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1. Purpose of the Policy

At Alternative Acres, we aim to create a positive, inclusive, and supportive environment where children and young people feel safe, valued, and empowered to manage their own behaviour. This policy outlines our approach to behaviour management in a therapeutic farm setting, promoting respect, responsibility, and resilience through nurturing, nature-based interventions.

2. Aims of Behaviour Management

- To create a structured, caring environment where children can develop self-discipline and mutual respect.
- To use the therapeutic farm setting to provide meaningful experiences that support emotional regulation and positive behaviour.
- To implement restorative approaches that foster understanding, empathy, and personal growth rather than punitive responses.
- To promote consistency and fairness in managing behaviour, while recognising each child's individual needs and circumstances.



- To celebrate and reward positive behaviour and personal achievements in meaningful and motivating ways.
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3. Core Principles

- **Respect and Responsibility:** Every child is expected to show respect for themselves, others, and the natural environment of Alternative Acres. Responsibility for their actions is encouraged through guided reflection and restorative practices.
 - **Restorative Approach:** We prioritise repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than punishment. When conflict or misbehaviour arises, our goal is to support children in understanding the impact of their actions and taking responsibility.
 - **Emotional Wellbeing:** Recognising that many of our children may have experienced trauma or have additional emotional and social needs, we adopt a trauma-informed approach that places emphasis on emotional safety and trust-building.
 - **Personal Development:** The natural environment and therapeutic activities on the farm, including animal care, horticulture, and outdoor learning, are used to develop emotional regulation, social skills, and a sense of achievement.
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4. Behavioural Expectations

At Alternative Acres, we expect:

- **Respectful Communication:** Children should use appropriate language and tone, showing kindness and empathy towards peers, staff, and animals.
 - **Positive Engagement:** Children should engage with activities and staff in a positive manner, taking responsibility for their behaviour and choices.
 - **Respect for the Environment:** Children are expected to care for the farm, its animals, and the equipment provided, treating all living things with respect.
 - **Safety First:** Safety is paramount. Children are expected to follow the safety rules of the farm to ensure their wellbeing and that of others.
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5. Managing Challenging Behaviour



Our approach to managing challenging behaviour is centred around de-escalation, reflection, and learning. We recognise that challenging behaviour often stems from unmet needs, and our response is tailored to support children in identifying and addressing these underlying issues.

Steps in Managing Behaviour:

- **Prevention and Early Intervention:** Staff will use positive reinforcement, clear communication, and structured routines to prevent behavioural issues from arising. Regular emotional check-ins with children help identify and mitigate potential triggers.
- **De-escalation Strategies:** When a child is showing signs of distress or agitation, staff will use calm, empathetic communication to de-escalate the situation. This may include offering a quiet space, time with an animal, or a therapeutic activity.
- **Reflection and Restorative Conversations:** After an incident, staff will support the child in reflecting on their behaviour through guided conversations. Restorative practices, such as discussing the impact of their actions and ways to make amends, are a key component.
- **Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP):** For children with ongoing behavioural challenges, an Individual Behaviour Plan may be created in collaboration with the child, their family, the commissioner, and other professionals. This plan outlines specific strategies for managing their behaviour, as well as rewards and interventions.

6. Positive Rewards for Good Behaviour and Achievements

We place strong emphasis on recognising and reinforcing positive behaviour and celebrating personal progress. Our rewards include:

- **Verbal Praise:** Immediate and specific praise from staff to reinforce positive actions.
- **Praise Telephone Call Home:** Staff may contact home to celebrate a child's success or improvement, ensuring families are involved in positive reinforcement.
- **Love2Shop Vouchers:** Awarded as a tangible reward for significant effort, progress, or outstanding behaviour. These may be given weekly or termly based on agreed criteria.



- **Responsibility Roles:** Children may be given special roles (e.g., animal care leader, buddy mentor) as a reward and to promote leadership skills.
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7. Consequences for Inappropriate Behaviour

While we focus on restorative approaches, there may be occasions where consequences are necessary to reinforce boundaries. These consequences will always be fair, proportionate, and directly linked to the behaviour.

- **Natural Consequences:** For example, if a child mistreats an animal, they may lose the privilege of working with that animal until they demonstrate readiness.
 - **Reflection Time:** A brief time away from activities to allow the child to calm down and reflect on their actions.
 - **Restorative Tasks:** These may include making amends for any harm caused, such as helping repair damaged property or contributing to the farm's upkeep.
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8. Supporting Children with Additional Needs

We recognise that some children at Alternative Acres may have specific emotional, developmental, or behavioural needs that require additional support.

- **Tailored Interventions:** Behaviour management strategies will be adapted to meet the individual needs of the child, taking into account any relevant diagnoses, trauma histories, or learning difficulties.
 - **Multi-Agency Collaboration:** We work closely with other professionals, including therapists, social workers, and educational psychologists, to ensure a holistic approach to behaviour management.
 - **Staff Training:** All staff are trained in trauma-informed care, de-escalation techniques, and therapeutic approaches to behaviour management.
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9. Role of Parents, Carers, and Commissioners

We believe that effective behaviour management is a partnership involving the child, their family, Alternative Acres, and relevant commissioning bodies.

- **Parents and Carers:**



- **Regular Communication:** We keep parents informed about their child's behaviour, both positive and negative, through regular updates and meetings.
 - **Collaborative Approach:** We work with families to develop consistent strategies for managing behaviour at home and at the farm.
 - **Supportive Resources:** We offer guidance and resources to help parents understand and support their child's emotional and behavioural development.
 - **Commissioners:**
 - **Oversight and Support:** Commissioners are involved in the review and support of behaviour plans, particularly where provision is funded through local authorities or other services.
 - **Collaborative Planning:** Commissioners are invited to contribute to Individual Behaviour Plans where appropriate and attend reviews or meetings to ensure coordinated care.
 - **Monitoring Outcomes:** Commissioners may receive updates on behaviour and progress as part of reporting agreements, with a focus on child-centred outcomes and long-term success.
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10. Monitoring and Review

This Behaviour Management Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Feedback from staff, children, parents, and commissioners will be considered as part of the review process.

At Alternative Acres, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive in a safe and supportive environment. By using a therapeutic, restorative approach to behaviour management, we aim to foster positive relationships, build emotional resilience, and empower children to take responsibility for their actions.