



Policy
Document

Woodfield School

PUPIL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Date: Spring 2024

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POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT AND PUPIL DISCIPLINE POLICY

Values and Aims

As a school we believe in promoting equal opportunities and value each individual as well as aiming for the highest level of personal achievement and independence. We aim to produce an environment in which pupils feel safe, secure and respected. We tailor programmes to engage and support each individual student. Good levels of behaviour and engagement are pre-requisite to learning and therefore we promote positive behaviour support throughout the school.

It must be remembered that most pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) are functioning at the level of a much younger child and therefore behaviours observed and consequences of these behaviours must be appropriate to the child's developmental age, rather than their chronological age.

We share our ethos with all new staff, as part of induction, that there are no 'naughty' pupils at Woodfield just children with additional needs who are trying to communicate. The staff are therefore dedicated to trying to understand the reasons for particular behaviours displayed by individual pupils and to helping them cope with the anxieties, frustrations and difficulties associated with their own needs.

Woodfield has adopted Hertfordshire Steps, the Local Authority's preferred approach to behaviour management in schools and all staff have completed 'Step On' training as part of induction. This is a therapeutic approach to behaviour management, with an emphasis on consistency, on the teaching of internal discipline rather than imposing external discipline, and on care and control, not punishment. It uses techniques to de-escalate a situation before a crisis occurs and, when a crisis does occur, it adopts techniques to reduce the risk of harm. An important aim of Hertfordshire Steps is to provide opportunities to support and debrief both children and staff after a crisis. Woodfield has a Behaviour Support Team (BST) of 4 staff, all of whom are Hertfordshire Steps trainers. An additional member of staff from the Family Support Team has also completed the Steps Trainers Training.

Behaviour must be analysed to see what purpose it serves for the pupil before we can change it. Wherever possible, we aim to teach pupils to take responsibility for their own actions and to accept the consequences of their choices. Generally, our students do not understand the consequences of their behaviour, even if the action is a conscious one, and therefore early intervention to de-escalate or prevention of an incident is always the preferred option. Any consequences must never be for ease of management of the situation and must be proportionate to the incident and take into account the pupil's Special Educational Needs. If a pupil is removed from a situation it should be in their best interests and they should be offered the chance to return as soon as possible (for further information see Physical Intervention below).

There are clear and realistic expectations of behaviour for each individual pupil, which means that we recognise that we will expect and accept different behaviours from different pupils, according to their own particular needs and disabilities. No two pupils are the same and we see the behaviour as the problem, not the child. By addressing the difficulties we try to 'analyse not moralise'. Class peers are supported in relation to this process.

Staff provide positive role models with appropriate language and social interaction and must have high expectations of pupil behaviour at all times. If pupils do display inappropriate

behaviour they are told or shown that staff and others find this unacceptable in a way that the child can understand. We expect staff at Woodfield to respond in a calm, clear, consistent manner, but need to have a real awareness of their own safety, whilst implementing de-escalation strategies (as trained) and following Risk Reduction Plans and Anxiety Management Plans.

The schools Leadership Team are committed to supporting pupils and staff regarding the positive management of pupil behaviour. Staff reward positive behaviour and, as far as possible, ignore the less desirable behaviour. The pupils can be consulted, where possible, to tailor rewards to their interests and can be re-focused on their tasks by reminding them of the outcomes or using support methods such as a 'Now/Next' system. Self control comes from empowering students with positive choices and appropriate strategies.

Referrals of pupils to Woodfield

Any referrals to Woodfield School, via the Local Authority (LA), of pupils with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) which refers to complex challenging behaviours are carefully examined in order to determine whether we can meet the specific requirements of these pupils within the context of our present accommodation and level of school resources, and in relation to the whole school's health and safety needs.

Teaching and Learning Approaches

We use a range of resources and systems consistently to create structure and routine which help to create a calm environment. This ensures that a pupil's day is easily communicated, predictable and manageable, and so reduces possible anxieties for individual pupils. Key skills are taught discretely as needed but there is ongoing teaching and learning related to the personal and social curriculum.

We ensure that approaches towards the pupils and their behaviour are consistent and appropriate to their level of understanding and differing needs.

Where a pupil is struggling to cope in a class environment staff may consider the need for changes to the pupil's timetable for certain times of the day or for a short period of time. In cases where behaviour subsequently improves, the pupil may be able to resume work again alongside larger groups of peers or back in the classroom environment. Most of these changes are to do with additional physical activity, shorter work periods, and/or sensory breaks. Occasionally this may be away from the main class group for short periods of time in order to reinforce routine and structure and keep the pupil focussed on positive engagement and life skills.

Communication is a vital area for all pupils, as a pupil is likely to be more anxious and confused when they do not understand what is being asked of them and/or they have no means of communication, so every effort is made to ensure that pupils are helped to communicate their needs and frustrations – for example using signs, symbols, pictures, objects of reference or Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Social stories should be used if appropriate to an individual pupil to help prepare them for changes, deal with sensory issues etc and to provide them with the information and support they need to process the circumstance.

When talking to pupils, staff should use clear, simple, positive language and be aware of their own body language and of how much information individual pupils can cope with at

any one time. The use of positive choices is a key element of positive behaviour support so that the pupil feels involved in communicating their preferences in all scenarios.

Some pupils need a longer period of time to process instructions, and so need to be allowed more time to respond before they comply with requests. Some pupils may need time and space such as offering the option to leave the group/room. Staff are encouraged to identify an area which is quiet and free of distractions to which a pupil can go to work or to relax and reduce the level of social and sensory demands. This might be an area of the classroom or a specific area in the school. Some pupils will need a regular short break, even if only a minute or two, before they can then resume their activity.

Individual Risk Reduction Plans and Monitoring Incidents

All staff are trained in Hertfordshire Steps 'Step On' as part of induction and 'Step Up' if they are likely to be supporting a child whose behaviour is such that a physical intervention is likely to be needed, as identified through risk assessment. This helps to develop their skills in managing pupil behaviour and share successful practice with other staff. Staff work as a team to analyse the causes of behaviour and develop effective and appropriate strategies for each individual pupil. Strategies and individual support plans are monitored and overseen by the Behaviour Support Team (BST).

Specific risk assessments are completed for pupils with challenging behaviour. This is mandatory if a pupil has a Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) programme. Once a pupil is identified as requiring a level of behavioural support that is greater than usual classroom management techniques, the behaviours presented will be analysed. The first approach will be to complete Anxiety Mapping. This will produce a Predict, Prevent, Progress document that highlights key areas of concern, provides consistent strategies for staff to utilise when supporting that child and, importantly, how the learning required to behave more independently in a pro-social can be supported. Should the behaviours presented still be a cause for concern, an Anxiety Management Plan may be needed. This provides greater detail than a Predict, Prevent, Progress plan in terms of the support that child needs to maintain a regulated state. Through ongoing risk assessment, if it becomes apparent that a child is likely to need a planned Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) as part of the planned responses to the behaviours presented, then a Risk Reduction Plan will be produced.

All members of the class team should be involved in the production of Predict, Prevent, Progress, Anxiety Management and Risk Reduction Plans (RRP), with support from the BST as required. Parents should also be consulted and have input into all plans as their specialist knowledge of the child cannot be replaced elsewhere. Once a plan has been produced, it is checked by the BST, then it is shared with the child (if appropriate for the child), their parents (copy sent home) and all staff who work with that pupil. All RRP's will be reviewed at least annually.

In order to analyse and assess behaviour it is necessary to gather information. Staff need to complete or take into account the following;

- Recording situations as they occur in school on an Incident Form. All Incident Forms are monitored by the Behaviour Support Team and entered onto SOLAR (the schools behaviour database) as appropriate (this will soon be replaced by adding incidents directly to CPOMS).
- Discussion with parent/carers (this may be via home/school diaries or in a meeting).
- Involvement with other relevant professionals e.g. medical, PALMS, Herts Steps advisors, Complex Case Team etc.

- Meetings of staff working with that child e.g. class meetings, which a member of BST can attend if required to review strategies.
- Individual Risk Assessments.

If this does not improve the situation, other strategies may need to be employed, such as;

- Discussion about the individual at the Behaviour Support Team meetings.
- Referral to the Educational Psychologist, if requested.
- Monitoring of anxiety levels where there is a particular concern to look for patterns (Anxiety Mapping).
- Monitoring of the Behaviour database and BST systems to look for patterns and possible causes.
- Request for further support from external services such as the County Herts Steps Lead or the HCC Complex Case Team.

The support required by some pupils' behaviour can be stressful for both staff and pupils. Staff need to support and reassure other pupils in a class or individual pupils after a distressing time. A member of staff who has dealt with a difficult situation may also require a short break. There may be occasions when pupils display aggressive behaviour which could cause injuries; for example, scratches, bites etc to staff involved. Consequently, it is essential for staff to be aware of their own safety and take any necessary precautions; risk assess, long sleeves (arm guards), considering the position of self in relation to the pupil, not wearing jewellery that can be pulled, tying hair back etc.

All classes have a supply of radios that can be used to contact members of the BST or other senior staff directly if an incident requires support. There are also alarms around the building that can be pressed to alert the office. These are being phased out in favour of radios. If Physical Intervention (PI) or RPI have been necessary, staff must fill in the appropriate paperwork immediately after the incident. PI will require an Incident Form, whereas RPI needs to be recorded in the RPI book, which is kept in the school office. This is a legal document, all sections of which need to be completed in a timely manner.

Parental Involvement/Other Agencies

The school is a partnership between parents, pupils, staff and outside agencies which only works if communication systems are kept open. Analysing, observing and sharing information and strategies about an individual is our key to success. Parents need to feel welcomed and valued with positive and consistent messages about our pupils' problems (as well as their achievements) shared with them. Risk Reduction Plans are jointly discussed and agreed and advice and support is a two way process. Parents should be offered understanding, advice and support regarding their child's behaviour, both at school or at home. We can also offer a weekly parent support group, individual appointments with the class teacher, parent ambassador or BST, or if appropriate home visit/s. The schools Family Support Team (FST) and Pastoral Lead are actively involved in engaging with and supporting parents. We also have partnership with the Mental Health Support Team and run training and awareness sessions for parents.

On occasions, it may be necessary to seek advice from other agencies, and we see this as a strength, to ensure we are doing the best for the pupil involved. Continuing disruptive behaviour may be the result of the pupil's needs not being met, and other agencies (including safeguarding) may be considered. This support may come in the form of the Complex Case Team, an Educational Psychologist, CAMHS, Family Support Worker, social

worker, referral to PALMS etc. BST/SLT/FST can make referrals to the appropriate agency as required.

Physical Intervention

Woodfield School follows Hertfordshire County guidelines regarding the use of Physical Intervention (PI). All staff are trained in Hertfordshire 'Step On' as a de-escalation and supportive way of working. 'Step Up' is used when there is an audited need and this would be classed as Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI). Hertfordshire Steps is updated for all staff annually through refresher training.

PI may be part of everyday life in an SLD school, where pupils need to be supported to reach independent learning. They may, for example, require escorting along a corridor, assistance to sit down or enter a classroom to enable access to the curriculum etc. There may also be occasions where a pupil needs reassurance or comfort. In this instance, staff have received training regarding appropriate touch, ensuring that the boundary between member of staff vs family member is not blurred. Interactions are part of a broader educational or therapeutic strategy and involve no force.

RPI is a "last resort" measure that is only used in accordance with the law and wherever possible is to be avoided. Staff have the right to use 'reasonable force' where a pupil is;

- a danger to themselves,
- a danger to others,
- poses a significant threat to property.

We ensure that staff training is followed when RPI is necessary and that any incidents are recorded as soon as possible and reported to SLT. Based on identified need, some staff are trained in elements of 'Step Up' training where specific techniques are taught for a specific pupil. When RPI is used it must be the minimal force needed for the minimum amount of time to achieve the desired result of keeping the situation safe.

Where RPI has been used, the Head or Deputy and the parents **MUST** be informed and the incident **MUST** be recorded in the RPI book. The BST will arrange for de-briefing of staff and pupils as soon as practicably possible, usually within 24 hours. If RPI is used more than once (once may be an emergency), good practice dictates that parents should agree to its use, and it should be written into an individual's Risk Reduction Plan. Such programmes are reviewed and updated on a regular basis, at least annually, though this could be more frequently if necessary.

Please see the Woodfield School Reducing the Need for Restrictive Physical Interventions in Schools Policy for further detail.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Pupil behaviour is monitored to check on the frequency of specific behaviour and to see if there are improvements, or if any changes have occurred regarding the behaviour. Incident Forms are used for this analysis. The strategies of support are then altered, revised or remain the same, depending on the outcome of the analysis.

The information from Incident Forms is recorded on SOLAR (the schools behaviour database), and the information monitored weekly in BST meetings. It is discussed regularly in staff meetings/SLT meetings and at the pupil's Annual Review and/or Child in Need (CIN)

meetings. The Deputy Head with lead responsibility for behaviour reports on behaviour to the Governors on an annual basis.

Teachers can discuss aspects of pupil behaviour with a member of the BST at any time and often invite a member of BST to a class meeting.

If a pupil has an Anxiety Management Plan, and/or Risk Reduction Plan, then these are discussed and reviewed regularly by class staff, both informally and at class team meetings. Any changes that occur in a pupil's behaviour will mean that the current behaviour support plans will be reviewed. Parents should be involved in such discussions, where possible.

Any class team who have reviewed a Risk Reduction Plan must ensure that they have discussed this with the BST, or informed them of changes. Class teachers must ensure that behavioural support documentation is passed on to the next class team when a pupil moves groups.

Where appropriate, pupils should be encouraged to talk through difficulties they may be experiencing – with staff providing understanding, support and advice. Staff are reminded that other pupils who witness challenging behaviour need the opportunity to talk through the situation as well.

Exclusions

The reasons below are examples of the types of circumstance that may warrant a suspension or permanent exclusion:

- Physical assault against a pupil
- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult
- Use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon
- Bullying
- Racist abuse
- Abuse against sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- Abuse relating to disability.

This list is not exhaustive and is intended to offer examples rather than be complete or definitive.

A suspension is a short-term exclusion. Typically, a pupil will not be allowed to attend to school for a period of around 2-3 days.

A permanent exclusion is when a pupil is no longer allowed to attend a school (unless a pupil is reinstated). The decision to exclude a pupil permanently should only be taken:

- in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy
- where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others such as staff or pupils in the school.

There is an expectation that, in a situation where a pupil presents extreme challenging behaviour, the school should pursue all possible avenues in order to help that child before a decision to permanently exclude is taken. This includes providing that pupil with a Risk Reduction Plan or Anxiety Management Plan which is subsequently continually reviewed;

regular monitoring of that pupil's behaviour; frequent liaising with parents; involving other professionals such as the Educational Psychologist and/or the school Doctor; seeking assistance from the Local Authority. However, in exceptional circumstances, the severity of a single incident may mean that a permanent exclusion is utilised before the above have been fully explored.

As our pupils have severe learning difficulties they will rarely learn from exclusion. As a school, we do not use suspension or exclusion as a punishment. Short periods of exclusion may, however, be necessary in order for us as a school to reflect on and review our practices. Staff are likely to need time to discuss, review risk assessments and implement any identified changes in procedures and methods of support needed to keep everyone safe. This may require the redeployment of staff or a need for further training. It is important for us to take the time that is needed to ensure, as much as possible, that we are able to deploy our resources in a way that provides the level of support that the young people in our care need at all times.

In some circumstances it can be important for other pupils to see that some behaviours have consequences that mean a pupil is not allowed on site for a period of time. This can help other pupils to feel reassured that the adults around them will keep them safe. It is important for us as a school to take into account the well-being of all the members of our school community.

Following a suspension there will be a reintegration meeting held in school with the parents/carers of the young person. At this meeting, the following points will be discussed:

- the reason for the suspension and background issues
- the agreed period of phased return
- how the phased return will be monitored and reviewed
- review of current levels of support and any additional support requirements
- any wider concerns.

A phased return would mean the young person attending school with a reduced timetable that increases incrementally. This would start the day after the reintegration meeting. Typically, and assuming there were no further incidents of concern, the young person would return to attending full time after a two week period of reduced timetable. The phased return is an important element as it allows the school to ensure that any adaptations that have been put in place are effective.

In the situation of a permanent exclusion, the school would endeavour to support the family of that child, involve any relevant agency and work with the LA to find an alternative placement as quickly as possible.

This would be done by calling an early review meeting of the Education, Health and Care Plan as a reassessment of the child's needs and would be required in order to ensure that his or her ECHP is accurate and up to date so that the next placement is able to fully meet the young person's needs.

In addition, the school should liaise with the local SEN Team about initiating an interim review of the pupil's plan. It will then be possible to consider whether the pupil's needs have changed and whether amendments to the plan are required as an alternative to the pupil being excluded.

It is extremely important that parents of children with SEN who are excluded from school receive advice on the options available for their child's future education. Schools might usefully advise parents that advice and information on SEN is available through the SEND

Information and Advice Service (SENDIAS), formerly known as Parent Partnership. SENDIASS should also be able to provide details of voluntary agencies that offer support to parents, including those that can offer advice concerning exclusions.

A more extensive list of useful organisations is included in the letter that parents/carers receive following a suspension or exclusion.