



The Birtenshaw Group

Transforming Lives

Birtenshaw Education Services Behaviour Policy

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the Autism Policy and Teaching and Learning Policy.

Sources:

- Human Rights Act (1988)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Children Order Act (1995)
- Use of reasonable force, DfE (2013)
- Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention, DfE (2019)
- Positive environments where children can flourish, DfE (2020)

Rationale:

The aim of Birtenshaw's Education Services is 'Transforming Lives'. In order to achieve this aim, pupils / learners need to feel safe and well supported in managing their behaviour and emotions. We recognise that for autistic children and adults and those with speech, language and communication barriers, behaviours almost always have a communication function which needs to be understood. At Birtenshaw we adopt a "Total Communication" approach. Rather than adopt a punitive approach to undesirable behaviours we aim to understand the communication function first and to teach alternative responses. Each pupil / learners' Communication Passport provides a starting point for staff to understand the link between communication and behaviour for that individual. Promoting and teaching positive behaviour is central to ensuring academic achievement, independence and community participation.

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Autism and Behaviour

The triad of impairments associated with people with autism, Social Interaction difficulties, Social Communication difficulties and difficulties around flexibility of thought, can all contribute to behaviours which may be regarded as inappropriate or challenging by some. Autistic people often experience high levels of anxiety and frustration - other factors which can affect behaviour.

Autistic people can behave in ways that hinder their access to opportunities, restrict their social inclusion and adversely affect their quality of life. Working with families and carers to enable the children and adults supported at Birtenshaw to learn to behave appropriately in different situations is central to achieving our aim of their acceptance and inclusion.

Aims:

We aim to:

- understand the underlying factors causing behaviours, in order to respond positively, consistently and effectively;
- provide structures and strategies to empower the individual to manage their own behaviour, promote emotional regulation and independence, enhance communication and socialisation and raise self-esteem;
- treat all pupils / learners with respect and fairness;
- provide a caring, safe and supportive learning environment;
- support pupils / learners to participate in their local community;
- Celebrate the achievements of all pupils / learners.

Key Approaches:

Unconditional Positive Regard

All pupils / learners are accepted and supported regardless of what they say or how they behave.

Total Communication

Communication is key. To aid understanding, we ensure language is kept simple and minimal and that where appropriate it is supported by alternative or augmentative communication.

Consistent Routines

Anxiety can be reduced when pupils / learners know what is expected of them and what to expect. Consistent routines are maintained and any changes are fully explained and planned for using strategies such as social stories.

Visual schedules (Now, Next, Later boards) are used to prepare for changes and to encourage positive behaviours – “when you have finished this work, it will be snack time” or “work then snack”

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Sensory Awareness and Integration

Sensory activities such as rebound therapy, use of swings, swimming pool, pony riding, sensory play, all help to ensure that anxieties are reduced. Pupils / learners may have an individualised sensory diet to support them in their learning and development if appropriate, written and supported by Occupational Therapists.

Engaging, purposeful and appropriate activities

Individualised learning plans ensure that planned learning activities are designed to build on interests and preferred learning styles as well as challenge and stretch appropriately. Engagement in positive, enjoyable activities supports the development of positive behaviour.

Individual Behaviour Plans

During the period of initial assessment and transition a behaviour plan will be written and shared with all staff who work with the individual. The plan will be regularly reviewed by the pupil / learner's key worker. The plan should be specific to the individual and should include identified behaviours and the strategies to address these.

At Birtenshaw School these behaviour plans are completed on SOLAR and encompass behaviour level response proactive and reactive strategies.

Strategies that Support the Development of Positive Behaviours

- Positive relationships are fundamental for learning and culture. The culture for learning reflects in behaviour and the interactions that happen between staff and pupils/ learners around the school / college.
- Pupils / learners have the freedom to make mistakes as they learn how to interact with staff and peers. Allowing friendship and relationship difficulties to happen provides an opportunity for them to learn how to correct these mistakes in future and gain an understanding of how they can avoided. This may be seen in choose times with pupils / learners sharing a toy, turn taking, class jobs, working with peers etc.
- Positive reinforcement given appropriately, smile accompanied by phrase – “good counting John”
- The teaching of fun skills,
- Teaching of ‘functionally equivalent’ behaviours – i.e. those that allow the individual to gain similar results to those gained by the less positive behaviour.
- Learning activities and tasks should be intrinsically rewarding wherever possible
- Reward schedules – rewards may be immediate or deferred (pupil / learner gathers points toward a reward). Rewards should always be appropriate for the individual, proportionate and delivered consistently with acknowledgement of age appropriate resources.
- Responsibilities that enhance a person's self esteem

- Clear expectations and boundaries, consistently applied – these should be regularly reviewed and agreed with the individual/group and presented visually wherever possible
- Sharing of success, certificates presented in assemblies, End of Term celebrations, good news home presented via handover/email home.

Use of Sanctions

Sanctions may be applied for repeated or chosen undesirable behaviours. Any sanction must be fair and proportionate. In summary they could be:

- Natural consequences, e.g. having to complete an activity before having free time (remembering that breaks are important and to miss them completely can be detrimental and cause further difficulties.)
- Reparation – reasonable ‘making good’ of a situation, e.g. picking up items that have been thrown.
- Loss of a privilege – to be judiciously applied as a last resort

Prohibited Sanctions

- Using isolation or restraint as a punishment
- Corporal punishment, including smacking and rough handling
- Withholding of food and drink and force feeding
- Withholding of basic physical comforts such as warmth and appropriate clothing
- The use or withholding of medication
- Inappropriate use of voice and tone
- The use of language which demeans or intimidates the pupil / learner
- Putting pupils / learners out of the classroom unsupervised

The use of Isolation and Restraint

Some children and young people at Birtenshaw can react to situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves or others. There may be occasions when it is necessary to use restraint or isolation with a child / adult in order to minimise the impact of their behaviour to them and for other people. Staff have a duty of care to keep people safe and must act in the best interests of the all pupils / learners they are supporting. Whilst we recognise that use of restraint and isolation can have long-term consequences on the health and wellbeing of children and young people, Birtenshaw has a duty to ensure the safety of everyone within each service. “Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils / learners from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property or from causing disorder.” Dept for Education 2012.

Restrictive physical interventions (RPI) will only be used to support challenging behaviour where there is clear and imminent danger and there is no alternative and wherever possible, it should be avoided. Proactive, preventative and non-restrictive approaches will be used in respect of the behaviour that challenges prior to any RPI.

Staff are Team Teach trained and must only use physical interventions/positive handling that they have been trained in and are permitted to use. Any Restrictive Physical Intervention must be within the terms of the Birtenshaw Physical Intervention Policy and must be recorded in the incident log and reported on to parent/carer and where appropriate, social worker.

There may be some cases where restraint or isolation is used to support behaviour throughout the day. Physical intervention can provide deep pressure and sensory feedback which can quickly reduce anxiety and support pupils / learners to regulate their emotions. Similarly, with isolation; some pupils require regular “time out” in a safe space when they are feeling overwhelmed by the day. In these situations, the use of restraint or isolation is clearly explained in the individuals risk assessment and behaviour plan.

The definitions of restraint and isolation are -

- Physical restraint: a restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact where the intervener’s intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body of another person.
- Restricting a child or young person's independent actions, including removing auxiliary aids such as a walking stick or coercion, including threats involving use of restraint to curtail a child or young person’s independent actions.
- Chemical restraint: the use of medication which is prescribed and administered (whether orally or by injection) by health professionals for the purpose of controlling or subduing disturbed/violent behaviour, where it is not prescribed for the treatment of a formally identified physical or mental illness. Mechanical restraint: the enforced use of mechanical aids such as belts, cuffs and restraints forcibly to control a child or young person’s individual’s movement. This includes seat belt buckles and harnesses. This also includes using furniture or the environment to keep someone some moving out of their seat.
- Withdrawal: removing a child or young person involuntarily from a situation which causes anxiety or distress to themselves and/or others and taking them to a safer place where they have a better chance of composing themselves.
- Seclusion: supervised confinement and isolation of a child or young person, away from others, in an area from which they are prevented from leaving, where it is of immediate necessity for the purpose of the containment of severely disturbed behaviour which poses a risk of harm to others.
- Segregation: where a child or young person in a health setting is not allowed to mix freely with others on a long-term basis

Withdrawal, seclusion and segregation are all terms used to describe isolation.

Responsibilities:

Responsibilities of Assistant Chief Executive and Heads of Service

- To implement the policy within the school or college, ensuring all pupils / learners have an appropriate individual behaviour plan.
- To ensure that appropriate risk assessments are carried out and understood by all staff.
- To ensure functional assessments and behaviour support plans are in place for all pupils / learners who require them.
- To ensure effective joint working with other agencies
- To ensure all staff and volunteers have the appropriate training
- To ensure that all staff are well supported and have the opportunity for post incident debriefings
- To ensure adequate staff supervision, particularly for staff who support pupils / learners with extremely challenging behaviour

Responsibilities of education staff

- To notify the Heads of Service of any serious incident and to follow the procedures for recording and reporting such incidents
- To carry out appropriate risk assessments in order to ensure risks are minimised
- All employees have a duty of care that requires them to act in the individuals best interest and to treat all everyone fairly, with respect and understanding
- All persons have a duty to report any concerns about practice to the Heads of Service.
- To respond in a calm and positive manner
- To provide positive role models to all pupils / learners ensuring that their behaviour reflects the good practice of the school.
- To always make clear that what they would like a pupil / learner to do rather than over-emphasise what they do not want them to do.
- To value everyone even if their behaviour needs a high level of support
- To enable and support pupils / learners to recognise a range of feelings, both positive and negative and to develop their emotional regulation
- To work with their team, pupils / learners, parents and carers to ensure that functional analysis and behaviour support strategies are developed together and that there is continuity of approach across settings.

Responsibilities of volunteers

- To follow guidance given
- To request support and advice when necessary

Responsibilities of Pupils / learners

- To work with staff to develop and follow behaviour plans
- To treat others with respect and follow agreed rules
- To enable others to learn

Responsibilities of parents/carers

- To keep the school informed about concerns, problems and family circumstances which may affect their child's behaviour or well-being
- To work with staff to plan and implement individual support plans

Assessing, Reviewing, Recording, Reporting and Monitoring:

All behavioural incidents must be recorded immediately, or, if not possible; by the end of the day in which they occurred. Behavioural data is monitored by the Head of Service to ascertain trends and patterns to identify training needs and/or appropriate interventions.

CPD:

All staff are provided with opportunities for professional development and training in line with the Service Improvement / Development plan and the organisational training needs analysis and strategy. Training needs will be linked to the performance management process. As part of core training, all staff will receive autism awareness training, safeguarding training and Team Teach.

Equal Opportunities:

Birtenshaw supports the rights of all pupils / learners to equal access and opportunities regardless of age, culture, religion, gender, ability, disability or sexuality.

Birtenshaw promotes an ethos of respect for everyone.