



GOOD BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Kestrel House School is an independent school which provides a specialist education for primary and secondary-aged children who hold a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) for Autism and associated social and communication difficulties. This will include children and young people with moderate or severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour.

The school is committed to providing a safe environment for its students and this policy is compliant with national and local guidance and compatible with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

The nature of their disability means that children and young people with autistic spectrum disorders may not have sufficient understanding or awareness that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable or that they might be construed as bullying or challenging. Similarly, children with autism who are the recipients of such behaviours may be unable to express or communicate their aversion to such behaviours or to tell adults. This means that all staff at Kestrel House School have a duty to not only be aware of such behaviours and of any child involved, but also to respond appropriately to instances of bullying behaviours. Kestrel House School can draw upon skilled and knowledgeable professionals, including Psychologists, to help devise strategies to manage and reduce challenging behaviours and their sometimes bullying effects.

Kestrel House School recognises that the children benefit from adult modelling and guidance in acquiring and maintaining appropriate behaviours. All adults encountered by children at Kestrel House School have a duty to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with children and with each other. This modelling helps children to develop more appropriate strategies that will aid them with social interactions and in their learning experiences.

Adults working at Kestrel House School aim to

- create and maintain a positive, safe, secure, caring and effective learning environment with realistic expectations;
- develop a moral framework which encourages relationships based on kindness, tolerance, respect and understanding of the needs of others;
- ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability;
- demonstrate that we value, recognise and appreciate the efforts and contribution of all individuals;
- encourage consistency of response to both positive (appropriate) and negative (challenging) behaviour;
- ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood;
- encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.

Objectives

Kestrel House School recognises that all adults working with our students must have an understanding of the nature of autism and the consequences of autism on social behaviour.

Kestrel House School staff understand that the behaviours of children with autism have a variety of specific functions and intentions, e.g.: to get or avoid social interaction, to get or avoid sensory input, to get or avoid tasks and tangibles, to get or avoid control and predictability or medical reasons. These functions of behaviour are however often difficult to identify without a detailed analysis of each particular incident. Behaviour management is undertaken by skilled professionals following an approach which takes into account a wide variety of elements involved in each student's life, e.g.: communication skills, sensory integration, positive strategies, safe environment, diet, opportunities for relaxation, functional skills, differentiated curriculum, emotional development, self-awareness, interests.

Challenging behaviours are carefully identified and monitored by staff using a functional analysis and the 5P Approach. 'Working With Me' behaviour plans are specifically designed to prevent and support those behaviours considered challenging: i.e. aggressive and self injurious behaviour or damaging property.

The objectives of Kestrel House's behaviour policy are for children to develop:

- communication and interaction skills
- self-regulation strategies, independence and functional skills
- self-awareness and awareness of others and positive peer relationships
- an interest and participation in their school activities.

Using an individualised person centred approach that includes the 5P Approach, Kestrel House School's focus is on preventing challenging behaviour from arising i.e.

1. Management of Physical Settings

Classroom management and teaching methods affect children's behaviour and signal to children how they and their efforts are valued. Relationships between teachers and children, strategies for encouraging appropriate behaviour, physical proximity, arrangements of furniture, access to resources and classroom display influence the behaviour of children with autism. At Kestrel House School the visual structure of classrooms and of other physical settings is aimed to develop independence and personal initiative. For example, furniture should be arranged to promote on-task behaviour so that specific areas of the classroom are associated with specific work, such as TEACCH work stations, activities table, circle time area, etc. Materials and resources should be arranged so that only those relevant to the work in hand are accessible to reduce the students' uncertainty and distraction. Displays should be designed and positioned to avoid 'visual overload', while pupils' individual sensory needs are as well taken into account, making sure the sensory environment is conducive to learning.

Teaching methods should encourage active participation, for example through the use of augmentative communication methods, including the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and Makaton signing when appropriate. Lessons should also aim to develop functional skills, knowledge and understanding to encourage children to complete specific tasks, play and co-operate with others.

2. The Curriculum and Learning

Kestrel House School recognises that an appropriately structured academic curriculum contributes to effective learning and appropriate behaviour. Thorough planning for the needs of individual pupils and the involvement of pupils in their learning, and feedback, when appropriate, help to foster appropriate behaviours.

Lessons should have clear learning objectives and be differentiated to meet different abilities. Record keeping and praise can help provide feedback to the children on their progress and achievements, and signal that their efforts are valued and that progress matters.

3. Reinforcers & Motivators

Kestrel House School emphasises acknowledgement and reward to reinforce appropriate behaviour instead of focusing on challenging behaviour. Often, students benefit from an “I am working for” reward chart system, a “reward” system towards preferred items (e.g. particular activities or toys) and “First and Then” visuals for explicit instructions.

Managing Inappropriate Behaviour

Kestrel House School is committed to a positive and non-punitive philosophy and adhere to the guidance issued by the Department for Education in ‘Use of Reasonable Force’ July 2013.

Kestrel House School’s strategies for the management of inappropriate behaviours rely on a proactive approach, which help prevent challenging behaviour and de-escalate a crisis situation when they occur. The 5P Approach, and the adoption of Team Teach, clearly promote a child centred approach as well as a preventative and de-escalation philosophy, whereby each child’s individual needs are considered and behaviour plans developed (‘Working With Me’ packs) to prevent incidents of challenging behaviour.

However, it is recognised that given the nature of our pupils difficulties, it will not always be possible to avoid situations where people are at risk of harm, whether it be to the child themselves, staff, parents or members of the public. In such circumstances staff are instructed to use Team Teach interventions to manage particularly challenging behaviours. Team Teach is an ICM (Institute of Conflict Management) accredited training programme. Within the Acorn Group there are trainers who regularly deliver training and refresher sessions to all staff.

The interventions taught are aimed at keeping people safe primarily through risk reduction and de-escalation. However, some interventions involve the physical management of pupils. The school uses a range of graded physical interventions that include guiding and prompting, one- and two-person escorts, hair pull and grab releases.

Generally the most successful strategy for managing challenging behaviour is to give pupils room and time to calm and regulate their emotions. Where pupils are unable to find their own space in which to calm, or will not follow staff’s prompts or verbal guidance to go to a safe space, a physical intervention may be necessary.

The use of interventions is proportionate to need and based on the assessment of risk. In extremely dangerous situations, where the risk of harm is judged to be significant, staff may need to physically restrain pupils. While the principles of Team Teach are applied the physical interventions taught at the school may be inadequate in managing every situation successfully. In such cases staff are directed to apply the following principles:

- the minimum amount of force is used
- the restraint is for the shortest amount of time
- the restraint is not intended to cause pain
- and, it is not used as a punishment

Any incidents which require Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) are recorded on SLEUTH, an electronic recording system, which is used by all Acorn Schools. Copies of entries are made available to parents on request as well as at meetings and annual reviews.

Managing challenging behaviour, as stated earlier, is most often best managed when the child feels safe and secure. This is generally within a quiet, stimulus free environment where the child does not need to interact. At Kestrel House School, calm rooms/safe spaces called Green Rooms, are identified for such a purpose. Staff are provided with guidance and procedures for the use of such spaces and support, continually monitor and record the use and effectivity of the Green Rooms.

Monitoring

At Kestrel House School the Assistant Psychologist (under the supervision of a Registered Educational Psychologist) and Senior Management team monitor the frequency and type of incidents of challenging behaviour which occur through regular examination of SLEUTH and Green Room logs. The quality of written entries is also monitored by senior staff who sign off Restrictive Physical Intervention records. Information from the monitoring process is used to maintain a good standard and quality of recording, overall provision and management of challenging behaviour. This information is also used to identify needs for staff training or any pupil specific issues where additional intervention or review of the 'Working With Me' pack may be required.

Sanctions

(See Use of Sanctions Statement appended)

While the school does not believe in and rejects a negative, sanction-based philosophy, it recognises that students benefit from developing their understanding of natural consequences of their behaviour. For example, if a community-based trip is planned and a pupil is displaying challenging behaviour which requires intervention and time to calm, the natural consequence would be to miss the trip, as the pupil is not ready for the trip nor displaying the appropriate behaviour to participate.

Communication and parental partnership

Kestrel House School aims to encourage communication within the school and promotes a positive partnership with parents to foster and support the development of appropriate behaviours in their children. Parents are encouraged to share their concerns regarding their child's behaviour with the school. A positive partnership with parents fosters a common approach to behaviour expectations and consistent strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour. This is reinforced through sharing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 'Working With Me' packs with parents.

Policy last updated September 2017

Policy to be reviewed September 2018

Appendix. 1

Using Sanctions and Punishments with People with Autism

People on the Autism Spectrum think differently and can make different associations to those who do not have autism, consequently the practice of using sanctions and punishments is often not the most effective way of managing challenging behaviours within this population.

Sanctions and punishments often aim to change behaviour within the immediate context of that behaviour. Many of the behaviours shown by the person with autism can occur in different contexts, with differing underlying reasons and, given the well-documented difficulties that those with autism have in generalising information, they will find it difficult to associate a sanction or punishment that is immediate across different contexts. Consequently sanctions and punishments are often **not effective in the long term** as a behaviour management strategy. The person may well not associate the sanction or punishment with their behaviour at all, only leading to greater frustration and possibly further incidents of challenging behaviour thus creating a negative cycle of behaviours and escalation. Challenging behaviour often occurs when the individual is in an extremely high state of arousal (“fight or flight”) and thus any sanction or punishment imposed at that time will be ineffective as the person is unlikely to be in a state to make the conscious connection between what they are doing and the sanction or punishment that is imposed on them.

The underlying cause and intention of a person’s behaviour must be analysed in order to put in place any behaviour management strategies. As most behaviours have an underlying communication element, imposing sanctions and punishments may only serve to deny this attempt to communicate. Research and ethical practice suggests that the use of positive behaviour management strategies are often far more effective in managing and altering behaviours in the long term. It is well documented that people with autism do not respond well to negative reinforcement; hence clearly conveying expectations in a way that is understandable and takes account of the person’s cognitive, communication and motivational needs is much more effective than telling the person what he or she cannot do.

Sanctions and punishments often reflect the expectations of the social norms of society. As understanding these norms and picking up on the cues relating to social norms is part of the core struggles for people with autism, intervention programmes that teach awareness and understanding of expectations are likely to be more effective in the long term.

5P Behaviour management plans and strategies should be reviewed regularly by the team to assess their effectiveness for that person. All in all, the aim of behaviour intervention plans is to improve the quality of life for the individual and if that is not the resulting consequence of the plan it should be reviewed and amended accordingly.