



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Relationships and Behaviour Regulation Policy

Rev	Date Issued	Prepared By	Approved	Comments
1.2	Feb 2021	RTL		
1.3	May 2023	RTL	June 2023	Some minor additions
1.4	June 2025	RTL	July 2025	Addition of Team Teach approach to physical intervention
Next review date: June 2027				

Mission statement:

“Excellence and Enjoyment in Education for Everyone”

1. Background

All children are different.

Even identical twins, raised in the same environment with the same parenting, exhibit unique traits that make them unique.

At Sparken Hill, we recognise and embrace these differences.

As a consequence, we treat each individual child differently according to their needs.

“If a child doesn’t learn the way we teach, we teach the way the child learns”.

However, this does not mean that we abandon common sense approaches to our behaviour regulation and relationships.

It is a primary aim of Sparken Hill Academy that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. We are a caring community, whose values are built on mutual trust and respect for all. The academy's Relationships policy is therefore designed to support the way in which all members of the school can work together in a supportive way. It aims to promote an environment in which everyone feels happy, safe and secure.



The school has a four basic golden rules, but our behaviour policy is not primarily concerned with rule enforcement.

It is a means of promoting good relationships, so that people can work together with the common purpose of helping everyone to learn. This policy supports the school community in aiming to allow everyone to work together in an effective and considerate way.

The school expects every member of the school community to behave in a considerate and respectful way towards others but particularly so to pupils in a dysregulated state.

Our policy is based on a whole school recognised understanding that:

- **Behaviour is a form of communication** of an unmet need. Therefore, to change behaviour, we must respond to the unmet need.
- **Children's behaviour cannot be fully understood in isolation**, without considering their individual influences
- Relationship-based, restorative approaches offer an evidence-based **alternative to zero-tolerance** behaviour management systems

This policy aims to help children grow in a safe and secure environment, and to become positive, responsible and increasingly independent members of the school community.

1.2 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). For example:

- experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect
- witnessing violence in the home or community
- having a family member attempt or die by suicide

Also included are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding, such as growing up in a household with:

- substance use problems
- mental health problems
- instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison

ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential. However, ACEs can be prevented.

In this school we integrate Attachment Aware and Trauma Responsive interventions into our everyday practice. From research we understand that the toxic stress involved in ACEs impacts the nervous systems of human beings. From research we know that rich relational interventions can bring about recovery so that children can function well at home, school and in their communities.

From our own experiences in serving our community, we know that a large number of pupils within our setting will be experiencing (or have experienced) significant events that could be classified as ACEs.

We will not discriminate how we relate to pupils in our care as we believe each pupil is worthy of our time energy and patience.

How we will work with our pupils who have experienced relational trauma and loss

- We will know their story.
- We will allocate a key adult.
- We will prioritise spending quality time with our pupils, being physically and emotionally present, attuned, attentive and responsive.
- We will always prioritise maintaining positive relationships with our pupils whatever other demands are going on, engaging in quality moments.
- We will intentionally use warm and open faces and body language, a varied tone of voice, humour and playfulness in order to support feelings of safety and security.
- We will be curious about why pupils do what they do, wondering aloud so that our pupils have the opportunity to be curious too.
- We will not problem solve or reassure before first really communicating that we have heard what they are trying to tell us.
- We will use the **4 Rs** (Perry's Neurosequential Model of Education) and are mindful of the order needed: **Regulate, Relate, Reason, Repair**. Also acknowledging the need to revisit stages if pupil's stress levels indicate they are not ready.

The school recognises and promotes good behaviour, as it believes that this will develop an ethos of kindness and cooperation. This policy is designed to encourage good behaviour, rather than merely deter anti-social behaviour.

At Sparken Hill Academy, we have realistic expectations and recognise that it is often appropriate to improve the management of a situation rather than be in constant search of a cure to all problems. We recognise that behaviour is communicative and often reflects on emotion or feeling. Through co-regulation of feelings, children learn to become more independent and develop self-regulation.

Our approach is grounded in the belief that we are able to develop our ability to self-regulate our emotions and behaviour.

Good behaviour and discipline in school is of paramount importance to successful teaching and learning.

'Too often we forget that discipline really means to teach, not to punish.

A disciple is a student, not a recipient of behavioural consequences.'

Dr. Dan J. Siegel

Growing up Is about making mistakes.

Even as adults, we live our daily lives making mistakes and rectifying our behaviour in future to avoid making the same

mistake again. This is what makes us responsible adults and positive members of society.

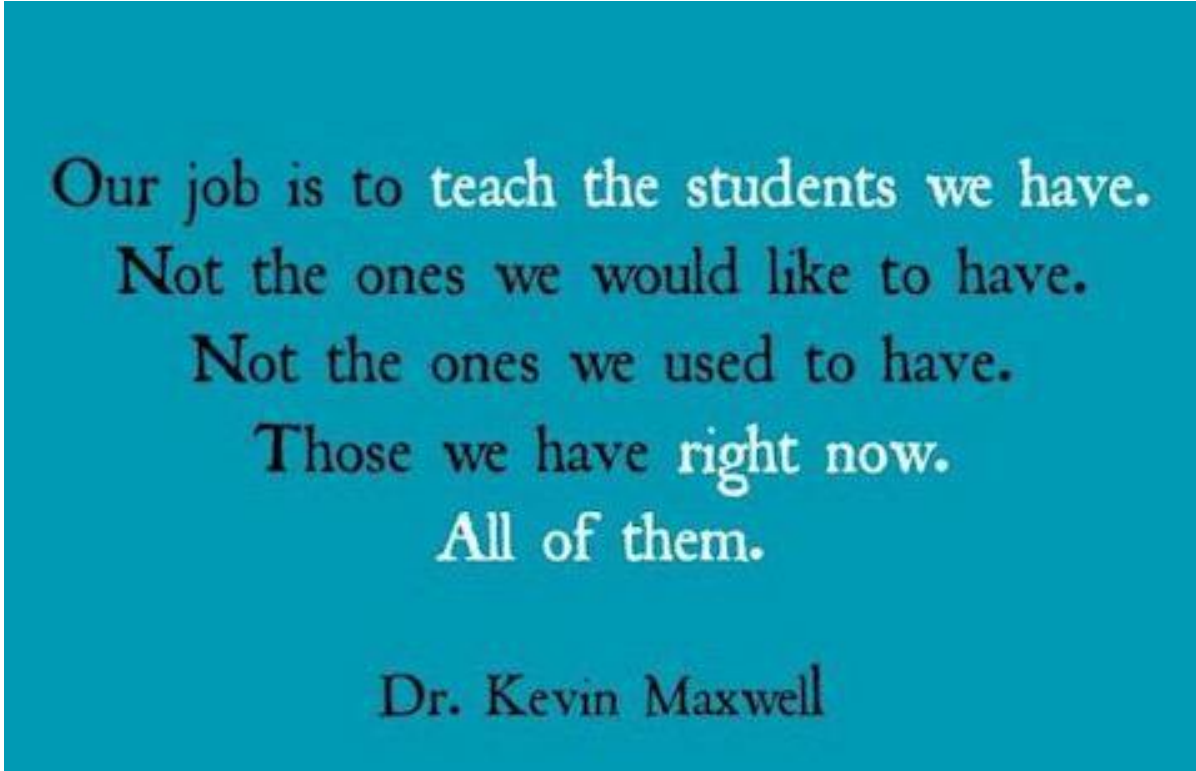
Children need the guidance of adults to help them recognise when they have made a mistake and be given the chance to rectify this safely and **learn** from it.

The Academy has adopted a positive relationships approach. Members of our Academy talk through problems that may arise in a respectful and professional, **child friendly manner**. Pupils are asked to reflect on the impact of their behaviour through discussion – where possible involving all affected pupils. Pupils may be asked to put right the impact of their behaviour.

During reflection, pupils will be encouraged to think about:

- **How has your behaviour affected others?**
- **What could you have done differently?**
- **How can you make amends/move forward?**

This does not mean that sanctions are removed entirely from our toolkit of strategies. Sometimes time is needed to enable repair and proper reflection. On occasion, repeated behaviours require an appropriate sanction both for the safety of the victim and as a way to educate pupils in understanding accepted behaviours. Details of our approach to praise and sanctions are identified in section 3.



Our job is to teach the students we have.
Not the ones we would like to have.
Not the ones we used to have.
Those we have right now.
All of them.

Dr. Kevin Maxwell

2. Policy Statement

This policy is informed by practice developed within the school over the past 20 years. It is guided by principles highlighted in Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) "Understanding Behaviour in Schools" toolkit and has included input from members of staff, BPBP behaviour partnership colleagues, representatives from our governing body, parents and carers and crucially, pupils.

2.1 Policy Scope

This policy is for all staff, pupils / students, parents and carers, governors, visitors and partner agencies working within the school and provides guidelines and procedures as to how our school supports and responds to behaviour and emotional distress.

2.2 Policy Aims and Objectives

Our school is committed to the emotional mental health and well-being of its staff, pupils / students and parents/carers. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of school life, and to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that supports the social, emotional and mental health of the whole school community.

We therefore aim to

- Develop a positive, stimulating and caring environment where each individual is valued and respected.
- Promote self-discipline and proper regard for authority among pupils.
- Develop self-esteem in individuals.
- Work towards a collective commitment (pupils, staff, parents and governors) to maintain and develop positive attitudes in school.

Our aims include supporting all pupils to:

- Function well at home, school and in their communities.
- Experience safety, security and stability in our care.
- Reduce their blocked trust.
- Increase their comfort zone.
- Increase their stress tolerance.
- Increase their self-awareness.
- Strengthen their sense of self.
- Increase their internal controls.
- Strengthen their resilience.
- Feel confident and secure enough to explore, experiment, be curious and open to learning.
- Develop a personalised tool kit that will support them to move from alarm to social engagement.
- Integrate their past experiences into a coherent narrative.

2.3 Shared Responsibilities

It is not just the role or responsibility of a few key staff for dealing with behaviour at Sparken Hill - it is a shared responsibility. The relationship-based approach applies to all relationships within the school community.

Fairness not Equality

Just as our curriculum policy does not specify “one way fits all” neither does our Relationships policy. We would rarely consider that ALL children would access a core subject area at the same level of understanding and skill as their peers. We would offer differentiation – an adapted model of delivery that is adapted to improve a particular curricular concept by adopting a carefully considered, structured, supported approach.

Such is our Relationships policy.

We do not treat all pupils equally.

The reality is that students rarely begin school at the same starting point, and in order to change the inequities created as a result of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), insecure attachment or underlying medical SEMH needs, we must put the needs of these students and their families first.

We do however, attempt to treat all pupils with Equity; in other words, all pupils receive **what they need, when they need it**, so they reach their potential by the time they leave the school.



3. Details of Our Approach

3.1 The role of all of our staff

Staff in our academy have high expectations of the children in terms of behaviour, and they strive to ensure that all children operate to the best of their ability.

Staff in our Academy have a responsibility to be “stress and shame regulators” for the pupils in our care. We see it as our responsibility to learn all about our pupils- what they have experienced, their stressors, their calmers and their resilience factors. In addition, staff will:

- Be wise with our words
- Keep our promises
- See it as more important to maintain connection with a pupil rather than proving a point or getting our point of view across.
- See it as our responsibility to remain regulated throughout the school day taking regular quality breaks and pressing the pause button occasionally to regulate ourselves.
- See it as our responsibility outside of school to look after our own relationship and regulation needs and to keep healthy in body and mind.
- Remember that everyone is doing the best they can with what they have lived through to date.
- Try really hard not to take rejection and personal insults personally as we know that some pupils have experienced betrayal and do not trust adults in the moment.
- Let others know if we are struggling so that we can engage in safe quality practice.
- Be aware of the boundaries of our skill set.
- Identify someone we trust in our work capacity to be our professional key adult to give permission to check in on us on a regular basis in order to support our self- care.



When we only look at behaviour, we stop seeing the child and only look with an intent to judge whether we need to reward or punish. When we look behind the behaviour, we see that little struggling human, our little human who needs our help with something.

Rebecca Eanes • Artist: Celeste Keller

3.2 Use of Praise

We praise and reward children for good behaviour in a variety of ways:

- Teachers congratulate children verbally;
- Teachers give children stickers
- Teachers use Rainbow / Sun / Cloud system (consistent in every class)
- House points and “dojo” points

- Each week teachers and the senior mid-day supervisor nominate children to receive “special mention” in Mentions Assembly on Friday afternoon;
- Each child mentioned receives a certificate in the assembly either for consistent good work or behaviour, or to acknowledge outstanding effort or acts of kindness in school. They are also named in the weeks newsletters;
- All classes have the opportunity to show examples of their best work.
- The school acknowledges all the efforts and achievements of other children, both in and out of school through mention in weekly Newsletters to parents and on our website.

3.3 Use of Sanctions:

When necessary the pupil is reminded of the rules by the class teacher who, knowing the pupil, is best placed to speak with the pupil. The academy employs a number of sanctions to ensure a safe and positive learning environment. We employ each sanction appropriately to each individual situation.

- If a child is disruptive in class, the teacher will remind them of Academy expectations – usually by referring to our Golden Rules (present in all teaching areas and circulation spaces)
- If the child misbehaves repeatedly, his/her name will be moved from the Sun to the Cloud or Thunder Cloud. This will mean 5 minutes of playtime (Cloud) or a full playtime (Thunder Cloud).
- If pupils do not respond to this (or respond negatively to being moved onto a cloud) they will be isolated from the rest of the class either within the classroom or elsewhere until s/he calms down, and is in a position to work sensibly again with others.
- If the child continues to cause disruption the teacher, in extreme circumstances, may opt to remove the class and send for another member of staff to counsel the child in the classroom until s/he calms down.

Dependent upon the context of the misbehaviour, other sanctions could include;

- loss of activity time,
- non-participation in sports or clubs (but not games or P.E. lessons)
- Sending to / for the Principal.

The safety of the children is paramount in all situations. If a child's behaviour endangers the safety of others, the class teacher will stop the activity and prevent the child from taking part for the rest of that session.

If a child threatens, hurts or bullies another pupil, the class teacher records the incident and the perpetrator is spoken to at length. If a child repeatedly acts in a way that disrupts or upsets others, the school may contact the child's parents and seeks an appointment in order to discuss the situation, with a view to improving the behaviour of the child.

Sparken Hill Academy is an inclusive school and we recognise that some pupils exhibit some social, emotional and behavioural difficulties from time to time. We hope to approach these difficulties in a fair and consistent manner, sometimes utilising a Behaviour Management Plan accompanied where appropriate with a risk assessment.

Cases of consistent misbehaviour such as repeated offences after warnings or failure to comply with instructions, offensive language, and serious instances of violence, bullying, theft or vandalism will be dealt with decisively. The Principal and parents will be involved and lunchtime or fixed-term suspensions will be considered and, in the worst cases, permanent exclusion.

The school does not tolerate bullying of any kind (see Anti Bullying Policy). This includes a zero tolerance around of issues relating to sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. In all instances of this, they will be logged on CPOMS, parents called followed by a loss of privileges together with a case discussion re internal pastoral support mechanisms.

3.4 Persistent Disruptive Behaviour

If a child misbehaves repeatedly, the class teacher records such incidents on Scholarpack and deals with them. However, if the unwanted behaviours persist, the class teacher may seek help and advice from Lead Behaviour Professional (LBP) and /or the Principal.

Should the concerns be consistent or be of a serious nature, a "Blue Behaviour File" will be commenced with the advice / direction of the LBP. This file includes valuable "Graduated Response" assessment / monitoring forms that can be utilised to support the pupil / CT.

At break-times the member of staff on duty is responsible and will report to the class teacher if necessary.

During lunchtime the mid-day supervisors report to the senior supervisor who may report to the class teacher or Principal.

The class teacher will liaise with the SENCO and external agencies, as necessary, to support and guide the progress of each child.

The class teacher may also contact a parent if there are concerns about the behaviour or welfare of a child.

"Get out with dignity"

Sometimes, a child can 'back themselves into a corner' leaving themselves little capacity to move forwards. This can lead to an escalation in negative behaviour. Where this is the case, the child will be offered a way out by the staff member. Examples include:

- If a child has been placed on the cloud but subsequently corrects their behaviour, the class teacher has the ability to (and is encouraged to) use their discretion in moving the child back to the sun.
- If a child is serving a sanction (missing breaktime) but appears to be reflective, the child may be allowed some of their playtime as a result of this reflection.

We call this approach "Get Out With Dignity".

3.5 Transitions

Pupils with insecure attachment can often become anxious when approaching a transition. This could be due to a number of things but rejection is a typical negative emotion that can manifest itself in the child's behaviour. Transition could be moving to another school but it can also mean moving classes, key stages or even approaching school holidays.

In these cases, staff will try very hard to manage these anxieties by:

- Expressing genuine care – they will not be forgotten. Practical suggestions from within the Academy include staff being encouraged to write a postcard to identified pupils (which they receive half way through a break). Other suggestions include a goodbye book with photos and messages from friends and staff members for the child to keep.
- If the pupil needs to leave suddenly the key adult will make all necessary efforts to say goodbye by using skype, letters or cards.
- If an adult needs to leave school we will make sure that the pupil has a carefully thought through and staggered goodbye.
- If an adult needs to change their regular commitments we will take all necessary efforts to communicate this change to the pupil directly and with compassion. The adult will also swap something like a pen or pencil case to help manage the separation or change of plan.

3.6 Provide Relational Repair

Following an episode of dysregulation, staff will attempt to facilitate repair. This could include:

- Never leaving a pupil on their own after a difficulty.
- If an interaction with a pupil becomes difficult for the adult, the adult will take time out to get themselves regulated before re-engaging at a later stage.
- As adults we will always apologise directly to the pupil if we misunderstand them.

- If something needs to be repaired we will join in too even if we don't consider the difficulty to be our own personal responsibility.
- If there is a tension build up in the classroom we will ensure we check in with our assigned pupil to reassure them.
- If something goes wrong we will seek understanding from the pupil themselves rather than making our own assumptions.

3.7 Reasonable Force

All staff follow guidance outlined by the DfE in Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for Principals, Staff and Governing Bodies. The guidance refers to Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which clarifies the position regarding the use of physical force by teachers and other staff working in schools, to control or restrain pupils. Staff should refer to the Physical Intervention policy.

Teachers in our school do not hit, push or slap children. Staff will only intervene physically to restrain children or to prevent injury to a child, or if a child is in danger of hurting him/herself. Some named staff are trained in "Safe Handling Training" (Team Teach) to deal with specific identified children.

4.0 How the school supports staff well-being and reflection

Teaching is a tough job. It can be immensely rewarding but also physically and emotionally draining. If we want our school staff to do what is asked of them, then we need to make sure that their mental health and wellbeing is effectively supported.

Staff members have a dedicated, comfortable large staff room space that is dedicated to the staff team and where they can go and take some time out. There are clear policies and procedures around staff wellbeing, and these processes and expectations are applicable to all staff. Our Senior Family Worker is also our Mental Health Lead. She prioritises wellbeing and communicates to staff about both internal and external pathways to support. The academy encourages a culture and ethos of open communication, particularly when it comes to talking about concerns.

Where there is a serious incident that staff are required to deal with, the Principal will undertake a detailed review of actions taken and lessons learned. Part of this is checking on the well-being of the staff member who has been involved to ensure that they are listened to and have the ability to talk about how they feel.

Academy staff have regular opportunities to feedback on any thoughts or concerns regarding staff wellbeing and how to improve it. It features as a standing item on our Staff Meeting programme and senior leaders provide emotional support for staff in

order to help manage stress and secondary trauma, and to reduce the likelihood of staff burnout.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The role of the Principal

It is the responsibility of the Principal under Section 88 (i) Ed. Inspection act 2006, to implement the school behaviour policy consistently throughout the school, and to report to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy. It is also the responsibility of the Principal to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all children and staff in the school.

The Principal supports the staff by implementing the policy, by setting the standards of behaviour, and by supporting staff in the implementation of the policy.

The Principal keeps records of all reported serious incidents (via Lead Behaviour Specialist)

The Principal has the responsibility for giving fixed-term suspensions to individual children for serious acts of misbehaviour. For repeated or very serious acts of anti-social behaviour, the Principal may permanently exclude a child. Either these actions will only be taken after the chair or vice-chair of governors has been notified. All exclusion processes will follow the guidance contained in: - [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England \(Sept 2023\)](#)

The Principal and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions without consent where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item. Staff will adhere to the guidance, [Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools \(July 2022\)](#)

Prohibited items are:-

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images

Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been or is likely to be used:

- To commit an offence

- To cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person including the pupil.
-

5.2 The role of parents

The school works collaboratively with parents, so children receive consistent messages about how to behave at home and at school.

We expect parents to support their child's learning, and to co-operate with the school. We try to build a supportive dialogue between the home and the academy, and we inform parents immediately if we have concerns about their child's welfare or behaviour. On many occasions, behaviours in school can be an indication of an unsettled personal / family life and may be a 'cry for help'.

If parents have any concern about the way that their child has been treated, they should initially contact the class teacher. If the concern remains, they should contact the phase lead for their particular child. If these discussions cannot resolve the problem, a formal grievance or appeal process could be considered.

We operate a Community Team to support parents for whom behaviour is an issue at home. Referrals can be from school, external agencies or parents may self-refer.

Sparken Hill Academy will not tolerate threats of violence or verbal abuse from parents (see Violence to Staff Policy)

5.3 The role of governors

The governing body has the responsibility of setting down these general guidelines on standards of behaviour, and of reviewing their effectiveness. The governors support the Principal in carrying out these guidelines, namely:

- Make sure the school has a policy which sets out measures that aim to promote good behaviour, self-discipline and respect, prevent bullying and ensure pupils complete assigned work, and which regulates the conduct of pupils
- Make and review a written statement of general principles to guide the head teacher in determining measures to promote good behaviour and discipline
- Make sure a written policy for promoting good behaviour is drawn up and carried out. This must define the sanctions to be adopted when pupils misbehave
- Make sure an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and carried out
- Arrange suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age who has a fixed-term suspensions of more than 5 school days
- Convene a meeting to consider reinstating the pupil and consider parents' representations about an exclusion (in some circumstances)

- Arrange for an independent review panel to review the governing board's decision not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil (where requested by parents within the legal timeframe)

There is a crucial strategic role that Governors undertake – monitoring the impact of this policy in terms of numbers / types of behaviour incidents, number and type of suspensions. Where necessary, Governors also have a role in hearing exclusion proceedings.

The Principal has the day-to-day authority to implement the school relationships policy, but governors may advise the Principal about particular issues. The Principal must take this into account when making decisions about matters of behaviour.

5.4 The role of Nottinghamshire County Council – Bassetlaw Primary Behaviour Partnership

See Appendix for local services offering guidance, training and support.

We are lucky to be the base school for the area's Behaviour Partnership (Bassetlaw Primary Behaviour Partnership – BPBP Ltd)

BPBP is a registered company based at Sparken Hill Academy whose purpose is to improve outcomes for SEMH of pupils in the Bassetlaw Area. Through the establishment and operation of behaviour partnerships we are learning much about the support schools need in place to best meet the needs of identified SEMH pupils and in partnership, we target resources in a more proactive and preventative way. At all times, the Academy follows the Graduated Response system introduced by the BPBP

6. Policy Links

This Relationships and Behaviour links to the following other policies we hold in school:

- Relationships Health and Sex Education Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy – including Contextual Safeguarding, linked to Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Physical Intervention/Coping with Risky Behaviour Policy
- E-safety and cyber-bullying policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff handbook
- Extra-curricular policies and guidance

We will measure this policy's effectiveness by:

- Checking attendance data.
- Using the Boxall Profile.
- Seeking the pupil's own views about their mental health and wellbeing.
- Logging how many times SLT have to deal with serious incidents (through Scholarpack behaviour monitoring or CPOMS).
- Measuring their learning progress, in comparison with themselves not their peers.
- Logging any transitions made between classes or schools mid-year.

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions

The following pages are included as 'self-help' wider reading that should serve to provide more context to our approaches or to provide finer detail

Are you saying we shouldn't use fixed term suspension/permanent exclusion?

Effective, restorative consequences are those which lead to lasting behaviour change and learning. When considering exclusion within the framework of relationship-based and restorative practice, some helpful questions to ask: When is exclusion in the best interest of the child? Is it going to benefit the child? Impact of exclusion? What are the benefits? What is going to change for them, what have they learned from that experience? What teaching has taken place – what has the child learnt from the exclusion?

What about the child who excludes or 'opts out' themselves?

Ask why they are opting out or withdrawing. What is the unmet need behind this behaviour? In the short-term, this strategy may help them to regulate strong emotions however, in the long term, learning a new behaviour regulation skill will be helpful for them e.g. if it helps them to access the curriculum. Create safe spaces in school for children and young people to access, with the support of trusted adults. Consider the 'Responding in the Moment' model (Notts EPS, 2020)

How come pupil X has been treated differently to pupil Y? How is that fair?

Equality and fairness do not mean everyone should be treated in the same way. There is a need to teach children and their peers that different people need different things based on their individual needs (link to the learning and behaviour assumptions grid).

Consider the legal requirements of schools and educational settings to make reasonable adjustments for children with SEND which includes SEMH (SEND COP, 2015).

Appendix 2: Use of language



SECTION 1 – Language around the CHILD

Use of language: in discussions and in our written documents

When we are challenged by someone else's behaviour, we are more likely to use language that is negative and provides a sense of hopelessness. It can be an indication of how we are feeling about the situation and the child. We may be keen for the listener to hear how difficult we are finding the situation and to justify our own constructs/feelings/behaviour – we may also feel the need to pathologise their behaviour in order to gain resources, like additional staff in school.

It is human nature to categorise, put children in boxes and be reductionist to speed up complex discussions, help our memory etc. Language has the ability to hastily create a picture in our minds. Consider what images come to mind when we use the following phrases; tantrum, kick off, melt down and naughty. However, we must be cautious as the language that people use in their discussions actively constructs perceptions around a CYP and the gravity of the situation.

"He's a spitter", "He's a runner"

"She's a climber", "He's LAC", "She's feral", "She attacked the staff"

"She's manipulative" "She's ADHD" , "He's violent" , "He went for another child"

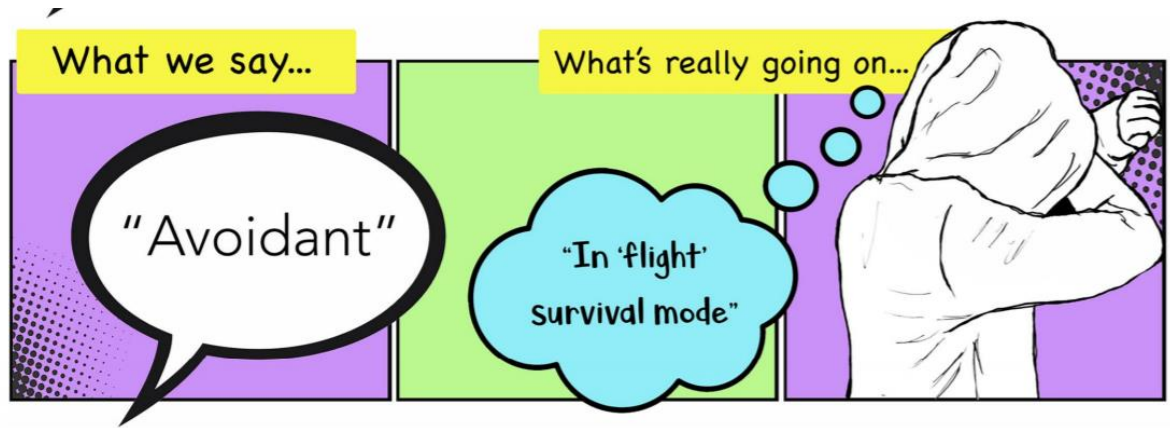
"In all my years of teaching I have never seen anything like it"

These sweeping statements (and often emotional statements) imply and assume that:

- The child is their behaviour or diagnoses.
- That behaviour is not separate to the child.
- Behaviour is unchangeable
- Behaviours are not context dependent.
- The behaviours that the child presents are frequent.
- The child possesses the skills to 'manage' their behaviour.

- That these behaviours are 'abnormal'.

Discussions using these kinds of statements help create and maintain a 'single story' of the child and objectifies the child. Language can also create a sense of escalation, within the now and in the future, even when there is less evidence of this than the language implies....



Instead it maybe more helpful to consider:

Normalising their behaviour and subsequently, your language about their behaviour. If you hear colleagues using unhelpful language, it will be beneficial to reframe their wording and model more helpful language...e.g. "So, you're telling me that when they're upset or angry they will display that behaviour", "It sounds like they were struggling to manage their emotions", "They were in distress and unable to tell us using their words". This language demonstrates a higher level of understanding of the unmet needs behind behaviour.

That behaviour is a form of communication. Consider why they are presenting this behaviour rather than simply describing the behaviour. Explore the function of their behaviour, what are they expressing to the adults around them? If you use reflective language, you are modelling this to the child and to other staff members.

Where are you having these conversations? Avoid having negative, emotive or judgemental discussions in front of the child. It will only create and reinforce a child's view and help perpetuate the cycle of behaviours you find challenging.

Children as humans i.e. talking about them as we/friends/family would want to be spoken about.

Stories

Language can help create and maintain a 'single story' of the child and objectifies the child. Language can also create a sense of escalation, within the now and in the future, even when there is less evidence of this than the language implies....

Equally, incidents of behaviours that adults have struggled to manage can become engrained in the child's history as adults pass these on and the child becomes the

"child who....e.g. broke a window of the foundation unit....climbed the roof...started a fire". It becomes impossible for the child to rewrite their story, as the discussions move like Chinese whispers from class to class, school to school or placement to placement.

Instead, be a part of punctuating this cycle and changing the child's story.



SECTION 2 – Language with the child

Strengths-based language working with the child – support the development of positive behaviour

Doing it together, using collaborative language

Non-directive, invite the child to engage with you, wonder aloud about their strong emotions

Be careful about non-verbal behaviour presented by staff

What is our response to language or non-verbal communication used by the children?

Inappropriate behaviour is subjective and culturally driven e.g. context says whether it is appropriate or not. Consider language of expected or not expected behaviour in this situation – some children need explicitly teaching.

Consider trigger language

Saying no – is it needed?

Being careful

Using goal orientated language – describing the behaviour you want to see, the things you want the child to achieve

Communicating safety and trust when setting limits on behaviour

Consider staff knowledge about the words they are using e.g. training, CPD, reflective supervision for staff