



The Dales School

Consistent Approach Policy

Introduction

Pupils within The Dales School may present with a variety of difficulties relating to their behaviour which stem from their underlying issues. It is the duty of all staff to maintain high levels of care and good control of pupils at all times. All pupils and staff are entitled to learn and work in a safe, secure and relaxed environment without fear of the actions of others.

The Dales School believes that:

- Children want to behave well
- Behaviour is a means of communication – we must ensure that all pupils are supported to communicate their needs safely and appropriately
- With the right support and intervention, children and young people can learn to improve their behaviour and manage it well
- Mistakes are part of the learning process and we recognise that all of our children and young people are at different stages of the developmental process
- All of our pupils have learning difficulties which may impact on how they learn to behave
- All adults can learn strategies to support children and young people to improve their behaviour.

A consistent and positive system of managing behaviour is essential. The Dales School adopts the Thrive approach in which all staff working with pupils are trained to an appropriate level. We believe that we can support pupils in school through:

- The quality of our relationships with them and each other
- The quality of our provision
- A well-informed understanding of their needs
- The differentiation, scaffolding and support we put in place to help them learn
- Observation, evidence gathering and analysis so that our interventions are well informed and planned
- Working in close partnership with parents and carers
- Investing time to allow pupils to practise and make mistakes without fear of harsh sanctions.

Scope

This policy exists:

- To prevent injury or damage to pupils.
- To prevent injury or damage to staff.
- To provide guidance for staff, parents, governors and other stakeholders on how we keep children and young people safe.
- To provide a framework for our collective beliefs around human behaviour as it relates to children and young people.
- To provide an inclusive model for our understanding of behavioural needs.
- To underpin our beliefs with evidence-based practice and current research.

Definitions / Abbreviations

Behaviour	The way in which someone acts or conducts themselves, especially towards others.
Challenging behaviour	Conduct or actions that are demanding, provocative, testing and not recognised as the norm that may cause harm, injury or distress.
Sanctions	Actions which involve a penalty or removal of a privilege, aimed at encouraging more acceptable behaviour.
Reparations	Actions that repair damage or ease distress caused by challenging behaviour.
Restraint	The positive application of sufficient force to ensure, by physical means alone, that a child or young person does no injury to himself, others or property.

Principles

The guiding principles of the policy are based on our beliefs about behaviour:

Children want to behave well:

- We believe that pupils are happy when they behave well and when that good behaviour is recognised by adults and their peers. Children are able to behave well when their needs are well met in school, at home and in the community.

Behaviour and Communication:

- How children behave provides important information about how they are feeling.
- Supporting children to communicate is an essential part of helping them to behave appropriately.
- Children with severe and complex needs will need a personalised approach to behaviour management and consideration must be given to their physical and sensory needs and levels of stimulation and engagement.

Children can learn to improve their behaviour:

- Our pupils can find learning difficult. Learning new behaviour is a task, just like learning to read or write.
- As adults, we must consider the learning styles and needs of children and young people and we must have realistic expectations about the speed of progress they will have when learning to adapt or develop new behaviours.

- Our pupils learn in small, incremental steps over long periods of time – it takes time and consistency to make progress.

Mistakes are part of the learning process:

- Mistakes are not judged but we support our pupils to get things right.

All adults can learn strategies to support pupils to improve their behaviour:

- Most adults have evolved ways of responding to children's and young people's behaviour based on a combination of personal and professional experiences, training and experiential learning.
- Within school, we encourage all staff to reflect on what may be the underlying issues which drive or trigger behaviour in children and young people and to think about ways of responding to challenging behaviour in a positive, non-judgmental and supportive way.
- The school has adopted a consistent approach to working with children and young people who have challenging behaviour and all staff receive training as soon as possible when joining the school.
- We recognise that managing challenging behaviour can be very difficult, particularly if a pupil is targeting a member of staff or others in a very aggressive way. Within school, we support all staff to develop their own emotional resilience through professional and peer support.
- All staff must be committed to developing their practice, reflecting on their own behaviour and sharing their skills and experiences.

Adults can support children and young people through:

- The quality of our relationships with each other. Fostering close team working, acceptance and trust amongst the staff team provides good role models of behaviour for our pupils and students at all times.
- The quality of our relationships with pupils. It is essential to build strong, positive relationships with pupils. To succeed with this, we need to:
 1. Actively build trust and rapport – we earn the trust of children.
 2. Have high expectations for all children. When we demonstrate our belief in them it supports them to succeed.
 3. Treat pupils with dignity and respect at all times, e.g. by thanking them, communicating clearly and positively at all times at an appropriate level and listening to them with respect. We do not talk about them over their heads and confidentiality is always maintained.

4. Reflect on what lies behind the behaviour and why the child is behaving in this way. There is always a reason and a trigger, which needs to be identified.
5. Act consistently and see things through. If there are consequences to behaviours, whether positive or not, they must happen.
6. Always keep our word. If a commitment to a child cannot be honoured, we must communicate clearly and honestly about why this has happened.
7. Apologise if we make a mistake. This is an excellent model for pupils and will build trust and respect.
8. Identify the strengths in the child. These should be identified with them and built upon.
9. Quietly, firmly and consistently set and hold appropriate boundaries for all children.
10. Be non-judgmental about the life experiences and backgrounds of children but use the knowledge sensitively to inform planning and intervention.
11. Manage our own emotional reactions to children's behaviour and act positively at all times. If we are finding this difficult, then support should be sought.
12. Actively seek support from wider professional groups as soon as needed; e.g. CYPs teams, therapists or senior leaders.

The quality of provision:

If we can accurately identify each child's needs and meet them, it is likely that challenging behaviour will decrease or stop. To do this we need to:

1. Complete an accurate and thorough assessment of needs.
2. Draw up a comprehensive plan to meet needs, which will be specific and personal to them, looking at equipment, sensory needs, language needs, staffing levels etc.
3. Support children to be resilient and have good levels of self-esteem so that they believe they can succeed.
4. Provide frequent and positive reinforcement when things are going well and minimal feedback for low-level, undesirable behaviours.
5. Focus on what we want the child to do, not what we do *not* want them to do.
6. Praise children for specific achievements so that they are clear what they have done well and when.
7. Find positive motivators for all pupils.

8. Deliver personalised learning programmes to match each child or young person's stage of development.
9. Where possible, include the child in target setting, planning and evaluation of outcomes using language and methods appropriate to them.
10. Be clear about progress and what needs to be done to achieve further progress.
11. Actively teach children the behaviour for learning.

The structure we put in place:

The things we do to support our children to manage their own behaviour successfully are key to a positive ethos and environment.

Rules support positive behaviour and should be:

1. Few in number,
2. Agreed with pupils as far as possible.
3. Communicated in an appropriate way; e.g. through visual cues, sign, symbols etc.
4. Positive – things we are going to do.
5. Regularly referred to by everyone.
6. Appropriate to the setting, activity and developmental level of the pupils involved.

Routines also support children and should be:

1. Explicitly taught in all situations.
2. Consistent.

Language used by staff is part of helping children to take responsibility for their behaviour. It can help them to choose the right thing to do and, if appropriate, explain the consequences of their actions. Descriptive praise gives positive feedback, increases self-esteem and supports behaviour for learning.

1. Language is always linked to action and consequences are always linked to choices.
2. Descriptive praise is used when children and young people are seen to make a good choice. Adults must be vigilant and never miss an opportunity for this to happen. Examples include, *'I liked the way you lined up as soon as I asked'*, *'Thank you for putting your scissors back straight away'*.

3. Positive and consistent communication will increase pupil's sense of responsibility and remove the struggle for power.

Rewards and Consequences/ Sanctions:

Rewards must be able to be delivered and focus on positive choices and the behaviours we wish to encourage. They may include:

1. Descriptive and specific praise.
2. Symbolic rewards (stars, stickers, etc.)
3. Communication with others to inform them of the behaviour or achievement.
4. Special responsibilities or privileges.
5. Preferred activities which are beyond the scheduled classroom timetable; e.g. preferred activities, computer time, outdoor play outside of usual break times.

Sanctions or consequences must also be able to be delivered and must be appropriate but not harsh or removed from the behaviour that we wish to decrease. They may include:

1. Having a break from the situation, supported by an adult to reflect on behaviour.
2. Having a learning break linked to a sensory need that may be triggering the behaviour.
3. Losing a preferred activity or privilege.

Adults should reflect on the incident that has led to a sanction or consequence and consider if something could have been done differently to support the child or young person.

Reparations:

We believe that children should be given the opportunity to repair relationships following a behavioural incident and that they want to do this.

Punishment is not a concept that we feel is positive as it focuses the child's mind on the punishment rather than what led to it.

This can lead to them feeling angry and resentful about the punishment rather than thinking about the effect of their behaviour on themselves and others.

Where appropriate, we support children to take responsibility for what they have done and repair it with other people affected.

We should not make assumptions about what children are feeling. Unresolved difficulties can make them very anxious and lead to further behavioural or habitual behavioural problems.

Pupils with exceptional behavioural needs:

The majority of children in school will respond positively when staff work within the guidelines detailed above; however, some of our pupils present with significant levels of challenging behaviour, which are deeply embedded and require additional support to overcome or diminish.

This is done by:

1. Ensuring that the general principles within this policy are adhered to at all times.
2. Putting in place additional scaffolding and support, which is tailored to the specific needs of each child.
3. Drafting a comprehensive Consistent and Positive Approach Plan (behaviour management plan) to ensure that all support and strategies are clearly documented, and staff know how to manage each situation as it arises. This plan should be drawn up with parents, carers and significant staff and agreed with the Senior Leadership Team. Risk assessments should also be completed to ensure safety in all situations. Involving pupils in their consistent approach plan and asking what support would help them to manage their behaviour.
4. Working closely with parents to support them to implement strategies and changes of approach.
5. Putting in place additional staff training where needed.
6. Prompt involvement of external agencies such as Children's and Young People's Services (CYPS) teams, mental health practitioners, and psychology and psychiatry teams.
7. Involving family and/or medical services to ensure that there is no underlying reasons for the behaviours including illness or unresolved pain.

Some children and young people may require very specific and detailed planning. This could include a shortened school day, off-site education, additional one-to-one support or a period of home-based learning. When such significant adaptations are required these will be planned jointly with all involved agencies.

Physical Intervention and Restraint:

All staff working with pupils who present with significantly challenging behaviour will be trained at the appropriate level. The following rules apply:

1. Physical intervention and restraint should rarely be used and only after all other interventions have been exhausted. It must only be used by staff who have had the recognised level of training and where this is up to date. Yearly refresher training is mandatory.
2. It should only be used if the child is putting himself or others in danger and where failure to intervene would result in harm and constitute neglect.
3. Any physical intervention should be as a last resort and should be proportionate, reasonable and necessary.
4. If used it must be logged (see below) and parents and families informed before the child arrives home from school, whenever possible.
5. An individual Consistent and Positive Approach Plan and risk assessment must be in place or, in the event of physical intervention needing to be used for the first time, updated within the next two days.
6. Consistent and Positive Approach Plans must be regularly reviewed, updated and shared with all who need to know. They must be dated, and previous versions removed from circulation.
7. Staff must reflect on the incident once it is over to determine if anything could have been done to manage it differently and to plan for the future.

Deprivation of Liberty (DoL):

Within school, children must **never** be:

1. Locked in a room alone without support or supervision.
2. Deprived of food or drink.
3. Denied access to a toilet.
4. Restrained using a harness or other equipment where this has not been agreed by all involved, risk assessed and clearly documented.

In exceptional circumstances, a pupil may be secluded in a safe space to reduce the risk to themselves or others. There must always be two adults present, either inside the room if safe or outside the door with visibility if not. A senior member of staff must be notified immediately.

Seclusion must be documented as part of the Consistent and Positive Approach Plan and agreed as a strategy by all involved. It must be regularly reviewed, and plans made as soon as possible to move on to other strategies as appropriate

Incidences of seclusion must be logged using the schools' recording system (CPOMS).

Touch:

Corporal punishment is illegal and will never be used within school.

Contingent touch may be used appropriately in the appropriate context; e.g. a hug or a pat on the arm or shoulder for reassurance (as appropriate to child's age and stage of development) but staff must know how the child is likely to react as some may misinterpret this.

Holding (e.g. through arm walking etc.) may only be used as part of the approach by staff who are trained to this level and under the circumstances described in paragraph 5:10.

Children and young people with complex sensory needs may require more direct physical touch and contact; e.g. squeezing or deep pressure. This will be documented in sensory profiles and their consistent approach plans.

Fixed Term Exclusions:

Exclusions are not the most effective way to support children and young people with SEND. We will always try to adapt and personalise our provision in order to ensure that all can access education.

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to exclude a pupil for a fixed time, but this would always be considered very carefully. These circumstances may include:

1. Incidents where the safety of the pupil or student or that of others is seriously compromised and the occurrence is frequent or increasing in frequency and intensity.
2. Incidents of knife crime or use of other weapons.
3. Incidents of a sexual nature or sexual violence.
4. Incidents of significant damage to property.

Decisions to exclude children are made on an individual basis and will always be a reasonable, measured and considered response which will have an impact and be a learning opportunity for them.

Exclusions may be managed internally, and the child may be removed from class for a fixed period of time.

In the event that The Dales School cannot meet the needs of an individual child, we will work with families and the Local Authority to help identify a suitable placement for a managed transition.

Reporting and Recording Incidents:

Any behavioural incident must be recorded on CPOMS. This must include antecedents to the incident, the behaviour displayed by the pupil, the intervention used and the pupil's response to the intervention. Any injury to pupil, staff or property must also be included.

If a physical intervention was required, staff and pupils must be debriefed. SLT will then complete a record of all incidents to identify trends where necessary. Parents must be informed of any physical intervention necessary. The pupil's Consistent and Positive Approach Plan will be amended if required.

Monitoring and Compliance

Overall responsibility for the operation of the policy lies with the Head Teacher. The effectiveness of the policy will be formally reviewed and monitored as a minimum on an annual basis to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements of the school and that it reflects best practice and statutory legislation as appropriate. All consistent approach plans will be shared with the member of SLT responsible for Behaviour and attitudes.

Signed:

Ann Jolley

Chair of Governors