



**Downs View Life Skills College**  
**Positive behaviour policy 2020-2021**

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<b>Person responsible:</b>	Headteacher
<b>Display/availability:</b>	Website
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**Purpose of those policy:**

- To provide guidance and clarity to College staff, parents and carers, trustees and stakeholders on how we support our learners in managing their behaviour and self-regulation and ensuring they feel safe and equipped to learn.
- To set out our beliefs and understanding of behaviour in relation to learners with a range of complex needs.
- To describe our inclusive ethos and how it relates to our cohort of learners.

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## Introduction

Downs View Life Skills College opened in September 2016 as an initiative of Downs View School and Brighton and Hove Local Authority to give more choice of post 19 education for young people with complex Special Educational Needs.

We support young people aged 19-25 years who have Education Health and Care (EHC) plans for a range of complex needs relating to their Cognition and Learning, such as profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and severe learning difficulties (SLD). Many of our students have additional needs such as a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC).

This Positive Behaviour Policy has been co-produced with staff. We have incorporated aspects of Brighton and Hove City Council's guidance on "Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy" when drafting this guidance, as well as other examples of good practice.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our policies on:

- Physical Intervention & Restraint
- Behaviour Management Policy and Guidance
- Touch policy
- Reporting Incidents
- Safeguarding Policy

## Key beliefs

At Downs View Life Skills College we promote an ethos of mutual respect for the whole learning community. We recognise that our expertise in understanding the complex needs of our learners will have a positive impact on their behaviour and ability to self-regulate. We know that behaviour is a form of communication and sometimes more challenging behaviour may be the only way a learner feels they can communicate. It is our intention to focus on the reason for the behaviour and it is through a whole person approach that we can best plan for and meet the needs of our learners.

We expect high standards of behaviour and every member of staff without exception has a part to play in establishing and maintaining a positive and supportive culture. This will include having positive expectations of learners, having respect for all, providing good social role models for students, constantly looking for ways to celebrate achievement, and looking to enjoy and have fun in college.

We have a very clear policy for the development of behaviour management plans which set out the parameters for good practice for each individual learner.

At all times we will ensure that we observe and consider the potential underlying causes of the behaviour a learner is exhibiting so that we can best understand it

before supporting or intervening. Learners will be encouraged to think and talk about their behaviour where appropriate and will be encouraged to develop self-regulation and independence.

Our college ethos promotes a therapeutic, proactive approach, with strong relationships between staff, learners and their parents/carers. It relies on creating a climate that fosters connection, inclusion, dignity, respect and value for all members of the college community.

We believe that:

- our learners want to behave well;
- the complex needs of our learners impact on how they learn to regulate and manage their behaviour;
- learners who exhibit challenging behaviour need to be regarded as vulnerable rather than troublesome, and we all have a duty to explore this vulnerability and provide appropriate support;
- learners should be supported to communicate their needs safely and appropriately using their preferred communication method;
- the relationship between home and college is key to the success of our learners;
- being 'fair' is not about everyone getting the same (equality) but about everyone getting what they need (equity);
- we take a non-judgmental, non-confrontational, curious and empathic attitude towards behaviour;
- to help our learners feel safe, their educational environment needs to be high in both nurture and structure;
- natural and logical rewards and consequences that can follow certain behaviours should be made explicit, without the need to enforce 'sanctions' that can shame and ostracise learners from their peers, college community and family, leading to potentially more negative behaviour.

Teachers and class teams can support our learners by:

- being mindful and reflective on the quality of relationships
- maintaining clear boundaries and expectations around behaviour.
- being committed to the continuous improvement of our provision
- planning the support our learners need to develop their self-regulation skills
- gathering and analysing data on behaviour to ensure interventions are personalised, informed and planned according to the needs of each individual
- allowing safe spaces and opportunities for learners to practise these skills and learn from their mistakes.

## Behaviour is Communication

When working with a learner, we consider their communication styles, social interaction skills, sensory and emotional needs, pain thresholds and what self-injurious behaviour they could be communicating, as well as levels of stimulation and engagement. The role we play in supporting them to develop and effectively communicate encourages them to self-regulate and behave in a positive manner.

Our learners have a wide range of communication styles and many are pre- or non-verbal, and use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems to communicate. Their effort to manage themselves and their behaviour should be recognised by adults and their peers.

## Relationships with parents and carers

We work collaboratively and supportively with parents and carers to establish a better understanding of the learner so that we can better meet their behaviour needs. It is important to reflect and plan with parents to ensure consistency in approaches between home and college. Behaviour management plans are shared with parents and regularly reviewed.

Communication between home and college is frequent, with teachers and teaching assistants using the most appropriate method of communication for that family. This provides parents/carers with on-going feedback as to how their child is progressing and timely addressing of any issues that arise.

It is also important that we work collaboratively with other professionals to ensure their input into planning and strategies

## Practical strategies and resources for promoting positive behaviour

This Behaviour Policy provides a framework through which staff can create a stable and safe learning environment. All staff are equally responsible for the management of behaviour. The college operates as a community with clear values and well understood approaches which are enhanced by the co-operation of the whole team.

Staff are individuals who have their own preferred methods of working which complement their own personalities. However, it is essential that we work in an agreed procedural framework to provide the consistency and stability that our learners need. We must ensure a whole staff acceptance of standards

Learning behaviour is a task, just like learning to read or write. We must have realistic expectations about the rate of progress a learner will make when learning to adapt or develop new behaviours.

Mistakes are part of the learning process. We encourage staff to consider the issues that have caused challenging behaviour in our learners and think about

how to respond to that behaviour in a non-judgemental and supportive way. This can be very difficult especially if the learner is aggressive or targeting others. We support our staff in developing their own resilience through professional support. This can be peer to peer, group or individual support and can draw on expertise both within Downs View and externally.

We use a variety of resources and responses to re-enforce good behaviour. We support learners to self-regulate, especially via the 'Just Right' programme.



## Organising the classroom for effective communication and behaviour

### Curriculum and timetabling

- Managing behaviour is embedded within the curriculum itself.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and designed to develop the key skills the learners will need throughout their lives.
- We use timetabling to manage “difficult” times. The timing of lessons is linked closely to the concentration of learners and the need for risk assessments for certain activities.
- Staff are aware of triggers for inappropriate behaviour.
- Our grouping arrangements ensure there are appropriate activities for all learners, particularly at unstructured times – break times/lunchtimes etc.

**Class rules** to support positive behaviour should be:

- Few in number
- Where developmentally appropriate, agreed with learners
- Communicated in a way that learners can understand (including social stories)
- Stated in the positive – things we are going to do
- Regularly referred to by the class team
- Appropriate to the developmental range of the students.

### Routines

Consistent routines support our learners to understand expectations, manage anxiety, and prepare themselves for the day – allowing them to learn how to self-regulate, engage with learning and manage behaviours positively. These routines must be explicitly taught for all activities; there should be no assumption that students know these routines.

Class teams should however also reflect on how they support learners to adapt to and prepare for changes to routine; this is an important life skill.

### Rewards and consequences

The rewards below are linked to positive choices and achievements. They focus on specific behaviours we wish to improve:

- Descriptive praise – using signs and symbols when appropriate
- Symbolic rewards (e.g. certificates, good work stickers)
- Communication with parents and carers to inform them of behaviour or achievement
- Special responsibilities/privileges
- Preferred activity above and beyond scheduled daily activities
- Physical tangible rewards (e.g. favourite games)

## **Consequences**

1. We do not believe in sanctions or punishment
2. It is important for our learners to clearly link a specific behaviour with its consequence
3. The consequence needs to be either a natural or a logical consequence, to support the learner's understanding of both positive and negative consequences.
4. It is also important for adults to review what has happened. Was there anything that could have been done differently to support this learner?

Natural and logical consequences result from choices a person makes about their behaviour. In effect, they choose the consequence they experience. By allowing someone to experience the pleasant or unpleasant consequence of their behaviour, we help them learn what happens because of the behaviour choices they make. Using consequences can be an effective discipline tool for learners whose cognitive profile allows them to understand the concept of consequence.

### **Steps for using natural and logical consequences:**

1. Identify reasons for the behaviour
2. Explain why the behaviour needs to change
3. Offer choices and talk about their choices in a positive way
4. Let them know when they have behaved well or made a positive choice
5. If possible, let them help decide the consequences.

### **Positive action in times of conflict**

- Keep all conflict and confrontation to a minimum.
- Remind learners of expectations.
- Act non-confrontationally in reminding learners of the consequences and allow 'thinking and processing time'. This allows learners an opportunity to rectify the situation without further intervention.
- Confrontational approaches will result in confrontation back from learners which we must avoid as the end result will not be positive.
- Separate the behaviour from the person; show the learner we are fair and consistent in our expectations; be respectful no matter what they have done.

## **Reparation**

Reparation means making good in some way. We use reparation wherever possible as we believe that our learners should always be given the opportunity to repair, and that they want to do this. We do not believe in the concept of punishment, because it focuses the learner's mind on the punishment and leads to

them feeling angry about the punishment, rather than thinking about what he or she did.

Our staff reflect on their own practice, to consider if their actions may have escalated a situation and what they could do differently next time.

Unresolved conflicts can make learners very anxious; this can cause behaviour to escalate or become habitual. We support learners to take responsibility for what they have done and to repair it with the other person(s) involved. Even learners with complex difficulties can be supported to repair. This looks different for each student.

### Descriptive praise

Descriptive praise involves telling people exactly what it is that we like about what they are doing and reinforces the behaviours we want to promote e.g.

- “I liked how you were helping Sam at break time”
- “I noticed how well you were working in class today”

This positive feedback raises self-esteem and leads to improved behaviour.

### Learners with exceptional behavioural needs

Some of our learners need additional support to learn to self-regulate and manage their behaviour. We provide that support by:

- Working in line with this policy and the Just Right programme
- Putting in additional support, tailored to the specific needs of each learner
- Drawing up a Risk Assessment and Behaviour Management Plan
- Working closely with the family
- Multi-agency working
- Observations in a range of contexts
- Making routines and strategies more detailed.

As with all our learners, we work to understand the reasons for the behaviour and consider the person as a whole, including their life history, physical health and emotional needs.

Some learners need very specific planning, which could include a shorter day, off-site education or home based learning. This would only be for a fixed timeframe until the learner feels ready to return to normal college hours. We always plan these adaptations with parents and carers and the other professionals involved.

## Bullying

Some learners may use bullying tactics to overcome their own feelings of inadequacy or because they have learned to use threats/name calling/unkind comments/physical gestures/intimidation through their own life experiences.

All learners are told that there are only two acceptable ways of dealing with these behaviours: to ignore it by showing no emotional response (which often results in a reduction in the behaviour) or to tell staff/parents in order that they deal with it.

- We do not tolerate bullying. All learners have the right to be educated in a non-threatening environment.
- All instances must be recorded
- It is the responsibility of all staff to highlight bullying concerns immediately.
- Where there is a pattern of bullying, staff must inform parents and an incident must be rigorously documented.
- Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis
- All individuals involved will be given appropriate support and guidance
- Parents/carers of the individuals will be kept fully informed and may be invited to take part in the investigation and any follow-up work
- The learner will need to take responsibility for their actions, apologise and agree to change the behaviour causing concern.
- If necessary the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will be informed
- Learners need to be supported to gain e-literacy appropriate to their developmental level so that they can keep safe online.

Positive relationships between learners and appropriate social interaction are consistently promoted through all our work, lessons and tutor time as well as the pro-social modelling of staff. Anti-Bullying Week is highlighted each year through a programme of activities and sessions which raise the profile of this topic.

### **Abusive and Discriminatory Behaviour (e.g. racism, homophobia, transphobia, disability, ableism)**

All incidents of racism and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are dealt with seriously and are regarded as unacceptable behaviour that will be dealt with in accordance with this behaviour policy. Abusive and discriminatory behaviour are discussed in class.

Whilst abusive acts and incidents are clearly recognised as bullying, the Local Authority requires that they are logged and monitored annually.

## Exclusions

At Downs View Life Skills College we do not believe that exclusions are the most effective way to support learners with SEND. We will always try to adapt and personalise provision so that every learner can access education. Exclusion can only be considered after every avenue to support the learner in changing their behaviour has been explored and exhausted. The Headteacher has sole responsibility for excluding a learner.

### **Fixed term exclusions**

An exclusion for a fixed term would only be considered in the rarest of circumstances such as:

- Incidents where the safety of the learner, other learners or staff is seriously compromised
- Incidents of knife crime or the deliberate use of weapons in College
- Incidents of sexual violence
- Incidents of significant, deliberate damage to property.

Exclusion can also be managed internally and a learner may be removed from class for a fixed period of time.

### **Permanent exclusions**

It would be extremely rare for us to permanently exclude a learner at the Life Skills College.

In the event that we are not able to meet the needs of a learner, we will always aim to work with the family and the Local Authority to identify a suitable alternative placement.

All exclusions will be reported to the Trustees.

## Understanding self-injurious behaviour

Self-injurious behaviour is when a learner physically harms themselves. It is sometimes called self-harm. This might be head-banging on floors, walls or other surfaces, hand or arm biting, hair pulling, eye gouging, face or head slapping, skin picking, scratching or pinching, forceful head shaking. The learner may have no other way of telling us their needs. It may be a way of telling us they are frustrated, in pain (or be a way of coping with pain), a way of getting an object or activity they like, or a way of getting us to stop asking them to do something. It might help them cope with anxiety or excitement, or could be because they are bored. Staff should work collaboratively with the learner, parents or carers and other professionals to try to find ways to prevent or replace this behaviour.

- Respond quickly and consistently when a learner self-injures, it is never appropriate to ignore severe self-injurious behaviour.
- Keep response low key – limit verbal comments, facial expressions and other displays of emotion. Try to speak calmly and clearly, in a neutral, steady tone.
- Reduce demands, the learner may be overwhelmed.
- Remove physical and sensory discomforts
- Redirect: tell them what they need to do instead of the self-injurious behaviour.
- Provide light physical guidance e.g. gently move their hand away from their head, with as little force as possible, and redirect to another activity. This must be used with extreme caution as it could escalate behaviour
- Place a barrier between the learner and the object causing harm.
- Consider physical restraint if there is a serious risk of harm. Physical restraints should always be used under the guidance of a specialist/therapist to ensure they are done safely. They do not address the cause of the behaviour, so they must never be used in isolation without teaching the learner new skills to address the reasons for the behaviour.

## Positive handling/Restraint, touch and restricting liberties

### Contingent touch

Positive touch looks different for each learner - see Touch Policy.

### Holding

Holding may be used appropriately. By this we mean providing physical direction similar to contingent touch but more directive e.g. the learner is led away by the arm/hand. Learners with complex sensory needs may also request squeezing or deep pressure. This will be document in their EHC plan and learner profile.

### Positive Handling or Restraint

Positive handling or restraint is the positive application of sufficient force to ensure, by physical means, that a learner does not cause injury to themselves or another person, or significant property damage.

Successful behavioural intervention relies on skill and relationships, not physical size or gender. The use of physical intervention should only be used as a last resort once all other options have been exhausted. Staff will always risk assess any situation for their own and others' safety before physically intervening. It should only be used if the learner is putting him/herself or others in danger and where failure to intervene could constitute neglect.

Staff are trained in ProAct SCIPr UK with annual refresher training for all. There are clear criteria for circumstances where it is permissible for staff to physically

intervene in a situation. Having appropriate training and understanding of the uses of physical intervention equips staff to provide a duty of care to safeguard both the learners and staff within the College community. This is outlined in the Physical Intervention Restraint Policy.

Staff generally work in teams. This protects staff from having to manage dangerous situations alone. It also prevents them from being open to allegations. If a member of staff is working alone they need to have a walkie-talkie if on site or mobile phone if off site (see new lone working policy).

If a situation is escalating, assistance should be called. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure the safety of all members of the community and this means that they should not be reliant on the Senior Leadership Team to take the lead in physical interventions.

Physical intervention should never be used as punishment or to elicit compliance with requests. Where a learner is causing major disruption there may be occasions where this intervention is necessary. However, if a learner is refusing to leave an area, the first action should be to relocate other learners to an alternative classroom and remove the audience, which often results in a diffusing of the situation.

In any situation where learners are fighting or one is assaulting another, staff are expected to intervene and separate the learners to prevent further harm. Staff have a duty of care to ensure the safety of all learners.

**If positive handling is used, it must be recorded in an incident report before the end of the day.** An Individual Risk Assessment and Behaviour Management Plan will be drawn up or amended. Once the incident has been de-escalated and the learner is regulating well again (this may not be the same day), we will consider what appropriate repair work needed to maintain the positive relationship with the learner.

### **Restricting liberties**

Learners should never be:

- Locked in a room alone, without support and supervision
- Deprived of food/drink
- Denied access to the toilet.

In exceptional circumstances a learner may be secluded in a safe space to reduce the overall risk to him/herself or others. There must always be at least two adults present and a senior member of staff must be notified immediately.

If a learner is secluded the incident should be fully recorded, shared with parents/carers and the Local Authority should be notified. The learner's risk assessment may need updating.

## Health and Safety

Managing students, particularly those who exhibit severely challenging behaviour, is a physically, emotionally, and mentally demanding task. Working with students with these needs can engender high levels of stress which must be managed appropriately.

Class teams are the first point of support with effective team discussion playing a major part in reducing anxiety and stress. The best opportunity for support is the daily class based time at the end of each day once the learners have departed which can be used for debriefing and problem solving.

All incidents of violence are logged using official forms – the college has a clear policy for the reporting of incidents at different levels and logging restraint. The required information and/or duplicate forms are sent to the Health and Safety Department at Brighton and Hove Council.

## Staff training

Our staff are committed to developing their practice and sharing their skills as part of their professional development. We encourage all adults in College to consider the reason for a learner's behaviour, rather than focussing on the behaviour itself. We want all school staff to feel confident and empowered to support our pupils when their behaviour is challenging.

Training for staff in the management of behaviour takes several guises but is always high on the agenda.

## Review

This policy will be discussed with staff at one of the first staff meetings in the new academic year when safeguarding procedures are discussed.