

Behaviour Policy

1. Purpose

The Rise School is an autism specific school. We know that for many of our pupils, their communication difficulties, sensory impairment, sensory processing difficulties and mental health issues can lead to some form of behaviours of distress at some point during a typical school day, week, month, or year. For some autistic pupils, a lack of social imagination can also lead to peer misunderstanding that can quickly escalate into behaviour of distress or behaviour that might cause distress to others.

This policy seeks to provide staff and other key stakeholders with clear guidelines as to how behaviour is understood and how behaviours of distress are managed in our school. A shared understanding and a consistent approach amongst all staff are essential to upholding our values, ensuring our pupils feel safe, and providing the best possible support for them. The attitudes, perceptions and values of the staff working with our pupils will have a significant effect on the incidence of behaviours of distress and the effectiveness of how they are managed.

Our Ambitious Approach underpins all our thinking and practice. It is an approach to education created by Ambitious about Autism to support autistic children and young people. It has been developed to provide high-quality education whilst affording dignity, respect, and compassion, in all aspects of our provision, including the consideration of mental health and wellbeing. The Ambitious Approach is based upon a person's indisputable rights to be:

- Treated with dignity and compassion
- Valued
- Listened to
- Supported to have the best quality of life possible
- Empowered to make choices and decide on how they want to live their life.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Physical Intervention policy
- Serious Incident Reporting policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection policy and procedure
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedure
- Risk Assessment policy
- Exclusion policy
- Debriefing policy
- Whistleblowing policy

This policy takes account of [guidance](#) published by Department of Education in September 2022.

2. Scope

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to meet need and understand behaviours of distress, there are senior leaders at The Rise School who have a specific remit in this area. They are

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the Head of School and an Assistant Head who normally is responsible for Behaviour and Attitudes.

3. What is meant by 'behaviours of distress'?

At The Rise School, 'behaviours of distress' typically fall within the following categories:

- Self-harm (e.g., head banging, biting)
- Harm to others (e.g., hitting, pushing, punching, scratching, biting, throwing)
- Damage to property (e.g., smashing equipment, ripping displays, forceful opening of doors)
- Vocalisation (e.g., swearing, screaming, shouting)
- Sexualised behaviour (e.g., masturbation or inappropriate touching)
- Pica (e.g., eating non-edible items)

These behaviours are considered to signal distress when they are of an intensity, frequency or duration as to impact on the quality of life and/or the physical safety of the young person or those around them.

4. Causes of behaviours of distress

Behaviours of distress can often be perceived as a 'problem' to be treated or stopped. This is not the case at The Rise School. Behaviours of distress are nearly always a response to adverse environmental circumstances and serve a function.

Behaviours of distress are **not** likely to occur when a young person:

- Understands what is happening and is understood by those around them;
- Is doing things that they have chosen to do or with people that they have chosen to be with;
- Is healthy and not in pain or discomfort;
- Is with others with whom they have positive relationships;
- Feels comfortable and safe in the environment; and
- Is meaningfully engaged.

Therefore, when behaviours of distress arise, young people are not to be blamed or punished for their behaviour, instead, we must consider:

- How the behaviour is serving a function for the individual; and
- What the behaviour is communicating.

We do this through utilising Positive Behaviour Support (PBS).

It is important to note that we only seek to address the development of behaviours that support quality of life and we do not teach behaviours for the purpose of 'normalising'. For example, self-stimulatory behaviour ('stimming') would not become a focus of intervention unless this severely impacted on quality of life for an individual.

5. Positive Behaviour Support

PBS is an intervention framework for supporting people with behaviours of distress. The framework enables support to be offered that focusses on:

- Enhancing the quality of life for the individual and others involved in their life;
- Developing an understanding of the behaviour based on an assessment of their social and physical environment;
- The full inclusion and involvement of the individual being supported, their family members and/or their advocate; and
- Developing, implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of a personalised system of support.

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PBS involves provision of a tiered system of support to facilitate a focus on prevention as well as response. The level of provision a pupil accesses is determined by the team of professionals supporting them at The Rise School. We call this team the Transdisciplinary Team (TDT).

6. Tier 1/ Universal Support

Most of our time and energy needs to go into preventing behaviours of distress from happening through a universal level of support. This involves putting into place a range of proactive curriculum and environmental supports that are known to assist pupils in staying regulated (e.g. low arousal classroom environments, augmentative communication, minimal noise, structured teaching, visual supports, predictable routines meaningful tasks with appropriate level of challenge). This also involves being aware of things that can cause a young person to become dysregulated and could act as a trigger for behaviours of distress. In addition, we need to ensure that the curriculum that pupils access covers the core/basic skills needed to prevent behaviours of distress.

If/when Tier 1 intervention provides insufficient support, more targeted (tier 2) or specialist (tier 3) intervention should be provided. In such instances, assessment and support strategies should be person-centred and grounded directly in information/ data that has been gathered about the person and their environment. This process, known as a 'functional assessment', begins with a systematic review of when, where, how and why a young person displays behaviours of distress.

7. Tier 2/ Targeted Support

Tier 2 support is provided to reduce the frequency and intensity of behaviours of distress by providing focused, intensive, group-orientated intervention in situations where the behaviours occur. This usually involves a process of systematic data collection to enable the effective intervention programmes to be developed and reviewed.

8. Tier 3/ Specialist Support

Tier 3 support is provided when the behaviours of distress are unlikely to be addressed at the first two tiers. Tier 3 involves provision of highly individualised behaviour support plans and includes specific protocols for responding to behaviours of distress. Tier 3 provision will often warrant large environmental adaptations such as a 2:1 staffing support or the requirement of a quiet space when in crisis.

It is important to note that the tiering system is not static, and the levels of provision needed will fluctuate. Half termly reviews of tiering support are undertaken by the behaviour analyst team at The Rise School.

9. Positive Behaviour Support Plans

When a pupil joins the school, a Risk Assessment for Behaviours of Distress is undertaken. Where this highlights a risk(s) that needs mitigating, a Positive Behaviour Support plan (PBS plan) is developed and implemented. PBS plans define a behaviour of distress and highlight what the causes/triggers are believed to be. Proactive intervention strategies are laid out alongside the skills that should be taught to enable non harmful behaviour and behaviour that will support quality of life. The plans also include strategies for managing/reacting to the behaviour of distress when it occurs. In every plan, the strategies to prevent the behaviour from occurring outweigh the strategies for reacting to it. As outlined in our Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy, the use of physical intervention will only be incorporated into behaviour support plans in instances where behaviours of distress present an immediate and clear risk to keeping everyone safe.

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All PBS plans are reviewed “as and when” needed, but at least six monthly. The responsibility for the creation and review of PBS plans sits with PBS specialists. Risk assessments of behaviours of distress, and corresponding PBS plans, are also undertaken and developed immediately following any incidents that cause or had the potential to cause injury or distress.

Whilst not all pupils have PBS plans in place, all have personalised support plans, such as Communication, Regulation and Wellbeing Passports, to help staff meet individual needs and support quality of life. This reflects our primary approach to preventing behaviours of distress.

10. Training and supporting staff

All new staff at The Rise School follow a structured induction programme, focused on The Ambitious Approach. This includes a competency framework that provides a basis for development, evaluation and feedback.

All staff receive regular training and support to ensure that they have the skills, knowledge and understanding to work effectively with all pupils. Staff engage in a three-step process before working “one-to-one” with pupils. Firstly, training with specific pupils and their individualised support plans takes place through a day of shadowing with another team member. The second training opportunity allows for new staff to start to build a rapport with the young person that are supporting, alongside a fully trained and competent team member, taking a lead with the full support of a second staff member. The final stage of training allows the new staff member to take the lead for a full day with the support of an experienced staff member on hand but taking a step back. Staff are also regularly supervised and supported by their line managers and, where appropriate, through clinical supervision meetings.

Regular inset days and weekly twilight trainings should be used to ensure that staff members remain up to date and fully supported to engage in best practice.

11. Challenges with meeting needs

This policy highlights how failing to meet the physical and psychological needs of autistic young people with and without learning disabilities can result in behaviours of distress. It is important that staff are able to understand and meet these needs within the school environment and are able to address behaviours of distress as a result, and where this results in being unable to keep a young person or those around them safe, we will involve external agencies around that young person, usually this means holding a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meeting. The purpose of an MDT meeting is to ensure that all stake holders are aware of the circumstance(s) leading to the meeting being held and to fully explore every avenue of support that can be provided for the young person. In rare cases, we might recommend alternative provision is sought where the young person’s needs can be met. Decisions such as these are reached following Tier 3 intervention delivered over time and in collaboration with staff, parents/carers and, where possible, the young person. Decisions made about the school’s ability to meet an individual’s needs will ultimately be decided at an annual review or emergency annual review where decisions about alternative provision can also be explored. This differs to decisions made to permanently exclude a young person as outlined in our school’s exclusion policies.

12. Searching, screen and confiscation

The Rise school is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of pupils and staff and, in line with current relevant legislation (including the government-issued Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools document September 2022 and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2023), the school can search pupils for any item, if the pupil agrees. The Head of School, and members of staff as authorised by the Head of School, have a statutory

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power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may be in possession of a prohibited item. Where practicable, the school will consult with parents before a search takes place.

Staff must be the same sex (as recorded at birth) as the pupil being searched. Where this may cause concern due to a pupil's gender identity not aligning with their sex, decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. There must be a witness (also a staff member), the witness should be the same sex (as recorded at birth) as the pupil being searched. There is a limited exception to this rule, where it is reasonable to believe that there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if a search is not conducted immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff. School staff can view CCTV footage in order to make a decision as to whether to conduct a search for an item. The staff member conducting the search may not require the pupil to remove any clothing other than outer clothing. 'Outer clothing' means clothing that is not worn next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear but 'outer clothing' includes hats, shoes, boots, gloves and scarves. Staff can request pupils to turn out their pockets or bag if they suspect they are in possession of a prohibited item. Authorised school staff can require pupils to undergo screening using a hand-held scanner.

After a search has taken place, this must be reported to either the Head of School or the Deputy Head of School and a record must be kept on the school safeguarding reporting system. School staff can seize any item, which they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline. The school will inform the individual pupil's parents or carers, as soon as is practicable, where prohibited items are found.

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