WOODSIDE SCHOOL

Pupil behaviour policy for all Woodside School

Independent School Standards: paras 7, 9, 11, 16 and 34.

**National guidance: '[Behaviour in Schools' (February, 2024)](#)
and '[Searching, screening and confiscation' (July, 2022).](#)**

Policy content includes:

- ■ how our therapeutic approach encourages positive behaviour
- ■ rewards, consequences (sanctions), suspensions and

exclusions. This policy must be considered alongside and in

addition to:

- ■ anti-bullying strategy, online safety, physical intervention and safeguarding policies, and knives-related incidents procedure.

Last external review	September 2024

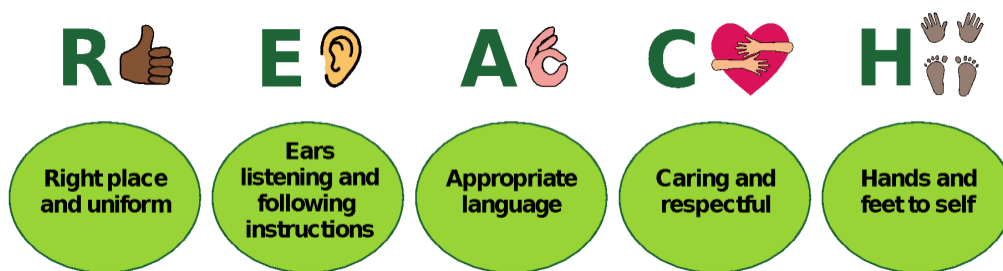|	
Next external review	September 2025
Latest update	September 2024

OUR PRINCIPLES

- We work with pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health needs, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and experiences of toxic stress.

- We understand the power of relationships and that through experiences of positive and emotionally-aware relationships we can buffer the impact of childhood adversity. It is therefore imperative that our behaviour policy is flexible, effective and centred on building relationships and connecting with pupils, in line with our therapeutic approach.

- ACEs include abuse, neglect, having a family member in prison and exposure to domestic violence. Our pupils also have histories of rejection and exclusion, including from previous schools or other educational settings.

- We therefore use a combination of strategies to support, encourage and reward behaviour that develops relationships and ensures that all pupils feel successful. Most importantly, we strive to consistently acknowledge good behaviours, to praise pupils' achievements, to treat every lesson and every day as a fresh start and to always be as positive as humanly possible with our pupils, who are, regrettably, very familiar with being 'told off'.

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

- A **nurturing approach** that involves caring, consistent, empathic, non- retaliatory and boundaried relationships between staff and pupils

- Recognising that pupils have unmet needs, likely from early years, which may need to be met before they can progress. This may mean providing **support which is appropriate to their emotional/social age rather than their calendar age**

- Having **clearly-communicated expectations of behaviour**

- Developing pupils' abilities to **understand** and **communicate their emotions**

- **A positive and predictable approach** with a focus on **praising** and **rewarding good behaviour**, recognising and developing strengths and abilities, helping pupils to develop an improved perception of themselves and **removing fear and doubt**

- Our work is underpinned with **unconditional positive regard** –

ensuring that **pupils always feel wanted** and supported **despite their behaviour** – and having firm expectations of behaviour without shaming or further damaging self-esteem
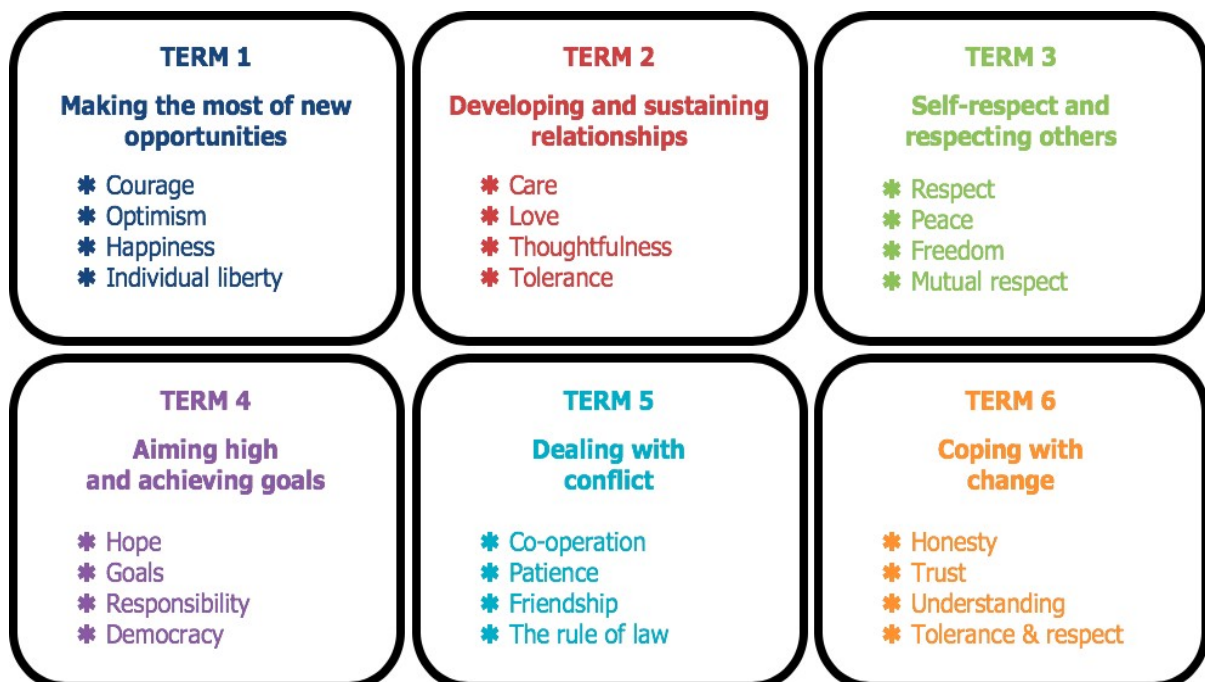
■ Acting as appropriate **role-models** for our pupils. Being aware of our **verbal and body language** as well as our emotional reactions to the pupils and how we respond to them. Being conscientious about our personal wellbeing and seeking support when needed

■ **Providing good attachments** for our pupils while being sensitive to and supportive of the relationships between parents/carers and their children

■ Providing a **specialist therapeutic programme** tailored to individual pupils

■ Providing opportunities for children to **demonstrate maturity** and **responsibility** as they progress through the schools

Key elements of our approach to managing behaviour include:

■ Our **REACH expectations**. These are visible all around the schools and are constantly referred to on a daily basis in order to actively encourage good and positive behaviours:

R	E	A	C	H
Right place and uniform	Ears listening and following instructions	Appropriate language	Caring and respectful	Hands and feet to self

■ Our **values-centred curriculum** permeates the curriculum and underpins
conversations about pupils' behaviour for learning:

TERM 1 **Making the most of new opportunities**	**TERM 2** **Developing and sustaining relationships**	**TERM 3** **Self-respect and respecting others**
❋ Courage ❋ Optimism ❋ Happiness ❋ Individual liberty	❋ Care ❋ Love ❋ Thoughtfulness ❋ Tolerance	❋ Respect ❋ Peace ❋ Freedom ❋ Mutual respect
TERM 4 **Aiming high and achieving goals**	**TERM 5** **Dealing with conflict**	**TERM 6** **Coping with change**
❋ Hope ❋ Goals ❋ Responsibility ❋ Democracy	❋ Co-operation ❋ Patience ❋ Friendship ❋ The rule of law	❋ Honesty ❋ Trust ❋ Understanding ❋ Tolerance & respect

OUR PUPILS' NEEDS

It is essential that we understand what is **behind** our pupils' behaviour in order to be able to support them. Our pupils' behavioural needs are caused by a range of factors, including the impact of ACEs, toxic stress and attachment difficulties.

Typical behaviours include:

- **Insecure attachment behaviours** – clinginess, defiant independence, mistrust of adults, ambivalence (clinginess combined with rejecting behaviours)

- Lack of awareness or tolerance of external boundaries and lack of development of internal boundaries – **risk-taking behaviours**, **impulsivity**, **inability to manage emotions**, **inability to think ahead** and predict consequences, **oppositional defiance**

- **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.

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 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 pupils can and do make significant and lasting progress both emotionally and academically.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the key to positive development. Developing positive attachments with staff members (all pupils have a trusted adult) can help to make up for some of the development that has been missed.

Our staff support relationship-building with pupils by:

- ■ Being **consistent**, **patient** and **dependable**

- ■ **Tuning into their needs** – noticing when they are hungry, upset, tired or angry and demonstrating care through our responses

- ■ **Empathising** with and **validating their feelings**

- ■ **Containing their distress/rage** – trying to understand the reasons for challenging behaviour and figure out solutions for the child, not retaliating through our reactions, **managing our own behavioural responses to challenging behaviour**

- ■ **Demonstrating unconditional regard for the pupil** – disapproving of behaviours, never the child as a person (e.g. **"that language is rude", as opposed to "you are rude"**).

Knowledge of pupils' histories is vital for building strong relationships with them because only once we understand their histories are we able to view their behaviours within the correct context.

When a new pupil joins the school, all staff will read their documentation and will also be briefed by the relevant leader and lead therapist.

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR THROUGH OUR THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

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

- ■ We speak **quietly** and use our **body language** to encourage pupils to regulate their emotions. We pick up on the positives, e.g. a time when they have successfully changed a response, or we remind them of their strengths or personalised targets

- ■ We **offer alternative strategies** such as reflection time and/or relocation

- ■ We **repeat** that we are there to **support them** and communicate

care

■ We **never shout** and ensure our **body language is positive** and that the
pupils have personal space

- We use **diversion/distraction**, e.g. change the activity or topic of conversation to remove pressure

- We use a **change of face** – swap places with a colleague if we feel the child might be better helped by someone else in this moment

- We remind them of the **schools' expectations** and that their actions have **consequences.**

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

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

Possible rewards include:

- praise, including regular, positive contact between school and home
- stickers, good news notes and sticker charts
- weekly special mentions / certificates / postcards
- weekly and termly achievement certificates and letters
- personalised rewards including trips and enrichment
- being given responsibilities.

As specialist schools, and with pupils as unique as ours, a 'one size fits all' approach to consequences is inappropriate.

Possible consequences include:

- social stories to support understanding, where needed to be used as part of a pupil's consistent routine to support ongoing reflective conversations

- reparation (such as fixing an item that a pupil may have damaged)

- reflection time, that may take place during a break time or after school if appropriate (if a pupil is kept after school, families are always informed of this in advance), to reflect on the feelings behind the behaviour. This always happens alongside a trusted adult, and never alone.

- withdrawal of specific activities, where it is deemed unsafe for the pupil to take part

- time arranged to complete work that may have been missed; this may take place during a break time or after school or, if appropriate.

ENDLESSLY POSITIVE

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

- All staff are regularly trained in our 'endlessly positive' therapeutic approach
throughout the academic year.

'WE WORK AS ONE': WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM

- It is essential that pupils see the adults around them working together as a team. We continually model positive social communication, respect and care for each other and challenge gender stereotypes.

- It is important that we all work together and share information, as appropriate, to ensure that we are providing effective joined-up care for our pupils. This is why daily briefings before and after the school day are crucial.

SUSPENSIONS, PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS AND EMERGENCY REVIEWS

- In extreme cases only, the CEO may authorise the suspension of a pupil from attending school for a period usually of no more than one or two days (previously known as a 'fixed-term exclusion'). A suspension of more than two days is very rare.

- When the decision is taken to suspend a pupil, an explanatory letter is always sent to the family and local authority on the same day.

- During a suspension, we provide homework of a suitable quantity and quality.

- During a suspension, contact will be made with a pupil by a member of the therapy team (typically the lead therapists) to provide emotional support during their absence from school. Contact is in the form of a phone call or virtual therapy session.

- Following on from the suspension, **a reintegration meeting** (before or at the beginning of the pupil's return to school) **is held** to discuss strategies and support for the pupil to meet the expected standards of behaviour takes place with a senior leader.

■ Very occasionally, families may be asked to collect their child from school if it is obvious that every strategy has failed (to calm and/or engage and/or keep safe the pupil). This will always count, and be marked as, a suspension.

- In very exceptional circumstances the CEO may make the difficult decision to permanently exclude a pupil. An exceptional circumstance may include, as non-exhaustive examples, extreme violence and/or being in possession/bringing forbidden items into school such as a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs.

- When we have exhausted our resources / strategies and have no choice but to conclude that we can no longer meet a pupil's needs, we will call for an emergency annual review with the placing authority and pupil's family to
re-evaluate the suitability of the placement and recommend that another provision be sought. This is **not** the same as a suspension or a permanent exclusion. In this scenario, we will continue to provide education in the form of online learning, work packs and a remote therapy offer. While the pupil remains on our roll, a key trusted adult (most likely the lead therapist) will make contact with the pupil once a week in order to check in and ensure the pupil is well and safe. This will be logged on the pupil's ScholarPack profile.

RECORDING AND COMMUNICATING BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT EVENTS

- All pupils have an Individual Risk Assessment (IRA) which records and highlights known behaviour and triggers which could pose as a potential risk to the pupil and others. For further information please see our risk assessment policy.

- Serious incidents of misbehaviour, including those resulting in a sanction such as suspension or permanent exclusion, are logged on our online data management system.

- Team Teach interventions are logged on handwritten forms and are always signed off by leaders on the same day as part of a reflective debrief.

- Accidents, injuries and use of first aid are reported using the schools' online
system, Medical Tracker.

- All events logged are analysed by leaders on a weekly basis and changes are made proactively and rapidly to avoid repetition.

UNIFORM

- Pupils are required to wear full school uniform at all times, which consists of black shoes / trainers, black trousers / dress and an Woodside Schools top (either polo shirt or jumper). A green checked summer dress can also be worn.

- At primary, PE t-shirts, shorts and plimsolls are provided for pupils along with a reading book bag.

■ Non-uniform clothing should not be worn over school uniform and the wearing of hats/caps and hoods is not permitted.

■ Pupils are not permitted to wear any jewellery, aside from a single stud in each ear. Necklaces that hold significant meaning may be worn, however the need to be concealed under tops.

MOBILE PHONES

■ In line with the 'Mobile phones in school' guidance, all school sites, including
external areas, are phone-free environments.

■ Pupils must hand in any electronic device or mobile phone on arrival to their
site's administrator.

■ All devices are kept safely secured until the end of the school day.

RECORDING PUPILS

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

SEARCHING, SCREENING AND CONFISCATION

■ To ensure the safety of our pupils, there are procedures in place that allow staff to search pupils using a metal detector wand; this is to make sure that pupils are not bringing inappropriate materials or dangerous weapons into school. These could include: weapons including knives; alcohol; illegal drugs or stolen items.

■ Staff may also search a pupil if they reasonably suspect any article has been, or is likely to be used to commit an offence; to cause personal injury to, or damage to, property of any person (including the pupil), or an illegal and/or dangerous article such as weapons, tobacco, drugs, fireworks, pornography.

■ Before any search takes place, staff conducting the search will explain to the pupil why they are being searched, how and where the search is going to take place and give them the opportunity to ask any questions.

■ There will normally be two members of staff present during the search, one who will wand the pupil. We will always try to accommodate a pupil's request of a same-sex member of staff. In exceptional circumstances, if there is a risk of serious harm to a person if the search is not carried out straight away, a pupil may be searched by a person of the opposite sex and without another member of staff present.

■ Families are always informed of any search for a prohibited item above and the outcome of the search as soon as is practicable.

■ An authorised staff member carrying out a search can confiscate any item that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting poses a risk to staff or pupils, or is prohibited. Prohibited or illegal items such as controlled drugs or stolen items must be delivered to the police as soon as possible unless there is a good reason not to do so.

ALLEGATIONS FROM PUPILS AGAINST OTHER PUPILS

■ In most instances, negative conduct of pupils towards each other will be covered by this behaviour policy (and our anti-bullying policy), however, some allegations may be of a more serious nature and raise safeguarding concerns.

■ Allegations made against another pupil may include physical abuse (e.g. violence, particularly pre-planned; forcing the use of drugs or alcohol), emotional abuse (e.g. bullying, blackmail, extortion, threats, intimidation), sexual abuse (e.g. indecent exposure, touching, sexual violence and sexual harassment, sexting, forcing the watching of pornography or upskirting, which is a criminal offence and typically involves someone taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm and/or sexual exploitation (e.g. photographing or videoing indecent acts).

■ Sexting is sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the internet. If any devices need to be seized and passed onto the police, then the device(s) will be confiscated, and our safer schools police officer will be contacted. The device will be turned off and placed in the safe until the police are able to come and retrieve it.

■ Allegations must always be referred using our online safeguarding system and will be dealt with as a safeguarding concern by the DSL. Further guidance on this area can be found under 'child-on-child abuse' in our safeguarding policy.