

Positive Relationships and Engagement Support Local Procedures Aurora Vincent House School

Please refer to Main Policy A4 Positive Relationships and Engagement Support Policy

1. Introduction

Vincent House School is a specialist education provision for students aged 5-19 (currently 11-16) who are autistic. They may also have social, emotional, and mental health needs. Many of our students can present with high levels of anxiety that impacts on their behaviour and potentially their own safety. Therefore to promote positive behaviour in our students, staff must have an understanding of their needs and diagnoses. This neuro-informed approach is the basis of our approaches to both rewards and sanctions and give due consideration to the problem of double empathy.

At Aurora Vincent House School we follow the PBS framework through the use of Thrive. As a new school we will also be introducing Elklan. Our staff are fully trained in Team Teach and have a Team Teach instructor onsite to advise staff.

2. Local expectations/routines/rules

At Vincent House School there are three main rules:

- We are kind (to ourselves and others)
- We are safe (and we keep others safe)
- We are ready (and engage with our learning opportunities)

The safety and wellbeing of students is our priority and most school rules are derived from this focus.

We value personal choice and flexibility as long as these do not impede on their own wellbeing, learning and safety or that of others.

In respect to uniform, students are asked to wear the school uniform if possible. Some students may wish to wear some items of uniform and not others.

We ask that when uniform is not worn, students comply with the following rules:

- No blue jeans
- No ripped clothes
- No logos that may cause offence to others (no swear words)
- No footwear that compromises safety e.g. open footwear. Trainers are allowed.

Appropriate kit is required for PE – especially the wearing of trainers. Jeans are not allowed. It is preferred that students change for PE but it is not a requirement.

We understand for some of our students, the wearing of jewellery and make-up or false eyelashes is a key part of their self-expression and self-confidence. Therefore whilst we do not encourage it, it is

not against the rules. If senior leaders deem it excessive then this will be discussed with the student and their parents/carers.

False nails are strongly discouraged for safety reasons and the impact on the curriculum. No student should miss opportunities to learn because they cannot engage in an activity due to wearing false nails.

All students remain on site throughout the day, unless there has been a special request by parents and the Headteacher has agreed it.

2a. Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are switched off on entry to school premises and are handed over to the school for the duration of the school day. We acknowledge that for many students this can be a difficult process and for some students supports them with their regulation. The no-phone policy is in place to safeguard all students. It prevents potential inappropriate or illegal use of phones which can include taking media images of other students or staff without permission or showing inappropriate content on their phones to others. No student will be allowed to remain in school if they refuse to hand over their mobile phone.

Mobile phones may be authorised by staff for use as part of learning life skills or for specific external activities.

Smart watches (e.g. Apple Watch) worn by students must be placed into airplane mode, or they can be handed in. Wearable tech that that does not contravene our safeguarding regulations may be worn with permission from the Headteacher. Laptops and tablets (and similar I.T. devices), must be handed in to staff on entry to the school. This is to ensure the security of such devices and to support our safeguarding culture within the school.

3. Reward system

Our reward system focuses upon promoting intrinsic motivation and has a flexible approach to a diverse cohort where students may vastly differ in their understanding of rewards as well as their response to different reward systems.

Students rewards largely come via praise either verbally or written and may be given directly to the student or their parents/carers. Rewards are focused on immediate feedback and may include stickers. The Headteacher will give out 'Reward ducks' to students related to seeing particularly good work, great effort, kindness or over-coming a particular challenge. We do not encourage the comparison of rewards between students.

4. Consequences

Vincent House School do not use punitive measures and instead will consider natural consequences. As part of our Thrive® approach, we support students to understand their behaviour and this may need a restorative justice process. This process may require students to participate in this at any point of the school day including breaktime. We do not use detentions as a punishment, but students may be asked to complete work.

Parents/carers may be informed of low-level behaviours for their awareness but this is more likely if they are persistent.

Where the behaviour is disruptive to others, students may be asked to work in a different location. This is a short-term strategy for an infrequent occurrence.

If students do not engage with staff to change their behaviour this will be referred to the senior leadership team who will decide the next step. Actions may include a meeting with parents/carers.

If a student's behaviour compromises safeguarding and the safety of persons within the school community these consequences may be significant. Keeping all students safe is always our priority and when that is at risk, a suspension or exclusion may be given.

Behaviour outside of school that impacts on other students will also be addressed in school as much as possible.

Ensuring a welcoming and a safe environment for all students is integral to our approach. Behaviour that damages the environment will be sanctioned with reparations required for any damage.

Where behaviour is a concern, an individual risk assessment will be updated and then reviewed by the senior leadership team. Behaviour incidents are recorded on Engage.

Permission from the Headteacher must be given to search a student at Vincent House School – unless for emergency reasons as identified in Aurora policy. Local policy includes the permissible searching for mobile phones and for vapes as well as the list of prohibited items in 4.4.1 of Appendix 4.1 Searching, Screening and confiscation in relation to the Positive relationship and engagement policy.

5. Relationships and Engagement Support

All school staff are pastoral first – it is a priority. We are neuro-informed and neuro-affirmative. It ensures that our overall approach is empathetic, student centred and based on building trusting relationships. Vincent House School adopts evidence-based practices that help neurodivergent students navigate the school day. This includes opportunities to self-regulate and a personalised sensory diet. There are clear expectations and routines in place and when changes are unavoidable, staff prepare students and support them with the change. Staff have an additional session after tutor time to provide an intervention for students if they believe the student may be becoming dysregulated. Working collaboratively with parents on all aspects of behaviour reinforces the approaches we have in school. Students have a Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBSP) completed by the tutor and pastoral teams that promotes positive behaviour and helps prevent dysregulated behaviour. All staff learn the triggers for all students across the school through regular training and updates. This is supported by integrated therapy and the universal therapeutic offer.

Staff have a set period that is protected from 15:20-16:00 for debriefs every day. There is a student focused meeting every week to discuss concerns and approaches for both individuals or groups of students which includes the entire Senior Leadership Team, DSL & Family liaison, and Clinical Psychologist. There are Mental Health First Aiders along with the Clinical Psychologist to support staff wellbeing.

Thrive ® and Team Teach

We promote positive behaviour through establishing strong staff-student relationships. Both approaches emphasise understanding behaviour as communication and the importance of de-escalation in a crisis. The Thrive approach® is embedded across the curriculum and permeates staff relationships and actions with students.

Clinical support

Some students receive specific interventions from our therapists and clinicians advise on personalised strategies to the behaviour of individual students. The whole clinical team provide training for all staff and work closely with them to ensure their practice is trauma informed and have a sound understanding of neurodivergence. Our neuro-affirmative approach also supports positive behaviour. Additional support is given to both staff and students to understand the mental health difficulties our students may experience and dynamically assess effective strategies to support.

Language

Staff model the expected language and appropriate ways to communicate to each other in school. Staff refer to the 3 over-arching school rules throughout interactions with students and praise them referring to their success within these. We avoid the unhelpful verbal labelling of students

6. Behaviour Curriculum/Lifelong Learning

Overall curriculum approach

The entire school curriculum supports students to develop positive behaviour. The curriculum and its delivery is based on the school's neuro-divergent and neuro-informed ethos. We strive to understand our students' needs and know them as individuals: we value staff-student relationships. Staff prioritise safeguarding, engagement and emotional regulation. These values and overall approach aid positive behaviour by providing appropriate challenge and promoting wellbeing, trust, and self-esteem. Vincent House School works on a transdisciplinary model and therefore curriculum strategy and delivery is designed with the input of the therapy team.

Enrichment curriculum

The Enrichment curriculum is given significant time and flexibility to:

- Enhance students' health and wellbeing.
- Have frequent opportunities for students to participate in activities that help students to regulate.
- Give students additional motivation to attend school and engage with staff.
- Allow staff to work with students outside of the classroom, often within practical activities, that promote good student-staff relationships.
- Engage with members of the community and enhance their sense of belonging.

This reduces the likelihood of negative behaviours and mitigates the impact of any incidents.

PSHCE, RSHE and Preparation for Adulthood

Whilst SMSC is woven throughout the curriculum, there is specific teaching in the curriculum within PSHCE and RSHE that focus on emotional literacy, relationships, social skills and communication. Particular attention is given to student behaviour online and text messaging and we proactively address the significant challenge to prevent bullying and harassment of students outside of the school day. Parental engagement in addressing this is vital and expected.

Tutor time and personalised learning in the mornings, along with weekly key stage assemblies provides opportunities for targeted responses to behaviour trends in school and specific and appropriate learning opportunities. They provide a chance to celebrate achievements also.

7. Quiet spaces

There are a number of spaces within Vincent House School that can serve as quiet spaces – both inside and outside within our garden. These spaces may not always be available though and each space may lend itself better to the needs of different students at different times.

Within each classroom, there is a bean bag as well as clearly separate seating and desk to the side of the class which can provide space and can be supported with headphones for additional quiet.

Within our therapeutic area we have rooms that allow supervised quiet time away from other students, as well as an intervention room and some students may choose to be in one of the staff offices where there is also comfortable seating.

8. Transition

Transition is managed carefully and is dependent upon individual circumstances and needs. Where possible, there will be transition activities to support students' entry to the school and they will be given an information pack introducing the student to the routines and rules of the school. The transition process may begin on a full or part time basis, dependent on the needs of the child. This is agreed in advance with the parent, child and local authority where relevant. Part time timetables are managed by the SENCO with reviews on a fortnightly basis. They are intended to last no-longer than 6 weeks, although individual circumstances may vary. Within the school, expectations and rules are the same across Key stage 3 and Key stage 4.

At KS4 students engage in a careers programme, which includes discussion and exploration of post-16 colleges and provision. Students in Year 10 are supported to begin making choices about post-16, with regular meetings with parents, the Deputy Head and students to discuss. Support from the clinical team to manage engaging with transition conversations is utilised where necessary. Vincent House supports students to visit and attend a variety of transition activities with post-16 colleges, including sessions with local, knowledgeable advisors independent of the school.

9. Communication

Communication with parents is based on parent/carer preference which may include, phone calls, emails, text messages, Teams meetings or face-to-face meetings. We promote ongoing and transparent information sharing between the school and the family. It is important that school shares all the positive behaviours they see in every student. Whilst electronic messaging can be easier, we recognise that speaking on the phone or face to face is more effective and therefore attempt to offer this whenever possible.

Frequent and regular school newsletters are sent to parents/carers with general information about the school and will include any reminders about expectations of behaviour and school rules.

If there has been an incident that requires a consequence for a student the parent /carer will be contacted that day by a member of staff.

At Vincent House School there is a high expectation of behaviour to support the wellbeing of all students. Therefore Senior leaders will be made aware of all concerns or incidents and may choose to lead on the required actions at all levels.

Level 1: Teacher will liaise with Class tutor who will escalate to Senior leaders if outside of known behaviour considering context and diagnosis.

Level 2: Class tutor will lead in conjunction with Deputy or Headteacher advising so that is seen in full context at Senior Leadership Pastoral meetings. Subject teacher may also address this issue.

Level 3: Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

Level 4: Headteacher (or senior leader in the absence of the Headteacher).

10. Additional training

Classroom practitioners

All staff have additional training in supporting neurodivergent students and those with mental health difficulties.

Clinical team

The clinical team is available to give training support to staff and families and are integral to the pastoral team. They are available in terms of therapy, assessments, and to support when a student may be in crisis.

First aiders

All first aiders have ligature training and an understanding of self-harm.

Pastoral Team

The pastoral team includes a range of senior leaders who work collaboratively to support positive behaviour and respond to any concerns. This team has a transdisciplinary approach.

Safeguarding team

This is led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and includes Deputies (DDSLs). They can support with any safeguarding concerns or training.

Senior Leadership Team & Mental Health First Aiders

These staff members are able to support staff who may be experiencing a range of difficulties which may result from experiences with the students or could affect their judgement when supporting students with their behaviour. Following the use of a restraint, staff will be debriefed but should seek further support if required.

Team Teach Trainer

Staff member qualified to instruct Team Teach Level 2. They should be informed if there has been any physical intervention and should advise on any safety plans. The trainer can be contacted by any member of staff to arrange further practice or advice.

Thrive® Approach

The Thrive approach is being introduced school and all staff have training. The school may choose to use Thrive® Practitioner to train staff and consult with SLT and Clinical team to ensure congruence in approach. This is dependent upon the development stage of the school.