

The Snowflake Trust Limited

Operating The Snowflake Winter Night Shelter

VIOLENCE POLICY

(to be read in conjunction with the Warning & Banning Policy & Police Protocol)

1. Principles

- Every effort will be made to diffuse any potentially violent situation
- Physical violence will not be tolerated amongst Guests or Volunteers
- Implied violence and threatening behaviour will not be tolerated
- The use or threatened use of any weapon will not be tolerated

2. General Guidelines

- Any Guest or Volunteer who uses physical violence may be banned immediately
- Anyone who consistently provokes violence may be banned
- Anyone who consistently threatens or implies violence may be banned

NOTE: Banning is a last resort for Guests who exhibit continuous violent or harmful behaviour.

3. When a violent behaviour has taken place:

- The Shift Leader will make an appropriate entry in the log book, including details of the incident and those involved, and notify the Project Manager immediately
- If the incident is deemed unmanageable, the Shift Leader may decide whether or not a person is asked to leave. If the situation and time permits, reference should first be made to the Project Manager who will proceed in accordance with the Warning & Banning Policy (see separate document)
- The Shift Leader or, if appropriate, the Project Manager, will be initially responsible for talking to any Volunteer involved in the incident.

4. The Police may be called in the following instances:

- If anyone is being threatening/violent with a weapon or is seen to be in possession of a weapon
- If there is a multiple fight which cannot be contained
- If anyone refuses to accept a ban, refuses to leave when asked and/or is persistently returning to the shelter seeking admission

- Any situation where the Volunteers feel unable to contain the situation.

5. Role of Volunteers

- Volunteers are encouraged to de-escalate any potential problems provided they feel confident and safe to do so. Volunteers should not put themselves at risk of harm. If circumstances permit, ask another Volunteer to observe the situation while reference is made to the Shift Leader or, if possible, the Project Manager.
- If you see another Volunteer in a situation which might escalate, try to inform the Shift Leader or, if possible, the Project manager, before trying to offer assistance. Volunteers should be sensitive to the fact that joining heated discussions can be unhelpful, especially if the Guest may feel that Volunteers are 'ganging up' on them.
- If any Volunteer feels uncomfortable or unsafe then it is better for them to remove themselves from the situation and then inform the Shift Leader or, if available and appropriate, the Project Manager.

6. Counselling

- This may be offered to Staff or Volunteers after any serious incident.

7. Weapons

- If a Volunteer sees a weapon at any time, the Shift Leader and, if possible, the Project Manager, should be informed immediately and the Police informed - see the accompanying 'Police Protocol'
- Any weapon found will be confiscated.

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