



Cedars Academy

Behaviour Principles

Written Statement

Responsibility for Policy: C&S Committee

Date policy written/rewritten: February 2018

Date policy last reviewed: March 2024

Next Review: March 2025

Trustees' Statement of General Principles with Regards to Behaviour

Rationale and Purpose

This statement has been drawn up in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act, 2006 and DfE guidance (Behaviour and Discipline in Schools, 2014). The purpose of this statement is to provide guidance for the Headteacher in drawing up the school's behaviour policy so that it reflects the shared aspirations and beliefs of governors, staff and parents for the children in school as well as taking full account of law and guidance on behaviour matters. It is intended to help all school staff to be aware of and understand the extent of their powers in respect of discipline and sanctions and how to use them. Staff should be confident that they have the Governors' support when following this guidance.

This is a statement of principles, not practice; it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to draw up the school's behaviour policy, though he must take account of these principles when formulating this. The Headteacher is also asked to take account of the guidance in DfE publication Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: a guide for Headteachers and staff. The school behaviour policy must be publicised, in writing, to staff, parents/carers and children at least once a year.

Principles

Ours is a community of learning, where secure partnerships create opportunities for students, staff, governors, parents and carers alike to participate and grow to become intellectually, emotionally and socially *fit for life*.

We pride ourselves on our positive, person-centred approach to pupil behaviour at Cedars Academy. It is a fundamental part of the work we do with all our children and young people and it underpins every child and young person's success in learning.

Everything we do begins with the child or young person and their family, and all our children, young people and families are supported by an experienced and highly skilled team of professionals at school.

All adults at Cedars Academy follow our proactive behaviour policy. They provide positive role models to support the development of our children and young people's personal and social skills. This ensures that all our pupils have a secure foundation on which they can develop their own behaviour. Working in this way means that all our pupils are part of a school community which is positive, respectful and that continually strives for them to 'be the best they can be'. We are proud of their successes and achievements and we reward and celebrate their good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.

Furthermore, we acknowledge and understand that some of our pupils have significant challenges relating to their behaviour. Our policy and practices support them through a highly personalised approach consisting of specially tailored programmes which enable them to overcome these challenges and experience the success of doing so.

A Positive Approach to Behaviour Management

Most systems of behaviour modification and management are based on sanction and reward. There is an increasing body of evidence to suggest that sanction of negative behavioural choice is an ineffective method of effecting change. Our approach to behavioural modification will be based on three main components.

- An effective reward system based on short, medium and long term rewards, a reduced behaviour monitoring period and an emphasis on positive reinforcement
- Curriculum modification to enhance teaching of social skills, social problem solving skills and emotional regulation
- Intervention to ensure that post event learning opportunities are fully utilised

There will be **no use of sanctions** on a day to day basis and staff will not use language that can be associated with punitive approaches. All of our interactions with pupils will be positive, avoid confrontation and promote de-escalation.

There is evidence to support that the actual sanction is relatively unimportant; people respond to the feelings of discomfort they experience when faced with the disapproval of others. They learn to associate these feelings of discomfort with the negative behaviours that precipitated them. There is, however, a significant population of pupils who do not respond well to this aversive conditioning and for whom sanction or the fear of punishment is less effective in promoting behavioural change.

- Some pupils with social communication difficulties may find it hard to recognise how they or others feel and therefore less likely to respond to punishment cues. Sanction may well be less effective for this type of pupil
- Some pupils show callous unemotional (CU) traits. Pupils displaying these traits are less likely to experience empathy or to care about the feelings of others and therefore will be less responsive to aversive conditioning. Restorative justice techniques are often inappropriate for these pupils.
- Pupils with a combination of SEMH and ADHD have been shown to have a suppressed fear response to aversive stimuli. This lack of fear may make them less responsive to aversive conditioning.

As well as being ineffective for a sizable group of our pupils, punishment may militate against positive behavioural modification. Evidence shows that pupils are more responsive to work on modifying poor choices when they feel a sense of well-being and are emotionally resilient.

Punishment does not contribute to positive feelings of self. The anger that many pupils feel when sanctioned is often transferred and used to 'justify' the original misdemeanour or fuels feelings of negativity about any victims of the behaviour. Such pupils are less likely to analyse their behavioural choices and develop new strategies to cope with challenging situations.

De-escalation and Non-Confrontational Approaches

The best chance of successfully implementing strategies to modify behaviour is to build excellent working relationships between staff and pupils. The philosophy of using non-confrontational approaches when communicating with others is central to the school's ethos.

We embrace an approach which emphasises the use of verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques to reduce instances of aggressive behaviour and the need for positive handling. All staff are trained and conversant in the use of de-escalation techniques and receive refresher training on an annual basis or as need is identified.

Restorative Justice

The use of restorative justice (RJ) techniques and RJ type questions should be carefully considered and their appropriateness will depend on the students involved. Pupils who display callous unemotional traits may well have the empathic ability to understand the effects of their actions on others but may not care about their feelings sufficiently to modify their behaviour. In the worst cases they may use information gained during the process to negatively manipulate future situations.

RJ techniques and questions are beneficial for some pupils. This is especially true of those who care about the feelings of others but lack the ability to understand the emotional impact of their actions on them. Carefully administered RJ sessions may be especially beneficial for some learners on the autistic spectrum when combined with work to recognise feelings in others and self.

All children and staff have the right to feel safe at all times in school. There should be mutual respect between staff and children and between each other. All visitors to the school should feel safe and free from the effects of poor behaviour at all times and in all parts of the school.

Creating the Conditions for Positive Behaviour

Pupils are more likely to make positive choices if staff are proactive in creating the optimum conditions for this to happen. When negative interactions do occur staff are expected to intervene rapidly to prevent them from developing.

Proactive engagement

In any situation, including social situations, staff members should always be engaged with pupils either directly in learning, building relationships or distracting/deflecting. This should begin from the moment that the pupils arrive until the moment they leave.

Proactive planning

Staff should plan their actions carefully, taking into account the pupils who will be present, the learning situation and any other information that has been communicated. Teaching and support staff should consider:

- what activity pupils will be asked to do to immediately engage them
- who is likely to need immediate support to achieve a positive start
- what differentiation is in place to ensure appropriate stretch and support
- where pupils will sit and how their movement to their places will be managed
- how they will position themselves in the room and in relation to likely behaviours
- what they will do in response to events in the room
- the type of learning activity, how pupils are likely to respond to it and the appropriate interventions
- how they will build in time for marking and feedback
- non-verbal and verbal cues to signal the need for intervention
- if any pupils are showing themselves unready to learn in the following session

Communication

Whilst one person is responsible for leading a lesson, its successful implementation is the responsibility of all members of the teaching team who are present or become involved in any way.

The lesson leader is responsible for directing and communicating with support staff. Equally they are responsible for creating an environment where support staff feel comfortable communicating information to them and acting with appropriate independence.

Support staff are responsible for communicating issues to the lesson leader. This might be information about pupil learning/behaviour or might be feedback about the application of agreed policy.

The Role of Parents & Carers

Parents/Carers should be encouraged and helped to support their children's education, just as the children should be helped to understand their responsibilities during their time at school, in the local community and in preparation for their life after school. The responsibilities of children, parents/carers and all school staff with respect to children's behaviour must be outlined in the Home School Agreement which children, parent/carers and teachers must be asked to sign when a pupil joins the school.

To be read alongside Cedars Academy Behaviour Policy Incorporating the Code of Conduct

UNCRC Reference: Articles 3, 12, 16, 23

Date: Spring 2024

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