

Relationship and Behaviour Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines reflect the values, ethos and philosophy of Fern House School in relation to behaviour support. It provides guidance on the procedures in place when working with pupil behaviour including, the identification of needs within Fern House School, and the organisation of specific arrangements. This includes guidance relating to: Bullying, and Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPI).

This guidance is a working document and as such it reflects both the practices that are carried out and those to which the school is striving. The document is available for interested parties. These guidelines work in conjunction with the Connect Education Trust *Behaviour Policy*. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff.

At Fern House School senior leaders, teachers, wellbeing mentors, specialist teaching assistants, admin staff and site staff working with young people receive training in our attachment aware and trauma informed approach.

OUR VISION

Fern House School will empower every child to have a love of learning, the strength to grow and the courage to be brave. Together, we change lives.

OUR VALUES

These values run through our practice, curriculum and policies. They are referred to daily and support our children and young people's behaviour for learning.

Acceptance

We are comfortable with who we are and who you are.

Bravery

We do the right thing, even when it is hard or we are challenged.

Curiosity

We explore, we discover and we ask lots of questions.

Determination

We are committed to achieving our goals.

RATIONALE

At Fern House School we recognise that appropriate behaviour and good order is a necessary prerequisite to effective teaching and learning. Every member of staff strives to develop the whole child/young person, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

All the children and young people who attend Fern House School have Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) needs and/or Autism. This is likely to affect all areas of their learning and functioning, including communication skills and learning how to be socially appropriate. It is recognised that some pupils require structured support and guidance in order to enable them to live full and valued lives in spite of their diagnosis, the impact of ACEs, toxic stress and attachment difficulties.

At Fern House School, every member of staff shares a responsibility to support children and young people to demonstrate behaviours that enable healthy relationships and full participation in learning activities. We recognise that children and young people have a 'window of tolerance' within which they feel safe, secure and regulated. Our aim is to help our children and young people to widen their window of tolerance through teaching them about the stress-response in the brain and how they can learn to self-regulate through co-regulation with adults. When asked to do something outside of this window they can experience stress and react accordingly.

Typical behaviours include:

- Insecure attachment behaviours – clinginess, mistrust of adults, ambivalence (clinginess combined with rejecting behaviours), stress responses (fight, flight, freeze, submit/collapse), unhealthy independence
- 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
- Difficulty in understanding or communicating feelings
- Difficulty in tolerating 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 (e.g. 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.

Behaviour is something to interpret. 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, i.e. we separate the child and young person from the behaviour and look at the emotions behind the behaviour.

We feel before we think! These behaviours are not fixed, and given the right kind of support within a nurturing, positive and predictable environment; our children and young people can and do make significant and lasting progress both emotionally and academically.

The behavioural challenges presented by a number of children and young people mean that, in order to reduce the risk of harm, some form of restrictive physical intervention may be unavoidable.

This guidance explains the philosophy and practices of the school in meeting the needs of learners. It is the duty of all staff to follow all policies, guidelines, reporting procedures, as well as the pupil graduated response charts and risk assessments.

What if we are curious about behaviour?

OUR FERN HOUSE WAYS

At Fern House we view behaviour as a learning process. It is important for all members of the school community to be self-aware in order to have an integrated sense of self within society. We believe that learning empathy is a key factor in children and young people understanding that others exist and have different experiences to their own. It is only through the process of learning self-awareness and developing empathy that a healthy relationship can be formed. We therefore place a high importance on understanding yourself (Me), learning empathy (You) and building positive relationships (Us). This process of learning is defined by the school as the following:

Me

I understand who I am, what experiences I have and how they have shaped me
I understand my boundaries, barriers and triggers
I understand my qualities, likes and aspirations
I understand where I fit into this world
I am self aware and I self reflect
I keep myself safe

You

I recognise you exist and have an awareness of your needs
I recognise you have feelings
I enjoy the company of you
I understand there are similarities and differences between you and I
I understand my impact on you
I keep you safe

Us

We build and maintain healthy relationships
We feel comfortable around each other
We share our successes and our challenges
We are part of a community
We grow together
We keep each other safe

OUR EXPECTATIONS

At Fern House School we have high expectations for our children and young people. The following expectations cover all times of the school day and where children and young people are representing the school out of hours or off site. Our expectations are linked directly to our whole school values; *Acceptance, Bravery, Curiosity* and *Determination*.

(Acceptance)

- *We accept our own experiences and how they have shaped us*
- *We accept that others have different internal working models based on their experiences*
- *We accept other people's rights to express a point of view*
- *We accept feedback and support*
- *We accept differences in others*

(Bravery)

- *We do the right thing and uphold good morals*
- *We take responsibility for ourselves*
- *We take risks in our learning*
- *We allow ourselves to be vulnerable*

(Curiosity)

- *We ask lots of questions*
- *We wonder aloud*
- *We are not defined by labels, we are curious about ourselves and others*
- *We want to learn new things*

(Determination)

- *We are hard-working*
- *We are aspirational*
- *We are resilient*
- *We are committed*

It is the responsibility of Fern House School staff to support our children and young people to meet the school expectations.

The adults will:

- *Ensure children and young people are at the centre of every action of everyone at all times*
- *Stay calm and bring calm*
- *Be outstanding role models at all times*
- *Maximise all moments of the day to support progress and achievements*

- *Adhere to all school policies and procedures at all times*
- *Keep children and young people safe at all times*
- *Provide emotional holding/containing*

In the classroom we will see:

- *A unique environment that represents the individual needs of our children and young people*
- *A safe, calm and purposeful environment*
- *Routines and rituals that are embedded and predictable*
- *Natural light and the use of biophilia to support healing and regulation*
- *Reduced and planned transitions*
- *Visuals to support communication and interaction*

Any child and young person's communication that falls below our expectations of our school will require some level of intervention, remembering that **every interaction is an intervention**. The strongest approach to support a child or young person is through their relationship with the adult. It is through our unwavering care and connection that we seek to empower children and young people to make positive choices, always remembering to regulate, relate and reason fluidly. We always prioritise the safety of our children, young people and staff. Everything we do in school is underpinned by our safeguarding procedures.

Sensitive, attuned, responsive care

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR THROUGH OUR ATTACHMENT-AWARE, TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH

At Fern House School we aim to be proactive rather than reactive in our response to potentially stressful situations. This is achievable because adults invest in knowing our children and young people, spotting their triggers, intervening quickly and praising whenever possible.

Every aspect of our practice should contribute to the prevention of challenging behaviour. When pupils experience stress, personalised regulation methods are used based on EHCP and Thrive assessments, these may include:

Speaking quietly, limiting vocabulary and using our body language to encourage them to regulate their emotions. Using key adults where possible, sharing our calm and identifying positives, e.g. a time when they have successfully changed a response, or we remind them of their strengths or regulation strategies

Using PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy) to connect, co-regulate and increase levels of oxytocin

Using sensory regulation strategies to help to decrease arousal and reduce cortisol

Repeating that we are there to support them and we always communicate care

Never shouting and ensuring our body language is positive and non-threatening

Using physical connection (see safe touch guidance) and emotional containment

Using diversion/distraction, e.g. changing the activity or topic of conversation to remove pressure

Changing the adults – swapping places with a colleague if we feel the child might be better helped by someone else in this moment

Reminding them of the schools' expectations

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR - REWARDS

Our ultimate aim is for our children and young people to feel motivated by intrinsic feelings. This takes time and we will need to support them to become aware of positive feelings every time something has happened which increases levels of oxytocin. We remind ourselves that humans are evidence-seeking and we back up our praise with real life events (I can see you're smiling. I wonder if you're feeling happy because you earned some money for the Woodland's Shop! It's a nice feeling when you're successful).

Before we get to this, we provide positive reinforcement through rewards. At Fern House School rewards are linked to feelings so as to constantly reinforce the connection between behaviours and feelings. Possible rewards include:

Class reward time
Reward trips
Positive phone calls home
Visits to other adults
Virtual money to spend at the Woodlands Shop
Being given responsibilities

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR - CONSEQUENCES

Consequences are used as a response to communication, remembering that these can be positive too. The consequences used at Fern House School always look at the incident with the knowledge of the stress response and how the brain reacts with an aim to repair and restore through relationships. Where possible, a natural consequence is used which is logical and directly linked to the incident, e.g. tidy up mess caused, replace a broken item.

Our Fern House School consequences are defined as *Protective* consequences and/or *Educational* consequences.

Protective consequences: these are required to protect the rights of others and keep a child or young person safe. This may include:

Regulate, relate, reason
Identifying safe areas
Communicating to other staff what needs to be done to keep everyone safe
Identifying further de-escalation strategies
Having a clear action plan to keep young person safe
Increased staff ratio
Change of school day/timetable
Appropriate use of suspension (using the time to provide psychoeducation, using co-regulation to develop self-regulation strategies; reflect, amend plans and identify needs and other appropriate interventions to support)

Educational consequences: these are used to teach, encourage, support and motivate the child or young person to communicate differently next time through better understanding. These should always be logical, appropriate and proportionate. This may include:

Reflection time (loss of break time/withdrawal from specific activity)
Ensuring the child or young person completes the task they may have missed due to dysregulation
Loss of money from Woodlands Shop
Rehearsing/modelling situations through intentional teaching of prosocial behaviour (social stories)
Ensure the child or young person assists with repairs where they have caused damage (when possible and practical)
Intentionally provide educational opportunities for the child or young person to learn about the impact of certain actions and behaviours
Providing the child or young person with an opportunity to 'put things right' through a process of reflecting, repairing and restoring relationships.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Bullying is a deliberately aggressive, habitual, hurtful behaviour causing pain or embarrassment to others. It is an abuse of relative power. It is often repeated over a period of time; It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take on many different forms and can be physical, verbal or indirect. It can be planned and organised or it can happen suddenly and spontaneously. It can be carried out by individuals or groups.

Bullying may include: Any form of physical violence such as, hitting, punching, kicking, pushing, spitting. Making aggressive, intimidating gestures or intruding into someone's personal space. Interfering with someone's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it. Making violent threats, using offensive names or insulting someone or his family. Telling lies, spreading rumours or making up stories about someone. Picking on someone or putting them down, belittling their ability and achievements. Making abusive or degrading remarks about someone's race, culture, religion or social background. Making sexually suggestive or insulting comments. Ganging up on someone or hurtfully excluding them from a group or activity. Ridiculing someone's appearance; Forcing someone to do anything against their will.

Fern House School does not tolerate bullying or harassment and recognises the damaging effects of all forms of bullying. All members of the school community are dedicated to establishing and maintaining an environment in which everyone can learn, develop and enjoy life while feeling safe and secure.

We recognise that many of the children and young people at Fern House School have difficulties with challenging behaviours which can be directed towards other children and young people and we are committed to helping with these problems. Some of our children and young people have challenging behaviours and can be violent. Some of them direct their violence towards staff. Some are violent towards other children and

young people. This is not bullying if it is not done with the intention of causing harm to that person in particular – if they are simply the unfortunate recipient of the problems the child or young person is experiencing and expressing at that time.

Bullying implies a degree of forethought, and of malice. It has to be directed deliberately at a person and with the intent to hurt or harm that person with physical abuse or verbal insult. Some children and young people in the school are capable of doing this. However, the reasons for their doing so are frequently associated with the extent of their social, emotional, mental health difficulties.

As a school community we will not allow bullying to go unreported. All instances of bullying must be recorded on CPOMS and reported to a member of the senior leadership team.

SAFE TOUCH

At Fern House School we believe that children and young people have the right to learn independence and choice. We believe that children and young people have the right to feel included. We seek to provide opportunities for personal growth and emotional health and wellbeing.

This guidance takes into account the extensive neurobiological research and studies relating to attachment theory and child development that identify safe touch as a positive contribution to brain development, mental health and the development of social skills.

By applying the specialist knowledge about how children and adults develop their emotional, cognitive, sensory, behavioural and psychological abilities, we aim to offer relational interventions to build secure attachments. At Fern House School we have adopted an informed, evidence-based decision to allow safe touch as a developmentally appropriate intervention that will aid healthy growth and learning.

This guidance rests on the belief that every member of staff needs to know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. Staff need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the difference. Equally, when a child or young person is experiencing distress, staff are trained to know when and how sufficient connection and psychological holding can be provided without touching. Children and young people are helped to understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. It's equally important that children and young people understand the context in which they are supported in this way so as not to place them in a vulnerable position outside of school. When a child or young person does not respond positively to touch, adults withdraw physical contact immediately, using narration and reflection to validate the feelings presented by the child or young person.

Different Types of Touch

Casual / Informal / Incidental Touch

Through sensitive, attuned and responsive care, staff use touch as part of a healthy normal relationship ~ for example, comforting a child or young person, providing

reassurance and congratulating. This might include holding hands with a child or putting an arm around the shoulders. The benefit of this action is often proactive and can prevent a situation from escalating.

Reparative Touch

Healthy emotional development requires safe touch as a means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a child. Touch used to regulate a child's emotions, triggers the release of the calming chemical *oxytocin* in the body. Reparative touch may include stroking a back, rocking gently, cuddling, tickling, sitting on an adult's lap, or hand or foot massage.

Contact Play

Contact play is used by staff adopting a role similar to a parent in a healthy child-parent relationship. This will only take place when the child has developed a trusting relationship with the adult. Contact play may include an adult playfully chasing and catching the child or playing a game involving throwing cushions at each other.

USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

At Fern House School we believe that children and young people need to be safe, to know how to behave and know that adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. Only for a very small minority of pupils will the use of restrictive physical interventions be needed. On such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention are used.

All members of staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviours might be communicating. They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour.

Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) is the term used to describe interventions where bodily contact using force is used to control or manage a child or young person's behaviour.

Due to the learning and emotional difficulties of some children and young people attending Fern House School there is a significant likelihood that they may present behaviours that place themselves and / or others at risk of harm, requiring adults to physically intervene in order to reduce this risk.

Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control and may only be used to reduce the risk of harm and never as a form of punishment. RPI must never be used to force compliance with staff instructions. Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for RPI through dialogue and diversion. Only the minimum force necessary will be used. Staff will be able to show, when asked, that the intervention used was a reasonable response to the incident. As soon as it is safe the RPI will be relaxed to allow the child or young person to gain self-control.

At Fern House School all staff will receive training in restrictive physical interventions, using the BILD accredited techniques taught in PRICE training. The training will be

delivered by fully trained and accredited tutors. Fern House School has 1 onsite PRICE trainer.

The use of Restrictive Physical Interventions, either planned or unplanned must always be recorded on CPOM. The pupil's risk assessment will include: a record of risk reduction options, techniques for managing the pupil's behaviour e.g. de-escalating conflict, starting at which point an RPI may be used; identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected; systems for summoning additional support; identifying training needs.

RECORDING INCIDENTS

CPOMS is the online system used for recording behaviour incidents. Each staff member has a unique log on. It is the responsibility of the first staff member involved in the incident to begin the behaviour incident form, as they will be aware of any triggers and initial de-escalation strategies used. If there has been a change of face or more than one staff member involved, it may be appropriate for other staff members to either add to the same incident form or start a new one.

Should it become apparent that a child or young person is behaving in a manner that would trigger more than one behavioural incident report in one day then class staff should collate all the information for that one day and present it as one report.

It is important that classroom staff evaluate CPOMS reports to identify patterns of behaviours, times when behaviours occur and possible triggers with a view of implementing positive and proactive strategies to support the individual. The Headship Team will use information from CPOMS to analyse behaviour with a view of identifying triggers and seeking new ways and strategies for dealing with behaviour issues.

This will help staff to identify triggers and make links with regard to analysing the ongoing behaviour concern. Staff should use the ABC approach to recording incidents on CPOMS (antecedent, behaviour, consequence) to ensure an analytical approach to recording.

"The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love."

"People, not programmes, change people".

Dr Bruce Perry

This guidance is based on the following:

Louise Bomber and Daniel A. Hughes, *Settling To Learn: Settling troubled pupils to learn: Why relationships matter in school*

Louise Bomber, *What About Me?: Inclusive Strategies To support pupils with attachment difficulties make it through the school day*

Louise Bomber, *Inside I'm Hurting: Practical strategies for supporting children with attachment difficulties in schools*

Louise Bomber, *Know Me To Teach Me: Differentiated discipline for those recovering from Adverse Childhood Experiences*

Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D, *The Power of Showing Up: How parental presence shapes who our kids become and how their brains get wired*

Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D, *The Whole-Brain Child: 12 proven strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*

Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D, *No-Drama Discipline: The whole-brain way to calm the chaos and nurture your child's developing mind*

Kevin Street, *School As A Secure Base: How peaceful teachers can create peaceful schools*

Heather T.Forbes LCSW, *Help For Billy: A beyond consequences approach to helping challenging children in the classroom*

Touchbase, *7 day Attachment Lead Training / Trauma Responsive Education Course*

Touchbase, *Inside I'm Hurting – Supporting the child who has experienced significant relational traumas and losses, Foundational Level 1*

Touchbase, *What About Me?' – What might attachment support look like during a school day? Foundational Level 2*

Enfield Educational Psychology Service, *Enfield Trauma Informed Practice in Schools and Settings (E-TIPSS)*