



**WILDS LODGE
SCHOOL**

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP POLICY (BEHAVIOUR)

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 these 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: ACCEPT

- Authenticity
- Connection
- Curiosity
- Empowerment
- Positivity
- Tolerance

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 child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school contracts the services of third-party organisations to ensure regulatory compliance and implement best practices for:

- HR and Employment Law
- Health & Safety Guidance
- DBS Check processing
- Mandatory Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and other relevant training
- Educare / National College (online CPD)
- Data protection and GDPR guidance
- Specialist insurance cover
- Neotas (Online searches / Social Media checks)
- VWV (legal)

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 learner and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, learners 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 learner 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.
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Intent

To Promote Positive Relationships, Encourage Reflection and Develop Supportive Strategies to Reduce Behaviours of Concern.

Aims

This policy is intended to help staff carry out tasks to create and maintain a safe environment for all, with a specific focus on working with behaviours of concern, maintaining a therapeutic environment, and - within this - ensuring a calm learning environment.

The policy is underpinned by four key interrelated concepts

- (i) Reflective Practice (Appendix 1)
- (ii) PACE (Appendix 2)
- (iii) Restorative Practice (Appendix 3)
- (iv) Relational Practice (Appendix 4)

Introduction

We know that learners communicate their thoughts and feelings through their behaviours.

We have a responsibility to try to understand what they are telling us, even if this may not be immediately apparent. It is important to connect with the underlying reasons the child may be behaving in a particular way. Their observable behaviour is grounded in their own experience of SEMH and often as a result of coping strategies that they have developed over time, so our job is to support, identify, interpret and redevelop so that a child is able to respond to difficulties and challenges in different, healthier, and safer ways. We also work hard to celebrate the uniqueness of each child and their experience of their SEMH so that, by the time they move on from Wilds Lodge, they are better able to understand their own diagnosis and needs, its impacts on themselves as individuals and on those around them and even to celebrate their differences.

We recognise that many of the young people placed at Wilds Lodge School may have struggled in previous specialist or mainstream placements. A primary need of SEMH can encompass a range of needs with many of our learners having experienced early

childhood adversity alongside other co-occurring diagnoses that are likely to have made school feel particularly difficult. We also recognise that previous educational experiences may have resulted in the learner and young people at Wilds Lodge feeling a sense of shame about earlier failed placements that they have learned to cover with sometimes aggressive and avoidant behaviour.

Our role is to work therapeutically with all learners, to understand the uniqueness of their experience and to build and use healthy and positive relationships to help them develop greater self-esteem and realise that they can make different choices.

We come from a place of curiosity about behaviours, and staff are trained to think carefully about the complexities of a learner's experience in order to try to identify the feelings and thoughts behind their behaviours. Sometimes the feelings that working with a child can bring out in ourselves can give us insight into what the learners are experiencing. As an example, a learner who can display rigid thinking and demand avoidant behaviour has an ability to make those around them feel frustrated, powerless and at a loss as to how to help. If we can – as professionals – understand that our feelings are a reflection of those of the learner, it enables us to act in a way that reassures, offers options and empowers the learner.

The combination of relationships, structure, routine, clear boundaries, and opportunities for thinking together promotes the development of positive, healthy, safe ways of relating to others. All staff should be aware that learner can be abusive towards other learner (often referred to as child on child abuse) and that the school is vigilant and responsive to these behaviours; we work in an environment where the behaviours of one child can have a direct impact on the feelings of another and we are committed to – rather than removing the causes of anxiety and stress – supporting learners to develop strategies, resilience and the ability to manage the impact of others on their own sense of well being. We are aware that working in this way with learners and young people can take time and that during their time at Wilds Lodge, it is likely that all learners will go through periods of dysregulation and difficulty. We ask that all stakeholders recognise this and offer support and patience when learners who have experienced a period of dysregulation might have an impact on the progress and regulation of their own learner.

Our Positive Behaviour Support takes the form of Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Strategies as outlined below.

1. Primary Strategies

These are all the things that we do as a school all day every day to develop a safe learning environment. These things include everything from the safety of the school site and environments to the very individual support each learner needs around them, but include as well:

- The culture throughout the school of supportive nurturing relationships with a focus on getting to know each child well so that each child has trusted adults within the school.
- The structure of the school day so that learners know what to expect on their timetables.
- The structure of the class groups and residential houses (for boarding learners) and the staff that work with the learners..
- Communication and collaboration with parents to co-develop strategies and support for learners.
- The development of Individual Care Plans to take account of the unique nature of a learner's needs, interests, triggers and responses to behaviours as detailed in their Risk Assessment/EHCP.
- The involvement of learners in decisions about their provision and the support and interventions they need through regular personal support sessions, student council and key worker sessions in residential.
- The involvement of the Multidisciplinary Team ensures that all provision is underpinned by therapeutic practice and takes account of the individual profiles of learners.
- The ongoing training and understanding of staff on matters relating to SEND practice and support.
- The attitude and behaviours of staff in order to teach by example and model respect for the learners , for each other, themselves, the school, and good ethical behaviours in all aspects of work.
- The staff's expectation and assumption of positive interaction with peers and learning, whilst being prepared for, and aware of, possible behaviours of concern.
- The presence of clear policies and procedures – followed by all – that provide consistency in approach and behaviours across the school.
- The clarity of expectation from learners so that they are aware of what is expected of them in terms of their learning, behaviour and responsibilities and are able to ask for help when needed.
- Develop a habit of asking learners if you can approach them, sit with them, if they require your help, etc – this places a sense of control with them about their personal space.
- Keep the learners in a place of unconditional positive regard by all who work at Wilds Lodge and maintain the desire to seek resolution through reflection and reflective practice, sharing pride and enjoyment alongside learners when they achieve.

2. Secondary Strategies

These are the things that all staff are trained to think carefully about, in order to manage and support the day-to-day interaction between people on site.

No single approach or technique is helpful in all situations for all learners. Staff, therefore, have a commitment to paying attention to the child's individual needs and to do what actually helps them, here and now, using the most appropriate strategies outlined in the child's Safety Plan/EHCP

- We ask staff to notice and be curious about the learner's behaviours, understanding when a learner is feeling emotions and recognising when they might need support to identify, name, describe or manage the feelings they are experiencing.
- We ask staff to use de-escalation strategies to try to reduce the potentially volatile nature of interactions and feelings through distraction, diversion, affirmation, compromise and ultimately reflection and restorative practices. Wilds Lodge School recognises that teaching young people to recognise and name their feelings is a core part of our work. This can be through the use of Zones of Regulation and the PACE models.
- We ask staff to consciously aim to separate a learner's feelings from their behaviours - whilst it may be unreasonable for the child to kick, bite or scream, it is not unreasonable for them to feel cross or unhappy.
- The most important part of managing any incident at school is the learning conversations that take place afterwards and when a child is calm and ready to reflect. Staff are trained to find a range of ways to support a learner to have these conversations in order to support them to explore other - more constructive - ways to express feelings and frustrations.
- We ask staff to make use of positive language, so to give learners options for acceptable behaviours rather than asking them to refrain from unacceptable behaviours, for example, "let's do this" rather than "don't do that".
- We ask staff to use clear, supportive language to reduce ambiguity and to make clear the boundaries; this includes using statements of reality for learners, which can be useful in grounding and supporting the learner to understand their current experience, ie 'you are shouting at the moment'.
- We ask staff to reduce the use of language when a learner is becoming heightened and upset, in order to reduce the amount a learner has to process at that time; being present, offering a listening ear and making suggestions to give learners options are all useful strategies when a learner is starting to feel a lack of control. For learners with a more demand avoidant profile, we ask staff to make adjustments to their communication to remove demand, offer options and reassure the learner, thus treating a 'meltdown' more as a panic attack.
- We ask staff to recognise their own feelings when supporting a learner, and to be vigilant too about other staff, to identify when they might need to step away from a situation. We are not seeking a win-lose situation, we will always seek a win-win, where both parties can be supported to find a suitable solution to resolve

a matter. Over time, this is one of the single most effective ways to develop resilience and strategies for a child to resolve conflict.

- When supporting a child who might be becoming heightened, we ask staff to reduce any perceived threat of their presence by sitting, kneeling, or giving space for the child to move about. Body language is evidenced to be even more important than verbal language at these times and can be the difference between inflaming a situation and calming it.

As a rule, the following strategies should be used as a quick guide.

- Change personnel if behaviour feels targeted or if the member of staff needs to regain composure.
- Be aware of positive and supportive body language.
- Be aware of the tone and timbre of your voice in maintaining calm reassurance.
- Reduce the content of language to simple choices or reassurances and make sure your language is age and stage appropriate.
- Avoid any mention of sanctions.
- Check that the environment is safe, free from hazards and, where possible, without an audience; try to remember that it is frightening to feel out of control.
- When a learner continues to struggle with ongoing dysregulated behaviour, the school is committed to exploring this behaviour, convening team meetings, solution circles and instigating Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) cycles to enable staff to think carefully about the behaviour they are seeing, plan responses accordingly and take action to support change. As part of an ongoing response to periods of dysregulation for learner and young people, we aim to work with parents and colleagues to identify different strategies and encourage more regulated behaviour. It is through the ongoing process of review that we can affect change positively.

3. Tertiary Strategies

These are the strategies that are employed when a child has reached a high arousal level and is starting to display behaviours of concern. Again, no single approach will work for all learner all of the time, so we ask staff to be familiar with individual learners, in order that they understand the best ways to support them in a heightened situation.

We understand at Wilds Lodge that, if a child is presenting a risk to themselves or others or causing serious damage to property, physical interventions – *those that are reasonable, necessary, proportionate, and in the best interest of that child* – may be required. In all cases, this should be carried out with:

- The **minimum** amount of force

- For the **minimum** amount of time
- And should **always** be in line with approved training methods.
- This is particularly the case where we know a child may struggle with physical contact of any kind.
- In the case of causing serious damage to property, any physical intervention should be *only* for the purpose of separating the property and the child and supporting the child to move to a safer space.

At Wilds Lodge School, we follow the approach, guidance, and ethos of the Sherwood system of Positive Behaviour Support, which emphasises that the majority of behaviour management should be *proactive*.

We would always expect to see a range of primary and secondary measures being employed before tertiary measures are even considered as an option. This emphasis on *prediction and prevention* rather than *finding and fixing* ties in with Wilds Lodge School's commitment to the Restraint Reduction Network.

For the above reason, we would direct staff to make use of breakaways/releases before any kind of Restrictive Interventions are employed.

It should always be remembered, when working with behaviours of concern, that interventions of *any* nature should be in the best interests of the child; reasonable, proportionate, necessary and as a last resort.

As in all positive behaviour strategies described throughout this policy, we direct staff to be familiar with the Safety Plan/EHCP for individual learners, in order that they are able to respond to individuals in a way that is most likely to be helpful to them.

For some learners, the use of physical interventions can be seen as a calming strategy; in these cases, the physical intervention is viewed as a proactive measure, but they are still only applied in cases where proactivity has been agreed upon with the parents and the child as a *positive* intervention.

In either case - where physical intervention is used proactively or where it has been deemed necessary as a measure to keep the child and/or others safe - the following should always be remembered:

- Physical Intervention can only be used by a member of staff who is trained in the use of Positive Behaviour Strategies (Sherwood) or if reasonable force is required in an unforeseeable event to keep a child safe from immediate harm/danger.
- One person should take the lead during the incident/intervention. This can avoid

creating confusion over decision-making.

- Any physical interventions are defensive and protective techniques. They should **never** be used offensively.

After any physical intervention:

- A visual check of the child needs to be completed to check for injuries
- A first-aid check should be offered
- Any medical treatment that is required is actioned and recorded on the report.
- Any incidents of reasonable force or restrictive physical intervention are recorded on Behaviour Watch before the end of the working day, even if further detail will need to be added later.
- Parents/carers must be informed on the same day as the incident took place and ideally before the child returns home.
- Incidents should be reviewed, debrief opportunities offered and any appropriate amendments made to the child's Safety Plan/ICP following an incident where a physical intervention has been used.
- It is often helpful to have a further staff member not directly involved to support those managing the incident to take notes - this not only supports accurate recording of the incident but also allows those involved to focus on the child and those around them.

Shared Language

Shared language is incredibly important within the school and staff are asked to think carefully about the language they use both toward, and about, learners and young people.

We do not use punitive language at school;

- Learners are not 'banned' from things; rather, we find a more appropriate time to rearrange the planned activity, when a child is better able to access this.
- Learners are not 'punished'; rather, we want to encourage them to talk about what went wrong and how behaviour might have been changed by all involved to bring about a different outcome.
- Sanctions are not administered; rather, we support the child to recognise the natural consequences of their actions and make positive choices
- We do not withdraw privileges from learners; rather, we look at how to use interests and merits positively as an incentive, rather than the removal of these as a punishment
- Incidents are described in neutral and blame-free language; examples to use include:
 - 'the child became emotionally dysregulated', not 'the child was behaving badly'
 - 'there was a conflict', not 'they were out of control'

- 'the strategies we have tried so far were unsuccessful', not 'nothing's working'
- Learners are not isolated from others; rather, we try to identify the sources of conflict and put measures in place to reduce heightened behaviours and restore relationships.
- We recognise that this process can take considerable time, as repairing relationships and building trust takes time.
- Staff, learners and parents alike are asked to commit to this process for all learners in the class, as it is being with others that leads to the ability to:
 - manage and repair conflict
 - make compromises
 - accommodate the needs of others
 - ultimately manage their own tolerance and ability to be around others with different needs and interests.
- We consider all of the above as essential life skills and it is the learning of these things that can sometimes be the focus for learners at first, whilst we introduce and slowly increase academic demands.

Our response to conflict is to think carefully about restoration and we use the principles of restorative justice whenever supporting learners. We ask that all those participating in the restorative process do so with the following core values:

- A desire to address and repair any harm
- A willingness to participate voluntarily
- A fair and unbiased attitude
- A commitment to creating a safe environment throughout the process
- A commitment to ensuring the process is accessible to all
- A willingness to ensure respect and dignity for all

Sanctions

It is not Wilds Lodge's practice to administer punitive sanctions; there is strong evidence-based research into SEMH, autism and childhood developmental trauma that reflective and restorative practices are more likely to bring about lasting change to behaviours than extrinsic sanctions. These practices also support the child in the long term to develop and implement strategies for managing their own behaviours in more positive ways.

- If a child has missed work due to dysregulated behaviours, they will be supported to complete this work later. This represents our day-to-day approach with learners as we will always look for more regulated times to introduce tasks and support a learner to achieve academically.
- If a child has had a disagreement with a peer, they will be supported to have

restorative conversations which support them to understand one another's perspectives; this is not only important in bringing about reparation between peers but will teach the learner strategies for conflict management in the future.

- If a child is reluctant to follow staff instructions, they may be given an opportunity to do the task in a different way, or in a different order, with staff support, or later in the day, in order that staff can celebrate achievements with the child. It is good practice to praise a child when they even make an *attempt* at the work, as we recognise that starting a task can often be the hardest part to do.
- If a child is showing unsafe behaviours, it may be necessary to postpone a trip or planned event to a later date; again, the removal of this event is not punitive and the anticipation of a renewed opportunity can often be used positively to support the child to make good choices.
- It is the school's policy that learner will be included in any educational or planned activity outside of school if they are safe and able to do so
- Reflective 'learning conversations' should therefore take place after every incident where a child has shown behaviours of concern and should be handled by familiar members of staff who can approach these conversations supportively and at a time when a child is most receptive.
- Learning conversations intend to:
 - promote appropriate behaviour
 - help learner recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other learner, the adults caring for them, and the wider community
 - help learner accept responsibility for their actions
 - support a child to undertake reparative and restorative action
 - provide a space for thinking, feeling, and making things better
- It may, on occasion, be necessary to ask parents to meet with staff to talk about the best ways forward with the learners; it is our experience that when parents and school work together, agreeing on the best ways to support a child, this is likely to be the most effective way to bring about positive change.

Although Wilds Lodge School's Positive Relationships Policy lays out clearly the school's ethos, response to learners and the primary, secondary and tertiary measures to support the development of a child's behaviour, it is important to make clear that the following sanctions will **not** be used within school and could lead to disciplinary action for the member(s) of staff involved:

- Any form of corporal punishment;
- Any punishment involving the consumption or deprivation of food or drink;
- The use or withholding of medication, or medical or dental treatment;
- Any intimate physical examination;

- Withholding any aids or equipment needed by a disabled child;
- Any measure involving punishing a group of learner for the behaviour of an individual child;
- Denying access to the toilet;
- Threats or verbal abuse intended to humiliate, shame or degrade a child, his/her family or other important people;
- Removal of curriculum entitlement for any reason other than health & safety;
- Removal of rewards that have already been earned;
- Enforced seclusion, where a child is forced to spend time alone as a consequence. Any separation from the child's group would be in the company or close proximity to an adult. We do understand that sometimes learners choose to be alone and this is noted on their risk assessment or care plan accordingly
- Any sanction that could subject a child to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

In certain rare cases, it may be required to keep a child in a room to remove them from others or reduce their own risk of harm, but this would always be with a member of staff and in the best interests of the individual(s) involved. In line with mandatory reporting, this would be recorded as a restrictive physical intervention in the usual way with parents informed accordingly. Locking of external doors in order to provide safety for the learner and prevent unauthorised persons from accessing the building is permitted.

Suspension or Permanent Exclusion

Any form of suspension or permanent exclusion should only be used rarely and in *exceptional* circumstances. The decision to suspend or permanently exclude a learner can only be made by the Head (DfE guidance, 2017) or Executive Principal. Whilst a one-off episode or incident of behaviour may sometimes be positively managed with a suspension out of school, it would be our usual practice to consider whether Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Strategies had been fully explored. However, it is also important to remember that:

- Individual needs, risks and context will always be considered when contemplating a suspension of any sort.
- Suspensions of between 1 and 5 days may be considered when the child and/or the school feels that some time might be necessary in order to re-think approaches or make changes to provision and where a break from school, coupled with a reintegration meeting with the learner and parents, could be a really effective way to restart provision in a more positive way for the learner and their staff.
- Suspensions may also need to be considered in serious circumstances, to allow the school to reflect with parents, carers, social workers and/or other professionals on

the cause of the incident or behaviours and to plan for more successful reintegration. Such serious circumstances might include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Peer on peer abuse
- Single or repeated violence or assault
- Activities involving illegal drugs, smoking (or smoking paraphernalia) or alcohol
- Carrying an offensive weapon.

Unfortunately, permanent exclusions may be a necessity in more extreme circumstances, where for example, the safety or wellbeing of others at school has been significantly compromised. Such extreme circumstances might include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Use of weapons or weaponry within school towards another
 - Selling of drugs or drug paraphernalia
 - Premeditated actions to hurt or harm another
 - Continued and repeated disruptive behaviour and unwillingness to engage with support or learning
 - Repeated, long-term targeting of another or others / child-on-child abuse
 - Single or repeated serious violence or assault
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- Whenever a suspension or permanent exclusion is issued, parents/carers and the placing Local Authority, including the social worker of any looked-after learner, will be notified by phone and letter. Parents/carers will also be advised of their right to appeal and the process that will be followed should they choose to exercise this right.

Monitoring Restrictive Physical Intervention

All incidents using Restrictive Physical Intervention and/or releases are mandatorily reported within 24 hours of the incident and the number of incidents with details where requested are reported weekly to the SLT and at least termly to the Cavendish Executive Team. Records should:

- Be submitted before the end of the working day, even if further details need to be added later;
- Use the systems and structure identified in our policies, through Behaviour Watch;
- Be factual and objective, using clear and unambiguous language;
- Be dated accurately;
- Inform a learner's Individual Safety Plan/Individual Care Plan where any amendments are recommended.

Remember:

- After any physical intervention, a visual check of the child needs to be completed to check for injuries and ensure any medical treatment that is required is actioned; this check, with any outcome, needs recording on the report.;
- The child should always be offered first aid after any incident, and, where appropriate, the staff member will document any marks, injuries, etc. using a body map.
- Debriefs will be held after any restrictive physical intervention or incident involving a release. These can be facilitated by any members directed by the Behaviour and Welfare Team and the actions/points of discussion must be recorded before the incident is closed on Behaviour Watch.
- In all incidents where a restrictive physical intervention was used, the child should be given the opportunity to go through the incident with a staff member. This needs to take place within 5 days of the incident. It is this learning conversation that forms one of the most important aspects of the restorative/reflective process at Wilds Lodge and must take place to give the child a sense of closure, reflection and repair.
- A key part of going through the incident with the child is about listening to and capturing the child's experience of the incident and particularly of the restrictive physical intervention and involving them in thinking about strategies that may help them in the future.

Role of Staff

- To be familiar with this policy.
- To ensure that behaviour management in the school is an active process that anticipates the learner's needs and meets these where possible before acting out behaviour becomes extreme.
- To use their knowledge of the child to contribute to keeping EHCP and any additional behaviour support plans up to date.
- To ensure that any measure of discipline or control is used with thought and care in the best interest of the child(ren).
- To reflect on their own practice and be a critical friend to colleagues.
- To contribute to developing best practices, including being open to changing and improving their own practice on an ongoing basis.

Role of the Leadership Team

The leadership team has a responsibility to know and understand what is happening in the school in terms of behaviour, including:

- The nature and frequency of incidents
- The way in which individual learner are supported
- How groups are working together
- what interventions, approaches, therapies and relationships are in place to

support and develop positive behaviour both across the school and for individual learners

- how well staff are trained on the relational approach and are adhering to the principles of these approaches for learners
- This involves:
- Ensuring that there is sufficient oversight of, monitoring of, and accountability for the behaviour across the school
- Monitoring and improving the systems to record behaviour within the school
- Monitoring the progress of individual learners and groups over time, to inform the priority areas where the Multidisciplinary Team, Psychologists and Behaviour and Welfare Team are allocated for the most impact
- Monitoring the reflective practice/learning conversations within the school
- Ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities for training
- Responsibility for Monitoring:
- The Behaviour and Welfare Team hold oversight of the risk reduction plans and directly monitor the recording of incidents and the legal aspects of recording and signing these incident logs.
- These logs and the logs of the subsequent reflective conversations are also monitored by the Senior Leadership Team, and the Leaders within the school, in order to support the staff around the learner, provide additional training where required, and allocate Multidisciplinary colleagues to support.
- The Head and SLT monitor recording systems and maintain the systems used to ensure practice and recording is of the highest standard. This is monitored on a regular basis.

Role of the Cavendish Executive Team

This team remains focussed on the effectiveness of the school in working safely with and reducing learner's challenging behaviours. The Governor with lead responsibility for Safeguarding has particular oversight of the intent, impact, and implementation of this policy on young people.

Role of Learners

It is intended that, through participation in restorative conversations, as well as through the reflective process, learners should come to understand their own behaviours and develop their own capacity for verbalising feelings and self-regulating. This should lead to a reduction in behaviour that challenges over time to be replaced with more effective strategies for managing heightened emotions.

Role of Parents/Carers

We know learners make the most progress when the school is working well with the

parents/carers. This means good clear communication between home and school with the parents/carers understanding the ways in which we are working with behaviour. This policy should be shared openly with parents/carers, as should their own child's EHCP which outlines the individual needs of their child in terms of the likes, dislikes, cues and triggers for their child's behaviour as well as how the school should respond for the most positive management of behaviours.

We also ask that all parents understand the context of the school and support us when another child in their child's class is struggling and displaying behaviour that challenges them. Whilst the impact on your own child is fully recognised and it can be a very unsettling time, the school will do what we can to regulate the child in question and reduce the impact of their behaviours, as we believe that everyone should get the chance to be understood and get the right support; eventually, when they feel safer and understood, they will be able to self-regulate and make progress again.

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

