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Positive Behaviour Policy

Date: January 2022 Updated: January 2023

Review Date: January 2025

  
  
Article 3 – Adults must do what is in my best interest

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Article 4 – The Government should make sure that my rights are   
respected

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Article 28 – I have a right to a good quality education. I should be   
encouraged to go to school to the highest level I can.



**Rationale**

For children with additional needs, it is often difficult to communicate anxiety and distress verbally. Understanding a child’s behaviour can be key to understanding their *social communication*. In particular, children with autism spectrum conditions (ASC) experience a broad range of communication difficulties involving both expressive (communicating with others) and receptive (understanding what others are communicating) difficulties. The following are some of the ways communication difficulties might be expressed:

* inability to communicate wants and needs (such as pain, hunger, thirst, discomfort and frustration) to others can lead to the development of behaviours as an alternative means to communication or as a way of achieving a desired outcome
* difficulties in understanding the verbal information provided by others can lead to frustration, anxiety and confusion (which can be further exacerbated by people’s reactions to the perceived lack of compliance to a request or instruction)
* problems interpreting non-verbal information, such as facial expressions and body language, can contribute to misunderstandings which may cause a range of behavioural responses
* literal interpretation of language and concrete thinking can create confusion and distress when interpreting the language of others and may lead to behaviours that appear inappropriate

Children with additional needs, in particular ASCs also experience difficulties with *social interaction*. They may choose to be isolated or may want to be included but lack the social skills to know how to be involved causing upset and frustration. These difficulties may present in the following ways:

* social situations can be very unpredictable and stressful for people with ASCs and an individual may engage in behaviours to avoid or limit social contact
* not understanding the importance of social interaction in meeting needs and wants can lead to behavioural difficulties as compensation
* a lack of understanding of ‘social rules’ can cause confusion and misunderstanding in social situations, and may lead to behaviours that appear inappropriate to others and possibly antisocial

Children with ASCs can *lack imagination and be inflexible*. This can lead to a high level of stress when faced with change or new situations e.g. a change of class; new teacher; change of menu etc. These difficulties may be explained in the following ways:

* changes to routine, unpredictable events and unstructured time can cause extreme anxiety and distress and may lead to behavioural difficulties as an attempt to cope
* sequencing problems can make it very difficult to predict what is coming next, which can cause a great deal of stress and anxiety.
* the inability to imagine events occurring in the future and difficulties understanding abstract concepts, such as the passage of time, can cause difficulties with waiting and may lead to behavioural issues due to this lack of understanding
* difficulties understanding the perspective of others can lead to behaviours that may appear inappropriate, or sometimes even selfish or harmful.
* interrupting activities connected to a person's special interest can cause distress, leading to behavioural issues
* a strong focus on areas of special interest can limit involvement in other activities and affect the learning of new skills, which may in turn cause more problems socially.

Children with ASCs often experience *difficulties with information received via their senses* e.g. they may be highly sensitive to noise or smells; they may have low or high tolerance to touch; they may not be able to filter noises and, therefore be unable to listen to the teacher when there is a noise e.g. a car outside. A flickering light may cause pain. These difficulties can impact significantly on how the individual experiences his or her world for example:

* over-stimulation of one or more of the sensory systems can cause extreme agitation, distress, anxiety, and confusion and may lead to behavioural outbursts as an attempt to deal with this discomfort
* under-stimulation of one or more of the sensory systems can lead to behaviours which attempt to reinstate balance. Self-stimulatory, self-harm or repetitive behaviours (such as spinning, jumping, or flicking of objects) may be an attempt to gain input for a particular sensory system
* hypo-sensitivity (a lack of sensitivity) of the tactile system may result in an increased tolerance for heat and pain – meaning children do not feel either very easily. Self-harming behaviour to test out pain thresholds is not unusual, e.g. poking, nipping skin
* misinterpretation of perceptual information can lead to behavioural responses that may seem inappropriate to others but are the individual's way of coping with a confusing and often frightening world, e.g. screaming when the school bell rings.

***How do we enable our learners to manage their behaviour in a positive manner?***

**At a whole school level:**

* Senior management is responsible for:
  + ensuring that the health and safety of learners, staff and visitors is not at risk due to challenging behaviour.
  + ensuring that adequate appropriate and ongoing training is provided for staff in order to promote positive behaviour and relationships.
  + ensuring that those staff likely to encounter challenging behaviour, ascertained through risk assessment, have appropriate training in ‘CALM’ and are supported on a daily basis to practice de-escalation techniques.
  + putting guidance in place with procedures for predicting, assessing, recording, and monitoring of behaviours that cause concern.
  + putting procedures in place for involving and collaborating with parents/carers and other professionals as appropriate with referral to behaviours that may cause concern.
  + ensuring that IEPS, Passports, Sensory profiles, Inhibitors to Learning, Risk Assessments are in place.
* Staff have a sound understanding of autism and the behavioural issues which may arise, particularly when management of the learner and his/her environment is inappropriate. They also have a sound knowledge of strategies which can be used to de-escalate and support behaviour causing concern.
* Teamwork is valued and supported through a range of informal and formal opportunities for communication and planning. We work closely with parents/carers on a daily basis where appropriate. We also work collaboratively with other professionals as required by individual needs.
* Where appropriate sensory profiles are completed for individuals to try and eradicate potential student discomfort.
* We write IEP targets to develop appropriate behaviour by building on the learners strengths and developing their confidence in their own abilities.
* Learners are encouraged to develop interpersonal skills by an ethos of positive social relationships between learners, staff, and each other.

***How do we enable our learners to manage their behaviour in a positive manner?***

**At an individual level:**

* Staff are trained to observe and understand what a child’s behaviour is trying to tell us.
* Staff are aware of individual passports and other documents.
* Passports, sensory passports and inhibitors are updated regularly to ensure an accurate profile of the individuals.
* Staff understand the importance of targeting one specific behaviour at a time.
* We work collaboratively with most parents/carers in order to promote a consistent response.
* Interventions are conducted individually to suit the needs of the student.
* We use a range of visual strategies to enable our learners to cope with change and transitions e.g. a scrapbook of photos linking home and school to support the child finding it difficult to come into school; an interactive visual timetable for activities; a pictorial social story for the child finding an activity difficult e.g. attending the swimming pool. For more able pupils we use verbal social stories for a range of social situations. This is particularly valuable when linking home and school.
* We promote social skills at every opportunity on a planned and informal level e.g. snack time; conversation opportunities; table-top games etc; activities to help empathy and the understanding of feelings.
* We encourage peer interaction through a range of activities.
* At St Andrew’s School we promote an autistic friendly environment. We have created a well-structured and supportive environment which allows children to feel secure and relaxed. We structure our learning context to provide visual cues and prompts; workstations to communicate start and finish to tasks (TEACCH) and visual timetables to provide predictability for those pupils who require this level of support.
* We aim to support our children in managing their own behaviour by creating situations where they learn about their own feelings and the feelings of others. We help them to recognise when they are becoming stressed or frustrated and teach them simple strategies for managing the resulting stress.

We employ a range of strategies appropriate to the child and situation for increasing desirable behaviour e.g. positive reinforcements; first / then etc.

* We aim to establish consistency of management across all settings. Close links with home are valued in order to achieve a consistent approach. We encourage our learners to generalise their skills to new situations and provide a range of experiences in and out of school.

***How will we know that this policy is effective?***

* Pupils are relaxed and there are few incidents of stressed behaviour
* Staff are knowledgeable and confident in addressing behaviour which could be challenging
* Parents/Carers are confident that school staff have a shared understanding of how best to manage their children’s behaviour.
* A consistency of approach is visible across all settings.

**Monitoring**

The impact of this policy will be monitored through:

* monitoring of IEPs
* observation
* Marvellous Me
* annual review
* multi-agency activity
* analysis of behavior incidents

**Restraint**

Most staff at St Andrew’s School are CALM trained-(some staff are not able to carry out holds due to physical restrictions). This training focuses on de-escalation skills. Staff will always work very hard to de-escalate situations before they reach a need for restraint which is an absolute last resort.

**Behaviour as communication: understanding the functions of behaviour**

Many of the difficulties associated with autism spectrum conditions may lead to behavioural issues. It is important to have a clear understanding of how an individual is affected by these difficulties when thinking about a particular behaviour. However, it is also important to remember that each individual and each situation is unique. We need to think about the function that a particular behaviour has for the person *as an individual*.

We all learn from experiences that we have had, and we use this information to determine how to behave in the future. If we find that behaving in a particular way brings about a good outcome (by either reducing or stopping an undesirable experience or increasing a desirable one) then we are more likely to behave that way again in the future. In this way, it can help if we think of all behaviour as a form of communication and ask ourselves, 'What is this person trying to tell me through their behaviour?'

Sometimes we find that a behaviour can have more than one function, or that what initially was an attempt to communicate a specific want or need has now also become an attempt to gain attention, or to bring about a particular outcome as a result of our reactions and what the individual has learnt from these. It is very important to have a clear understanding of the different factors which may be involved in triggering and maintaining a behaviour.

Gathering together behavioural 'clues' and developing a hypothesis for why a particular behaviour is occurring is called a 'functional analysis'. To complete a functional analysis we need to gather information about what happens before, during and after a behavioural incident. From this 'behavioural record', we are then able to establish whether there are any patterns and to reach a hypothesis (or theory) about why the behaviour is occurring.

**Recording behaviour**

Behavioural records are often referred to as ABC charts:

* **A** stands for **antecedents** - that is, what occurs immediately before the behavioural incident and can include any triggers, signs of distress or environmental information
* **B** refers to the **behaviour** itself and is a description of what actually happened or what the behaviour looked like
* **C** refers to the **consequences** of the behaviour, or what happened immediately afterwards, and can include information regarding other people's responses to the behaviour and the eventual outcome for the individual.

**Preventative or positive strategies**

The main focus of any behavioural intervention should always be on the development of new skills to assist the individual in coping with their environment and communicating their needs. To achieve long-lasting behavioural change, we want to provide the individual with other ways of achieving the outcome that the behaviour has previously provided.

**Improving communication**

There is no doubt that difficulties with communication (both expressive and receptive) can be a major factor in many behavioural difficulties for people with an ASC. Improving an individual's communication (and the way we communicate with them) can be one of the key components of many behavioural interventions.

There are a number of strategies that can be implemented on a day-to-day basis to improve an individual's communication with, and understanding of, others. The use of particular strategies will vary according to the individual; however, some examples are listed below:

* provide as wide a range of communicative and social opportunities appropriate to the individual as possible
* select language that is appropriate for the individual's level of understanding
* use visual cues such as objects, pictures, PECS, symbols or written instructions dependent on the individual's level of understanding (the use of these is discussed in further detail below)
* avoid use of sarcasm, metaphors and turns of phrase, e.g. 'I laughed my head off' with certain pupils. It is acknowledged that some pupils do like this sense of humour.
* use concrete terms, particularly with reference to abstract concepts such as time, and be specific
* be positive when providing instructions: don't tell the individual what they shouldn't be doing but instead tell them what they **should** be doing
* provide extra thinking time for information to be processed and use repetition if necessary. Some people with autism may process auditory information differently or more slowly than other people. It may be necessary to allow extra time for a person with autism to respond to a request or question.

Some individuals with an ASC benefit from the use of augmentative and alternative communication approaches. Some examples of these are listed below:

* gestures and pointing
* sign language (such as Makaton)
* Communicate in Print
* board maker
* communication aids
* iPad
* PECS
* PODD books
* social stories

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed and updated every 3 years by St Andrew’s School Senior Leadership Team.

Written: January 2022 Updated: January 2023 (added UNCRC Rights) Review Date: January 2025