Policy Information Sheet

Name of Policy:	**Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy**
Delegated Authority	☒ Trust Board ☐ Nominated Committee ☐ CEO ☐ CFO ☐ Other _____
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1.0	R.Kitson	Updated to reflect current practices	
2.0			July 2025
3.0	SLT	Updated in line with other policies.	July 2026
4.0	R. Kitson	September 2026 compliance update.	06.10.2026

1. Statement of Intent - Promoting Positive Behaviour

At Hartlepool Free School, we believe that behaviour is a symptom and a form of communication. Our students are individuals and all have a variety of learning and physical needs and have varying communicative abilities. Our students face lots of challenges which can affect their day-to-day lives, including; their means of regulating themselves, forming successful relationships, mental health difficulties and communicating needs and frustrations. These challenges can manifest themselves in varied types of challenging behaviour.

We recognise the importance of promoting positive behaviour within our school. It is the aim of Hartlepool Free School to create an environment where pupils and staff are respected and valued. It is within this stable, positive environment that the behavioural, emotional, educational and social needs of our pupils are met.

In line with the Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015), Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2026, Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (2024), and other current Department for Education guidance, Hartlepool Free School adopts an integrated, child-centred approach to meeting the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of its pupils. We work closely with parents, carers and professional colleagues to support pupils within school and in the wider community.

The key principles underlying this policy are the formation and continuance of positive and appropriate relationships between staff and pupils. These relationships are built upon mutual respect for each other thus engendering respect for self and the learning environment.

Hartlepool Free School aims to;

- create a framework within which staff and pupils can develop positive meaningful relationships.

- provide a safe and secure learning and teaching environment within which pupils and staff are valued and where young people can be assisted to reach their full potential.

- provide support for pupils in all aspects of their lives, offering assistance in the transition from school pupil into the world of work and early adulthood.

- build culture, ethos and a safe, positive environment – the health and wellbeing of students and staff is promoted through the informal curriculum, including leadership practice, policies, values and attitudes, alongside the social and physical environment

Promoting Positive Behaviour is a continuous cycle of improvement owned by everyone within Hartlepool Free School and Make It Different Trust. We believe that behaviour can communicate need and that incidents should be used, where appropriate, as opportunities for learning, reflection, repair and the development of safer, more successful ways of responding. High expectations apply to all pupils, alongside the reasonable adjustments and individualised support required by law and by each pupil's needs.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The trustees have overall responsibility for:

- Ensuring that this policy is implemented lawfully, fairly and inclusively and does not discriminate, harass or victimise pupils in relation to any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. The Trust also expects respectful treatment of all pupils and will

address prejudice-based or discriminatory behaviour, including abuse relating to gender identity or perceived identity.

- Promoting a whole-school culture where calm, dignity and structure encompass every space and activity.
  Reviewing behaviour, bullying, discriminatory incident, suspension/permanent exclusion and restrictive-intervention information at an appropriate level, including patterns or disproportionality relating to SEND, disability or other protected characteristics, and challenging leaders where action is required.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the Trust's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- The monitoring and implementation of this policy and of the behaviour procedures within the trust. This includes the policy's effectiveness in addressing any SEMH-related drivers of poor behaviour.
- Establishing the standard of behaviour expected by students within the trust.
- Determining the trust's rules and any disciplinary sanctions for breaking the rules.
- The day-to-day implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring this policy is published and clearly communicated to staff, pupils and parents/carers, with expectations revisited at least annually and during induction or re-induction where appropriate.
- Reporting to the trustees on the implementation of this policy, including its effectiveness in addressing any SEMH-related issues that could be the cause of any dysregulation.
- Overseeing the whole-trust approach to our graduated response to SEMH, including how this is reflected in this policy, how staff are supported with supporting students with SEMH-related behavioural difficulties, and how the trust engages students and parents with regards to the behaviour of students with SEMH difficulties.
- Senior Leaders recognise the need for a well-trained, competent workforce able to meet the complex social, emotional and mental health needs of pupils. Leaders will ensure appropriate induction, ongoing training and support so staff understand the behaviour culture, safeguarding responsibilities, reasonable adjustments, de-escalation, and the lawful use and recording/reporting of restrictive interventions.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Planning and reviewing support for students with SEMH issues in collaboration with parents, the SEMH Lead and, where appropriate, the students themselves.
- Aiming to teach all students the full curriculum, regardless of their barriers to learning.
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every student achieving their full potential.
- Being responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the students in their class.
- Delivering Thrive sessions, following a Thrive Action Plan and following the Thrive ethos around the trust.
- Writing and overseeing CASS (Consistent Approach to Supporting Students) Plans and ensuring agreed strategies are followed consistently.

All members of staff, including teaching and support staff, and volunteers are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy.
- Supporting students in adhering to this policy.
- Promoting a supportive and high-quality learning environment.
- Modelling high levels of behaviour.

- Recognising that behaviour may be a sign of unmet need, distress, abuse, exploitation or other safeguarding concern, and following the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and reporting concerns promptly to the DSL or deputy.
- Setting high expectations for every student.
- Being aware of pupils' identified needs, outcomes, CASS plans, risk assessments and support, and making reasonable adjustments and following agreed strategies consistently.
- Staff are all aware of their roles and responsibilities in the delivery of appropriate education, pastoral care and behaviour management within the organisation.
- All staff have responsibility for the development and implementation of programmes of learning that meet the needs of our pupils.
- Strong partnerships with parents and carers are maintained through regular contact, support, guidance, and home visits.
- Positive behaviour is promoted through a holistic approach, working with services such as Psychological Services, CAMHS, and Social Work.

Students are responsible (where appropriate) for:

- Working, with support appropriate to their age, development and needs, towards the school's behaviour expectations in school, online where behaviour affects the school community, and when representing or travelling to and from school.
- Reporting any unacceptable behaviour to a member of staff.

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Working in partnership with the school to help their child understand and meet the school's behaviour expectations, while sharing information about needs or circumstances that may require additional support or reasonable adjustments.
- Informing the school of any changes in circumstances which may affect their child's behaviour.

3. Legal Framework

Legislation

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Health Act 2006
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025

Statutory Guidance and Key Documents

- DfE (2024) Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff
- DfE (2026) Keeping children safe in education (effective 1 September 2026)

- DfE (2026) Working together to safeguard children and KCSIE 2026 provisions on child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment
- DfE (2018) *Mental health and behaviour in schools*
- DfE (2015) *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years*
- DfE (2026) Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (effective 1 April 2026)
- DfE (2022, updated 2023) Searching, screening and confiscation: guidance for schools
- DfE (2026) Mobile phones in schools - statutory guidance to be followed from 1 September 2026
- DfE (2026) Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (effective 26 July 2026)
- DfE (2022) Searching, Screening and Confiscation

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Assessment Marking and Feedback
- Attendance Policy
- Curriculum Aims Policy
- Holding Safely Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Learner Voice Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Restorative Practice Policy

References:

The Escalation Cycle, *Managing the Cycle of Acting-Out Behaviour in the* Classroom by Geoff Colvin, 2004.

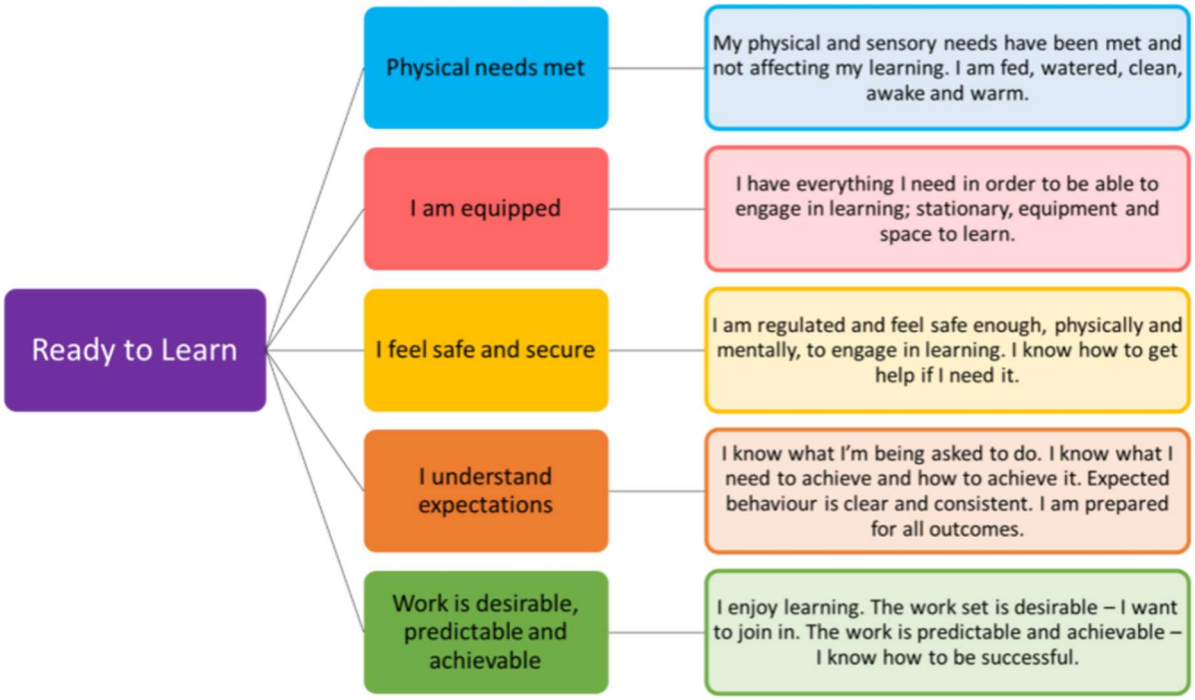
- *The Pyramid of Learning*, Taylor and Trott, 1991.
- *The Zones of Regulation,* Leah Kuypers, 2011.
- *The Thrive Approach,* Fronting the Challenge Projects Ltd, Available at: https://www.thriveapproach.com (Accessed: 18 August 2025).

4. Principles in Practice

4.1 Readiness to Learn

Hartlepool Free School, believe that before learning takes place students must become Ready to Learn. We believe that a person cannot be Ready to Learn until they; have their physical needs met; are equipped; feel safe and secure; understand expectations and the work is desirable, predictable and achievable.

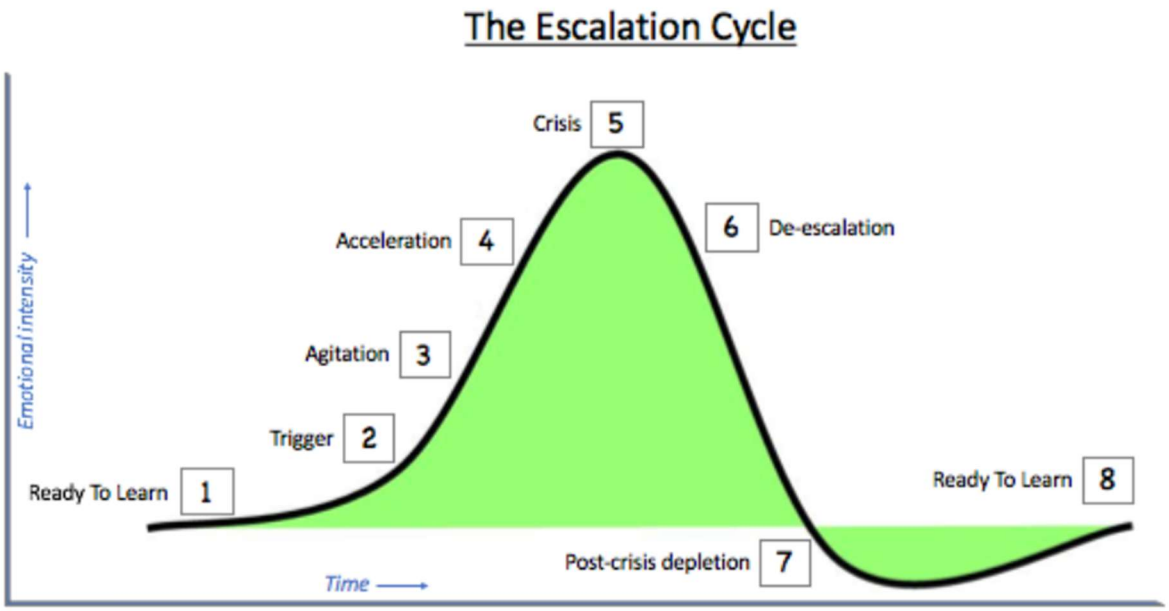
Staff will use the Ready to Learn flow chart and classroom management to prepare students for learning and to assess against low-level disruption in the classroom.



4.2 The Escalation Cycle

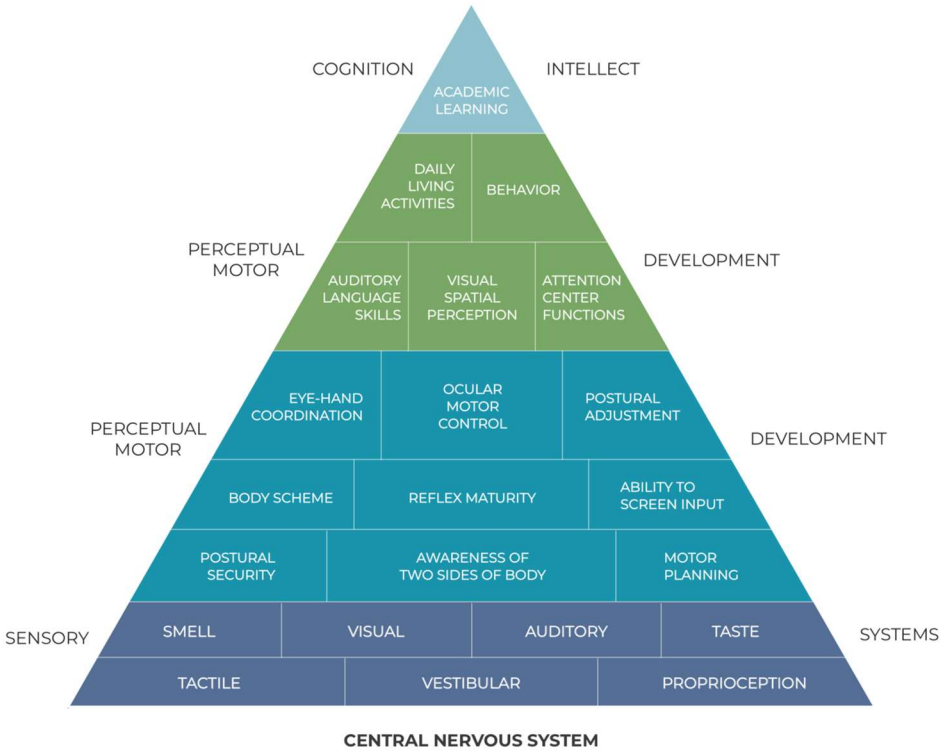
When general classroom management including 'Ready to Learn', has not managed to meet the student's needs, staff will use the Escalation Cycle to assess what sort of consistent response to behaviour is needed.

Phase 1 – Ready to Learn – Student is engaged in learning.
Phase 2 – Trigger: Something has happened to make the student uncomfortable, stimulated, confused or irritated.
Phase 3 – Agitation: The student is struggling to manage their response to the trigger.
Phase 4 – Acceleration: The student is losing control of themselves and needs support to help them to return to calmness.
Phase 5 – Crisis: The student has lost control. They need an adult to take control and make a decision for them to contain their crisis.
Phase 6 – De-escalation: Student is returning to a calmer state with adult support.
Phase 7 – Post-crisis depletion: Student may be feeling low, embarrassed, confused or frustrated following incident.
Phase 8 – Re-entering state of Ready to Learn: Student and adult to talk about what happened and agree to how we will manage this better next time. Student understands why adults responded how they did. Student given chance to wipe slate clean and re-enter classroom in a state of Ready to Learn.



4.3 Sensory Needs

At Hartlepool Free School, we recognise that meeting sensory needs is an essential part of supporting students with additional needs to be Ready to Learn. The Pyramid of Learning (*Taylor/Troft 1991*) shows us all of the sensory needs to consider *before* academic learning can be achieved.



4.4 The Thrive Approach

The Thrive Approach is a therapeutic approach to help support students with their emotional and social development. The Thrive approach offers practical strategies and techniques and is built around online assessments which identify student's emotional development providing action plans for each individual's needs.

The Thrive Approach draws on insights from recent advances in neuroscience, attachment theory and child development, to provide a powerful way of working with students and young people that supports optimal social and emotional development. In addition, the approach can equip you to work in a targeted way with students and young people who may have struggled with difficult life events to help them re-engage with life and learning.

The Thrive Approach is in the process of becoming embedded across the Trust, to be used by all staff and where appropriate individual learners have regular 1:1 sessions with a licensed Thrive practitioner.



4.5 PACE Approach

The PACE approach in schools, developed by clinical psychologist Dan Hughes, is a trauma-informed and therapeutic framework focused on building safe and trusting relationships with students, particularly those who have experienced trauma or attachment difficulties. PACE stands for Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy. It aims to help students feel secure, understood, and capable of learning, even amidst challenging experiences.

Key Principles of PACE:

- Playfulness:
  Engaging with students in a lighthearted and enjoyable way to foster connection and ease anxiety.

- Acceptance:
  Demonstrating unconditional positive regard for the child, acknowledging their feelings and experiences without judgment.

- Curiosity:
  Showing genuine interest in the child's perspective, thoughts, and feelings, encouraging them to share their experiences.

- Empathy:
  Validating the child's emotions and demonstrating an understanding of their internal world.

4.6 Consistent Approach to Supporting Students (CASS Plans)

All students at Hartlepool Free School have a CASS Plan. The purpose of a CASS plan is to identify and reflect on the causes of behaviour and to find an individual, meaningful and consistent response to a student's behaviour, that all staff working with the student should follow. We believe that consistency is vital to managing behaviour. The CASS Plan should be a working document and a collaborative document. Where appropriate, the views of the following could be considered when writing and updating a CASS Plan: all who teach, SENCo, Education Psychologist, CAMHS, parents and carers, any other relevant professional and the student themselves.

CASS Plans are written in conjunction with our teaching of the Zones of Regulation.

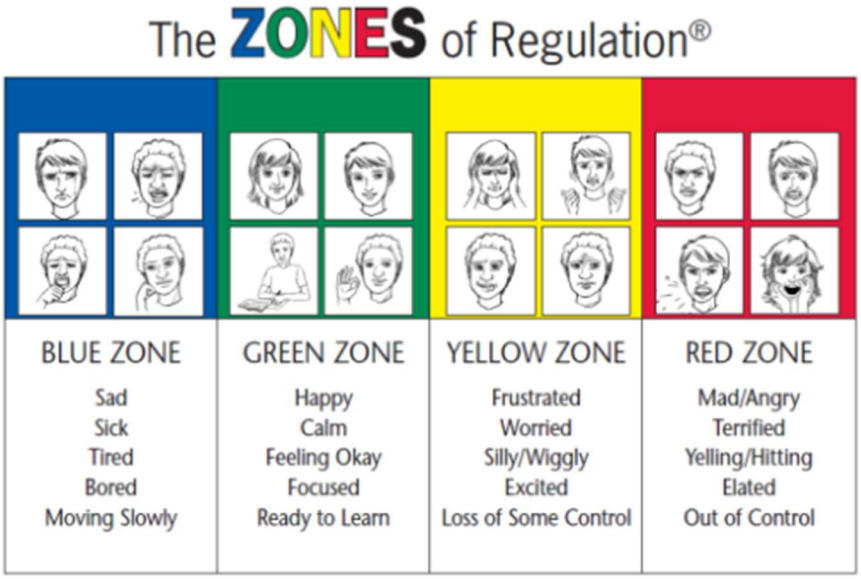
See Appendix 1 for Blank CASS Plan

4.7 The Zones of Regulation

We recognise that teaching students the importance of being 'Ready to Learn' is highly valuable and essential to making progress.

We teach about good behaviour and look for learning opportunities to help students understand behaviour expectations – sometimes taught explicitly in PSHE lessons and pastoral time and sometimes inexplicitly, through, for example, role-modelling and coaching.

At Hartlepool Free School, all of our curriculums include the direct teaching of the Zones of Regulation and its principles are embedded throughout. For example, all staff have been trained in how to use 'Zone Language', all classrooms have Zones of Regulation resources that is relevant to the needs of the learners and students have access to resources that support being 'Ready to Learn'. Where appropriate, students are also taught the neuroscience behind emotions and behaviour, via the Thrive Approach, in order to have a greater understanding of how to regulate. We also have regular awareness days to highlight current SEMH issues.



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4.8 Team Teach

Hartlepool Free School uses Team Teach as one element of its approach to prevention, de-escalation and the safe management of crisis. Restrictive intervention is not a sanction and must never be used to punish, humiliate or secure compliance where there is no lawful justification. All school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances, but any use must be necessary, reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances, using no more force than is necessary and for the least amount of time. Staff should consider whether a less restrictive and effective response is available. Staff who are likely to use restrictive interventions will receive appropriate training, and individual risk assessments and CASS/behaviour support plans will be used where there is an identified risk. Significant incidents involving force, and incidents of seclusion or restraint where the statutory recording/reporting duties apply, will be recorded and reported in accordance with the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025 and DfE guidance. Parents/carers will be informed in accordance with those duties, and pupils and staff will be offered appropriate post-incident support. Full procedures are set out in the Holding Safely Policy.

4.9 Working with Outside Agencies

We recognise the value of working with outside agencies who can provide skills and services that support students with their learning and development both in and outside of school. We recognise the importance of collaboration and strong communication between agencies and professionals and ensure that we maintain excellent professional relationships. The outside agencies that we work with include, but are not limited to:

- Education Psychologists
- CAMHS/LD CAMHS

- Occupational Therapists
- Social Care
- Speech and Language

We also employ a number of Alternative Provisions, who provide alternative learning opportunities for the students that require it. The Alternative Provisions we work with include, but are not limited to:

- Outdoor Ambition
- Evolve
- Daisy Chain
- Nisai
- Field House Farm

4.10 SEND, disability and reasonable adjustments

Hartlepool Free School maintains high expectations for every pupil while recognising that SEND, disability, communication needs, sensory differences, trauma, mental health needs or other circumstances may affect behaviour. The school will anticipate likely triggers where possible, use the graduated approach, secure provision in Education, Health and Care plans, and make reasonable adjustments to policies, routines, teaching, support and sanctions where required. A reasonable adjustment changes how a pupil is enabled to meet an expectation; it does not remove the school's responsibility to keep the pupil and others safe. Behaviour will not automatically be assumed to arise from SEND, and each incident will be considered individually and in context.

5. Expectations of our students

5.1 Key Values

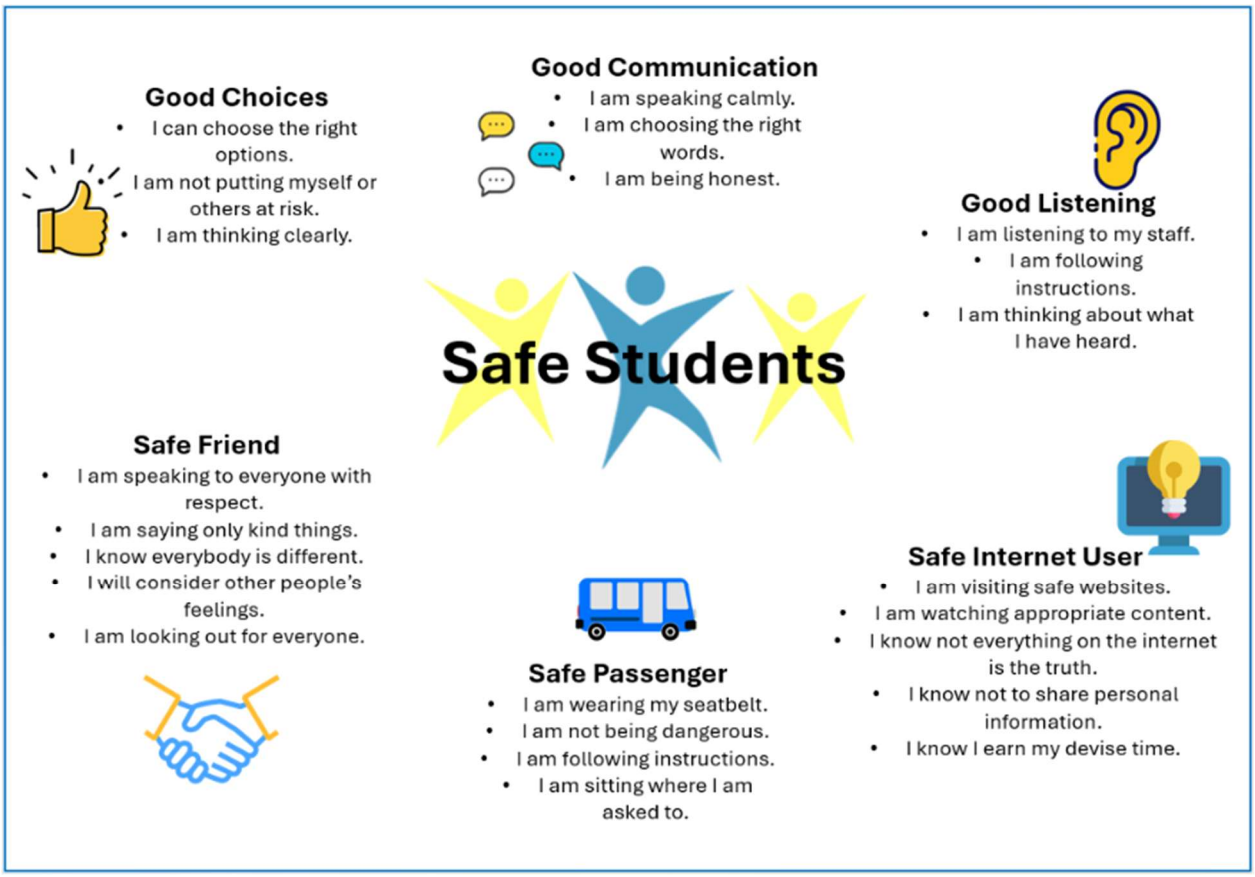
We expect our students to follow and continuously develop their understanding and practice of our 4 Key Values:

- Be friendly, generous and considerate of each other, the environment and of all other living things (*kindness*)
- Take accountability for the decisions that you make and learn from them (*personal responsibility*)
- Have understanding that your abilities can be developed so that you grow and achieve (*growth mindset*)
- Demonstrate capacity to recover from difficulties and move forward (*resilience*)



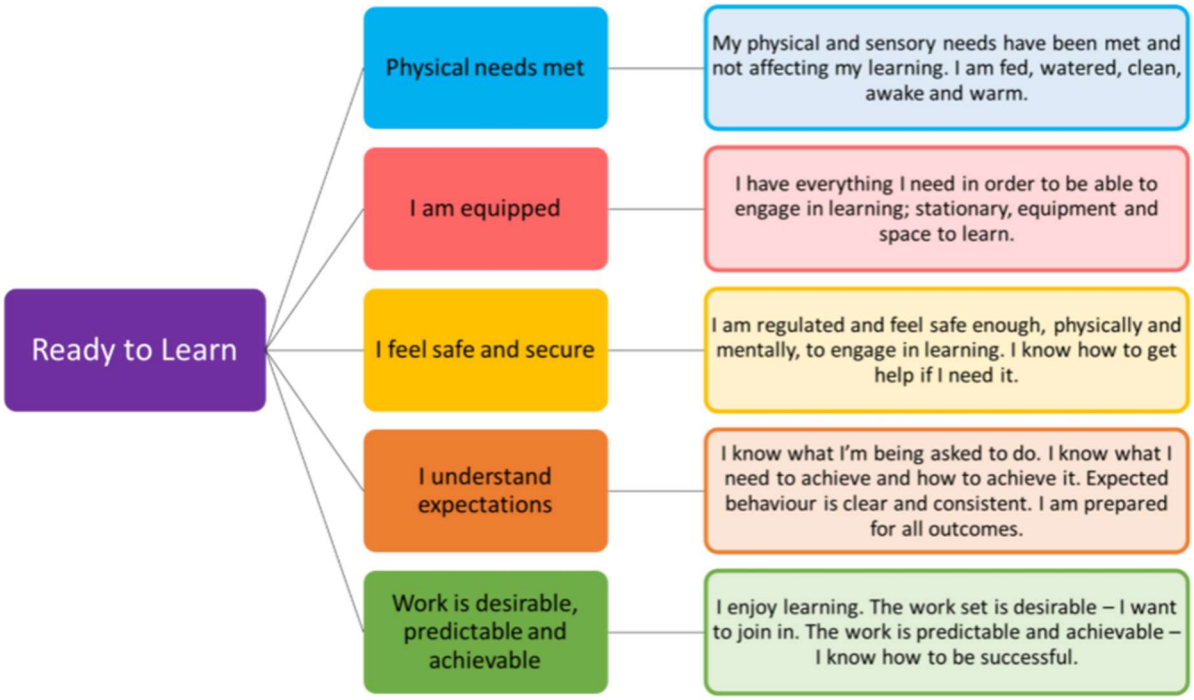
5.2 Safe Students

Safety is paramount and we expect our students to be Safe Students:



5.3 Be Ready to Learn

We expect students to try their best to be Ready to Learn. Many things can affect our readiness to learn and it is not always easy. We expect students to continuously work towards improving their readiness to learn, including self-reflection, accepting staff support and supporting staff to do this by communicating their needs to them.



5.4 Behaviour outside school and online

The school may respond to and, where lawful and reasonable, sanction behaviour outside the school premises or online where it occurs while a pupil is representing the school, travelling to or from school, is otherwise linked to the school, poses a threat to another pupil or member of staff, could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school, or adversely affects the school community. Any response will be fair, proportionate and mindful of safeguarding, SEND and individual circumstances. Where behaviour outside school or online indicates that a child may be at risk of harm, the matter will be referred to the DSL/deputy and managed under safeguarding procedures.

5.5 Bullying, discrimination and child-on-child abuse

Bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence and other forms of child-on-child abuse are not accepted or dismissed as banter, joking or an inevitable part of growing up. Staff will intervene promptly, support affected pupils, consider the needs and safety of all children involved, and follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Child-on-Child Abuse Policy and Preventing Bullying Policy. Behavioural consequences may form part of the response, but safeguarding action and support will not be replaced by a sanction alone.

6. Rewards and Consequences

We aim to encourage behaviours that enable our pupils to:

- access the full range of learning opportunities in a calm positive environment.
- appreciate the needs of others.
- behave appropriately in a wide range of social and educational settings.
- monitor and control their own behaviour with increasing independence.
- maintain, build and repair relationships.

6.1 Celebrating Success

Hartlepool Free School is committed to celebrating the successes of both pupils and staff. This encourages all associated with Hartlepool Free School to reach their full potential. A range of strategies and events are in place in each school to celebrate success, these range from informal events in class to open days and events where everyone involved in the care and education of the pupil is invited.

6.2 Praise and Reward

Hartlepool Free School acknowledges the value of praise and reward in promoting positive behaviour. What is meaningful or motivating will differ between pupils, and rewards will be adapted to age, development, communication needs, SEND and individual preferences. For example, one pupil may value a points-based reward, another specific verbal feedback, and another access to a preferred activity.

Rewards are granted in line with the ages, needs and developmental stages of all pupils and always hold some educational value.

Many of the young people within Hartlepool Free School have low self-esteem and feelings of poor self-worth. Praise and reward used appropriately can lead to heightened self-worth thus improving not only behaviour but also educational attainment.

6.3 Sanctions

Sanctions may be used where a pupil has not met a clearly communicated behaviour expectation or has breached a school rule. They are one part of a wider response that includes teaching, support, reflection and repair. Any sanction must be lawful, reasonable, fair, proportionate and predictable, and staff will consider the pupil's age, development, SEND/disability, communication needs, safeguarding circumstances and any reasonable adjustments required. Safety remains paramount, but sanctions will not be used simply because a pupil is distressed or dysregulated where support is the appropriate response.

Examples of behaviour that may require a response, depending on context, include:

- Disrupting a safe learning environment.
- Disrupting other student's learning.
- Inappropriate words or conversations.
- Not following instructions.
- Not using equipment safely/appropriately.

- Putting self or others at risk of physical harm.
- Negative/personal comments towards others.

The school will respond promptly and robustly to behaviour including:

- Racism
- Homophobia
- Sex-based, gender reassignment-related or gender identity-based abuse
- Disability-based abuse
- Bullying
- Physical assault or threats of violence
  Sexual harassment, sexual violence or other child-on-child abuse

List of Sanctions that may be used where appropriate:

- Verbal prompts, support, reminders of expected behaviour.
- Directed use of a different space for a short period to support regulation, safety or learning. A regulation/time-out space is not seclusion where the pupil remains free to leave. Any measure that prevents a pupil leaving may amount to seclusion or restraint and must only be used lawfully and in accordance with the Holding Safely Policy and statutory recording/reporting requirements.
- Proportionate restriction of non-essential resources or privileges (for example computers, reward time or a trip where participation would not be safe). Where part of break or lunchtime is used as a consequence, pupils will still have reasonable opportunity to eat, drink, use the toilet and access necessary medication/support.
- Intervention from SLT.
- 1:1 working.
- Parent/Carer meeting.
- Suspension, where warranted and in accordance with current statutory guidance.
- Permanent exclusion, which may only be decided by the Principal/headteacher in accordance with the statutory test and current DfE guidance, and is used as a last resort.

Following a significant sanction or incident, staff will consider what support is needed to help the pupil successfully re-engage, reduce recurrence and repair relationships where appropriate. The school will not use informal or unlawful exclusions, including sending a pupil home for disciplinary reasons without formally recording a suspension. Part-time timetables will not be used as a behavioural sanction.

6.4 Searching, confiscation and banned items

Searching and confiscation will only be undertaken in accordance with the Education Act 1996 and current DfE Searching, screening and confiscation guidance. Searches will be conducted with regard to the pupil's dignity, privacy, safeguarding needs and SEND, and any safeguarding concern arising from a search will be referred to the DSL/deputy. Items prohibited by law include knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images, and articles made or adapted for causing injury or damage, or intended for such use. The school also prohibits vaping

products/e-cigarettes and other items identified in school rules where possession or use creates a safety, safeguarding or serious disruption risk.

For the purposes of the school's search powers, mobile phones and other smart/communication technology are identified as searchable items where a pupil has failed to hand in, store or use the device in accordance with the Mobile Phone Policy. Any search of or decision to access data on an electronic device will follow the law, DfE guidance and safeguarding procedures.

The law states 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.

There is a limited exception 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 by a member of staff who is same sex as the pupil or it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff.

When a member of staff conducts a search without a witness, they should immediately report this to another member of staff, and ensure a record of the search is recorded

6.5 Mobile phones and smart technology

From 1 September 2026, Hartlepool Free School will operate in accordance with the DfE statutory guidance on mobile phones in schools. The school is a mobile phone-free environment throughout the school day by default, subject only to clearly authorised exceptions and reasonable adjustments, including where access is necessary because of disability, medical need or another exceptional individual circumstance. Detailed arrangements for storage, authorised use, confiscation, sanctions and reasonable adjustments are set out in the Mobile Phone Policy.

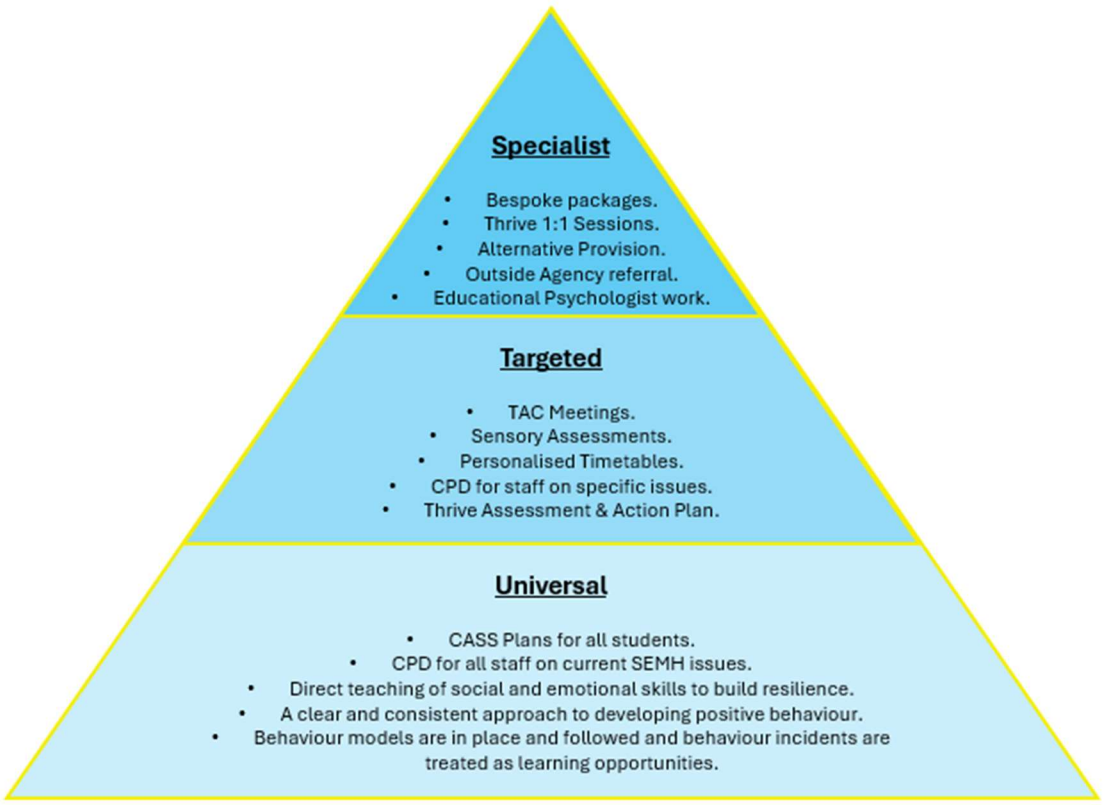
7. Graduated Response

The response to behavioural challenges is graduated at Hartlepool Free School and can be split into three categories; Universal, Targeted and Specialist.

- Universal: Trust-wide approaches to meet the needs of all students, implemented by all staff. This includes the use of behaviour models previously expanded on, including The Ready to Learn Flowchart, The Thrive Approach, Safe Students, and the Zones of Regulation.

- Targeted: For pupils who need additional support to become Ready to Learn, or who are experiencing persistent, increasing or circumstantial challenges with behaviour, social, emotional or mental health. Support will be planned and reviewed using an assess-plan-do-review approach where appropriate, with pupil and parent/carer involvement and reasonable adjustments recorded clearly.

- Specialist: For pupils whose needs require specialist assessment, intervention or multi-agency support. The school may seek advice or provision from services such as CAMHS, Educational Psychology, social care, health professionals or appropriate alternative provision. Where behaviour gives rise to a safeguarding concern, safeguarding procedures take priority and the DSL/deputy will consider Family Help, referral or other multi-agency action as appropriate.



Appendix A – Blank CASS Plan:

