

## Facilitation - Behaviour Policy

We believe that all participants deserve to feel safe and able to fully engage in our drama and creative workshops. We also believe all participants have a right to be treated fairly and equally.

We have outlined 11 key procedures to follow with regard to managing behaviour. These procedures should be followed by all staff and volunteers of Fall into Place.

### 1. Include all participants

Some participants' behaviour might be more challenging than others. Some participants may be very quiet or nervous during workshops. Our job is to make sure that all participants are acknowledged and treated fairly. This can be achieved by getting to know them, talking about their interests; what they like and don't like. This can also be achieved by asking group questions such as 'Hands up if you agree with this' to ensure fuller participation and that everyone in the group is included.

Aim to say hello to every participant and try to use their names as much as you can (ask if you can't remember a name.) Avoid nicknames or 'pet' names (e.g. 'love'). If someone is not participating or is behaving in a difficult manner, it can help to speak to that individual one-on-one and not in the whole group.

### 2. Don't ignore participants's thoughts and feelings

Don't disregard a participant's feelings. Take the time to listen to them and acknowledge how they are feeling. For example, a participant may fall out with a friend or an adult may feel unhappy with their contribution in a performance. These examples can seem like small things to adults, but to a participant it can mean a lot. Listen to their feelings and let them know their feelings are valid. Avoid dismissive language like 'Stop being silly' or "Don't be upset". Try using language such as 'I understand that you are feeling scared about performing. It's ok to feel scared sometimes, performing can be scary for all of us. It's important to try and do things that scare us sometimes, and just give it a go.'

### 3. Wait for silence / respect one person talking

Use an attention grabber (ideas listed below) and then wait a few seconds for silence before saying the next instruction. Drama can be exciting, and participants can take a few more seconds to settle after an activity. Waiting for silence before speaking shows that you expect everyone to listen to you and ensures that all the participants hear the instruction. It also displays respect, and you should also avoid talking over participants when they are speaking where possible, or apologise if you have to interrupt for time restraint purposes.

For children, use praise for those who are listening well before picking out the ones who aren't listening. If participants are still slow to be quiet, you can name children who are still talking.

#### **4. 3 Strike policy for poor behaviour**

##### **(children):**

If a participant is displaying poor behaviour that is low level, give 2 warnings. If they continue after 2 warnings then they have to sit out for 3-5 minutes, using discretion based on the age of the participant. You should then receive an acknowledgement of the behaviour, before welcoming them back to the group. Make sure the participants know what will happen next on warning 2, e.g. "Thomas, this is the second time I've told you to stop playing that piano. If I have to tell you again, you will be sitting out for 5 minutes. Is that clear?"

We can also use a traffic light system which involves participants writing their name on a car and placing it on the green traffic light, if they are warned about their behaviour they move their car to orange light and if they continue with bad behaviour they move their car to the red light which will involve them sitting out. It is important the participants move themselves so they are accountable for their actions.

For more serious poor behaviour, sit out straight away (straight to red light). Examples of serious poor behaviour are aggression or violence (physical or verbal) towards another pupil or deliberate destructive behaviour towards property. Where necessary, you can separate the participant from the group if they need some time to calm down. In rare cases of serious poor behaviour, you can send a pupil to fetch another member of staff for support. If running a workshop as an individual, you can contact a Director for support. If behaviour is deemed serious or repetitive, parents should be notified.

When talking about behaviour, stick to the facts and avoid accusatory language. For example; "Jenny had to sit out in the drama club today. This was because Jenny was asked three times to listen and continued talking. We talked to Jenny about good listening and Jenny has agreed that she needs to try harder to listen next week'.

Report to the directors if any participants are behaving poorly on several occasions or any serious poor behaviour occurs, who will discuss next steps with you. Also report to directors if a participant suddenly displays a change in behaviour, e.g. becomes angry or withdrawn. This could potentially be a safeguarding issue - please refer to our safeguarding policy for more detail on what to do in this situation.

##### **(Adults):**

If an adult has behaved poorly in a low level way (e.g repeatedly talking over someone else), try to have the conversation one to one or in a quieter place, if it is safe and within Fall into Place's policies to do so. Avoid accusatory language and stick to the facts. Where possible, try to let any personal feelings of stress, anger or anxiety pass before holding the conversation, and focus on facts and solutions. If a situation needs to be resolved formally (such as bullying language or aggression) inform your line manager as soon as possible. If you have any concerns for your safety or the safety of others, do not meet with the individual one on one. If you are very concerned for your own or others immediate safety (e.g. someone becomes abusive in a group), you can ring the police.

## 5. Restorative conversations

After an incident of poor behaviour a restorative conversation should happen. For example, for children, ask the participant why they have been told to sit out: "Why did I ask you to sit out? ... How do you think that made me/the person feel when you did (behaviour)... What are you going to do differently next time?"

Adults example:

'We all want to enjoy this group and feel welcome. I'm concerned that language such as X could make some individuals feel unwelcome, even if that's not the intention. I wanted to speak to you about this, and come to a solution together to make sure everyone, including yourself, feels respected.'

Examples of restorative questions can be found here:

<https://trackitlights.com/restorative-practice-6-questions-lead-better-pupil-behaviour/>

## 6. Always try and engage participants

You are more than likely going to see participants not wanting to participate in certain activities, particularly in the first session. They may be sitting or standing at the side and showing hesitation. Be encouraging, and plan sessions to slowly build confidence where possible

Be encouraging for all to get involved, but also leave space for individuals to join in at a 'lower level' if that is what they need. They may have a fear of the activity, they may not have enjoyed it in the past, or it may be an emotional issue. Remind them it is okay to join in and for them to have a go and if they really don't like it they can stop. For a first session try to start with 'easier' group games that don't require much improvisation, such as 'start, stop, touch the floor' or group exercises, to build up participants' confidence and encourage bonding.

Some participants are naturally more introverted and this is not a lack of confidence or willingness but a personality type. Many introverted participants have a rich inner imagination

and can greatly benefit from drama. They may prefer more group games and paired work rather than 'on the spot' questions, which can be very daunting for participants who need more time to think before responding. A lot of noise or constant stimulation can be overwhelming for an introverted people, so remember to monitor their energy levels and have a mix of calmer activities ready too, such as drawing, creative writing, art, mindfulness exercises (for children: sleeping lions, mirroring or listening to a story). Making sure there is a balance of different activities will make the drama accessible for different personality types. Another option to encourage quieter participants to join in discussions is to ask an extroverted participant first, then ask the more introverted participant: 'Do you agree?'

When working with children, another option may be to have the participant doing something else within the activity, like setting up, choosing the teams, being a referee etc.

Sometimes you have to be flexible in the moment - have a backup game or activity in case an activity is not engaging the participants, or something has happened in the day that has left the participants more restless or agitated than usual.

Also be aware of the participants' age. Younger participants can not listen or sit still as long as older participants. Older adults may struggle with 2 hours of standing activities. Make sure instructions are clear and appropriate for the age/mobility. If you are unsure during prep, ask one of the Directors for guidance.

## **7. Always challenge the behaviour not the participant**

NEVER label participants as 'naughty' or 'difficult'. It is the participant's behaviour that is unacceptable. Behaviour can be challenged and changed. Labelling a participant as 'naughty' or 'bad' could be interpreted by the participant that they are always those things and lower their self esteem. Stick to facts and the warnings system and state the behaviour you want to see e.g. instead of 'Stop being silly' try "I want you to sit still and look this way". For adults: 'That language is not acceptable. I want to make sure we use language that is respectful at all times please'.

## **8. Make rules together and refer back to the rules as needed**

In a first meeting with participants, let the participants decide as a group what their own rules are. You can add one or two to the list as well. Write them in coloured pens and take the sheet to every session. If poor behaviour occurs, ask the participant to pick out what rule they are breaking and remind them you made these rules as a group and need to follow them. For adults, check in with the rules if low level issues are occurring, to allow everyone to get back on the same page - remind everyone you are there together to support each other and be a key part of a team.

## **9. Be willing to apologise**

If you make a mistake, acknowledge it. Participants need to learn forgiveness and humility and it's important that you practise what you preach. We are all human, so if you make a mistake or feel you did not behave or speak fairly in a situation, acknowledge that you made a mistake, why it was a mistake and how you would like to change this in future.

## **10. Treat all participants equally and with respect**

If you see a participant going against the rules and you challenge them, then you see another participant doing the same thing and they receive no challenge; this is not treating participants as equal individuals. Therefore, ensure you provide the same treatment for all participants, respect their wishes, beliefs and interests.

## **11. Make all instructions clear**

Make sure you have explained what you require and you have checked all the participants have understood. Use short sentences and repeat key information. Ask a participant to repeat back what you have asked them to do. Some poor behaviour is caused by participants not understanding the task. This can be avoided by speaking slowly, clearly and concisely.

## **12. Be mindful of triggers**

Triggers can be areas that participants are very sensitive to because of past trauma or difficult experiences. Be mindful if a participant suddenly disengages from an activity/discussion, or becomes angry and defensive, it may be the situation has triggered a past experience that was unpleasant for them. Try to remain calm, and give them space, listen to them and empower them by allowing them space to either speak or pause. Acknowledge any difficult feelings they share, and thank them for their honesty. If appropriate, you can offer to speak after the session with them, making it clear you are not a therapist but are open to listening and understanding. If you feel mental health training would be beneficial to your role, please ask your line manager.

**Lastly, here are some other ideas for behaviour management during drama workshops:**

### **Ideas for praise and recognition**

- Observing a group working well and commenting on it
- Praise effort over achievement
- Giving rewards, like choosing the end game
- Consider stickers as an incentive

- Encourage participants to nominate a group member who was kind to them, and they receive an applause from the group
- Use praise frequently and smile
- Try to ask a different participant a question about themselves each session
- Show you are proud of them and let them know
- Use humour where appropriate to create a friendly, relaxed atmosphere.

### **Attention Grabber Techniques**

- A specific clap that you do, then the participants repeat back
- A certain phrase you do, then the participants repeat back
- Countdown from 3 and sit down on the floor, gesturing for participants to follow suit
- Put your hands in the air and when they see it they copy and fall silent
- Use a musical instrument or a bell on a phone linked with a speaker

### **Final tips**

If you have any worries or discomfort around a participant's behaviour towards themselves or others, don't ignore it or worry alone. Speak to your line manager, they are there to support you.

All facilitators have brilliant sessions and tougher sessions, and we can all reflect after sessions to grow and improve. If you think of any additional points and tips from your own experiences, please share them with us so we can all continue to learn together.