

# Oarsome Chance Behaviour and Relationships Policy including bullying



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## Behaviour and Relationships Policy

### 1. Introduction

Oarsome Chance aims to provide a caring, calm, and secure environment in which tolerance, understanding and respect for others is fostered. We aim to promote a positive culture and to encourage in all young people a sense of responsibility to themselves, to our organisation and to the wider community. This is achieved through staff, students, parents/carers, trustees, and referral schools working in partnership.

### 2. Aims

We aim to:

- Encourage a calm, purposeful and happy atmosphere conducive to good learning.
- Foster positive attitudes towards themselves and others which recognises and values achievements at all levels.
- Enable students to recognise and appreciate appropriate behaviour.
- Encourage increasing independence and self-discipline so each young person learns to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and choices.
- Provide a consistent approach to behaviour management across the organisation.
- Make boundaries of acceptable behaviour clear and understand the relationship between actions and consequences.
- Enable students to feel safe in our community.
- Provide an interesting, well-planned curriculum that motivates young people to learn alongside developing social, emotional, and behavioural skills.
- Implement mental health and trauma-informed approach to behaviour in our organisation.

### 3. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- [Behaviour and discipline in schools](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusions](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)
- [Supporting students with medical conditions at school](#)

It is also based on the [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#).

### 3. A Trauma Informed Approach

Oarsome Chance is committed to developing a Trauma and Mental Health Informed Approach which will protect our community – staff, young people, and parents/carers. There is a growing body of research on the impact childhood adversity has on long-term mental and physical health.

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To ensure every young person develops positive mental health and resilience, our aim is to:

- Support young people to make sense of their experience(s)
- Find ways to manage their emotions and feelings.
- Create an environment of safety, connection, and compassion at all times.
- Build strong, positive, supportive relationships through training.
- Ensure young people maintain the capacity to learn, despite difficult events that may occur.

Our behaviour and relationship policy reflects a trauma-informed approach and our rewards and sanctions are both developmentally and trauma-informed. We do not operate a 'zero tolerance' or 'one size fits all' approach to distressed behaviour. We have high expectations of behaviour for all, however rigorous support is offered to those having difficulty meeting those expectations.

### 4. PACE

It is recognised that good behaviour needs to be modelled and taught. We embed the PACE (Play, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) approach originated by Dan Hughes in order to support a young person's social engagement system. The development of positive student/staff relationships along with effective curriculum planning which recognises individual needs and encourages young people to behave in appropriate and less challenging ways.

- **Play** – Playfulness, light, open, hopeful, and spontaneous.
- **Acceptance** – Unconditionally accepting of all of the experiences of the learners, so they trust staff not to be judgmental.
- **Curiosity** – Non-judgmental active interest in how learners experience what happens to them in their lives.
- **Empathy** – Felt sense of the young person's feelings and needs which is actively communicated to the young people.

### 5. Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect

To this end Oarsome Chance is committed to educational practices which Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect:

#### Protect

- Ensure that all young people are greeted warmly in all areas of the organisation.
- Staff trained in 'PACE' modes of interaction: warm, empathetic, playful and curious (proven to shift young people out of flight/fright/freeze positions).
- Staff ensure that interactions with young people are socially engaging, warm and inviting.
- Focused sessions that help staff to get to know young people better on an individual basis. These relationships are key to enabling young people to feel safe whilst in Oarsome Chance, ensuring all young people have access to an emotionally available adult.
- Staff adjust expectations around all young people to correspond with their developmental capabilities and experience of traumatic stress. This includes removing traumatised young people away from situations they are not managing well, providing a calmer, smaller area with an emotionally available regulated adult.
- Staff to provide a voice for young people and advocate on their behalf.

#### Relate

- A whole-organisation commitment to enabling young people to see themselves, their relationships, and the world positively.

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- Provide young people with repeated relational opportunities (with emotionally available adults) to make the shift from 'blocked trust' (not feeling psychologically safe with anyone) to trust, and from self-help to 'help seeking'.
- Staff trained in empathic and playful modes of interaction.
- Relating with the young person; staff can show they are listening and seeing the young person's feelings, supporting, and recognising the emotions they are experiencing.

### Regulate

- Relational interventions specifically designed to bring down stress hormone levels (e.g., from toxic to tolerable), enabling young people to feel calm, soothed and safe. This is to support learning, quality of life and protect against stress-induced physical and mental illness, now and in later life.
- Evidence-based interventions that aim to repair psychological damage caused by traumatic life experiences, through emotionally regulating, playful, enriched adult-young person interactions.
- The emotional well-being and regulating of staff are treated as a priority to prevent burnt out and stress related absence, debrief sessions are in place to support post incident.

### Reflect

- Staff training and development in the art of good listening, dialogue, empathy and understanding.
- Time to reflect on post incidents, to talk about alternatives to young person's behaviours while still acknowledging the emotion behind them. Staff can reassure young people that they care about them but the behaviour they are exhibiting is not acceptable.
- Provide young people with other options, give choices. (e.g. "If you feel like this again, you can.....").
- Provide time to discuss events and situations.
- Discuss feelings as a daily experience. Talk about experiences others have had.
- Identify how it feels to be calm/relaxed, provide young people with opportunities and reflect on the differences they may feel in these moments.
- Avoid putting the young person back in the same situation and reliving a trauma. What can we do differently?
- Staff reflect on what was the young person trying to tell them in that moment. What is the behaviour telling them?

## 6. Responses from staff

**Affect Attunement** – Meet the young person's emotional intensity (positive or negative) on an energetic level, to connect with the young person in their pain or joy. Mirroring the same level of energy to build a connection around the trauma and help the young person understand the feelings and emotion. The young person will hopefully see this as a positive connection with staff helping to build the trusting and emotionally available relationship.

**Empathy** – Recognition of how the young person is experiencing the event, even if this is very different to how staff are experiencing it. Staff won't dismiss the feeling, they will help affirm, understand, and recognise what the young person is feeling.

**Containment** – Staff will be able to be in the moment with a young person's intense feelings without absorbing the emotion and acting upon it. At times this will mean being able to bear the young person's pain. Containment is also supported through clear structures to the day, boundaries and actions that are followed through on.

**Emotional Regulation** – Bringing down toxic stress to tolerable stress and the moving to states of calm. Soothing and calming the young person’s emotional dysregulated state, will over time, develop effective stress regulating systems in the brain and a more positive feeling through the young person’s body. This can be done through calming conversations, timeout, and sensory support/items but in each case will be bespoke to the young person in question.

**Use of Voice and Body Language** – In most cases, staff will use a calm and lowered tone of voice when managing behaviour to communicate calmness, safety, and empathy to a young person. All staff ensure that their body language is always open and non-confrontational.

**De-escalation strategies** – Staff are trained in a range of de-escalation strategies. These include – distraction, re-direction, change of face, use of humour, offering reflection or a calming space.

### 7. Motivators

We recognise, praise and reward young people for positive choices and to help motivate and engage young children promoting positive learning behaviours. As we recognise that sometimes one size does not fit all, we use different rewards to help motivate and engage all young people.

### 8. Consequences

We want young people to be aware that for poor behaviour choices, there are consequences. Sometimes for a variety of reasons, a young person will continue to find it difficult to behave in an expected manner. If this happens, there are further strategies and appropriate consequences related to the behaviour that will be used by staff to encourage the young person to develop greater self-esteem, self-discipline and thought for others, maintaining a safe and positive environment.

All of our staff understand that presented behaviour may be an outcome or a response to an adverse child experience (ACE) and will adopt and implement trauma-informed strategies that preempt unacceptable behaviour.

All of our staff will undergo regular Trauma Informed training and key information including ACES and external factors will be shared promptly with relevant staff. We want young people to take responsibility for their behaviour and will encourage young people to do this through restorative justice approaches which enable young people to reflect upon their behaviour and to make amends. This process does not, however, replace consequences.

We know that consistent management of behaviour is essential for young people to understand what is expected of them and to avoid mixed messages. It is vital that young people learn early on in life that there are always consequences for poor and unacceptable behaviour which undermine the positive atmosphere of our community. The consequences of not keeping to the expectations are clearly taught to the young people. The consequences are short, clear and progressive. Young people are taught to understand that it is their choice to break a rule and they must take responsibility for making that choice.

Our expectations about behaviour also apply to all off-site activities, visits and whilst young people are being transported.

The consequences should always be reinforced by telephone calls to parents/carers and the referral school.

### 9. Behaviour Concerns

At Oarsome Chance we define behaviours of concern as any behaviour which:

- reduces the quality of an individual’s life.
- reduces access to learning, taking part in activities.
- puts a young person at risk (physically or emotionally).

- puts the people around a young person at risk (physically or emotionally).

Behaviours of concern may show that:

- The young person has needs or wants which they are not able to communicate with through other means.
- The young person's medical needs are not being met – they may feel ill or in pain.
- The young person is experiencing demands which are too much for them.
- The young person is experiencing feelings such as frustration, anxiety, depression, or anger.
- The young person is overwhelmed by their environment or others around them.
- The young person needs more help to understand what is expected of them.

Low-level disruption is addressed quickly to ensure young people's behaviours do not disrupt provision activities or the day-to-day life of Oarsome Chance. If bullying, aggression, discrimination, and derogatory language occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively.

In judging whether a particular behaviour is a cause for concern, adults consider the young person's age and level of development.

We work with referral schools and external agencies, reviewing EHCPs, behaviour plans and risk assessments and create our own young person risk assessments, which are reviewed at least termly.

### 10. Recording of behaviour concerns/incidents

Incidents of behaviour are recorded on the CPOMS safeguarding system and monitored regularly by the leadership team.

Any incident that results in an injury being sustained should be recorded in the Accident book.

### 11. Positive Handling/ Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

When faced with extreme behaviour, by becoming physically involved, staff may increase the risk of somebody getting hurt. Therefore, our response is to support the young person into a safe space and give the young person time and space to regain self-control. At this point, staff will take the following action to reduce the risk to others and themselves:

- Make the environment safe.
- Remove the audience.
- Take other young people to a safer place.
- Remove all potential hazards and weapons.
- Ensure that other staff know what is happening or get help.

Staff will use physical restraint on a young person **if their behaviour is placing themselves or others' safety at risk and will do so only as a very last resort.**

Incidents of positive handling must:

- Always be used as a last resort.
- Be applied using the minimum amount of force and for the minimum amount of time possible.
- Be used in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Never be used as a form of punishment.
- Be recorded and reported to parents/carers.

In extreme cases, staff have the right to and will ask for Police intervention.

Physical interventions will be recorded, and information passed on to all parties as soon as possible after the event.

### 12. Confiscation of inappropriate items

Staff can confiscate any item that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting:

- Pose a risk to staff or other young persons.
- Are illegal or banned by Oarsome Chance.
- Is evidence in relation to an offence.

These items include:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- E-cigarettes or vapes.
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Any article a staff member reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the young person)

**Weapons, knives, and extreme or child pornography must always be handed over to the Police.** Otherwise it is for staff to decide if and when to return a confiscated item, following discussion with the leadership team.

### 13. Exclusions

We do not believe that exclusion is the most effective way to support our young people and we will always try to adapt and personalise the provision for all our young people in order to ensure that they are able to access the provision.

However, in extreme and exceptional circumstances, leadership may need to exclude a young person temporarily or permanently - this will be considered very carefully.

Safe conduct by young people is essential to ensure that all students can benefit from the opportunities provided by the provision. This is essential when safeguarding the most vulnerable students. All behaviour incidents that potentially warrant an exclusion are discussed by the leadership team with the CEO before finalising this decision and informing parents and the referral school.

A decision to exclude a young person permanently from Oarsome Chance is only to be used as a last resort and will be taken only if:

- There is a significant risk to the young person or others.
- Allowing the young person to remain at Oarsome Chance would seriously harm the education or welfare of the young person or others in the provision.
- Allowing the young person to remain at Oarsome Chance would put staff at risk.



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- In response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the Oarsome Chance behaviour policy.

The reasons below are examples of the types of circumstances that may warrant a temporary or permanent exclusion. This list is non-exhaustive and is intended to offer examples rather than be complete or definitive.

- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a young person.
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult.
- Use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item that has been prohibited by the behaviour policy.
- Bullying.
- Racist abuse.
- Abuse against sexual orientation or gender reassignment.
- Abuse relating to disability.
- Persistent breach of Law.
- Physical assault against a young person or an adult

Where young people are at serious risk of exclusion, the Local Authority and all relevant external agencies will be involved, and an urgent meeting will be called. Exclusion will be the last resort after all other steps have been exhausted.

### 14. Bullying

**Bullying** is defined as the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

- Bullying is, therefore:
- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult to defend against

Bullying can include:

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racial</li> <li>• Faith-based</li> <li>• Gendered (sexist)</li> <li>• Homophobic/biphobic</li> <li>• Transphobic</li> <li>• Disability-based</li> </ul>	Taunts, gestures, graffiti, or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (e.g., gender, race, sexuality)

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

### Investigating allegations of bullying

A member of the leadership team will investigate allegations of bullying in line with the child-on-child abuse policy from the Child Protection policy.

### Reporting and recording incidents of bullying

Incidents of bullying should be reported to a member of staff as soon as possible.

Once a member of staff receives a report or witnesses an incident, this should be recorded on the CPOMS safeguarding system, within 24 hours of receiving information or witnessing the incident.

A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern, where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a young person is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. In such cases, Oarsome Chance will report its concerns to referral schools and relevant external agencies.

### Supporting students who have been bullied

The victim will be reassured that action will be taken to relieve the situation, i.e. the bully will be spoken to. Advice and support for the victim will be provided by the appropriate staff and support from external services will be sourced where appropriate.

The perpetrator needs to understand how their actions are affecting the victim, and they will be encouraged to work with appropriate members of staff to modify their behaviour including, where necessary, access to counselling support and therapy. If they are reluctant to engage, other behaviour management strategies will need to be put in place.

### Prevention of bullying

For the issue of bullying to be tackled successfully a climate needs to be created in which all forms of victimisation are discouraged, and where reporting cases of bullying is seen as the normal and right thing to do. Staff will challenge any bullying behaviour from students.

## 15. Training

The induction of new staff includes an introduction to our Relationships and Behaviour Policy.

Staff briefings at the start and end of every day enables relevant information about young people to be shared.

Staff have opportunities to discuss difficulties within an open and non-judgemental framework. This may include informal and private conversations with colleagues, staff debriefing, supervision, annual appraisal, and staff meetings.

Regular and on-going training is provided to ensure all staff are skilled professionals and are able to manage challenging behaviour in a consistent and professional manner.

### 16. Allegations against staff

In line with our trauma informed approach to behaviour management, any malicious and unfounded accusations made against staff would be investigated on an individual basis, with staff, the young person, parents/carers and referral school, working together to understand the possible functions of this behaviour. If appropriate, a restorative practice-based approach (e.g., a restorative conference) would be used in order to repair relationships between the young person and the staff member, whilst aiming to avoid eliciting shame in the young person. The member of staff involved would also be provided with access to emotional support from staff on a more private basis, and/or counselling if required.

### 17. Links to other policies

This policy is linked to (but not limited to) the following policies:

- Child protection policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Equality and Diversity
- Off-Site Visits & Outdoor Education
- Health and Safety
- Acceptable Use of ICT

### 18. Monitoring & Review

At Oarsome Chance, we review this policy at least annually in line with legislation and other relevant guidance. This policy will be updated during the year to reflect any changes brought about by law, guidance, internal monitoring or any other changes.

The policy, following review, will be approved by the Board of Trustees prior to publication.