

## The Bridge SEN School Behaviour Policy

The Bridge SEN School is committed to providing an environment conducive for our students and staff to learn and work effectively. During their stay with us, students are required to conduct themselves in a responsible and mature manner. We believe that good behaviour is a necessary precondition for effective teaching and learning to take place. However, due to the nature of school and the support we provide for young adults with a range of mental health disabilities, we do recognise that difficult or challenging behaviour is usually the result of a few very specific challenges. Because every young person is unique, the challenge is different for each student. Our behaviour policy is based on the principles of Positive Handling and uses techniques associated with Emotion coaching.

There are many factors which influence behaviour. To encourage good behaviour in our learners we adopt a wide range of strategies. We recognise that all of the following influence and encourage behaviour.

### Aims

To give learners responsibility appropriate to their stage of development which helps to encourage confidence, skills, independence and a sense of community;

- For learners to take pride in their work and the school environment
- For learners to praise and encourage others and help build up their self esteem
- For learners to treat each other with respect regardless of sex, cultural or other differences
- To help learners develop a core of social skills and community values
- For learners to learn and allow others to learn
- For learners to understand themselves and develop the strategies to cope with anger disappointment, envy and failure
- For learners to try hard and persist with an activity
- For learners to share attention, equipment and friends
- For learners to use acceptable language
- To encourage self-motivation in learners rather than an emphasis on working only for rewards

- For achievement/ good behaviour to be emphasised, recognised and celebrated

## **Safeguarding and Legal Compliance**

**All behaviour support practices adhere to safeguarding principles and relevant legislation, including:**

- Equality Act (2010)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005)

## **SEND Code of Practice (2015) Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Head teacher**

The head teacher is responsible for reviewing this behaviour policy.

The head teacher and the senior leadership team will ensure that the school environment encourages positive behaviour and that staff deal effectively with poor behaviour and will monitor how staff implement this policy to ensure rewards and sanctions are applied consistently.

### **Educational Psychologist**

The educational psychologist is responsible for conducting interviews and observations with the aim of creating the final Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Plan

### **Teaching Staff**

Teaching staff are responsible for providing relevant input to the educational psychologist for the creation of the PBS. They are responsible for following the guidance provided in the PBS and ensuring all staff supporting the learner mentioned in the PBS are aware of the relevant guidance.

## **Staff**

All Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the behaviour policy effectively
- Abiding by the PBS guidance in their support of learners
- Modelling positive behaviour
- Providing a personalised approach to the specific behavioural needs of particular pupils
- Recording serious or ongoing behaviour incidents and reporting to appropriate member of senior leadership team
- Creating Risk assessments to ensure all those supporting the learners have taken all means necessary to minimise the chances of injury or damage.

## **Strategies**

To ensure learners adhere to the aims and ideals mentioned above The Bridge SEN School regularly monitors school routines to ensure all members of the school are familiar with all aspects of the school day.

Classroom decorum is maintained by the teachers and on occasion by the academic manager who may deem it necessary to participate within a class to observe the behaviour of learners or to assess the ability of the teacher to maintain discipline. Communication can be frustrating for autistic learners especially those who are non-verbal and so the teacher and classroom support staff will engage in a number of communicative methods to try and help the learner.

### ***Promoting Good Behaviour***

#### **Using Praise and Recognising Good Behaviour**

Praise is key to nurturing motivated, engaged learners who make good choices and consequently build positive relationships. It is important that young people who make good choices are recognised and praised.

Young people are encouraged to be polite and respectful towards others. This is encouraged and modelled by adults.

All members of staff are committed to using positive behaviour reinforcement by doing all we can to avoid humiliating a learner, overreacting or giving blanket punishment, instead we work on building positive relationships, and strive to use humour, keep calm and be positive. We get to know learners as individuals and try to leave a positive note after dealing with situations.

### ***Individual strategies***

Individual strategies for learners are covered in their PBS plans which are located in each learner's folder. Staff should consult these and ensure those who work with the learner for the first time are aware of them.

### ***Isolation and Restraint***

If a learner's challenging behaviour is too disruptive or potentially harmful for other learners or staff, it may be necessary to isolate them or in extreme situations to restrain them. Learners can go to the sensory room for a time out and this can be suggested to them or firmly stated. If a learner's behaviour becomes physically harmful or destructive, staff can employ positive handling or restraining techniques. Physical intervention and seclusion should only be considered once de-escalation techniques and other strategies have failed to calm the situation. These interventions are management strategies and are not regarded as primary techniques. When determining which intervention to employ, safety of other service users, staff should be taken into account.

This level of restraint can only be applied if there is evidence that the person is behaving in a way that:

- a) poses an imminent risk of danger to those in the immediate vicinity, e.g. other service users and/or members of staff
- b) means they are unable to receive urgent medical attention

Please see the school's Restraint policy for more information on restraint. Any decision to use force to control or restrain any learner should be made in accordance with the governmental guidance provided in [Use of reasonable force](#) created by the Department of Education.

### **Principles of Positive Behaviour Support**

PBS at the Bridge SEN School is grounded in the following principles:

- Person-centred: Individualised support that reflects each learner's strengths, preferences, and needs.
- Inclusive and Non-Judgemental: Every behaviour has a purpose; we seek to understand, not blame.
- Preventative and Proactive: Focused on preventing behaviours that challenge through environmental adjustments and skill-building.

- Empowerment and Co-production: Learners, families, and staff collaborate in the development and implementation of support plans.
- Least Restrictive Practice: We aim to reduce and, where possible, eliminate the need for restrictive interventions.

### **Understanding Behaviour**

Behaviour is recognised as a form of communication. Learners may use behaviour to express unmet needs, confusion, distress, or frustration.

Common underlying factors include:

- Communication difficulties
- Sensory sensitivities
- Pain or discomfort
- Environmental stressors
- Changes in routine or expectations

Staff are trained to observe, reflect, and analyse behaviour using functional assessment tools to understand its purpose.

### **Developing Support Plans**

Each learner with identified behaviour support needs will have an Individual Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBS Plan) which includes:

- Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)
- Zones of regulations and or Traffic light system
- Primary prevention strategies (e.g., environmental adaptations, schedules, sensory supports)
- Teaching and reinforcement of alternative behaviours
- Reactive strategies (only when necessary, least restrictive first)
- Wellbeing and emotional regulation strategies
- Crisis or risk management plans, where required
- Input from parents/carers and external professionals, where applicable

PBS Plans are reviewed at least termly or following any significant behavioural incidents.

### **Staff Training and Development**

All staff receive regular and ongoing training in:

- Understanding behaviour through a trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming lens
- Implementing PBS strategies
- De-escalation and conflict resolution techniques
- Safe and ethical use of physical interventions (where absolutely necessary), in line with the Restraint Reduction Network (RRN) standards and local authority guidance

Staff are supported through reflective supervision, team debriefs, and access to mental health and wellbeing resources.

### **Data Collection and Monitoring**

Incidents of behaviours that challenge are recorded consistently using [insert system, e.g., CPOMS / BehaviourWatch]. This includes:

- Antecedent, Behaviour, and Consequence (ABC)
- Information Patterns and frequency of incidents
- Effectiveness of interventions

Data is analysed to inform support planning, identify trends, and improve outcomes. Senior leaders monitor and report trends to governors and the local authority, where appropriate.

### **Partnership with Families**

Families are integral partners in supporting behaviour. We ensure:

- Regular communication regarding behavioural progress and plans
- Opportunities for training and workshops
- Collaborative reviews of PBS plans
- Respect for family insights, culture, and expertise in their child's needs.

### **Interfering behaviour**

Interfering behaviour varies among students with Autism and can range from mild, periodic vocal outbursts to inappropriate sexual touching. These behaviours disrupt the child's day-to-day activities and prevent positive interactions with other people. Such behaviour can include but is not limited to the following:

- Attempting to or actually going to the toilet in non-designated places
- Public disrobing
- Refusal to cooperate to perform a task (eat, get dressed, play a game, do homework)
- Running from the authority figure at home, in public, at school
- Eating non-edible items such as paper, erasers, soap
- Making loud noises when quiet is expected
- Laughing at inappropriate social times

### **Challenging behaviour**

Challenging behaviour can be defined as interfering behaviour that is more disruptive or potentially harmful to the student or those around them. Interfering behaviour can sometimes escalate into challenging behaviour so staff need to be vigilant of all behaviour in the classroom.

This can include but is not limited to:

- Destroying property
- Self-harming behaviour (banging one's head on a wall, and other self-harming actions)
- Physical assault or aggressive behaviour
- Sexualised behaviour (unwanted physical contact, public masturbation)
- Incontinence & public urination or defecation

All examples of challenging behaviour should whenever possible be recorded in the observation book as this could provide guidance for triggers or methods of managing the student in the future. Any occasion of challenging behaviour requires the completion of an incident report (appendix 1) which must be forwarded to the academic manager, school Principal and the Local authorities. Please see below for the procedure for handling challenging behaviour that occurs in the classroom. Appendix 2 provides a diagram of this.

### **Autistic Learners**

Challenging behaviour is often common among young people diagnosed with Autism. It may be caused by anxiety and stress, sensory processing differences, underlying medical conditions, and specific situations that the person finds distressing. Every person with Autism is unique and so the treatment and support of each person is similarly unique. Please see the school's Autism policy for more information about how we support Autistic learners.

### **Persistent Poor Behaviour**

Where there are on-going concerns about a child's behaviour, parents will be informed. It is important that home and school work together to identify the cause of the behaviour and ways to address it.

This can include:

- Parent/carer meeting with the class teacher and or member of SLT
- Referral for assessment of underlying need which might be affecting behaviour, for example:
- hearing
- eyesight
- speech and language
- Team around the child, to include any professionals working with the child

- Drawing up of a behaviour plan with objectives agreed by parents, school and child

## Exclusions

Very rarely it may be necessary to exclude a learner as a result of bullying behaviour. This can be:

- Internal exclusion where a child is excluded from their classroom for a fixed period of time. This will be supervised by the head teacher or the SENCO

Exclusion from school, which can be:

- For a lunchtime only
- For a fixed period (e.g. 3 days)
- For an indefinite period
- Permanent

Parents are always notified of the reason for and length of exclusion and have the right to appeal against exclusion to the Governing Body. The Head teacher is responsible for decisions regarding exclusion from school.

## The Procedure for managing challenging behaviour followed:

1. If any challenging behaviour is demonstrated, the staff will first attempt to communicate with the learners to discover the source of the problem. The staff can also employ distraction and de-escalate techniques to reduce the situation. They should encourage the student verbally to sit down or to remain calm.
2. If the behaviour persists or seems to be escalating, the teachers or assistants should encourage or guide the learner to go to the sensory/chill out room to calm down or have a time out. Alternatively, the student can be taken into the community with a member of staff to allow them to calm down in the fresh air.
3. If the behaviour escalates, and/or the student refuses to go to the sensory room, the priority should be to ensure the safety of any other nearby learners. Any other student is at risk, should be encouraged to move from the area surrounding the disruptive learner.
4. If the disruptive behaviour continues, the staff will employ more assertive dissuasive tactics verbally or with signs to establish that the student is acting inappropriately and may provide means through which the student can communicate how they are feeling. Digital device, emotion chart or Pecs.

5. If a student becomes violent towards any member of staff or him/herself, or destructive to any furniture or classroom equipment staff trained in positive handling, in accordance with [Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), can attempt reasonable force to restrain the student. Restraining a violent student can be dangerous and distressing for the student so staff should only attempt this as a last resort and no staff should attempt positive handling alone unless there is clear risk to themselves or another learner. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. Please see The Bridge SEN School restraint policy for more information.

6. If it is deemed acceptable for the learner to rejoin the class once their challenging behaviour has subsided, they may do so. However, if they are still unsettled they will be advised to go to the sensory room or taken into the community with two members of staff and a driver if required, and they will be kept occupied with community activities until the end of school. The student's parent/guardian will be informed of the student's behaviour.

7. Any incident is recorded and an incident report must be sent to the director and student's social worker within 24 hours of the incident (please see Appendix 1 for the Incident/Accident report at the end of this policy).

8. Following the incident staff should meet and discuss the trigger of the challenging behaviour and discuss strategies on how to prevent the occurrence from happening again.

### **Training for staff on how to Manage Challenging Behaviour**

All staff at the Bridge are given autism awareness training, communication training, de-escalation training and Positive Handling training.

This training includes:

#### **Section 1: Legal Briefing**

1. Reasonable force, including Common Law and Section 3 (1) Criminal Law 1967
2. Human Rights Legislation, in particular Article 2 regarding the right to life
3. Health and Safety at Work legislation, duty of employers and employees under Section 2,3 & 7 of Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
4. Education and Inspection Act, 2006 where applicable

5. Recognizing and preventing positional asphyxia
6. Clarification of techniques that should not be used following DfE guidance
7. Instruction and practice if approved "low risk" Positive Handling safe holding and restraint techniques.

### **Behaviour Monitoring Tool**

The Bridge SEN School uses BEHCA (Behavior, Environment, Health, Communication, and Activities) tool to effectively monitor and support individuals through behaviour tracking.

BEHCA enables staff to log detailed behaviour observations, identify environmental or health-related triggers, and track patterns over time. The tool supports informed decision-making and contributes to the development of personalised support strategies.

To enable us to deploy a **data-informed approach that enhances the well-being and development of individuals receiving care or support.**

Staff are required to:

- Log in securely to the BEHCA platform.
- Accurately record behavioural incidents, including context before, during, and after the behaviour.
- Tag and categorise observations for effective data analysis.
- Use BEHCA's reporting features to identify trends and inform team discussions and support plan updates.
- Maintain strict confidentiality and data protection standards.
- Complete initial and ongoing BEHCA training to ensure consistent and competent use of the tool.

### **Support for staff if in a challenging situation**

Dealing with challenging behaviour can be distressing or even physically injurious for staff involved in such care. A PBS plan and risk assessment is created for each learner at the Bridge and the student's EHCP is available for all students working with the learner to view. For more information about challenging students in the Bridge SEN School please consult the Challenging Student Policy.

## **Injuries and Damages**

It is possible that injuries and damages to property may be caused by challenging behaviour. In the case of injury that prevents a staff member from working temporarily, the incident must be documented and the accounts department informed so that their injured staff member is paid during their convalescence. Serious injuries that require longer to recover from may require a sustained absence from the school. In such cases the school's procedure for sickness and absence should be followed and a Return to Work Meeting will be required. The school's Staff Sickness Policy should be consulted for more information.

The school is not responsible for damage done to staff's personal property. The school's Classroom Policy has more details on personal property in the school.

While the School will take all reasonable attempts to make good minor damages caused to school premises (such as re-fixing door handles, knobs, repairing drawers, cabinets etc.) through students' challenging behaviour, the family and funding authorities will be accountable to compensate for all other damages. While all precautions will be taken to prevent learners from causing damage in the community or in public places, the behaviour of learners can be unpredictable and it is possible that damage may be caused. Damage done by learners in the community is not the school's responsibility but rather the responsibility of the family or the local authorities that placed and funds the individual learner unless clearly stated otherwise in a signed written agreement with clear terms presented.

## **Child on Child abuse and Bullying**

Child on Child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others. All staff should recognise that young people are capable of abusing their peers. All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from peer abuse including:

- bullying (including online bullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment

- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

This kind of abuse can be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences that result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm. Staff, alongside the safeguarding officer have to make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

### **Racist, Homophobic and Bullying Incidents**

Racist, homophobic or bullying incidents are not tolerated at The Bridge SEN School and are dealt with accordingly. Please see our Anti-bullying policies for more information on this.

### **RECORD KEEPING**

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Information will be kept confidential and stored securely. Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated and The Bridge SEN School may decide to pursue disciplinary action against the individual who made their allegation. Founded allegations will be passed on to the police and will result in a termination of employment. THE BRIDGE SEN SCHOOL will also inform the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) to ensure accurate records are kept. Records of founded and unfounded allegations should be retained and reviewed if new evidence comes to light.

The Bridge SEN School is also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. The academic manager is responsible for updating this policy.

Updated December 2025

Next update due December 2026

## Appendix 1

|  |              |                   |                           |                         |
|--|--------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>A. Nature of Incident</b>   |              |                   |                           |                         |
| <b>Bruise</b>  | <b>Fall</b>  | <b>Fire</b>       | <b>Break in</b>           | <b>Physical Assault</b> |
| <b>Verbal abuse</b>  | <b>Death</b> | <b>Ill health</b> | <b>(Other (describe):</b> |                         |
| <b>B. Location and time of incident</b>                                    |              |                   |                           |                         |
| Date:  |              |                   |                           |                         |
| Time:  |              |                   |                           |                         |
| <b>C. Name of person directly involved</b>                                 |              |                   |                           |                         |
| Name:  |              |                   |                           |                         |
| DOB:   |              |                   |                           |                         |
| <b>D. Events prior to incident</b>   |              |                   |                           |                         |
| .  |              |                   |                           |                         |
| <b>E. Details of incident &amp; descriptions of any injuries or damage</b> |              |                   |                           |                         |
| <b>F. Action taken by staff</b>  |              |                   |                           |                         |

**G. Post incident**

**H. Action plan**

**I. What could have been done differently?**

Report completed by:

Date:

Signed by manager:

## Appendix 2

### Procedure to follow when Challenging behaviour occurs

