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**Behaviour Policy**

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| **Written by:** | **Rob Stevenson** | **Date: December 2024** |
| **Last reviewed on:** | **NEW** | |
| **Approved by:** | **Andrew Powell (Proprietor)** | |
| **Next review due by:** | **December 2025** | |

**Introduction**

Higher Farm Education places the safety and well-being of the learners we educate and care for as its highest priority. We aim to create inclusive communities where learners flourish, enjoy their education in a culture and environment which is conducive to their strengths and needs.

The aim of this policy is to promote positive behaviour through a supportive and consistent approach that is based on an understanding of our learners’ individual needs.

Higher Farm Education is a specialist provision which offers support for learners with SEND who may have ADHD, Autism, social anxiety and other needs.

**Framework and Guidance**

This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed, including:

• The Education (Independent Provision Standards 2018) (Part 3, Para 9 and Part 6 Para 32)

• Equality Act (2010),

• Education Act (2011)

• Learners and Families Act 2014

• Positive environments where learners can flourish, Ofsted Guidance (2021)

• Behaviour and Discipline in Provisions DFE Guidance (2016)

• Behaviour in Schools A guide for Head Teachers and Provision Staff (September 2022)

DFE

Guidance

• Use of reasonable Force – advice for provision leaders, staff and governing bodies

• Keeping Learners Safe in Education, statutory guidance for provisions and colleges

(September 2022)

• DFE Guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation (July 2022)

The Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Guidance (2016) states that ‘provisions need to ensure they have a strong behaviour policy to support staff in managing behaviour, including the use of rewards and sanctions’. Behaviour policies are typically informed by behaviourist approaches; however we are aware that they are not successful with all individuals. This is especially true for alternative provisions with a neurodivergent population. Good behaviour is central to a good education, with provisions providing a calm, safe and supportive environment which learners want to attend and where they can learn and thrive. This is one of the aims of Higher Farm Education.

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

• Safeguarding Policy

• Anti-bullying Policy

• Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy

• Suspension and Permanent Exclusions Policy

• Self-Harm and Self-Injurious Behaviour policies

• Medication Policy

• Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy

• Managing Allegations Against Staff Procedure

• Complaint’s Policy

**Policy Implementation**

Everyone is expected and supported to treat one another with dignity, kindness and respect. We use an ‘inclusion by design’ model, meaning we create environments which are predictable and comfortable and staff teams who are consistent whilst remaining adaptable. This policy can be implemented alongside Individual Plans, which may identify a specific approach tailored to a learner’s strengths and needs.

When incidents of behavioural distress and emotional dysregulation occur, we respond promptly, predictably and with confidence to maintain a calm, safe learning environment. We consider and reflect together how the likelihood of such incidents recurring can be reduced.

Debriefing occurs at the end of each day to consider everyone’s actions and responses.

**Our Philosophy**

* Learners are all individual and unique, and we celebrate this.
* We value developing strong and respectful relationships. This includes with our learners, between staff, with parents/carers, and the wider community, such as LA professionals
* We maintain clear boundaries and positive expectations to create safe and predictable environments.
* We include consultation to the learner population to ensure they have a voice and are listened to.
* We recognise learners can be distressed and can experience meltdowns or shutdowns. We also recognise that some behaviours are just part of everyone’s childhood and adolescence, for example, pushing boundaries when developing independence.
* There are times when learners may become so distressed that additional measures may be required to keep them and others safe.
* Our teachers and wider provision team are role models in creating positive, inclusive communities.
* Our approach utilises restorative practice and treats each new day as a fresh start.

**Maintaining High Standards of Wellbeing to Support Positive Behaviour**

The Management Team take responsibility for implementing measures to ensure our provision’s approach to supporting needs and behaviour meets the following national minimum expectation:

* We have high expectations of learners. Our expectation relating to their behaviour is always understood according to their individual strengths and needs.
* The Management Team visibly and consistently support all staff in supporting learner need and behaviour through following this policy.
* All members of the community create a positive safe environment in which bullying, physical threats or abuse and intimidation are not tolerated, in which learners are safe and feel safe and everyone is treated respectfully.
* Any incidents of bullying, discrimination, aggression, and derogatory language (including name calling) are dealt with quickly and effectively.

**Key Roles**

**The Management Team** is highly visible, with leaders routinely engaging with learners, parents / carers and staff on setting and maintaining the culture and an environment where everyone feels safe and supported.

The Management Team ensure that all new staff are introduced to the provision; to ensure they understand its rules and routines and how best to support learners to participate in creating the culture of Higher Farm Education.

**All staff** have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which learners can learn, including regulation of their own emotions and behaviour, encouraging respect for others, and preventing all forms of bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) and being alert to any signs of child-on-child abuse. Staff have an important role in developing a calm and safe environment and establishing clear expectations and boundaries. Staff uphold the whole-provision approach to behaviour by modelling expected behaviour and positive relationships so that learners can see examples of good habits and are confident to ask for help when needed.

Staff communicate expectations, routines, timetables, values and standards both explicitly through modelling, visual supports and in interactions with learners. Staff also receive clear guidance about provision expectations of their own conduct, which are set out in the Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy.

**All learners** deserve to learn in an environment that is calm, safe, supportive and where they are treated with dignity. To achieve this, every learner is made aware, in line with their individual capacity, of the provision standards and expectations. Learners are taught that they have a duty to contribute to the inclusive community culture. Our learners are asked about their experiences within the provision and provide feedback in ways that are accessible and meaningful to them. This can help support the evaluation, improvement and implementation of this policy. Every learner is supported to achieve the best standards they can, including an induction and transition process that familiarises them with the culture.

**The role of parents/carers** is crucial in helping the provision to develop and maintain our culture and approach. Including parents and carers within the whole community is key to ensure comprehensive support around the learners. Parents/carers are encouraged to get to know the Behaviour Policy and related policies and, where possible, take an active interest in the provision. Parents/carers should be encouraged to reinforce the policy at home as appropriate; supporting the team around the learner. Where a parent/carer has any concerns, they should raise this directly with staff while continuing to work in partnership with them.

We build and maintain positive relationships with parents/carers, by keeping them updated about their child, encouraging them to celebrate successes, or holding sessions for parents/carers to help them support the consistency of the policy and their child’s needs. Where appropriate, parents/carers should be included in pastoral work, including attending reviews of specific interventions in place.

**Clinical and wellbeing approaches-** the provision has access to an animal assisted intervention therapist, an occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and psychologist to help support and assess learners. As well as providing therapy plans to be worked on, if it is necessary then a learner may access direct therapy if required. We celebrate our learners’ differences and make reasonable adjustments to enable learners to access learning and engaging to the best of their ability.

**Use of Rewards and Recognition**

•Recognition - We recognise and celebrate effort not just achievement and examples of our rewards and reinforcements include praise, ‘Learner of the Week,’ unexpected rewards, certificates and pony club related awards. Achievements will be shared with the wider community, such as parents/carers. Rewards are never taken away from a learner once they have been earned for the intention of providing a sanction.

•Rankings – Reward systems will not be on public display as we recognise this could be shaming and demotivating for some learners.

•Unfair incentives - we have eliminated unfair provision incentives, such as attendance awards, as we know neurodivergent learners will have difficult days when they struggle to attend provision and they should be penalised.

**Responding to Distress and Need**

There are times when our learners become distressed and may require other sources of support. When a member of provision staff becomes aware they respond empathically, predictably, promptly and clearly in line with this policy.

The first priority will be to establish the physical and emotional safety of learners and staff and to restore a calm environment. Keeping learners safe is always the highest priority for all staff.

We will also consider whether the behaviour gives cause to suspect that a learner is suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm. Staff must be familiar with, and follow, the provision’s Safeguarding Policy. All concerns, no matter how small, that a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm must be reported to the provision’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy, and recorded on CPOMs.

The provision has the responsibility to respond to learner’s behaviour outside of onsite hours (including online) to such an extent as is reasonable.

**Natural and Logical Consequences**

Positive reinforcement combined with natural and logical consequences are important and necessary to support our whole provision culture.

All learners require boundaries and consequences that are fair, predictable and understandable. Learners will be reminded of these and will be able to access time out if they require this to help them regulate. This can take many different guises: such as one of our calm spaces, follow the river walk with a member of staff, accessing a sensory or dark space to reduce the sensory overload. Time with a keyworker or another familiar adult will always be an option.

De-escalation techniques are our primary responsive strategies, these include:

•our staff teams will use a calm approach with neutral body language

•our staff teams will use minimal verbal interactions during de-escalation

•we will use positive framing language

•we will use planned and proactive positive distraction (for example talk about the learner’s interest)

•we will divert the learner to a different, preferred activity or experience

•change their environment (for example allowing a learner to access a calm room or outdoor safe space)

•we will encourage the learner to engage in a preferred sensory activity

•’change of face’ to the team supporting the learner

•use of space and allowing the learner to move and run, within view and in a safe space

•using visual supports to support the learner to process and understand

•any unique strategies that the child themselves has requested as part of their individual behaviour support plan or EHCP

**The Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention**

We are aware that restraint of any kind can have a negative impact on a child’s mental health and damage relationships between learners and those who educate for them.

Restraint is only ever used as a last resort response to maximise safety and minimise harm of the learner and others.

A reasonable, proportionate and least restrictive course of action is taken when there is an imminent or immediate risk of harm to self or others.

It will always be used for the shortest time possible and only when there is no other alternative to help learners and staff to stay safe. Staff are fully trained using CPI (Crisis Prevention) and work in line with the DFE guidelines

Where possible, we consult with all learners about their de-escalation plans to ensure their voice is heard and understood in relation to their triggers and how they want their staff team to respond.

If reasonable action is used, then this is detailed and recorded on the CPOMs system.

**Searching, Screening and Confiscation**

Provision staff can confiscate, retain or dispose of a learner’s property in line with the DFE Guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation. Staff should consider whether the confiscation is proportionate and consider any special circumstances relevant to the case.

Items which contribute to the learner’s wellbeing, neurodivergence and sense of safety (for example fidget toys) will never be removed unless there is a risk of significant harm.

**Removal from learning**

Removal from a learning space is only ever considered when the safety and wellbeing of the individual, peers or staff are at risk. We will always additionally consider the potential disruption of others learning opportunities in the immediate area. The learner will continue to be supervised at a level appropriate to their emotional needs. At other times, we may choose to remove the rest of their peers in order to ensure their safety and to cause minimal disruption to their learning.

The Headteacher or Provision Manager maintains strategic oversight of any removals, makes sure the reasons that may lead to learners being removed are transparent and known to all staff and learners, that removal is for the shortest time possible, in an appropriate place that is resourced to learn and refocus, supervised by staff, with a clear process for reintegration of the learner back into learning as soon as it is appropriate and safe to do so. Learners will not be removed from the provision for prolonged periods of time without the explicit agreement of the Headteacher.

**Temporary Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions**

All learners are entitled to an education where they are protected from disruption and can learn in a calm, safe and supportive environment. Headteachers can use temporary suspensions and permanent exclusion in response to serious incidents or in response to persistent poor behaviour which has not improved following in-provision adaptions and support. This will also be seen as a very last resort, as removing a learner from the provision as an environment with trusted adults is rarely likely to be in a learner’s best interests. We also recognise the impact this might have on a learner and or parent/carers and will work to support the child and their family/carers. Please refer to the Exclusion Policy for more information.

**De-Briefing**

It is good practice to provide a space for learners to de-brief following a significant incident and to support restorative practice. This needs to be at a time that is appropriate and timely and when everyone is ready. We can use visual and narrative techniques to support and promote learning during any learner de-brief. It is recognised that some neurodivergent learners will struggle to reflect as they may not recall memories during a meltdown and therefore, we ensure all de-briefs occur in the learner’s best interest.

It is recognised that managing complex needs can be incredibly stressful for individuals and for teams. Supporting colleagues after an incident and/or challenging day occurs in a non-judgemental and empathic safe space. Post incident de-briefs are required.

**Recording and Reporting**

The provision has a strong and effective system for recording and reporting, and all incidents will be reported on CPOMs. This includes, behaviour incident data, attendance, incidents of searching, screening and confiscation, and other behaviour related issues.

The Management Team and staff analyse and audit data and pose questions to drill down further to identify possible trends and patterns of individual behaviours to proactively prevent future dysregulation. Analysing the data by protected characteristic and using those findings to inform policy and practice help the provision ensure that it is meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

**Reporting to outside agencies:** Behaviours presented by the learner which are dangerous or criminally harmful will require reporting to outside agencies, such as the police. If concerns are raised about staff, referral to outside agency may be required, such as the Local Authority or police. Staff must follow the process set out in Provision Safeguarding Policy and Managing Allegations Against Staff Procedure.

**Anti Bullying**

Learners may lack the social skills required to manage relationships, and/or they may not have learnt a way of managing relationships through appropriate role modelling. Staff will remain vigilant to signs of bullying, which could be obvious or subtle, in person or online, and will be dealt with according to the Provision’s Anti-Bullying Policy.

**Child-on-Child Abuse and Sexual Harassment**

Please refer to the child-on-child abuse policy

Following any report or concerns raised of child-on-child abuse or sexual harassment offline or online, the provision will follow the Provision Safeguarding Policy and Peer-on-peer Abuse Policy and notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy immediately. The provision is clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable, will not be tolerated and that incidents where behaviour falls below expectations will be addressed. All staff are aware of the importance of challenging all inappropriate language and behaviour between learners. The provision will never normalise sexually abusive language or behaviour by treating it as ‘banter,’ an inevitable fact of life or an expected part of growing up. We advocate strenuously for high standards of conduct between learners and staff; they should demonstrate and model manners, courtesy and dignified/respectful relationships.

It is essential that all learners are reassured they will be supported, kept safe, and are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the provision will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. A learner will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a learner ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised.

**Online Incidents**

Please also see the Staying Safe Online Policy

The way in which learners relate to one another online can have a significant impact on the culture at provision. Negative interactions online can damage the provision’s culture and can lead to provision feeling like an unsafe place. Behaviour issues online can be very difficult to manage given issues of anonymity, and online incidents occur both on and off the provision premises. The provision is clear that even though the online space differs in many ways, the same standards of behaviour are expected online as apply offline, and that everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity.

Inappropriate online behaviour including bullying, the use of inappropriate language, the soliciting and sharing of nude or semi-nude images and videos and sexual harassment will be addressed in accordance with the same principles as offline behaviour, and the process set out in the Safeguarding Policy for reporting must be followed when an incident raises a safeguarding concern. The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy must be informed immediately.

The provision will address with learners when their behaviour online poses a threat or causes harm to another learner, and/or could have repercussions for the running of / reputation of the provision.

Please also see the provision’s Mobile & Smart Technology Policy

**Suspected Criminal Behaviour**

In cases when a member of staff or headteacher suspects criminal behaviour, the provision will make an initial assessment of whether an incident should be reported to the police by gathering enough information to establish the facts of the case. These initial investigations will be fully documented on CPOMs, and the provision will make every effort to preserve any relevant evidence. Once a decision is made to report the incident to police, the provision will ensure any further action they take does not interfere with any police action taken. However, the provision retains the discretion to continue investigations and implement their own consequences so long as it does not conflict with police action.

When making a report to the police, it will often be appropriate to make in tandem a report to the Local Authority. The Provision’s Safeguarding Policy must be followed, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) being informed immediately.

**Complaints**

Any complaint or concern raised by a learner will be taken very seriously, and staff will be vigilant to obvious and subtle signs of this. A complaint will be dealt within in accordance with the Complaint’s Policy.