

Inspire - Enable - Achieve



The Vale Federation Positive Behaviour Policy

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Signed:

 Principal

Date 28th January 2026

David J Pearce Chair of Governors Date 29th January 2026

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Vision

Through a multi-professional approach, we will create a high quality, inclusive, happy and safe school environment where students with a range of learning difficulties are:

- Inspired to engage in learning
- Enabled to realise their greatest possible level of independence and emotional resilience
- Supported to recognise and celebrate their achievements now and in the future

Aims

This policy provides guidance to class teams, parents and carers, governors and other stakeholders on how to support our learners to self-regulate, manage their behaviour and feel safe so that they are ready to learn.

This behaviour policy aims to outline:

- Our key beliefs
- The importance of relationships
- How we encourage positive behaviour
- Our expectations of pupils and staff
- The provision required
- How students with exceptional behaviours of concern will be supported
- Our approach to self-injurious behaviour
- Bullying
- Discriminatory language/ incidents
- Reasonable force
- Restrictive physical intervention
- Low level physical intervention
- Debriefs
- Recording and Reporting
- Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

This policy should be read in conjunction with those policies listed below:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Special Educational Needs Policy

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Teaching and Learning handbook
- Autism handbook
- Exclusions Policy
- Anti-bullying policy

Key Beliefs

This policy outlines a positive, low arousal ethos that will be demonstrated by all staff at all levels in order to ensure a positive, safe environment where relationships are created and maintained in order to best respond to behaviours of concern, presented by the pupils across both schools. At the Vale Federation we want our Positive Behaviour Policy to reflect our insight and understanding of the complex needs of our pupils and how this contributes to their ability to self-regulate and manage their behaviour in a positive manner so they can be ready to engage with their learning.

The students at The Vale Federation of schools all have significant needs associated with their learning difficulties and for a significant proportion of the students, a diagnosis of autism. These complex needs affect how our students perceive and interact with the world around them. All our students have difficulties with communication. Many also have difficulties with social interactions, processing and managing sensory information. All will present behaviours of concern in line with these complex difficulties, some of which will result in or from challenges to themselves and/or others. Students are supported to identify their emotion and level of regulation through The Zones of Regulation approach, which is embedded into the school day.

Most students learn in small, incremental steps over a very long period of time. We believe that making mistakes are part of the learning process. We should not be judgemental about this but instead support our students to get it right.

Our Federation values are determination, excellence, courage, trust, kindness, friendship, respect and equity. We aim to enable pupils to access and engage with their learning: social, informal and formal. This policy is relevant to all The Vale Federation's pupils, regardless of whether they present behaviours considered 'concerning' or not. It is every bit as much to do with enabling students to adopt a positive and purposeful approach to school life and work as it is with addressing challenge.

Behaviours of concern can be described as concerning when it is of such an intensity, frequency, or duration as to compromise the quality of life and/or the physical safety of the individual or others. Behaviours of concern are likely to lead to responses that are restrictive, aversive or result in exclusion from opportunities.

We consider that behaviours of concern always happen for a reason and might be the only way a student can communicate- it can arise for different reasons which are personal to the individual. Learners who display, or at risk of displaying behaviours of concern, might need support which involves positive behavioural support and some form of restrictive practice or physical intervention. Any restrictive intervention must be legally and ethically justified, be absolutely necessary to prevent serious harm and be the least restrictive option.

We acknowledge that behaviours of concern can be short in duration but frequent or intense and lengthy but much less frequent, both can be just as impactful.

This policy is fundamentally about the learning environment created by staff, and pupils' experience of that. That experience will be the context for whatever behaviour is presented, whether desired or concerning.

At The Vale Federation we believe that all behaviours of concern, serve the following purposes:

- A way to communicate unmet needs
- A way to gain choice and control
- There is no alternative way of communicating or meeting a need
- It works (is effective)

Behaviours of concern can have a negative impact on the child, those around them, their environment, their relationships, their capacity to access and engage with learning and the quality of their life.

At the Vale Federation we believe that our students have the right to an atmosphere and environment where pupils and staff alike:

- Feel safe, valued, respected and happy
- Want to behave well
- Want to access, engage with and enjoy learning
- Are motivated to join in
- Are respected
- Are not subject to bullying
- Are well regulated either through co-regulation or self-regulation

We believe that:

- Every student is an individual
- Behaviour is a means of communication- we must ensure that learners are supported to communicate their needs safely and appropriately using their preferred communication systems
- With the right support and intervention, students can learn to self-regulate (or accept support to co-regulate) and manage their own behaviour
- Students will require support to learn, rehearse and review language and action, to support social relationships
- All of our students have learning difficulties and other complex needs which impact on how they learn to regulate and manage their behaviour.
- Teacher and class teams must be given the opportunity to learn, understand and have insight into why our students become dysregulated and reflect on how/ why it impacts on their behaviour. To work collectively with our learners, their parents/ caregivers and other professionals to develop strategies as part of a positive behaviour support, to support them to self-regulate and manage their behaviours in a positive manner.

This policy is therefore as much about staff's behaviours and the culture, climate and relationships they create as it is about students' behaviours of concern. This policy aims to ensure clarity and consistency in how we support behaviour of concern so that we can all work in a safe environment that promotes learning, opportunities and minimises the need to use force. **Where possible, behaviours of concern are managed without physical support or handling.** We do not use sanctions or any form of punitive measures as part of our behaviour management.

Relationships

Self-Regulation (either mutual/ co-regulation or self- regulation) and Positive behaviour are developed through high quality relationships between staff and students and between staff.

At The Vale Federation we use the Low Arousal approach to build trusting relationships and to minimise/ reduce or deescalate behaviours of concern. Staff across The Vale Federation use these 10 key principles to de-escalate and prevent escalation of behaviours of concern by-

Non-verbal strategies:

1. Staying/appearing calm
2. Avoiding direct eye contact
3. Being wary of physical touch
4. Slowing movements down
5. Having an awareness that gestures can be misinterpreted
6. Avoiding gathering staff in crisis situations
7. Removing other people from the situation
8. Keeping a safe distance away (allowing for space)
9. Being aware of the power of the messages you communicate
10. Tactically withdraw from the person or situation

It may also be necessary to:

1. Reduce demands, requests and or boundaries
2. Distract or divert
3. Manage the environment

Staff should always model positive behaviour and the Low Arousal Approach.

Quality relationships with all learners are essential to foster and enable successful relationships where students are valued, safe, respected and are enabled to make progress. In order to establish and develop these relationships we need to-

- Actively build trust and a rapport with all students
- Have high expectations for all students
- Treat students with dignity and respect at all times by ensuring communication is clear, accessible and appropriate

- Consider and identify the purpose of behaviours of concern and seek to teach alternatives
- Identify strengths and use these to build on
- Offer an apology when mistakes are made in order to model and support the trust and respect of the relationship
- Name and manage your own emotional reactions to behaviours of concern, seeking help and guidance when needed
- Quietly but firmly hold appropriate boundaries for the student you are working with remembering that boundaries may vary from student to student
- Seek support from the team working with the student to problem-solve where needed
- Ensure the student is shown the utter most respect ensuring that we do not talk over them over their heads or in front of other students.
- We remain non-judgemental about students' life experiences/ family backgrounds/ past history, but instead use behaviour data and key information from professionals to inform Individual Support Plans.

The Vale Federation also recognises the importance of quality relationships with parents and carers and other Professionals and Health Professionals.

Encouraging positive behaviour

In order to foster positive approaches to behaviours that concern it is essential that all staff promote the ethos and culture of positive behaviour management.

The staff at The Vale Federation will:

- Use agreed Expectations as part of lesson routines and throughout the school day
- Use a Low Arousal approach
- Use sensory strategies to support students' individual regulation needs
- Model with visuals the Zone of Regulation that the student is in
- Offer regular zones 'check-ins' to help students to be aware of their emotions and regulation
- Use a range of strategies to de-escalate behaviour that concerns (see appendix 4)
- Model positive behaviour
- Offer rewards and motivators appropriately
- Be kind and caring towards each other
- Encourage students to make good choices (and provide them with the choices if needed)
- Be prepared for every day by dressing appropriately (long hair tied up etc.)
- Welcome the students on arrival
- Treat pupils with dignity and respect
- Be fair
- Plan differentiated and motivating lessons
- Deliver well prepared and organised lessons

- Use a total communication approach
- Use agreed lesson routines (start and end) and structure to promote understanding and reduce anxiety (appendix 3)
- Record incidents of behaviour on CPOMS using the guide for reporting behaviour incidents (appendix 7)
- Inform the Principal if they feel that any member of staff is not acting in the best interests of the student (wittingly or unwittingly) when dealing with behaviour that concerns (see what to do if you have concerns about staff working with children poster)
- Be aware of any student for whom there have been or are safeguarding concerns for how this could affect a student's behaviour (and how this should subsequently be managed)
- Deal with behaviour incidents in a way that protects themselves from allegations

Teachers (with support from therapists) in addition to the above will:

- Adhere to the Expectations for adults (appendix 4)
- Be a positive role model for students and other adults in the class
- Follow agreed lesson routines
- Use the agreed Expectations for students
- Write, monitor, review and update Individual Support Plan for individual students which are also shared with families. For students with CAMHS involvement, a CAMHS positive behaviour plan may be written in place of an Individual Support Plan. Teachers will support it and then update and review (appendix 9)
- Know the sensory strategies that will support individual students
- Know individual student's sensory profiles
- Work to understand why students behave in certain ways
- Develop strategies for helping students maintain an acceptable level of behaviour
- Be familiar with the relevant histories and family information for students in their classes
- Display or have available information to enable class staff to best support individual students e.g., sensory toolbox and Zones of Regulation visuals
- Ensure the classroom / learning space is a capable environment.

Therapists (with support from the teachers) in addition to the above will:

- Use agreed school expectations for adults and students
- Write, monitor, review and update individual seating profiles and regulation information which are also shared with families (OT)
- Write, monitor, review and update communication passports which are also shared with families (SaLT)

The behaviour lead, with support from the leadership team, will:

- Implement the behaviour policy consistently throughout the school by setting the standards and expectations of behaviour and provision in classrooms
- Support staff to implement the policy
- Support staff to implement agreed expectations and routines

- Organise and training for staff in suitable strategies for helping students maintain an acceptable level of behaviour including sensory processing and Zones of Regulation
- Keep records of all reported serious incidents
- Report to the governors on the status of behaviour in the school
- Lead meetings with parents/ carers/ professionals where necessary
- Analysis behaviour incidents and feedback to class teachers' relevant information

The Governing Board will:

- Support the school in the implementation of the policy
- Have a named governor who oversees the implementation of the policy and reviews behaviour and the monitoring of incidents
- Review and monitor the effectiveness of the policy.

Provision

High quality provision is essential to ensure that each students individual needs are met. By ensuring that student needs are effectively met, the likelihood of behaviour that concerns decrease and, in some cases, stops.

In order to ensure that every individual student needs are met whatever their developmental/ cognitive levels are, we need to:

- Know each student as an individual and know their sensory profile
- Have communication systems in place so that students are able to communicate as effectively as they are able
- Accurately assess and understand students' needs in order to provide personalised learning which meets the needs of each individual student at his/ her point of development/ learning journey
- Use plans drawn up by professionals e.g., EHCPs (Education, Health & Care Plan), TPPs (Termly Provision and Progress), Sensory profiles, Communication profiles/ passports to ensure that students have access to equipment, sensory strategies/ toolboxes/ communication aids, daily sensory diets
- Support students to develop high levels of resilience
- Have high expectations of every student
- Support students to develop high self-esteem, so that they believe they can succeed
- Frequent positive reinforcement for when things are going well/ desired behaviour is being displayed and expectations are being demonstrated, with minimal feedback for low level undesirable or behaviour inappropriate to the situation. The focus and language should always be on what you want the student to do
- Know what motivates students and use these as positive reinforcements
- Give students feedback about their learning, progress and achievement in a supportive way and at a level appropriate to the developmental level they are working at
- Offer praise and rewards for specific achievements and do this as often as possible

- Actively teach the students the behaviour for learning by modelling and reinforcing the Vale Federation Expectations regularly and consistently (appendix 4)
- Support students with the use of continuous provision (appendix 6)

Students with exceptional behaviours of concern

Most students respond positively to the expectations and routine which are in place. On occasions some students will need additional support to mutually/ self-regulate, communicate effectively/ support their own mental health/ cope with external factors in order to manage their behaviour in a positive manner.

Some students have periods of intense behaviours that concern/ a specific behaviour of concern and or periods of escalation where additional support may be required. For students requiring additional support to self-regulate/ communicate and manage behaviours of concern in a positive and safe way we will do this by-

- Working with parents/ caregivers
- Utilise Multi-Disciplinary Meetings
- Referring to CAMHS when required
- Referring for medical investigations
- Reviewing Individual Support Plans
- Referring to social care when required
- Drawing up a risk assessment
- Drawing up additional resources beyond the school e.g., Music Therapy

Self-injurious behaviour

Self-injury is a behaviour of concern and is where a student physically harms themselves. This type of behaviour, like all others is related to communication but may also be related anxiety, boredom, or discomfort/ pain. It is never appropriate to ignore self-injurious behaviour. In addition to the strategies to encourage positive behaviour (listed above-encouraging positive behaviour), it may also be necessary to:

- Use a barrier e.g., placing a barrier between the student and the object or body part they are using to cause harm
- Ensure medical support is sought if required this may be in the form of a 1st aider, school nurse or a referral.

Bullying (including cyber bullying)

The Vale Federation does not tolerate bullying. It is acknowledged that many of our students do not fully understand how their behaviour and behaviour choices impact on others or be experienced by others as being targeted or bullied.

- Bullying or the targeting of individuals or group should never be ignored
- All instances of bullying must be report on CPOMS after speaking with a member of SLT
- Any instances of bullying or targeting must be reported by the class teacher to parents/carers in a telephone call or face to face meeting
- Every instance of bullying must be addressed with each student at a developmentally appropriate level
- Students need to be supported and taught how to keep themselves safe online
- Parents/ carers should have opportunities to learn how to keep the students they care for safe online

Please also see The Vale Federation’s Anti-Bullying Policy.

Discriminatory language/ incidents

Language which is discriminatory about race, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or religion are not acceptable within The Vale Federation. It is acknowledged that our students do not fully understand the meaning of the words they are using or the offence/ impact that can be caused by using them.

- The use of discriminatory language must never be ignored
- All instances of discriminatory language must be reported on CPOMS which may then require a referral to MASH
- Any instances of discriminatory language must be reported by the class teacher to parents/ carers in a telephone call or face to face meeting

Our students and parents must be supported appropriately and positively to understand our student's vulnerability to radicalisation in any form.

Reasonable force

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils. Reasonable force is the use of force only at a level which is relevant and proportionate to the circumstance. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Self-injury
- Causing injury to others
- Committing a criminal offence

- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during teaching time or elsewhere (this includes authorised out of school activities)
- Any other behaviour which may have a direct negative influence on the safe running of the school day or may pose a health and safety risk

For example, at The Vale Federation School reasonable force may be used to prevent or block a child from climbing inappropriately, if this poses a risk to their safety, such as on furniture or equipment. It may also be used to release a child from a hair pull or bite.

It would NOT be acceptable to use it to move a child transitioning between areas in the school that has flopped to the floor and or is refusing to move.

Physical Intervention will only be used if it is deemed to be:

- Reasonable
- Proportionate
- Necessary

Due the students' level of understanding and needs, we do not use sanctions or punitive measures as a form of behaviour management.

Restrictive Physical Intervention

Restrictive physical intervention is the positive application of sufficient force to ensure, by physical means alone that a student does not cause injury to themselves, a member of staff, another student or significant damage to property.

Restrictive physical Intervention should only be carried out by staff who hold an in-date Team Teach qualification (see Team Teach qualification list). Team Teach Trained staff may ask for help by staff who do not hold a Team Teach qualification to support them under their direction in an emergency. All Restrictive Physical Intervention should be for the shortest amount of time possible.

Where there is a need for restrictive physical intervention, trained staff will follow the Team Teach guidelines. However, all staff carry a duty of care and if a member of staff recognises that a restrictive physical intervention is required in order to maintain Health & Safety as part of an emergency where there are no other Team Teach staff available, staff are allowed to carry out a restrictive physical intervention. Indeed, their duty of care requires:

- Restrictive physical intervention should only be used as a last resort once all the other options have been exhausted. Any form of restraint should only be used when reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary
- Should only be used if the student is putting themselves or others in danger and where a failure to intervene would constitute neglect
- If used, must be recorded on CPOMS and parents notified on the day of the incident

- Any student that has in the past or is at risk of requiring physical intervention must have this documented on their Individual Support Plan (in the reactive column) and reviewed following any instances of physical intervention by SLT
- Any student that has required restrictive physical intervention must be closely monitored and observed due to the risk of injury
- Once the incident has been de-escalated and the learner is well regulated again (could be the next day), the class team need to consider an opportunity for staff and pupils to debrief and to maintain a positive relationship with the student

Restrictive physical intervention is NOT a punishment.

At the Vale Federation no student should ever be:

- Locked in a room alone, without support and supervision
- Deprived of food or drink
- Denied access to the toilet
- Isolated in way that means they are unable to express or communicate their needs using their preferred way of communication including non-verbal cues/ gestures
- Prevented from leaving spaces or rooms unless it is for their own protection or to protect the immediate safety of others.
- Any intervention must be proportionate, reasonable and necessary

Corporal punishment is illegal and never used at the Vale Federation.

In exceptional circumstances some students may require specialist equipment that has the function of restraint e.g., gaiters, specialist seating (postural control and grounding/ sensory feedback), standing frames, gaiters/ splints, helmets. Students who require specialist equipment (for seating) which also restrains have seating profiles which outline clearly how the equipment should be used and for how long (appendix 8). Other specialist equipment is risk assessed and documented as part of physio programmes.

Low level physical intervention

May be used by ALL staff to divert a pupil from a destructive, disruptive or situation which is likely to escalate and become risky or unsafe. Low Level Physical intervention can be considered to be the following:

Contingent touch: Contingent touch may be used appropriately e.g., a high 5 during hello time, in the appropriate context or a physical prompt to a child's arm or leg to prompt them to move it/ use it/ heighten awareness of it. Many of our students also require touch to regulate and soothe e.g., deep pressure, massage, cuddles. Please see the Intimate Care and Touch Policy for further information.

Handling: By this we mean providing physical direction similar to contingent touch but in a more directive nature e.g., the student is led away/ guided away (using Team Teach practises) or very young students it may mean more direct physical support – cradling or hugging. For students with sensory needs this may also include squeezing or deep pressure

either at the child's request or as a result of staffing identifying the student requires this in order to mutually regulate.

A release: If a student intentionally or unintentionally grabs hold of clothing/ hair and they are not able to release their grasp they may be helped to do so using a Low-level physical intervention (using Team Teach practises) to support them to release. Students who bite down on an object or person may also be supported to release the bite before being redirected to a more appropriate item e.g. a chewy.

Debriefs

Debriefs should take place for both staff and students involved in any form of physical intervention or after an incident deemed to be significant and did not involve any form of physical intervention. Debriefs will be at a level appropriate to the student's developmental level. Following an incident, the focus should be to ensure the continued strong relationship between the staff member and pupil/s involved. This may take the form of completing a favoured activity but will vary based on the individual circumstances and situation for those involved.

Post-incident/event, staff should remain vigilant to the wellbeing of the pupil and provide support, activities, space as is appropriate in order to promote a regulated and appropriate arousal level. It should be borne in mind that students may well continue to experience high-arousal and disturbed thought processes/awareness for a very long time after an incident/physical intervention, often well beyond that being obvious to others. If staff judge this to be the case, any form of debrief may be left until the next day regardless of whether it is believed the pupil can engage after that period of time or not. Attempting to supportively re-engage with a pupil who cannot access that process on the same day as the incident, is no less pointless than attempting the process the next day if the pupil has no recall. An individualised plan for how to debrief a pupil that takes account of such personalised needs must be part of their Individual Support Plan.

Staff may also need the opportunity to talk through an incident/event and give feedback and be debriefed on their involvement. Members of SLT will oversee and monitor classes, checking in with staff involved in incidents requiring restrictive physical intervention within 36 hours of being added to CPOMS. Where required/ requested/ wanted the SLT will facilitate debriefs.

Debriefs are personal experiences and look different for each individual. Staff are encouraged to seek out an appropriate colleague/s to debrief with, this can be through peer support or a line manager. A debrief may be required immediately after an incident or at the end of the day, staff should consider what is most appropriate for their own wellbeing at the time. They will need to have their own wellbeing, and the impact on them of events, taken into account and to be provided with any relevant support and/or training.

Suspension and Exclusions

The Vale Federation does not believe that excluding students is generally the most effective way to support students with complex needs and will always endeavour to personalise and adapt the learning and provision for individuals where operationally viable. In very exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to suspend a student for a fixed period.

Please see Suspension and Exclusion Policy for further information.

Recording and Reporting

All behaviour related incidents must be logged on to CPOMS and should be completed as soon as possible following an incident. The report should be factual and include all the information outlined in the guide for reporting behaviour incidents (appendix 7)

All incidents that involved Physical Intervention must be recorded as above but must also include information about the hold used and the duration of the hold. **All physical intervention holds must be verbally reported to parents on the day they take place**, either by an appropriate member of the class staff team or a member of SLT.

Where there are safeguarding concerns within the behavioural incident a DSL or DDSL should be contacted as a matter of urgency.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

The behaviour lead and other members of SLT will monitor behaviour incidents logged on CPOMS on a daily basis. Feedback and opportunities for further discussion should be required. The monitoring of behaviour incidents will include monitoring to ensure that all the relevant information has been recorded (outlined in the CPOMS guide for reporting behaviour- appendix 7). It will also include the monitoring of the number and frequency of behaviour incidents logged for an individual student or for a class.

A half termly report will be given to each class with the behaviour analysis for the last half term. This should be used by class teachers, therapists and behaviour lead to:

- Review the provision already in place
- Review and update Individual Management Plans
- Inform planning/ curriculum delivery
- Identify interventions
- Track progress for students in regard to behaviour
- Inform Annual Review reports, Therapy reports, EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan) recommendations and Termly Planning and Progress meetings