

Behaviour Protocol

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Introduction

The purpose of this protocol is to provide staff, students, families and our whole school community with information, strategies and legal requirements regarding how we approach behaviour at Medeshamstede Academy.

Our academy values and ethos underpin our attitude, actions and words towards students in our care: during all interpersonal interactions we will model and encourage the core values of **Respect, Responsibility, Resilience** and **Reflection**. Through these values we will ensure that everyone in our school community is treated with respect and dignity; belonging to a community that understands their needs and provides each child with the right support. These values are embedded into our curriculum and reinforced with students through Dojo points.



Respectful



Responsible



Reflective



Resilient

Just as we support students with the acquisition of academic skills it is fundamental that we also help our students to develop behaviours which are safe, functional, dignified, effective and respectful of others. The academy's curriculum emphasises the importance of developing effective communication, safety, independence, and wellbeing ensuring that these skills are not only expected but supported and explicitly taught to students who may have challenges in these areas. All classes develop a code of conduct or agreement appropriate to their development around expectations of

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themselves and each other based on our core values and underpinning principles (see below). Individual Student Profiles and Behaviour Management Plans ensure the needs of every child are understood and met.

At Medeshamstede Academy we have the following underpinning principles.

- Positive and meaningful relationships are imperative to our practice between all members of our school community.
- Unconditional positive regard should be practiced and always reinforced.
- Students and adults have a sense of belonging, feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Promoting the importance of fostering social relationships in a school community and appreciating and celebrating differences.
- Responsibility and accountability for one's own actions and their impact on others.
- Respect for others, their views, feelings, and circumstances.
- We work collaboratively with parents to support students to fulfil their potential and individual needs are met.
- Fairness.
- Consistency.
- A willingness to create opportunities for reflective change.
- Provide opportunities for students to make decisions about and be aware of their own regulation tools where appropriate.

Medeshamstede Academy views behaviour as a form of communication. Whilst all our students have a diagnosis of Autism, we recognise and celebrate all the unique differences and presentations of our students which may change over time. We recognise that every child and situation is different. There is no one approach that will resolve every child's behavioural challenge. We draw on a range of methodologies and proven techniques and remain curious in terms of establishing the underlying cause for a behaviour. The key to supporting each situation lives in understanding the context and the nature of the individual actions; all behaviour is communication. We engage in a reflective approach that is knowledge based and flexible in response as the situation develops. At Medeshamstede, behaviour and responses are analysed through data so that patterns can be identified and strategies used are informed and effectively deployed.

Some of our students will not have the verbal language to communicate their need, want or distress. Even where students have the capacity of speech to explain, this language is not always effective when they are in distress. When supporting students, we recognise this to ensure that our response is appropriate when there is dysregulation and support and encourage all forms of communication, ensuring visual forms of communication are available to those who require it. We use the support of NHS and internal speech and language therapists (SaLT) and assistants to remove communication barriers.

We would also regard the student's sensory needs as a fundamental physiological need; provision of an appropriate sensory programme or diet is put in place for many students to ensure they are sufficiently sensorily integrated before engaging with tasks. Sensory techniques are also used extensively to support the purposeful learning of students. We recognise that everyone's sensory needs are different and we use the expertise of occupational therapists (OT) to support our understanding of the individual.

The combination of relationships, structure, routine, clear boundaries, and opportunities for developing independence promotes the development of positive, healthy and safe ways of relating to others. All staff should be aware that students can be abusive towards other students (often referred to as child on child abuse) and that the academy needs to be vigilant and responsive to these behaviours; we should all be aware that the behaviours of one child can have a direct

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impact on the feelings of another and we are committed to supporting learners to develop strategies, resilience and the ability to manage the impact of others on their own sense of wellbeing. We are aware that working in this way with students can take time and that during their time at school, it is likely that all students will go through periods of dysregulation and difficulty. We ask that all stakeholders recognise this and offer support and patience when students who have experienced a period of dysregulation might have an impact on the progress and regulation of their own child.

At Medeshamstede Academy we recognise that students who are in the care of the Local Authority (CLA) as well as young people with disabilities are significantly more likely to have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). As such, trauma-informed practice is embedded into the everyday behaviour management strategies that we use. Our trauma-informed approach is grounded in the understanding that trauma exposure can impact an individual's neurological, biological, psychological and social development. Trauma-informed practice acknowledges the need to see beyond an individual's presenting behaviours and to ask, 'What does this person need?' rather than 'What is wrong with this person?'. All students who demonstrate challenging behaviour have an individual Behaviour Management Plan (BMP) and all BMPs include strategies aligned with the trauma informed approach - PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy).

We support the students to regulate their emotions, promote independence, enhance communication, social skills and raise self-esteem. We recognise autism as a life-long difference and understand the unique learning styles and characteristics of autistic students. We seek outside agencies and draw upon their expertise this might be through referrals, CPD or professionals modelling practice. Most staff in the academy are trained in PRICE (Protecting Rights in a Caring Environment) methods of behaviour management and deescalation. PRICE Principles focus on identifying the function of the behaviour and working with the student to replace inappropriate behaviour. Staff must try to unpick the function of the behaviour and replace or adapt this behaviour so that it is more acceptable and appropriate. The functions of the behaviour could be the desire for:

- **Social attention:** behaving in a particular way is a *reliable* way of gaining attention.
- **Sensory needs:** behaving in a particular way is a *reliable* way of satiating a sensory need.
- **Avoidance or escape:** behaving in a particular way is a *reliable* way of escaping from or avoiding a particular activity.
- **Tangible:** behaving in a particular way is a *reliable* way of gaining access to preferred items or activities.

Responding to Behaviour

At Medeshamstede, we acknowledge that students respond more positively to adults when they have positive and safe relationships. We expect all staff to role model good behaviour (behaviour that is appropriate to the social context) and acknowledge this behaviour to encourage repetition. We expect staff to communicate verbally and non-verbally Medeshamstede's expectations and values to all students. All interactions give staff the opportunity to reinforce routines, expectations and develop meaningful, consistent, and safe relationships with students. At Medeshamstede we consistently use the following to empower our young people and promote motivation: Verbal recognition; communicating positives to parents and carers via Dojo, phone call or achievement postcards; celebrating achievements at both in class and at assemblies and opportunities to earn Dojo points in line with the academy's core values.

Primary Strategies

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The following are things that we do as a school, all day every day, to develop a safe learning environment. These things include everything from the safety of the academy site and environments to the individual support students receive, but also include:

- The structure of the academy day – all students have access to a visual timetable, so they know what to expect throughout the day.
- Careful consideration to the structure of class groups.
- Communication and collaboration with parents to co-develop strategies of support for students.
- Staff to have a good working knowledge of each student's targets for behaviour.
- The attitude and behaviours of staff should teach by example and model exaggerated respect for the students, for each other, themselves, the academy and good ethical behaviours in all aspects of work.
- All staff expect and assume positive interaction with peers and learning, whilst being prepared for, and aware of, possible behaviours of concern.
- Give responsibility, wherever possible, to promoting student independence.
- Plan to prepare students for changes in routine well in advance.
- Be explicit and clear about intentions; having clear, consistent expectations and success criteria, visually communicated to students.
- Always allow for appropriate processing time.
- Work as a team to ensure a structured and visually organised learning environment.
- All staff will apply boundaries consistently and fairly.

Secondary Strategies

These are the things that all staff are trained to think carefully about, in order to manage and support the day-to-day interaction between students. No single approach or technique is helpful in all situations for all students. Staff, therefore, have a commitment to adapt strategies to the individual student, using the most appropriate strategies outlined in the student profile, Behaviour Management Plan and EHCP.

Below are some of the secondary strategies that staff should use to support students who are experiencing dysregulation or demonstrating behaviours of concern. This list is not exhaustive.

- Consciously notice positive behaviour and give genuine comments of specific praise.
- Use humour to diffuse tension.
- Using calming approaches
- Diverting the child's attention to an activity they enjoy
- Attentional shift.
- Listening actively and paraphrase to communicate understanding of what has been shared and what next steps will be taken in order to address a problem.
- Always be consistent with strategies and ensure the team is fully informed of approaches within Behaviour Management Plans

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- Have an awareness of behavioural needs of all students, equally quieter, less vocal students
- Avoiding the use of sarcasm.

Our aim is to involve parents and carers in all areas of their child's education and in the management of their behaviour, so that behaviours can be managed as pro-actively as possible. Behaviour Management Plans should reflect a student's Education, Health and Care Plan. Arrangements should detail behaviours displayed, their triggers, and strategies proposed for managing them. Details for behaviour management plans can be discussed with parents at review meetings; plans will be regularly reviewed and updated particularly after an incident as this document needs to reflect accurate and clear practice.

Reflection and Consequences

Natural consequences teach safety as well as ensuring expectations are clear, where possible, and appropriate students are given opportunities for reparation. We recognise the emerging body of research that suggests that sanctions are not effective for promoting changes in behaviour for autistic young people. We do not use a punishment-based approach: we work with students to develop their strategies around taking responsibility without invoking a feeling of shame. Many of our students have encountered adverse childhood experiences and we avoid triggering further trauma whilst supporting the child to recognise and take responsibility for their behaviour. Consequences for behaviour may be:

- A verbal/written reminder of expectations of behaviour e.g. conversation, social story, or use of symbols
- Reflection using resources to support understanding
- Change in activity or lesson e.g. not able to access offsite provisions for safety reasons
- Positive contributions to the academy e.g. watering gardens or tidying areas of school
- Change of environment – a student may need to be supported to work in a different area for reasons of safety
- Suspension
- Permanent exclusion

Further information regarding suspension and exclusions can be found in the [Greenwood Academy Trust – Student Behaviour and Exclusions Policy](#).

We recognise that different students have different ways of processing an event and ensure that the above take place at a time that is right for the child. Consistency is important across the academy, however reasonable adjustments to the policy may be made in relation to a student's SEND status or their protected characteristics. Student's Behaviour Management Plans will be reviewed regularly following incidents of challenging behaviour.

We use the following approaches to support relationships and a restorative approach.

- Respect - for everyone by listening to opinions and learning to value them
- Responsibility - taking responsibility for your own actions
- Repair - developing the skills within our school community to identify solutions and repair harm
- Re-Integration - working through a structured, supportive process that aims to solve the problem

Use of Reasonable Force

PRICE (Protecting Rights in a Caring Environment) is one aspect of our training regarding the support we provide to our students. Our academy PRICE instructors train staff in positive behaviour support and restrictive physical intervention in

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line with the PRICE Safe school's programme. This involves strategies to manage behaviours of concern, de-escalation and diffusing skills and restrictive physical intervention for use as a last resort (and to maintain a safe environment for all). As a school we recognised that unmet needs would impact on a student's ability to engage and learn. Each student known to display behaviours of concern has behaviour management plan written by the class team with input from parents, students, and professionals where appropriate, this works in conjunction with risk assessments and student profiles. Members of staff at Medeshamstede receive regular CPD in strategies which support student's SEND needs from school staff and outside professionals. New staff are trained in PRICE Safe Schools during the term they arrive, and this is refreshed yearly. Existing staff have their Safe Schools training refreshed yearly, and instructors also have their training refreshed in line with PRICE requirements. As a school we recognise and follow the standards of the restraint reduction network.

The use of restrictive physical intervention is a last resort, and all staff are trained to effectively de-escalate challenging situations. Physical restraint methods will only be used by staff with PRICE training and as a last resort where de-escalation techniques have failed or cannot be used. As long as safety can be maintained, the policy is to step back from a child displaying aggression, giving space and time for them to regain control. When restrictive physical intervention or reasonable force has been used, parents will be contacted by telephone to discuss the incident the same day.

The academy recognises that there are times when physical contact with a student may be necessary, for example: giving first aid; holding hands as they move around the academy; blocking students from dangerous situations or if a student is in distress or needs comfort or deep pressure. It also recognises that there are some students for whom touching is unwelcome because of their sensory needs or personal history.

For more information regarding the use of reasonable force and restrictive physical intervention, please see the Medeshamstede Academy's Restrictive Intervention Policy.

Searching and Confiscation

Principals and authorised staff can use force as is reasonable, given the circumstances, to conduct a search for the following prohibited items:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs and paraphernalia
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- E-cigarettes
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury (physical or psychological) or damage to property.

Staff will always give student the opportunity to volunteer any prohibited items and support them to identify the dangers related to the items or situation. Where a member of staff reasonably suspects that a student is in possession of a

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prohibited item and the student refuses to cooperate with a search of their person or of their property, the Academy may treat this as a disciplinary matter and apply the appropriate consequence.

The Academy follows the DFE's guidance on searching and confiscation when disposing of prohibited items. (Searching, screening and confiscation – Advice for Headteachers, school staff and governing bodies, July 2022). Any cigarettes or e-cigarettes confiscated in the Academy may be destroyed.

Bullying

It is important to accurately identify bullying - bullying is a behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying is not an isolated incident.

At Medeshamstede Academy we have high expectations of all of our students and expect our students to conduct themselves in the best way possible at all times. We aim to provide a supportive, caring and friendly environment which allows all our students to learn, grow and develop to achieve their full potential. The academy does not tolerate bullying in any form and actively works to prevent it: when it is identified we are committed to tackling it.

Our school ethos promotes inclusion at all levels, whether that is based on race, sexuality or disability. Due to the complexity of need for some of our students they may not know or understand that their behaviour constitutes bullying. Similarly, some of our students would not have the understanding to know or the verbal communication to express that they were being bullied. As practitioners it is our role to ensure that we are recognising when these behaviours occur and support our students to behave and respond in a way that is more appropriate and desirable.

Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical bullying: hitting, slapping or pushing someone
- Verbal bullying: name calling, gossiping or threatening someone
- Non-verbal abuse: hand signs or text messages
- Emotional abuse: threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- Exclusion: ignoring or isolating someone
- Undermining, constant criticism or spreading rumours
- Controlling or manipulating someone
- Making silent, hoax or abusive calls

The following types of bullying would also be defined as a hate crime:

- Racial, sexual, transphobic or homophobic bullying
- Bullying someone because they have a disability

At Medeshamstede Academy we use our curriculum planning and interventions as a tool to teach anti-bullying. Students learn about prejudice at a level that is accessible to them. We celebrate diversity, both within our own community as well as nationally and globally. We teach our students to be good citizens, to be kind and to understand we are all different but equally valued. We foster a culture of acceptance and this is taught throughout all aspects of our curriculum including through PSHE and RSE.

We work collaboratively with families to ensure that they are able to share concerns with staff and that those concerns are dealt with sensitively and promptly. This may include incidents that happen outside of school.

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We use our restorative approach to address bullying (as outlined above). Students are involved in the process and our model promotes collaboration rather than punitive measures to tackle incidents of bullying.

All incidents of bullying and child on child abuse is recorded on our internal system, CPOMS. Appropriate actions are also recorded as well as any external agency involvement. The system is robust and ensures that we are routinely monitoring incidents and our effectiveness at dealing with them.

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