

Anti-bullying policy

Standard

Circus Central operates a zero tolerance to bullying, discrimination or negativity towards others. The charity promotes a safe space for all individuals irrespective of age, gender, ability, sexuality, political or religious beliefs, racial or ethnic origins. The charity aims to promote a cohesive community where all staff, mentors, volunteers and associates are expected to contribute to maintain an inclusive, welcoming space.

Disclosure of bullying behaviour will be treated as a safeguarding concern, in conjunction with the behaviour management policy and the bullying resolution procedures outlined below.

Definition

Bullying is the intention to cause unhappiness in another person. It can involve any physical, psychological or verbal action by an individual or a group that is designed to scare, harm, or intimidate, another person. Bullying is typically systematic and intentional, it may be in person or online. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups.

1. General

1.1 Where bullying has been alleged the anti-bullying policy should be enacted alongside, safeguarding and the behaviour management policies.

1.2 Where staff, mentors or affiliates are subject to such practice they are advised to respond as follows:

- a) if the originator of the material is an employee they should consider resolving the matter directly with Circus Central management or the board of trustees
- b) if the originator of the material is a participant they should report this to their manager and the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the safeguarding and behaviour management policies as well as and code of conduct
- c) if the originator of the material is a contractor, client or visitor they should immediately report this to their manager.
- d) if the originator of the material has no connection to Circus Central they should consider reporting the matter to the police, and disclose to Circus Central manager to ensure their safety and well-being within the premises.

2. Prevention:

Bullying is not acceptable within Circus Central. We aim to prevent bullying with a cohesive approach between participants and mentors/staff.

2.1 Participants

All new participants must read, and agree to Circus Central's ground rules which clearly outline the charity's zero tolerance of negativity towards others.

All participants are expected to work together to prevent bullying: participants are expected to tell mentors if they witness any bullying behaviours.

2.2 Mentors/ Staff

Mentors must be vigilant of bullying behaviours within their sessions. Should bullying behaviours be witnessed mentors must:

- Consider their personal safety and the safety of the group prior to intervening. Consult with other mentors if necessary before taking action
- Follow the lone working policy regarding:
 - separating individuals in order to de-escalate a situation
 - listening to an individual making a disclosure
- Follow the Safeguarding policy and procedures
- The Safeguarding Officer will assess the nature of the suspicions or the disclosure.
- The Safeguarding Officer will decide on an appropriate course of action to resolve the situation

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3. Resolution

Where an allegation of bullying behaviour is made against an attendee, the safeguarding officer, in conjunction with other staff members will decide on the appropriate course of action to resolve the situation. The charity reserves the right to implement measures, including barring the attendee, to safeguard participants.

Where bullying behaviour has been identified the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Keep a written record of actions taken
- Work with relevant organisations and individuals to incur a satisfactory resolution (e.g. police/ care workers/ support workers/ parents etc)

Alternative resolutions to barring individuals include:

- Circle: ask the victim to draw or share their experiences, bring these into the group and ask the group to problem-solve. Encourage focus on empathy and resolution.
- Speak with victim and bully (ies) separately. Encourage the victim to share impact of bullying. Share impact with the bully to encourage empathy and understanding of impact of their behaviour
- Check in with bully to ascertain why the behaviour is occurring
- Seek an apology from the bully
- Work with the bully and victims carers/ support workers to develop a plan to change behaviour and check in with progress.
- Insist on return of 'borrowed' items
- Impose sanctions
- Support the victim/ bully to access counselling