

Do the Right Thing

Ethical Guidelines

For

Ballymun Regional Youth Resource

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Contents

Introduction	About ethics and ethics in organisations	Page xx
Section 1	Ethical guidelines for BRYR's youth work	Page 11
Section 2	Ethical guidelines for how BRYR works internally	Page 33
Section 3	Ethical guidelines for how BRYR works with parents and guardians	Page 56
Section 4	Ethical guidelines for BRYR's work with other individuals and organisations who can affect the welfare and development of young people	Page 68

Introduction

About ethics and ethics in organisations

What are *ethics*?

To understand *ethics* we need to understand *values*. Values are what are important to us in our lives. For most of us, there are many values, but some are more important to us than others. For example, we may value “having fun,” but “having friends” may be more important. Having money may be very valuable, but having our health may be more so.

This is what we call a *system of values*. Our values are not all of the same importance. We hold some things more dearly than others.

Ask yourself: what would you do if you won a million euros? Who would you share your wealth with? Friends, Family, the Poor, nobody? What would you do with the money you keep? Spend it all on luxuries like cars and holidays? Leave your job and live off the interest? Try to keep your life more or less as it is?

All these choices are determined by what you value: your system of values.

Ethics are how we practise our values every day. We may say we value friends over fun, but if we constantly make jokes that put our friends down, that suggests something different.

We know what we *really* value by what we *actually* do.

Sometimes though, we find ourselves in situations where we are not sure what to do. I may say I would never break a confidence. But what if I am told in confidence that my friend’s partner is cheating on them? I value confidences, but I also value loyalty to friends. Or I may say I value honesty, but what if I find a hundred Euro note on the floor of a shop, at a time when I can’t pay my rent?

These are what we call *ethical dilemmas*. In ethical dilemmas, values clash, and we find it difficult to choose which to follow in a particular situation.

We may not think about our values very often. But we all have values, and we show them in what we do and in the choices we make.

Ethics in organisations

Like people, organisations have values. And like people, organisations show their values in what they do and in the choices they make.

Take for example a local shop. It is an organisation, made up of its owners and staff, which exists to make a profit by selling goods to a local community. Such an organisation must value *profit*, because it needs to make money in order to stay open. It shows this by the prices it charges for its goods. But it may have other values. For example, it may show it values *fairness* by paying its staff a fair wage. It may show it values *the law* by strictly not selling cigarettes and alcohol to minors. It may show it values equality by making sure wheel-chair users can get into the shop and move between the aisles.

But an organisation, like an individual person, can face *ethical dilemmas*. No organisation can do everything. It must make choices within the limits of its resources, such as finance, staff and space. If our local shop for example makes a healthy profit, should it use it to increase staff wages or to spend on advertising? The staff have made a significant contribution to the profits, so fairness would suggest they should be rewarded. However, if the shop advertises, it may build on its success by bringing in new customers. If the shop expands, should the owner pay the builder ‘under the counter’?

Organisations face an additional difficulty about ethics. An individual only has their own value system to sort out. But an organisation is made up of many individuals. Different people will have different value systems. As a result, people in the same organisation may make different choices in the same situations. This is especially true as the organisation grows, and has more individuals involved and is doing many different activities. In a chain of shops for example, one shop manager may feel it is acceptable to save money by paying that builder without declaring tax. Another manager may be completely opposed to that.

An organisation needs to think about these things, especially as it gets bigger. It needs to decide what its value system is so that the individuals involved know what is acceptable and what is not. This can be difficult. It may mean that individuals will have to behave differently when working in the organisation than they would in their personal life.

This is why it is important at some stage in the life of an organisation for it to think about its value system. It is helpful to write down what its value system is, and to try to give guidelines about how these values should be practised in different situations. These guidelines are called *ethical guidelines*.

Guidelines are exactly that. They guide our behaviour. They are not strict rules which we must always keep for fear of punishment. Guidelines set standards, but we are human, and we will fail to meet standards from time to time. Having guidelines is a way of setting targets for ourselves.

How values shape an organisation

Organisations, like people, have personalities. An organisation’s personality is formed by how it answers four basic questions:

- What is our purpose?
- What do we do in the community?
- How do we organise ourselves?
- What are relationships like between us?

Answering each of these questions means making choices. A youth organisation could have any number of purposes. For example, four different youth organisations could have four different purposes:

- Org. 1. To help any young people who need help in any way we can
- Org. 2. To get every young person into education and employment
- Org.3. To stop young people causing trouble for the community
- Org. 4. To get young people involved politically

Each could do any number of activities:

- 1 could have a drop-in for young people
- 2 could organise computer skills classes
- 3 could organise activities for young people involved in anti-social behaviour
- 4 could organise political awareness classes for young people

Each could organise itself in a different way:

- 1 could have a voluntary committee of local people contracting youth counsellors
- 2 could have a manager and a staff of tutors overseen by the local education authority
- 3 could have a management committee made up of local people and Gardaí employing outreach youth workers
- 4 could have a committee of young people run the whole project

And each could have different sorts of relationships between those involved in the organisation:

- 1 could have a strongly bonded committee who do a lot of team building.
- 2 could have a business-like relationship where people only interact about the progress of students.
- 3 could have co-operative relationship, where Gardaí and local people concentrate on common interests for the good of the project.
- 4 could stress friendship, where people live and socialise almost as a commune.

The choices that an organisation makes about its purpose, its activities, its structure and its relationships are all guided by values. There will be many values involved, but there will always be values that determine the overall nature of the organisation. These values will strongly influence what choices it makes in answering each of the four questions. These values are called *core values*. These values determine the personality of the organisation.

Getting to the core of an organisation

We want to get to the core values of our organisation. But remember, values don't mean anything in themselves. We know the values of an organisation by what we see it do: the choices it makes.

David Clark has a theory of social systems that can help us here.¹ A social system is simply a group of people with something in common. It could be a city, or a family, or a group waiting for a bus. We can use it to help us think about an organisation.

Clark's theory describes social systems, or in our case organisations, as layers; a little like the layers of an onion. As we peel off the layers we go deeper into the organisation. We go beyond what we can physically see, to what we can feel, to what is at the core of the organisation: its values.

¹ Clark David, *Schools as Learning Communities*. Birmingham University, 1992

The first layer is people or what he calls *participants*. Every organisation is made up of people. But the people are not just there: they were chosen by the organisation to be involved. Whether voluntary or paid, the organisation picked *them*, not someone else, to be there. Why? What values informed that choice?

The second layer is *environment*. The organisation is in a particular place. It chooses to locate in one place or set of places. Most organisations operate at least partly in premises, a building or an office. These premises will look a certain way, will feel a certain way to those who go into them. Again there are choices involved here. Why choose to be here? Why those signs on the walls? Why that style of decoration? Why place one office in that part of the building and another one there? Again, while these might seem like trivial decisions, they all show the organisation's values in action.

The third layer Clark calls *interaction*. By this he means what we can see going on in the organisation. What can we see people doing? People will be writing reports, chatting over coffee, on the phone, leading a group, sitting in a team meeting, doing accounts. There are values governing all these activities. Why are these activities done? Why are they done in that way rather than another way? You may answer trivially, "because they have to be!" or, "because that's the way we do things!" But nothing *has* to be done and things can be done in different ways. Everything is chosen or permitted to happen because it is important. It serves some purpose. It expresses a value.

The fourth layer takes us a little deeper below the surface of the organisation. Here Clark is talking about *relationships*. What sorts of relationships exist in the organisation? Do people relate as best friends, or do they relate hardly at all, each simply doing their job in isolation. What about relationships with the public? Are they treated as customers, clients, friends, equals, nuisances, children.....? What sort of relationships is the organisation choosing that people should have?

The fifth layer is deeper still. The *morale* of the organisation talks about how people feel in it. For Clark, this is the most important layer. This is because he is concerned with community. He wants to see social systems, families, organisations, towns etc. develop as communities. The morale layer is important because this is the best level in the system at which to measure how much it actually is a community, as opposed to just a bunch of people who happen to be in the same building or town. He looks for three key feelings, or senses.

- *A sense of significance*. Do people feel that they matter? Do they feel that their voice is heard? If they weren't there, would they be missed? Is their contribution encouraged and valued?
- *A sense of solidarity*. Do people feel they all belong to the one thing? Do they share common goals with the others, or is it about different people all going their own way and doing their own thing? Do they belong together?
- *A sense of security*. Do people feel safe? Can they be themselves without fear of being assaulted, bullied or put down?

Again, the organisation is making choices here. For example, do we make decisions by everybody having a say? Or do we expect the top management to decide everything? Do we wait until everyone agrees on something even if it takes months,

or do we consult once and then let management decide? How do we deal with people who disagree with the organisation? Do we encourage criticism and people speaking their minds about the organisation, or do we expect loyalty?

At the core of the organisation for Clark are the *core values*. These are the primary values that govern all the choices made at the outer layers.

But even deeper are what he calls *core beliefs*. These are the way the organisation understands the world. What do we think is the reality about people and about life? What is our philosophy? For example, do we believe that people are fundamentally lazy and self interested or do we believe that everyone, given encouragement can become a good citizen?

This is what Clark calls the *heart of the matter*. It is our basic philosophy of people and of life that gives us our values which in turn give us our ethics: our guidelines for the choices we make in every aspect of our organisation.

Diagram to demonstrate and reiterate the above schema

The job of this document

The job of this document is to describe the core beliefs and values of BRYR and to offer guidelines on how we practice these every day in our actions.

The layout of this document

We organise this document in four sections as defined by the four key types of people BRYR works with: young people; BRYR's staff and management²; parents and guardians, and; other adults and organisations that can affect the welfare and development of young people.

- Section 1 Ethical guidelines for BRYR's youth work**
BRYR's core beliefs and values about youth work and how these are applied in the choices we make in our work with young people.
- Section 2 Ethical guidelines for how BRYR works internally**
BRYR's core beliefs and values about what a good youth work organisation is, and how these are applied in the choices we make in our internal organisational life.
- Section 3 Ethical guidelines for how BRYR works with parents and guardians**
BRYR's core beliefs about the role of parenting and our core values when it comes to relationships and interactions with parents or guardians.
- Section 4 Ethical guidelines for BRYR's work with other individuals and organisations who can affect the welfare and development of young people**
BRYR's core beliefs and values about networking with other adults and organisations and how these are applied in the choices we make in these relationships.

In each section we'll follow a formula – using Clark's model, we'll take a walk through each layer of the organisation, from the inner to the outer layers, from core beliefs and values to participants. This comprises seven parts.

In order to make these guidelines as practical as possible in each part we will give examples of what sorts of things are ethical and unethical.

The following table summarises the layout of this document.

² Throughout this document the word "staff" is meant to include BRYR's paid and voluntary workers and "management" is meant to include executive management and the Management Committee except where otherwise specified.

Table 1

Outline of “Do the Right Thing”

	Section 1. Our youth work	Section 2. Our organisation internally	Section 3. Our work with parents/guardians	Section 4. Our work with Other individuals and organisations affecting young people
Part 1. Core beliefs				
Part 2. Core values				
Part 3. Morale				
Part 4. Relationships				
Part 5. Interactions				
Part 6. Environment				
Part 7. Participants				

Section 1

Ethical guidelines for BRYP's youth work

1.1. Core beliefs informing BRYR's Youth Work

BRYR believes that:

All young people have the potential for and the right to positive lives

We believe in the potential of young people, all young people, to live lives where they are happy in themselves, in good relationships with others, can successfully address spiritual issues and are making a positive contribution to their community. While no two young people are the same, every single one can develop to achieve this in their own unique way.

Every young person has a right to be allowed to have a life like this.

The environment of young people deeply shapes young peoples' welfare and development, and we can help shape this environment

The attainment of essential welfare needs is the basic right of all young people. It is the responsibility of adults to create an environment that ensures reasonable safety and health. The attainment of higher developmental goals requires many elements at different levels: from a strong and supportive family environment to effective community and state services; or from effective democracy to positive peer relations. All of these environmental factors influence the potential for young people to have positive lives.

We believe that our work can help shape this environment.

Constructive relationships with young people are at the heart of youth well-being and development

We believe that young people have the power within themselves to live positive lives. But sometimes they need help.

We believe that by seeking a relationship that is constructively challenging, that offers respect and support, adults encourage a sense of confidence in young people and encourage more capacity to solve their own problems. This is true even if they have had serious knocks in their lives.

We believe that by encouraging similar constructive relationships between young people themselves the same goals can be reached.

The most effective way to assist young people is to resource them in their development

We call ourselves Ballymun Regional Youth *Resource*. This is because we believe being a resource to young people is the most useful way we can help them in their development. A resource is something that is useful to you, which you can use as and when you need it. We believe it doesn't help young people to have 'help' imposed on them. At the end of the day, young people will only develop through their own efforts. We see ourselves as a resource they can use in this development.

1.2. Core Values for the work of BRYR with young people

The basic welfare of young people

Basic welfare refers to essential safety and health needs. A fundamental value for BRYR is young people's basic welfare. This means two things.

- That the welfare of young people is *protected*. Nothing we do or fail to do should endanger the existing welfare of young people. Child protection is a primary value for us.
- That the welfare of young people is *enhanced*. What we do should, at the end of the day, intend to improve the welfare of young people.

We should be able to show how every decision we take will either protect or enhance the welfare of young people.

The development of young people

This goes beyond basic welfare. Youth development means the process by which young people grow and become people who are happy in themselves, in good relationships with others and are making a positive contribution to their community

BRYR defines 9 components of development:

- Health. Improved physical and mental health. This includes coping with disabilities or poor health.
- Education. All areas of cognitive development – knowledge acquisition and the capacity to apply or use knowledge.
- Identity. A sense of self as a separate and valuable human being. It implies a process of recognising, understanding and affirming oneself.
- Family and Social Relations. The ability to make friends and get on with people.
- Social Presentation. An understanding of the way in which one's appearance and behaviour are perceived by the outside world.
- Emotional and Behavioural Development. The appropriateness of responses, feelings and actions.
- Self-Care Skills. The practical and emotional competencies needed to acquire reasonable independence in adulthood.
- Spiritual and Moral Wellbeing. The capacity and opportunity to develop personal values, including spiritual or moral values.
- Active Citizenship. Having a critical involvement in both their own and their community's life

BRYR values development. What we choose to do beyond resourcing basic welfare should be about addressing at least some of the above components youth development.

Youth work as an effective means to youth welfare and development

We adopt a youth work approach to youth welfare and development. We value the effectiveness of the key principles of youth work – voluntarism, constructive relationships, and resourcing young people - in achieving youth welfare and development.

Professionalism in our work with young people

A professional is somebody who is makes their living from a particular line of work. A professional footballer for example, is someone who plays football as their job, rather than an amateur footballer, who plays when they can alongside their regular job. However, when we talk about BRYR valuing professionalism, we mean the *attitude* towards working with young people that we value. We value an attitude of professionalism. What do we mean by this?

There are three parts to a professional attitude.

- Competence. This means that staff are *actually able* to do the job. They have the skills and knowledge they need. They understand what the job is. They know the difference between what a youth worker does and what a social worker or a parent or a best friend does.
- Confidence. This means that they *feel able* to do the job. They have enough support, training and direction for them to know that they can do the job well.
- Commitment. This means that staff *want* to do the job. They show this by working hard. They work hard because they really and genuinely want to help the young people of Ballymun.

Integrity in our work – being role models

We are aware that we can influence young people, not only for better, but also for worse. Within BRYR we want to be positive role models for young people. This is expressed in three ways.

The way we behave as individuals

In BRYR we are aware that because we work with young people we have to think about how we behave in our own lives. BRYR staff cannot challenge young people about drug misuse or respect for the law, if we ourselves are misusing drugs or breaking the law.

The way we behave towards the young people

We believe that the best way to influence the behaviour of young people is in how we treat them. We have an obligation to treat each young person with respect if we expect them to behave respectfully towards us and others.

The way we behave towards each other

Supporting and respecting each other as colleagues in BRYR is not only good for ourselves, but it influences the young people we work with too. We commit to behave respectfully towards each other at all times, but especially when young people are present.

A positive attitude towards young people

We believe that all young people have the potential to lead lives where they are content, enjoy positive relationships, and contribute to their community. Because we believe this, we value a positive attitude towards young people. We like them. We believe in them. We challenge the tendency in many areas of society to label young people negatively, especially those from particular areas and backgrounds.

While we may challenge bad behaviour, we don't condemn or write off any young person.

1.3 The experience of young people when they are in contact with BRYR (Morale)

Clark described the feelings that people should experience when they are part of a community. We want young people to experience these feelings in their interaction with us.

The sense of significance young people should have in BRYR

When a young person is in contact with BRYR, they should feel that they matter. They should be noticed, not just as one of a crowd, but as an individual also. Their own particular needs should be of interest to BRYR. It should matter if they are not there. In so far as they can, they should have a voice in BRYR. They should have an opportunity to influence what work the organisation does with them and how it does that work. When appropriate, they should be invited and encouraged to participate in the wider life of BRYR such as its policy making, its management, or its advocacy work.

The sense of solidarity young people should have with BRYR

In so far as possible, a young person should be aware of the whole of BRYR. Their contact with or knowledge of the organisation should not be limited to the one youth worker or the one activity. They should feel that their ambitions for themselves, their peers and their community are connected to the ambitions of BRYR. They should feel common cause with the organisation.

The sense of security young people should have in BRYR

Young people should feel comfortable and relaxed in BRYR. Though they may at times be challenged by the organisation, they should never feel threatened. They should never feel in harm's way while involved in BRYR activities. There should be no question of them feeling they may be assaulted, bullied or put down.

These are our core beliefs and values and our ambitions for how young people will experience interacting with us. When you think about these core values for our youth work, it explains why we choose to do what we do with young people and our youth workers in BRYR. Because we value *relationship* and *development*, we have programmes like outreach, the arts and clubs. Because we value *professionalism*, we have staff supervision. Because we value integrity, we have an ethics guidelines document!

We now need to put down guidelines on how these aspirations can be practised in our day to day work; our ethical guidelines.

Continuing to follow the Clark model, we move out from the core of our organisation's youth work into what you see us do everyday. We build relationships through various activities, in different places with the young people of Ballymun. Here are the guidelines that govern how we do all that.

1.4 Ethical guidelines for our relationships with young people

We have already said that building relationship with young people is a key way to help them grow positively. Relationships with your people are key to BRYR's work.

Here is what we value in our relationships with young people.

- Conviviality. This means that relationships are a positive experience, based on people actually respecting each other and feeling comfortable in each others' company.
- Freedom. Young people choose freely to have a relationship with BRYR staff.
- Informality. Relationships are informal, where people are relaxed and can be themselves. Young people are not required, for example to dress a certain way or call BRYR staff by formal names, as in a school setting.
- Supportiveness. Relationships are supportive and encouraging of young people. When in a relationship with BRYR staff, the young person is often praised and their confidence enhanced.
- Mentoring. The BRYR person relates to the young person as a mentor. They are being a good role model and giving good advice and encouragement.
- Challenge. The BRYR person is clear about what behaviour is and is not acceptable.
- Fairness. The BRYR person treats young people with fairness. They are honest in their dealings with them, and do not exercise favouritism.
- Boundaries. Relationships are kept within strict youth work boundaries.

We will now outline what each of these characteristics suggests would be ethical and what would be unethical in our relationships with young people.

Ethical and unethical behaviour in our relationships with young people

Conviviality

Ethical behaviour

BRYR ensures staff that work face to face with young people are able to relate to them confidently. They are able to hold conversations with young people in a way that makes the young people feel at ease. BRYR ensures that staff have a natural disposition to liking young people and to enjoying their company.

Staff show a genuine interest in young people by listening to them and giving them time.

Unethical behaviour

Staff are inexperienced with young people or show little interest in or ability to be relaxed in their company.

Staff behave in ways toward young people that make them feel uneasy in their company. For example

- Talking over their heads; using language that young people could not understand.
- Cutting them short without explanation.
- Talking down to them; preaching at them in a judgemental, authoritarian tone.
- Using aggressive or abusive language or behaviour towards them.
- Making fun of them in front of others so they feel uncomfortable.

Freedom

Ethical behaviour

Staff are clear to young people about who they are, what their role is, and what they are doing interacting with the young people.

Staff work out with young people what is expected by them and the young people in their activities together.

Staff indicate to young people that that they are always free to opt out of activities and remind them of any consequences there might be as a result of their dropping out. Such consequences are reasonable and measured. For example, the young person cannot go on the group's outing if they don't attend the group all term.

Unethical behaviour

Staff coerce young people into participating in BRYR activities.

Staff pressurise young people to adopt their personal views.

Staff entice young people to participate in inappropriate ways, such as offering financial inducements for them to attend.

Staff intrude on young people in their homes or otherwise outside of designated BRYR activities.

Informality

Ethical behaviour

Staff work to earn respect by being open to young people and showing them care and support.

Staff work to create an environment for their activities that is informal. They dress casually and respectfully and speak to young people in a respectful but ordinary language. They arrange a room for group activities in an informal way, such as putting chairs in a circle or using sofas.

Staff are conscious of formal environments such as classrooms which some young people have found difficult in the past. They work to create an atmosphere that does not evoke such feelings.

Unethical behaviour

Staff try to insist on their authority being respected by enforcing rules and formalities.

Supportiveness

Ethical behaviour

BRYR engages staff that can understand and empathise with young people in Ballymun.

Staff show understanding of the challenges young people experience.

Staff engage in actively listening to young people, especially when they are in need of support.

Staff look for ways within the bounds of youth work to find support for young people who need it.

Unethical behaviour

Staff remain indifferent to or aloof from the difficulties of young people.

Staff are judgemental of young people, blaming them for the problems they face.

Staff promise support but then fail to follow through on promises made.

Mentoring

Ethical behaviour

Staff are conscious of the influence they can have over young people. They use this influence to be positive role models for young people.

Staff take an active interest in the ambitions and hopes of young people.

Staff take opportunities to offer advice and guidance to young people as they arise.

Staff work hard to be well informed, so as to ensure the quality of their advice and information dissemination.

Unethical behaviour

Staff behave in ways that contradict how they say they want young people to behave, such as boasting about being drunk, or telling racist jokes in their company.

Staff take no interest in the future possibilities for the young people they work with.

Staff belittle or undermine young peoples' aspirations.

Challenging

Ethical behaviour

Staff work hard to constructively challenge young people about attitudes or behaviour that is harmful to themselves or others. They work to challenge this behaviour in ways that are likely to be accepted by the young person.

Staff keep clear ground rules about what is and is not acceptable behaviour by young people in the course of BRYR activities.

Unethical behaviour

Staff collude in destructive behaviour and attitudes by young people. They do this either by encouraging such behaviour, or by accepting it without response.

Fairness

Ethical behaviour

Staff ensure that all young people are treated equally in BRYR. All young people should have the same access to BRYR staff and resources depending on their needs and aspirations.

Staff behave fairly when it comes to themselves, being prepared to admit their own mistakes.

Unethical behaviour

Staff give more time or resources to some young people because they like them more or they find them less challenging to work with. Decisions are made on the basis of favouritism.

Staff insist that young people agree with them, even if everyone, even themselves, know they are wrong.

Boundaries

Ethical behaviour

Staff are clear with themselves about what their role is with young people.

Staff are clear with young people about what their role is.

Staff distinguish between their working life as BRYR workers and their personal lives.

Staff distinguish their role from that of other roles that are concerned with young people, such as parents, social workers or counsellors. They work with colleagues to refer young people on as necessary.

Staff distinguish between a professional friendly interaction with young people and a personal friendship.

Unethical behaviour

Staff interact with young people in their own personal space and time. They, for example, have young people into their house, or intentionally interact with them as workers while not at work.

Staff develop personal relationships with young people beyond the youth work role.

Staff take on the role of other professionals such as social workers or counsellors.

1.5 Ethical guidelines for our interactions with young people

While building relationships with young people is very important in BRYR, there is a purpose to these relationships. We work at building relationships so that we can ensure a young person's welfare and resource their development. Interaction means what we actually do with young people; our activities. BRYR engages with young people in a whole range of activities. Our work includes outreach, arts, youth club activities, trips, mentoring, giving advice, referring to other services and much more.

In all of this we are making choices. We choose to do one set of activities rather than another. These choices are guided by our values, by what is important to us in our youth work. We take a certain approach to these activities too. There are many ways to go about organising a youth club or a trip abroad with young people. The way we do it should reflect what we value in youth work.

Below are the values which guide our interactions with young people.

- **Intention.** What we do, we do for a reason. That reason is about the welfare and development of young people. We should be able to explain why we are doing any activity, no matter how small, with young people, by how we expect it to resource the welfare or development of young people.
- **Responsiveness and flexibility.** We should have the capacity to respond to the needs and appropriate wishes of young people. Our plans and modus operandi should incorporate the capacity to be flexible in response to the needs and participation of young people.
- **Excellence.** What we do, we do to a high standard. We expect our interactions with young people to be models of best practice. We are committed to improvement through reflection on our work, accessing training and learning from our mistakes.
- **Education and information.** We value interactions that are educational and informative for young people. Interactions can be educational in terms of the transfer of new skills or pieces of information to a young person, or in facilitating their growth in awareness of themselves and the world they are part of.
- **Facilitation.** We value an approach to activities that is facilitative. This means we provide opportunities for young people to grow and develop and invite them to participate. We are not forcing them to follow any prescribed path, but working to enable them to choose for themselves their own way of development.
- **Health and safety.** All of our activities are organised so as to ensure the health and safety of all concerned, young people and our own staff and volunteers.
- **Child protection.** All our interactions are carried out in full awareness of the need for child protection.

Ethical and unethical behaviour in our interactions with young people

Intention

Ethical behaviour

The work is well planned, with clear objectives for each piece of work.

Work is documented appropriately with proper records being kept and reporting mechanisms adhered to.

BRYR collaborates effectively with all relevant statutory and community organisations, as well as parents and guardians, in the interests of a young person's welfare and development.

Development or support plans for individual young people are devised as appropriate by BRYR (possibly in collaboration with parents/guardians or other concerned organisations).

Overall strategy for its youth work is considered by BRYR from time to time. Evaluation and impact assessment of work is regular and informs this strategy.

There is consistency between the overall strategy of BRYR youth work and individual pieces of work.

Unethical behaviour

Youth work is unplanned and ad-hoc in its delivery.

Individual BRYR staff act in a maverick style, working according to their own plans without reference to their colleagues or their organisation.

BRYR staff operate to different agendas with different understandings of BRYR youth-work. There is no attempt to define collectively the policy, goals and strategies for youth work as an organisation. There is no attempt to properly evaluate the work.

Responsiveness and flexibility

Ethical behaviour

Workers are alert to the emerging or changing needs of young people.

We create mechanisms such as brief evaluations of sessions or activities that encourage feedback from young participants.

We schedule space in our timetables to be able to respond to emerging needs.

If necessary we adjust our work timetable to suit the needs and capacities of young people.

Unethical behaviour

Creating a plan and carrying it through no matter what.

Creating formal procedures that mean that work is responding to "targets" or "plans" or personal desires for regularity or predictability that are out of touch with emerging youth needs.

Not listening and seeking to understand the needs of young people

Having a “that’s not my job” attitude to situations that disregards the greater good.

Excellence

Ethical behaviour

Youth workers are punctual, alert and enthusiastic in their interactions with young people.

Activities are chosen in response to the needs and interests of young people.

There is a high quality of delivery of structured programmes and responses to individual needs.

There is good communication with young people about activities about times, venues or cancellations.

Activities are adequately resourced, with proper equipment in good working order and competent staff.

Unethical behaviour

Workers are slipshod in their approach to their work, being late, unprepared tired or hung-over.

Activities are planned to suit the staff rather than the young people. Activities that interest staff are planned at times and venues that are convenient for staff rather than young people.

Activities are of poor quality, with broken or inadequate equipment being used and untrained staff running events and activities for young people.

Education and information

Ethical behaviour

Young people are given every opportunity by BRYR staff to take part in educational activities organised by BRYR or other agencies.

Staff are alert to the educational needs of young people they meet. Gaps in skills or awareness that young people need for their development or their health and safety are noted and brought to the attention of colleagues in BRYR.

BRYR devises ways of giving educational opportunities to young people who normally do not access such opportunities.

Staff development receives a high priority.

BRYR builds working relationships with educational services so that they can connect young people to educational opportunities as required.

Unethical behaviour

Staff collude with young people in deriding education and learning.

Staff give information or attempt to lead young people in learning activities when they are not competent in doing so. They pass on information of which they are unsure.

Staff make no effort to follow up on meeting educational needs they notice in young people.

BRYR makes no response to reports from staff to educational or information gaps that they are experiencing in their work.

Educational activities are only offered for those young people who are easiest to access. No attempt is made to creatively engage with young people who are alienated from educational systems.

Facilitation

Ethical behaviour

BRYR works to listen attentively and actively to young people so they can respond to their needs.

Young people are, when appropriate, involved in planning the activities in which they take part.

Feedback from young people on what BRYR is doing is invited and acted upon.

Young people are encouraged to think for themselves about their situation and resourced to find their own solutions. With due regard to health and safety, they are allowed to make their own mistakes and to learn from them.

Staff respond promptly and efficiently within reason to requests for help and advice from young people.

Unethical behaviour

Staff impose activities and programmes on young people, limiting their freedom to choose what they want to be part of.

Young people are not listened to. Their views about BRYR activities are not sought.

BRYR engages in tokenism with young people; consulting with them about activities, but then ignoring the consultation, or expecting young people to participate in decision making at levels that are beyond them.

Young people are talked down to, judged and told what they must do in their lives.

Health and safety

Ethical behaviour

Staff are familiar with and their work complies with *BRYR's Health & Safety Manual*.

Relevant staff are familiar with and their work complies with *BRYR's Outreach Youth Work Guidelines*.

Staff are trained in health and safety related skills, such as first aid, the safe organisation of activities, how to use equipment properly, fire safety etc.

Health and safety related information, such as where fire exits are, or how to safely use a machine, is given clearly and adequately.

Resources needed to ensure health and safety, such as first aid boxes, fire equipment, are provided.

Unethical behaviour

Staff are inadequately prepared to work safely with young people. They don't know basic first aid. They are unaware of dangers inherent in activities and unprepared to respond to threats to health and safety.

Staff are expected to work in dangerous situations where they may be threatened or attacked, without adequate training and support.

Staff take unnecessary risks in their work, such as taking groups of young people on a trip without adequate supervision, or going out on outreach street work alone.

Child protection

Ethical behaviour

Staff and management implement *BRYR's Child Protection Guidelines*. These include:

BRYR staff are vetted to ensure young people are not put at risk in their contact with BRYR.

All activities and contact with young people applies BRYR's Child Protection Guidelines

BRYR applies its policies for dealing with disclosure and all staff are fully aware of procedures.

Unethical behaviour

Staff use their position to abuse young people.

Staff operate outside of procedures and guidelines in responding to disclosure.

Staff are careless in regards to child protection; for example not supervising children under their care in public places.

1.6 Ethical guidelines for choosing the environment we work in

BRYR is for Ballymun and is based in Ballymun. But it carries out its work in a variety of environments throughout the community. It works in offices. It works in halls and meeting rooms. It works on the streets and in public other areas around Ballymun. BRYR also does its work in environments outside of Ballymun. Youth work can take place with young Ballymunners in places as diverse other European cities to a restaurant in Dublin City Centre.

What sort of environments we create and what sort of environments we choose to meet with young people are a reflection of what we value. Here are the values which govern the environments in which we choose to work with young people.

- Health and Safety. Any place of work, even on the street should be a safe and healthy place for both young people and staff.
- Respect for boundaries. Any place of work should be appropriate to the nature of professional youth work. The environment should not give confusing messages to young people about the role of BRYR and BRYR staff in their work with them.
- Comfortable and accessible for young people. The working environment should be a place that young people can easily get to and where they can feel welcome, relaxed and comfortable.
- Where we can influence the design, fitting, equipping or furnishing of facilities (youth centres, community centres, sports centres, parks etc.) we work towards a physical environment that meets basic welfare needs and provides the best opportunity for development. Such facilities should have the best quality possible, without becoming forbidding.
- Where we can influence the management or operation of facilities we should encourage a sense of respect and engagement with young people.
- Young people who frequently become alienated or barred from certain facilities should be a particular focus of attention. BRYR's role should be to encourage respectful and constructive engagement by both the young people and the operators of the facilities.

Ethical and Unethical behaviour regarding the environment for our youth work

Health and safety

Ethical behaviour

BRYR staff retain adequate control over the environment so that they can address any health and safety concerns in good time.

All venues are properly equipped to deal with health and safety issues, with fire escapes, fire equipment, safety notices and first aid equipment.

Particular care is taken to ensure health and safety in outreach work, where the environment is not as controlled as in other situations. Work sites should where possible be properly lit, in public view and free from hazards such as dirty needles.

Unethical behaviour

Venues are hazardous, with no adequate escape routes, fire and medical equipment and information about safety.

Environments are uncontrolled. Staff do not know in advance what the working environment is like and its suitability from a health and safety point of view.

Staff use or are expected to use public environments that are hazardous, being unlit, or littered with dirty needles or broken glass.

Respect for boundaries

Ethical behaviour

Venues used are sanctioned by BRYR for use in youth work.

Unethical behaviour

Staff use or are expected to use venues that suggest a different personal rather than professional relationships, such as staff members' homes.

Staff use venues that confuse their role with that of other professionals or organisations. For example, using the offices of a political party to hold a BRYR youth activity.

Venues exhibit inappropriate messages, such as sexually explicit posters or racist images.

Comfortable and accessible for young people

Ethical behaviour

Venues are chosen that are known and for the most part familiar to young people.

As far as possible, BRYR meets young people as close to their own "turf" as possible. Venues are as local as possible. Accessing venues outside the area is made as easy as possible, by for example providing transport or accompanying young people there. Venues are accessible and comfortable for young people with disabilities.

Venues are furnished in ways that young people are comfortable and relaxed.

Venues reflect the informal nature of BRYR youth work.

Unethical behaviour

Young people are expected to get to venues that are far away or unfamiliar to them without support.

Young people are invited to venues that are not conducive to informal youth work, such as class rooms or board rooms.

Venues chosen are inaccessible to young people because of disability.

Venues are inaccessible to young people because they are in areas in which they cannot travel safely.

The design of facilities

Ethical behaviour

BRYR advocates for the good quality, accessible facilities for young people.

BRYR contributes its experience and expertise to the design and development of facilities.

Unethical behaviour

Ignoring the huge impact of the Regeneration of Ballymun on the lives of young people.

Not sharing information, such as the Reco Business Plan, to others designing facilities.

The management of facilities

Ethical behaviour

Hiring, training and supporting front line staff such as receptionists and porters with a strong capacity to engage young people positively.

Consciously creating a welcoming environment for all young people.

Young people who frequently become alienated or barred from certain facilities should be a particular focus of attention. BRYR's role should be to encourage respectful and constructive engagement between the young people and the operators of the facilities.

For BRYR this means gearing up our work, including the acquisition of adequate resources, to accommodate young people who may exhibit challenging behaviour in our facilities.

Promoting and supporting the management of facilities not managed by BRYR for the good of young people.

Unethical behaviour

Barring young people indefinitely.

Creating an atmosphere of distrust.

Permitting bullying or dangerous behaviour.

1.7 Ethical guidelines for choosing who we work with (participants)

BRYR has a purpose and works within limited resources to achieve that purpose. As such, we make a choice about how much time and resources go to working with which young people. This choice is a reflection of what we value.

Here are the values that guide our choice of who to work with.

- Inclusion. BRYR is a resource for *all* 10 to 21 year olds in Ballymun.
- Need. BRYR target's its resources towards those whose welfare and development is most challenged due to the environment in which they live.
- Strategy. BRYR chooses who to work with in line with its strategy for developing youth work in Ballymun.

Ethical and unethical behaviour relating choosing who to work with

Inclusion

Ethical behaviour

BRYR offers a range of resources to meet the diverse needs of 10 to 21 year olds in Ballymun.

BRYR responds positively to any requests or referrals regarding any young person in Ballymun coming from young people themselves or others in Ballymun.

BRYR is proactive in engaging with young people who are unlikely to approach the organisation of their own initiative.

BRYR maintains a strong profile in the community, and promotes itself as a resource for all 10 to 21 year old young people.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR remains unresponsive to requests or referrals from young people or those concerned about them.

BRYR as an organisation or individual staff deliberately excludes working with sections of the youth population because of their gender, educational achievement, social class, address, cultural background or age (within its brief to work with 10 to 21 year olds.).

Need

Ethical behaviour

BRYR actively prioritises how it targets its resources by researching and reflecting on the presenting needs of the young people of Ballymun. BRYR gives time to reflect on these needs, analysing them and developing strategies to respond to them.

BRYR is creative in how in engages with young people who are most alienated from the community or most in need of support to achieve basic welfare needs and developmental goals.

BRYR has good working relationships with other organisations who serve young people who are most challenged in meeting their welfare and developmental needs.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR focuses on the young people who are most easy to work with and ignores or gives up on those whose behaviour is most challenging.

BRYR is unresponsive to pressing needs as they emerge among young people in Ballymun. It remains inflexible, continuing with past practices even though new situations are calling for new responses.

Strategy

Ethical behaviour

BRYR targets its resources towards young people on the basis of a considered strategy for meeting the welfare and developmental needs of all young people. See *BRYR's Strategic Plan for Working with the Young People of Ballymun, 2005* and *BRYR's Annual Reports*.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR channels its resources towards those young people who are most vocal, or in response to those who advocate work with them most vocally, simply as a short-term response to pressure, even when there are greater needs elsewhere.

BRYR targets a particular group of young people solely on the basis of funding that is available for that work.

Section 2

Ethical guidelines for how BRYR works internally

2.1 Core beliefs informing how BRYR should be as an organisation

BRYR is a people organisation. Our reason for existing is to support people, specifically young people, in our community. As mentioned in section 1, one of our values is integrity. We want our organisation to give a clear message to the community about what we value. We don't want us to be saying one thing, and doing differently in our organisation.

Gandhi once said,

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”

So the way we treat each other in BRYR should be consistent with how we want people in the community to treat each other.

Another way of saying this is that BRYR is a *community-style* organisation. That means that we think about our organisation not just as a bunch of people doing a job, but also as sort of community. Organisations like ours should be places where people feel a real sense of significance, a real sense of security and a real sense of solidarity. (See page 8).

However, that is only half the story. The purpose of BRYR is not to provide a community for ourselves, but to resource young people! We're not here to benefit ourselves, but so that young people benefit!

Clark recognises this. He speaks about two tasks people-style organisations have to balance. There is the *community task* and the *operational task*.

The *community task* is the job of creating a sense of *solidarity*, *security* and *significance* among all involved.

The *operational task* is the job the organisation exists to do. For us, this task is to resource young people in Ballymun in their welfare and development to the best of our ability.

At the end of the day, the *operational task* is the primary one. The *community task* is important only in so far as it serves the operational one.

Imagine a BRYR where the staff and volunteers are all behaving in line with community values. Everybody feels really significant because they are involved fully in every decision the organisation takes. Everyone feels really secure because nobody ever says anything to challenge anyone else. Everyone feels they belong because they spend all day in the company of the other staff, thinking about their dreams for a better world! This would be a wonderful organisation if it wasn't for young people!

On the other hand, imagine a BRYR where people are insignificant in our organisation. Only a few people make all the decisions without input from anyone else. That means the experience of most staff and volunteers is not included when we make our strategies about how to resource young people. Decisions are taken in an “ivory tower” removed from the frontline experience of our people on the ground with young people. Imagine a BRYR where everyone does their own thing as they see fit,

without reference to anyone else in the organisation. There is no solidarity, no sense of belonging to the one team. There would be chaos. People would burn out quickly. Initiatives would not be followed up on and young people would be let down. Imagine BRYR where there is no sense of direction, no leadership and no management. People would feel very insecure in their roles, not sure about what to do or how to handle difficulties. Imagine BRYR where people felt insecure because bullying and intimidation were accepted in the organisation. Staff would leave the organisation quickly, so BRYR could not build lasting relationships with young people. Young people would see how staff treat each other, and conclude that bullying, intimidation and exclusion are the way the world should be, because that is how their mentors and leaders behave.

We can see from this that if we neglect our community task, it damages our operational one. In a people organisation, the two tasks are related.

Central to successfully achieving a good balance between both tasks is good management. It is the role of management to ensure that the resources of an organisation, especially the most important resource, that of its staff, are used to best effect in achieving the organisation's aim.

BRYR's core belief then is that we should manage the development of the sense of solidarity, security and significance internally *in so far as* that serves our mission, which is to resource young people in their welfare and development.

2.2 Core values that govern BRYR the organisation

Solidarity

In BRYR we aim to create a strong sense of belonging among our staff and volunteers to the organisation. This broad heading covers a number of important things within BRYR.

- Team. Everyone in BRYR belongs primarily to a team and their BRYR work is part of teamwork with colleagues.
- Communication. We value open and effective communication within and between teams. The staff member's knowledge of what colleagues are involved in and how that connects with their own work underpins the sense of solidarity in BRYR.
- Loyalty. BRYR values a sense of loyalty to the organisation where its people have a commitment to its positive profile in the community and to represent BRYR to the best of their ability.

Security

It is important to us that our staff feel safe in terms of:

- Physical safety. Every care is taken by staff themselves, by colleagues and by the organisation to minimise or eliminate the risk of physical harm in the course of work.
- Psychological safety. A culture of affirmation and support is valued within BRYR so that people are not threatened by bullying, aggression or intimidation by others for any reason.

Significance

Staff should feel that they matter, that their experience, their work and their voice is valued and given its due credence. Some key aspects of this include:

- Recognition. Staff's work is recognised through formal procedures such as reports and putting their area of work on the agendas of meetings, and informal ways, such as enquiries by supervisors and affirmations of what they have achieved.
- Participation. Appropriate levels of participation in the organisations decision making, and its development of strategy and policy are catered for.

Good Management

The work of BRYR is all for the benefit of resourcing the development of young people. BRYR values good management so the time and resources of the organisation are best directed to this end. Key aspects of this include:

- Staff supervision. We value the proper organisation and supervision of staff so that the mission of BRYR is effectively realised.

- **Accountability.** We organise ourselves so that every person has a line of accountability which ensures their work is effectively serving the mission of BRYR.
- **Planning.** Resources are best used when there is good planning about how BRYR can most effectively fulfil its aims.
- **Financial rectitude.** Finances are treated with a sense of responsibility and accountability. Finances are used to serve the mission of BRYR and for no other reason.

Leadership

In BRYR we value leadership. Leadership involves:

- **Developing vision.** Leadership involves developing clear vision for BRYR in light of the needs of young people within Ballymun.
- **Developing strategy.** Leadership involves offering practical ways of achieving the vision of BRYR.
- **Motivation.** Leadership involves inspiring the organisation and those within it to commit to the work of resourcing young people.

Quality staff and volunteers

In BRYR, we value the people who do the work in our organisation at all levels. It is important to BRYR that staff are retained over a long period, as this allows relationships with young people to be developed effectively. This aim requires BRYR to support staff by:

- Ensuring clarity of role and direction and proper employment conditions as per *BRYR's Staff Handbook*.
- Creating supportive teams.
- Giving good supervision supports and direction
- Promoting staff development through on-the-job learning, training and staff health promotion (see *BRYR's Staff Development Guidelines*)

Praxis

Praxis means activity combined with learning. BRYR values learning. We are a learning organisation that is constantly developing our understanding and skills in relation to young people and youth work. But we do not learn in the abstract. We learn through activity. We do work, and then build in time to evaluate it and reflect on what we learn from doing it. We then bring our new insights to the work. This is what we mean by *praxis*.

2.3 The morale of BRYR the organisation

The morale we value in BRYR corresponds exactly to Clark's three Ss, solidarity, security and significance. We want staff and management to experience these feelings in their work with BRYR.

The sense of significance staff should have in BRYR

All staff should feel that they and their work matter. They should value their work intrinsically and not just for financial reward. They should be noticed and the relevance of their work should be identified and noted. Their own particular needs should be of interest to BRYR. We should encourage staff development and where there is no negative effect on the operational task BRYR should offer reasonable personal support. It should matter if they are not there. In so far as they can, staff should have a voice in BRYR. They should have an opportunity to influence what work the organisation does and how it does that work. When appropriate, they should be invited and encouraged to participate in the wider life of BRYR such as its policy making, its management, or its advocacy work.

The sense of solidarity staff should have with BRYR

In so far as possible, staff should be aware of the whole of BRYR. Their contact with or knowledge of the organisation should not be limited to certain tasks. They should feel that their ambitions for themselves are connected to the ambitions of BRYR. They should feel common cause with the organisation.

The sense of security staff should have in BRYR

Staff should feel comfortable and relaxed in BRYR. Though they may at times be challenged by the organisation, they should never feel threatened. They should never feel in harm's way while involved in BRYR activities. There should be no question of them feeling they may be assaulted, bullied or put down.

While achievement of these three aims will create an strong sense of community, all of these feelings must take account of the primacy of BRYR's operational task. We are an organisation with a purpose. We exist, not for ourselves, but to resource the welfare and development of young people.

2.4 Guidelines for our relationships within BRYR

An organisation which values having a sense of community internally must take the relationships between staff seriously. Relationships within BRYR will be characterised by the following values:

- Professionalism. We are not in BRYR to serve ourselves, but to work for the benefit of young people. Our relationships with each other are professional. That means they are clearly defined in terms of how they serve the mission of BRYR to resource young people. Our relationships are primarily working relationships.
- Supportiveness. If we are to achieve a sense of community among ourselves, we need our relationships to be supportive.
- Feedback and challenge. We value challenge in how we relate to each other. We respectfully challenge each other to be better at what we do by giving constructive feedback.
- Honesty. There is an appropriate honesty in our relationships so that each knows what the work is like for the other. As we work closely together and support each other, we need to know a certain amount about each others' experience of the work: what is not going well, what is frightening, what our needs are.
- Respectfulness. In order to maintain good working relationships, there is a basic level of respectfulness required. People need to treat each other with courtesy. We respect each other as individuals, but also as professionals, assuming basic professional competence on each other's part.

Ethical and unethical behaviour in our internal relationships

Professionalism

Ethical behaviour

Staff relate to each other primarily in function of their work for young people.

All staff are clear about their role in the organisation and that of others. They understand how various roles relate to each other.

BRYR works to enhance staff's understanding of roles within the organisation and how they relate to each other.

Unethical behaviour

Staff relationships are primarily personal friendships over and above professional ones.

Staff cover up bad professional behaviour for each other on the basis of personal friendships.

Senior staff and management take decisions on the basis of favouritism in the relationships with staff.

Staff spend working time in socialising with each other rather than using their time to work co-operatively for the benefit of young people.

Staff develop primary roles with each other that do not relate to the work of BRYR, such as counsellor/client.

Supportiveness

Ethical behaviour

There is an open recognition by all in BRYR, reinforced regularly by senior staff, that the work is emotionally demanding and that support will be routinely required.

Teams are developed as places of support, where team members are encouraged to talk openly about their experiences of the work.

Space is given to team building.

Colleagues and supervisors are attentive and responsive to the needs and struggles of staff in the work.

BRYR has clear policies and procedures for supporting staff that need support in their work, such as external role supervision or space at team meetings for checking in.

Staff take responsibility for seeking support within the organisation if they feel they need it.

Unethical behaviour

Senior staff and management promote a message that staff should be able to work in BRYR without looking for or needing support. Needing support is seen as a sign of weakness.

Support systems are not available.

Colleagues and supervisors are dismissive of staff members indicating that they need support.

Individuality is promoted as opposed to team work.

Feedback and challenge

Ethical behaviour

Staff are open to giving and receiving feedback in order to improve their effectiveness in their work.

The organisation creates opportunities for people to give each other feedback on their work.

Supervision includes offering constructive feedback to staff being supervised.

Staff offering feedback and challenge follow specific guidelines to ensure that feedback is constructive. These include.

- Feedback is offered in the context of encouragement and support.
“That was a really difficult piece of work and I think you did well considering the difficulties...”
- Feedback is specific and concrete.
“When you said to that young person that you would get them a job, maybe you were promising a little much.”
- Feedback relates to the work.
“We run the risk of letting young people down if we make promises that we can’t keep.”
- Feedback offers suggestions or includes an offer to be involved in developing suggestions.
“Perhaps we could speak to the job-club. I have a contact there.”

Unethical behaviour

Staff are unreasonably defensive when constructive feedback is offered.

Staff ignore or collude in colleagues’ poor practice without challenging it.

Feedback is given in a way that is destructive.

- Feedback is delivered without any supportive context.
“You stupid thick! What do you think you were doing?”
- Feedback is general.
“You are *so* unprofessional as a worker.”
- Feedback criticises the person rather than the work.
“You can’t be very intelligent.”
- Feedback makes no effort to help with the situation.
“Just get it sorted out.”

Honesty

Ethical behaviour

Staff are open in an appropriate way about how they are experiencing their work, such as in the teams or with their supervisor.

Staff are honest with each other about difficulties they are having working together that are affecting their work.

Staff are truthful with those to whom they are accountable.

Management and senior staff are honest with staff in relation to decisions that affect them.

Unethical behaviour

Staff conceal difficulties from team colleagues or supervisors to the detriment of their work.

Staff don't address team difficulties that are affecting their work directly with those involved, or they talk about these difficulties with others in gossip.

Staff conceal or misrepresent facts to those to whom they are accountable.

Management or senior staff mislead staff in relation to decisions that affect them.

Respectfulness

Ethical behaviour

Staff maintain a level of courtesy in their dealings with other staff.

Staff err on the side of caution in relation to making comments or jokes that may be reasonably thought to offend colleagues.

Staff are especially conscious of modelling respectfulness toward each other when in the presence of young people.

Unethical behaviour

Staff are rude and abusive toward each other.

Staff are casual and careless in making remarks and jokes that may offend colleagues.

Staff try to impress young people by acting disrespectfully toward colleagues or by putting them down or gossiping about them with young people.

Staff take an over legalistic approach to relationships among themselves. They watch each others behaviour closely for anything that could be construed as offensive. Staff create an over-sanitised atmosphere of fear and restriction, where humour or casual banter are treated with suspicion.

2.5 Ethical Guidelines for the interactions between staff within BRYR

There is a whole range of internal activity within BRYR. A large organisation like ours does not function without all sorts of meetings, documentation and communications internally. Here are some of the key values that govern our internal activities.

Team

BRYR is a team-based organisation. It recognises that the quality of its work depends much on its being carried out by staff working as part of teams, rather than as individuals operating independently. All staff belong to teams. They almost always do their youth-work, facility management or administration in teams, and they develop plans and take important work-related decisions in teams.

Boundaries

Staff interactions always take place in the context of boundaries. Staff relate to each other out of their roles within BRYR, as outreach workers, youth workers, managers, administrators or whatever. They do not act out of roles that belong to others in the organisation. A youth worker, for example would not take decisions that properly belong to a manager.

Nor do they displace their roles with others that are not related to their work in BRYR. For example, a youth worker would not take up the role of counsellor with another youth worker.

Communication

Much of the activity within BRYR will relate to good communication. For the organisation to operate as one body, instead of a lot of unrelated initiatives, communication is very important.

Formal communication

BRYR needs to maintain clear procedures for passing information, insights and proposals relating to the work within and between different parts of the organisation. These procedures include reporting meetings, keeping items on agendas of team meetings, report writing and keeping records

Informal communication

A spirit of open and easy communication between colleagues is important to BRYR. This applies in many different scenarios, from communicating through non-verbal signals to a co-facilitator of a youth group about how to handle a situation, to stopping a staff member from another team in a corridor to ask advice on how to work with a particular young person.

Policy and strategy development

As mentioned before, BRYR values *praxis*, the policy of learning from our activity. This suggests that we interact around developing policy and strategy for our organisation's work by reflecting on our experience and responding to it. BRYR values taking the time to think about what we are doing together, and make conscious

choices about how to direct our resources. Much of BRYR's work is organised around three terms (Sept – Dec, Jan – May, June – August), and specific time is allocated to reporting and planning according to this cycle.

Participation

BRYR values the appropriate participation of staff in the life of the organisation. This is crucial to building the sense of significance that we seek in our organisation. However, participation must be appropriate to the role of the staff person involved. David Wilcox identifies the following levels of participation.

- Giving Information. This is the most basic form of participation; knowing what is happening. A manager decides on a particular system for requesting a budget, and simply lets everyone know.
- Consultation. You offer a number of options and listen to the feedback you get. The supervisor asks staff when they would like to take their summer holidays and then posts the timetable of holidays on the staff notice board.
- Deciding together. You encourage others to provide some additional ideas and options, and join in deciding the best way forward. The team leader facilitates a discussion about how to respond to a particular young person and the team reaches a consensus.
- Acting together. You create a consensus about what should be done, and then join in doing it. The team leader plans an education programme with the team and joins in delivering it with young people.
- Supporting the initiatives of staff. You help others do what they want within a framework of their role. The team members come to the team leader with a proposed initiative and are given permission to get on with it, reporting back at intervals.

The challenge is to get the balance between under and over participation. If a staff member is expected to deliver a piece of work, they can argue reasonably to they should be involved in deciding how it will be done. On the other hand, everybody does not have to be involved in deciding who to order the paper clips from.

Dialogue

BRYR is made up of a diverse staff. Within our organisation we have a gender mix, a range of age groups, cultural diversity, a mix of people from different socio-economic backgrounds and locals and non-locals. This mix throws up a richness of experience and talent, but also a healthy tension. People will have different perspectives, styles of work and sometimes different values.

In our interactions we value dialogue. Dialogue is a co-operative search for the best way of doing things or seeing things. In dialogue, people hold their convictions a little less tightly and actively listen to the other perspective. The local Ballymunner on the staff may have insight on the sub-culture of young people of a particular age. The person who grew up in a middle class area may need to understand this a bit better. But the Ballymunner may also need to re-evaluate local cultural norms that are harmful or disrespectful.

We value our diversity and want to get the most from it. That means we need to promote dialogue between colleagues, within teams and among the staff as a collective.

Conflict management

Given the intensity of the work, and the size and diversity of the staff, conflict within BRYR is inevitable. We value managing conflict constructively. We recognise that conflicts may not always be completely resolved, but that they can be managed so that the organisation can live constructively with tensions. We see conflict as a resource to us, from which we can learn as well as a problem that can undermine us.

Ethical and Unethical behaviour relating to interactions between BRYR staff.

Team

Ethical behaviour

Individual staff see themselves as team members rather than individuals working alone.

Teams are consciously developed as places of support, challenge, information sharing and planning together.

Staff use the team as places to think out difficulties

Team leaders are conscious of the need for team maintenance and development and work to address these needs.

Team meetings happen regularly.

Team meetings run efficiently, to time and according to an appropriate agenda and set of minutes.

There is space for team members to participate in teams, contributing to shaping the agenda and contributing to discussions.

There is space for team building, through occasional facilitated team building sessions, check-ins during meetings where team members can talk about how they are in the work, and flexibility and support in dealing in the team with difficulties team members are experiencing in the work.

Unethical behaviour

Staff take decisions and initiatives on the work individually which should be brought to the team. Such decisions include:

- referring a young person to an outside service,
- giving a commitment to take on a large additional piece of work,
- acting on a difficult decision when unsure what to do,

- dealing alone with issues that have implications for child protection such as disclosure about abuse.

Staff do not attend team meetings or are consistently late.

Team meetings are conducted in unproductive ways such as straying off the agenda unnecessarily or going way over time unnecessarily.

Team meetings are unsupportive. There is no space for personal support related to the work or addressing team maintenance issues. The team is overly task focused and has no flexibility in dealing with personal support issues when they arise.

Team meetings focus on the personal support of team members to the detriment of the task of the team.

Team meetings focus on the personal support of team members in such a way that the team crosses the boundary from a professional youth work team to a personal support group.

A few team members make all or most of the contributions at team meetings. Participation is very uneven, with a number of people rarely having the opportunity to speak. The agenda is set without any input from team members.

There is bullying or intimidation within the team.

Boundaries

Ethical behaviour

Staff know their roles within BRYR and understand the boundaries of those roles.

Referral procedures between roles are clear. For example, a porter knows when and how to communicate information or a concern to youth workers.

Staff are clear on the responsibilities that go with those roles and are committed to taking those responsibilities.

Unethical behaviour

Staff exercise other roles that are not assigned to them without sanction.

Staff pass responsibility that belongs to them onto other staff without sanction.

Staff devote time to exercising roles with other staff members that do not relate to BRYR. For example, a vulnerable staff member may seek support from their supervisor in regard to personal problems. If those problems are impacting on the capacity of the person to do their work and on their team, the supervisor can offer support by giving a listening ear and perhaps some friendly advice. However, if the supervisor begins conducting regular counselling sessions with the person, they are acting outside of their role. It may be appropriate for them to refer the person to counselling.

Communication

Ethical behaviour

Communication procedures are clear and are understood by all staff.

Communication procedures are followed.

Communication procedures are evaluated with input from all involved and are changed to make them more effective as required.

There is a culture of approachability within BRYR. People feel able to approach others to ask for or to give information. This includes those in authority.

There is consistency in communication. What is said is done and not changed without further communication.

Communication is resourced. Communication systems such as telephones, computers etc are all up to the job. Adequate staff time is available for maintaining good communication through meetings and report writing.

Staff keep the costs of communications to the necessary minimum.

Staff follow *BRYR's Internet Guidelines* and rules (*BRYR Staff Handbook*), concerning safety, proper use of resources etc.

Unethical behaviour

People are not informed, consulted or otherwise involved in decisions that they need to know about in order to do their job.

There is over-communication. People are swamped with information they do not need and spend time reviewing information that is not relevant to them.

People insist on being informed about everything, including information that does not relate to their role in the organisation.

Communication is inconsistent. Information is not updated. Decisions are changed without further communication as to the changes and the reasons for them.

Time and resources needed for adequate communicating are denied. Meetings where information is shared for example are sacrificed if through pressure of time or reports on work done are not written because there are no computers available.

Policy and strategy development

Ethical behaviour

Policy and strategy thinking is practised at all levels in the organisation. Two youth workers working with a group are thinking strategically about their youth work. They are planning where they want to go with the group and how to get there. They spend time working this out away from their actual engagement with the group. Similarly,

at management level, thinking will be going on about what BRYR as a whole is trying to achieve in Ballymun and how it should go about it.

On the ground youth work primarily informs policy and strategy. The experience of young people which BRYR meets through its face-to-face engagement with them is fed to the meetings in the organisation where policy and strategy are decided.

The Management Committee is given adequate information and opportunity to enter into consideration of strategy and policy.

Unethical behaviour

There is a culture of unreflective activity in BRYR. People show up for work, do what feels right at the time, and move onto the next thing. There is no time made available for reflecting and strategizing.

There is a disconnection between policy development of the organisation as a whole and the work on the ground. This is because of poor communication systems, a reluctance to involve junior staff in policy development, or policy development being driven by other considerations, such as what work will be best funded.

Appropriate participation

Ethical behaviour

BRYR seeks opportunities to enhance the participation of all in the life of the organisation, through consultations, informal and formal, participative team meetings, and meetings of everyone in the organisation to reflect on the work together.

BRYR staff are clear on the level of participation appropriate to their role.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR restricts decision making to a few in the organisation to the extent that staff as a whole feel they have little or no input in shaping the organisation and its work.

BRYR staff slow up the decision-making processes unnecessarily by involving themselves or insisting on being involved in levels of participation that are beyond their role.

Dialogue

Ethical behaviour

There is a culture of acceptance and tolerance of difference within the organisation. Diversity is seen as a resource, rather than a problem.

Discussions about different perspectives on how to approach the work are encouraged and facilitated. These can happen informally between colleagues, at team meetings, or during special gatherings of BRYR staff.

Unethical behaviour

There is a reluctance to engage with those with different backgrounds and perspectives.

There is unaddressed discrimination or prejudice against minority views or practises within the organisation. There is an unrecognised ranking at work in the organisation. For example, the views of people with more formal education are taken more seriously. Or, the perspective of those who live locally is taken as more valuable than those who are not from Ballymun.

2.6 Guidelines for the environment in which we work

BRYR makes choices about its workplaces, the buildings, offices and meeting rooms in which our staff do their work. These choices are governed by a few simple values.

- Health and safety. Places of work are safe places to be. Staff should not be in danger of accident or injury because of the layout or organisation within the workplace.
- Resourced. The work place is properly resourced. Staff have ready access within the workplace to what they need to do their job.
- Ordered. The workplaces are laid out in ways that facilitate the work. Staff who work together for example are near each other. Activity rooms where there may be noise are away from spaces that require concentration and quiet.
- Care and proper usage of facilities. Workplaces are treated with care and respect by those that use them and work in them and are used for the purposes for which they are provided. Staff use all equipment, furniture and places of work for the purposes for which they are intended.

Ethical behaviour relating to our workplaces

Health and Safety

Ethical Behaviour

Workplaces are equipped, prepared and used in accordance with *BRYR's Health and Safety Manual*.

Workplaces are warm and comfortable, bright and cheerful environments in which to work.

Equipment, such as electrical equipment, minibuses, canoes, bikes etc, are properly fitted out and maintained so as to avoid accidents.

There are people designated for overseeing the safety of workplaces.

Unethical behaviour

Health and safety guidelines for workplaces are ignored: safety equipment is absent or not working, there are safety hazards in evidence and nobody is designated responsible for maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

Workplaces are dull and dreary, with inadequate lighting and heating.

Resourced

Ethical behaviour

Offices, meeting rooms and building are at least adequately resourced for the purposes for which they are used, from chairs to stationary to IT equipment.

Gaps in such resources are noted and requests to provide resources are promptly responded to.

There are clear lines of responsibility regarding the provision of workplace resources.

Unethical behaviour

Staff are expected to carry out their work with inadequate resources.

Reasonable requests concerning the workplace environment are not promptly met.

Ordered

Ethical behaviour

Workplaces are thoughtfully laid out so that staff have the access to facilities and colleagues that they need to do their jobs.

Workplaces are laid out so that the functions of different spaces complement each other. For example, storage rooms and activity rooms are close to each other as are administration and management offices.

Unethical behaviour

Workplaces are laid out without care and attention being given to the needs of those working in them.

The experience of staff in work places is not heard by those who have responsibility for ordering the workplaces.

Care and proper usage

Ethical behaviour

Staff treat their workplaces and those of colleagues with care.

Staff treat the equipment in workplaces with care. They use equipment for its designated purpose.

Unethical behaviour

Staff cause wilful damage through action or neglect to workplaces or equipment.

Staff misuse workplace equipment or use it for their own personal use without sanction.

2.7 Ethical guidelines for choosing who works in BRYR

BRYR's chief resource is the people who do its work, its paid staff and volunteers. The values of BRYR are reflected in who is chosen to carry out that work and how they are chosen. These are the values that guide our choices.

Diversity

BRYR values a diversity of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives in our staff. This diversity is referred to in *BRYR's Equality Statement*, and includes people of different gender, age, sexual orientation, age, religious and cultural tradition. In addition, BRYR values a mix of local Ballymun people and non-Ballymunners on its staff.

To illustrate the value of diversity, here are two types within the mix and why they are valuable to us.

- Gender mix.

The perspectives of male and females are valuable in our organisational and strategic development. It is also crucial in the face to face work with young people. We need both genders to help us to relate to both genders of young people, and role models of both genders to show young women and girls a positive image of men and young men and boys a positive image of women.

- Local, Ballymun residents and non-locals.

Local Ballymun people can relate well to their fellow Ballymun young people. They also can enhance the profile of the organisation within the area. Non-locals can bring a fresh perspective on issues relating to young people in Ballymun. Both perspectives are complementary and valued.

Competence

BRYR staff need to be competent in their job. This requires levels of experience training and personal aptitude for the role, which the staff member brings to BRYR and which is enhanced by staff development programmes within BRYR.

Confidence

Staff need a basic level of self belief that enables them to tackle their role with confidence. Their confidence must be based in their sense of their competence, rather than an exaggerated self-belief in their abilities.

Commitment

BRYR values commitment in our staff. They should believe in young people, their potential, and the potential of youth work to resource their development.

Child Protection

Child protection is a primary value for BRYR in its youth work, so the choice of staff should reflect this. Staff members must be competent in relation to child protection issues, and BRYR has a responsibility to recruit staff who do not pose any risk to the protection of young people.

Ethical behaviour guiding our choices of staff in BRYR

Diversity

Ethical behaviour

BRYR recruits a staff body that reflects diversity in terms of gender mix and a balance local and non-local staff.

BRYR mixes teams in terms of perspectives such as gender, local/non-local, culture and religion, sexual orientation and age.

BRYR draws the best resource from its diverse staff by encouraging and facilitating dialogue between staff from diverse perspectives on issues relating to the work.

BRYR strategically uses its diverse staff base to best use in face to face work with young people. For example, thought is put into whether to place two women working with a group of girls or a man and a woman, considering whether positive male role models, or comfort in discussing female specific issues is more important in a given situation.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR values one perspective generally over others; for example that of local workers over non-local, and recruits accordingly.

BRYR misses the opportunities that its diverse staff base offers by, for example, not mixing teams.

Competence

Ethical behaviour

There are clear job descriptions, job specifications and criteria used to assess staff at interview.

An assessment of competence is a key criterion in selecting staff to work in BRYR.

BRYR maintains high standards of staff development through in-service training and mentoring.

Unethical behaviour

Staff, who are unsuited for a role, are selected anyway out of favouritism or simply because nobody better is available.

There is no attempt to up-skill staff once engaged by BRYR.

Staff do not take up opportunities for in-service training.

Staff do not engage constructively in supervision processes.

Confidence

Ethical behaviour

Staff who are justifiably confident in their roles are selected to fulfil those roles.

Staff's confidence is enhanced in BRYR through positive and constructive feedback, team support and an environment of encouragement within the organisation.

Unethical behaviour

Staff are expected to fulfil roles when they feel low confidence with poor levels of support.

Staff undertake roles based on over confidence that is not matched by competence.

Staff's confidence is undermined by colleagues through over-criticism bullying or lack of access to support.

Commitment

Ethical behaviour

Staff are recruited who show a genuine interest in the welfare and development of young people.

Staff are reliable in their work, for example being punctual and following through on commitments undertaken.

Staff have access to, and engage with opportunities for refreshment in the work that will sustain commitment, such as time off, training and opportunities to move to other roles for a time.

Unethical behaviour

Staff are maintained in roles for which they have lost their appetite for whatever reason, for example, through being burnt out.

Staff take a casual attitude to their work, turning up late, not fulfilling tasks they have undertaken or taking unsanctioned time away from work.

Child Protection

Ethical behaviour

Staff are familiar with *BRYR's Child Protection Guidelines* and implement measures such as appropriate supervision levels for groups.

Management implement *BRYR's Child Protection Guidelines* such as preventative measures like staff vetting and respond appropriately to reported allegations and suspicions of abuse.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR compromises child protection by employing staff without proper background checks and taking no steps to ensure staff are familiar with and competent in practising child protection guidelines.

Staff ignore or are casual in their regard to *BRYR's Child Protection Guidelines* in their work.

Section 3

Ethical guidelines for how BRYR works with parents and guardians

3.1 Core beliefs informing our relationships with parents and guardians

BRYR recognises the unique and important role that parents or guardians play in the lives of young people. Though many factors influence the development of young people, the influence of parents or guardians usually far outweighs all others. BRYR fully recognises the rights that parent and guardians have in relation to their role with their children.

We recognise that the parenting of young people is complex. Some young people are parented by those who are not birth parents for example. A young person may be adopted, in care or under the care of a grandparent, a sibling, or another relation.

However, for all young people there is a primary guardian, a fact which BRYR must take into account in its work with that young person.

(To make it easier to read, during the remainder of Section 3 when we use the word “parent” we do so in a manner that incorporates the role of a guardian).

We have discussed in other parts of this document the importance of BRYR staff keeping boundaries in their youth work. Boundaries should be kept between the professional role of a staff member and their personal life. Boundaries should also be kept between the role of staff member as youth worker and that of other professional roles, such as a counsellor or social worker.

However, a boundary that is most important, and often challenging to keep, is that between the youth worker and the parent. This is because the role of youth worker, which BRYR describes as resourcing the welfare and development of a young person, could also be used to describe the role of parent. A social worker, a garda, a counsellor, a teacher, all focus on specific aspects of a young person’s development, as determined by their job, whereas both a parent and a youth worker are concerned with general welfare and developmental needs.

But the roles are different. The key difference is that good parenting is taking responsibility for overseeing the totality of development of a child from dependence to independence. They, of necessity take an interest in their schooling, their relationships with other family members, their behaviour, their hobbies and interests, their health, their intimate relationships, their spiritual development and so on. A youth work organisation takes responsibility for resourcing specific aspects of a young person’s development as the young person seeks it. Youth workers don’t impose themselves on aspects of development the young person does not invite them to be involved with. They have no responsibility to and so no business to.

Youth work is based on a contract of willing engagement, formal or informal, between a young person and youth workers.

Parenting is based on a relationship of responsibility of the parent for the young person.

3.2 Core values informing BRYR's attitude to parenting and guardianship

When it comes to parents, BRYR values:

- The primacy of the well-being of the young person. BRYR exists to resource young people. Their well-being is our primary concern. This value is explained on page 13. Notwithstanding the role and rights of parents there are times when the welfare of a young person is being put in danger by a parent. In such cases, in accordance with *BRYR's Child Protection Guidelines*, the need to protect the young person takes primacy over the needs and wishes of parents.
- Respect for the role and rights of parents. We value an understanding and respect for the role of parents. We acknowledge the centrality of parenting in the lives of the young people we work with.
- Boundaries. In our work with young people, we recognise the boundary between youth work and parenting. Staff are never substitute parents.
- Parental engagement. While the core of youth work takes place through a direct relationship with young people, we value and encourage constructive engagement in our work by parents.
- Parental consent. BRYR recognises that much of its work depends on the support and consent of parents for the organisation and specific aspects of our work.

3.3 The experience of parents and guardians when they are in contact with BRYR (morale)

We want parents and guardians to have a sense of significance, solidarity and security with BRYR.

The sense of significance parents and guardians should have in BRYR

Parents should feel that they can make a constructive input into BRYR at least through the connection of their own child. They should feel that their role as parents is valued by BRYR. They should have an opportunity to influence what work the organisation does and how it does that work. When appropriate, they should be invited and encouraged to participate in the work of BRYR either at a practical project level or in its wider reality such as its policy making, its management, or its advocacy work.

The sense of solidarity parents and guardians should have with BRYR

In so far as possible, parents should be aware of the whole of BRYR. Efforts should be made to ensure they are well informed and given the opportunity to engage with BRYR. They should feel that their ambitions for their children are enhanced by the ambitions of BRYR. They should feel common cause with the organisation.

The sense of security parents and guardians should have in BRYR

Parents should feel informed, comfortable and relaxed in their relations with BRYR. They should feel that their children are safe when with BRYR. Though they may at times be challenged by the organisation, they should never feel threatened.

3.4 Ethical guidelines for our relationships with parents and guardians

BRYR has relationships with many parents through its youth work. In choosing the nature of these relationships we value:

- Acknowledgement. We acknowledge the unique role of parents in regard to young people and their rights as parents. We respect that role and those rights.
- Courtesy. We behave with courtesy and politeness towards parents.
- Tolerance. We show understanding towards parents, acknowledging the challenging role they have. We resist taking a judgemental or condemnatory attitude towards them, even if we believe their parenting is damaging the welfare or development of their children.
- Focus on the young person. Our primary concern and work is with young people.
- Young person's consent and comfort regarding parental engagement. While we value and invite the involvement of parents in our work, we recognise that this involvement must be balanced by respecting the needs and desires of the young people. Young people may not want their parents involved in BRYR-led activities in which they take part. While taking due regard to the rights, both legal and moral of parents to be informed and to offer consent for their children to engage in BRYR activities, the consent and comfort of young people is our guiding value in deciding how we engage parents.
- Confidence. BRYR values the confidence of parents in our organisation and our work. We need parents to trust us in our work with their children. To this end, we value having good communication with parents about our work with their children. We believe that doing good quality youth work is the best way to build confidence in parents that their young people are in good hands.

Ethical behaviour in our relationships with parents and guardians

Acknowledgement

Ethical behaviour

We recognise the primary responsibility and rights of parents for their children.

Parental consent is acquired for activities we undertake with under-age young people.

Staff explore with young people the position of their parents vis-a-vis key issues in their lives which arise through their youth work.

Staff encourage young people to take account of their parents in issues related to their welfare and development, with due consideration for the possible direct engagement of parents in the work.

Unethical behaviour

We do not seek required parental permission in the course of their youth work.

The views of parents concerning our work are ignored.

Information about our work is not shared with parents.

Parents are excluded from engagement in our work.

Courtesy

Ethical behaviour

We speak and act with courtesy towards parents.

Staff speak with due respect about parents, especially in the company of their children.

Unethical behaviour

Staff are verbally or physically abusive towards parents.

Staff speak disrespectfully about parents in front of their children.

Staff encourage the young people to act disrespectfully towards their parents.

Tolerance

Ethical behaviour

We are open and welcoming to parents who want to engage with BRYR in relation to their children.

Staff take due account of the difficulties particular parents may be in which give rise to poor parenting.

Unethical behaviour

Staff refuse to interact with parents who want to consult with them about their children.

Staff are openly critical and judgemental of parents in front of their children.

Focus on young people

Ethical behaviour

Staff remain focused on their youth work, notwithstanding their concern for parents.

Unethical behaviour

Staff develop roles with parents, which have no relation to their work with young people.

Staff casually break confidences with young people in their relationships with their parents.

Staff allow parents to direct and control their youth work.

Young person's consent and comfort regarding parental/guardian engagement

Ethical behaviour

When engaging parents in the work of BRYR due regard is paid to the consent and comfort of their children.

Unethical behaviour

Parents are invited to attend a youth group session without the knowledge or consent of the young people.

A youth worker contacts a parent without the young person's knowledge, except where there is either a legal requirement or after due consideration with management, it is deemed appropriate to the welfare of the young person.

Confidence

Ethical behaviour

We keep parents informed about the work with their children.

We are open and receptive to inquiries from parents about BRYR's activities with their children.

Staff treat confidential information given by parents about their families with respect. Such information is only used on a need-to-know basis and where it is deemed to be in the interests of the young person.

Unethical behaviour

The work with young people is deliberately kept secret from parents and may compromise the rights of parents.

Staff behave in ways that undermine parents' confidence in BRYR such as mistreating children, compromising their health and safety or by poor quality work such as failing to properly organise activities.

3.5 Ethical guidelines for our interactions with parents

BRYR interacts with parents. Many are neighbours and friends to our staff. Some are volunteers in our organisation. Given the different but complementary roles between youth worker and parent we have to choose carefully the sort of activities with which we will engage with parents. Values guiding this choice are:

- Focus on the welfare of the young people. Our activities and interactions with parents are for the benefit of young people. We should be able to clearly connect such activities to an effective resourcing of young peoples' welfare or development.
- Complementarity. BRYR's work complement good parenting. As such if a young person can benefit from consciously working in parallel with a parent's efforts for their child, we value that co-operation. For example, a youth worker might usefully resource a guardian's efforts to encourage their child to go back to education by linking them with a contact in a training programme.
- Input into policy development of BRYR. We recognise that parents have unique insights into the lives of young people. As such we welcome opportunities for their input into our policy development.
- Teamwork. Interactions by staff with parents should always be in the context of teamwork. Individual staff should keep their supervisor and colleagues in the picture regarding such interactions.

Ethical behaviour in relation to our interactions with parents

Focus on young person

Ethical behaviour

BRYR staff are clear on how their interactions with a parent can benefit their son or daughter.

Unethical behaviour

Staff are drawn into work with parents that focuses on their developmental needs, without connecting that to their role with young people.

Staff give information to parents about their child that might lead to the young person being in danger.

Staff engage in personal friendships with parents that might compromise their work with their children.

Complementarity

Ethical behaviour

Staff who are involved in substantial work with an individual young person take account of the young person's relationship with their parents.

Staff look for opportunities within the boundaries of youth work to reinforce parents' efforts to positively facilitate their children's welfare or development.

BRYR consults with parents about what work they can most usefully do with their children either as individuals or in general.

Staff take opportunities to engage parents in complementing their youth work. For example, a youth worker mentions to a parent that their child is becoming interested in creative writing. The hope is that the parent might encourage them by taking time to read their work.

Unethical behaviour

Staff take no account of the role and influence of parents in the lives of young people when planning their work with those young people.

Policy Development

Ethical behaviour

BRYR seeks to get the input of parents in the development of the organisation and its strategy.

BRYR considers the implications of their policies for their relationships with parents. For example, if we develop a sex education programme for our youth clubs, what will parents think about that?

Unethical behaviour

BRYR gives no consideration to the perspective of parents on the policies it develops for its youth work.

Teamwork

Ethical behaviour

Consideration of whether to approach a parent about an issue with a young person is talked through in the staff member's team or with their supervisor (or child protection designated person). This is most important where the issue involves the child's protection of their health and safety.

Unethical behaviour

Staff take it on themselves to involve parents in their work especially where child protection or health and safety issues are concerned.

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3.6 Ethical guidelines for where we work with parents

The ethical guidelines for our work with parents correspond with our guidelines for our places of youth work (page 28.). Environments should be chosen taking account of health and safety both for parents and staff. Locations should also take account of boundaries, and not suggest that the relationship is other than that of a youth worker meeting a parent in relation to the work with a young person. Locations should also be comfortable and accessible for parents.

3.7 Ethical guidelines for choosing which parents and guardians we work with

BRYR is open to working with everyone who is in the parenting role with their young people. However there are some considerations which influence the level of contact we will choose to have with parents. These are:

- Effectiveness for young people. Given that resources, including staff time are limited, the extent of contact with any parent will be determined by how effective that contact is in furthering the work with their child.
- Child protection. In some cases, parents are responsible for infringing the protection of their own children through for example physically abusing a child. Where BRYR staff are aware of or suspect this, they must temper their contact with such parents in the interests of the child.
- Staff protection. In some cases, staff may be in danger of physical or other abuse by parents. BRYR has a responsibility to protect its staff by limiting contact between such parents and its staff.

Ethical behaviour in regard to which parents BRYR works with

Effectiveness

Ethical behaviour

Staff choose to work with parents where they have clear goals for the young people that can be helped by the contact with parents.

Staff politely challenge parents who make unreasonable demands on their time.

Unethical behaviour

Staff spend too much time in casual contact with parents where it is not clear how the time spent will benefit young people.

Child protection

Ethical behaviour

Staff prioritise contact with parents where that work will contribute to the protection of children. For example, (where staff safety has been considered by management and is not regarded as being compromised) a parent is encouraged to work with social workers to get their child into a safe place

BRYR does not involve parents in its organisation where there is a danger to a young person's welfare.

The leadership within BRYR carefully supervises contact between BRYR staff and parents where there are child protection concerns in their home.

Unethical behaviour

We avoid working with parents even though that work may contribute to the protection/welfare of a young person.

BRYR does not consider the implications of its contact with parents where there are child protection issues within the home.

Staff protection

Ethical behaviour

BRYR does not allow its staff to engage with parents where staff might be put in danger.

Unethical behaviour

We expose staff to risks to their safety due to inadequate risk assessment in cases of suspected or actual abuse.

Staff take initiatives on their own to contact parents where they or their colleague(s) may be put at risk.

Section 4

Ethical guidelines for BRYR's work with other individuals and organisations who can affect the welfare and development of young people

4.1 Core beliefs informing our work with others

The responsibility of BRYR to work with others

While BRYR is the largest youth work organisation in Ballymun, there are many others who are concerned with and who affect the welfare and development of 10 to 21 year olds in Ballymun. These range from local volunteer leaders and youth organisations to large statutory bodies and state departments. Some of these are directly and exclusively concerned with the needs of young Ballymunners. Others have a wider brief such as Dublin City Council, but they have the capacity to influence the environment in which young people grow up, and so influence the welfare and development of those young people.

Because we believe that the environment in which young people grow up is a key influence and determinant of their welfare and development, we believe it is incumbent on us to engage with those who shape that environment. Consequently, we believe that we must engage with those who:

- Consciously share our concern to enhance the welfare and development of young people
- Affect, by their action or inaction, the factors influencing the welfare and development of young people

In the midst of the myriad of individuals, groups and organisations that play a part in the world of young people, we believe in the distinctiveness of youth work as an approach to youth welfare and development.

The distinctiveness of youth work

BRYR is a youth work organisation. The following principles mark the distinctiveness or fundamental beliefs of youth work.

- *Seeking the young person's agenda.* Most non-youth work agencies, political parties, sports organisations, faith organisations work to an agenda which is formed by others; not the young person. School teachers, for example, have a national curriculum to implement. Gardaí work to implement the law. Youth workers' agenda is the welfare and developmental needs of the young person as defined by the young person. Youth work is responsive; it is person, not programme centred.
- *Voluntary participation of the young person.* A youth work organisation only offers to resource young people's welfare and development when they freely choose to have us in their lives. Others, teachers, social workers, Gardaí and even parents are in their lives notwithstanding their own choice. The essence of voluntarism is the belief in individual freedom and choice. It also has the major practical benefit of being a more effective way of energising and resourcing young people to tackle their own challenges and to be stronger individuals in the long run.
- *A spirit of volunteerism from adults.* Voluntary youth work activity is a concrete expression of care, concern and interest by a community towards its young people. Volunteerism embraces the essence of youth work. We believe in volunteerism, not simply as doing youth work without pay, but as the

important gift of one's concern for and interest in young people. True volunteerism is not seeking personal fulfilment alone, or seeking public recognition, or meeting personal needs through working with young people. BRYR does not seek volunteers simply to have extra bodies to do its work. It facilitates volunteerism in order to facilitate the expression of properly motivated interest in the welfare and development of young people by the community.

- *Informality.* This is the predominant style of youth work. While others may adopt this style from time to time, most relationships have a degree of formality that flows from the power relationships between them and the young person.

We believe that these principles of youth work must be represented in any work undertaken by us when we engage with others for the welfare and development of young people. We believe that it is important to promote these principles in any work with young people.

4.2 Core values guiding our working with others

Here are the core values that govern how we choose and develop such relationships:

- The welfare and developmental interests of young people are paramount. Any work with others must at the end of the day be justified in that it serves the welfare and developmental interests of young people.
- The community of Ballymun. We value our rootedness in Ballymun. The community of Ballymun should have a sense of us being their resource to young people. BRYR sees itself as a bridge between the young people of Ballymun and the wider community. It represents the community to the young people, and the young people to the community. There are two broad implications of this:
 - The need for a community representative base. BRYR's rootedness in the community gives us a responsibility to be a Ballymun community response to the needs of young people, not just a response on behalf of the staff doing the work or the agencies funding it. In this sense, BRYR is one of Ballymun's youth resources. It is an expression of concern and interest by the community of Ballymun to the young people of Ballymun.
 - Advocacy for young people. We are in a good position to understand the needs of young people through our ongoing face to face contact with them. This contact surfaces issues, many of which are not within the remit or the capacity of BRYR to address alone. We value developing relationships with the community, other agencies and networks to advocate in the best interests of young people.
- Resourcing other organisations. BRYR is committed to resourcing other organisations. BRYR exists not only as a resource to young people directly, but as a resource to other organisations who resource young people. BRYR should be seen by the community as a whole and by organisations as their resource, accessible to them in their concern for young people. BRYR should be directing its resources towards facilitating the development of other youth orientated organisations that need its support. In all of this the key principles of youth work are emphasised.
- Co-operation. BRYR is keen to co-operate with the positive work of others for the benefit of young people, by putting its resources, expertise and influence at the disposal of those who are leading such work.
- Collaboration. BRYR values opportunities to actively collaborate with others for the benefit of young people. Collaboration involves mutual learning, where each party learns from the other and respects the other's contribution to the cause of working with young people. This will often involve challenge and argument, but in the spirit of seeking to find the best way of serving the developmental needs of young people. BRYR recognises that it can learn from others, as well as recognising that others can learn from it.
- To show integrity. As the largest youth work organisation in Ballymun BRYR has a particular responsibility to model good practice as a youth work organisation.

4.3 The experience of other individuals and organisations when they are in contact with BRYR (morale)

We want other individuals and organisations to have a sense of significance, solidarity and security with BRYR.

The sense of significance other individuals and organisations should have in BRYR

All relevant parties should feel that they can make a constructive input into BRYR, while having due regard to our core beliefs and values. They should feel that their role in enhancing the welfare and development of young people is valued by BRYR. They should have an opportunity to influence what work the organisation does and how it does that work. When appropriate, they should be invited and encouraged to participate in the work of BRYR either at a practical project level or in its wider reality such as its policy making, its management, or its advocacy work.

The sense of solidarity other individuals and organisations should have with BRYR

In so far as possible, other individuals and organisations should be aware of the whole of BRYR. Efforts should be made to ensure they are well informed and given the opportunity to engage with BRYR. They should feel that their ambitions for young people are enhanced by the ambitions of BRYR. They should feel common cause with the organisation.

The sense of security other individuals and organisations should have in BRYR

Other individuals and organisations should feel informed, comfortable and relaxed or constructively challenged in their relations with BRYR. They should feel that their young people are safe when with BRYR. Though they may at times be challenged by the organisation, they should never feel threatened except insofar as their actions or inactions have a negative effect on youth welfare and development.

4.4 Ethical guidelines guiding the relationships between BRYR and others affecting youth welfare and development

The nature of the relationships that BRYR seeks to establish with others should be characterised by the following:

- Professionalism. Relationships with other organisations concerned with youth welfare and development should operate with a professional attitude. That means that each party realises and respects the role and responsibilities of each party. Each should be clear on what the job of the other is, and not pressurise it to be something it is not. BRYR, for example, should not allow itself to become subsumed into a law enforcement role while maintaining good relationships with the Gardaí.
- Respectfulness. BRYR should maintain respect for other agencies and the efforts of volunteers or other youth workers. They should have a positive and appreciative regard for the efforts of other workers and support them as and when they can. BRYR staff should not be involved in putting down other workers, especially around young people. Difficulties in relationships should be addressed in appropriate fora.
- Ease. In so far as is possible, relationships should be easy. We value good positive relationships with other individuals and organisations, where access to each other is reasonably easy and contact is friendly.
- Equality. Differences in the power relationships between organisations or individuals should be recognised. Mechanisms to ensure that the contributions of all parties are heard and equally validated must be included in partnership arrangements.
- Willingness. Out of our respect for others who make a valuable contribution to young people, and their ambitions to develop best practice in their work, we maintain a willingness to support these others wherever we can. We are positively disposed to working with others in any effective way that will help them help young people.

Ethical behaviour in regard to our relationships with other organisations

Professionalism

Ethical behaviour

We are clear among ourselves about the role of youth work with young people.

We are able to clearly explain this role and how it differs from other roles.

BRYR staff operate under sanction from BRYR and represent BRYR in their general relationships with other organisations and individuals.

We follow up on commitments and maintaining appropriate communication with individuals or workers for other organisations.

Unethical behaviour

Substituting for other professionals, such as teachers or social workers.

Initiating projects with other organisations without sanction from BRYR.

Staff present BRYR in a bad light before other organisations by criticising their colleagues or the organisation in the presence of people from other organisations.

We fail to properly honour our commitments.

Respectfulness

We treat other organisations, their workers and property and other individuals with courtesy and respect.

We are respectful of other organisations and individuals in how we talk about them in the community, especially in front of young people.

Unethical behaviour

We are rude and offensive to those in other organisations or about those organisations or staff in the community.

We disrespect the good intentions of volunteers.

Ease

Ethical behaviour

BRYR staff develop appropriate informal as well as formal contacts with staff from other organisations.

We are prepared to support expressions of interest in volunteering by inexperienced individuals.

We are welcoming and receptive of contact from staff in other organisations.

Unethical behaviour

We are unnecessarily bureaucratic and formal in our relationships with others.

Equality

Ethical behaviour

BRYR is conscious of its power in relation to other organisations with which it has relationships. It is mindful to use its power ethically, for the benefit of young people primarily and to support the work of others who wish to benefit young people.

BRYR puts in place mechanisms to ensure that partnerships are equal as necessary, such as

- clear terms of reference for meetings,
- clear and accurate minuting of decisions,
- independent chairing to ensure that there is equal participation,
- supporting capacity building of weaker organisations.

BRYR challenges situations where it is disadvantaged by more powerful organisations.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR takes advantage of less powerful organisations by bullying, rail-roading or manipulating them to go along with its agenda.

BRYR engages in tokenism, inviting others to take part in partnerships simply to make up numbers or to gain credibility for itself.

BRYR makes no serious attempt to build the capacity of weaker organisations to participate with it in networks.

BRYR allows its agenda to be dictated by more powerful groups to safeguard funding or to serve interests other than those of young people.

Willingness

Ethical behaviour

BRYR is receptive to requests from others to collaborate or co-operate with them in the interests of young people.

BRYR is proactive in offering its expertise, support and resources to others in the interests of young people.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR maintains an isolationist stance, refusing to constructively engage in collaborative or co-operative possibilities with others in the interests of young people.

BRYR takes a competitive or undermining attitude to others who also work in the interests of young people.

4.5 Ethical guidelines for our interactions with other organisations or groups

These values are what guide what activities we choose to engage in with other players with a concern for young people.

- Effectiveness. The focus of our co-operation or interaction with others is to create more effective resourcing of the welfare and developmental needs of young people. This means that if we put time and resources into such networking, there must be a tangible pay-off in terms of realising this goal on the ground.
- Pro-active response/ advocacy. We value networking activities that arise from the need to address issues we are facing with young people on the ground. Often, the resources or scope of BRYR are not adequate to address these needs fully, and a wider view must be taken. Homeless young people need not only referral to a homelessness agency, but also someone to advocate and build alliances with those who can deliver security of accommodation for them over the long term.
- Building infrastructure. BRYR recognises that young people need a range of resources to draw on throughout their youth. This requires an infrastructure of organisations, connected up and working together to respond to their needs. Systems of easy communication and referral are required between all organisations who are concerned for youth, in order to make this a reality.
- Resourcing. BRYR is committed to being a resource for other organisations who share its ethos. We value being open and accessible to these organisations for advice, practical support through sharing resources and negotiating joint initiatives for the benefit of young people.
- Leadership. Given the significance of BRYR within Ballymun and within the youth work scene more widely, BRYR values using its position to take leadership in regard to youth work. We are committed to offering the community a vision of how young people should be supported and resourced, and working closely with others to facilitate them to play their part.
- Facilitating volunteerism. Through our interactions with others, we wish to encourage and facilitate the emergence of quality volunteerism. We are especially interested in collaborating and co-operating with under-resourced voluntary groups who work for young people. We are also active in giving willing volunteers an opportunity to work within BRYR.

Ethical behaviour guiding our activities with other organisations and individuals

Effectiveness

Ethical behaviour

Networking arrangements are focused on delivering results on the ground. They involve planned objectives, delivery and measured outcomes.

Networking arrangements are demonstrably linked to resourcing the development of young people in Ballymun.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR invests or continues to invest its resources in networks that are purely talk shops for reasons such as having status or obliging friends in other organisations.

Pro-active response/advocacy

Ethical behaviour

BRYR is active in shaping the agenda of other organisations with power to respond to the needs it finds among young people on the ground.

BRYR invests in pooling its resources with others to respond to the needs of young people.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR fails to raise issues or press for responses from agencies with power to respond to needs it finds on the ground.

BRYR tries to respond to needs in ways that take it outside of its capacity and mandate, rather than by building partnerships with others.

Building infrastructure

Ethical behaviour

BRYR is actively involved in building lasting infrastructure at local and regional levels that will sustain a multi-faceted response to the needs of young people over time.

BRYR engages in thinking long term about young people in Ballymun, planning for the needs of future generations of young people.

BRYR remains in open dialogue, formal and informal with other relevant agencies on the needs of young people and how the community as a whole needs to respond.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR remains focused on short term responses to young people.

BRYR cuts its self off from other statutory and voluntary agencies, preferring to remain in isolation so as to protect itself from outside influence or scrutiny.

Resourcing

Ethical behaviour

BRYR is responsive to approaches and requests from other agencies for advice, practical help and developing partnerships in the interests of young people.

BRYR models the practice of sharing resources with other organisations in the interests of young people.

BRYR works to build its profile as a resource, not only to young people, but also to people in the community who are concerned with young people.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR is closed and unresponsive to requests for it to be a resource to other organisations or groups who need help to support young people.

Leadership

Ethical behaviour

We are clear about our vision for youth work and can articulate that vision clearly to others.

We take opportunities to facilitate others to develop their youth work expertise through offering advice and training as required.

BRYR leads by example, maintaining standards of best practice in regard to youth work which supports the vision it articulates in public. We make out guidelines and other documentation available to others.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR takes a laissez faire attitude to the way youth work and young people are seen by others.

BRYR is unresponsive to opportunities to engage is leading others towards better understandings of and engagement in youth work and young people.

BRYR undermines its own reputation and authority to lead through poor practice.

Facilitating volunteerism

Ethical behaviour

BRYR works to resource those organisations that foster volunteerism with young people.

BRYR champions high standards of volunteerism, where volunteers are working in a structured appropriate way, out of genuine concern and interest in young people.

BRYR models good practice by creating spaces within its own organisation for volunteers and giving them the support and supervision they need to exercise their volunteerism well.

BRYR fosters within its paid staff a spirit of volunteerism, where genuine concern and interest in young people is the key motivation for their involvement in youth work.

Unethical Behaviour

BRYR devalues volunteerism in its own practice or in its relationships with others.

We encourage bad practice in volunteerism where volunteers engage with young people inappropriately or out of misguided intentions without challenge.

4.6 Ethical guidelines on the environments in which we build networks

Meetings and co-operative work between organisations are done in places, and the choices about those places reflect values. This applies to meetings between staff of organisations, and places where activities with young people are being organised in partnership with other organisations.

These guidelines are the same as those for working with young people (see page 28-) or the workplace environment, (see page 51-).

4.7 Ethical guidelines for choosing who we work with

There are many agencies groups and organisations that concern themselves, wholly or partly, with young people in Ballymun. BRYR could invest much of its time in various sorts of collaboration with these. We must make choices about who we work with, and those choices are guided by the following values.

- The benefit to young people. We primarily enter partnership arrangements with others for the end result of benefiting young people in the most effective way.
- Respect for our ethos. BRYR has a specific understanding of youth work. We appreciate that other organisations may have different understandings, different roles. We don't expect them to think like us or even agree with us. But there must be a respect for our ethos and ways of working if there is to be collaboration.
- Opportunities for appropriate participation. As we saw earlier, participation (see page 45) is a complex thing. There are many levels of participation. Sometimes in collaboration, all BRYR may require is that we are consulted. Sometimes, we may need to be acting together with another party, collaborating equally in different roles. BRYR values the opportunity to identify and negotiate with the other parties an appropriate level of participation for our role in a particular activity.
- Resources. BRYR has responsibility for many resources, from building to staff time to funding. We also have responsibility to being adequate resources to bear on our work with young people. In choosing who we work with, the implications of collaboration for our use of existing resources, or for gaining extra resources is a consideration.

Ethical behaviours relating to our choices of whom we work with

The benefit to young people

Ethical behaviour

BRYR identifies other parties that can play a useful role is helping to meet specific needs of young people it identifies through its work.

BRYR is responsive to requests for support in their work where their work benefits young people and collaboration would enhance that work

BRYR takes opportunities to facilitate young peoples' participation in collaborations with others especially where they have the chance to work constructively with policy makers.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR invests its resources in collaborations with other organisations with no demonstrable benefit to young people.

BRYR refuses collaboration with others where there would be a benefit to young people solely for spurious reasons such as:

- There are interpersonal difficulties between BRYR staff and those in the other organisation.
- There is little benefit to BRYR in terms of credit or profile or increased funding.

Respect for our ethos

Ethical behaviour

BRYR is clear and can articulate clearly to others its ethos and the role of its staff in youth-work.

BRYR builds alliances, informal and/or formal with other organisations that appreciate its ethos.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR chooses to work in collaborations that require it to change its ethos or its staff to work outside of their role as youth workers.

Opportunities for appropriate participation

Ethical behaviour

BRYR is clear on what level of participation is required in any collaboration for it to benefit young people.

BRYR chooses collaborators where it has the chance of successfully negotiating its proper level of participation.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR participates with others in arrangements where it is only a token presence.

Resources

Ethical behaviour

BRYR identifies and builds relationships with agencies which will fund its work

BRYR seeks collaboration with others whose resources can augment its own work with young people. For example, if a lot of staff time is going on finding shelter for homeless young people, collaboration with another voluntary agency that will carry out that work after a simple phone call is worth while.

Unethical behaviour

BRYR seeks to meet all the needs of young people from its own resources and refuses to collaborate with others.

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