

TreeHouse School Behaviour and Discipline Policy

1. Introduction

The TreeHouse Behaviour and Discipline Policy seeks to make clear the boundaries of what is generally considered appropriate in society, the hierarchy of sanctions, arrangements for their consistent and fair application, and a linked system of rewards for good behaviour. It promotes respect for others, intolerance of bullying and harassment, the importance of self-discipline and the difference between “right” and “wrong”.

This policy reaffirms the school’s commitment to promote equality and combat racism, sexism and disability discrimination, and should be read in conjunction with the school’s Equalities Scheme.

The values and ethos of the school support respect for individuals and an expectation that all members of the school community will work together to promote and safeguard the pupils’ wellbeing. This includes a positive approach to managing behaviour. This approach is underpinned by a belief that positive and constructive rewards fairly and consistently applied will promote improved behaviour. The Headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for discipline, with the backing of the governing body.

The approach and specific measures for promoting good behaviour includes such issues as bullying, racial or sexual harassment, and maintaining regular attendance. The governing body also has a general duty to ensure the school follows policies to promote good behaviour and discipline among pupils.

The Headteacher is responsible for promoting good behaviour and discipline. This includes promoting self-discipline among pupils; encouraging good behaviour and respect for others and preventing all forms of bullying among pupils; ensuring pupils’ standards of behaviour are acceptable; and managing pupils’ behaviour positively.

2. Behaviour and Discipline - the TreeHouse context

Individuals with autism have difficulty learning from typical environments, but can learn if an appropriate teaching method is utilised (Green, 1996). Individuals with autism may display a range of inappropriate and challenging behaviours. Both skill acquisition and management of challenging behaviour are approached from an evidence-based behavioural perspective.

3. Skill Acquisition

Behavioural principles are utilised and applied as effective teaching methods to increase skills across all areas of the curriculum including self-help, verbal and non-verbal communication, socialisation and play.

The key principles (as applied to a teaching model) are:

- individualised learning which addresses deficits and builds on skills
- breaking down goals into achievable elements
- a structured and consistent learning environment
- motivational learning through the use of positive reinforcement
- the use of ongoing data to inform teaching and learning

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4. Management of Challenging Behaviour

There is an extensive research literature to support the use of behavioural principles as an effective means of supporting individuals with autism to manage challenging behaviours. Such behaviours include: tantrums, self-injurious behaviour, aggression, destruction, oppositional defiance and stereotypical behaviour. Behaviour management programmes are typically comprised of two elements: proactive and reactive strategies. Both are based on an understanding of the function of the challenging behaviour. Reactive strategies outline the specific plan of action for when the challenging behaviour occurs; proactive strategies are longer term plans that often involve teaching new skills that minimize the occurrence of the challenging behaviour. Reinforcement strategies are the least intrusive and most preferred method used. However, more intrusive strategies may be required for behaviours that are severely challenging and that pose a greater risk to the individual or to others. Aversive procedures are never utilised.. Punishment is defined functionally by its effect on behaviour and is, therefore, any procedure that decreases the future probability of a challenging behaviour. At TreeHouse this can include the removal of tokens or preferred items and activities, saying 'no' and correction procedures. Punishment procedures are used only, (a) when all other less intrusive methods have been determined to be ineffective, and (b) in conjunction with reinforcement procedures designed to increase behaviour that functionally replaces the challenging behaviour.

5. Functional Assessment and Evaluation

As part of ongoing assessment staff members collect data on challenging behaviours in order to help understand why such behaviours occur i.e. the function of that the behaviour. Such data could be ABC (antecedent, behaviour, consequence) charts on target behaviour (these record the date, time, environmental antecedents and immediate events following the behaviour), checklists such as the Motivation Assessment Scale, or data from each of a number of different environments. Data are also collected on frequency, duration etc. of the target behaviours as appropriate. These data are carefully monitored in order to track increases/decreases and are used when developing behaviour plans.

6. Behaviour Plans

Each pupil that exhibits a challenging behaviour has a behaviour plan that operationally defines the target behaviour(s), provides details of how to monitor the occurrence of the behaviour, and gives detailed descriptions of the procedures used to decrease the challenging behaviour and increase the appropriate adaptive replacement behaviour. All key staff working with the pupil and the parents sign the behaviour plan once it has been agreed.

7. Parental Role

Full and regular information is provided on each pupil's progress and challenging behaviour (in the form of daily reports through the home-school book and more specific fortnightly written reports). Parents are also expected to provide information about any relevant issues relating to their child's time at home using the home-school book.

Parents are consulted when behavioural plans are implemented in the school and training will be offered so that the parents and or carers can carry out these strategies consistently outside the school environment.

8. Rewards/ Reinforcement

Purpose:

The rewarding and reinforcing of appropriate behaviours is an essential component in the learning process and enables the development of skills in all areas of a child's life. A behaviour is reinforced if the likelihood of the behaviour is increased following a reinforce. Appropriate behaviours are rewarded and reinforced throughout the school day.

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Types of rewards/reinforcers include

- verbal praise,
- tokens, stickers and preferred activities.

This is not an exhaustive list, as rewards or reinforcers are based on the individual preferences.

Guidelines:

Teaching staff should:

- Encourage reward and reinforce appropriate behaviours
- Provide positive feedback on what the pupil is doing right.

9. Sanctions

Purpose:

The sanctioning of undesirable behaviour makes it clear to the pupil that a behaviour, which they are engaging in, is not acceptable.

It is important to identify the possible function of the undesirable behaviour before any attempts to eliminate or reduce it are made.

Guidelines:

Teaching staff should:

- be calm and professional
- not draw attention to the inappropriate behaviour
- use preventative strategies in preference to punishment, such as rewarding appropriate behaviours
- give pupils a chance to calm down and avoid confrontational situations
- give clear instructions, and when necessary give clear warnings which are followed up as necessary
- review classroom organization
- follow pre-determined behaviour plans

It is accepted that from time to time, despite good classroom management, situations can arise which result in a pupil presenting a danger to him/herself or others. In such cases it is essential that the safety of all pupils and staff is the primary concern and therefore, crisis management strategies may be employed such as removing pupils from the classroom or the use of approved positive handling techniques. Restrictive physical intervention is only utilized when failing to do so is likely to result in an injury or significant damage to property (see positive handling policy), All staff working with the pupils are trained in Team-Teach methods of positive handling. When incidents occur procedures are routinely reviewed and further training carried out when necessary.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies including:

- Positive Handling Policy

10. References

Green, G. (1996). Early behavioral intervention for autism: What does research tell us? In Maurice, C., Green, G., and Luce, S.C. (Eds.), Behavioral Intervention for Autism: A Manual for Parents and Professionals. Austin, Texas: Pro-ed.

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