



# **Behaviour Support Policy**

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following policies: -

Valence Code  
Physical Intervention Policy  
Child Protection Policy

## **PURPOSE**

- To promote and maintain high standards of behaviour throughout the School.
- To give staff a clear understanding and expectation of how to promote good behaviour.
- How to prevent and discourage inappropriate behaviour.

The policy aims to provide staff with a clear framework, whereby they can find appropriate support and expertise, when confronted with difficult behaviour. This policy does not intend to act as an exhaustive guide to Behaviour Management but to act as a map directing staff to relevant support, knowledge and expertise found within Valence School.

## **PRINCIPLES**

Adults are responsible for setting a good example of behaviour to children by maintaining professional standards of behaviour themselves, and showing respect for others.

A positive, coherent and child centred philosophy of care and support is essential for the management of students' behaviour. There should be a shared approach by staff, with common standards and purpose. This must be supported and implemented by all staff even if they do not personally agree with every standard. Individual experience of parenthood is not by itself adequate for managing children's behaviour effectively.

Every child should be treated as an individual. Problematic behaviour may reflect difficulties over which a child has little control, and this should be taken into account. It should be possible to deal with most inappropriate behaviour without imposing sanctions. Expectation of appropriate behaviour must be made clear before imposing sanctions.

## **EXPECTATION OF BEHAVIOUR**

The Valence Code sets out clearly the standard of behaviour expected of everyone at Valence School. It contains responses and outcomes that will be triggered relating to certain unacceptable behaviours; from both minor and major misbehaviours, to serious misbehaviour that may result in exclusion.

We understand that the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour, is the most important aspect of promoting and maintaining high standards of behaviour throughout the School.

It is important to understand the difference between what is considered to be usual child misbehaviour and behaviour that is defined as Challenging.

## **BEHAVIOURS THAT CHALLENGE**

### Behaviour

Behaviour is a term used to describe observable actions; each action being a separate behaviour. It should never be viewed as a single action, but as a chain or pattern of linked behaviours (although it is not always easy to identify where one behaviour ends and another one starts).

Observing and describing behaviour objectively is important when one sets out to change behaviour. Behaviour should always be considered in the context in which it occurs, because not only is it difficult to isolate and describe effectively, it is also dependent on the situation at the time. The fact that behaviour is not always consistent would suggest that it can be amenable to change in some way, and pointers to change may lie in the situation in which the behaviour occurs.

### **What is Challenging Behaviour?**

The term 'challenging behaviour' was adopted to focus attention on the challenges which must be faced by service providers to ensure that they provide high quality services. It emphasizes that such 'behaviours' represent challenges, rather than problems to service providers.

Challenging behaviour has most commonly been defined as:

"Behaviour of such an intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to limit or deny access to and use of ordinary community facilities."

*(Emerson, 1995)*

There are a number of alternative definitions, including Zarkowska and Clements, who although labelling the behaviour problematic rather than challenging, believe it has to satisfy at least one of the following criteria:

- i) The behaviour itself or its severity is inappropriate given a person's age and level of development.
- ii) The behaviour is dangerous either to the person himself onto others.
- iii) The behaviour constitutes a significant handicap for the person by interfering with learning of new skills or by excluding the person from important learning opportunities.

- iv) The behaviour causes significant stress to the lives of those who live and work with the person, and impairs the quality of their lives to an unreasonable degree.
- v) The behaviour is contrary to social norms. (*Zarkowska & Clements, 1988*)

In addition to this, Towel (1987) referred to challenging behaviour as:

“Behaviour which is likely to be damaging to (the person) or others and/or seriously upsetting to other people with whom (the person) comes into contact.”

What is considered unacceptable behaviour may be a point for debate and compromise, but is generally seen as behaviour that is inappropriate because it is viewed as socially unacceptable.

Individuals often behave in certain ways because they have learned to do so, or have not been taught that such behaviours are socially unacceptable. In these instances it is necessary to examine the behaviours in detail to determine the factors which are allowing these behaviours to take place or to continue.

An inability to function within what are considered to be the 'social norms', whether by design or lack of knowledge, is generally what is referred to as 'challenging behaviour'. This behaviour can, particularly if it is presented in a violent way, have an effect on the morale and stress levels of staff, students and service users, who come into contact with it.

The strategies you choose should be different depending on the function of the behaviour.

Take the example of a person hitting staff.

If the person is trying to get your **Attention** by hitting:

- Teach the person how they can get your attention/the attention of others in a more appropriate way. This could be by teaching them a sign, a vocalisation or to gently tap your hand/arm
- Make sure you notice when the person is trying to get your attention appropriately and respond as soon as you can. This will help to reinforce the behaviour you want
- If the person goes to hit you, use a phrase such as “Gently” or “Hands down”. Teach the person what this means
- Interact with the person regularly, giving them plenty of opportunity to get positive attention
- Where possible ignore the hitting

If the person hits others to **Escape/Avoid** something or someone:

- Give the person an effective way to stop something they don't like; to remove them from a situation or person they don't like. This could be a sign/word or photo card to say "Finish" or "Home"
- Teach them to make choices and a way to say "yes" and "no"
- Introduce them to a situation/activity gradually to help them become used to it
- Use humour as a way to distract the person

- Notice when they are displaying 'early warning signs' that they may be becoming unhappy or anxious

- Change the way you ask them to do something

- When the person hits others to get something **Tangible:**
- Teach the person how to communicate they want a drink/toy/DVD etc.
- Give them what they've asked for as soon as they've asked appropriately. Give lots of praise. Make sure they have regular access to what they need
- Teach them how to get something for themselves where possible. Make sure the person knows where their magazines are kept or that juice is found in the fridge and make sure there is a cup in a cupboard they can easily reach
- Make sure they are not left without food or drink for too long, or without something meaningful to do (offer these regularly)
- As far as possible ignore the hitting
- If the situation escalates and people are at risk give them what they want

Where a person hits to get their **Sensory** needs met:

- Ask for a referral to a specialist Occupational Therapist (OT) who can do a sensory assessment to clarify specific sensory needs
- Be creative! Get a drum, box, cushion or other thing that they could hit
- Try out different objects to see which they prefer, then use these to create new activities
- Use preferred items to help you engage with the person
- Make sure the person can get their sensory needs met, but in a way that will not isolate them further or leave them engaging in a self-stimulatory behaviour for too long. If people have self-stimulatory activities that are very important to them, try and support them to have at least some meaningful routine/structure in their day, so that the self-stimulatory behaviour doesn't 'take over'

## **Positive Behaviour Support**

If an incident of challenging behaviour is identified, staff should complete an Incident Form. The incident will be analysed to look at the possible causes and reasons for the behaviour. If it is established that there is an identifiable pattern to the behaviour, a behaviour support meeting will be convened to explore the issues surrounding the behaviour and a Behaviour Support Plan will be developed to look at the positive interventions that are required to support the young person to find and use a more appropriate range of behaviours to meet the need that has been met through the inappropriate behaviour.

Staff should consider a range of positive interventions, which may include the use of a sanction. However, Valence School considers a Sanction as a last resort and should only be approved by a senior member of the school management team.

## **SANCTIONS THAT ARE NOT ALLOWED**

Include;



- Corporal punishment.
- Any form of hitting of a child (including hitting a child in anger or retaliation)
- Deprivation of access to food or drink.
- Enforced eating or drinking.
- Prevention of contact by telephone or letter with parents or and appropriate independent listener or helpline.
- Requirement to wear distinctive clothing or the wearing of night-clothes by day.
- Use or withholding of medical or dental treatment.
- Intentional deprivation of sleep.
- Use of fines other than by way of reparation and not exceeding two thirds of the child's immediately available pocket money provision.
- Locking in a room or area of a building.
- Intimate physical examination of child.
- Withholding of any aids or equipment needed by a child, except where it is necessary to do so to prevent injury.

The use of Reasonable force is considered as a last resort within an Incident. Staff should be familiar with the Physical Intervention Policy. Valence School considers the powering off of a wheelchair as a Physical Intervention. All incidences of Physical Intervention should be recorded on a Blue Incident Form

## **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

Where behaviour is not considered Challenging

All staff that have contact with students are involved in the behaviour management process and should follow the guidelines.

Persistent misbehaviour or a refusal to comply with necessary/essential medical interventions, that could be potentially harmful to a student, would mean that an individual behaviour support plan would need to be formulated and discussed with parents, staff and the clinical psychologist. Any behaviour support plans should be made available to staff and should be regularly

updated. It is of great importance that staff make themselves familiar with and adhere to an individual's behaviour support plan.

If a situation arises where you are unable to resolve a problem with a student's behaviour it is important to gain assistance and or advice. In the first instance colleagues who work directly with you may be able to help resolve the behavioural problem. Using the expertise and knowledge within your team is essential when managing students' behaviour. However, there may be some situations that require input from senior staff.

**During lesson time the following arrangements apply: -**

In the classroom the **Teacher** is the main adult responsible for behaviour and SSAs and those working in the classroom must report inappropriate behaviour to the teacher in charge. SSAs in particular must not feel that they are responsible for dealing with behaviour when it occurs in a classroom setting. While they may well assist the teacher, and follow up the teacher's discipline it would be inappropriate for them to attempt to deal with behaviour without reference to the teacher.

It is important for SSAs to refer classroom discipline to the attention of the teacher teaching the class. It is the responsibility of the teacher to follow up and support the SSA in these circumstances.

If the teacher feels that the sanctions have been ineffective, or wishes to see if the behaviour is replicated in other areas then they should bring the matter to the attention of to the Assistant Headteacher. It should always remain the responsibility of the Teacher to deal with behaviour which occurs in a classroom setting.

**In the classroom – Detail**

Within the phases teachers set individual rules which apply to their classroom situation. It is the responsibility of the teacher to inform students and staff in their classroom of their expectations and any consequences that may arise if those rules are broken.

These rules are based on the principles outlined in the Valence Code and in practical areas, to ensure a safe working environment for students.

**Outside the classroom**

Behaviour which occurs outside the classroom may well be dealt with, in the first instance, by the SSAs with that particular group. As soon as possible, however, responsibility should be handed over to the teacher – either the next classroom teacher, or Assistant Headteacher who will take the matter further, if necessary.

**Outside of school hours the following applies: -**

Behaviour, which occurs outside of school hours, will be dealt with, in the first instance, by the member of staff that has witnessed the incident. If they need

further assistance they will then need to contact the Home Living Area Manager or Assistant Manager. It will then be at their discretion to determine whether they need to contact the Senior member of staff on call.

### **RECORDING**

More serious behaviour will require an incident form to be completed. If it is necessary to sanction a student an incident form must be filled in and the sanction recorded on the incident/accident form. Please inform the Senior on Call (DSL) that you are completing one of these. These forms are BLUE and are located in all teaching areas; home living areas and Reception. Please put all completed forms into the PINK box at reception.

All completed forms are filed and monitored electronically by the Designated Lead for Safeguarding in a central file. This file is monitored for the use of reasonable force by the visiting Governor as well as the Standard 20 Visitor in line with the National Minimum Care Standards (Standard 12).

# Behaviour Support Procedure

