



Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy

Last review Reviewed By Date of next review	September 2024 Kim Carwardine September 2025
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Definitions

The term 'staff', in this policy, includes paid staff and also any other professionals working in partnership with BTGM.

The term 'centre' refers to Bridge the Gap Malvern (BTGM), 7 Edith Walk, Malvern, WR14 4QH.

Aim

The basis of the Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy is:

“Respect yourself, respect others and respect property”.

The Directors, and all the team at BTGM, believe that:

- All members of our community should feel physically and emotionally safe
- All members of our community should feel personally valued and respected
- All members of our community should experience both a sense of belonging and celebration of success
- Positive relationships are key to developing social skills and supporting appropriate behaviour

Behaviours that have a negative impact on safety, wellbeing or learning, including anti-social, destructive or disruptive behaviours, are contrary to the ethos and culture of BTGM and will not be tolerated.

This means that:

- nobody has the right to deliberately hurt another person, either physically or verbally
- nobody has the right to damage property or equipment
- nobody has the right to damage or steal anything that does not belong to them
- good attendance and punctuality are expected of everyone

Home/Centre Agreement

There is a Home Centre Agreement, based on our core values, which staff, parents/carers and students are required to sign during student induction (see Appendix 1).

Encouraging appropriate behaviour

To help students stay calm and behave appropriately, staff will ensure that:

- sessions start and finish on time



- sessions are relevant to the student, have a purpose and, if necessary, are adequately prepared for in advance
- expectations are consistent
- every opportunity is taken to build self-esteem, particularly through the frequent use of process oriented ***praise (1)***

Praise and Rewards

Respectful behaviour and a positive attitude will be recognised, valued, celebrated and rewarded.

All staff will:

- Intentionally build positive relationships with students
- Make a deliberate effort to 'notice' and recognise positive behaviours
- Give clear non-verbal praise frequently (eg a nod, smile, thumbs up)
- Give timely and specific, process oriented, verbal praise
- Give further praise for notable positive behaviours via a phone call/email/postcard

Individual rewards, of specific interest to individual students, may also be agreed.

Challenging Unacceptable Behaviour

We use a relational approach to managing challenging behaviour. All of our interactions with students will be positive, avoid confrontation, minimise embarrassment or shame, and promote emotional regulation.

All staff are expected to:

- Be good role models at all times and in all interactions (with students, parents/carers, professionals, members of the public and with each other)
- Show all students the respect of unconditional positive regard
- Have high expectations for behaviour
- Explicitly teach what we recognise to be acceptable behaviour
- Recognise behaviour as a form of communication and always ask themselves what need a student's unacceptable behaviour may be conveying
- Actively notice and challenge any unacceptable behaviour according to this policy

All staff working with BTGM students recognise that they are responsible for establishing positive relationships with students in order to best support healthy neurodevelopment and meet each student's individual social and emotional needs.

We work hard to build strong relationships with students and use them to positively encourage students and offer guidance to help them choose better behaviour. Staff at BTGM adopt the attitude of ***PACE (2)***, to help set a positive atmosphere, and therefore try at all times to convey **P**layfulness, **A**cceptance, **C**uriosity and **E**mpathy.

When students' behaviour is unacceptable we can communicate this to them in a variety of ways, from a simple "look" to a full discussion. We would usually try to give subtle reminders and advice as this is more powerful and less likely to escalate an



incident, than openly addressing behaviour in a way that could cause shame. We would usually avoid raised voices (and especially shouting) as we are aware that many of our students have sensory processing difficulties and may be sensitive to feeling shouted at, so would likely respond by further dysregulating.

When students display unacceptable behaviour we:

- Remain calm and well regulated
- Try to work out what need is being conveyed
- Attune to the student's emotional state and validate their feelings
- Remember that our students need more "take up time", and consider if it is possible to give them some space to self-regulate
- Address the behaviour, and not use language or phrases that could label students or sound negative towards the student personally
- Manage incidents in the moment, with our first priority always being to reduce risk and ensure everyone's safety
- Challenge unacceptable behaviours with supportive, honest follow up conversations when a student is calm and regulated
- Encourage **restorative approaches (3)**, including helping students work towards recognising when a simple heartfelt apology is appropriate
- Explain any **logical consequences (4)** carefully when they occur and support students to cope with these to develop their understanding of cause and effect
- Record/report behavioural incidents to the Head of Centre
- Ensure we reflect on our own practice, including appropriate use of supervision

Sanctions

On those occasions where student behaviour contradicts the centre's core values, of respecting self, others and property, a sanction may be used, to provide the student with an opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and to act as a deterrent for future misdemeanours, including:

- A verbal reprimand, proportionate and balanced with positive feedback
- A logical consequence relevant to the situation
- Restorative justice, including a verbal or written apology
- Phone call/email home
- Student and parent/carer meeting to discuss behaviour concerns (including poor attendance and lack of engagement)
- Exclusion from the programme (if on roll at a school, the school will be informed and any agreed processes followed)

Students opting out of a planned session

This will be managed on a session by session basis. On some occasions it may be possible for an alternative time, or an alternative activity, to be offered. However, when appropriate, students may also be supported to recognise a logical consequence of their decision not to engage. Ongoing refusal to attend/engage will be discussed with the Head of Centre and is likely to result in a meeting to discuss the student's willingness, or capacity, to engage with the programme.

External interventions



Where a student's behaviour is affected by both internal and external factors and requires a multi-agency approach, in agreement with the family, a notification will be made to the relevant social worker or a referral made to Worcestershire Early Help/Front Door.

It is our policy to refer students whenever appropriate to CAMHS and other health agencies in order to seek specialist help for individual students and their families.

Student voice

Students work one to one with their Transition Coordinator and are always encouraged to voice their ideas and opinions regarding BTGM systems, activities, safety, rewards and sanctions. They can also share their thoughts via our Student Feedback Questionnaires. Any concerns or complaints can be shared with any member of staff, including directly with the Head of Centre or Directors, at any time.

References

(1) Carol Dweck - A Study on Praise and Mindsets

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWv1VdDeoRY>

(2) Dr Dan Hughes PACE

<https://ddpnetwork.org/about-ddp/meant-pace>

(3) Restorative approaches

<https://restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-schools>

(4) Logical Consequences

<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/punishment-vs-logical-consequences>

Appendix 1

Home - Centre Agreement

Bridge the Gap Malvern agrees to:

- Promote the values of respect and fairness (see Equal Opportunities Policy)
- Support students with positive behaviour strategies
- Deal promptly with any report or complaint about bullying
- Apply any sanctions required fairly, taking into account any special educational needs, disabilities, barriers to access and vulnerability
- Keep parents and carers informed of any concerns (including regarding behaviour or engagement with the programme)
- Work with other agencies and professionals as necessary to support students and their families

Parents/Carers agree to:

Inform Bridge the Gap Malvern as soon as possible of:

- Any planned absences
- Illness absence



- Change to contact details
- Inform Bridge the Gap Malvern as soon as possible of any known issues that may affect the student's mood, behaviour, attitude or ability to engage
- Work collaboratively with staff at BTGM to develop strategies to support the student's learning and behaviour
- Encourage the student to take responsibility for behaviour and support BTGM staff by addressing any inappropriate behaviour and supporting any logical consequences needed
- Recognise and celebrate the student's successes and progress
- Address staff with respect
- Understand that the student will be challenged about any behaviour that puts their safety, happiness or progress (or that of others) at risk

Student agrees to:

- Do my best to respect myself, others and any premises visited
- Do my best to engage with my Transition Coordinator and sessions that have been arranged
- Make contact if I cannot attend a session (or feel I could not engage) to show respect for the person I should be working with, and try to rearrange the session for another time
- Try to ask for help if I find something difficult and accept help when it is offered
- Try different strategies to help me cope better
- Try not to say or do anything that might make others feel threatened, worried or sad, and expect to be challenged if I do
- Try to be open and honest, and willing to explain what has happened if necessary, so staff can help me sort out problems
- Let staff know if something is worrying me or if I am finding something difficult
- Only use a mobile phone during a session with permission
- Not use, wear or show any items that may cause offence or be a danger during any sessions (including remotely), and respect the view of Bridge the Gap Malvern staff if informed that something is offensive or dangerous
- Take care of any equipment provided by Bridge the Gap Malvern and use it safely
- Dress appropriately for all sessions (in person and online)
- Try to be a good ambassador for Bridge the Gap Malvern

Home - Centre Agreement

Bridge the Gap Malvern

Staff Name:

Signed:

Date:



Parent/Carer

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Student

Name:

Signed:

Date: