

Millennium Farm Trust

GN6 Managing Challenging Behaviour Policy V02

Next review date March 2026



Version Control

Version number	Date of changes	Who	Review summary
01	Oct 2019	T Freathy	
	Jan 20	T Freathy	Annual review following staff and QA meeting check. No changes
02	March 21	A O'Neill	Annual review. Covid safe practices added
	March 22	A O'Neill	Annual review. No changes
	April 24	A O'Neil	Annual review. No changes

Challenging Behaviour Policy

Statement

Challenging Behaviour is any behaviour that challenges the service provided by Millennium Farm Trust. Such challenges can take a number of forms – not all of them negative. For example, service users may challenge us to improve our service because they believe that we should be doing better. However, for the purposes of this policy challenging behaviour is taken to mean acts of violence and/or aggression towards other service users, volunteers or staff.

All Millennium Farm Trust staff, volunteers and service users have a right to be treated with respect and Millennium Farm Trust will not tolerate violence (definition below). Millennium Farm Trust will take all necessary steps to ensure that staff, volunteers and service users are safe while providing or using Millennium Farm Trust services. This includes responding to critical incidents, managing challenging behaviour and putting in to place policies, procedures and practices that ensure that such incidents are eliminated or minimised. Millennium Farm Trust will also record and review all incidents of such nature to ensure that its response is appropriate and in line with legal requirements and best practice.

Millennium Farm Trust recognises that its service users, by virtue of the fact that they identify as having a mental health problem, learning disability or acquired brain injury will often be suffering from anxiety and other negative emotions that may lead them to behave in untypical ways and recognises that due allowance should be made in this respect. However, at all times the safety of Millennium Farm Trust staff, volunteers and service users is paramount.

Definition

Challenging Behaviour for the purposes of this policy, challenging behaviour is defined as violent behaviour, or behaviour which has the purpose or effect of either violating another person's dignity, or making them feel intimidated, abused, threatened, degraded, humiliated, offended, vulnerable or helpless.

Millennium Farm Trust recognises that challenging behaviour can take many forms. This may include:

- Verbal assault,
- Threatening and/or abusive messages by phone or text,
- Psychological abuse including intimidation, bullying, humiliation, harassment or emotional blackmail,
- Persistent refusal to observe agreed rules and guidelines,
- Threats of physical or sexual assault, or harm to property,
- Actual physical or sexual assault or damage to property,
- Physical or sexual abuse.

Challenging Behaviour by members of staff or volunteers may be misconduct or gross misconduct and will be covered by the Millennium Farm Trust Disciplinary and Grievance policy.

Policy

1. Risk assessments will be carried out on all people who attend the farm and will include specific questions relating to challenging behaviour.
2. Staff should take all necessary steps to avoid a situation arising.
3. Personal intervention should be used as a last resort and staff must ensure they do not use any form of physical force that could be construed as assault. Staff who do not conform to this policy may be subject to disciplinary action or criminal prosecution.
4. Personal intervention should not be used at any point as a means of punishment.
5. Staff may use personal intervention only where a person is going to directly harm or significantly injure themselves or other people.
6. In no circumstances should staff put themselves or others at risk of personal harm or serious injury.
7. All incidents must be reported.
8. Challenging Behaviour training, which includes personal intervention, is available for all staff.

Procedures

Prior to an incident:

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure their own health and safety. Staff should remain vigilant for situations that may escalate into an incident involving violence or that may trigger challenging behaviours and should take the necessary steps to avoid them if possible.

All farm helpers have undertaken a risk assessment which identifies all possible behaviours that may challenge. Staff should acquaint themselves with farm helper risk assessments and abide by the mitigating actions and risk management processes identified for those risks.

Millennium Farm Trust recognising that people are individuals and that not everyone's behaviour is predictable all the time. Incidents will happen and they need to be managed appropriately.

During the incident:

If a member of staff does not feel able to control or de-escalate a violent situation then they should not attempt to do so. Better to withdraw and call for assistance than to get involved and not be able to get assistance. If possible, remove other service users and staff from the situation. Property can be rebuilt! All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to pass on information or concerns regarding the potential for violent incidents to occur. Such information must be taken into account when deciding how to deal with any person who is displaying violent or aggressive behaviour.

Covid Safe Practice.

Covid 19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It is caused by a virus called coronavirus. Symptoms can be mild, moderate, severe or fatal. From January 2021 new, more infectious variants of the virus have required us to strengthen our responses.

Staff are expected to maintain safe covid working practices when managing challenging behaviour at all times. Full details are contained in our Covid Risk Assessment. Key practices particularly relevant to those managing challenging behaviour include:

- Staff are strongly urged to be vaccinated against covid 19 and any subsequent variant.
- During a pandemic scenario, when tests are available, staff will be required to test regularly whether they are infected.
- Staff to include covid safety as a key factor for managing their intervention.
- Where intervention and close contact is judged to be required every effort should be made to use PPE (Gloves, apron, mask, visors). PPE to be disposed of immediately and appropriately after use.

Immediately following the incident:

Any member of staff or volunteer who has been involved in an incident should inform the Director and support the Director in recording all the events leading up to and including the incident and its immediate aftermath. The report is filed in all the farm helper's files involved in the incident and recorded in the Incident log book. The immediate support network for those involved in the incident, either directly or indirectly, will be informed. The Director, in consultation with the staff involved shall determine what happens next based on the severity of the incident.

Classification of Incident:

The Director will determine (in consultation with the Chairperson and other Board members if necessary) whether the event is to be treated as low level, moderate or serious.

Low Level – single incident of challenging behaviour which has the purpose or effect of making the recipient feel intimidated, abused, threatened, degraded, humiliated, offended, vulnerable or helpless.

Moderate Level – repeated, persistent or sustained behaviour which has the purpose or effect of making the recipient feel intimidated, abused, threatened, degraded, humiliated, offended, vulnerable or helpless; threatening body language or behaviour, damage to property.

Serious Level – direct threats, physical aggression, assault, serious damage to property. These are guidelines.

Actions:

1. The Director or their nominated staff member will record the incident in the Incident logbook. The record will include all details including date, time, place of incident, those present, who perpetrated the incident, circumstances leading up to the incident, any weapon used, and its classification and action planned.

2. Personal safety is paramount and the Director and staff will normally seek to isolate the individual to stop them harming others and seek to calm them down to stop them harming themselves whilst the immediate investigation is underway and assessments are being made.

3. Low Level Incidents – Informal discussion, or no action, may be appropriate.

4. Moderate Level Incidents – Formal discussion, involvement of service users and/or staff involved in incident, possible temporary exclusion from Millennium Farm Trust services.

5. Serious Level Incidents –

a) The Service Manager will notify the Chairperson as soon as possible.

b) If a crime has been committed such as assault or criminal damage, Millennium Farm Trust will report that to the police.

c) The individual responsible will be excluded with immediate effect from all Millennium Farm Trust services and a notification to this effect will be sent to all staff and Board members.

d) A letter will be sent to the perpetrator advising them that they are permanently excluded from all Millennium Farm Trust services and that the police may be called if they try to attend any of its services.

e) The Director will submit a report at the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees who will consider whether any further actions are necessary and whether any changes to operational policies, procedures and practices is necessary to prevent a reoccurrence.

6. Debriefing should be done by the Director as soon as possible after the incident. The support of other colleagues is crucial in the management of an incident and coping with the stresses involved. The development of skills and awareness in this area needs to be enhanced in supervision, team meetings and training. Debriefing must include:

- How staff feel now.
- How they might feel in a few days.
- A discussion about what can be done to support the member of staff.
- A discussion about what can be done to support the other person(s) involved in the incident.

7. Action to be taken by Director:

- Offer support to assaulted members of staff.
- Consider ongoing support and debriefing for service users involved.
- Consider any training implications.
- Discussion with colleagues which may be useful learning opportunity.
- Consider any learning/development implications of incident.
- Consider practical implications of incident.