



## Beaucroft School Behaviour Policy 2022

### Our Intention – a therapeutic approach

*'You can't teach children to behave better by making them feel worse. When children feel better, they behave better.'* (Pam Leo.)

At Beaucroft School, we believe that behavioural difficulties may signal a need for support and it is essential to understand what the underlying causes are. For example, a child may exhibit behaviours as a result of a medical condition or sensory impairment, previous trauma or neglect, or be exacerbated by an unmet need or undiagnosed medical condition. Behavioural difficulties may also reflect the challenges of communication, or the frustrations faced by children with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties – who have little choice and control over their lives. Students with behavioural difficulties need to be regarded as vulnerable rather than troublesome and every member of staff has a duty to explore this vulnerability and provide appropriate support.

We have adopted, therefore, a therapeutic approach to behaviour which prioritises the prosocial experiences and feelings of everyone within the dynamic. Put simply, positive experiences create positive feelings, leading to positive behaviour. We recognise that there needs to be targeted differentiation in our approach to ensure a healthy inclusion model within our school, as children require different approaches dependent on a range of considerations, including their age, cognitive ability, mental health, specific learning difficulties and life experiences. We believe that in order to learn effectively, students must feel safe whilst at school and adults must feel well equipped and supported to create and manage this environment.

Our values are demonstrated through each member of staff working as a team; sharing our ethos, achievements, successes, challenges, and concerns. The following school's core values relate to the support and management of behaviour:

- 'Empower, Engage, Achieve' in all we do.
- To encourage a support culture amongst students and all who work in school in their approach towards common and individual goals.
- To provide the best possible learning environment so that each student may realise their full potential.
- To respond to the student's individual needs as outlined in their EHCP.
- To enhance the self-esteem of students by creating opportunities for success.
- To give students respect and show that they are valued.
- To give students the opportunities to make choices.
- To provide consistency and stability.

All staff members seeking to support a student whose behaviour is presenting as difficult must aim to de-escalate and disempower the behaviour. It is the responsibility of all staff at Beaucroft School to follow the guidance provided in the Dorset Steps training to enable them to achieve this through a combination of the following strategies as appropriate.



## Implementation

### Safe Learners

It is our aim to create safe learners, who feel physically, emotionally, and socially comfortable within school, when supported by the strategies listed below. Our safe learners are able to access their learning most within a group setting.

### **Appropriate curriculum and routines**

It is the class teacher's responsibility (supported by TAs) to plan and deliver learning activities which are motivating and personalised to meet the individual abilities and needs of the students in their class. We recognise that differentiated, well-planned activities will reduce students' anxieties and enable them to experience success. Each student's Assessment Learning Journey identifies personalised priorities for them. We use a number of strategies and resources to support learning and promote prosocial behaviour which should be identified and used according to the individual students' needs and include:

- Visual schedules – whole class and individual
- Visuals
- 'First, then' boards – used to state what is currently happening and what will happen after
- Social stories – used to explain social situations and help students learn socially appropriate behaviour and responses
- Individual approaches to learning, acknowledging the students' particular needs and learning styles e.g. visual, auditory, kinaesthetic
- Recognition to celebrate achievements – these are used with the intent to create positive feelings for the recipient

Depending on the needs of individuals, students may partake in therapeutic activities. These may be collaboratively delivered by a range of professionals, examples of which include: Speech and Language Therapy, Music Therapy, Play Therapy, Therapy Dog, Occupational Therapy, Forest Skills...

### **Impact of language / communication**

At Beaucroft School, we use positive phrasing to continually encourage prosocial behaviour. We offer limited choice to allow the student's voice to be heard, whilst maintaining boundaries that are suitable for each circumstance. Limited choice may relate to location, resources, actions, staff members or activity. At Beaucroft, we ensure that we are communicating with students through means appropriate to their individual level of understanding, this may include Signalong, symbols or spoken language, varying from key word instruction to conversation.

### **Supportive environments**

We use multiple environments which may support students to regulate themselves. Staff are expected to respond to individual students' needs and use these environments as part of their de-escalation strategies:

- **Green room/Safe Space:** used as quiet, comfortable, low arousal spaces away from busier areas of the school. Students may use these spaces when time to themselves will aid them to self-regulate.



- **Small rooms off classrooms:** Used for pupils who find the business of a classroom difficult to manage, when working 1:1 or in a small group.
- **Sensory rooms:** Used for pupils with sensory needs and as a calming environment
- **Therapy room:** Used to release physical energy and build gross motor, social and communication skills.
- **Small outdoor spaces attached to classrooms:** Used as an additional work space for 1:1 or small group work. Used as a space to support self-regulation when a student requires space to let off physical energy.
- **Main Playground:** When not being used for playtime or sports, this can be used as a safe environment for students who require space from others (adults may watch the student from a distance). Students may also use this area for a sensory break e.g. walk or cycle.
- **Adventure Play Area, Junior Play area, EYs Playground, Swing on Field, Agility Trail:** When not in use these spaces can be used as a space to let off physical energy along side staff.

## Consequences

The two kinds of consequences used at Beaucroft School are 'Educational' and 'Protective'. The aim of a consequence is not to punish but to create a learning environment that directly relates the anti-social behaviour to the harm that has been caused: to teach internal discipline rather than imposing external discipline. It is essential that educational consequences are put in place to help our students develop new skills and mind-set, as well as the tools required to behave differently when faced with similar circumstances. The key question to consider when planning an educational consequence are:

- What does the student need to learn?
- How are we going to teach this?

A protective consequence is required when a dangerous situation has occurred, to ensure no further harm occurs in the short term. This may include temporary exclusion from an activity. The purpose of the protective consequence is to allow time to establish a successful educational consequence, such as practising a skill in a safer environment, before resuming as before.

## Home / School Links

At Beaucroft we recognise the importance of working collaboratively with parents and carers. We communicate key pieces of information using Home / School link books, phone or Teams calls and face to face meetings and encourage parents and carers to do the same. We have a Parent Support team who work closely alongside class teams to communicate with parents and carers. Keeping lines of communication open between home and school can help us to gain understanding of a student's experiences and emotions and tailor our approach to them accordingly. We also strive to share students' successes, as well as strategies and resources that are supporting them to build upon their internal discipline.

## Staff Training

At Beaucroft School all teachers and teaching assistants receive training in therapeutic behaviour support. This training is called 'Dorset Steps – Step On' and is adapted from the original work by Angela Wadham of Norfolk Steps. The term 'Steps' is drawn from the Norfolk County Council statement on inclusion: 'The



*process of taking necessary **Steps** to ensure that every child is given an equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy community life.'* Training consists of an initial 6-hour session, followed by ongoing refresher sessions throughout the year that equate to a minimum of three hours training.

It is the duty of all staff to follow all policies, guidelines, reporting procedures, as well as specific individual behaviour support plans relating to promoting prosocial behaviours.

### **Physical Intervention**

We recognise that at times it will be necessary for adults to support students using guiding or escorting techniques taught as part of the training mentioned previously. For further information, see the Physical and Restrictive Intervention Policy.

### **Steps Tutors**

We have 10 members of staff who are trained as Steps Tutors, including four Assistant Heads and one Co-Headteacher. (Four of these tutors are Step Up trained.) The role of these tutors is to support and promote the school's therapeutic approach to behaviour by supporting staff with:

- Suggestions of practical strategies
- Completion of necessary paperwork
- Regular 'Step On' training, to ensure staff are certified
- The delivery of 'Step Up' training (see 'Our response to dangerous behaviour' section) in response to audited need
- Analysis of whole school behaviour, producing a termly report which is shared with the Co-Headteachers and governors.

### **Our response to difficult behaviour**

Sometimes students display behaviour which is considered difficult, which requires greater consideration than the everyday strategies used for our safe learners outlined above. This is defined as behaviour that does not cause harm or injury but staff may find challenging.

### **Disempowering the behaviour**

It is important that all staff recognise the importance of reinforcing prosocial behaviour, as a way of reducing the occurrence of antisocial behaviours. This, in turn, supports students to develop internal discipline, so that pupils see prosocial as intrinsically motivating. At our school, this is achieved by:

- Verbal praise, supported by signs and symbols
- A non-confrontational approach
- Positive phrasing, aimed to reduce the impact of anti-social behaviours, such as '*It's OK, you can listen from there*'
- Use of a de-escalation script when a student is displaying a difficult behaviour, which may be adapted to reflect that student's level of understanding through the use of simplified language, or signing



## **Planning, documentation and record-keeping**

At Beaucroft School, all behaviour is seen as a form of communication. It is therefore essential for staff to work with students to understand why they are displaying the behaviour and to plan how to equip them to express themselves clearly and safely. Staff employ a range of techniques and resources to support students to understand what they are feeling and why, in order to empower them to manage their own behaviour as far as possible. Examples of these are class feelings boards, personalised scripts, key rings with key phrases/requests (such as a sensory break or time out of class).

Staff are responsible for following reporting procedures and keeping these records up to date:

- Class Incident Logs
- Serious Incident Reports
- Accident / Injury Forms

These are completed and a copy given to the Steps Lead (EW). Copies are kept in the students' record files and Middle Office.

Dorset Steps provides further guidance and supporting documents to be used for individual students who we recognise as requiring additional planning and analysis to manage their behaviour and formalise supportive strategies. These are working documents and should be reviewed by the class teacher and staff team on a half-termly basis or sooner if required. These documents include:

- Risk calculator – for harm and probability analysis
- Conscious and sub-conscious behaviour checklist
- RAG charts
- Anxiety mapping – including 'predict and prevent' mini-plans
- Roots and Fruits – to analyse the experiences and feelings of the child
- Risk Management Plan– detailing strategies to promote prosocial behaviour.

The Steps programme has provided a flow chart to indicate how these documents can be linked together to provide effective support for the student. All staff receive guidance in how to complete these documents, as part of 'Step On' training; additional support can also be provided by Steps tutors on request.

## **Collaboration with other agencies and parents**

While many staff may be experienced in managing difficult behaviour, we value and recognise that some of our students' complex needs require the support of other professionals, such as a Speech & Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist or Education Psychologist who may be able to assist in producing further positive outcomes for our students. Work with other agencies such as CAMHS or Social Care may occur if families need support in the home environment. Home/school links are expected to be more frequent for a student who is displaying difficult behaviours recurrently. Risk Management Plans should be shared and agreed with parents through an arranged meeting.

## **Our response to dangerous behaviour**

Occasionally, students display behaviour which is considered dangerous: behaviours that cause evidenced injury to self or others, damage to property, or committing a criminal offence. In addition to the measures undertaken for both safe learners and those displaying difficult behaviours, a student consistently displaying dangerous behaviour may require further support to promote prosocial behaviours, and to ensure their own safety, along with that of those around them. This may include the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention



(RPI) as a last resort, when all other strategies identified as being effective for the student have been exhausted.

### **Restrictive Physical Intervention**

In rare circumstances, staff may be required to employ a planned or unplanned restrictive intervention: a planned intervention would occur in accordance with an individual student's Risk Management Plan; an unplanned intervention would occur in an emergency, to prevent unexpected harm from happening. The Physical and Restrictive Intervention Policy explains in detail what circumstances such circumstances are justifiable and how they are to be managed safely.

### **Planning, documentation and record keeping**

In addition to completed and reviewing documents relating to difficult behaviour mentioned above, staff are required to consider the risks for a student before planning physical interventions, based upon their individual circumstances (audited need). The student's Risk Management Plan must clearly state what technique(s) can be safely employed and when and be discussed with parents/carers.

In the event of a dangerous incident a record should be made in RPI Log book (in the Middle Team Leader office) and on a RPI proforma. A copy of this must be shared with the Co-Heads within 24 hours and telephone contact must be made with the parents/carer of the student on the same day as the incident. If an injury has occurred, an Accident/Injury Report must also be completed (Medical Room) and returned for the attention of the Team Leader on the same day.

Further planning may be required as to how to best support the student (and the wellbeing of other students) in the school environment. For example, it may be necessary to consider differentiated working areas, timetables or staffing requirement.

### **Staff training**

When an identified need for RPI has been made through the use of Dorset Steps documentation, the Steps Tutors will ensure that the staff working with the student receives appropriate training. This will take the form of a Step Up session, in which specific RPI techniques for the use with the student will be taught. Staff may request further support with RPI at any time, and the Steps Tutors (who are Step UP trained) are responsible for ensuring that the skills of staff are regularly checked, refreshed and recorded.

### **Additional Support**

The Steps Tutors should work supportively with the class team as required to provide training, observe the student in order to gain a clearer picture of the challenges and possible strategies and use data to identify patterns.

When dangerous behaviour is displayed, further support may be required from professionals working around the pupil to support the understanding of the behaviours, and the subsequent strategies to be put in place, as mentioned earlier. This may also include specific input from the Dorset Steps Lead. Additional meetings will need to be set up with school staff, parents and relevant professionals and is likely to involve input from the Co-Headteachers.

### **Approach to exclusion**

In the Timpson Review of School Exclusion (2019), it is clear that being excluded from school is likely to have a long-term damaging impact on a child's life. Exclusion at Beaucroft, therefore, is considered as a last resort



and only occurs where there is evidence that a student's behaviour is significantly dangerous to the extent that it is the only protective consequence that will be effective, The Co-Headteachers are responsible for ensuring all other strategies have been fully explored where an exclusion appears to be likely. The time when a student is absent from school due to having been excluded must be used by the staff to change the circumstances in which the behaviour occurred and review and behaviour plans / resources required.

### **'Reflect, repair and restore'**

For any student who requires support to behave prosocially, an impact may be seen on their relationships with other students and staff around them and/or their own self-perception and wellbeing. During an incident, especially one in which difficult or dangerous behaviour is observed, behaviour may be influenced by a wide range of emotions, such as anger, frustration or disappointment. The purpose of reflect, repair and restore is to re-visit the experiences with each individual once they are feeling calm, and therefore more able to consider the incident and their behaviour constructively, given the appropriate support.

As part of a therapeutic approach, Dorset Steps suggests that all students and staff impacted by an incident should re-visit the experience by re-telling and exploring the story with a changed set of feeling. Students should therefore be supported to reflect on:

- What happened?
- What was everyone thinking and feeling?
- Who has been affected and how?
- How can we put right the harm?
- What have we learnt so we can make a better choice next time?

It is crucial that this happens after each incident to avoid the behaviour becoming 'normalised' and to provide the best chance of a long-term change. Due to the students' learning difficulties, finding an appropriate way to approach this process needs careful consideration and should be indicated on a Risk Management Plan. It may involve:

- Talking with the student
- Using a reflection sheet to structure the process
- Use of photos and symbols to aid communication
- Use of social stories or comic strip conversations

In some situations, a more practical approach may be required by:

- Tidying a room alongside staff that has been damaged
- Involvement in repairing objects that have been broken
- Spending time doing a favoured activity together, to restore a damaged relationship

Whatever form it takes, the principle of 'Reflect, repair, restore' should be applied consistently, so that students are familiar with the process that will happen each time. We aim to ensure that it therefore becomes a meaningful experience for the student. These reflections should be included in on the Serious Incident or RPI forms to help inform future practice.