

# **The Bridge School**

## **Behaviour Policy**

This document was accepted and ratified on: January 2024

Review date: January 2026

Person responsible: Maria Jackson, Head of School

## **Our Principles**

The Bridge provides a safe, calm and nurturing environment supporting students with mental health and medical needs.

It is vital that all students attending The Bridge are courteous, considerate, caring and inclusive, and behave in a manner that ensures all of our students are made to feel safe and protected.

The staff at the school work in partnership with all professionals and parents/carers in helping the young person re-engage with learning in a positive and secure environment.

We aim to:

- Provide a nurturing approach that involves consistent, empathetic 'boundaried' relationships between staff and students
- Recognise that our students have unmet needs, which require additional support appropriate to their emotional/social age and not their calendar age
- Clearly communicate with students and parents/carers the school's expectations of behaviour
- Develop students ability to understand and communicate their emotions
- Focus on praising and rewarding good behaviour
- Ensure our students feel wanted, valued and supported despite their behaviour.
- Ensure staff act as appropriate role models for our students.
- Be mindful of our verbal and body language as well as our emotional reactions to the students and how we respond to them

## **Core Beliefs**

- Poor behaviour will not be tolerated, as unruly conduct will have a detrimental impact on students attending our school
- The Bridge must have a clear, concise strategies in place to help students who are struggling with their behaviour
- We are consistent in our approach to poor behaviour, in order that each individual understands the school's expectations and consequences for breaking school rules
- The school places high value on good behaviour rewarding students for good conduct, excellent attendance, punctuality and homework and for demonstrating heartfelt compassion, boundless creativity and courageous optimism

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The classroom teacher will:**

- Be on time ready to greet the class
- Remain calm and behave in a professional manner at all times
- Demand and model high standards of behaviour from all students
- Follow a suitable seating plan
- Address any issue of poor behaviour in the first instance using the classroom behaviour code of conduct
- Staff will record any incidents using the school's behaviour log
- Staff will ensure all homework is recorded in the student's school planner

### **Head and Deputy Head of School will:**

- Review and monitor the behaviour log on a regular basis
- Provide support to staff in all matters relating to poor behaviour
- Work with students to support them to reflect on their behaviour
- Encourage students to apologise to staff and explore strategies for making good choices
- Ensure all behavioural matters are discussed in detail at the school's weekly pastoral meetings
- Inform staff of any issues or changes which may affect a student's behaviour at school
- Communicate with parents/carers to ensure they are made fully aware of any behavioural issues the school encounters
- Facilitate behaviour support plans if required
- Liaise with the referring school and report any behavioural concerns, which could impact on the student's placement.

### **Parents/carers will:**

- Work in partnership with staff to ensure good behaviour
- Inform staff of any concerns
- Respond to concerns raised by staff
- Ensure students come to school correctly equipped and prepared to work
- Have a positive, respectful approach and be supportive of staff
- Support the schools Code of Conduct
- Inform the school about any problems which might affect your son/daughter's learning
- Support the school and its policies

### **Students' Code of Conduct**

The Bridge is a calm and peaceful school where students come to re-engage with learning.

As a student, I will do my best to:

- Learn and achieve to the best of my ability at all times
- Show respect for others both in and out of school
- Attend school every day and arrive on time
- Adopt a positive attitude towards, and participate fully in, the life of the school
- Come to school with the equipment I need to learn
- Follow the school's Code of Conduct
- Wear appropriate attire for school
- Co-operate with teachers and support staff without questioning
- Record and complete all of my homework
- Respect the school environment and the local community
- Keep my planner up to date and make sure books are properly looked after
- Be responsible for taking communications to and from school and home when necessary

## **Rewards and Consequences**

**Clear consequences are essential for our students, but the emphasis should always be on rewarding positive behaviour**

**Possible rewards include:**

- Praise, including regular positive contact between school and home
- Reward points are rewarded to students across all subject areas
- Post cards are sent home recognising good behaviour, work ethic and kindness
- Half termly certificates are awarded to students
- Being given extra school responsibilities

**As a specialist SEMH School, ‘one size fits all’ approach to consequences are inappropriate.**

Possible consequences include:

- Reflection time, that may take place during break or lunch
- Sessions with the School’s Life Coach taking time to reflect on the feelings behind the behaviour
- Withdrawal of specific activities, where it is deemed unsafe for the student to take part
- Time arranged to complete work that may have been missed; this may take place after school or during the student’s social time
- Sitting with the Head or Deputy Head of School to reflect and calm down before returning back to class
- Positive Focus Report cards to help support students apply themselves in a positive manner
- Restorative approach/justice

## **Searches and confiscation**

The school recognises that we have a duty of care to all of our students; in all cases, the need to safeguard all students attending The Bridge by confiscating harmful, illegal or disruptive items is vital. There is also a requirement to safeguard the needs and wellbeing of students suspected of possessing these items.

We will confiscate any item that is harmful or detrimental to school discipline. These items will be returned to students after discussion with Head of School or Deputy Head and parents, if appropriate.

## **Searching a student**

A search can be considered if the member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student is in possession of a prohibited item or any item identified in the school rules for which a search can be made, or if the student has agreed. The member of staff will contact a designated team member who has authorisation to conduct the search.

Head of School, Deputy Head of School and authorised staff members only will carry out the search of a student. The search should be conducted by the same gender as the student and with another adult present; before any search is undertaken consent will be sought from the student.

If the authorised member of staff considers a search necessary, but is not required urgently, they will seek the advice of the headteacher, designated safeguarding lead or Deputy Head of School who may have more information about the student. During this time the student will be supervised and kept away from other students

An authorised member of staff of a different sex to the student can carry out a search without another member of staff as a witness if:

The authorised 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 by a member of staff who is the same sex as the student; **or**

It is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff

When an authorised member of staff conducts a search without a witness they should immediately report this to a senior member of staff, and ensure details are reported on the school's Safeguarding Tool to ensure the DSL is immediately notified.

The school will only search a student if the school has good reason to and all searches will be conducted in such a manner as to minimise embarrassment or distress to the student. The school recognises that the action of the school in such cases could infringe on the student's wellbeing and rights. The school will consider that all students have the right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy, under Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

In all cases the school will

- Seek consent from the student
- Conduct the search in a calm and respectful manner
- Explain to the student why the search is happening
- Explain how the search will be conducted and by whom
- Inform the student where this will take place
- Ask the student if they have any questions

If the student refuses to agree to a search, the member of staff can give an appropriate behaviour sanction.

If they still refuse to co-operate, the member of staff will contact the Head of School or Deputy Head of School, to try to determine why the student is refusing to comply.

The authorised member of staff will then decide whether to use reasonable force to search the student. This decision will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration whether conducting the search will prevent the student harming themselves or others, damaging property or from causing disorder. A full report will be made available to the student's referring school and in the event there has been a serious breach of school rules, the student could risk being referred back to their on roll school.

Where there is suspicion of knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs or stolen items (referred to in the legislation as "prohibited items"), the student may be searched without their consent. Where possible the school will inform the parents that a search will be carried out for a prohibited item, prior to the search being carried out. However, in circumstances where it has not been possible to make contact the parents will be informed of the search and outcome after the event and within a timely manner. All searches will be treated as a

safeguarding concern; the DSL will be informed and details will be logged on the school's safeguarding tool My Concern, recording:

- The date, time and location of the search
- Which student was searched
- Who conducted the search and any other adults or students present
- The reason for the search
- What items, if any, were found
- What follow-up action was taken as a consequence of the search

Authorised staff will search a student's bag, pockets and require students to remove outer clothing, meaning clothes that are not worn directly next to the skin or over underwear. Outer clothing also includes:

- Gloves
- Scarves
- Shoes

***The school will search for:***

- Any items with the student's informed consent
- Prohibited or banned items, with or without the student's consent

***Prohibited items are:***

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco, cigarette papers & Vapes
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Scissors
- Razor blades
- 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 student) or damage property

Students who have been in the possession of drug, alcohol or weapons will be considered vulnerable and at risk of exploitation. The school will work with and endeavour to seek the appropriate help from professional services to support the young person.

When items are found they can be confiscated if it is reasonable to do so and they are not allowed under the school rules. Where any article is thought to be a weapon, it must be passed to the Police.

The staff are **not** allowed to carry out strip searches, including the Head of School and authorised staff. Only police under the Police and Criminal Act 1984 (Code A) and in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (Code C) who have been asked to come to the school may decide whether a search is necessary and carry it out.

Before calling the Police into school, staff will assess and balance the risk of a potential strip search on the student's mental and physical wellbeing and the risk of not recovering the suspected item.

Once the police are on school premises, the decision on whether to conduct a strip search lies solely with them. The school will advocate for the safety and wellbeing of the student(s) involved. Staff retain a duty of care to the student involved and should advocate for student wellbeing at all times.

## **Exclusions and Emergency Reviews**

- Occasionally, families will be requested to collect their child from school if the school has explored every strategy and has failed to calm or engage the student. This will be marked as an authorised absence and direction offsite and recorded on the school's behaviour log and on the school's SIMS system. The Head of School has a duty to inform the student's referring school if the student in question is dual registered.
- In extreme cases, the Head of School may exclude a student for a fixed-term, this will be in consultation with the parent, for those students who are dual registered the referring school and the Local Authority responsible for the placement will be advised of the school's actions. The parent/carer will be informed verbally and in writing on the same day.
- If the school is unable to meet the student's needs and/or the student's behaviour is having a detrimental impact on other students attending The Bridge, a professionals meeting will be called with the referring school and the placing authority to re-evaluate the suitability of our school and request that another provision be sought. It is important to note that this is not an exclusion.
- In very exceptional circumstances the Head of School may take a decision to refer a student (who remains on the roll of the referring school) back to their registered school and the referring school may take the decision to permanently exclude the student. An exceptional circumstance may include, extreme violence and/or bringing forbidden items into school such as a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs or assault on another student or member of staff.
- If a student is single registered and in serious breach of the school rules, the Executive Head and Head of School have the right to exclude the student on disciplinary grounds; only the Executive Head and Head of School can issue an exclusion.

A single registered student can be excluded for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year), or permanently.

A fixed term exclusion can be for the whole day or part of the day. For example if the student's behaviour is in breach of the school rules during the morning they may be sent home during the afternoon.

Any decision to exclude should be rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate. If the seriousness of the incident is deemed to be significant, it may be appropriate to issue a fixed term exclusion in review of the initial findings and then issue permanent exclusion in light of further evidence following a thorough investigation.

It must be noted that when establishing the facts in relation to an exclusion, the Executive Head and Head of School must apply the civil standard of proof; i.e. on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'. This means that the Executive Headteacher and Head of School

should accept something happened if it is more likely that it happened than that it did not happen.

The school will treat every incident individually and will look closely at the circumstances of each student involved in each incident. When an allegation has been made regarding a student(s) involvement in a serious incident, the school will always withdraw the student(s) from lessons until such time as it is in a position to carry out its investigation impartially and in a manner that is fair to all involved and is not a punishment for those withdrawn.

The Executive Head and Head of School must not discriminate in the decision and for disabled children; this includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments. The Executive Head and Head of School can exclude an EHCP student but must have regard for the SEND Code of Practice.

The list is not exhaustive, but indicates what may be considered a 'serious' breach of this Policy:

- Persistent disruptive behaviour
- Refusal to follow instructions
- Use of abusive language towards members of our school community
- Bullying, cyber bullying
- Threatening and intimidating behaviour
- Violence and physical assault
- Threats of violence and physical assault
- Inappropriate comments made on social media in relation to staff and students attending the school
- Inappropriate images shared on social media
- Bringing prohibited items to school such as; alcohol, weapons, tobacco and alcohol cigarettes and vapes
- Reckless behaviour which puts others at risk
- Theft
- Sexual Harassment (see school policy)

Whenever a student has been excluded, the school will notify parents without delay of the period of exclusion and the reasons why the school has taken the decision to exclude. Initially, this may be by telephone and the parent will receive written confirmation by either email or post.

In the event the school has taken the decision to permanently exclude a student who is single registered at The Bridge, parents will be notified immediately by telephone followed up in writing the reason for the exclusion and the following process will be adhered to:

Parents will

- To inform parents' right to make representations about the exclusion to the governing body
- How representations will be made; and where there is a legal requirement for the governing body to consider the exclusion, that parents have a right to attend a meeting, to be represented at that meeting
- The Executive Head and Head of School will request a meeting to be organised with a week's notice thorough the Governor's Clerk

- Three governors are required for the panel and if appropriate the Deputy Head of School
- 48 hours beforehand necessary information will be presented to the panel
- Minutes and actions will be written up 48 hours after the panel has met and copied to the panel, the Executive Head and Head of School, the parent/carer and the student

The Bridge will, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding students as students at The Bridge are considered vulnerable due their mental health and wellbeing issues, and will therefore take all the necessary steps to ensure that the school takes input from multi-agencies and has a system of early intervention in place to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour.

In most instances, negative conduct of students towards each other is rare at The Bridge, but is covered by this behaviour policy (and or our anti bullying policy), however, some allegations may be of a more serious nature and raise safeguarding concerns. Allegations made against another student may include physical abuse (e.g. violence, particularly pre-planned; forcing the use of drugs or alcohol), emotional abuse (e.g. bullying, blackmail, sexual violence and sexual harassment, sexting, forcing the watching of pornography or up skirting, which is a criminal offence and typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm and/or sexual exploitation (e.g. photographing or videoing indecent acts).

Sexting is sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via a mobile or over the internet. If any devices need to be seized and passed onto the police, the device(s) will be confiscated, and our Safer Schools Police Officer will be contacted. The device will be turned off and placed in the safe until the police are able to come to retrieve it.

Allegations must always be referred using our online My Concern safeguarding system and will be dealt with as a safeguarding concern by the schools Designated Safeguarding Leads. Further guidance on this area can be found in our Safeguarding Policy and the school's Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment Policy.