

WILDS LODGE SCHOOL

A STATEMENT OF OUR AIMS AND PURPOSES

Date of issue: September 2025

Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review Date: September 2026

Wilds Lodge School is part of Newcome Education, which is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its learners and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of our policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Wilds Lodge School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility updated August 2023](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not

- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person – this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the young person, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the young person.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR
- Peninsula Business Safe (Health and Safety)
- Atlantic Data (DBS)
- Educare (online CPD)
- SchoolPro (data protection)
- Marsh Commercial (insurance)

Where this policy refers to ‘employees’, the term refers to any individual that is classified as an employee or a worker, working with and on behalf of the school (including volunteers and contractors).

Wilds Lodge School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Wilds Lodge School.

The policy documents of Wilds Lodge School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

General Aims, Purposes and Core Values

At the heart of Wilds Lodge School are six core values that guide how we work with our learners and each other: **Authenticity, Connection, Curiosity, Empowerment, Positivity, and Tolerance**. These values shape our daily practice and provide a clear framework for decision-making, relationships, and professional conduct.

We recognise that the journeys of our learners are rarely straightforward. By combining proactive planning with flexible, responsive practice, we create opportunities for both individual and collective success. Our aim is always to empower learners to build confidence, resilience, and positive futures.

- **Authenticity:** We encourage honesty, consistency, and genuine self-expression, while maintaining respect for others and the school community.
- **Connection:** We prioritise relationships, valuing connection before correction wherever possible, and building a culture of belonging.
- **Curiosity:** We see behaviour as communication and use curiosity to understand, learn, and grow together.
- **Empowerment:** We promote independence and positive decision-making, supporting learners to take ownership of their choices.
- **Positivity:** We focus on strengths and solutions, helping learners to develop resilience and a sense of achievement.
- **Tolerance:** We accept each learner as an individual, showing compassion and patience while setting clear, fair boundaries.

These values underpin our professional ethos, ensuring that care, education, and therapy are delivered as part of a balanced, high-quality provision.

Key Aims and Practices

Our approach to child care is progressive, personalised, and centred on the whole learner. Emotional, physical, social, educational, and therapeutic needs are seen as equally important and interlinked.

Wilds Lodge School can accommodate up to **120 learners**, both male and female, through a mix of day placements and boarding. Up to **70 learners may board**, currently limited to male pupils. We are a school first and foremost, but our boarding provision enhances outcomes by providing consistency, stability, and opportunities for personal growth. All learners—day or boarding—are treated with equity, respect, and the same high standards of care and opportunity.

Boarding Provision

We offer Monday–Friday boarding during term time, across five houses on three sites. Each house caters to a specific key stage, with responsibilities and independence increasing as learners move up the school. Homes are safe, homely, and well-maintained, with shared kitchens, lounges, and bathrooms to support community living and independence.

The Impact of Boarding

Boarding contributes to learners' social, emotional, and personal development within a 24-hour wraparound provision. It provides opportunities to practise life skills, build friendships, and access a wide range of activities both on-site and in the wider community. For day pupils and boarders alike, residential life complements the school day, reinforcing a consistent ethos and supporting resilience, confidence, and wellbeing.

Partnership with Families

We place strong emphasis on maintaining and strengthening family connections. Wherever possible, we work with families and carers to support reintegration into home and, when appropriate, mainstream education. Partnership with parents and carers is a central feature of our practice, as it reinforces a learner's sense of identity and belonging.

Standards of Care

We are committed to providing high-quality physical care, with living spaces that are clean, attractive, and respectful of learners' dignity. Our practice is rooted in unconditional positive regard: accepting each learner as a valued individual while setting clear expectations around behaviour.

Individualised Approach

We are anti-institutional in philosophy and practice. Learners are treated as individuals, with personalised care plans that identify goals, track progress, and adapt to changing needs. Group living is balanced with respect for individuality, ensuring each learner's "world view" is heard and respected.

Professional Practice

Care staff are trained practitioners. All staff are supported through professional development and supervision, working as part of one integrated team with education and therapy colleagues. This ensures a consistent, reflective approach across all areas of school life (see [Appendix](#) for Reflective Practice). Staff receive 1:1 supervision from their direct line manager on a termly basis (see [Appendix](#) for Staffing Structure).

All boarding staff are required to complete their Level 3 NVQ qualification in Health & Social Care (or relevant equivalent).

Therapeutic Support – Key Aims and Purposes

Therapeutic support is woven into the daily life of Wilds Lodge School. Our integrated model ensures that education, care, and therapy work together, enabling learners to thrive both academically and emotionally.

Integrated Approach

Therapeutic input is available through individual sessions, group work, and classroom integration. Teachers, care staff, and therapists work in partnership, ensuring strategies are consistent across school and residential settings. This prevents over-reliance on any one individual and prepares learners for life beyond school.

Access to Therapies

Where identified in co-production meetings, learners have access to Creative Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Educational Psychology. Younger learners also benefit from sensory spaces and daily sensory circuits.

Whole-School Therapeutic Ethos

We view all staff as therapeutic facilitators. Therapy is not confined to specialist sessions but underpins all interactions. Every staff member contributes to helping learners regulate, reflect, and build resilience.

Trauma-Informed Practice

We use trauma-informed approaches, including the PACE model (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy – see [Appendix](#)), Sherwood, and the Two Hands model of care to understand behaviour, foster safety, and support healing. This enables learners to explore thoughts and feelings in a secure, supportive context. Whole school training has been delivered this academic year in the above practices.

Professional Boundaries

Staff maintain appropriate “therapeutic distance”—supportive and caring while remaining professional. This balance ensures we guide learners with skill, consistency, and objectivity.

Role Models and Restorative Work

Staff act as positive role models, teaching through example. A key aim of our therapeutic work is restorative (see [Appendix](#)): helping learners develop healthier self-understanding, stronger relationships, and increased responsibility for their choices.

Levels of Intervention

Support is offered at three levels:

- Universal: Whole-school therapeutic support (including Personal Support Work for each learner) Individual therapy
- Targeted: Group therapeutic support
- Specific: Individual, time bound support.

This layered model ensures that every learner receives the right level of help at the right time.

Educational Programme – Key Aims and Purposes

Education at Wilds Lodge School is integral to the whole learner experience. Our goal is not only to meet curriculum requirements but also to use education as a tool for building confidence, resilience, and positive identity.

Learning and Psychological Growth

We recognise that many learners arrive with a “failure identity” from past school experiences. Our priority is to replace this with a sense of success. Achievement in the classroom contributes directly to self-esteem, emotional growth, and social competence.

Integration with Therapy and Care

Education is closely linked with care and therapeutic work. Insights from therapy inform classroom practice, while challenges in class can be supported through therapeutic intervention. This integrated approach ensures that emotional needs and subject learning are addressed together.

Classroom Environment

We strive to make classrooms peaceful, structured, and stimulating, giving learners the safety they need to take risks and achieve. Small class groups (typically 2:8 staff/student ratio) allow for personalised support and strong relationships between staff and learners.

Curriculum and Accreditation

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated to meet individual needs while aligning with the National Curriculum. Learners are supported to achieve external accreditation, including GCSE, BTEC, NCFE, City & Guilds, and Entry Level qualifications. Academic expectations are high but realistic, balancing ambition with an understanding of each learner’s emotional needs.

Preparing for the Future

At Key Stage 4, learners access work experience and college taster courses to build independence and prepare for transition beyond school. Where possible, reintegration into mainstream education is considered in partnership with families and local authorities.

Assessment and Review

Progress is tracked systematically, with EHCPs reviewed annually and learning plans adapted as needed. This ensures education remains personalised, purposeful, and responsive to each learner’s development.

Physical Environment

We are committed to providing learners with high-quality environments that meet their individual needs with safety and dignity at the centre. Our homes, classrooms, and shared spaces are spacious, well presented, and carefully maintained, guided by the principle: *“we give the children the best because they deserve the best.”*

Both of our sites offer abundant outdoor space, with woodlands, farmland, and natural play areas that create calming, restorative surroundings. These environments give learners the freedom to move, explore, and regulate themselves in ways that suit them—whether through quiet reflection, active play, or simply enjoying nature.

We aim to minimise any sense of institutionalisation. Learners are encouraged to enjoy a natural freedom to roam within safe boundaries, with staff support nearby or at a respectful distance as needed. At the same time, we must carefully manage sensitive information, confidential situations, and the dignity of all learners. For this reason, some areas such as offices and staff-only spaces are secured with keys and electronic fobs to ensure controlled access.

In rare cases, during escalating situations, doors may need to be locked temporarily to keep children safe from one another. Such measures are used only when essential, and always for the shortest time possible.

All our staff are provided training in Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) through Sherwood (see [Appendix](#)), a trauma-informed model of relationship management. This is complemented by the Two Hands model of parenting and the PACE approach (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy), which together support staff to build strong, therapeutic relationships with learners.

Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. All staff receive induction and ongoing training in safeguarding practice, underpinned by **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**. This ensures a shared commitment to promoting the welfare, safety, and dignity of every learner.

By designing spaces that are both beautiful and practical, and by equipping staff with the right training, we ensure that every child has room to thrive in a setting that balances freedom, safety, and care.

Conclusion

This Statement of Purpose brings together the values, aims, and practices that define Wilds Lodge School. Our integrated approach to education, care, and therapy is designed to support learners with SEMH and ASC in a way that is safe, nurturing, and aspirational.

We are committed to:

- Providing beautiful, spacious environments that promote dignity, freedom, and safety.
- Embedding therapeutic practice across all areas of school life, underpinned by trauma-informed models such as PBS, PACE, and the Two Hands approach.
- Offering personalised education that combines academic progress with emotional growth and resilience.
- Maintaining high standards of care and safeguarding, with staff fully trained and supported in their professional development.
- Working in partnership with families, carers, and professionals to ensure continuity, consistency, and the best possible outcomes for each learner.

While our learners face significant challenges, we hold fast to the belief that every child deserves the opportunity to succeed, grow, and find joy in learning and life. This Statement reflects our professional commitment to providing that opportunity every day, for every learner in our care.

Appendix 1: Reflective Practice

Donald Schön once defined reflective practice as “*the ability to reflect on one’s actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning.*” This concept goes far beyond a quick review of what happened in a day — it is a deliberate and ongoing process of pausing, looking back at our actions, examining our decisions, and using that insight to guide future behaviour.

In professional, practice-based roles — especially in education, care, and support settings — reflective practice is not optional. It is the foundation for improving the quality of our work, making better-informed choices, and ensuring we remain responsive to the needs of those we serve.

Engaging in reflection requires openness and honesty with ourselves. It means asking:

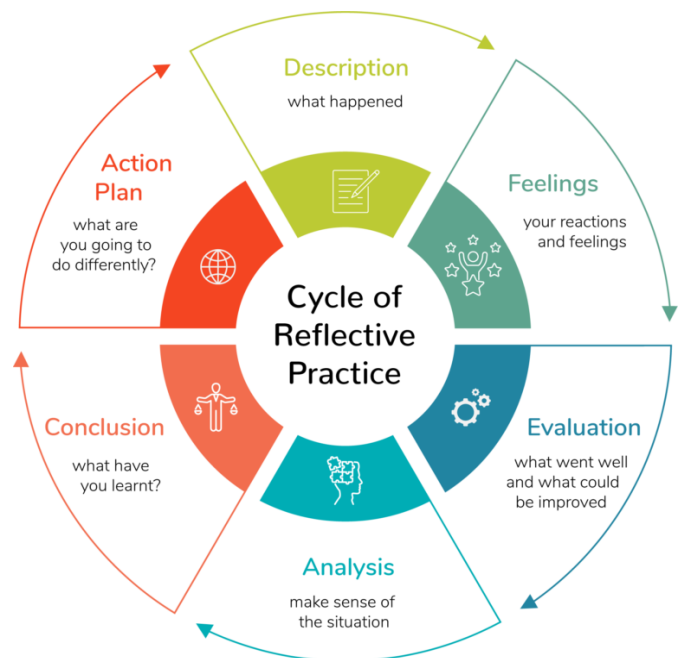
- *Why did I choose that approach?*
- *How did it affect others?*
- *What could I have done differently?*
- *What did I learn from this experience?*

The benefits are wide-reaching. Regular reflection strengthens our ability to justify our decisions, helping us avoid autopilot thinking. It deepens connections between our learning experiences, personal values, and professional assumptions, enabling us to work more intentionally. It also broadens our perspective by inviting us to consider the viewpoints of others — for example, understanding a student’s strengths and challenges, or learning from a colleague’s alternative strategy.

Over time, reflective practice builds self-awareness, which is central to emotional intelligence. It enhances empathy, fuels creative problem-solving, and encourages active engagement in our work rather than passive routine.

Philosopher John Dewey described three attitudes that underpin effective reflection:

1. **Open-mindedness** – Being willing to hear new evidence, see different points of view, and accept that we may have been mistaken. It involves letting go of the need to be “right” and focusing on understanding instead of winning arguments.



2. **Responsibility** – Acknowledging that our actions carry consequences, both seen and unseen, and taking ownership of how they impact others.

3. **Wholeheartedness** – Approaching every situation as a learning opportunity and believing there is always more to discover.

By weaving these attitudes into our day-to-day work, reflective practice becomes more than a task – it becomes a mindset that shapes our professional identity

Appendix 2: PACE

PACE, created by Dr. Dan Hughes, is a model that combines **Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy** into a way of interacting that helps learners feel safe, understood, and valued. Originally developed for attachment-focused family therapy, PACE has proven highly effective in educational and care settings, particularly with learners who have experienced trauma, neglect, or loss.

The power of PACE lies in its flexibility. It is not a scripted set of steps, but a way of being that blends the four elements as the situation requires.

- **Playfulness** – Playfulness reassures learners that relationships can be fun and safe, even when things go wrong. Lighthearted moments — a smile, a gentle joke, a shared activity — can lower defences, reduce shame, and communicate: *“We are still okay, even if we disagreed.”* For learners who have learned to expect rejection or danger from adults, this is profoundly healing.
- **Acceptance** – Acceptance is the act of embracing a child’s inner world without judgment. It doesn’t mean agreeing with all behaviours; it means recognising and validating the feelings, memories, and experiences behind those behaviours. This shows the child: *“You are valued as a person, no matter what.”*
- **Curiosity** – Curiosity is a gentle wondering about the reasons behind behaviour, replacing judgment with a desire to understand. Asking questions like *“I wonder what made you feel that way?”* helps learners reflect and opens the door to self-awareness.
- **Empathy** – Empathy is the emotional bridge that tells a child: *“I am here with you, and you’re not alone in this.”* It’s less about offering solutions and more about providing a safe emotional presence during difficult moments.



When these elements work together, they create a climate of safety and trust in which learner are more willing to explore, learn, and grow.

Appendix 3: Restorative Practice

Restorative practice shifts the focus from *punishment* to *repair*. It is an approach to resolving conflict that actively involves all parties, aiming to heal relationships and rebuild trust rather than simply impose consequences.

In a school environment, restorative practice does more than manage conflict — it actively fosters a culture of belonging, accountability, and empathy. It teaches students that their actions have impact, but it also gives them the opportunity to make amends and learn from mistakes.

Key principles include:

- **From punishment to repair** – The emphasis is on identifying the harm caused and finding ways to repair it collaboratively, ensuring everyone's voice is heard.
- **Building relationships** – Regular practices like circle time, restorative dialogues, and group problem-solving help strengthen connections among students and staff.
- **Seeing behaviour as communication** – Every action has a reason behind it; restorative approaches seek to understand the needs or emotions driving the behaviour.
- **Empowering students** – Students are given the chance to take responsibility, contribute solutions, and feel ownership of the school community.
- **Promoting empathy and accountability** – By hearing the perspectives of others, students begin to understand the ripple effects of their actions.
- **Creating a safe and inclusive environment** – A school culture built on respect and restoration reduces incidents of bullying and exclusion, replacing them with trust and connection.

When applied consistently, restorative practice transforms school relationships, creating a learning environment where students feel seen, respected, and invested in the wellbeing of their community.

When things go wrong:*(i.e. Questions for wrongdoers)*

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done?
 - In what way?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

When someone has been harmed:*(i.e. Questions for those affected by wrongdoing include)*

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Appendix 4: Relational Practice

Relational practice draws from research on attachment, trauma, and restorative methods. It recognises that relationships are the *primary tool* for creating a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment.

Trauma-informed principles are at its core. These principles acknowledge that early adversity — such as abuse, neglect, or instability — can affect brain development, emotional regulation, and social skills. Instead of asking, “What’s wrong with this person?” relational practice asks, “What does this person need?”

This approach sees behaviour not as something to simply control, but as communication — a signal of an unmet need. When we respond with empathy, boundaries, and consistency, we help students develop trust, self-regulation, and resilience.

Relational practice in schools involves:

- **Attachment-aware practice** – Supporting students to form secure, consistent connections with adults, which is especially crucial for those who have experienced disrupted early relationships.
- **Trauma-informed approaches** – Understanding how past experiences shape present behaviour and learning capacity.
- **Restorative methods** – Repairing harm, restoring relationships, and teaching responsibility rather than punishing mistakes.

It is important to stress that relational practice is **not** about being overly lenient or simply “nice.” It involves:

- Clear and consistent expectations
- Professional boundaries
- Emotional containment (helping students manage overwhelming feelings)
- Role-modelling respectful, positive behaviour

By putting relationships at the heart of school life, relational practice creates a culture where students feel safe to take risks, learn from mistakes, and engage fully in their education.



Appendix 5: Positive Behaviour Support

Sherwood Training's ethos for physical intervention emphasises its use as a last resort, within a broader positive behaviour support (PBS) plan, and always adhering to the Restraint Reduction Network (RRN)'s principles. Key aspects include focusing on prevention and de-escalation, conducting thorough risk assessments, promoting the least restrictive option, and respecting the individual's human rights and dignity.

Key Principles:

Last Resort:

Restrictive physical interventions (RPI) should only be used when all other non-physical strategies have failed to manage a risk, or in an emergency when inaction poses a greater risk.

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Framework:

RPI must be part of a wider, person-centred PBS plan that aims to prevent behaviours of concern by addressing unmet needs.

Restraint Reduction Network (RRN) Standards:

Sherwood's training aligns with RRN standards, which focus on protecting human rights, promoting de-escalation and prevention, and reducing reliance on restrictive practices.

Risk Assessment:

A formal, individualised risk assessment must be conducted before any physical skills are used, considering the person's physical and mental well-being.

Least Restrictive Option:

When an intervention is necessary, it must always be the least restrictive option available.

Safety and Dignity:

The primary aim of any intervention is to ensure the safety and well-being of the individual and others, while also upholding their dignity.

Prevention and De-escalation:

The focus is on preventing crises by understanding the root causes of behaviour and implementing preventative measures and de-escalation techniques.

Ethical and Legal Compliance:

All RPI must be justifiable, legally compliant, and ethically appropriate according to current standards.

Staff at Wilds Lodge School are trained to a level that is appropriate to their role.

- Those that frequently work directly with learners receive the full 3-day training which includes restrictive intervention.
- Those that have limited interactions with learners receive 1-2 days training which is limited to theory and the potential for breakaway techniques, depending on need.

Appendix 6: Staffing Structure of the School Senior Leadership Team Structure (Reporting to Head of School)

- **Head of School:**
 - **Head of Education**
 - **Head of Boarding**
 - **Head of Safeguarding & Compliance**
 - **Head of Stakeholder Relations**
-

Education Structure (Reporting to Head of Education)

Assistant Heads by Phase

- **Primary/Nurture (KS1/KS2) Assistant Head**
 - 6 Teachers + 6 TAs
 - 2 Floating HLTAs
- **Key Stage 3 Assistant Head**
 - 6 Teachers + 6 TAs
 - 3 Floating HLTAs (1 per year group)
- **Key Stage 4 Assistant Head (*also Exams Officer*)**
 - 4 Teachers + 4 TAs
- **Key Stage 5 Assistant Head (*also Exams Officer*)**
 - 2 Teachers + 2 TAs + 1 Instructor

- 1 Careers Officer
 - 1 Preparation for Adulthood Tutor
-

SENCO & Therapeutic Services

- **SENCO**
 - SENCO Co-ordinator
 - 2 Trainee Assistant SENCOs (also teachers)
 - **Therapy Team (Reports to Senco):**
 - Senior Therapist (Play Therapist)
 - Music Therapist
 - Counsellor
 - SaLT
 - OT
 - Assistant Psychologist
-

Pastoral

- **Positive Relationship Team Lead (*Vacant*)**
 - 5 Positive Relationship Mentors (1 per key stage)
-

Boarding / Residential Care (Reporting to Head of Care)

Senior Team Leader: Wilds Site

- 1 Team Leaders
- 3 Deputy Team Leaders
- 4 Care Staff

Senior Team Leader: Crossroads Site(*also Sherwood Instructor*)

- 1 Team Leader
- 1 Deputy Team Leader
- 2 Care Staff

Senior Team Leader: Rock Lodge (*also AIMS Assessor*)

- 1 Team Leader
- 1 Deputy Team Leader
- 2 Care Staff

Office & Administration Team

Reports Directly to Head of School:

- **Senior Admin (Ops Lead)**
 - PA to Toby and Paul
 - Oversees Receptionist (*Wilds Site*)
- **Senior Admin (HR)**
 - Oversees Receptionist (*Crossroads Site*)

- **Finance Officer**
 - Oversees Accounts Assistant
- **Finance & Operations Controller** (*Due to start Nov 25*)

Reports to Head of Education:

- **Data Co-ordinator** – (*Vacant*)

Appendix 7: Extended Senior Leadership Team Structure

- **Head of School:**
 - **Head of Education**
 - Assistant Head: Primary
 - Assistant Head: Key Stage 3
 - Assistant Head: Key Stage 4
 - Assistant Head: Key Stage 5
 - Senco
 - Positive Relations Lead (currently vacant)
 - **Head of Care**
 - Senior Team Leader: Wilds Site
 - Senior Team Leader: Crossroads
 - Senior Team Leader: Rock Lodge
 - **Head of Safeguarding & Compliance**
 - **Head of Stakeholder Relations**
 - **Finance & Operations Controller** (*Due to start Nov 25*)