

Addendum to the Behaviour for Learning Policy

Behaviour Support and Management of Students with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)

Agreed by Governors: January 2016

Next Review: January 2018

Committee: Inclusion

Background and Rationale

JCoSS as an inclusive school welcomes students with a range of conditions. There are autistic students in the provision with varying degrees of complexity and there are autistic students in the main school with varying degrees of complexity. This policy seeks to give guidance and set out strategies for working effectively with these students.

ASC is a spectrum condition, and in relation to the students in the PSRP this means that while all students share certain characteristics, it will affect each individual in different ways.

The PSRP is committed to ensuring that our students are fully prepared for the journey into adult life and there are a number of critical factors which need to be in place to ensure this is done well. One of these factors is the policy and practice in relation to understanding and managing the behaviour of our students, all of whom have a diagnosis of ASC. The philosophy is that in order for these students to flourish and achieve well they must be supported by a system which acknowledges and responds to their particular needs.

The Equality Act 2010 is clear that schools must make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled children are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. This includes the application of the behaviour policy, to ensure disciplinary procedures do not discriminate against students who may have a condition such as ASC that can impact their behaviour. It also means ensuring staff working with students with a diagnosis of ASC have appropriate training to adjust their practice. Policies in the PSRP fulfil both of these requirements.

This policy also reflects the six key elements of the Disability Discrimination Act:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination
- eliminate harassment related to a disability
- promote positive attitudes towards disability
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even when that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people

The intention underpinning our philosophy is to ensure a clear distinction between the behaviour of students who can behave but choose not to, and behaviour which is driven by the specific needs of the students' condition. Children with ASC can present behaviour that is socially inappropriate or difficult to manage. These behaviours often result from anxiety or frustration arising from specific environmental factors and lack of understanding of communication and social interaction experiences which affect children with ASC differently to other children. These factors may be current or from an earlier occasion which the child is still being affected by. Challenging behaviour can also arise from a lack of understanding of student needs. This manifests itself through poorly judged behaviour management strategies and unrealistic targets and expectations of what the student can do.

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For these reasons, all our approaches to behaviour support and management start with the need to understand the student, being pro-active in planning and organising students' school day experiences, and when behaviour problems do occur, looking first for the underlying reasons for the behaviour being presented.

All staff are fully aware that due to the nature of the condition, children with ASC are often unable to understand what 'socially appropriate' behaviour is or interpret other people's intentions accurately. Adults who do not know the child with ASC or about autism may misinterpret their behaviour. Staff understand and follow systems and procedures which reflect this, ensuring that every day has a consistently positive and supportive ethos. The school ensures that members of staff have a robust knowledge of autism and how to structure situations to promote learning as well as observational skills and the capacity to motivate and involve.

Positive Whole School Strategies which Supports Equal Opportunities and Inclusive Practice

Although every child with ASC is unique and will respond in different ways to different situations and approaches there are some general strategies and areas of good practice which will impact positively on all students. We are committed to the use of specific strategies known to reduce anxiety and promote feelings of well-being, to modify unwanted behaviours and promote more appropriate behaviours. Students have individual plans that are regularly reviewed and updated with parents, healthcare, and education professionals, and form part of the documentation for Annual Review.

These strategies are often helpful for all students but are particularly appropriate in responding to students with ASC. They include:

- Having a clear structure to the day or lesson, with a visual timetable displayed to show what is going to happen which is individualised to each student's needs and levels
- Minimising disruption to routine. Always talking through, or visually representing/or displaying known changes well in advance so that the child can be prepared
- Organising the classroom with clearly defined areas, and setting up a quiet, distraction-free corner for the child with ASC (and others) to use, as and when appropriate
- Remembering that the child with ASC may not understand facial expression and figurative language; explain clearly and concisely in black and white terms or represent visually
- Referring to the child by name – she or he may not understand that 'everyone' or 'Group 2' includes them
- Using concrete apparatus and visual signs and symbols to back up verbal and written instructions
- Making explicit links between old and new learning
- Remembering that the student may find it hard to see the 'big picture' and may focus on the fine detail
- Being clear and firm about behaviour and applying rules consistently, but also understanding a child's limitations
- Making use of ICT – computers are not demanding emotionally, as people often are, and can allow the child with ASC to rest from the demands and pitfalls of social interaction
- Structured teaching. Continuity of practice and provision Visual prompts and cues
- Communication systems which are developed with Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) and go with the student through school.
- Use of augmented communication systems aids, including picture exchange systems and objects of reference and/or electronic communicators
- Personalised timetable and individualised schedules
- Text to support social learning
- Opportunities for tailored, specific support
- Opportunities to learn to work without prompting from an adult

Particular care needs to be taken when supporting a PSRP student in the mainstream who is partially integrated. Close liaison between mainstream staff, PSRP staff and Learning Support Assistants is needed to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

Parental Involvement

The school acknowledges the demands and additional responsibilities that come with being a parent of a child with an ASC. The school's philosophy is grounded in working in partnership with parents, offering as much support and encouragement as possible. Parents need to feel confident that the staff understand about autism and their child's specific needs, and that measures are in place to meet those needs.

Parents will be involved in personalised planning and target setting as well as agreeing strategies to support their child and which respond to situations and challenges if and as they occur. Good communication with parents means that they can support the work of the school effectively and feel reassured that appropriate provision is made for their child.

Some students may have a personalised home/school communication system. This is used to share information such as how homework is set and how to help with homework, feedback on behaviour and lessons, clothing requirements including PE kit, preparation for a school trip or other changes in routine. Additionally, parental notification of any issues arising before school supports staff in settling a student into morning lesson time. The diary and other systems such as text and email are used to send messages containing news about activities, behaviour and achievement during the day.

Behaviour Management Practice (Policy into Practice)

The school is committed to the following actions:

- Setting targets which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time framed Enjoyable and Recorded (SMARTER)
- Having a good working knowledge of each individual student's targets
- Being organised and working as a team to ensure a structured learning environment
- Ensure the children know what is expected of them and reminding them frequently
- Preparing children for changes in routine well in advance
- Keeping calm – it reduces tensions
- Listening carefully– it earns respect
- Being positive and building relationships
- Being consistent with practices
- Knowing the students well including knowledge of students learning styles
- Giving responsibility wherever possible using humour – it can build bridges
- Following up problems to their conclusion
- Being firm but always consistently fair
- Noticing positive behaviour frequently and give praise
- Avoiding raised voices
- Treating students with respect
- Avoiding the use of sarcasm
- Being explicit and clear about intentions
- Working as a team in developing more effective approaches to working with children with ASC

Rewards – Encouraging Positive Behaviour

In the PSRP every opportunity is taken to praise and reinforce good behaviour and achievements.

We give children positive feedback by:

- positive use of voice and facial expression
- telling them when we are pleased with them and why
- supporting them help, in assembly, in the dining room, with jobs

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- encouraging them take work to show other staff
- giving tokens, stickers, certificates etc.
- letting them choose an activity

The PSRP operates systems to celebrate success through the use of monitoring and reward sheets that enable a student to receive tangible rewards. Within the classroom a variety of strategies are used to encourage good work and behaviour, including stickers and earning privileges. Whole-school awards, in the form of commendations, are given weekly to celebrate achievements across the school and the PSRP.

Sanctions

Sanctions are used within our framework of reinforcing good behaviour. Before sanctions are applied, disapproval of the act is expressed.

Agreed sanctions include:

- temporary loss of privilege (staff class team decision)
- verbal reprimand (staff class team decision)
- restriction of leisure (choice) activities (staff class team decision)
- time out – this should only be used as a part of an agreed behavioural programme, and only to allow students under close supervision, to calm down (staff class team decision)
- Record made on Behaviour Watch and or SIMS (the PSRP/school information management system)
- letter home to parents which is triggered by the record made on Behaviour Watch
- Phone call to parents, recorded on meeting/phone recording sheet and actioned appropriately
- Parents invited into school to meet the PSRP Senior LSA/class teacher/Deputy Director/Director
- Exclusion – only to be used in very extreme and exceptional circumstances by the Head Teacher in consultation with the Director of the PRSP