



## BEHAVIOUR IS COMMUNICATION Policy

<b>Date established by governing body</b>
Summer Term 2025
<b>Date for full implementation</b>
Immediately
<b>Date for review</b>
Summer Term 2026

### Rationale:

At Cleaswell Hill School, we are committed to providing a structured and supportive framework that reflects our deep understanding of the complex and diverse needs of our pupils. We recognise how these needs influence their ability to self-regulate and engage positively with their environment.

We place great importance on establishing clear boundaries and maintaining high expectations, which are essential for fostering trusting, respectful, and mutually supportive relationships throughout the school community.

### Our Beliefs and Approach to Behaviour

At Cleaswell Hill School, we believe that:

- **All behaviour is a form of communication or an expression of need.**  
We are committed to helping pupils understand their emotions and develop strategies that support appropriate and constructive behaviour.
- **Pupils thrive when their individual needs are recognised and met.**  
When supported effectively, they are better able to self-regulate and engage positively. We value and acknowledge their efforts to manage their behaviour, both as individuals and within the wider school community.
- **Emotional development and self-regulation are teachable skills.**  
With the right support, pupils can learn to improve their behaviour over time.
- **A personalised approach is essential.**  
Behaviour support must take into account each pupil's sensory and emotional needs, past and present experiences of trauma, and their level of stimulation and engagement.
- **Mistakes are part of the learning journey.**  
We recognize that all pupils are at different stages of emotional and behavioural development. Rather than judge, we focus on meeting needs through consistent and compassionate support.

### Responding to Emotional Dysregulation

When a pupil is experiencing emotional dysregulation, staff will consider the following:

- Is the pupil safe?
- What support does the pupil need to help them regulate?
- What co-regulation strategies can be used?
- Is additional support required, and how can it be accessed?



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### **Positive Behaviour Support and Intervention**

Some pupils may display behaviours of concern that require a structured and supportive response. Where necessary, and only as a last resort, restrictive physical intervention may be used. Any such intervention must be:

- Legally and ethically justified,
- Proportionate to the risk,
- Used only to prevent serious harm.

All incidents involving restrictive intervention will be recorded and reviewed in line with safeguarding procedures.

### **Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment**

A pupil's stage of emotional development and additional needs will influence their ability to self-regulate and engage in learning. Cleaswell Hill School provides a stable, nurturing environment where pupils can make academic progress while developing emotional and social independence. This policy underlines our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and welcoming school community where every pupil can thrive.

### **Working in Partnership with Families**

We value the knowledge and insight that parents and carers bring. We are committed to working in partnership to identify the most effective ways to support each child. Concerns raised by parents and carers will be listened to with empathy and without judgment, and we will act on them wherever possible to ensure that pupils' needs are fully met.

### **Encouraging Positive Behaviours & Communication**

At Cleaswell Hill School, we believe that pupils make the greatest progress when supported by staff who are fair, flexible, respectful, and who model positive, trusting relationships. Every member of staff plays a vital role in promoting a culture of positive behaviour and communication that supports the holistic development of each pupil.

"Getting the culture right is pivotal. With the right culture the strategies that are used become less important. The culture is set by the way that the adults behave."

*Paul Dix, When the Adults Change, Everything Changes 2017*

### **Staff Commitments**

To foster a positive and supportive learning environment, the staff team will:

- Develop a deep understanding of why pupils may become dysregulated and reflect on how this impacts their behaviour.

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- Consistently model the behaviours we expect from pupils and maintain high expectations for conduct.
- Create and maintain a calm, purposeful, and inclusive learning environment.
- Support the development of self-regulation through appropriate scaffolding and emotional coaching.
- Collaborate closely with external professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT), Occupational Therapists (OT), and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CYPS).
- Build strong, supportive relationships with all pupils, grounded in empathy and respect.
- Communicate regularly and effectively with colleagues to ensure that behaviour is understood in context and that support strategies are consistently applied.
- Share good practice across the school to strengthen collective expertise.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure consistent, joined-up support for every pupil.

### **Support Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour and Engagement**

To help students understand expectations, process instructions, make positive choices, and thrive in their environment, the following strategies will be implemented:

- **Visual Timetables**  
Used to reduce anxiety by providing a clear structure of the day. Visual reinforcement helps students understand their environment and the passage of time, which can prevent some undesirable behaviours.
- **Now and Next Boards**  
These help students anticipate what is happening imminently, reducing anxiety and confusion. To encourage engagement, a motivator or preferred activity should follow the completion of the “next” task.
- **Lesson Transition Strips**  
These outline the steps or expectations within a lesson. A reward at the end of the strip can motivate students to complete tasks and reduce anxiety around transitions.
- **Sensory Breaks**  
Offered to support self-regulation and help students recognise and respond to their own sensory needs. These breaks reduce the likelihood of overload and emotional crisis in the classroom.
- **Praise and Positive Reinforcement**  
Use descriptive praise, positive facial expressions, supportive gestures, and kind words throughout the day to reinforce good behaviour and provide emotional reassurance.

### **Restorative Approach**

Pupils are supported to build, repair, and maintain positive relationships through restorative conversations tailored to their level of understanding. This approach also helps improve communication and behaviour by fostering empathy, reflection, and accountability.

Through guided conversations, pupils are encouraged to:

- Identify and label their feelings and emotions

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- Reflect on what happened
- Consider who was affected and how
- Explore how they feel about the situation now
- Think about what they could do differently in the future

By engaging in this process, pupils develop emotional regulation strategies, strengthen their ability to reflect, and learn to take responsibility for their actions. This empowers them to make more thoughtful choices and contribute to a respectful and supportive school environment.

### **Consistent Approach Plan**

A **Consistent Approach Plan** is a dynamic, working document designed to summarise and support the individual needs of each pupil. It provides staff with clear, practical strategies to promote emotional wellbeing, reduce distress, and foster positive engagement.

The plan includes:

- **Communication & Interaction**  
Clear information on preferred communication methods and social interaction styles.
- **Sensory & Emotional Needs**  
Insight into sensory preferences and emotional regulation requirements.
- **Likes & Dislikes**  
Personal interests and aversions to help build rapport and engagement.
- **Stress Factors & Triggers**  
Identification of potential stressors and proactive strategies to prevent escalation.
- **Early Warning Signs**  
Guidance on recognising early indicators of agitation or distress.
- **Environmental Considerations**  
Adjustments to the physical or social environment to support regulation.
- **Skill Development**  
Support for developing communication, daily living, coping, tolerance, and resilience skills.
- **Meaningful Engagement**  
Strategies to increase participation in purposeful activities and social inclusion.
- **Staff Responses**  
Clear, consistent approaches for managing emotional dysregulation safely and supportively.

### **Recording & reporting:**

Incidents of emotional dysregulation are recorded using PBS Cloud. Staff are encouraged to:

- Reflect on underlying causes and contributing factors.
- Respond in a non-judgmental and supportive manner.
- Share insights and strategies to enhance team practice.
- Update the Consistent Approach Plan as needed.
- Identify and request relevant training opportunities.



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### Recognising Achievement

At Cleaswell Hill, we foster a positive and inclusive environment where every pupil feels valued, motivated, and empowered. By consistently recognising and celebrating both effort and progress, we help pupils build self-esteem and develop intrinsic motivation.

We use a variety of meaningful rewards and motivators tailored to individual needs and preferences, including:

- **Descriptive praise** – specific, positive feedback that reinforces effort and achievement.
- **Certificates and stickers** – tangible recognition of accomplishments.
- **Celebration assemblies** – public acknowledgment of progress and success.
- **Home communication** – sharing achievements with parents and carers through:
  - Phone calls
  - Pupil diaries
  - Postcards home
  - Tapestry
- **Working Towards cards** – personalised goals with clear rewards to encourage perseverance.

This approach ensures that all pupils experience success, feel proud of their achievements, and are inspired to continue striving toward their personal goals.

### Legislation and Statutory Requirements:

This policy is informed by the following key legislation and statutory guidance, which underpin best practice in supporting pupils' education, wellbeing, and safeguarding:

- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- The Education Act (2011)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2024)
- The Equality Act (2010)

### Suspensions

At Cleaswell Hill, we are committed to inclusive practice and believe that suspension (fixed-term exclusion) is rarely the most effective way to support learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Wherever possible, we aim to adapt and personalise provision to ensure that all pupils can access education in a safe, supportive, and meaningful way.

However, in exceptional circumstances, a suspension may be necessary. Such decisions are made with great care, ensuring they are reasonable, proportionate, and in line with statutory guidance.

Exceptional Circumstances May Include:

- Serious incidents where the safety of the pupil, peers, or staff is at risk.
- Deliberate use of weapons, including knife-related incidents.

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- Sexual violence or harassment.
- Significant and intentional damage to property.

### **Our Approach to Decision-Making**

Suspensions are considered on an **individual basis**, taking into account the pupil's needs, context, and the potential impact of exclusion. We recognise that for pupils with SEND - particularly those with autism - behaviour may be a form of communication and a response to unmet needs or environmental stressors.

We follow guidance from:

- The **Department for Education:**  
Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance (2023)  
This outlines the legal process and expectations for fair, lawful, and inclusive decision-making.
- The **Autism Education Trust:**  
[School Exclusions: A Guide for Governing Bodies](#)  
This highlights the importance of understanding autism, making reasonable adjustments, and avoiding discriminatory practices.

### **Reflective Practice and Support**

Following any suspension, we:

- Review the incident in collaboration with the pupil, family, and staff.
- Reflect on underlying causes and update the pupil's Consistent Approach Plan and risk assessments accordingly.
- Consider staff training needs to better support the pupil moving forward.

### **Permanent exclusions**

At Cleaswell Hill School, permanent exclusion is considered an absolute last resort and is extremely rare.

Our priority is always to support every learner to succeed within our setting through personalised, inclusive approaches.

However, in the rare event that we are unable to meet a pupil's needs despite all reasonable adjustments and interventions, we will:

- Work collaboratively with the pupil's family and the Local Education Authority (LEA).
- Seek to identify and secure a more suitable alternative provision that can better meet the learner's needs.



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### Reporting and Oversight

All exclusions - whether fixed-term or permanent - are:

- Reported to the Governing Body.
- Shared with the Local Authority.
- Communicated with relevant external professionals, where appropriate.

This ensures transparency, accountability, and that the best interests of the pupil remain central to all decisions.

### Links to other Policies:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related policies, which collectively support a consistent and inclusive approach to pupil wellbeing, behaviour, and learning:

- **Physical Intervention Policy**  
Outlines the safe and appropriate use of physical intervention to support pupil safety and de-escalation.
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**  
Details the school's commitment to preventing and responding to all forms of bullying, promoting a safe and respectful environment.
- **Teaching and Learning Policy**  
Sets out the principles and practices that underpin high-quality, inclusive teaching across the school.
- **Equality Policy**  
Describes how the school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations.

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