



# **Wivelsfield Primary School & Nursery**

## **Therapeutic approach to Behaviour Support**

Last reviewed January 2026  
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## **BACKGROUND**

Governing bodies of maintained schools have a duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requiring them to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This is complemented by the Elton Report (2006) which recommends that schools should develop behaviour policies that are clearly understood by pupils, parents, staff and governors. Moreover, the Department for Education Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (2016) states: *'Headteachers, proprietors and governing bodies must ensure they have a strong behaviour policy to support staff in managing behaviour, including the use of rewards and sanctions.'*

Whilst it is necessary to establish basic school rules, which everyone adheres to, it is also very important to recognise and promote our fundamental beliefs on this issue.

At Wivelsfield, we know long term behavioural change comes from developing internal discipline. Using a therapeutic approach, we teach positive behaviour in the following way. Our therapeutic approach to behaviour support has been inspired by the Therapeutic training received by East Sussex. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and support we provide for behaviour at Wivelsfield School.

Our school's central purpose is concerned with children's overall well-being and their learning. Our vision is that everyone at Wivelsfield School has a love of discovery and learning, has respect and consideration for self, others and the environment, has a positive and reflective approach, is confident, independent and works happily together in an inclusive curriculum.

*'I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.'* Often attributed to Maya Angelou.

Taking a non-judgmental, curious and empathic attitude towards behaviour is vital. We encourage all adults in school to respond in a way that focuses on the feelings and emotions that might drive certain behaviour, rather than the behaviour itself. All behaviour is communication or a form of information. Their feelings are driving everything they are doing. They are unable to rationalise that without being taught and supported to do so. It is our role to recognise that they're trying to tell us something and we need to help them regulate.

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES**

The most effective schools seem to be those that have created a positive atmosphere based on a sense of community and shared values. The latter are encapsulated in the school's published 'Golden Rules' (Appendix A). At the beginning of the autumn term, each class will discuss the school's 'Golden Rules'; specifically 'what they look like in and around our school. A copy of the Golden Rules will be signed by the teacher(s) and children and displayed in the classroom.

### Mutual respect

Good relationships are the keystone to a successful therapeutic behaviour policy. Every member of the school should feel valued. There should be a willingness to listen and understand and to develop a school ethos which is built upon a caring attitude.

## Respect for the Environment

The school should look as if it is cared for. It should be kept tidy; there should be no litter or clutter. The gardens and displays, which make the school more attractive, should be valued.

## Safety

The school should be a safe place where everyone feels secure. By looking after each other and our environment this can be better achieved.

## Responsibility

Children are encouraged to become responsible citizens through taking on responsibilities in the classroom, and in the wider school community such as school councillors, prefects, digital leaders and play leaders.

# **RELATIONSHIPS**

## Language

The language used to describe behaviours and children is vital in maintaining a non-judgmental approach. At Wivelsfield we only use these terms:

- A child is attention needing not attention seeking
- A child has additional needs
- Difficult/dangerous/unsocial or anti-social behaviour
- A child is in crisis, dysregulated or distressed

- Emotional intelligence

The term Emotional Intelligence refers to a person's overall ability to manage their emotions. It's the ultimate goal we want for our children. It is something we can grow for our children but we are mindful that children will have different starting points and challenges.

- Emotional vocabulary

We prioritise the teaching of emotional language so children can describe their own feelings and can understand the feelings of others.

- Emotional literacy

If a child cannot communicate how they are feeling and what their needs are, they are unlikely to reach their full potential. We work towards children having the ability to read or recognise their own emotions and feelings and to read or recognise the emotions and feelings of others. The aim is for all children to understand and predict the impact of these feelings on actions and behaviours.

- Emotional agency

With the teaching of emotional vocabulary and emotional literacy, children will develop the ability to predict how they will feel as a result of experiences in the future and plan to protect themselves from either the antisocial experience or to manage the resulting antisocial feelings. In time, children will develop the ability to predict how they will feel as a result of experiences in the future and plan to ensure a prosocial experience or to create the desired prosocial feelings.

## **Mutual respect**

The promotion of positive relationships continues every day at Wivelsfield. Children should feel safe, valued, respected and liked by all adults. Adults show kindness, make connections, listen to children and greet them when they see them.

Children learn best from being surrounded by good role models. Adults in school will always demonstrate consistent, calm adult behaviour.

- We know that 'children can't be what they can't see,' therefore, all adults at school speak respectfully to each other, to children and about children.
- We walk in the school building, listen to children when they talk to us and take time to teach children pro-social ways to behave, always linking this to our rules e.g. Thank you for holding the door open and showing respect.
- We model to the children, often through talk, how we are feeling, how it is ok to have a wide range of feelings, and we show by example how being honest and talking through our experiences is a positive strategy. Consistency and consistent use of scripts.
- By consistency we mean creating a culture and environment where children know that whichever adult they are talking to the same expectations for behaviour are present and the way their behaviour is managed is the same.
- We achieve consistency by ensuring all staff are Steps trained every two years and in the interim a refresher is given. Steps training primarily refers to a therapeutic, trauma-informed approach (often called Norfolk or Cambridgeshire Steps)
- Staff may have reminders of this policy through email, briefings or staff meetings.
- New staff are given this policy as part of their induction and this policy is reviewed by staff and governors annually.
- We know that by having some agreed scripts that are positively phrased and used by all staff across school, children are more likely to feel secure that the expectations for their behaviour are the same.
- If children feel safe, happy and respected they are more likely to display pro-social behaviours. They don't always get this right and it is vital that when they do get it wrong they are given a fresh start. Every day is a new day. Adults need to forgive and model this forgiveness.

## **Safety**

Routines, repetition and structure with established clear and agreed boundaries/expectations help to create a sense of feeling safe and prepared.

- We use visual timetables for whole classes to share what the day is going to include.
- Changes to a typical routine will be explained clearly to children.
- We are mindful that changes in routine can be difficult for children and need to be carefully managed with preparation and support comfort, forgiveness and restorative processes.
- In order to help children to feel safe, their educational environment needs to be high in both nurture and structure. Transitions are seen as important and managed carefully for all children. A nurturing approach encourages us to think about transitions in the widest context. Following holiday periods, between school years, moving class to class and even small transitions between activities in a classroom and from the playground to the classroom are all examples of transitions for young people.

- When a young person has experienced adversity, changes (even between task and space) can trigger feelings of threat and hypervigilance.
- During difficult and dangerous behaviours, they need to encounter adults who are calm and consistent who respond in a predictable, consistent, empathetic way.

## **TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR**

### **Pro-social**

Doing something to help, benefit or care for someone else, because you believe that other peoples' feelings and experiences are important. Examples of prosocial behaviour includes:

- Sharing
- Taking turns
- Speaking softly/kindly
- Helping others who are stuck
- Inviting people to join in our games
- Treating others with respect (adults and peers)
- Looking after our environment

### **Unsocial Behaviour**

Unsocial behaviour is when a child is not enjoying or making an effort to behave sociably in the company of others, but not to the detriment of others.

Not doing as instructed, but not to the detriment of others. Examples:

- Leaving their desk without permission
- Leaving the carpet during input/story without permission
- Refusing to complete the work set
- Choosing to do another activity than the one the class are doing (reading/drawing on whiteboard etc.)
- Rocking on their chair
- Calling out/talking to a friend
- Not listening to instructions
- Playing/fiddling with equipment Staff should strive to interpret unsocial behaviour as a communication of negative feelings and so should provide differentiation or support.

### **Antisocial behavior**

Children displaying anti-social behaviours, need to be regarded as vulnerable rather than troublesome, and we all have a duty to explore this vulnerability and provide appropriate support.

Antisocial behaviour is behaviour that causes harm to an individual, a group, to the community or to the environment. Behaviour that violates the rights of another person and is likely to cause injury, harassment, alarm or distress.

It is important not to group unsocial behaviour with antisocial behaviour. The child who can find no reason to join in or complete a directed task is often showing considerable restraint in not allowing how they feel

to result in behaviours that are antisocial.

It is important that our response to unsocial behaviour does not drive the behaviour to become antisocial.

Anti-social	Dangerous antisocial
Aggressive shouting/calling out	Leaving the school building
Continued interruptions	Spitting
Swearing	Scratching
Answering back, mimicking	Pinching
Name calling	Hair pulling
Lying	Hitting
Refusal to carry out an adult's request	Kicking
Distracting and/or disrupting other's learning by shouting, banging, making noises	Fighting
Throwing small equipment	Biting
Damage to property	Punching
Pushing over furniture	Throwing furniture
Stealing	Physical or verbal bullying

These behaviours will be a sign of a child needing support and a child may be in a heightened, anxious state – possibly due to factors outside of school – please be aware and empathetic of this and that their behaviour is communicating a need.

## **POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT**

**“You can’t teach children to behave better by making them feel worse. When children feel better they behave better.” Pam Leo**

High but appropriate standards should be set in work and behaviour. Whilst we work towards children considering their behaviour in terms of the impact on themselves and the positive feeling. We use positive reinforcement of these standards by recognising when a child has displayed pro-social behaviour and attitudes in line with our golden rules and values. All rewards and consequences should be consistently and fairly applied.

Alongside more informal positive re-enforcement which may include personalised praise, positive facial expressions, thumbs up children will also receive more formalised rewards.

## **Rewards KS1 and KS2**

1. Animal of the week
  - Each week one individual from the class is recognised for their hard work and achievements. A certificate and the class animal will go home with them, to be returned by the following Friday.
2. Postcard home.
  - KS1 look out for a postcard in book bags and KS2 look out for a postcard in reading logs from staff to recognise the children's positive actions in line with the school value (see appendix b) which is the current focus.
3. Courtesy Award - KS1 & KS2.
  - Courtesy Award to be handed out to one child from KS1 & one child from KS2 each week, to be returned by the following Friday.
4. House points
  - Children will collect house points but these will go added together as a house, rather than individuals and the winning house will receive a treat once a long term.
5. Whole class rewards
  - Children will work collectively as a class to win points/marbles. Children will agree with their class teachers beforehand on a treat (E.g. own clothes day, movie, karaoke!) and once they reach their target children will enjoy their treat.
6. Golden table
  - A child from each class is recognised for their good behaviour at lunch and is invited to eat at the golden table for lunch on a Friday.

## **PREVENTION**

### **Preventing anti-social behaviour**

#### **Planning and Early Intervention**

We use a range of tools at Wivelsfield to support children regularly displaying anti-social behaviours. Children who display regular anti-social behaviour will have a therapeutic plan in place and where appropriate shared with all staff and parents. These are working documents to help adults (and children) to recognise when a child is struggling. It provides guidance on how to de-escalate during a difficult time and enables them to become calm and ready for learning as quickly as possible. The aim is for a child to regulate and be ready for learning but remember – de-escalation first. A heightened, distressed or tired child, is unable to consider learning conversations.

Possible strategies that could be used:

Differentiated learning space/work station/ Fiddle toy / Wobble cushion/ Whiteboard to write / Timers/ Task planner / Scaffolds / Additional resources / Individualised timetable / Now and next board/ Brain breaks/ Positive experience / Class job / Task differentiation / Adult support/Peer support / Learning intervention / Small group/paired learning

### **Preventing Escalation**

To prevent escalation an adult must show consistent, calm behaviour while using the following strategies: Limited language is used, focusing on a positive behaviour. For example:

- Kind hands
- Walk nicely
- Sit safely
- Voices off
- Empty hands
- I would like to see you...
- Let me help you...
- Hands up....
- Lolly sticks...
- Empty hands
- This is our quiet time

### **De-escalation**

For when a child has become emotionally dysregulated, staff will use a script to respond in a positive, calm manner with an understanding that whilst a child is dysregulated they will be unable to respond logically or to learn.

#### **The script**

- [Name of child]... I can see you might be / are feeling annoyed/angry/upset.
- I am here to help.
- Talk and I will listen.
- Come with me and ... Emotional Recovery:
- Different children need varying lengths of “cool down” times

A situation may also be de-escalated by a cool down can be offered in a variety of locations within the school and will be personalised depending on need. Change of face, where one adult replaces another as the person leading de-escalation.

## **Consequences**

There will be times when the positive reinforcement and de-escalation is able to prevent behaviour that is not pro-social. Wivelsfield School encourages children to reflect on the impact of any poor behaviour on others through Restorative Justice conversations and, when appropriate, consequences related to the misdemeanour. Consequences for behaviour.

Before a consequence is put into place a warning will be given

That is a warning, I have asked you to have 'empty hands' and you have chosen to carry on...'

If the behaviour continues, children will be made aware of the consequences

'You have chosen to continue ..... you now have 5 minutes with me to talk about this.'

'You have chosen to continue ..... you now have 10 minutes with me to talk about this.'

A child who has spent time in 'crisis' may need time to calm down before any educational consequence or conversation takes place, this may be the following day.

In these situations, consequences will need to be put into place. These will be either:

**Educational** - A logical action which supports the child to understand their behaviour and learn new skills where necessary.

Or

### **Protective**

- ✓ If necessary, used to protect the safety of the child or others.
- ✓ Must always be alongside an educational consequence.
- ✓ The aim is always to return freedom to the child as soon as possible.

If an adult at school needs to talk to a child about behaviours that are not prosocial this will be done privately to avoid humiliation or giving too much 'air time' to anti-social behaviours.

### **What a consequence might look like:**

#### **► Consistently, calling out and disrupting the learning of others:**

Educational consequence - 5 minute conversation at the start of break/lunch about the impact on the lesson and the impact on others. Opportunity to discuss strategies to avoid this in the future.

#### **► Using unkind language:**

Educational consequence - time spent during child's own time discussing the impact on others. Opportunity to discuss how they might repair the situation.

- ✓ apologise verbally
- ✓ write or draw a sorry note
- ✓ do something kind to show that they are sorry
- ✓ If this is a regular occurrence, a protective consequence may also be necessary, for example the child is moved to another area of the classroom.

► **Physical aggression during football:**

Protective and educational consequence - a period of time spent not joining in with football with peers. Supporting younger children to play and working with staff outside to identify strategies for playing safely and remaining calm

**Restoration**

We understand that each child will need time to reflect, repair, restore. It is important that after an incident there is time to reflect, repair and restore. As soon as possible after an incident, if all parties are emotionally ready, it is essential to talk with a child to safe guard their emotional wellbeing and help them reflect and progress. The purpose of reflect, repair and restore is to re-visit the experience by re-telling and exploring the story with a changed set of feelings.

During the incident, the child's behaviour may be influenced by anger, frustration, disappointment etc. These questions can be used to guide the discussion.

- What happened?
- How were you thinking / feeling and how did it make others think and feel
- Who has been affected and how?
- What can we do to put things right? These then need to be done.
- What have we learnt and how can we respond differently next time?

We have a zero-tolerance of more 'severe incident' i.e. peer on peer abuse, fighting, stealing, anti-social behaviour in the toilets, swearing at pupil/adult or deliberate rudeness to an adult, damaging school property with intent, persistent unkindness to others/bullying type behaviour there will be no warning given. This will also apply to sexual harassment between peers. The child will be sent to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. At the discretion of the Headteacher/ Head of School, or in their absence another member of the SLT, a further consequence may be applied e.g. internal exclusion or longer loss of playtime. In these instances, parents/carers will always be informed.

If a staff member feels it necessary then the Head of School/Head Teacher should be informed of a behaviour, particularly if it a consistent or concerning behaviour, that not normally merit their intervention according to the consequence shown above.

Where appropriate East Sussex guidance for managing incidents of Harmful Sexual Behaviour will be followed.

At the end of the lesson, the 'slate is wiped clean'.

Teacher assistants have the right to apply the consequences in conjunction with the teacher or whoever is teaching the class. .

If a child is removed from their normal playtime, in all instances children will be given time to go the toilet and the opportunity for a few minutes 'run around' at the end of a break time.

Clubs should not be missed if a sanction has been given. The sanction should be deferred to the next day.

## **Recording**

Significant behaviour incidents are recorded electronically My Concerns.

## **Behaviour Code Posters**

Posters are displayed in all classes and learning areas showing the Behaviour Code

## **Special Educational Needs and Disability**

We provide support and intervention programmes for those children with whose emotional and mental health can manifest themselves in negative behaviour patterns. This support is identified on the SEND additional needs plan or EHCP. **This means alternative actions, rewards and consequences to those described above may be used for these children.** If necessary, additional support is provided to the school and child through outside agencies such as the Team Around the School and Setting (TASS). We recognise that this individualized approach can sometimes lead to perceptions that we are not adhering to policy but ask parents/carers and children to understand that where there are departures from policy, these are taken for good reasons in line with the SEND Code of Practice. As a school we seek to deal with all such cases professionally and sensitively.

## **RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION**

Restrictive physical intervention should only be used in emergencies; every available strategy should be considered prior to the use of physical restraint. Any restrictive physical intervention is used in line with '*East Sussex County Council Restrictive Physical Intervention/Use of Reasonable Force Guidance –Nov 2023.*

There are many different strategies available to avoid the need for physical restraint, the first of which is pre-empting any such incident. Talking, to help a child to calm down, a 'safe' place to reduce anxiety, a 'breathing' space, recognition of escalating anxieties and having a break from the class – a walk round the field accompanied by an adult are all strategies which should be employed. However, in certain circumstances, restrictive physical intervention is required to ensure the safety of an individual pupil and the safety of other members of the whole school community. Violent or aggressive behaviour to others is not acceptable and will not be tolerated: where this is identified and extreme behaviour is appearing to escalate, making the use of physical restraint inevitable, parents will be informed to collect their child as soon as possible.

Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used as a 'last resort' and only for:

- **removal of a disruptive pupil from a classroom**
- **restraint of a pupil to prevent them harming themselves**
- **restraint of a pupil to prevent them harming others**
- **prevention of a pupil leaving if leaving would risk their safety.**

**It should not be used merely to prevent a pupil damaging school property**

In any circumstance where physical restraint has been used, the incident will be documented, giving details of the incident and reasons for restraint. Parents will also be informed immediately by telephone and asked to remove the child from the school site where deemed necessary.

Wherever possible, members of staff trained in positive handling should be asked to assist if restraint is needed.

## **EXCLUSION**

Exclusion is used as a last resort and will only be considered in response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy. It will be considered and implemented, where permitting the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm: the education or welfare of the pupil, the education or welfare of another pupil or pupils or the physical wellbeing of others in the school.

Other than in the case of a serious one-off offence (non-exhaustive examples being serious actual or threatened violence, sexual abuse or assault, supplying an illegal drug or carrying an offensive weapon) exclusion will only be used when other approaches have been unsuccessful. For a serious one-off offence, exclusion may be immediate.

Any exclusion, whether temporary or permanent, will be notified to the parents of that child in writing.

Any exclusion will be carried out using guidance and procedures stated in 'Exclusion Guidance for Schools and Academies' East Sussex County Council September 2023 in conjunction with 'Exclusion Guidance for Schools and Academies' DfE September 2023.

Please also refer to the Exclusions Policy .

## **SEARCHING, SCREENING AND CONFISCATION**

Any pupil bringing a mobile phone onto the premises is expected to hand this over to reception, to be collected at the end of the day.

Any pupil will be searched by a member of staff, if the member of staff knows, or has the reasonable belief that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item. Should such a search take place, a second member of staff will also be present. Should it be suspected that a prohibited item is concealed within a child's underwear, the authority of the Head Teacher/Head of School, or in their absence the Deputy Head Teacher, will be sought prior to any such search.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of prohibited items. Any such items found in a pupil's possession will be confiscated and not returned to the pupil:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Any article a staff member reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil)

We will also confiscate any item which is harmful or detrimental to school discipline. These items may be returned to pupils, after discussion with senior leaders and parents, if appropriate.

Searching and screening pupils is conducted in line with [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools](#), DfE January 2018. If at all possible, two members of staff will be present, where possible they will be the same gender as the pupil being searched. A search will only be undertaken if there is reasonable grounds for suspicion.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

Effective Behaviour Management is essential to the smooth running of a school and in the creation of an environment where everyone's rights and responsibilities are addressed. A balance between fundamental rights and responsibilities is at the heart of behaviour management. (Rogers, B 1995)

## **Appendix A**



## Appendix B



At the heart of the community, inspiring our children to be the best they can be in an ever-changing and diverse world.

We value:

- A love of discovery and learning
- Respect and consideration for self, others and our environment
  - A positive and reflective approach
    - Confidence and independence
    - Working happily together

We are:

Considerate  
Honest  
Proud  
Helpful  
Confident  
Happy  
Respectful

Written and agreed by the children