



## The Walnuts School Behaviour Policy

Most children and young people (CYP) at The Walnuts School have Autistic Spectrum Differences (ASDs) and all have varying degrees of communication difficulties. This may adversely affect self-esteem and confidence. Many have a poorly developed sense of identity. CYP at The Walnuts School are generally able to process information visually rather than aurally and benefit from clear structures and routines, which aid the management of behaviour for all CYP. *"The world can seem a very unpredictable and confusing place to autistic people, who often prefer to have a daily routine so that they know what is going to happen every day."* (NAS, 2016)

### Statement of Principles

- Most CYP with ASDs experience high levels of anxiety and stress. So providing a therapeutic environment in which students are understood and can develop is at the foundation of our approach. We seek to include activities in their curriculum to reduce stress levels and keep them at a minimum. We acknowledge and celebrate CYP's as individuals accepting the 'whole' person.
- Respecting and validating a child or young person's means of communication is important. (See Communication Policy.) Improving communication is fundamental in alleviating frustration and diminishing challenging behaviour.
- We recognise the importance of attending to the needs of the whole person, both physically and emotionally. Finding positive qualities and building relationships in which CYP's feel secure is vital.
- Knowledge and understanding of Autism and the areas of difference is crucial. Challenging behaviour is viewed as a lack of skills in the key areas of language and communication, social interaction and flexibility of thought. The teaching of new skills and re-enforcing appropriate behaviours is encouraged.
- It is understood that a child or young person's sensory processing difficulties or sensitivities may impact substantially on their behaviour. Sensitivity to sound, light, smells, touch and taste may have an adverse effect. Other environmental conflicts e.g. staff, appropriateness of teaching style, resources, number of students, order of environment are given careful consideration to minimise difficulty.
- Assessing, analysing and understanding the functions of behaviour is at the core of our approach. Through analysis of incidents, antecedents and triggers, and the collection of data, patterns of behaviour may be established. Incidents can be tracked and monitored, and programmes developed accordingly through the use of behaviour watch.
- CYP are given secure boundaries, within which to explore and manage feelings and become self-regulating.
- All CYP at The Walnuts have a right to be treated with dignity and respect in all circumstances, irrespective of any challenging behaviour displayed.
- Consistency when managing behaviour is essential. Partnerships with families and carers are crucial to achieve consistent management across all settings. Effective

communication is vital to achieve a complete picture and open and honest communication is essential.

- To create these relationships adults need to be attuned, aware and show empathy to CYP through the appropriate use of voice and tone, and non-verbal means of communication e.g. posture, gesture, movement and touch. **The language used should be non-judgemental and must be kept to a minimum or cut out completely when a child or young person is under stress.**
- We aim to give attention to behaviour we wish to increase and ignore most undesired behaviour unless injury or damage may occur. We also aim to generally avoid confrontational situations, which by their very nature give attention to negative behaviour. However, this may be unavoidable. Some behaviour can be ignored, but aggressive behaviour against oneself, others, or the environment must be clearly responded to. It is acceptable for a child to show their feelings within these boundaries. We need to create a safe environment that nurtures real emotional growth.
- Adults need to help CYP manage and regulate feelings and therefore need to be a well regulated, calm, firm and confident presence. Good honest communication between adults is crucial along with a willingness to share problems and ask for support.
- We believe in the importance of developing a cohesive approach to behaviour and need a shared value system. We are aware that adults are role models for behaviour in school. Our agreed value system is based on: respect, taking responsibility, empathy, trust, co-operation, honesty, happiness
- On no occasions do we consider our children and young people to be 'naughty', or require 'punishment'. We do however recognise that some of our children and young people may need to understand that their behaviours have consequences in order for them to make sense of the world and how their actions impact on this.
- We believe that learning there is a consequence for an action is a valuable life skill.
- We also acknowledge that initially many of our children use challenging behaviours as a means of communication and also, may not have the ability to understand the cause and effect their behaviour has on others, but as this is such a large part of everyday living we do try to teach these skills and understanding.
- Every CYP has rights or entitlements *see appendix 1 for examples of these.*
- We acknowledge that in general, the more positive opportunities that are presented for meeting the needs of the CYP, the less likely violent or disruptive behaviours are to occur. When there is a mis-match between a person's needs and the opportunities and supports available to them, they are likely to become bored, frustrated, angry or simply confused.

### **The Management of Challenging Behaviour**

Becoming out of control for a child or young person can be a frightening experience. They may experience feelings as uncontained and fragmented. When there is a danger of CYP hurting themselves, others or property, it may be necessary to use positive handling restraint techniques.

This is when behaviour is of such an intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is placed in serious jeopardy or behaviour which is likely to impair a child or young person's personal growth, development and family life and which represents a challenge to services, to families and to the CYP themselves, however caused.

At the Walnuts CYP's behaviour is considered challenging if it:

- Prevents participation in offered activities
- Isolates them from their peers
- Affects the wellbeing and/or learning of other CYP
- Drastically reduces their opportunities for involvement in ordinary community activities
- Makes excessive demands on staff and other resources
- Places the child or young person and/or others in physical danger
- Or threatens the prospects of future placements

If the behaviours cannot be successfully improved over a period of time this may indicate that the placement is not appropriate.

If a younger pupil (e.g. age 4/5) becomes upset it may be more appropriate to pick them up or carry them as an agreed de-escalation strategy, preventing the need for positive handling; however this needs to be age appropriate and discouraged as pupils move through the school.

#### **What the law says: - Guidance on the use of force (2013)**

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2011 enables school staff to use such force as is **reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary** in the circumstances to prevent CYP from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- causing personal injury to self or others
- damage to property

#### **The Use of Positive Handling**

The school follows the Milton Keynes Safeguarding Children Board Policy on the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention with Children and Young People.

All staff are trained in the use of **Team Teach** safe techniques and receive support in devising non- confrontational programmes. A list of all trained personnel is kept on file.

All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force whether or not they have been Team Teach trained. It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of CYP such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on organised trips. (Use of Reasonable Force 2013).

#### **The child or young person's welfare is always of paramount importance**

- It must be stressed that 95% of Team Teach techniques focus on de-escalation, and that positive handling is a final tool in the box, when de-escalation or diffusion techniques have proved ineffective. Such containment is to make CYP feel safe and

secure and bring him or her down from uncontrollable states of hyper arousal. Positive handling may be appropriate for some CYP, but **not** others and this should be reflected in their Behaviour Plans. CYP should have the opportunity, post incident at a time interval suitable for the individual, to communicate their feelings through words or symbols to a member of staff not connected to the incident.

As stated, finding the functions of behaviour and increasing the skills of CYP to gain more true self-control and confidence, underpins our approach to challenging behaviour. The school places great emphasis on low arousal approaches using de-escalation, diffusion and diversion techniques. See appendix 2 for examples of what this may include.

CYP are individual and respond differently to different techniques. Planned interventions made before escalation occurs can be most effective.

To support CYP after incidents of positive handling it may be appropriate that CYP are given the opportunity for de-briefing but this should not happen until levels of arousal have subsided.

### **Behaviour and Stress Management Plans**

All CYP have a written **combined Behaviour and Stress Management Plan** that includes proactive, preventative and reactive strategies and also activities for stress management. The second part of the document; positive handling plan and risk assessment will describe behaviours, triggers, antecedents, methods of de-escalation, medical conditions and Team Teach restraint techniques suitable for use if necessary. This plan will be drawn up and signed by the class teacher, head of department, behaviour lead and parents. This is to be shared at parent's evenings throughout the year. Strategies will be agreed to ensure continuity and consistency in all settings. The Behaviour and Stress Management Plan is reviewed and updated a minimum of three times a year.

### **The Recording and Reporting of Incidents**

All behaviour paperwork should be completed on Behaviour Watch ([www.behaviourwatch.co.uk](http://www.behaviourwatch.co.uk)). Every school staff member has an individual login to behaviour watch. A significant incident needs to be considered on an individual child basis. If an incident is significant for that particular child a **Significant Incident Form** should be completed, within forty-eight hours, by staff involved indicating whether the incident was with or without positive handling. If the pupil, another pupil, staff member or member of the public has been injured as a result of an incident a **Significant Incident form** should be completed. A **Positive Handling Report** form, for incidents involving positive handling, must be sent home to parents offering an opportunity to discuss further. Updates and developments are regularly given in person, by phone or through the Home/school book. Incidents with positive handling must also be recorded in a **Bound Book** containing numbered pages for cross referencing. Incidents should also be logged on the frequency of behaviour collection form on Behaviour Watch to enable monitoring of frequency and severity.

If CYP require physical intervention on a regular basis, such as an escorted walk, staff will ensure this is indicated and detailed in the CYP's individual behaviour management plan and positive handling plan. Once this is signed and agreed by parents then staff do not need to complete a significant incident form when the agreed strategies are implemented unless the incident is significant for the individual. Staff must use the frequency of behaviour tally chart to keep a record of any form of positive handling that is not deemed 'significant'.

### **The Behaviour and Stress Management Team**

The Behaviour and Stress Management Team is comprised of representatives from across all settings. It will respond quickly to referrals. Strategies will be discussed and agreed with staff and an Action Plan created for CYP to support staff in managing behaviour. The team will also monitor incidents and examine data for patterns of behaviour. The team will update forms and procedures and will meet weekly.

Strategies will regularly be discussed at Department Meetings for CYP causing concern.

### **Supporting staff who have been injured or hurt during an incident**

The most common form of injury towards staff is that caused by aggressive CYP's behaviour arising out of their specific needs.

Serious incidents requiring restraint can be upsetting for all and may result in injuries to CYP or staff. Immediate action should be taken to provide first aid and further medical help. It is important to ensure staff are given emotional support. A member of the BSMT or Senior Management Team will be available for support and counselling as soon as can reasonably be arranged. See appendix 3.

### **The Reporting and Recording of Racist Incidents**

Racist incidents should be reported and recorded and discussed with a designated senior member of staff and action taken as appropriate. Forms are located in staff workroom. The school is aware of cultural differences in behaviour and its implications.

### **Positive Approaches/Reward Systems**

The school aims to create calm, ordered supportive environment that minimises the risk and threat of violence. Effective relationships between CYP and staff are central to a positive environment. The Walnuts adopts a whole school approach to developing social and emotional skills through 'circle times' and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) activities enabling CYP to manage strong feelings. Positive behaviour is promoted through class 'Golden Rules' and also through the work of the school councils. CYP's suggestions and views on appropriate behaviour are sought.

The school is intolerant of bullying in any form. (See Anti-bullying policy)

We are committed to positive approaches to behaviour management throughout the school and offer reward systems to motivate and help some CYP to learn appropriate behaviours. For examples of what these include see appendix 4.

### **Dealing with Complaints**

Parents and CYP have a right to complain about actions taken by school staff. This might include the use of force. If a specific allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff then the school needs to follow the guidance set out in '*Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*'

**([www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practise/IGOO175](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practise/IGOO175))**

### **Exclusions**

In the rare case where it may be appropriate to exclude a child or young person for a fixed term or permanently, the school will follow the guidelines set out by the Department for Schools and Families in the document '**Improving Behaviour and Attendance: guidance on exclusion of pupils from local authority maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units 2017**'.

Fixed term or permanent exclusion will be considered if a child or young person commits a violent or violent acts of such severity that it is deemed unsafe for staff to continue working with the child or young person.

Also fixed term or permanent exclusion will be considered if the frequency, intensity and severity of violent behaviour is increasing and the child or young person is not responding to any of the strategies available.

### **Mealtimes**

It has long been recognised that the giving and receiving of nourishment can be a powerful emotional expression and can be linked to some of our earliest communication experiences. It is a communicative opportunity, a chance to take turns and make choices in a real context. Mealtimes are therefore recognised as very significant, and it is important that all adults use this time to extend social skills and feed emotional needs. Food must not be used as a punishment. It is a right. (See Food & Healthy Eating Policy)

### **Use of Quiet Rooms in the School Environment**

Quiet rooms are within most classrooms on the Hazeley and Hertford Place sites. See appendix 5 for possible uses of the quiet room.

### **The Use of the Quiet Room for De-escalation**

For CYP who may become out of control the first option to de-escalate is to give space either inside the class or outside in the play areas. (See 'Guidance on the use of Force' section - De-escalation techniques). If this is not possible, the use of the Quiet Room **may** be appropriate.

There are some occasions when it is appropriate to escort CYP to the Quiet Room as an area for de-escalation. On such occasions, the CYP's behaviour may have become too disruptive and dangerous for the safety of other CYP or staff and of the CYP themselves. The use of the Quiet Room should be clearly indicated as a **reactive strategy** in the CYP's **Behaviour Plan** which is shared with parents.

If it is likely that the CYP will not remain in the Quiet Room and continues to present significant risk to self or others or property, it may be necessary to prevent them exiting the Quiet Room. Under no circumstances must the door be locked or bolted. Acceptable methods (agreed by parents, staff and governors of the school) are to hold the handle or sit on a chair against the door. In exceptional circumstances the handle may be held for a prolonged period; when this occurs it must be brought to the attention of senior members of staff for further guidance.

CYP should be visually checked at all times through the viewing panel in the door.

- A numbered monitoring sheet must be filled out stating the total length of time a child or young person was in the Quiet Room and the reasons why it was felt appropriate.
- At 3 minute intervals a brief description of the behaviour and what has been offered to support CYP must be filled out
- CYP must be offered non-confrontational opportunities to re-engage at intervals e.g. offered a drink, a tissue or cuddle as appropriate
- Adults' body language should be open and facial expressions either neutral or positive
- For some CYPs the safest option may be to be alone in the room and regularly supervised. Others may need the neutral presence of an adult to offer positive contact whilst in the Quiet Room

Behaviour Lead - Oct 2017

Review date: BSMT Sept 2018 - PPC Committee Nov 2018

## **Reference List**

The Department for Education (2013) *The Use of Reasonable Force*. Available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/444051/Use\\_of\\_reasonable\\_force\\_advice\\_Reviewed\\_July\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf) [Accessed 7.5.16]

The National Autistic Society (2016) *Autism: Restrictive and repetitive behaviours and interests*. Available from: <http://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/asd.aspx> [Accessed 10.5.16]

## **Behaviour Policy Appendices**

### **Appendix 1:**

#### **Rights and entitlements of all**

##### **Physical Well-being**

- ❖ A healthy lifestyle including a nutritious and balanced diet, exercise, medical care regularly reviewed
- ❖ Reasonable protection from injury
- ❖ Freedom from ill treatment and abuse including the mis - use of medication
- ❖ To have appropriate care in relation to hygiene and physical comfort
- ❖ Freedom from sexual abuse or exploitation

##### **Emotional Well-being**

- ❖ To have access to the same range of activities and pastimes as non-disabled people of a similar age and background
- ❖ To be treated fairly with courtesy and respect
- ❖ To have new experiences and opportunities for learning which are appropriate to the person's interests and abilities
- ❖ To make choices and decisions about their lives as appropriate
- ❖ Respect by others for different cultural and religious backgrounds

##### **Material Well-being**

- ❖ Personal possessions
- ❖ Comfortable clothes which reflect age, gender, race and preference
- ❖ A comfortable, clean safe environment

##### **Social Well-being**

- ❖ Acceptance by others
- ❖ Opportunities to meet others
- ❖ Opportunities to form close relationships
- ❖ Opportunities for religious observance
- ❖ Representation from independent advocate who is in???
- ❖ Time for privacy as appropriate



## Appendix 2:

### **De-escalation, diffusion and diversion techniques**

- Giving space
- Providing comfortable environments
- Quiet areas
- Selective reactivity
- Using a non-confrontational tone
- Non-aggressive posture and gesture
- Involving a new person
- Limiting language
- Planned ignoring
- Referring to reward systems
- Offering closed choices
- Humour
- Offering 'chewies' to alleviate frustration
- Firm and confident presence
- Deflecting or distracting attention away or judging whether a child needs to 'feel' feelings
- Counting to change activities or as a way of ending an incident
- Structured routines and prompts using symbols
- Regular kinaesthetic activities, relaxation, massage
- Removal of other CYP from the room
- Change of face
- 1:1 close support

## Appendix 3:

### **Procedure for supporting staff who have been injured**

Where a member of staff has been injured:

1. Enquire whether the member of staff needs further assistance
2. Offer the member of staff time out, with a colleague if desired.
3. Make an assessment of any injury. If first aid is required ask for a first aider to be called.
4. Inform a senior member of staff through office staff.
5. Staff involved in a significant incident should have the opportunity to de-brief immediately if necessary, or voice complaints or concerns to a senior member of staff or the Head teacher at the end of the day.
6. The next morning, following the significant incident, a member of BSMT or SMT will be available for them to discuss the incident if necessary.

#### Appendix 4:

##### **Examples of reward systems/positive approach**

- Verbal or praise using symbols
- Showing good work - to class or member of SMT
- Certificates for good work or desired behaviour - often celebrated at assemblies
- Stickers, tick charts, smiley faces, award books
- Reward/favourite task built into a schedule
- Valuing work through display
- Written praise in Home/School book
- Earning of individualised rewards ( e.g. activities or time) for keeping class rules or showing a desired behaviour
- The use of motivational treats as incentives
- Completing an agreed task before a self-chosen preferred activity

#### Appendix 5:

##### **Possible uses of the Quiet Room may include:**

- A CYP eating lunch
- If a CYP is unwell
- Playing board games
- Chill out time
- Tac Pac/massage/aromatherapy
- A distraction free environment for tasks
- Sensory stories
- For short periods of 'private' time (see Sex and Relationship Education policy) when the CYP is given time alone, but checked at regular 2-5 minute intervals