

## **Code of Conduct for Parents/Carers/Visitors connected to I AM Celebrating Autism in Greater Manchester (I AM)**

At I AM we work hard to support individuals who are autistic. We recognise the challenges that individuals and their parents/carers face and we are dedicated to trying to work with individuals and their families to help them to achieve their goals and aspirations wherever possible.

**The purpose of this code of conduct is to provide clarity about the expectations around the conduct of all parents, carers and visitors connected to our work.**

We are committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner, through an open and positive dialogue. However, we understand that everyday misunderstandings can cause frustrations and have a negative impact on our relationships. Where issues arise please contact our Centre Manager or the CEO, who will be available to discuss the issue with you and hopefully resolve it. Where issues remain unresolved, please follow I AM's complaints procedure (available on our website). On rare occasions, we may not be able to support specific needs. When this happens, we will discuss the issue with the parent/carer and signpost, if possible, to services that may be better placed to provide support. We recognise that these situations can be frustrating for parents and carers – and empathise with these frustrations. However, our priority is always to act in the best interests of all our members, not just a single individual.

This code aims to clarify the types of behaviour that will not be tolerated from anyone, and we expect parents, carers and visitors to act in accordance with this code. By “member” we mean a user of our services, whether a paid-up member or not.

### **Behaviour that will not be tolerated:**

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of I AM's normal operations
- Inappropriate behaviour on I AM's premises or attending I AM's activities elsewhere
- Using loud or offensive language or displaying temper
- Threatening in any way a member of staff, visitor, parent/carer or member of I AM
- Damaging or destroying I AM property
- Sending abusive or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communications (including via social media) to anyone within the I AM community
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory posts or comments regarding I AM or any of the members/parents/staff/Trustees of I AM on social media sites or elsewhere
- The use of physical, verbal or written aggression towards another person
- Approaching another member in order to discuss with them or chastise them because of the actions of this member towards them or their own family member





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- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on I AM premises (alcohol may be consumed only by adults and only during authorised events)
- Taking or publishing (e.g. on social media or sending via email or text message) photos or videos of other people without their permission

### **What happens if someone ignores or breaks the code?**

Should **any** of the above occur on I AM premises or in connection with I AM, we may feel it is necessary to take action by contacting the appropriate authorities or consider banning permanently the member and/or their parent, carer or visitor. Actions taken will be as follows:

- In cases where the unacceptable behaviour is considered to be a serious and potentially a criminal matter, the concerns will in the first instance be referred to the Police. This will include any or all cases of violence or threats of violence. This will also include anything that could be seen as a sign of harassment of any member of the I AM community, such as any form of insulting social media post or any form of social media cyber bullying.
- In cases where evidence suggests that behaviour would be tantamount to libel or slander, then I AM will refer the matter to its legal advisers for further action.
- In cases where the code of conduct has been broken but the breach was not libellous, slanderous or a criminal matter, then I AM will send out a formal letter to the parent/carers with an invitation to a meeting to discuss and resolve the issue.

In all cases the individual member connected to the parent/carers/visitor considered to be breaking the code will be temporarily suspended from participating in all I AM activities until the matter is resolved.

At I AM we take safeguarding issues seriously. Where we have concerns about a safeguarding matter we will follow our policy on reporting our concerns.

Thank you for abiding by this code. Together we can create a positive environment not only for I AM members but also all who work and visit I AM.

Signed:..... (by parent/carers/visitor)

Date:.....

