

# **The New School at West Heath**

## **Policy on Promoting Positive Behaviour**

This policy is central to everything we do in the school. It functions as a spine into which all the other policies fit as ribs. Therefore this policy should be read in conjunction with all the other policy documents; the Guidance in the staff manual – “What ifs?”, the Agreed code of conduct and Classroom rules.

### **Introduction**

All of the students who come to The New School at West Heath have social and emotional needs that prevent them from attending mainstream schools. Very often our students have previously found behavioural outlets for their distress and suffering which are not socially acceptable. We make an assumption in our school that all behaviour will be good; problems are in the past and we are all - parents, students and staff - pulling in the same direction towards the student's success and happiness. We encourage positive behaviour by valuing everybody - staff, students, and parents alike. Our belief is that unacceptable behaviour is nearly always best dealt with by using an approach, which looks behind the behaviour to take account of the emotional causes, which lie behind it. We also use a system of rewards and praise to encourage good behaviour and sanctions to discourage behaviours that are interfering with the safety, happiness, and/or learning of an individual student or his/her group. However, if it transpires that a student will not conform to the Code of Rights and Responsibilities in our school to the extent that the safety of our school community cannot be guaranteed, then the student concerned may be permanently excluded.

### **Aims & Objectives:**

- To ensure our School is a safe and happy learning environment for all.
- To ensure staff feel supported and confident as effective teachers.
- To ensure that staff have a consistent approach in dealing with students' behaviour.
- To ensure students recognise and understand their rights and responsibilities and work with us in changing their behaviour.
- To actively promote good behaviour and to assist students to overcome the emotional problems underlying unacceptable behaviour, thereby developing self-awareness and self-control.
- To reverse the often long-term histories of negativity and failure and to equip students to become stronger and more responsible citizens.

## **Strategies:**

### **1. Expectations:**

Our students are expected to show respect and courtesy for themselves, their peers, the staff, the community, and the premises/facilities of our School through their words and actions. Teaching staff should be addressed formally and students should treat staff and each other with the same courtesy which they expect to receive. They should obey requests and instructions from staff. They should follow the code of conduct agreed at the School Council. They should work within the constraints of previously agreed safe practice. They should tidy up after themselves. They should not use offensive or overly familiar language. They are expected to arrive promptly to lessons, keep movement around the teaching space to that which is appropriate and explained, and never leave a classroom or The New School at West Heath premises without authorisation from a member of staff. They are expected to follow the agreed code of conduct negotiated with individual teachers for their classrooms and teaching areas.

Staff are expected to show by example the standards of behaviour expected from students. They should dress appropriately and treat students with the same respect and good manners, which they expect in return. They should follow the rules of prevention consistently and deal with students who do not meet expected standards of behaviour promptly and according to the guidelines set down in this policy document. They should encourage and reward good behaviour from students and avoid confrontational approaches to unacceptable behaviour whenever possible, looking past the behaviour to try to find its emotional source. They should always disapprove of the bad behaviour, not the student, whose low self-esteem is often a partial cause of the behaviour in the first place.

### **2. Prevention:**

Unacceptable behaviour in the classroom is discouraged and incidents are often prevented by teachers following the rules of prevention:

1. All staff are expected to be ready on time and in the classroom to receive each class with a lesson prepared which achieves balance, pace, and differentiation.
2. Staff are expected to make appropriate arrangements for an orderly entrance to the classroom, for seating and movement.
3. Staff are aware of the individual personalities, learning styles, and needs of the students as well as the social dynamics within each teaching group (from baseline assessments, information drawn from Personal Challenges and each individual students' Individual Education and Care Plan IECP). They are expected to take them into account in the planning and delivery of lessons.
4. Each lesson has an introduction and conclusion and starts and finishes on time. Homework is assigned regularly in each subject in line with the subject policies and the overall School Homework Policy.
5. All behavioural problems are anticipated (as far as is possible) and defused as quickly as possible when they arise using the agreed

strategies set out in this policy document. Students who are known to exhibit particularly unacceptable behaviour in certain lessons may be given time with a Teaching Assistant during those lessons.

Unacceptable behaviour during breaks and before and after school hours is discouraged and prevented by providing activities during breaks designed to capture student's interest and keep them constructively occupied. Computer games and music are available in the common rooms and there is a lunch-time club programme. Staff supervise according to a duty rota which is posted in the staff room. Students known to antagonise each other are either kept apart or engaged with by an adult with the intention of trying to resolve their differences.

Students who board with us are similarly expected to meet our expectations for good behaviour. Care staff and students have developed their own system for recognising and celebrating good behaviour and managing unacceptable behaviour, which is entirely congruent with our school's philosophy.

Students are much more likely to follow rules they understand and believe to be fair. The behaviour expected of students and the School's rules are discussed and reviewed regularly in whole school assemblies. All students are issued with a hand-book when they join our school which contains, among other things the agreed code of conduct. Rules are kept to a minimum and these are explained during each new student's induction programme. However, if students believe a rule should be changed or reviewed, they may submit a proposal via the Student Council to be considered by the staff at a staff meeting. Management decisions are final. Students are encouraged to make suggestions via a suggestions box, through the Head Boy and Head Girl, and also directly to the Principal.

An atmosphere of mutual respect which encourages good behaviour is created by valuing everyone. We show that students, and in deed all members of the West Heath community, are valued by celebrating birthdays and social/sporting/etc. achievements outside the School as well as within it. All students may attend the student council where they can air their views and concerns. Students may discuss their problems with their staff contacts, Key Worker (if boarding) or registration teacher. Students are entered for SATs and any public exams in which they have a likelihood of success and encouraged at every step.

We show parents they are valued as partners in their child's education by keeping them up to date on student's progress by phone calls and parents' evenings. Parents also contribute to reviews and IECP's for their children. We encourage them to attend certificate and prize-giving ceremonies, and welcome them into the School at any time. A regular news bulletin is produced to keep parents up to date with developments and there are occasional lunches

### **3. Approaches:**

1) *Rewarding good behaviour.* Showing care, concern, and approval are very successful rewards for positive behaviour and effort. The need for praise and recognition is within us all and the vast majority of our students will have

experienced very little, if any, of either. Positive behaviours such as work effort and presentation, kindness, helping others, manners, self-control, good attendance, academic achievement, and good leadership all receive positive reinforcement through the use of discretionary rewards. Discretionary rewards available are smiles, words of praise/approval, "merits", praise from Principal or Senior Members of Staff, displays of good work in the classrooms and corridors, and progress reports/letters to parents. Merits may be exchanged for rewards advertised in online "catalogue". There are a number of subject awards given at the annual Prize-giving for various types of progress and effort. Records of Achievement and Progress Reports are also given out then. AEB and GCSE certificates are given out at a second annual celebration of achievement. Staff may nominate students for a range of special awards, which are presented in the whole school assemblies. We have "Boarder of the month" award and Head Boy and Head Girl appointed to last three terms on a rotating basis.

2) *Managing unacceptable behaviour.* It is the responsibility of the teacher to deal with breaches of expected standards of behaviour using the following incremental steps: Within lessons:

- a) Re-direct the student to the task at hand allowing take up time.
- b) Re-state the re-direction and ask if the student needs assistance to complete the task.
- c) Remind the student of the expected standard of behaviour, explain why it is necessary, and ask him/her to comply or to ask for assistance if needed. (This should be done quietly if possible so the student does not feel embarrassed to ask for assistance if it is needed.)
- d) Give student the choice to return to task or face further sanctions such as a lunchtime detention to catch up on work missed.
- e) Apply the appropriate action, probably from the list below:
  - Move the student to another seat.
  - Take away any object he/she is misusing (to return at end of the session).
  - Ask the student to stay on at the end of the lesson - or to see you during a named break to discuss what can be done to improve the situation. (If this option is chosen, you must actually see the student, find out what caused the behaviour, and assign a task to try to prevent it happening in future. This task could be homework if the problem has to do with work or some sort of "community service" within the School. If a such a task is not appropriate, the student's parents may be called to discuss the behaviour.)
  - If a student leaves a lesson, depending upon their risk assessment, they should be ignored at that stage and security staff should be notified to ensure the student remains within the school grounds. The teacher concerned should follow up the incident with the student concerned when they can look to a resolution of whatever problem the student is experiencing.

- Place the student in a lunchtime detention to either catch up with missed work or reflect upon the reasons why they are being detained. If the student fails to attend, they are automatically placed in detention for a longer period of time with a senior member of staff.

If at any time during this procedure the student becomes verbally or physically abusive towards another student or the teacher, or if he/she poses a physical danger to him/herself, a Teaching Assistant or another student is asked to contact a senior member of staff. The senior member of staff then asks the student whose behaviour is causing concern to go with him/her out of the lesson. If it should ever happen that a student refuses to leave a lesson and continues to pose a danger to him/herself or others, the teacher will remove the rest of the class, leaving the senior member of staff to deal with the student's behaviour within the classroom.

(f) More serious breaches of the standards of expected behaviour result in the student being asked to leave the lesson immediately, accompanied by a Teaching Assistant who will ensure the student concerned works away from the group until such a time as they can return to either the teacher or the lesson. Senior members of staff are involved when this strategy proves unhelpful and unproductive. Other staff may be informed of the incident in the daily Staff Notes on the computer in the staff room. They are also recorded, the record sheet being attached to the individual student's chart in the staff meeting room, where others may read of the incident. Serious incidents and/or significant observations are recorded by a senior member of staff involved for inclusion in the student's file.

All students have negotiated targets, either academic, behaviour or a strength on which to build. These are identified through our personal challenges and IECP process. Students who repeatedly exhibit disruptive or otherwise unacceptable behaviour are discussed at a staff meeting and specific individualised behaviour targets are devised in consultation with parents and the student for inclusion in the student's IECP. These students will usually receive Teaching Assistant support during lessons which pose particular problems.

Intransigent cases of poor behaviour will be taken to one of our weekly staff meetings for discussion and resolution.

Outside lessons, and in our boarding facility, the responsibility for dealing with minor breaches of the standards of expected behaviour belongs to our care staff. Students should first be asked if they need assistance and then be reminded of expected standards of behaviour, why they exist, and asked to follow them. They should be given a second chance to choose to comply with the expected standards of behaviour before further sanctions are imposed. Failure to comply at this point results in an appropriate sanction, probably chosen from this list:

- Sitting alone during break, supervised by a member of staff
- An appointment with a senior member of staff to discuss the behaviour
- Some sort of "community service"

- A period of detention
- A telephone call to the student's parents to discuss the behaviour. This will be logged.
- A conference with parent to discuss progress

Incidents vary by degree and by motivation and are dealt with accordingly. Each case will be judged individually according to the prevailing circumstances and the pupil's needs. It would be inappropriate, for example, to punish a student who has a history of refusing to attend school with a suspension or exclusion. Below is a table of serious offences which will not go unchecked.

<b>Behaviour</b>
Interference with another student's work
Damaging the property of others including vandalism and graffiti
Intimidation or bullying including racist or sexist behaviour
Stealing
Smoking
Drinking alcohol or solvent abuse
Violence towards another student or member of staff
Behaviour which puts the student or others in physical danger e.g. starting fires, running off, selling drugs etc.

Sanctions used by staff dealing with breaches of the standards of expected behaviour may include breaktime, lunchtime and after school detention, exclusion of the student from certain lessons to work in internal exclusion.

Our school uses a sanctions book to record the details of students who are excluded from our school. Additionally, we maintain a detention book to record and monitor youngsters who have been detained for specific period during their social time and both of these records are transferred to each students' individual file. All other responses to poor behaviour fall within the remit of this policy and are recorded in each individual student's file. Files are regularly monitored by a senior member of staff.

3) *Restraint:* We have a separate policy dealing with restraint called Positive Handling. As a general principle, the use of restraint is overwhelmingly against the ethos of our school and that staff will continue to use other methods to deflect possible violent situations. This has proved the most successful approach. The security team, based in the gate lodge, who are responsible for protecting us from intruders have been asked to talk down any senior child trying to leave the premises but not to physically restrain students unless absolutely necessary and the student is in immediate danger of harm to themselves or others.

### **Staffing and Resources:**

All staff have equal responsibility for ensuring the safety and good behaviour of our youngsters. All staff have the authority to apply the sanctions and rewards outlined in the sections above.

The Principal, Vice Principals and Senior Teachers have responsibility for the setting, monitoring, and reviewing of policy; for dealing with major breaches of the expected standards of behaviour as outlined in the sections above; and for liaising with parents and external agencies. All staff, particularly staff contacts and key workers are encouraged to ring parents with good news and to develop informal caring links with families especially those of their contact student.

Teaching Assistants have the responsibility for supporting students with behaviours which repeatedly pose problems in certain lessons. They play a part in supervision outside lessons and with their less formal relationships can provide a great deal of guidance and help towards appropriate behaviour.

Registration teachers have the responsibility for ensuring behavioural targets are included in students' IECP's. Time is allocated for this during the registration and tutor period at the start of the day or afternoon. Target setting will involve consultation with other staff, parents, and the student). Targets are monitored continually and reviewed every half-term.

We regard all resources as related to behaviour management either directly or indirectly since that is at the heart of everything we do. There is a staff library containing useful books, videos and magazines and we have regular staff training days.

#### **External links:**

Parents with children experiencing difficulties are often on the defensive. They feel responsible for the problems and have not heard good things about their children from some considerable time. We need to reverse this, to applaud their efforts and to get them on our side. Always looking for the positive will make it much easier to find opportunities for praise.

Parents are regarded as integral to the process of behaviour management within our School. They are kept up-to-date with students' progress, consulted on target setting and reviews, and are encouraged to share concerns about students' behaviour at home as well as at school with senior staff to give better insight into the student's emotional problems and potential causes/solutions.

There are regular multidisciplinary Reviews with medical, psychiatric, psychological, social worker and educational welfare officer input, where appropriate. External counsellors, volunteers and therapists also make a regular contribution to the life of our school.

The school nurse is involved in giving the pupils information about personal hygiene and sex education.

Inset days on behaviour management and effective learning are held regularly which sometimes involve external trainers and consultants.

**Promoting Positive Behaviour**

**This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:**  
Drugs, Exclusions, Anti Bullying

**Appendices:**

**Monitoring of Policy Implementation is the responsibility of:**  
The Senior Leadership Team

**Lead responsibility:** Vice Principal – Student & Staff Welfare

**Relevant Legislation:** To be detailed in the next release

**Annual Policy Review Required:** Yes / No

**Approved by:** S.S. Committee

**Date approved:**

**Ratified by:** Trustees

**Date ratified:** 10/2003

**Reviewed – no changes**

**Date:**

**Reviewed – with revisions**

**Date:**

**Revision No.**

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