

# Behaviour Policy



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<b>Lead Person</b>	Deputy Principal	
<b>Policy Audience:</b>	Staff, Students, Parents/Carers, Visitors, Trustees	

## 1. Aims of the document

This policy aims to create and maintain a safe, therapeutically informed environment that supports all members of our community. It focuses on managing challenging behaviour while maintaining predictable and consistent boundaries, ensuring that all students can learn, grow and reach their full potential.

Many students at West Heath have experienced adverse childhood events/experiences, including trauma. As they grow older, they may struggle to regulate their emotions, communicate effectively, or express their thoughts in a mature way. Instead, they often convey their feelings through actions and behaviours, which can sometimes be challenging both for themselves and for those around them.

As a community, we seek to understand these behaviours through the lens of the students' past experiences. We recognise our responsibility to provide a safe, nurturing and structured environment where students can build trust, find stability, and thrive. This policy serves as a guide for the community/staff when responding to challenging situations, ensuring a compassionate and informed approach.

Staff at West Heath School are expected to be understanding, flexible and tolerant – but not passive. By observing students and their behaviours, we aim to uncover both conscious and unconscious motivations, helping them develop more mature ways of engaging with the world, particularly in relation to themselves and others.

Additionally, this policy defines the expected standards of behaviour and the boundaries necessary to maintain safety for all the community. We acknowledge that many students are on a developmental journey and require substantial support to meet these expectations. Given that each student has a unique background, responses to behaviour should be individualised based on an understanding of its underlying causes.

Through a safe, structured and consistent environment, we aim to support students in their growth, helping them reach their potential and develop positive behaviours toward themselves and the whole school community.

## 2. Our Ethos on Behaviour

At West Heath School we understand that all behaviour is communication and relationships and the ways in which we are with each other are critical when managing difficult and painful situations.

Our students are most likely to be able to learn when they feel safe, understood, cared for, valued and respected. If they are not, they are likely to display a behaviour which challenges. Our staff are most likely to be able to support such moments if they feel safe and supported themselves.

Everything we do at West Heath is underpinned by our values The Four Rs, Relationships, Responsibility, Respect & Resilience and the Ten Core values of the Therapeutic Communities (Appendix 1).



As a community we all aim to be ready to learn, however different groups have different responsibilities in the process:

### **2.1. Staff responsibilities**

- To work with the understanding that behaviour has meaning
- To work within our therapeutic model with the students
- To promote behaviour through example focusing on kindness, curiosity, reflection and honesty
- To work consistently and therapeutically when managing behaviour that challenges
- To provide a caring and effective learning environment
- To create a positive environment with high yet realistic expectations
- To encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- To encourage everybody in the community to work collaboratively
- To help our students feel good about themselves
- To ensure fair treatment of all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- To encourage the development of the whole student – academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually
- To be able to reflect on their own practice, and constructively, yet kindly challenge others, fostering a culture of openness
- To seek support and supervision should they feel overwhelmed by a student or a behaviour

### **2.2. The responsibilities of families and carers**

- To engage in supportive and open dialogue with the community
- To seek help from the community
- To encourage the development of the whole student – academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually

- To work in partnership with the school to develop positive attitudes towards those from different cultures, races and with different feelings, values and beliefs
- Following an incident, work with the school to consider the best course of action to support the best outcome for the student and the community; and attend a moving forward meeting
- Support the school's values, vision & ethos to promote a successful educational environment for the students
- Endeavour to provide a safe, secure and happy environment at home

### 2.3. **Students' responsibilities**

- To respect themselves and the community
- To take responsibility and pride in their learning
- To embrace opportunities
- To seek help when needed
- To promote behavior through example focusing on kindness, curiosity, reflection and honesty
- To ensure fair treatment of all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- To accept responsibilities and reflect on their impact on the community
- *To understand that they have a right to:*

#### *Be safe*

- *To be treated kindly*
- *To be listened to*
- *To be helped*
- *To play and learn happily*
- *To feel part of the community*

### 3. When things become difficult 'What helps'

At West Heath School we understand that despite the community's best efforts, we will have moments which will become challenging. We know that such moments, when contained and managed well, can provide a good learning opportunity for us all. Despite moments not always being easy, we strive to remain person-centered and trauma-informed at all times.

Being trauma-informed means that we do not use traditional behaviour teaching styles based on punishment and reward, as research tells us that these can have detrimental impact on students who have had adverse experiences. Traditional behaviour teaching styles can lead to exacerbating feelings of unsafety and shame.

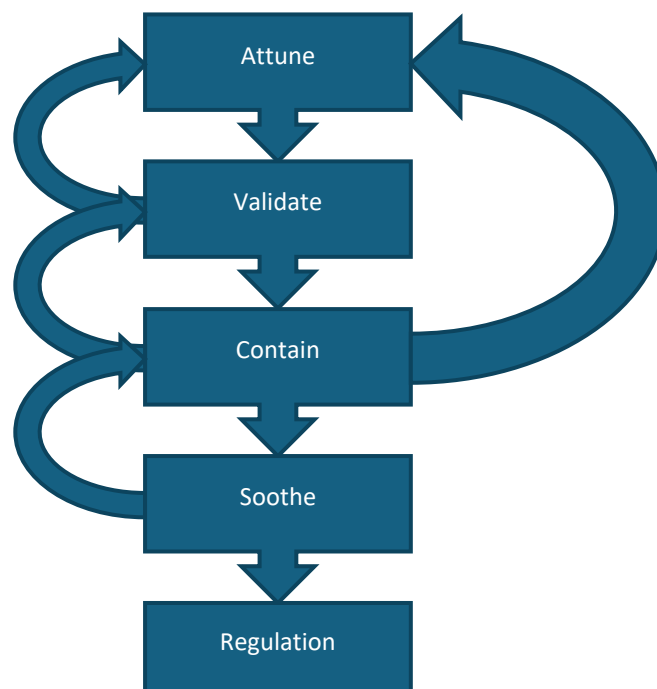
As a community, we therefore choose to focus on thoughts, feelings and experiences of the student who is struggling, rather than the behaviour. Research tells us that the best way to contain challenging moments is to feel 'connected' and 'corrected'. For the interaction and intervention to be successful, we *always* need both things to happen together. This is called the 'two hands approach'. The connection hand provides warmth and nurture and matches the approach to behaviour, based on the students' developmental age. The correction hand provides structure and boundaries, which are firm but never angry.



These are some examples of what to say and how to be when using the two-hand approach during difficult moments:

- *I can see that you are having a very tricky day today and everything is making you feel angry (connection hand), but I am not going let you hurt your friends (correction hand).*
- *I can see that you are feeling very sad, and I am sorry it is like this for you today (connection hand), but I care about you too much to let you hurt yourself (correction hand).*
- *I can see you are cross with me, and I am not able to help you today, I will ask somebody else to support you (connection hand), as we cannot have you breaking property, we need to keep you safe (correction hand).*

Here are ways which we know can support our students and staff during moments of dysregulation (i.e. sad, angry or anxious):



## **Attune**

Attunement involves being aware of and responding to another person, allowing us to resonate with their experience. When a member of the community is experiencing heightened emotions, it is important for them to feel connected to someone. Members of the community can do this by being calm, present with the individual and matching the intensity of the emotion they're experiencing. Attuning to somebody happens mainly through non-verbal communication (i.e. sitting down next to a person, making appropriate eye contact...) but words can be helpful, too.

Things you can say:

*I have noticed that you are feeling sad/worried/angry*

*I imagine that you are feeling sad/worried/angry today because of the change of your timetable. Am I getting it right?*

*I was wondering if today is feeling like tricky day/things are not quite working out.*

*Talk and I will listen...*

*I can see that you are feeling really angry/perhaps something really annoyed you.*

## **Validate**

To validate a member of the community is to acknowledge that they are heard and understood. Validation is an extremely powerful response which involves acknowledging emotional dysregulation and helps individuals feel understood.

Things you can say:

*I can understand why (it would made you feel sad).*

*If I was you (I would probably feel sad/worried/disappointed).*

*I remember feeling sad/worried/angry (about something similar when I was your age)*

## **Contain**

Containment involves the safe holding of an individual's thoughts and feelings. When a member of the community is experiencing heightened emotions, they may not feel safe enough in their thoughts and feelings. Appropriate boundaries may enable the member of the community to feel safe. However, if their emotions are too intense and themselves or others are at risk, physical containment may be required. Please refer to Positive Handling Policy for this and Appendix 8

Things you can say:

*I need you to (stop/let go/leave the room as this is not safe).*

*I cannot let you (hurt yourself/others).*

*We need to keep you safe.*

*I care about you too much to let you (do this to yourself/the things we share with others).*

## **Soothe**

Once a member of the community is feeling understood and safe, we can move into reducing their emotional distress. Soothing allows for the member of the community to begin to feel regulated once again. Sometimes, words are not enough on their own to regulate a member of the community. A soothing tone and approach are needed. Where appropriate, we can use the West Heath hug.

Some things we can say:

*Shall we (head over to ... where you can...*

*Let's go to (safe space), if that's ok with you.*

*What can we do to make it better for you?*

These examples are to help promote ideas of how to approach conversations with members of our community. The most important part will be our judgement and relationship with the member of the community while supporting them through difficult situations. Sometimes, a member of the community can feel so dysregulated that we may need to consistently attune and validate their experiences before they are ready for containment or soothing. Even once reaching these later stages, we may need to revert to attunement or validation.

## 4. Behaviours which challenge the community

### 4.1. Categorisation of behaviour that challenge us

In our school, we think about behaviour in relation to its impact on the community (i.e. low, medium and high). The impact is decided by the appropriate member of the community and escalated to Head of school or SMT as necessary (see Appendix 2) Below are examples of behaviours which can challenge our community and would need bounded containment.

Behaviour	Low	Medium	High
Disruptive behaviour			
Verbal abuse of staff			
Verbal abuse of peer(s)			
Refusal to hand in mobile phone			
Inappropriate use of language			
Smoking or vaping on site			
Leaving a lesson without permission			
Truancy of whole lesson			
Targeted discriminatory language / behaviour			
Damage to school property			
Activating the fire alarm			
Off site without authority			
Possession of alcohol / solvents			

Bullying - repeated and targeted harmful behaviour towards one/group of students			
Aggressive, violent behaviour, including fighting			
Intentional physical attack on staff			
Self-harm (please add to CPOMS)			
Severe and dangerous violent behaviour			
High level disruptive behaviour that regularly places them beyond the care and control of staff			
Fire-setting			
Possession and or supply of class A, B, or C drugs (including THC vaping)			
Criminal behaviour that places both themselves and others at risk			
Possession of an offensive weapon that endangers the school community			

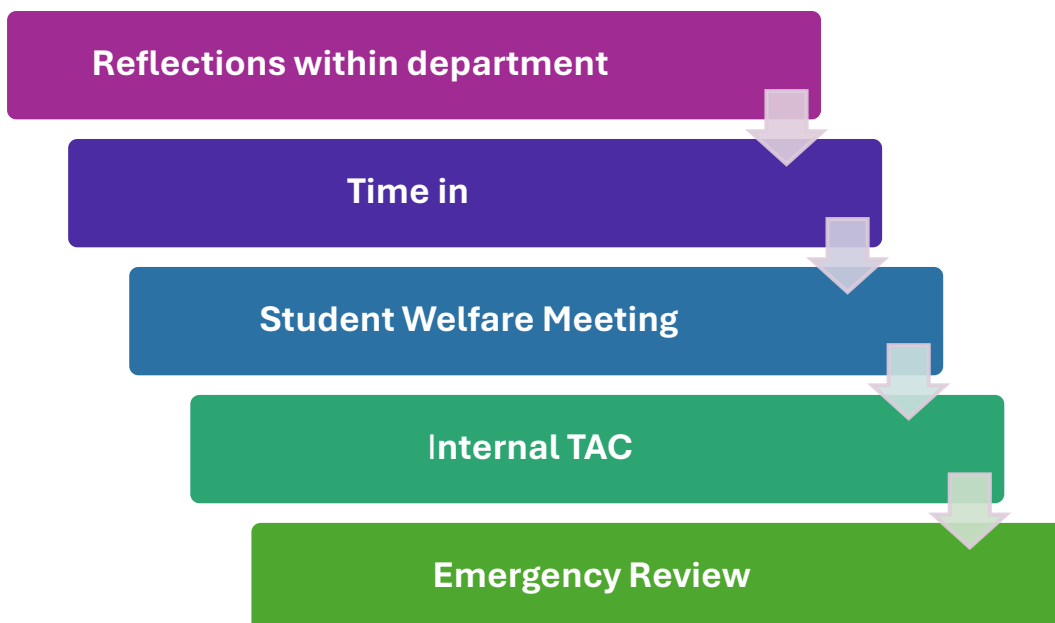
#### 4.2. How do we support students who are struggling

We are committed to support those who are struggling. If a student is displaying a behaviour of concern, a member of staff is expected to raise their concerns with the Head of School or Tutor and discuss the behaviour of concern, its function and possible strategies and interventions which might help. A student who is finding things difficult will then be invited to Time-in, a reflection space where a trusted adult can find out more about why they are struggling. If appropriate, please refer to the Therapy Department (Appendix 3) or EOS (Appendix 4).

If the behaviour does not subside, a representative of your department should raise this in the Student Welfare meeting where further discussions will be held between Pastoral, Curriculum, Therapy, Safeguarding and specialised departments (i.e. EOS, Induction). Actions and interventions will be defined, planned and followed.

If in-depth thinking is necessary, the community will hold an internal TAC (Team around child) meeting. Staff important to the student's care and education should be present. Developmental history, behavioural and Boxall data will be presented and a Individual Support Plan devised (Appendix 5) and subsequently shared with the team who support the student. This will be shared with the student, the family, and the carers and the team.

In extreme cases the school reserves the right to call an external TAC to discuss with all stake holders how to best support the student. There may also be emergency reviews to discuss placement and allow the local authority to understand the challenges the student is facing. Along with discussing with all stakeholders what adaptations need to be implemented to support the student or if West Heath School remains an appropriate setting for the student.



## **5. Keeping each other safe when things become too challenging**

### **5.1. Thinking time**

At West Heath School, we strive to be a therapeutic and trauma informed community, dedicated to the holistic well-being of our students. We understand that there will be days when students may experience times of dysregulation which might lead to behaviour which has significant impact on the student and those around them. On these occasions, it's essential for the students to have the time and space to decompress, reflect on their actions, and recompose themselves. During this *thinking time*, we remain committed to fostering an environment that encourages growth and understanding. Our approach of thinking time allows us the opportunity to plan and prepare for each student's successful reintegration into the school community. We ensure that educational materials are readily available, either through virtual platforms or in-person resources, allowing students to continue their learning journey even in moments of pause. Additionally, our dedicated pastoral, educational, and therapeutic staff may contact the student in this time of decompression. This additional support aims to assist them in processing their experiences and preparing for a smooth transition back into the classroom environment. Thinking time also enables those who were impacted by the behaviour to process the situation and prepare themselves for repair. We believe that this thoughtful and therapeutic approach is vital for each student's success within our community, and we appreciate parent/carers' collaboration and partnership as we work together to support the student.

### **5.2. Formal exclusion**

In the interest of supporting all members of the therapeutic community and in maintaining a safe environment, there may be times when a formal exclusion may be invoked for a duration of 1 to 5 days, or a placement meeting may

be called depending on the severity of the situation and under the following circumstances:

1. *Physical Violence*: Any act of violence that poses a threat to the safety and well-being of students, staff, or members of the community will be grounds for formal exclusion.

2. *Intentional Damage*: Deliberately damaging school property or the personal belongings of others, as well as causing harm to the school's environment, warrants a formal exclusion.

3. *Disruption of Learning*: Behaviour that significantly disrupts the learning experience of others, impeding their ability to engage in educational activities, may also lead to formal exclusion.

4. *The bringing and or using substances: drug, alcohol, smoking/ vaping or other illicit or age-inappropriate items.*

6. *The setting of fires.*

7. *The persistent bullying of any member of the community (child or adult).*

This policy aims to uphold the integrity of our school community and ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn in a respectful and safe atmosphere. Decisions regarding formal exclusion will be made after careful consideration of the specific circumstances surrounding each incident. If the incident is deemed to be sufficiently significant then a team around the child, or professionals meeting may be called to investigate supportive measures. This could lead to an Emergency Review being called if deemed necessary.

## 6. How do we repair

### 6.1. The moving forward process

After a difficult incident following a time when the student is not at school, those involved (including any adult or student impacted by the incident) should have the opportunity to have a STEPS (**S**ay what happened; **T**ell me how you felt; **E**xplain who has a link to what happened; **P**ropose Ideas; **S**elect the best option) conversation with trusted adult support. The gist of this conversation should be recorded on the STEPS form (Appendix 5). This form could be completed during a home visit during 'Thinking time' or during a visit back to school prior to returning to the school day fully.

At an appropriate time following this conversation, the student will be asked if they are ready to attend a Moving forward meeting.

### 6.2. Moving forward meeting

Those invited to this meeting must include a trusted adult for the student from the community as well as parents or carers. The other person/people involved may wish to attend for some the meeting to explain the impact that the incident has had on them. They may prefer that their views are represented by a trusted adult from the community (this should not be done by the Chair).

It may be appropriate to hold this meeting shortly after the STEPS conversation on the same day. In other circumstances this may need to happen on a different day.

The meeting should be chaired by a Pastoral Head or Deputy or other members of the community who have been trained to chair the meetings (Appendix 6).

### Structure of the meeting:

- Chair recaps why we are here and a summary of the conversations and thinking that was present at the time. (Taken from the STEPS Sharing the experience)
- Chair reminds group that the purpose of the meeting is to put things right and check what other things might support the Individual and the community so that things can be better for everyone moving forward
- Discussion around understanding of why things went wrong / triggers / struggles / thoughts and thinking then and now should happen. The adults will hold firm but not angry boundaries and be mindful not to evoke shame humiliation in the student
- Focus should also be given to strengths and potential of student as building on these in the agreements will build the student up and increase their resilience against further incidents
- When all other relevant voices have been heard, the Chair will work with the group to construct the 'Moving forward Agreements'.
- Each person will be given a copy and a date will be set to review
- The review should be set for an appropriate amount of time to check how new supports are going. It should be a celebration of any positives or improvements seen.

## Appendix 1

### What is a Therapeutic Community

Therapeutic community schools emerged in the mid-20th century, influenced by the broader therapeutic community movement that sought to create supportive environments for individuals facing psychological and social challenges. The concept was initially developed to address the needs of children and adolescents with emotional disturbances, or those recovering from trauma.

*The ethos of therapeutic community schools is rooted in several 10 core values:*

- Healthy attachment is a developmental requirement for all human beings, and should be seen as a basic human right
- A safe and supportive environment is required for an individual to develop, to grow, or to change
- People need to feel respected and valued by others to be healthy. Everybody is unique and nobody should be defined or described by their problems alone
- All behaviour has meaning and represents communication which deserves understanding
- Personal well-being arises from one's ability to develop relationships which recognise mutual need
- Understanding how you relate to others and how others relate to you leads to better intimate, family, social and working relationships
- Ability to influence one's environment and relationships is necessary for personal well-being. Being involved in decision-making is required for shared participation, responsibility, and ownership
- There is not always a right answer and it is often useful for individuals, groups and larger organisations to reflect rather than act immediately
- Positive and negative experiences are necessary for healthy development of individuals, groups and the community
- Each individual has responsibility to the group, and the group in turn has collective responsibility to all individuals in it

## Escalation Chart



## Appendix 3

### Therapy Referral



#### THERAPY REFERRAL FORM

<b>Student name:</b>		<b>DoB:</b>	
<b>Boarder (Yes/No):</b>		<b>Tutor Group:</b>	
<b>Referrer name:</b>		<b>Today's date:</b>	

<b>Reason for referral (including relevant background information/significant events):</b>
<b>Which therapy are you looking to support you?</b>
Occupational Therapy Speech and Language Talking Therapy Student Well-being Advocacy Holistic
<b>What relevant strategies have you tried?</b>
<b>Have you discussed this referral with the student?</b>

Please return completed form to Dr Iva Roberts, Head of HEART and Therapy  
([whs.heartandtherapy@westheathschool.com](mailto:whs.heartandtherapy@westheathschool.com))

## Appendix 4



### EOS SUPPORT AND WELLBEING REFERRAL FORM FORM

<b>Student name:</b>		<b>DoB:</b>	
<b>Head of Schools name:</b>		<b>Tutor Group:</b>	
<b>Date of Referral</b>		<b>Today's date:</b>	

**Program Information:** All EOS support programs are designed to run for a maximum of 6 weeks to 12 weeks. If continued support is needed, a new referral form will be required to ensure ongoing collaboration and review.

<b>Start Date:</b>		<b>End Date:</b>	
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**Reason for Referral:** Please share the context and purpose for this referral, focusing on the student's strengths, needs, and goals for growth and wellbeing.

**Type of Support and Environment** (Please indicate whether support will be Onsite or Offsite, and describe the preferred setting that will best nurture the student's sense of safety and belonging.)

**Proposed Days for Support** Which days would be most supportive for the student's engagement and continuity?

**Rationale:** Explain how this provision will help the student feel included, valued, and supported in their learning and personal development.

**Learning Plan:** If the student will be learning in EOS House or through home tutoring, please outline the subjects and work to be provided. This ensures continuity and a sense of achievement.

Subject	Teacher	Work Provided (Y/N)

**Student Profile and Handover:** Please include any relevant information that will help the EOS team understand the student's strengths, challenges, and preferred ways of working. This may include wellbeing considerations, communication strategies, or any support networks already in place.

**Costs and Risk Assessment:** (To be completed by EOS Head. Includes agreement on costs and completion of risk assessment/offsite procedures.)

**Approval:**

**EOS Head (Risk Assessment):**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Head of Year:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Deputy Principal:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed form to, Head of EOS

([whs.EOS@westheathschool.com](mailto:whs.EOS@westheathschool.com))

## Appendix 5



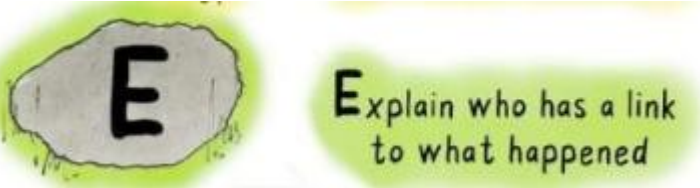


### Individual Support Plan

PUPIL NAME		Date:		Review Date	
Target Behaviour			Communication of the behaviour		
Additional information					

SETTING EVENTS & TRIGGERS	EARLY WARNING SIGNS	BEHAVIOUR	POST INCIDENT
HOW TO PREVENT IT	FIRST RESPONSE	HOW DO WE DE-ESCALATE	WHAT TO DO POST INCIDENT

## Appendix 6

### STEPS Conversation

 <p>“What happened?”</p>	<p>Use this space to summarise any important points from the student account</p>
 <p>“How did that make you feel?”          “I imagine that made you feel...”          “I can understand why that made you feel...”</p>	<p>It may be helpful to look at a mood meter to support identifying the different feelings that were occurring. Note feelings here</p>
 <p>“Was anyone else there?”          “I’m curious to know if that has affected anybody else”</p>	<p>Who else was there? Or who did it have an impact on? This may be people both in and out of school -eg a parent.</p>
 <p>“Is there anything you can think of to make this better?”          “I imagine you might have some ideas of how to move forward”</p>	<p>List several options as to what can be done <b>now</b> to make things better or move forward. No idea is a problem at this point – let student suggest anything, even if it is unachievable or silly. You could write each of their ideas on a post it note to have a visual of their thinking.</p>
 <p>With each post-it-note in turn, ask:          “How would this help to solve the problem?”          “How would you feel when you see each other next?”</p>	<p>Support student to think through the possible consequences positive or negative of their proposed ‘post it note’ ideas above – allow student to select ideas that will support putting things right and moving forward.</p>

## Appendix 7

### Moving Forward Form

Name:	Date:	Review Date:
Incident outline:		
<p><b>How the community can help you:</b></p> <p><i>Suggested supports or interventions that student agrees to try (i.e. organised clubs, interventions, therapy, adjusted timetable)</i></p>		
<p><b>How you can help the community:</b></p> <p><i>Recognising that this incident had an impact on the community, suggestions of what the students can do to make amends (i.e. a letter of apology to an individual, helping to fix or clean something in the school or using a talent they have for good use in the school – eg using art skill to create a kindness poster or work on a school display IF and when they are ready:</i></p> <p>The student may wish to use ideas generated in the 'Talking it through' meeting</p> <p>Things might include</p>		
<p><b>How your family or carers help you and the community:</b></p> <p><i>Recognising the importance of working closely with school to support the student and co-creating a plan forward (i.e. safeguarding children on-line, being encouraging about new plans)</i></p>		
<p><b>How you can help yourself:</b></p> <p><b>SMART target for positive learning</b></p> <p><i>i.e. Until the next review I agree to enter the lesson and stay for a minimum of 15 minutes before walking away. If I feel I need to leave I will report to an agreed adult and remain in an identified space that does not interfere with the opportunities of others and their learning.</i></p>		
<b>Signed Chair:</b>	<b>Student:</b>	<b>Trusted Adult:</b>
Review Date:		

## Appendix 8

# Restrictive Interventions & Team Teach Practice

Appendix 8 updates the Behaviour Policy to reflect the Department for Education's 2026 guidance on restrictive interventions and integrates Team Teach principles.

### 1. Definitions

Reasonable Force: Staff may use reasonable force only to prevent injury, criminal offence, serious property damage, or serious disorder.

Restraint: Physical intervention to restrict movement; must never affect breathing or circulation.

Seclusion: Supervising or confining a pupil alone where they cannot leave; requires statutory recording and reporting.

Non-force restraint: Restricting liberty without physical force.

### 2. Prohibited Techniques

Techniques restricting breathing or circulation, pressure to the neck, mouth, chest, abdomen, or intentional ground holds are prohibited.

### 3. Prevention and De-escalation (Team Teach)

Emphasis on 95% de-escalation, relational practice, trauma-informed responses, and personalised risk reduction plans.

### 4. SEND Requirements

Intervention planning must account for individual SEND profiles, communication needs, and EHCP requirements.

### 5. Statutory Recording Requirements

All significant incidents must be recorded with time, date, duration, rationale, force used, injuries, and SEND status on the school's Behaviour Watch system.

### 6. Reporting to Parents/Carers

Parents must be informed as soon as practicable and within the same day unless it risks serious harm.

### 7. Medical Assessment

Where appropriate, pupils must receive a medical check following restraint.

### 8. Governance Responsibilities

The Full Board of Trustees must monitor data, training, compliance, and ensure alignment with Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010.

### 9. Alignment with Team Teach Principles

Team Teach promotes minimum force, maximum care, restorative practice, and post-incident reflection.