in writing.

- b) The difficult adult shall be given the opportunity to make representations about management's proposed course of action.
- c) If the difficult adult continues to contact YPM after being advised of management's proposed course of action, management may, after considering any representations from the parent / carer, advise the parent / carer that any or all of the points (bulleted above) will now apply.

**YPM reserves the right to seek legal advice and representation over all or any of the issues raised above.**

## **Angry Adults**

Occasionally an adult's behaviour falls short of the normal standard we experience in YPM. Do not take this personally; there are probably other reasons why the adult is angry and stressed. What may appear to be a minor issue or incident to you, will appear to be very serious to the person who is angry. (Below is a list of strategies for YPM staff members).

### **1.) Calm the conversation**

- Listen to the individual carefully and try to find the cause of their anger and complaint.
- Validate and understand how they are feeling – e.g. I can see/I can hear you are upset and I would like to help you.
- Let the person finish speaking and 'saying their piece'.
- Keep yourself calm and do not rise to their aggression.
- If the individual continues to behave unacceptably, even after you have tried the above techniques, you can ask someone else to come and support you.
- If you fear for your safety, you can leave the area and fetch assistance immediately. This could be the police.
- If the individual continues to swear or be rude and abusive you can terminate the conversation (see below – dealing with adults who are rude, abusive and aggressive).

### **2.) Progress the Conversation**

- If the person believes a mistake has been made, accept what they say and resolve to carry out an investigation. (Once an investigation has been carried out – we can inform the parent/carer of the findings).
- You are entitled to correct clearly wrong statements and allegations in a calm and reassuring manner – NEVER use sarcasm or be aggressive in your response.
- Only make realistic promises and ensure that you do follow it up.
- Try to end on a positive and constructive note.

### **3. After the Conversation**

- Record the conversation as soon as possible in case the adult misunderstands or misrepresents what you said, or comes to another member of staff who needs background information.
- If the adult makes a personal threat to you inform management immediately who will decide if further action is needed.
- Make any investigations that you need to regarding the issue raised by the adult.

## People who are Rude, Abusive or Aggressive

Rude, abusive or aggressive behaviour may include rude or otherwise vulgar noises, expressions or gestures, verbal abuse of a personal or general nature, threatening or offensive behaviour, and physical violence against property or person.

If an individual is rude, abusive or aggressive comments or statements are made in telephone conversations or interviews to a member of the YPM staff team, the staff member may:

- a) Warn the parent/carer that if the behaviour continues or occurs again at any time the conversation or interview will be terminated, and
- b) Terminate the conversation or interview thereafter if the rude, abusive or aggressive behaviour continues or occurs again at any time after a warning has been given.

Where a conversation or interview has been terminated in such a way, the staff member must notify the Team Leader on site of the details as soon as possible. The staff member **MUST** make a written statement as soon as possible about the incident, and if there were witnesses to the behaviour, they **MUST** make statements too.

If, in the opinion of management any correspondence to YPM contains personal abuse, inflammatory statement or material clearly intended to intimidate, it will be returned to sender and not otherwise acted upon unless it is regarded by management as being serious enough to warrant forwarding to another authority e.g. Police.

Please read through Appendix 1- Suggestions for what to say to difficult adults.

## Aggressive Situations on Site: Site Bans

A parent/carer of a child attending YPM's settings has normally implied permission to be within YPM's settings at certain times and for certain purposes but if the adult's behaviour is unreasonable this permission may be withdrawn and they will become a trespasser. YPM reserves the right to refuse entry to any adult that behaves inappropriately on site.

Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against YPM staff or other members of the YPM community will not be tolerated. All members of the YPM community have a right to expect that the YPM settings are a safe place in which to work and learn. There is no place for violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in the settings. Where such behaviour does occur we will take all possible action to deal with it.

**Appendix 2** outlines the kinds of behaviours that YPM has experienced from parents/carers and other members of the YPM community, and the kinds of actions that YPM will take in order to deal with those behaviours. Of course this outline is not exclusive or exhaustive and YPM will judge each case on its own merits.

Our staff is trained in how to deal with aggressive situations, and our first priority is to the safety of the children within our setting. If safety is in question we **WILL** act with the full weight of the law behind us.

What to do in an Aggressive Situation On-Site

- Depending on the seriousness of the situation – call 999.
- Inform Team Leader immediately.
- Attempt to calm the situation and move the parties away from each other.
- If the situation is not able to be calmed ask the people concerned to leave the site.



- If they refuse to leave – walk away and ensure that the police are called.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES PUT YOURSELF IN DANGER – IF YOU FEEL THREATENED MOVE AWAY FROM THE SITUATION IMMEDIATELY.**

After the Aggressive Situation has occurred.

Staff will gather witness statements where appropriate and write down what happened in as much detail as possible as soon as possible after the event. Management will then decide if a site ban is necessary. A site ban will be issued in all cases where safety and the emotional well-being of children have been called into question. YPM will call the police, if it is deemed necessary, to report serious incidences of public order, threats and intimidation or actual/grievous bodily harm and assault.

**How Does a Site Ban Work?**

- 1) Management will write a letter to the parent using the format in Appendix three explaining the reason for the site ban and giving a timescale for them to make representations or to make an apology. This time scale is three weeks.
- 2) Once the evidence has been gathered and the representations made, management will decide whether or not to uphold the site ban or to lift it. Appendix 2 details the kinds of actions that warrant a site ban and how long that site ban should be for. We take each case on its merit and this is only a guideline.
- 3) Once the time period of the site ban is up, management will review again and conduct a risk assessment, then lift the ban. The letter will follow the format of Appendix 4.

**General**

In all of the situations referred to in this policy, adequate documentary records must be made and maintained on the appropriate YPM file.

Where senior management determines to limit a parent/carer's access to YPM in any of the ways specified in this policy, management will advise staff as soon as possible of the relevant circumstances and the action taken.

**Young People Matter reserves the right to seek legal advice on any or all of the issues stated above.**

## **Appendix 1**

### **What to Say to Angry Difficult Adults**

#### **What to say to the shouting or swearing person.**

- “I’m trying to help you, but if you continue to shout and swear I am going to ask that you call back/revisit the site at another time.”
- “I’m sorry. It isn’t possible to help while listening to that language. If it stops, I can help.”
- “If a few minutes helps you calm down before we continue, that would be fine. You can certainly call me back/sit in the foyer.”
- “I want to help you, yet the language is getting in the way.”

**Note:** Your tone is critically important with the above statements. You must come across calm, neutral and non-threatening.

#### **What to say to the person who wants to speak to a Manager**

- “I’m sorry you feel you need to speak with someone else, but that’s the reason I’m here. I have been given full authority to help resolve your concerns. May I have the opportunity to resolve this first?”
- “Please give me an opportunity to try and resolve this for you. That’s why I’m here.”

#### **What to say to the rambler or storytelling person**

- “Before we hang up I want to be sure to tell you/ that you are clear/that you understand...”  
This statement psychologically leads the adult towards the end of the conversation.
- “I don’t want to take up anymore of your time so let me give you...” You can make this statement even when the parent/carer has called you.
- “One last thing I need to tell you....”
- “I have all the information I need so I’ll now....”

#### **What to say when you need to convey empathy**

- “The problem you experienced is no more acceptable to us than it was to you.”
- “It must have been very frustrating for you to come here to discuss your child’s behaviour only to find that this is an inconvenient time.”
- “It must seem like these things take forever.”

#### **What to say when you need a graceful exit**

- “We see this differently and I am going to have to put more thought into the perspective you have shared with me. It’s helpful for me to understand how you see things. In the meantime, here is what I can do to solve the immediate problem.”
- “I’m sorry that I have not been able to help you. If you don’t object, I would like to let a colleague of mine attempt to better meet your needs.”

#### **What to say when you want to “safely” apologise**

- “Please accept my sincere apology for any frustration this may have caused you.”
- “I am sorry for any misunderstanding you may have experienced.”

## Appendix 2

Table to show the progression in seriousness of incidences on site and the conduct of adults and the actions open to us, incident action that could be taken.

Incident	Actions That Could Be Taken
<p><b>Stage 1</b> Ignoring YPM staff several times – but then apologising and complying when asked to</p>	<p>Member of YPM staff to remind adult of the procedure/policy/rule that has been broken and suggest other ways of dealing with their request or need.</p>
<p>Bringing a dog within YPM setting.</p>	<p>Usually dealt with by Team Leader – ask the parent to take the dog from within YPM setting.</p>
<p>Making unreasonable requests to YPM staff – e.g. asking staff not to record late collections of their child and anything else that requires YPM staff to make an exception in their case. Includes repeated offences.</p>	<p>Member of YPM staff dealing with that adult will explain calmly the policy and the reasons why this is the way things are done. For repeated offences a letter from member of senior team to explain the policy and procedure.</p>
<p>Disrespect to YPM staff – includes vulgar noises, kissing teeth, finger pointing, cutting eyes, inappropriate and rude comments.</p>	<p>Member of YPM staff dealing with the adult will explain calmly what it is that they find unacceptable – e.g. please don't point your finger at me as I am finding that rude. Ask them to stop. Once they have done continue to deal with the issue in the usual way.</p>
<p>Using a mobile phone within YPM settings in a way that causes a nuisance or disturbance to YPM staff</p>	<p>Adult to be asked politely to refrain from using their mobile phone and the reasons why explained – i.e. staff may want to talk to you about your child, you may inadvertently stand in the doorway or obstruct a fire exit whilst talking, we encourage conversations between adults and children, it is polite to give those around you your full attention when picking up or dropping off your child.</p>
<p>Smoking/littering within YPM settings.</p>	<p>Adult to be asked to politely refrain from smoking/littering on school property as it sets a bad example to children. Asked to pick up the litter.</p>
<p>Smoking directly outside YPM's settings in full view of children that attend our provision e.g. when picking up or dropping</p>	<p>Politely discourage the parents from doing this and explain reasons why but understand that on public footpaths it is not illegal to</p>

off	smoke. Rudeness to YPM staff upon being asked to stop – can be dealt with as a separate issue.
Parking illegally outside YPM's settings e.g. on the yellow lines, in the disabled bay or on the zig zags, blocking emergency exits.	Politely request the adult move and explain reasons why. Warn repeat offenders will have their registration numbers reported to the traffic police.
Cycling or riding a scooter within YPM settings	Ask person to refrain from this and explain it is a health and safety issue.
Writing rude, intimidating, sarcastic, inappropriate comments on YPM letters e.g. (don't you people look, I'm not answering this, how ridiculous)	Phone call to adult asking them if there is anything further the school can do to help and to better understand the reason for an inappropriate comment.
<b>Stage 2</b> Repeated stage 1 incidences and...	
Shouting in the building to no-one in particular but calming down immediately (no swearing/offensive elements included)	Member of staff dealing with the adult to ask them to calm down and explain why we don't shout in the building. Letter written by member of management team to explain policy and give a warning.
As above but to members of staff or the YPM community (no swearing/offensive elements included).	As above.
Incidences of entering YPM sites with the express purpose of challenging YPM decisions or behaviour policy in an inappropriate way e.g. seeking out the sessional worker/team leader. To express your dislike at how a situation was handled.	Get a member of management team, ask parent to calm down and arrange a meeting to discuss further. Warn them verbally about inappropriate behaviour. Letter confirming date and time of meeting and warn again in writing about conduct.
Trying to get the attention of school staff inappropriately e.g. shouting, tutting, sighing, repeated holding of buzzer, banging on windows, pulling at doors.	Person dealing with the adult to calm the adult down and attempt to deal with the issue. After the adults' query has been dealt with explain that their behaviour was unacceptable.
Bringing a dog onto school site and refusing to take it away.	Member of management team to write a letter detailing why conduct was unacceptable. Warn that repeat offences will result in a site ban.

<b>Stage 3</b> Swearing of ANY kind towards members of YPM staff	Immediate site ban of at least 1 month – dealt with by management team.
Swearing of ANY kind on YPM sites.	As above.
Intimidating staff or members of the school community either verbally, physically or electronically	Immediate site ban of 1 month whilst an investigation is carried out.
Circulating rumours and gossip about members of YPM staff on YPM settings.	Adult called in for a meeting to explain what the issue is and warned that if it continues there will be a site ban
Approaching other people’s children on YPM sites, independently of the school to tell them off for incidences that happened in or out of school time	Adult called in for a meeting to explain that this is not the correct course of action and to reassure that we deal with incidences ourselves in YPM – possible site ban if repeat offence and also depending on the level of threat and intimidation towards that child.
Approaching other parents, independently of YPM, on YPM sites to air a grievance about an incident that occurred on/off YPM sites, in/out of school time	As above
Urinating on school property	Immediate site ban 1 month
Being drunk/intoxicated within YPM setting but not posing a physical threat to anyone.	Call to social services
Bringing a dog onto federation property and allowing it to defecate/urinate – showing no concern or cause for children’s health and safety	Immediate site ban of 1 month – and being asked to clear up the mess themselves. If the request is refused – report to the police.

<b>Stage 4</b> Anyone who is engaged in vexatious complaining - including approaching the press, having not exhausted appropriate communication channels and protocols.	All of these examples are ones where we would involve the police or seek legal advice as we see fit. Actions open to YPM within the law include:
Racial/homophobic (hate crime) abuse of any kind within YPM setting.	Anti-social behaviour orders – imposed under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – Prohibits people from doing anything described in that order. If breached there is a penalty of up to £5,000 and/or a prison sentence of up to 6 months.
Racial/homophobic (hate crime) abuse of any kind towards any member of our YPM team.	

Anyone engaged in overtly promoting extremist material / viewpoints on YPM sites.	<p>Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – this could prevent a parent from coming within a certain distance of a YPM setting or from making phone calls to a YPM staff members home. Section 4 of this act covers threat of violence, and also the racial element.</p> <p>Criminal Damage Act 1971 – Adult destroys property belonging to YPM or a staff member. Severe penalties including a fine of up to £5,000 and 6 months in prison, or if the damage was with intent to harm or endanger life – unlimited fine and life imprisonment.</p> <p>Common Assault – in accordance with section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.</p> <p>Offences Against the Persons Act 1861 – section 47 covers assault occasioning ABH</p> <p>Public Order Act 1986 – once incident alone is sufficient to constitute a public order offence. Section 5 – lower level – parent/carer causes a disturbance in or outside the school and causes alarm harassment or distress. Section 4a – creates an intentional form of this offence Section4 – is more serious where there is fear or provocation of violence (racially aggravated section 31 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998)</p> <p>Section 3 – Affray – a person uses or threatens unlawful violence such as would cause a reasonable person to fear for safety.</p> <p>Criminal Justice Act 1988 – section 139A this includes any article made or adapted for use causing injury and any article which has a blade or is sharply pointed.</p> <p>Any of the above carry with them a minimum site ban of 3 months and a maximum of 18 months</p>
Trespassing on YPM sites – including refusal to leave when asked	
Re-entering YPM sites after a site ban has been issued	
Physical fighting and aggression	
Verbal aggression, including a combination of shouting, swearing, intimidating body language	
Anyone engaged in harassing YPM staff	
Threats of violence towards any member of our YPM community either verbally electronically or physically	
Actual bodily violence towards any member of our YPM community	
Vandalism of YPM setting or staff property	
Theft of any kind from YPM sites at the hands of an adult	
Defamation – libel/slander towards any member of YPM staff.	
Carrying a weapon of any kind onto YPM setting- includes any article made or adapted for use causing injury and any article which has a blade or is sharply pointed.	