



Behaviour Policy

To be considered in conjunction with our **preventing bullying, Team-Teach, online safety, safeguarding** policies

by Governing Body – September 2021
Next Review Date – September 2022



OUR BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING PRINCIPLES

It is imperative that our behaviour policy is flexible, effective and **centred on rewarding positive behaviours and building positive relationships**. Adverse childhood experiences include abuse, neglect, having a family member in prison and exposure to domestic violence. Our pupils also have histories of rejection and exclusion, including from previous schools or other educational settings. We therefore use a combination of strategies to support, encourage and reward behaviour that is conducive to learning. Most importantly, we strive to consistently acknowledge good behaviours, to praise pupils' achievements, to treat every lesson and every day as a fresh start and to always be as positive as humanly possible with our pupils, who are, regrettably, very familiar with being told off.

At Infiniti School, we understand that pupils' behaviours need to be viewed within the context of the many negative and complex factors outlined above. We, therefore, use strategies that work *with* pupils' difficulties in order to help them realise their full potential. This approach includes the following features:

- A **nurturing approach** that involves caring, consistent, empathic, non-retaliatory and 'boundaried' relationships between staff and pupils
- Recognising that pupils have unmet needs, likely from early years, which may need to be met before they can progress. This may mean providing **support which is appropriate to their emotional/social age rather than their calendar age**
- Having **clearly-communicated expectations of behaviour**
- Developing pupils' abilities to **understand and communicate their emotions**
- A **positive and predictable approach** with a focus on **praising and rewarding good behaviour**, recognising and developing strengths and abilities, helping pupils to develop an improved perception of themselves and **removing fear and doubt**
- Our work is underpinned with **unconditional positive regard** – ensuring that **pupils always feel wanted** and supported **despite their behaviour** – and having firm expectations of behaviour without shaming or further damaging self-esteem
- Acting as appropriate **role-models** for our pupils. Being aware of our **verbal and body language** as well as our emotional reactions to the pupils and how we respond to them. Being conscientious about our personal wellbeing and seeking support when needed
- **Providing good attachments** for our pupils while being sensitive to and supportive of the relationships between parents/carers and their children
- Providing opportunities for children to **demonstrate maturity and responsibility** as they progress through the school.



OUR PUPILS' NEEDS

It is essential that we understand what is behind our pupils' behaviour in order to be able to support them through their difficulties. Our pupils' behavioural difficulties are caused by a range of factors.

Typical behaviours include:

- **Insecure attachment behaviours** – clinginess, defiant independence, mistrust of adults, ambivalence (clinginess combined with rejecting behaviours)
- Lack of awareness or tolerance of external boundaries and lack of development of internal boundaries – **risk-taking behaviours, impulsivity, inability to manage emotions, inability to think ahead** and predict consequences, **oppositional defiance**
- **Inability to understand or communicate feelings**
- **Inability to tolerate difficult feelings** – projects them onto others through challenging behaviour to achieve temporary relief
- **Lack of empathy**
- **Intense envy** or comparison of their peers
- **Feelings of low self-esteem**, critical of self, unable to recognise achievements
- **Intense fear of failure**, inability to take healthy risks (for example in learning or relationship building)
- **A rigid need to control** born out of anxiety of the unknown (often in children from chaotic backgrounds)
- **Hyper-vigilance** – always on the lookout for threat, hypersensitivity to insult or perceived threat
- **Inability to tolerate 'good' and 'bad' in the same person** – categorises people as being either good or bad, but will often change how a person is categorised in individual situations.

Daily exposure to these behaviours can be frustrating and distressing; it is important that we continue to see them within the appropriate context and that we do not retaliate, therefore **we separate the child from the behaviour and look at the emotions behind the behaviour.**

These behaviours are not fixed, and given the right kind of support within a nurturing, positive and predictable environment; our pupils can and do make significant and lasting progress both emotionally and academically.



SUPPORTING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the key to positive development. Secure attachments to caregivers are essential for children's psychological development, however, many of our pupils have not experienced this at home. Developing secure attachments with staff members can help to make up for some of the development that has been missed.

The staff at Infiniti School support relationship-building with pupils by:

- Being **consistent, patient** and **dependable**
- **Tuning into their needs** – noticing when they are hungry, upset, tired or angry and demonstrating care through our responses
- **Empathising** with and **validating their feelings**
- **Containing their distress/rage** – trying to understand the reasons for challenging behaviour and figure out solutions for the child, not retaliating through our reactions, **managing our own behavioural responses to challenging behaviour**
- **Demonstrating unconditional regard for the pupil** – disapproving of behaviours, never the child as a person (e.g. “that language is rude”, as opposed to “you are rude”).

Knowledge of pupils' histories is vital for building strong relationships with them because only once we understand their histories are we able to view their behaviours within the correct context. When a new pupil joins the school, all staff will read their documentation and will also be briefed by the leader and key therapist who will have interviewed the child and family.

PROMOTING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIOURAL DEVELOPMENT

Social and emotional development is central to our curriculum and ethos. There are a variety of times throughout the day which are focal points for the facilitation of this development, however, it is acutely important that **social and emotional learning is embedded throughout the entire day. Daily activities at Infiniti School that help to develop social skills and learning about emotions include:**

- Drama and role-play
- Sport and games
- Group art activities
- Discussing films and news stories
- Speaking and listening activities
- Mediation, time for reflection and conflict resolution after incidents



COMMUNICATING FEELINGS

Pupils need to be encouraged to communicate appropriately about their feelings instead of acting out their feelings through challenging behaviour. We support them to achieve this the following ways:

- **Modelling** – talking about our own feelings and emotional reactions
- **Praising** pupils whenever they are able to tell you about their feelings
- **Labelling emotions for pupils** (this is communicating their feelings for them if they're unable to do it themselves)
- **Providing opportunities for emotional communication** – communicating care and opening the door to sharing
- **Validate their feelings** – normalise what they're expressing by letting them know that we all have these feelings (“**It makes sense that you're upset about that because it must have made you feel alone**”)
- **Meet their emotional need:**
- Shame needs reassurance
 - Fear needs safety (emotional safety through containment)
 - Sadness needs comfort
 - Anger needs space/boundaries
 - Anxiety needs to be challenged

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR THROUGH OUR THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

At Infiniti School, we focus on prevention rather than reaction. This is achievable because our staff invest in knowing our pupils, spotting their triggers, intervening quickly and praising whenever possible. Every aspect of our practice should contribute to the prevention of challenging behaviour. When challenging behaviour does arise, de-escalation methods are used, for example:

- We speak **quietly** and use our **body language** to encourage pupils to regulate their emotions. We pick up on the positives, e.g. a time when they have successfully changed a response, or we remind them of their strengths or personalised targets
- We **offer alternative strategies** such as reflection time and/or relocation
- We **repeat** that we are there to **support them** and communicate care
- We **never shout** and ensure our **body language is positive** and that the **pupils' have personal space**
- We use **diversion/distraction**, for example change the activity or topic of conversation to remove pressure
- We use a **change of face** – swap places with a colleague if we feel the child might be better helped by someone else in this moment
- We remind them of the **schools' expectations** and that their actions have **consequences**



PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

This policy must be considered alongside our physical intervention (TeamTeach) policy. Physical intervention (known as positive handling or restraint) is only used as a last resort. It is not used as a behaviour management strategy – it is used when there is a risk to the safety of a student or others. The focus of this training is on de-escalation rather than needing to physically intervene with students.

REWARDS AND CONSEQUENCES*

(* Known as 'sanctions' for the purposes of the independent school standards)

Clear consequences are essential for our pupils, but the emphasis should always be on rewarding positive behaviour.

Possible rewards include:

- praise, including through regular, positive contact between school and home
- certificates, including daily and weekly awards
being given responsibility
- reward trips
- reward gift vouchers
- raffle ticket rewards

With pupils as unique as ours, a 'one size fits all' approach to consequences is inappropriate.

Possible consequences include:

- withdrawal of reward time
- withdrawal of specific activities
- reparation (such as fixing an item the pupil damaged)
- remaining at school during break time or after school to complete work or to make up lost time if pupils arrive to school late

EXCLUSIONS AND EMERGENCY REVIEWS

Occasionally, families will be asked to collect their child if it is obvious that every strategy undertaken has failed to calm/engage the pupil. This will be marked as an exclusion in our register.

In extreme cases, the headteacher may exclude a pupil for a fixed-term of, typically, one or two days. A fixed-term exclusion of more than two days is exceptionally rare. When the decision is taken to exclude a pupil, an explanatory letter is always posted to the parent/carer within the same day – as well as to the placing authority – and homework is provided.

In very exceptional circumstances, such as a pupil bringing illegal drugs or weapons into our schools, the headteacher may make the decision to permanently exclude.

When we cannot meet a pupil's needs, we will call for an emergency annual review with the placing authority to re-evaluate the suitability of the placement and recommend that another provision be sought. This is not the same as exclusion.



ENDLESSLY POSITIVE

To help boost self-esteem and change how our pupils view themselves, we need to constantly be on the lookout for **small successes** and to praise/reward these successes. It is important to remember that we need to notice behaviours that might seem ordinary but are significant for our pupils. It could be something as simple as a pupil returning a greeting or saying please and thank you. We always keep language as positive and solution-focused as possible e.g. **we focus on the behaviours we want, not the behaviours we don't want.**

DIFFERENTIATING LESSONS

The importance of differentiation cannot be underestimated – if lessons are not differentiated appropriately, pupils may struggle to understand or engage with what is being taught, which often leads to challenging behaviour.

WORKING AS A TEAM

It is essential that pupils see us working together as a team. We continually model positive social communication, respect and care for each other and challenge gender stereotypes. Many pupils may use 'splitting' as an emotional defence to give them a sense of control. This involves categorising people as 'good' people, who are unrealistically idealised, or 'bad' people, who are unrealistically demonised. To discourage this, adults need to demonstrate to pupils that they will not allow themselves to be split in this way. **It is important that we all work together and share information, as appropriate, to ensure that we are providing effective joined-up care for our pupils. This is why daily briefings and debriefings before and after the school day are so important.**

UNIFORM

Pupils are required to wear full school uniform at all times. Pupils are not permitted to wear jewellery, aside from a single stud in each ear, due to health and safety purposes.

RECORDING AND COMMUNICATING BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT EVENTS

- Serious incidents are logged daily
- Serious misdemeanors resulting in any form of exclusion are logged
- Accidents, injuries and use of first aid are reported using the schools' accident books

All events logged are analysed by the leadership team on a weekly basis and changes are made proactively and rapidly to avoid repetition

RECORDING PUPILS

As a school, we **strongly discourage** parents and carers from **filming their children, or another child, when in crisis**. It can be incredibly shaming for the child, and often for the parent too. When a child is in crisis we advise the adults around them look to **support the child's emotional state** through acknowledging and validating the **feelings that are behind the behaviour**.



BULLYING

This policy must be considered alongside our preventing bullying policy. All types of bullying, including outside of school and all forms of electronic bullying, must be followed up with the same rigour and using the same processes outlined above.

ONLINE SAFETY

This policy must be considered alongside our online safety policy as many online safety incidents will be considered behavioural incidents (many may alternatively/also be safeguarding concerns and should therefore be considered as part of our safeguarding strategy).

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER RIGHTS

At Infiniti School we believe that eradicating homophobic language has a clear link to school improvement. If LGBT+ young people are not subjected to the use of homophobic language they not only feel happier, with improved self-esteem, but perform better too.

Homophobic language, even when used unconsciously and without hurtful intent, should be addressed by staff.

Staff should ensure students understand the facts about sexuality and gender identity, and understand the damage and prejudice that stereotypes can cause.

ALLEGATIONS FROM PUPILS AGAINST OTHER PUPILS

In most instances, negative conduct of pupils towards each other will be covered by this behaviour policy (and our anti-bullying policy), however, some allegations may be of a more serious nature and raise safeguarding concerns. Allegations made against another pupil may include **physical abuse** (for example violence, particularly pre- planned; forcing the use of drugs or alcohol), **emotional abuse** (for example, blackmail, extortion, threats, intimidation), **sexual abuse** (for example, indecent exposure, touching, sexual assault, sexting, forcing the watching of pornography) and/or **sexual exploitation** (for example, photographing or videoing indecent acts).

In this case, the allegation must be referred to our DSL and will be dealt with as a safeguarding concern. Further guidance on this area can be found in our safeguarding policy.

POLICY REVIEW CYCLE

This policy and all policies at Infiniti School will be reviewed and updated by the leadership team & governing body as per our policy review cycle.