

Guidelines for Positive Behaviour Management

LETTERKENNY BLAZE BASKETBALL CLUB is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all its members. The club believes that it is important that members, coaches, administrators and parents/guardians associated with the club should, always show respect and understanding for the safety and welfare of others. Blaze members follow the club code of conduct. (See code of conduct for players and coaches for more information)

Aims of these guidelines:

- To enhance the learning environment where children and young people can make progress in developing their basketball skills.
- To create an atmosphere of inclusion, respect and consideration for everyone.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising individual differences between children and young people and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- To promote a strong sense of community, co-operation and connectedness among children and young people, coaches and parents.
- To give coaches tools to reinforce positive behaviour.

Coaches encourage positive behaviour in our club by for example:

- Building positive relationships with all members (i.e. greeting players, getting to know children young people and parents for example talking with them before and after practice, calling children and young people by first name, giving children and young people responsibility for particular jobs).
- Using specific praise statements, for example naming the specific skill or behaviour that needs to be acknowledged or reinforced.
- When correcting skills naming something that the player is doing well first , correcting the skill or behaviour and ending the teaching of a new skills with a positive comment, when possible.
- Using positive non-verbal communication (for example, eye contact, thumbs up, high 5).
- Building positive relationships with parents and communicating with parents in person and through parent talks, text messages and emails.
- Setting out rules with players at the beginning of the season.

The club endeavours to offer good experiences where members can learn in a safe and positive environment. The club acknowledges the general good behaviour of all players, however, at times when coaching some children and young people need help to:

- listen and attend
- follow instructions
- speak kindly and politely when talking to others

- keep their hand and feet to themselves
- respect people's personal space.

A positive, proactive, preventative approach to behaviour management is encouraged and is adopted by all club members working with children and young people.

In Blaze a planned stepwise approach to responding to negative or non-compliant behaviours is used to address behaviour. Coaches are advised to use the following strategies set out below:

- Praise children and young people frequently and 'catch them being good' i.e. purposely find times that they are listening/ complying /trying hard/ and praise these behaviours.
- Use proximity praise, i.e. praise or acknowledge the compliant behaviour of a player standing beside the child/young person who is non - compliant. In doing so the child/young person will often comply to receive similar praise.
- Physically move closer to a player who is not listening or responding to gain their attention. Doing so reminds the child/young person to listen or attend without having to name or correct the child publicly.
- Tactically ignore low-level, non-disruptive, attention-seeking behaviour, if deemed appropriate. In this way you are not reinforcing negative behaviour. When the child or young person complies give them help or attention.
- Avoid giving unnecessary attention to silly comments, e.g. tactically ignore or say, *'That's not a helpful comment right now'* and move on.
- Use non-verbal signals rather than words to correct low level behaviors i.e. establish simple non-intrusive hand signals, or visual cues. For example, turning the volume down, fingers on lips or a hand to the ear to indicate to a player to listen. This often helps a child who is unaware that they are distracted or disrupting.
- Re-direct the player to the task or activity, stating clearly the desired behaviour. For example, Anne remember we are practicing chest passing, I want you to stay on task and call your partners name when you pass the ball.
- Give a rule reminder e.g 'remember our rules - it is important to look at me when I am talking'
- Approach the player who off task is and ask a question or give them feedback, e.g. Do you need help with this? What are you doing? What are you supposed to be doing? (avoid asking lots of 'Why' questions which can be interpreted as accusing and confrontational, why are you not doing what I asked? why are you talking?).

- Telling players what we want rather than what we don't want and therefore using positive words - '**do**' rather than '**don't**'.
'Hands up without calling out' rather than, 'Don't shout out.'
'Look this way and listen, thanks' rather than 'Don't talk while I'm talking.'
- Challenge put downs.
'We have a rule about respectful language in our session, that's a put down, don't do it again.'
- Distract the player where there is potential for escalation of behaviour, e.g. asking them to demonstrate a drill, help put cones out on the court.

If children and young people continue to disrupt a session following the use of the above preventative, proactive strategies the following sequence of steps should be considered:

1. Give a warning and state the desired behaviour, for example "Anne this is your first warning, I need you to keep your hands and feet to yourself". Give time to comply and praise the child/young person if he/she complies.
2. If the disruptive behaviour continues give a second warning, restate the desired behaviour. For example, "Anne keep your hands to yourself, this is now the second warning, one more warning and I will have to ask you to sit on the bench
3. If the child continues to misbehave put the consequence in place - "Anne you have chosen to sit on the bench for 2 minutes".
4. Once the child/young person returns encourage positive behaviour. However, if the child / young person continues to disrupt apply the consequence for a longer period (for example sit out for 5 mins) .
5. If disruptive behaviour continues request the player to ask their parent to talk to the coach after practice or phone the parent after the session. Parents will be asked to talk to their child and support positive behaviour in the session.

Applying a consequence firmly and calmly:

- ✓ Consequences should never be severe to be effective, i.e. 2 minutes on the bench can be as effective as sitting on the bench for 15 minutes.
- ✓ Consequences should not be psychologically harmful in any way.
- ✓ Examples of appropriate consequences include asking a player to sit out of the activity for several minutes; taking a player out of a game situation; asking a player to move to a different group to practice a skill or complete an activity.

It is important to remember to 'wipe the slate clean' after each session/practice and give the child/young person and opportunity to improve their behaviour.

If the child/young person continues to disrupt the next session the same measures should be taken and parents should be informed.

Coaches are requested to keep a log of incidents noting the behaviour of concern, the frequency of the behaviour and any consequences put in place. Coaches should request assistant coaches to co-sign documentation recorded for future reference.

If behaviour continues to cause concern over a prolonged period:

- A child/young person may be requested to sit out of sessions for longer periods of time.
- A parent can be requested to stay at the session and sit with their child when necessary.
- The child/young person will be reported verbally to the Grievance & Disciplinary Committee. The grievance committee will work with parents/coaches and if appropriate the child/young person to resolve the situation.
- All efforts will be made to support positive behaviour and resolve the issues arising. However, persistent misbehaviour will result in dismissal from the Letterkenny Blaze Basketball Club.
- Dismissals may be appealed in writing to the Letterkenny Blaze Committee.