Learning Community Trust

Severndale Specialist Academy

Behaviour as Communication
Positive Behavioural Support Policy
2025 – 2026

'Behaviour as Communication' Policy 2025-26 Document Status			
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At Severndale Academy we put the best interests of the child at the centre of all we do. We recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication. Children and young people always have a reason why they behave the way they do. Our responsibility is to listen, observe, process and use our professional expertise and wider network to try to understand their needs and difficulties, and then implement support to enable the child/ young person to understand and regulate their emotions in a safe and appropriate manner.

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to promote positive behaviour in order to establish an ethos and environment where we, the adults in the immediate school community, can support and encourage pupils to learn, work and interact successfully together.

Throughout this policy the term staff is used to imply all who work in the school, whether as employees, as agency supply staff, in a voluntary capacity, or when placed here for work experience. The impact of the policy will require all staff to understand and apply the policy consistently to promote the acquisition of positive behaviour in all pupils based upon unconditional positive regard, mutual respect and supportive trauma informed relationships.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure that all children and young people at Severndale Academy are treated with dignity and respect.
- Establish a consistent approach to understanding behaviour as a form of communication.
- Develop an understanding of the impact of trauma and attachment on behaviour.
- Ensure a consistent and positive approach to the management of behaviour by supporting children and young people to understand and self-manage their behaviour, enabling positive interactions and engagement in learning.
- Safeguard children and young people by ensuring everyone is aware of and reporting concerns regarding changes in a learner's behaviour, and/or being aware that behaviours of concern or unusual behaviour can be a sign of an underlying safeguarding concern.
- Summarise the roles and responsibilities of different people in the school community.
- Ensure that all staff work within the legal framework and understand their duty of care.
- Ensure that staff understand how to support learners in a non-confrontational, calm and proactive manner.

Vision

Our vision is to ensure that the needs of all our learners are 'truly met' and that we ensure learners leave Severndale as independent as they can be and are also ready to access 'life beyond the school'. We focus on developing quality interactions, relationships and supporting positive communication, as well as providing high quality learning experiences in a dynamic, creative, enjoyable and safe environment.

In essence… enabling communication, independence, and enjoyment for life.

Behaviour as Communication

Behaviour has meaning. We recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication. Children and young people always have a reason why they behave the way they do. Children and young people communicate through their behaviour. Everybody, whether young or old, has times when they are upset, angry, worried, confused or hurt. Strong emotions can be tough to understand, express and manage, particularly for children and young people who may not have the language or ability to communicate through a unifying communication model what they are experiencing. When a young person's behaviour becomes concerning, it may be that they are experiencing a strong, overwhelming emotion that is hard for them to manage. Behaviour serves a purpose and is useful in some way even if there are unintended or negative consequences. Whilst verbal and physical aggression is not a helpful or appropriate response, it is a way of communicating and expressing how the young person is feeling. Therefore, behaviour can be considered as communication.

Our responsibility is to listen, observe, process and use our professional expertise and wider network to try to understand their needs and difficulties and then help the child or young person to overcome them over time. Children and young people can respond to strong and overwhelming emotions impulsively and reactively in the moment and without thought or consideration of the consequences. Experiencing a combination of different emotions that are strong and overwhelming is very confusing for a child or young person and may lead to unpredictable or changeable behaviour.

The factors that influence how a child or young person may behave include:

- Pressure and expectations (both real or perceived) or demands (especially being asked to do something they don't want or feel able to do)
- Hormone fluctuations and developmental changes (going from a baby to infant to child to teenager to adult)
- Pain or feeling unwell (physically or emotionally)
- Unpredictability, uncertainty, or change
- Strong emotional states (especially fear, anger or sadness)
- Interactions with others (such as friends, family, staff or even strangers)
- Significant life events (such as bereavement/ loss, bullying, illness/ accident/ injury, trauma)
- Sensory experiences such as being too hot, too cold, tight or scratchy clothing, loud noise, smells or bright lights.

Positive Behaviour Support

As behaviour is a form of communication, it is important we understand what the learner is telling us through their behaviour and adopt a positive, proactive and planned approach to positive behaviour support. This includes identifying strategies that enable children and young people to actively engage in their learning. Staff will identify ways to analyse behaviours of concern and implement strategies that remove the barriers to learning. Staff follow a personalised approach to positive behaviour support that focuses on trauma informed practice, understanding behaviours and using de-escalation techniques. Staff are aware of what can cause an individual's behaviour to escalate and have strategies planned and ready to be put in place to support.

This approach is used across the schools ensuring that there is a consistent approach to positive behaviour support through;

- All staff throughout the school day encouraging, supporting, and reinforcing positive behaviour whenever and wherever they interact with pupils
- Getting to know each pupil well and developing strong relationships, based on trust and respect.
- Provide positive role models and relationships based on respect and dignity – staff/staff, staff/learner and learner/learner
- Valuing all learners and having high expectations of them.
- Providing learners with clear expectations, structure, and routine - managing change so that the environment is secure, stable, and predictable, using methods such as class timetables and individual schedules/ Now and Next systems.
- Working collaboratively to provide consistent approaches and clear boundaries.
- Having effective communication systems in place, at an appropriate level for each individual to enable them to communicate effectively and express, wants, needs and preferences.
- Establish a curriculum accessible to individual needs, with activities that are motivating, engaging and appropriate to the learners' age and ability, and that provide a constant challenge.
- Establish positive group dynamics and class rules devised with learners
- Use clear, simple language and where required, symbol/signed visual support, allowing learners time to process and respond.
- Remain calm under pressure and seek help from AND offer help to colleagues if needed
- Using non-confrontational positive language e.g. "we are going to. ……then we are …." Rather than" If you don't…. you won't be able to…." "Don't do ". We avoid negative language.
- Using non-confrontational body language (e.g. standing off midline / bringing our self-down to learner's eye level remaining relaxed) smiling, having a cheerful disposition, as appropriate.
- We provide pupils with opportunities to visit calming spaces such as the sensory or soft playroom or movement breaks - ensuring pupils sensory needs are met
- We monitor behaviour carefully and try to avoid escalation by using strategies on a learners' PBS plan.

At Severndale **Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) plans** are created for our learners, this is a document created to help understand behaviour and support behaviour change.

Our PBS plans provide staff with a step-by-step guide to identify how and when they need to intervene, to prevent or reduce the likelihood of a behaviour of concern occurring, focussing on supporting our learners to remain or return to baseline where they are ready to learn. Our plans contain a range of tailored PBS strategies which not only focus on potential behaviours of concern but also include ways to ensure the learner has access to things that are important and purposeful to them, with the aim of increasing their quality of life. The strategies used are referred to as **proactive strategies** and **reactive strategies**.

- **Proactive strategies** are intended to make sure a child or young person has what they need and want on a day-to-day basis and also includes ways to teach appropriate communication and life skills.

- **Reactive strategies** are designed to keep the child or young person and those around them safe from harm. They provide a way to gain safe, rapid, and effective control in a situation where the child or young person is distressed or anxious and displaying challenging behaviour.

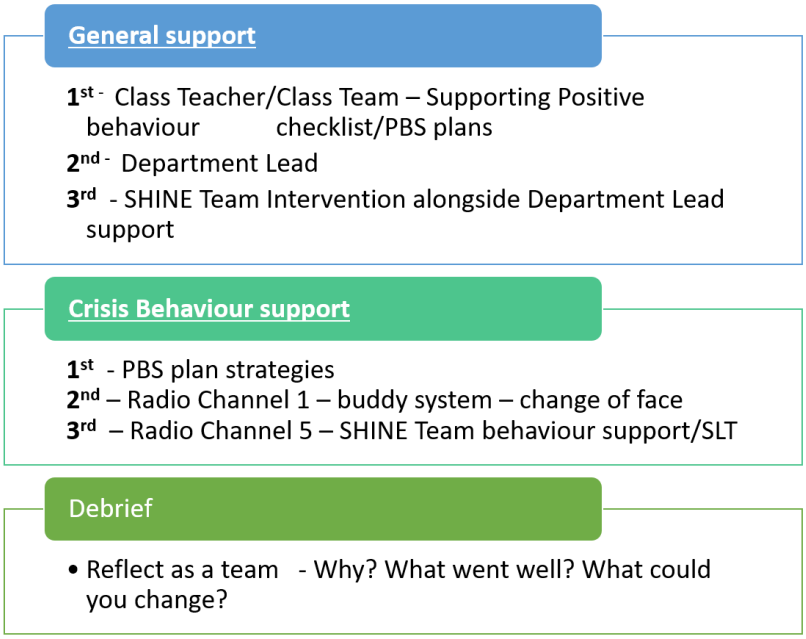
There are four areas to our Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Plans. PBS Plans are in place to support our children and young people with behaviours of concern to ensure our pupils remain:

- **Green** (Calm, engaged and ready to learn). This ensures that we are proactive in our approach to supporting and managing behaviours of concern.
- **Amber** To support and re-engage our pupils when they are escalating.
- **Red** To support and keep our learners and others safe during crisis.
- **Blue** to support the learner following crisis to recover and return to baseline.

Positive Behaviour support plans are reviewed and updated regularly. Each time they are created/ reviewed they are shared with parents/carers.

Behaviour Management

Severndale follows the following procedure for Behaviour Support.



Learner behaviour is recorded on CPOMS. Department Leads and the PBS Team (Behaviour/pastoral support team) work with the class team to find solutions. Behaviour reports are also analysed and discussed between Senior Leadership and the PBS Lead at weekly meetings.

The initial response to any 'inappropriate' or undesired behaviour will come from the staff directly involved at the time of the incident who will focus on the use of de-escalation and calming strategies outlined in PBS plans.

If a change if face or additional support is required staff will seek support from their identified Buddy team.

If required, a member of the PBS team or SLT may become involved if class staff feel they need additional support. This is gained by radioing on channel 5.

If the de-escalation techniques are unsuccessful and there is an immediate danger of injury to any person a physical intervention may be necessary. These interventions will always be used with consideration to whether they are reasonable, proportionate, and absolutely necessary.

Physical Intervention (Please also see the Severndale Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy)

On occasion a small proportion of our learners may become so upset or otherwise aggressive that staff may need to intervene physically to ensure their safety or of others; prevent significant damage to property; prevent a criminal act from occurring; or prevent significant disruption to the learning environment. In order for this intervention to be legal it needs to be "reasonable, proportionate and necessary".

Staff at Severndale Academy use the language of, "Show me safe"; this can be used before, during and after a physical intervention or circumstances where unsafe behaviour is being displayed. "Show me safe" essentially means that we are asking learners to show a safe body. If learners can demonstrate that they have a safe body, then staff would not need to intervene with a physical intervention but may use other co-regulation strategies instead. During physical interventions it is important that learners can demonstrate a safe body rather than demonstrating that they are calm. When a learner has demonstrated that they are safe, the staff team can modify or disengage from the physical intervention.

Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPIs)

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil.
All staff have a duty of care to all learners. Therefore, in an emergency, all staff who work at the school may use reasonable force to prevent a learner from causing personal injury to any person, including themselves, causing significant damage to property or engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order. Approved RPIs are Team Teach holds. This may include staff that do not hold a current Team Teach certificate. However, the expectation is that if there are staff available who have been trained in Team Teach; they will take the lead in any physical interventions and school radios will be used to summon Team Teach trained staff if necessary.

All RPIs must be recorded on CPOMS using the RPI tag and parents/carers informed on the day of the RPI.

'It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible. Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.' – Restrictive intervention, including the use of reasonable force, in schools. April 2026.

Non-physical contact restraint / non-force related restraint

***'Restraint:** a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupils crutches would both be considered a form of restraint.'*
Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 26)

In Severndale a type of non-physical restraint could include locked doors, top locks/handles, fences, etc. When these measures are in please the following process is followed to ensure that reasonable, proportionate and necessary measures are in place for the best interests of the learners.

1. Risk assessments are completed when non-physical restraints are in place which includes a rational and criteria for use.
2. A reduction plan is created for learners to reduce restrictive measures.
3. Plans are reviewed termly by PBS and Operations team.
4. A record of all risk assessments and reductions plans are held by PBS and Operations Team.
5. Risk assessments and reduction plans are shared with parents via the annual review process.

Seclusion

Seclusion - a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving - should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment.
The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.
An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in the section on 'Recording and reporting duties'.
Seclusion, as defined in this guidance, is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom. Schools should refer to the Behaviour in schools guidance for further information on these and other disciplinary measures.

Debrief

Severndale Academy has a team of staff who are available to support any colleague who has experienced a difficult incident and consider the next steps. A debrief will take place for all incidents where a Restrictive Physical Intervention has taken place.

All incidents involving an injury must also be recorded on the school online incident reporting system (Parago).

Internal Exclusion, Suspension, and Permanent Exclusion

The use of suspension/exclusion is very rare at Severndale Academy. A suspension/exclusion is never used as a sanction, however it may be required to ensure the safety of the child or young person concerned, or the safety and emotional wellbeing of others.

These may be for one or more days up to a maximum of 45 days in the year depending on the circumstances. The Local Governing Body and Local Authority are informed of all suspensions and parents or carers are informed of their right of appeal. Reintegration meetings are held with the pupil, parents or carers, and senior leaders following each suspension.
Exclusion is used in extreme circumstances where a change of school may be the only way forward for both the learner and the school. A formal exclusion meeting is held with parents or carers, an LA officer and three members of the Local Governing Body.

Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff will;

- Ensure that the content of this policy is upheld, embedded in day to day practice and that they work together to ensure that consistent and positive approaches are in place to support learners. Approaches are solution focused; trying to understand the communication or motivation behind a behaviour and then interpret the behaviour from the child or young person's point of view, always trying to find positive ways to support our children and young people to achieve their best.
- Model positive behaviour and social interactions to promote healthy and positive relationships, which in turn allows greater engagement in learning.
- Report behaviour incidents on CPOMS
- Be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, as set out in statutory guidance Part One of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSiE 2025).

Teachers will;

- Provide an engaging, structured classroom environment – ensuring all aspects of the 'Promoting Positive Behaviour Checklist' are in place.
- Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment.
- Support children and young people effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to individual learner's needs in order to involve and motivate them.
- Communicate behaviour of concern incidents to parents or carers.
- Review, action, and close all behaviour of concern incidents reported on CPOMS for their class.

Department Leads (Assistant Principals and Department Coordinators) will;

- Read all behaviour of concern incidents reported on CPOMS for their department, check that communication with parents and carers has taken place, and follow-up incidents as required with relevant actions.
- Provide department updates which include linked behaviour and safeguarding incidents at the weekly Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Group Supervision meeting and will liaise with the PBS Lead to explore intervention support for children and young people.
- Identify when referrals to external agencies are required (for example, BeeU).

PBS Lead (Kara Crossland) will;

- Ensure that the 'Behaviour as Communication' policy is consistently applied throughout the Academy.
- Manage a system of recording whole school behaviour on CPOMS and ensuring consistency in reporting across the Academy.
- Interpret and analyse behaviour data recorded on CPOMS and provide weekly summary reports to the Senior Leadership Team.
- Oversee and coordinate the Academy's delivery of Team Teach training.
- Assess the behavioural, pastoral and wellbeing needs of pupils using a range of strategies to determine those in need of specific help.
- Lead and implement intervention work in relation to behaviour, pastoral and wellbeing in conjunction with the Principal and deploy the team of Positive Behaviour Support/Pastoral Higher Level Teacher Assistants and Teaching Assistants (The SHINE PBS Team) as appropriate.
- Quality assure individual Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) plans.
- Work closely with the Principal wider Senior Leadership Team, and other staff to ensure high standards of behaviour, pastoral and wellbeing provision throughout the Academy.
- Line manage the Positive Behaviour Support/pastoral Higher Level Teaching Assistants and Teaching Assistants (The PBS Team).
- Implement and oversee all personalised behaviour, pastoral and wellbeing arrangements for learners as appropriate.
- Link with the Trauma-Informed network within Shropshire.
- Organise relevant professional development (including induction, checks-ins with staff and refreshers)
- Liaise and work collaboratively with external professionals and parents to create a consistent positive behaviour support approach.

Principal (Lucy Lee)

- Have due regard of advice and related legal duties of headteachers
- Ensure high standards of behaviour, pastoral and wellbeing provision throughout the Academy
- Create, and then update, the Academy's 'Behaviour as Communication' policy
- Promote a Trauma-Informed culture.
- Provide half-termly summary CPOMS reports to the Local Governing Body.

- Have regard to the Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools guidance and must have regard to the Special Educational Needs and Disability 0-25 years Code of Practice so that appropriate support can be provided to pupils who have additional needs.
- Have regard to the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance when considering either of these sanctions

The Role of Parents & Carers

We are committed to involve parents and carers in all aspects of their child's education including positive behaviour support. Parents and carers will be asked to contribute to their child or young person's PBS plan. Internal and external support may be provided to help parents and carers respond to behaviour that may challenge in the home environment.

Maintaining Confidentiality

It is important that a balance is kept between maintaining good channels of communication and the right of individuals to confidentiality. Matters discussed within the school team should not be discussed in front of, or with, visitors to the school who are not charged with care of the learners.