

Behaviour Policy : limit setting; containment, management; support and restitution.

Position statement

We recognise that due to the nature of the autistic condition, misunderstandings and communication breakdowns are inevitable. Our whole school approach is geared towards helping our pupils develop the thinking skills they need in order to communicate and understand the world better.

We also know that our pupils' autism means that they have difficulty managing uncertainty – which often manifests itself in a need to control situations and/or sometimes acute difficulties with emotional regulation.

In support of the above, Woodside School has developed:

- The 'Toyota' principle – a policy statement describing our commitment to avoiding communication breakdown and conflict by putting into place our 'guiding practice', together with extensive staff vigilance, ensuring both structured and unstructured time is arranged so that the potential for misunderstandings between pupils is minimised.

Staff

The staff team will develop an excellent understanding of each individual pupil and of the way pupils interact together so that potential flashpoints can be anticipated, any difficulties nipped in the bud, and where a misunderstanding does escalate, the situation can be managed quickly and fairly to enable pupils to move on from the incident, facilitating restitution if appropriate.

- Weekly staff meetings have a standing agenda item looking at team management of any pupil issues or challenging behaviours. Agreements made here are used to update the individual 'challenging behaviours profiles'.
- Daily staff briefings update staff on pupil issues and strategies to be used.

Parents

Woodside School provides:

- A behaviour management agreement which is signed by parents on admission of each pupil to school
- A system for keeping parents regularly apprised of pupil progress, including any behaviour-related difficulties.
- School's Headteacher and Proprietor have close working relationships with all parents, which enables any emerging difficulties with pupils to be discussed quickly with parents.

Our practices – we have:

- Profiles of each pupil including a section that identifies most likely problematic behaviours; appropriate strategies to support pupils when such behaviours occur; and limit setting strategies and sanctions appropriate to each individual pupil
- Ground rules for behaviour in school
- A pupil/school agreement that sets out the culture we are trying to promote at Woodside School, examples of types of behaviour that are unacceptable, and what sanctions will be applied (if appropriate) for transgression of anything in the agreement. This will be personalised for each pupil.
- A personalised reward system for thoughtful and kind behaviour
- A practice of using 'stop and think mind maps and role play' to enable pupils to identify alternative options for responding in the face of a challenge/communication breakdown
- A system for spotlighting competence to enable pupils to lay down positive episodic memories of success (including success in interpersonal communication) to build their resilience and ability to use past experience to inform future decision-making

Working with pupils

- A 'zones of regulation' system to support pupils to recognise the way they themselves may be feeling (moving on to how others might be feeling when appropriate) throughout the day. (Traffic lights or similar-pupils may personalise)
- A sensory room that pupils can use in the event of the need to regulate
- 'Stop and Think' and resilience-building through episodic memory as described above

Limit setting strategies

At Woodside School, we start from the principle that 'kids do well if they can' rather than 'kids do well when they try'. We aim to use our training and our in-depth knowledge of our pupils to distinguish between a behaviour that is being displayed because a pupil is too emotionally dysregulated/too overwhelmed to engage in an activity and a behaviour that is being displayed because the child is being deliberately avoidant/controlling.

Where there is problematic behaviour, we will always initially use collaborative problem solving to empathise with the pupil, state the problem and offer the pupil the opportunity for some reflection time before any sanctions are considered.

We use a range of limit setting and behaviour management strategies at Woodside School, including:

- 'Counting' from the book '1, 2, 3 Magic' with sanctions that are appropriate to each pupil
- 'Collaborative problem solving' (Ross Greene) <http://www.livesinthebalance.org>
- Natural consequences
- Loss of access to screen during breaks

- Withdrawal of member of staff from the pupil
- Withdrawal of pupil from peers
- Letting the pupil know that xxx is not acceptable and if it continues, a pupil-specific consequence will be applied
- Where there is physical aggression towards staff and/or destruction of property, the pupil will be informed that the Police will be called.

Restitution

Where a social communication breakdown or social misunderstanding has occurred, staff will work with pupils to enable them to understand the other's perspective, facilitating mutual understanding and ensuring that an apology is made where any party has been aggrieved.

Serious incidents

- Where there are any behaviours that cause staff particular concern, a system is in place for engaging appropriate external professionals for assessment and guidance.
- Where there is a serious breach of our school ground rules, staff will work together as a team to decide upon the appropriate consequence and any supportive measures that need to be put in place. The most serious breach (e.g. physical aggression against a pupil or member of staff) may result in a fixed term exclusion from school.

In these circumstances, staff will put conflict resolution measures in place to enable pupils to take a different perspective, understand how their outburst may have upset/hurt other pupil/s and – in the interests of natural justice – facilitate an appropriate restitution.

- Serious incidents and any follow up are recorded in the incident book and discussed with parents.

Exclusions

In cases of dangerous or criminal behaviour more serious consequences will have to be used. This will go together with providing the utmost support to help the student to succeed.

In cases of dangerous or criminal behaviour the police might be called and/or a temporary exclusion might be applied.

In cases of consistent non-engagement, disruptive and inappropriate behaviour a temporary exclusion might be part of the strategy to help the student reflect on the benefits of his/her placement at Woodside School and give him/her the opportunity to re-engage.

Permanent exclusion will be the last step after all other efforts and support failed. Here the exclusion will be part of a staged process over a length of time (for example):

1. Verbal limit setting by staff member

2. Meeting with one of SMT staff plus one member of teaching staff
3. Temporary exclusion/s
4. Meeting with SMT staff and parents/Social Worker
5. Discussion in student welfare meeting with specific support structure agreed
6. Behaviour and support plan devised and implemented
7. If unsuccessful, meeting with SMT staff and parents/Social Worker
8. Written warning
9. Permanent exclusion

(This is for illustration purposes only and the order might change according to the individual case)

In serious cases permanent exclusion will be used.

The decision for any exclusion (temporary or permanent), including its length, will be taken by the school's Management Team and will be followed up by letter to parents and professional teams and a face to face meeting (if appropriate).

Approved by: MK

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