

## **AUTSCAPE'S BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

Autscape aims to provide a safe space where individuals have valued opportunities to discover and develop a healthy autistic identity and to enjoy the company of other autistics and supportive non-autistic people in an adapted environment.

We aim to create a supportive and peaceful atmosphere throughout Autscape activities, and it is hoped that participants will feel safe and comfortable.

Co-existing in a peaceful and respectful manner will assist participants to recognise that the people are as important as the environment and activities at Autscape.

### **Our policy is:**

To provide a fair policy which is clear and easy to use

To publicise the existence of our Behaviour Policy

To manage boundaries/challenging behaviour with the minimum amount of intervention necessary for the situation in a fair and timely way

To ensure the safeguarding of all our participants

To make sure that wherever possible, situations are resolved and that relationships are repaired

To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **This policy includes information about:**

1. Our Ethos
2. Our behaviour statement
3. Confidentiality
4. Responsibility
5. Monitoring and learning

**Appendix A** contains a Protocol for managing boundaries/challenging behaviours at an event.

### **1. Our Ethos**

Autscape's primary concern is to foster the safety, welfare and enjoyment of all participants and the satisfactory staging of Autscape events. Consequently the organisers will normally only intervene where these goals are in jeopardy, rather than to impose particular moral or ethical standards on participants.

Autscape believes that people should be allowed to make mistakes and learn from them in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. Consequently the organisers and the board will strive to avoid retention of formal records or institutional memory of individual's past mistakes beyond that which is absolutely necessary to achieving the primary concerns stated above.

### **2. Our Behaviour statement**

As far as possible, Autscape wishes to avoid prescribing participant behaviour in order to ensure that participants feel as comfortable and uninhibited as possible. However there are three sources of limitations on the freedom of action of Autscape participants:

1. All participants are subject to law of the country the event is in. (just as they would be anywhere else).
2. Autscope itself has a number of internal behaviour guidelines designed to ensure the environment is safe and comfortable for all participants; we may also need to ask individuals to modify any behaviour which jeopardises someone else's safety, comfort or enjoyment.
3. The venue where Autscope takes place usually have some guidelines and Autscope participants are expected to abide by these in order to avoid jeopardising Autscope's welcome at the venue.

### **3. Confidentiality**

All matters will be confidential to the organisers and the board. Matters of law (sexual abuse, drugs, violence) or behaviour which gives rise to grave concerns about the physical and emotional well being of the person concerned (mental confusion, severe self-harm) may need to be referred to statutory agencies or other professionals. The organisers or board may also override a participant's right to confidentiality in order to provide essential information to a participant's carer, but should only consider doing so against a participant's wishes in cases in which a behaviour gives rise to grave concerns about the physical and emotional well being of the person concerned or others and/or the continued attendance of the participant at Autscope is in jeopardy.

### **4. Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board of trustees.

### **8. Monitoring and Learning**

Behaviour will be reviewed periodically to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

### **Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on 28th May 2022

## **Appendix A.**

There will be occasions when other participants or the organisers are concerned about an individual, or group of individuals, in respect of boundaries or behaviour. It is impossible to list all possible occasions and have prescribed rules for everything therefore an organiser or a person in a position of responsibility eg a home group facilitator or discussion moderator should be competent enough to judge the seriousness of the behaviour and when to seek additional help, advice or support.

The following protocol has some guidance and essential information which all organisers and people in a position of responsibility should be aware of.

### **PROTOCOL For managing boundaries/challenging behaviour at an Event**

#### **Incidents requiring an immediate response**

For incidents requiring an immediate response, an organiser or person in a position of responsibility (e.g. group facilitator or chair) should speak to the individual(s) concerned about their behaviour.

##### Minor incidents

If the incident is minor, no further action or report is required. However, if the person intervening in the incident feels a report is warranted, e.g. other people may do the same thing, there could be repercussions, or an individual is repeatedly coming to their attention, it should be reported to a member of the Management Team as soon as possible. If the incident escalates, it should then be treated as a major incident (see below).

##### Major incidents

For major instances the organiser or person in a position of responsibility should try and seek support from a member of the Management Team before speaking to the individual(s) concerned. In some cases an organiser or person in a position of responsibility may not have time to seek support in advance and they should seek help from participants to alert a member of the Management Team or assist them.

#### **Reported incidents**

Incidents may also be received through the Action Needed box or a verbal report from a participant.

##### Minor incidents

Where the incident is minor, the organiser receiving the report may deal with the incident. If this requires speaking to an individual, two organisers, at least one of whom should be a member of the Management Team, should be present. These two should speak to the individuals concerned as soon as possible, both the complainant (if identified) and the person who has been complained about.

#### **Protocol for all major incidents (reported or immediate)**

Where the reported incident is major, the organisers receiving the report or intervening in the incident must inform a member of the Management Team as soon as possible. Any participants who helped should also be spoken to and where necessary given an explanation of anything which may

occur as a result of the incident E.g. an arrest requiring the assistant to give a statement, and any confidentiality issues they need to be aware of.

Where organisers speak to individual(s) involved, the purpose of these meetings should be to obtain the individual's view of the incident, not to immediately place blame or impose consequences.

These incidents must be recorded. Matters recorded in this way are not intended to form part of individual participants' records. They may be made available to the board for training and other purposes and the board has the option to delete particularly sensitive information.

## **LEGAL AND SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

Any matter that involves legal or safeguarding issues should be recorded and action should be taken in accordance with the law or the safeguarding policy.

## **BEHAVIOUR MEETINGS**

If any member of the Management Team think it is appropriate they should convene a meeting with the full Management Team to discuss any concerns about behaviour. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the situation and arrive at possible outcomes for solving the problem and, if necessary, ways of supporting a participant. The Management Team will need to demonstrate sensitivity, an awareness of confidentiality, respect for the dignity of the person or people involved, reasonable understanding and tolerance of autistic behaviour, and for the inclusivity of Autscope.

In doing so they will bear in mind the following:

In those cases where the majority of participants are involved E.g. The venue have brought it organisers attention that people are entering out of bounds areas, they should decide how to prevent the behaviour happening and how they should inform all participants.

In those cases arising from difficulties in understanding, attempts to resolve the situation through clarification and support of those individuals involved will be made.

In those cases where guidelines have been broken, the participants will be informed of the current consequences of this and any future consequences arising from the continuation of the violation of guidelines.

The consequences of breaking guidelines will be decided by the collective judgment of the Management Team, except with regard to those situations involving legal issues or falling under the safeguarding policy, which remain absolute.

In cases where the Management Team cannot decide on consequences, then the final decision rests with the Event Manager.

After the initial meeting of the Management Team, the person(s) concerned may be invited to join the process. Another person who is not a member of the Management Team, in consultation with the participant, should be available to support that participant during the process if the participant wishes. The purpose of this meeting with the participant is to explore the possibilities identified and to arrive at an agreed way forward.

Where the meeting concludes that it is appropriate to refer matters of concern to outside agencies, this is to be done with respect for the sensitive and personal nature of the concern. Whenever possible such a referral will be made by the participant themselves or with their agreement. Where it is not possible to achieve this, the Event Manager or another person chosen at the meeting will refer the matter to the appropriate agency, keeping the participant as fully informed as possible.

After the matter has been dealt with, in all cases where long term sanctions are considered, where a participant has been required to leave the event, or there has been a legal or safeguarding issue, the Event Manager will forward the minutes to the board. At the earliest convenience the board will review what happened. They will re-examine the guidelines and any agreement which has been reached with the participant(s) concerned (see also next section on behaviour contracts). Any agreement with the participant(s) concerned can be amended as necessary, and any suggestions for the Autscope guidelines can be recorded by the secretary.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

Serious problems should be recorded in a location which ensures the information will be readily available both to the current board and to the Registrar in future years, allowing the board adequate time to consider how and whether an individual might be supported to attend Autscope successfully. Such records kept about individual participants should be reviewed by the board annually and there should be a presumption in favour of their deletion unless the board agrees it is necessary to retain the record.

## **Sanctions**

### Behaviour contracts

Short term behaviour contracts may be required by the Management Team in order to allow a participant to remain at the event. These will have a maximum effective period of the remainder of the current event.

In cases where an individual participant has engaged in serious and/or repeated infringements at one or more Autscope events, the outcome of the behaviour meeting may be that they ask a person to agree to a behaviour contract applying to future Autscope events. Behaviour contracts should be reviewed by the board when they review the incident. Sanctions and behaviour contracts affecting more than the current Autscope event may only be imposed through a decision of the board.

### Leaving Autscope

If it proves impossible for the person to remain at an Autscope event, the leave-taking is to be handled sensitively and with regard to the vulnerability of the person concerned.

When it is not possible for a person to travel safely alone, they will be entrusted to the care of a person the persons at the meeting considers appropriate (whenever possible, a person familiar to and acceptable to the participant) or to the relevant statutory agency or other professional. When an Autscope participant leaves, for whatever reason, this represents a loss to the entire organisation. Provision is to be made for explaining the person's departure to other participants if necessary as far as confidentiality permits. Other Autscope participants may need to be assured that this event is exceptional and that they are safe and not at risk of removal.

Any incident requiring a participant to leave the event should be reported to the board.

