

At Woodcroft school we believe each pupil should be treated with dignity and respect, so that in a safe, secure and stimulating environment they achieve to the best of their abilities. Pupils are supported by staff in developing socially desirable behaviours, managing their own sensory and emotional regulation and reshaping less desirable behaviours into positive ones.

As a school that provides placements to many children on the autistic spectrum (AS), we are aware that most behaviours are a means of communication or a response to an individual's heightened anxiety or sensory regulation. We recognise the importance of providing transactional supports in order to enable pupils to avoid or negotiate emotional dysregulation (SCERTS, 2007) and promote self-management (zones of regulation) through greater understanding of what they are feeling. More information on these concepts is provided below and in our *Communication policy*.

At Woodcroft, we believe it is important that all of our staff appreciate that by the nature of their condition, children on the AS may not have sufficient understanding or awareness that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable, or that they might even be construed as bullying or challenging. In keeping with current thinking, staff appreciate the likely impact that changes and transitions may have upon the state of all our pupils' level of anxiety and emotion, but particularly for those on the AS.

Similarly, we recognise the need for staff to understand the link between hyper-vigilance and heightened anxiety and the perception, by some pupils, that the actions of others are directed against them, thus causing them to enter a state of 'flight, fright, fight'. This state of arousal can result in behaviours that challenge staff in keeping the pupil and others safe.

Woodcroft's *Behaviour management policy* objectives are for its pupils to develop:

- an awareness of others;
- social skills and social behaviour;
- self-confidence;
- self-regulation strategies;
- independence and functional skills;
- an interest in activities and issues other than those of their special interest; and
- behaviour which is acceptable within school, home and the wider community.

Principles and practice

1. Being positive towards others

The school's ethos is underpinned by the principle that we should be positive towards others. Everyone should find being a member of Woodcroft a positive experience.

In order to achieve this:

- Staff are role models and model appropriate behaviour.
- Staff see the best in each other and try to build up positive relationships.
- Staff recognise and praise all positive happenings.
- Staff and parents work in partnership to build upon the children's positive qualities.
- Follow up actions or consequences should be in proportion to the nature of the incident and the needs of the pupil.
- Staff recognise the presence of stressors in practices and environments and their potential impact on an individual's emotional and sensory regulation.
- Transactional supports are provided so as to enable pupils to transition and manage experiences as calmly as possible. (See section 4. *Supportive* below.)

2. Creating a safe and pleasant environment

Woodcroft School is committed to providing a safe and pleasant environment. Classrooms should be clean and well provisioned. They should be set out to promote 'on task' behaviour appropriate to the work being undertaken, such as TEACCH type workstations for independent work, or group settings for interactive activities. The careful positioning of displays and other classroom resources avoids 'visual overload' and supports greater clarity of purpose. Pupil's sensory needs are taken into account to ensure the sensory environment is conducive to learning, e.g. the right room temperature and type/level of lighting.

3. Feeling respected

Woodcroft believes that each pupil should be afforded dignity and respect whilst at the same time learning to appreciate the needs of other members of the school and the wider community. We hope to achieve this by:

- Offering a curriculum which respects differing needs, learning and behaviour styles, such as those associated with AS.
- Respecting each other's cultural differences.
- Speaking to each other in an appropriate way.
- Demonstrating appropriate body language and respecting personal space.

4. Supportive

Woodcroft School endorses the principle that every member of the school community should feel supported. All members of Woodcroft staff have the responsibility to provide support and accept support from others. Staff will apply their knowledge of Transactional Analysis (Berne, 1964) to all their interactions to promote the best possible reception of their communications. Support will be provided by:

- Pupils being encouraged to co-operate with staff by concentrating during lessons and not disrupting the learning of others.
- Staff offering the means of mutual regulation to pupils.
- Staff recognising when they may have become 'contaminated' during an occurrence and enacting a 'change of or fresh face' approach.
- Staff being vigilant to pupils attempts to self-regulate (i.e. take a break).
- Forming a supportive partnership with parents.

Application of behaviour management strategies

The school seeks to avoid circumstances that may lead to negative behaviour and actively promote, teach and support positive behaviour. When pupils are behaving well this is acknowledged. Staff seek to develop a positive working environment, establishing clear expectations and routines. Both verbal and non-verbal reinforcement is used to encourage appropriate behaviour. When relevant there can be a reward for good or improved behaviour, e.g. stars, stickers, certificates or a letter of praise sent home. (See *Appendix B*) It is important that staff keep in mind that the use of rewards to shape or modify behaviour can result in individuals on the AS becoming more anxious. It is likely that pupils with AS are not able to regulate arousal or inhibit negative behaviour when the control is external to them.

When an intervention is necessary, the emphasis should be upon the positive, keeping safe, rather than the negative. For example, focus on the behaviour expected rather than the disruptive behaviour. And negatives should be rephrased: 'Do ...' rather than 'Do not ...'. Staff should have to hand a range of positive scripts, such as 'Are you doing ... / lets do the right thing'. Language of shaming and blaming will be avoided and staff will instead use a positive language of safety.

Respect for others

Respect for others is an integral part of the school's practice. This is reinforced by:

- Understanding and empathising with the pupil's individual needs/diagnosis.
- Recognising individual pupil's sensory needs.
- Separating the behaviour from the person.
- Where possible, privately rather than publicly, drawing the pupil's attention to their behaviour.
- Re-directing pupils to help them focus on what they should be doing.
- Re-establishing a relationship after an incident.

Interventions

Interventions should be given as low a profile as possible. This is promoted by giving the pupil time to comply and by:

- Keeping directions brief.
- Taking pupils away from the class group to work.
- Keeping the focus on the main issue.
- Not unnecessarily escalating the situation.
- Avoiding arguments.
- Tactically ignoring non-verbal secondary behaviour.
- Using a different member of staff as a 'change of/fresh face'.

Class routines

Class routines and the structure of the learning environment support positive behaviour. Consideration of the following elements help to provide conditions which make negative behaviours less likely.

1. The classroom environment

Structured teaching areas and activity areas give pupils cues as to the expected behaviour.

- The learning environment should be organised and distraction free.
- There should be a preferred form of room organisation, with seating arrangements promoting easy access for all.
- The grouping of pupils should promote a positive work ethos.
- Staff support and supervision should be able to function adequately.
- The staff/pupil ratio should be appropriate to meet the needs of the pupils.
- There should be interesting, age-appropriate items and materials for all.

2. Class activities

Class activities should be:

- Organised so that pupils participate in a range of activities.
- Useful, meaningful and relevant with minimum expectations to wait without a focus/activity.
- Suitable for stressful times of the day or week, e.g. last thing on a Friday.
- Carefully planned regarding changeover of activities.
- A balance of quiet activities and group activities.
- Clearly defined regarding routines for completed work.
- Clearly defined regarding beginnings and endings for each session.

3. Class timetables

- These should be structured and displayed to inform pupils about the daily routines. Easily accessible visual schedules should also be displayed in all the classrooms.
- Pupils should be able to identify what they are doing, where and when.
- Pupils should be informed in a timely way of any changes due to occur.

- Pupils should be given opportunities to choose what they can do at specific times.
- The daily routines should be used to lead the pupils to gain situational understanding.

4. Communication in class

- Positive communications should be responded to and rewarded.
- Alternative means of communication should be provided, e.g. signing and symbols.
- The pupil's first name should be used before giving instructions, directions or redirection.
- Pupils should be given time to process information.
- Distractions should be kept to a minimum enabling pupils to maintain attention.

De-escalation techniques

Staff should always seek to reshape unacceptable/off task behaviours into positive alternatives. Staff should also endeavour to intervene in a positive way to distract a pupil and de-escalate a potentially negative behaviour. For example:

- Adopting a relaxed non-threatening stance, a friendly facial expression and a quiet tone of voice (principles of Transactional Analysis).
- Using a verbal 'help me' request.
- Asking a pupil questions, such as 'Are we doing the right thing?'
- Using positive, good-natured humour.
- Discussing the problem.
- Reminding those present of rules/rights/responsibilities, the desired behaviour, limits and the skills already gained in dealing with difficult situations.
- Redirecting to a different activity.
- Effectively using space or changing the location.
- Introducing a 'change of face' thereby allowing another member of staff to take over.

Follow up or outcome

The follow up strategies should be planned, related, reasonable and certain rather than severe in order to support pupils understanding that behaviour has outcomes (See *Appendix B*). These may include:

- Sitting away from others for a short time.
- Working away from others by relocating the pupil within the room.
- 'Taking a break' within the room, at a designated space.
- Encouraging the pupil to take a 'calm-down' time away from the room or activity.

The application of these strategies should be:

- Planned and clear to all.
- Calm and brief.
- Without arguments.
- With clear procedures for supported closure.
- With dignity and without public shaming.
- Aimed at enabling a supported and positive return to a class.

For consequences of bullying please see the *Anti-bullying policy*.

The 'calm-down' period

The reasons for having a 'calm-down' period are:

- To allow others present during a pupil's dysregulation, to have a period of recovery time where they feel safe and not threatened.
- As a management strategy (and never used as a punishment or threat) for badly handled frustration, anger or aggression; or of acting in an unsafe way.

Options for the management of a 'calm-down' period:

- In a set area, which could be an area set aside in the classroom with table and chairs (possibly screened).

- Supported, outside the room, if this is practical.
- In a quiet environment, with sensitive support.
- When in the playground, sitting away from the others on a bench.

In circumstances where a pupil will not leave the class, it may be more appropriate to remove the rest of the class, a staff member remaining with the unsettled pupil. Pupils should never be carried except in situations where safety is compromised (this will then be recorded on the pupil's risk assessment).

Corporal punishment

In law, corporal punishment, which is defined as the intentional application of force or rough handling as punishment, is forbidden in all schools.

None the less it is a stated policy that in their management of pupils no member of staff, visiting student or voluntary assistant shall use corporal punishment, such as hitting or unduly firm physical handling. Handling of pupils must be conducted according to approved guidelines as detailed on individual pupils behaviour profile and risk assessment. No pupil should be left unsupervised at any time.

Pupil risk assessments (RA)

Individual pupil risk assessments are devised to support and provide safe management of a pupil's known range of behaviours and antecedents that may cause them to become dysregulated. The profile is written in such a way that it positively presents the pupils attributes that may need to be considered in order to promote the pupil's functioning and avoid predictable occurrences that may cause distress and uncertainty.

All behaviour interventions must be planned, agreed, written, monitored and reviewed at regular intervals. Pupil behaviours that require support and may impact on themselves or others are identified in the risk assessment. Where the need for a physical intervention is recognised, then the appropriate Team Teach approach is identified.

Risk assessments are formulated on a multi-disciplinary basis, and include parents. Each pupil has an individual risk assessment, which is updated regularly (or where a new risk emerges) at class meetings and shared with parents, encouraging consistent management at home and at school. These RAs form the main means of co-ordinating a unified approach to encouraging positive and changing negative behaviour. Each RA identifies, where appropriate: behaviours, sensory and medical issues that present risk and ways of responding to them. The plans are kept in relevant files and are easily accessible for reference throughout the day. Where appropriate, realistic behavioural objectives, involving staff and parents, are set for pupils as targets through the Woodcroft Approach to Goal Setting.

Documentation

The *Behaviour management policy* is supported by the use of all relevant means of record keeping. Accidents, injuries, incidents and physical interventions are recorded in the relevant book or through the Integris data management system. Notification of accidents/incidents is made to parents on the day they occur. Parents will be telephoned if an injury has occurred. The school's record system includes:

- Fact-finding, observation and data collection sheets, computer software
 - RAS
 - Accident and injury books and Incident data base system (Integris, Evolve and CPoms)
- (See the *Physical intervention policy* and *Accident, injury and incident policy* for further information)

Staff training and support

This policy is available electronically to all staff. Staff will be able to access training in positive handling and review and refresher courses are provided as appropriate through related in-service sessions. External support, on a consultative basis, will be engaged when necessary. Weekly class, pupil behaviour profile and risk assessment, and focus team meetings are utilised to address current issues.

Staff are expected to take the opportunity to debrief or request time and space following a significant incident. Line managers and identified staff are available to give staff support. A significant incident is defined as: where a pupil is hurt or could have been seriously hurt; a staff member has suffered extreme verbal and/or physical abuse; incidents which have continued for a long period of time; and incidents which have occurred off-site.

Monitoring and reviews

Incidents are monitored on a daily bases by the wellbeing team and analized on a weekly basis by the monitoring group. This group includes the lead wellbeing mentor and looks for patterns and considers necessary interventions, such as personalised programmes and how best to support the pupil to navigate their day more successfully.

This policy will be monitored annually taking into account environmental and social factors and the school's curriculum.

Appendix A – rewards

It is important that staff keep in mind that the use of rewards to shape or modify behaviour can result in individuals on the AS becoming more anxious. It is likely that pupils with AS are not able to regulate arousal or inhibit negative behaviour when the control is external to them.

Sensitivity needs to be practiced in the awarding of rewards, as this can cause pupils who are not receiving a reward to become distressed and perceive injustice. Overt reward systems should not be used. Instead staff should provide a nurturing environment where pupils understand that 'good things' happen when they do the right thing.

Recognition of success by adults

- Good work shown to other teacher / head teacher
- Praise for pupil's conduct/work in group situation
- Pupil's work put on display
- A note/telephone call to parents

Approval of peers

- The class/group are allowed to share a favourite activity
- Class privilege, e.g. cup of tea

Independence

- Time given to work on own preferred activity
- Choice of who to sit with
- Choice of break time activity

Activity rewards

- Helping staff during or after lessons
- Giving out or collecting class materials
- Listening to music or an electronic story
- Time with a special toy or game

- Colouring activity
- Time using computer/iPad
- Given responsibility for certain things

Home based rewards

- Extra time to read or look at books
- Favourite food for tea
- Having a friend to the house
- Allowed to watch special television programme
- Allowed weekend treat

Appendix B – follow ups and consequences

These must be used as appropriate to form part of a behaviour plan to help pupils come to realise that behaviour has outcomes.

- Asking (supporting) the pupil to ‘take a break’
- Separating the pupil from their surroundings, e.g. a ‘cool-off’ or ‘calm down’ time
- Moving a pupil from a difficult situation to work in another classroom
- Tactically ignoring negative behaviour
- Indicating to pupils that behaviour choices have outcomes
- Informing parents through the pupil’s home/school book or telephone
- Change of class where appropriate, including temporarily, if participating in a class off-site activity which is being used as part of a reward system
- Head teacher decides pupil remains at home as ‘emotional break’

Appendix C – physical intervention

The aims of this Appendix C are to:

- Safeguard the pupils and staff at Woodcroft; and
- Meet the statutory reporting requirements.

Physical intervention must only take place in order to prevent a pupil from harming himself; harming others (including emotional); causing serious disorder or from damaging property.

This *Physical intervention policy* requires that any physical intervention should be reasonable, necessary and proportionate. It should involve the minimum of reasonable force; always seek to avoid injury; and not be attempted if the intervener is putting themselves at risk.

The first consideration all staff should follow prior to any physical intervention is that of avoidance and then de-escalation of confrontational situations.

As a result of a physical intervention it may be appropriate for the head teacher or managing director to contact the LADO where a pupil is alleging they have been hurt by the member of staff supporting them.

Documentation

When a physical intervention occurs it is recorded by the member of staff who carried out the physical intervention on the school’s Integris data base system. This documents the intervention in full.

The parents are informed of the physical intervention that day. The head teacher or designated deputy is made aware of the occurrence on a daily basis by the staff member responsible for collating intervention data. Data is updated weekly.

The completed Integris incident reports provide all the necessary information in the case of a complaint from a parent alleging abuse or injury as the result of a physical intervention.

All physical interventions are recorded whether or not observable injury occurs.

In the event of a serious and significant incident the head teacher may deem it appropriate that individual accounts are composed by those staff involved in the occurrence. These will be dated and signed.

Physical intervention techniques

The school has invested in the training of three Team Teach staff tutors. As part of our inset schedule, de-escalation, physical intervention techniques and other related issues are shared with the staff through initial training and regular refreshers in order to maintain Team Teach accreditation. Records of this training are held in school and forwarded as part of the registration requirements to Team Teach.

Appendix D – removal from school

Reasons for removal from school

Some forms of extreme disruptive behaviour may require preventative measures, such as physical intervention or temporary or permanent removal from class or school. Such extreme behaviours include: causing serious risks to the welfare of pupils themselves or others; serious damage to property; or severe disruption of learning. The use of physical intervention is discussed in Appendix C above.

In extreme circumstances the school will consider following its *Pupil exclusion policy* which complies fully with current legislation on exclusions and the Equality Act. A copy is available from the head teacher on request.