

Behaviour Policy

Contents

Aims	3
Legislation	4
Roles and responsibilities.....	5
Creating an Inclusive Community.....	8
Bullying.....	8
Child on Child abuse and sexual harassment	9
Strategies to respond to behaviour	10
Recording and reporting.....	19
SEND	20
Training	21
Staff wellbeing	22
Monitoring	22

Aims

Elm House School recognise and understand that behaviour is a form of communication that requires different approaches to support. Staff at Elm House School schools do this through the development of positive relationships, understanding the needs of each individual we work with, working collaboratively to support the individual using best practice that is underpinned by psychodynamic approaches which are at the heart of our approach. We seek to build and develop safe and positive relationships based on mutual trust and respect and that this is based on a clear understanding of acceptable behaviour.

Elm House School supports children with complex social, emotional and mental health needs requiring a flexible and bespoke support plan. Our Individual Support Plans place an emphasis on proactive action to recognise, foster, acknowledge and reward positive behaviour whilst understanding our children and responses required to support behaviours when they are in crisis. All of our staff are expected to understand and adhere to an individual's risk assessment and individual support plan and working with the Lead Teacher and Senior Leadership Team, they will contribute any necessary updates to have an up-to-date informed understanding of each child. Knowing our children well and being actively involved in their care is the foundation of supporting positive behaviour.

Elm House School schools provide:

The best quality of education and care for vulnerable children through a vibrant curriculum which fully prepares pupils for their future economic wellbeing and nurtures outstanding personal development.

We are driven by our pursuit of excellence, high expectations of behaviour and respect for every member of the school community and seek to create an environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place.

This policy aims to:

- Create a positive culture that promotes and supports positive behaviour, ensuring that all children have the opportunity to live and learn in a calm, safe and supportive environment
- Establish an approach to maintaining high standards of behaviours that reflect the values of Elm House School
- Outline the expectations and consequences of behaviour
- Provide a consistent approach to behaviour support that is applied equally to all children
- Define what we consider to be unacceptable behaviour, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based behaviour and discriminatory bullying.

We strive to promote and create responsible citizens who:

- Make good choices and encourage others to do the same
- Behave positively

- Are considerate and value themselves, others, and their environment
- Have the confidence, tenacity and resilience to attain their ambitions
- Are inclusive and embrace differences
- Have high levels of engagement
- Demonstrate positive learning behaviours
- Are role models to others
- Make a positive contribution to the community in which they live, are educated and will go onto work

Legislation

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

- [The Independent School Standards - Guidance for independent schools](#)
- [Behaviour in Schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff Feb 2024](#)
- [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010: Advice for schools](#)
- [Education Act 2011](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#)
- [Behaviour and discipline in schools - guidance for governing bodies](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](#)
- [Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance](#)

As an Independent Special School, this policy is also based on Schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ([legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)): paragraph 7 outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, paragraph 9 requires the school to have a written behaviour policy and paragraph 10 requires the school to have an anti-bullying strategy.

The [Behaviour and discipline in schools' guidance](#) states that 'schools need to ensure they have a strong behaviour policy to support staff in managing behaviour, including the use of rewards and sanctions. Behaviour policies are typically informed by Behaviourist approaches; however, we are aware that punitive approaches to behaviour management in schools are damaging to children's mental health. This is especially true for Elm House School pupils who have a significant number of pupils with lived experience of trauma and complex needs.

[Behaviour in Schools \(2024\) guidance](#) is clear that good behaviour in schools is central to a good education, with schools providing a calm, safe and supportive environment which pupils want to attend and where they can learn and thrive.

Roles and responsibilities

Everyone has a responsibility to abide by the Code of Conduct

The Directors are responsible for:

- Always ensuring the safety of pupils in school
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy is kept up to date and in line with all current guidelines
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy is effective in leading to high standards of behaviour
- Ensuring that all staff are provided with Positive Behaviour Support training (Proactive Approaches) and receive annual refreshers
- Ensuring that all staff including volunteers and temporary staff are made aware of this policy and all individual support plans and risk assessments
- Ensuring that any known issues or problems with behaviour management processes are improved in a timely fashion
- Ensuring that each school has strong guidelines and procedures for dealing with serious incidents of misbehaviour
- Ensuring that all policies and procedures are reviewed annually
- Liaising with the Executive Headteacher throughout the year to discuss processes and possible improvements that lead to high standards of behaviour

The Senior Leadership Team

Our school leadership team is highly visible, with leaders routinely engaging with pupils, carers, professionals and staff on setting and maintaining the school culture and an environment where everyone feels safe and supported.

Leaders ensure that all new staff are inducted into the Elm House School culture to ensure they understand its rules and routines and how best to support pupils to participate in creating the culture of the school.

The Head of Education are responsible for:

- Positively modelling the school culture and values, ensuring that they are understood by all.
- Ensuring that each Elm House School provision is a safe learning environment
- Undertaking regular, frequent and robust checks at each school to check that the Behaviour Policy and procedures are fully and effectively implemented
- Ensuring that Lead Teachers are well trained and confident in Positive Behaviour Management
- Ensuring that the school implements the Behaviour Policy and procedures by holding the Lead Teacher to account

- Checking that all staff attend Positive Behaviour Support training during their induction period and in line with the training schedule
- Ensuring new staff are provided with a clear induction into the schools' behavioural culture, ensuring clarity and understanding of the school rules, routines, and approaches to best support all children to participate fully in learning
- Ensuring that Lead Teachers make all staff at each school including volunteers and temporary staff aware of this policy
- Ensuring that all required documentations relating to behaviour incidents is completed and sent to relevant social workers and other external agencies where required (LADO), Ofsted) within 48 hours of the event occurring
- Ensuring that staff recognise positive behaviours and support through positive recognition strategies across the school
- Reviewing all policies and procedures annually, or earlier when significant changes are required
- Ensuring that all policies and procedures are amended promptly when significant changes are required by the DfE
- Liaising with the DfE, Directors and staff throughout the year to discuss processes, make changes and improvements wherever appropriate and ultimately lead to high standards of behaviour

Teaching Staff

All school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which pupils can learn, including regulation of their own emotions and behaviour, encouraging respect for others, and preventing all forms of bullying behaviour (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) and being alert to any signs of child-on-child abuse. Staff have an important role in developing a calm and safe environment and establishing clear expectations and boundaries. Staff uphold the whole school approach to behaviour by teaching and modelling expected behaviour and positive relationships so that pupils can see examples of good habits and are confident to ask for help when needed.

Staff communicate school expectations, routines, values and standards both explicitly through teaching skills, visual supports and in every interaction with pupils. Staff also receive clear guidance about school expectations of their own conduct, which are set out in the Elm House School Code of Conduct.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they have read the Elm House School Behaviour policy and are aware of the procedures to promote positive behaviour
- Ensuring that they have read, understood and are committed to implementing the Behaviour policy
- Ensuring that the school site and learning environment are safe by exercising due diligence and a high level of vigilance regarding behaviour

- Communicating clearly, using low demand and low threat language, clear expectations of appropriate behaviour, ensuring that the child understands those expectations in accordance with their age, level of understanding and individual needs
- Adhering to all aspects of the Behaviour policy and procedures including recording and reporting issues
- Ensuring that all incidents of serious misbehaviour are reported to the Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible, and no later than 4pm on the day of occurrence
- Ensuring that all required documentation relating to behaviour incidents are completed and sent to the Senior Leadership Team within 24 hours of the incident occurring
- Attending Positive Behaviour Support training promptly and in line with the company's training schedule
- Ensuring that any weaknesses they feel exist regarding the company's policy and procedures are promptly reported to their line manager
- Remaining professional curious as to how best to support individuals with behaviour which challenges
- Being professional at all times, and seek support from other staff and senior leadership as required

Children

All pupils deserve to learn in an environment that is calm, safe, supportive and where they are treated with dignity. To achieve this, every pupil is made aware, in line with their individual capacity, of the school expectations, support, and therapeutic consequence processes. Pupils are taught that they have a duty to contribute to the school culture and are asked about their experience of the school and provide feedback in ways that are accessible and meaningful to them. This can help support the evaluation, improvement and implementation of this policy. Every pupil is supported to achieve the best standards they can, including an induction and transition process that familiarises them with the school culture.

Children are expected to:

- Indicate or ask when they need support with their behaviour wherever possible and accept support where they are able
- Participate where they can in planning and assessing supporting strategies in place to support positive behaviour
- Accept the help and guidance provided in relation to positive behaviour
- Ask questions to understand strategies and their own needs in relation to positive behaviour support if they are worried or unsure
- Where possible, give feedback on their experience of the behaviour culture to support the evaluation, improvement and implementation of the behaviour policy

- Participate in post-incident debriefs when ready to reflect and understand their own behaviours, triggers and responses
- Demonstrate respect for themselves, others and the environment

All visitors, whether parents, carers, visiting professionals or employees are expected to:

- Demonstrate a professional, kind, and respectful attitude around school, modelling positive and acceptable behaviour
- Follow any guidance provided by staff should any incident of a behaviour concern take place during their visit
- Raise concerns and ask questions in relation to behaviour support if they are worried or uncertain to the Head of Education or Executive Headteacher

Creating an Inclusive Community

- **Clear expectations and consistent boundaries:** we clearly communicate our expectations through speech, visuals and modelling so all staff and pupils (in line with their ability) are aware of the expectations and boundaries appropriate to their strengths and needs.
- **The curriculum:** our children are supported to develop their understanding of behaviour as part of the Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship / Sex and Relationships curriculum.
- **Routines:** Routines and structure are integral to the school day. For example, staff will ensure that pupils receive a timetable for their learning and daily activities that is appropriate to their unique age and stage.
- **Environment:** We create calm, welcoming and clean spaces, taking into account the sensory sensitivities and needs of our pupils.
- **Communication:** We use a total communication approach which aligns with the communication strengths and needs of our pupils.
- **Emotional Understanding:** Many of our pupils may experience more intense emotional responses and/or struggle to process, share, express their emotions. We support our pupils to develop skills to understand and manage their emotions and behaviour through the use of emotional literacy skills. This helps support a shared language approach within the whole school community.

Bullying

Bullying is defined by the Department of Health, Department for Education as:

“Deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied who are powerless to defend themselves”.

Bullying is therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult to defend against

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress for the victim.

It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion and belief, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs, and disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs, and email. Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. A feature of bullying in education and residential settings is that its existence is not always immediately known or suspected by those in authority. Bullying can quickly become a safeguarding matter, and it may on occasion be necessary to record it as a safeguarding concern.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional:** Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting e.g. hiding books or personal belongings, threatening gestures.
- **Physical:** Pushing, kicking, punching or any other use of violence.
- **Racist :** Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- **Sexual:** Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- **Homophobic:** Because of or focussing on the issue of sexuality.
- **Verbal:** Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- **Cyber:** All areas of the internet, email, and chat-room misuse.
- **Digital:** Threats through social media, SMS or calls, misuse of associated technology such as cameras and voice recorders.

Children may lack the social skills required to manage relationships, and/or they may not have learnt a way of managing relationships through appropriate role modelling. Staff will remain vigilant to signs of bullying behaviour, which could be obvious or subtle, in person or online, and will be dealt with according to the Elm House School Anti-Bullying Policy.

Child on Child abuse and sexual harassment

Following any report or concerns raised of child-on-child abuse or sexual harassment offline or online, the school will follow the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy and notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy immediately. The school is clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable, will not be tolerated and that incidents where behaviour falls below expectations will be addressed. All staff are aware of the importance of challenging all inappropriate language and behaviour between pupils. The school will never normalise sexually abusive language or behaviour by treating it as 'banter', an inevitable fact of life or an expected part of growing up. We advocate strenuously for high standards of conduct between pupils and staff; they should demonstrate and model manners, courtesy and dignified/respectful relationships.

It is essential that all victims are reassured they will be supported, kept safe, and are taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised.

Strategies to respond to behaviour

Positive behaviour management

Elm House School recognises that behaviour is a method of communication, often deriving from past trauma, and this is at the core of our approach. We pride ourselves on building positive relationships and understanding that children in our schools are often communicating to meet a need through their behaviour and we must recognise this to inform our response. At Elm House School, we work in partnership with children, our residential and clinical colleagues and other professionals to develop risk assessments and individual support plans. This starts as part of our transitional stage as we build relationships with our children. This very early approach forms a positive behaviour support and relational approach which helps children understand their own needs as we grow together and develop alternative communication strategies as they begin to feel safe, heard and understood.

Leaders and staff are responsible for setting the tone and context for positive behaviour around the school. They will:

- Create and maintain a calm, therapeutic and stimulating environment that encourages children to create positive relationships and engage in learning
- Read and understand the appropriate individual support plans, individual educational plans, risk assessments and other support documentation relating to each individual.
- Act as a role model, modelling the values of Elm House School, showing kindness and respect and showing consideration for every individual while supporting a community spirit.

Following a relational approach to develop positive relationships with children, which may include:

- Establishing clear routines, structure and boundaries
- Communicating expectations of behaviour in ways in addition to verbal, such as now and next boards, visual strategy cards and class contracts
- Highlighting and promoting good behaviour that also considers the needs of those who find demands difficult
- Concluding the day positively using reflective techniques and starting each day as a new day

Having a plan for dealing with low-level disruption:

- Using positive reinforcement and trusted relationships to challenge behaviour
- Working as part of a team to develop consistent approaches to promoting positive behaviour and dealing with disruptions/incidents
- Record and report in line with requirements, any incidents of behaviour or concern and ensure actions are followed up

Recognising and celebrating positive behaviour

Elm House School provides a warm, holistic and therapeutic environment that recognises, responds and celebrates positive choices, promoting good behaviour through an array of approaches including using praise, recognition, daily prizes and long-term rewards, building self-esteem and an individual's sense of worth. Praising pupils will raise their self-esteem, help them to learn to accept praise with good grace, enable them to appreciate their strengths, and recognise the success of others and help them to become positive members of society.

We use a variety of reward and recognition systems in line with our behaviour policy, values and high expectations whilst also recognising effort and positive outcomes. Positive reinforcements and rewards will be applied clearly and fairly to recognise progress, reinforce good behaviour and positive attitude, reinforce the routines, expectations and norms of the school behaviour culture. Examples of rewards include:

- Verbal praise and time to celebrate with key adults
- Rewards via points or other currency within the rewards system
- Weekly certificates to celebrate achievements for all children
- Positions of responsibility, such as being entrusted with a pupil council role e.g. new pupil mentor
- Access to popular activities, trips or visits based on achievement and participation levels

Sanctions and responding to negative behaviour

Our children are developing and learning their way in the world, learning what constitutes acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours. A lot of our children have a considerable amount of challenging presentations due to the previous journeys they have been on throughout mainstream schools and other provisions where their behaviours have possibly escalated due to the environmental impacts.

At Elm House School, we need to help them understand their own needs, ways of positively communicating and how to make the right choices and support the development of their ethical compass. As a part of this learning process, sometimes mistakes will be made through their previous ways of dealing with situations, being overwhelmed or struggling with engaging in learning due to academic struggles. We need to help children make informed and positive choices but if poor choices are made, where deliberate or intentional, consequences need to be implemented.

It is the duty of all staff within the school to support children and strive to understand the underlying reasons for behaviour of concern whilst recognising that individuals

should be supported in taking responsibility for their actions. This will be supported by the clinical team and SLT to help to recognise where behaviours are a communication, apply appropriate sanctions and escalate where required.

Elm House School does not issue permanent exclusions to any of its pupils and instead considers sanctions and consequences when an individual's behaviour falls below the standard that can reasonably be expected of them. Staff will respond in line with the individual's behaviour support plan, to restore a calm and safe environment, and to prevent the recurrence of misbehaviour. Each behaviour support plan clearly identifies proactive strategies, active strategies, reactive strategies for when in crisis/dysregulation, and restorative actions following an incident.

Staff will endeavour to create a predictable environment by following proactive strategies and always praising positive progress and behaviour, challenging behaviour that falls short of the standards, and responding in a consistent, fair and proportionate manner, so children know with certainty that misbehaviour will always be addressed and progress and positive contributions will be rewarded.

Our staff are all trained in ProActive Approaches where de-escalation techniques are key to reducing behaviours actively before reaching crisis point, and then strategies to be reactive in crisis point. ProActive Approaches will be used to help prevent further behaviour issues arising, such as the debriefs and reflective work. These strategies will be reflected in individual support plans. All children will be treated equitably under the policy, with any factors that contributes to the incident of behaviour being identified and taken into account supporting a culture of inclusivity and not disadvantaging any individual as a result of a disability.

When giving behaviour sanctions, staff will also consider what support could be offered to an individual to help them to meet behaviour standards in the future, liaising with the Senior Leadership Team and Clinical team for strategies including sensory resources, target interventions and 1:1 learning.

Sanctions should be:

- Relevant to the behaviour presented
- Be seen to be fair in the eyes of the children and discussed with them
- Tailored to the individual and reviewed regularly
- Not seen as a revengeful tactic and not seen as injustice
- Be discussed with the staff team
- Be applied as soon after the event as possible
- Be reviewed for a consistent and appropriate method and involve the child in the review

Natural and logical consequences

Positive reinforcement combined with natural and logical consequences are important and necessary to support our whole school culture.

All children require boundaries and consequences that are fair, predictable and understandable. Children are encouraged to be a part of devising these.

Natural consequences occur without the intervention of an adult. For example, a child might throw a favoured object when they are feeling angry which might break and therefore cannot be used. Shame is also considered a natural consequence, and children will require support with this.

Logical consequences are adult-led and are linked to the event, and when a natural consequence may not occur or may be a safety hazard. For example, if a child removing their seatbelt during a car journey – a logical consequence to ensure safety may be to avoid car journeys whilst car safety work is completed with the child to ensure they understand why this needs to be worn.

Natural and logical consequences will be communicated to the child in an empathic and collaborative way, never in a shaming way.

Our schools do not use punitive sanctions, for example detention or removal of privileges. These can promote a sense of shame, are often not linked to the behaviour and therefore do not encourage our pupils to learn what to do instead. The consequence must always be linked to the behaviour to provide a learning opportunity.

The school considers the use of the following sanctions in response to unacceptable behaviour:

- Verbal reprimand and reminder of the expectations of behaviour
- Restorative meetings with staff and peers where required and if suitable
- Temporary loss of off-site activities requiring transportation if unsafe behaviours has been shown
- Not being able to use specific resources or equipment due to misuse e.g. not using a laptop or iPad
- Insisting that work is repeated/completed during social time or after school to catch up on missed learning
- Helping to tidy up mess or put back displays they have damaged

Repairing relationships (a restorative approach) is a key part of natural and logical consequences and it is the staff's responsibility to approach this repair if it is difficult for the child.

The range of sanctions used in any establishment for children must comply with the guidelines set down by Ofsted, in the National Minimum Standards and must not contravene the Children Act 1989. Any sanction imposed beyond those approved will be unacceptable and possibly illegal.

Individual circumstances of the child are always considered when choosing sanctions and decisions will be made on an individual basis, but with regard to the impact on perceived fairness.

Sanctions which are never acceptable are:

- Corporal punishment
- The restriction of contact and communication
- The withholding of food or drink, sleep, medication, personal aids and equipment required for a disability, and clothes
- The requirement to wear distinctive or inappropriate clothing
- The imposition of a financial penalty other than reasonable reparation
- The imposition of group punishments for the behaviour of an individual
- The involvement of any child in the punishment of another
- Humiliating, belittling or punitive punishments
- Those that may appear revengeful

De-escalation

De-escalation techniques are our primary responsive strategies, these include:

- Our staff teams will use a calm approach with neutral body language
- Our staff teams will use minimal verbal interactions during de-escalation
- We will use positive framing language (“kind hands” rather than “stop hitting”)
- We will use planned and proactive positive distraction (for example talk about the child’s special area of interest)
- We will divert the child to a different, preferred activity or experience
- Change the environment (for example allowing a child to access a calm space)
- We will encourage the child to engage in a preferred sensory activity or strategy to help them to co-regulate
- Changes to the team supporting the child
- Use of space and allowing the child to move and run, perhaps complete a sensory circuit
- Using visual supports to support the child to process and understand
- Any unique strategies that has been agreed as appropriate for an individual child and is reflect within their individual support plan

Physical Intervention

A restrictive physical intervention is defined as a planned or reactive act that restricts an individual’s movement, liberty and/or freedom to act independently; and the sub-categories of restrictive intervention using force or restricting liberty of movement (or threatening to do so) [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention - GOV.UK](#). Restrictive physical intervention is always considered to be a very last resort, and may only ever be considered when there is:

- A significant risk of injury to any person
- Significant damage to property
- An offence being, or highly likely to be, committed
- No alternative method of mitigating these risks

Restrictive physical intervention where used must be reasonable, proportionate, and use no more force than is absolutely necessary and follow the Proactive Approaches principles. Physical interventions may take the form of an emergency intervention, or a planned intervention. Staff are trained and competent to use physical intervention

(to be updated on an annual basis with regular training given on de-escalation and restraint techniques) and must adhere to all safety measures. Staff must only use physical intervention if they have been trained unless it is an emergency to prevent harm to the child or others. All incidents of physical intervention are recorded using our reporting systems on the same day, or at the latest within 24 hours of the incident taking place. Detailed reports are produced and shared with social workers and other relevant professionals within 48 hours of the incident taking place.

Please see Elm House School Positive Handling and Restraint policy.

The use of quiet spaces

Pupils at Elm House School schools will sometimes require access to a quiet and calm space, to have an opportunity to regulate their feelings and emotions either through self-regulation or co-regulation. A quiet space is a sensory-controlled area and this is an available space. We have different spaces available within our schools including calm rooms, reading corners, and outdoor space. The purpose of a quiet space is not exclusion, isolation or punishment and it should never be used punitively. Over time, it is anticipated that children will come to recognise their own emotions, and feelings and seek these spaces independently to calm and self-regulate their emotions so that they can then return safely to their activity. The regular use of a quiet space should form part of an individual's behaviour support plan.

Children will be consulted with their views as part of their consultation and continual review of support strategies to support learning and positive behaviours. Strategies to use a quiet space will be implemented and reviewed when:

- A member of staff notices that a child is becoming anxious or agitated – the individual should be given reasonable opportunity to calm using the strategies detailed in the child's individual support plan
- If the behaviour continues to concern and impact on others in the class and/or they become a danger to themselves, other children or staff, the individual may request, or staff may suggest use of a quiet space
- As part of a dynamic risk assessment, staff may consider it necessary to escort the child to the quiet space using an approved physical intervention in line with policy which must be recorded

- Once in the quiet space, staff involved should try to understand the situation using the techniques outlined in the pupil's individual support plan to de-escalate the situation
- A dynamic risk assessment should be taken to recognise if the child needs space, time and quiet. Children should not usually be left unsupervised in a quiet space, however at times it may be appropriate to allow the child to calm on their own within the room but staff must still be able to see them in order to ensure their safety.
- At no time should children be locked in a quiet space or classroom. Where a child is very distressed and at a point of crisis where they pose a risk to themselves or others and is unable to respond to or process requests, staff may need to implement a dynamic risk assessment and use restrictive physical intervention according to the above on emergency interventions
- When a quiet space has been used as part of an incident, this must be recorded appropriately in line with policy and if necessary, risk assessments and behaviour support plans should be updated

Elm House School will not support the restriction of a child's right to freely leave a quiet space, unless there is an immediate danger of harm to the individual or others. Any restriction and action will be treated as a restrictive intervention by the member(s) of staff involved and the incident will be reviewed to ensure the event was handled appropriately. All incidents of restrictive practice will be recorded within 24 hours of this occurring.

The use of touch

Touch can be used to calm, comfort, divert and distract children who are distressed. Physical contact is an integral part of delivering an effective therapeutic programme – a distressed child cannot be refused a hug or a comforting hold and a positive recognition of this requires that Elm House School's policy and training include more than the use of physical interventions in challenging situations.

Nurturing and proactive physical contact can be immensely reassuring and making this available to our children can prevent behavioural challenges developing as well as contribute significantly to emotional recovery.

In line with The Children Act guidance, any physical contact should be about meeting the needs of the child. Some children welcome physical contact, whilst others avoid it. This may be linked to a child's history, their stage of recovery and the quality of the relationship they have with a particular adult. It would be inappropriate to offer specific policy guidance in relation to touch in particular situations, however, the following general points apply in all cases:

- Adults working in our schools should be mindful of their use of touch
- Due regard should be given to gender issues
- Contact with sensitive areas should be avoided
- Physical contact can be misinterpreted and people need to be conscious of this

- If any concern is expressed by anyone about the appropriateness of a particular interaction, this should be reported to a line manager and recorded. Open and honest recording is protective of both children and adults.

Searches, screening and confiscation

At Elm House School we have a duty of care to all pupils. Searching, screening and confiscation in our school is conducted in line with the DfE's latest guidance on [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#) to:

- Safeguard all pupils by confiscating harmful, illegal or disruptive items
- Ensure the safeguarding needs and wellbeing of pupils suspected of possessing these items

The 'best interests' of the child should be your primary consideration. We will only search a pupil if we have good reason to, we are mindful that this could infringe upon their wellbeing and rights in several different ways. For example:

- Physical loss of privacy when clothes, bags or possessions are searched
- Loss of a sense of security, if they feel they are monitored and searched without reason
- The impact to a pupil's dignity or reputation if they are unduly searched or suspected of possessing prohibited items

At Elm House School we treat confiscations as a safeguarding issue. Children in possession of drugs, alcohol or weapons should be considered vulnerable and at risk of exploitation. As per

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686b94eefe1a249e937cbd2d/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2025.pdf, we need to consider:

- Signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Challenging family circumstances, such as drug and alcohol misuse
- Misuse of drugs or alcohol themselves

Searching a child

School staff can search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees. Schools are not required to have formal written agreement from the pupil. For example, a teacher may ask a pupil to turn out their pockets or ask if they can look in their bag. If a pupil refused to co-operate with such a search, the teacher could apply an appropriate sanction as set out in the behaviour policy.

If they have reasonable grounds for suspecting the pupil is in possession of a "prohibited item", the Senior Leadership Team and members of the school staff authorised by the Executive Headteacher can search the pupil without their agreement. The member of staff may not require the pupil being searched to remove clothing other than outer clothing.

The law states that the member of staff conducting the search must be of the same sex as the pupil being searched. There must be another member of staff present as a witness to the search, where possible the witness should also be the same sex.

There is a limitation to this rule. This is that a member of staff can search a pupil of the opposite sex and /or without a witness present only:

- If the member of staff carrying out the search reasonably believes there is risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency; and
- In the time available, it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff.

An appropriate location for the search should be found. Where possible, this should be away from other pupils. The search must only take place on the school premises or where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, for example on a school trip.

A search can be considered if the member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item or any item identified below:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images

Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to:

- Commit an offence
- Cause personal injury (including the pupil) or damage to property

The list is set out in [Education Act 2011](#) and paragraph 3 of the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

School staff can confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty in the same circumstances as other disciplinary penalties. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated, provided they acted lawfully. Staff should consider whether the confiscation is proportionate and consider any special circumstances relevant to the case.

If a pupil continues to refuse to co-operate, the member of staff may use an appropriate sanction in line with the school's behaviour policy, escalating to a Senior Leader or

DSL. Staff should ensure that they are responding to misbehaviour consistently and fairly. If the member of staff still considers a search to be necessary, they should seek the advice of the headteacher/DSL. During this time the pupil should be supervised and kept away from other pupils. If the pupil still refuses to co-operate, the member of staff should assess whether it is appropriate to use reasonable force to conduct the search. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for any prohibited items identified in the prohibited items list. This should follow the Proactive Approaches training completed by all staff members. The decision to use reasonable force should be made on a case-by-case basis. The member of staff should consider whether conducting the search will prevent the pupil harming themselves or others, damaging property or from causing disorder. It should be noted that the use of reasonable force will differ depending on whether the member of staff is searching possessions or the pupil themselves.

When a person conducting a search finds an electronic device the school rules allow pupils to be search for, or that they reasonably suspect has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property, they may examine any data if they think there is a good reason to. The member of staff conducting the search must have regard to the guidance in section 15 of [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#). When an incident involved nudes or semi nudes, the member of staff should refer the incident to the DSL (or deputy) as the most appropriate person to advise on the school's response. Handling such reports or concerns can be especially complicated and schools should follow the principles as set out in

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686b94eefe1a249e937cbd2d/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2025.pdf .

In the event of discovering a weapon, schools should treat this with the utmost seriousness and it may be appropriate to consider exclusion as one possible response.

Detailed guidance for schools can be found in Searching, screening and confiscation at school. Headteachers and school staff should read and follow this guidance.

Recording and reporting

Individual Support Plans

Each child has an Individual Support Plan. This should be based upon available history as well as direct assessment and observation. The suitability and effectiveness of the plan needs to be monitored in practice and modified to reflect observed needs and demands.

The distribution of and adherence to the plan should be a cornerstone of the overall practice of positive behaviour management across the whole organisation. The consistent implementation of the behavioural principles and strategies contained within the plan is key to the successful management of challenging behaviour. All

adults who work with a child should be familiar with the relevant ISPs and actively supported to implement them consistently.

Plans should clearly:

- Identify strategies that are aimed at reducing the likelihood, frequency and severity of challenging behaviour
- Direct staff on how to respond to challenging behaviour when it does happen in the least aversive, non-threatening way, that doesn't involve the use of physical interventions
- Explain circumstances under which physical interventions might be required and direction relating to the criteria for use of such strategies with the particular child

Incident reports

Where an incident involving behaviour of concern has taken place and/or the use of restrictive physical intervention has been used as part of this policy, these will be recorded on the relevant report on the same day or within 24 hours, at the latest. This will also record and report follow-up interventions and strategies as part of this policy. The independent school standards (paragraph 9(c)) require that a record is kept of the consequences imposed upon pupils for misbehaviour. A record of any consequences given is included in the full report for each incident.

Following an incident, carers, social workers and other relevant professionals will be consulted and copies of relevant documentation will be made available and all information shared within 48 hours of the incident occurring. Incident reports are important legal documentation and should be treated as such.

SEND

Recognising the impact of SEND on behaviour

Elm House School understands that behaviours can present as a form of communication and that behaviour may be impacted by a special educational need or disability (SEND).

All of the children attending Elm House School schools are recognised as having a SEND.

When incidents of misbehaviour arise, we will consider them in relation to an individual's SEND, although we recognise that not every incident of misbehaviour will be connected to their SEND.

Decisions on whether a SEND had an impact on an incident of misbehaviour will be made on an individual child and individual incident basis although behaviours will be logged to identify trends and patterns in behaviours for us to be proactive in supporting our children.

At Elm House School, our rules, rewards, sanctions and strategies take into account the SEND in school and consider this when dealing with misbehaviour from individuals, especially where their SEND affects their behaviour.

Elm House School will balance its legal obligations when making decisions about enforcing this behaviour policy. These legal duties include:

- Taking reasonable steps to avoid causing any substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil caused by the service's policies or practices (Equality Act 2010)
- Using our best endeavours to meet the needs of individuals with SEND (Children and Families Act 2014)
- If a child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan, the provisions set out in that plan must be secured and the school must co-operate with the local authority and other bodies

Each child that attends a Elm House School will have an individual education plan, individual support plan, an individual risk assessment, and a one-page risk and vulnerabilities profile taking into account the child's needs, known probable behaviours and strategies to proactively, actively and reactively support our children and also post-incident management.

Individual plans include the following key information:

- Any diagnoses and diagnosis under assessment
- Vulnerabilities
- Communication needs including strategies to communicate
- Risk taking behaviours
- Triggers – likes and dislikes to be able to plan learning accordingly
- Strategies to learn (active, proactive and reactive approaches and de-escalation techniques)
- Physical intervention techniques (Proactive Approaches)

This information is pertinent when considering the behaviour sanctions which should be applied for children with SEND and the child's understanding of the incident, the rule or instructions, and the level of self-control and aggression due to their SEND.

Training

Elm House School ensures that all staff receive continuous professional development and training to be able to understand the needs of children in the schools and how to support individual needs. Staff will also receive daily information and updates around children with strategies to support the management of behaviour and support children in their care. The main emphasis of our positive behaviour support training is on preventative strategies – primary and secondary, with a strong focus on the use of Individual Support Plans (ISPs). There is a parallel focus on environmental management and monitoring as a feature of the overall therapeutic programme. Within the overall positive behaviour support strategy, physical interventions are taught as

reactive strategies with the only goal being to establish safe and rapid control over significantly dangerous behaviour. Physical interventions are not included in ISPs without a parallel and greater emphasis on the use of positive behaviour management strategies.

Because of the emphasis on minimising physical interventions, our practical training also includes:

- Environmental awareness
- Proxemics (distance, regulation and zoning)
- Help protocol – teamwork, active redirection and change of face
- Self-awareness of arousal state
- Active disengagement
- Strategic capitulation

Staff wellbeing

It is recognised that managing complex needs can be stressful for individuals and for teams, and at Halliwell Homes we aim to create a positive and trauma informed whole school culture. Our strategies support individuals to be aware of and also manage their own well-being. Schools support colleagues after an incident and/or challenging day in a non-judgemental and empathic safe space and post incident debriefs are mandatory. Teams are also supported with regular team meetings, supervision sessions and clinical support.

Monitoring

Elm House School will collect and review data on the following to support the needs of individuals, support staff and the school environment:

- Levels of pupil participation
- Behavioural incidents
- Attendance
- Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention
- Incidents of searching, screening and confiscation
- Incidents of bullying
- Direct observation of pupils' behaviour
- Team meetings

The school will ensure that the results are reviewed regularly in ensure the school is meeting the statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Policy review

This policy document will be reviewed by the Education Director on an annual basis to ensure it is up to date with current legislation and best practice.

Date approved: December 2019

Date last reviewed: September 2026

Next review (or before): September 2027

Signed: 

Position: Education Director