

# Mountjoy School

## Behaviour Support Policy

### July 2021



In accordance with Article 16,19 and 23 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

**This is a Dorset Council Policy**  
**Reviewed by: Full Governing Board**

**Date: July 2021**  
**Date of next review: July 2022**

Signed:.....  
Chair of Governors

*Heel*

Date ...July 2021.....

## **Behaviour Support Policy**

### **Introduction**

This policy reflects the values, ethos and philosophy of Mountjoy School in relation to behaviour support. It provides guidance on the procedures in place when working with pupil behaviour including, the identification of needs within Mountjoy School, and the organisation of specific arrangements. This policy includes guidance relating to: Bullying, and Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPI). The behaviour support policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Physical Contact / Touch policy (attached).

The Behaviour Support Policy is a working document and as such it reflects both the practices that are carried out and those to which the school is striving. The policy is agreed upon by the whole teaching staff and presented to the Governing Body. The document is available for interested parties. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff.

At Mountjoy all staff working with young people receive training in behaviour support. This training is called "Dorset Steps" and is adapted from the original work by Angela Wadham of Norfolk Steps. The term "Steps" is drawn from the Norfolk County Council statement on inclusion: *"The process of taking necessary **Steps** to ensure that every young person is given an equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy community life."* This statement reflects the philosophy, policy and practice at our school.

### **Rationale**

At Mountjoy School it is recognised that appropriate behaviour and good order is a necessary pre-requisite to effective teaching and learning. Every member of staff strives to develop the whole person, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This requires teaching an understanding of:

- Right and wrong
- Honesty, truth and fairness
- Respect for others and self
- Importance of positive relationships
- Self-discipline and sense of responsibility

All the pupils who attend Mountjoy School have significant learning difficulties. This is likely to affect all areas of their learning and functioning, including communication skills and learning the conventions of society. It is recognised that, some pupils require structured support and guidance in order to enable them to live full and valued lives in spite of emotional and / or behavioural difficulties. The behavioural challenges presented by a small number of pupils mean that, in order to reduce the risk of harm some form of restrictive physical intervention may be unavoidable.

At Mountjoy School, every member of staff shares a responsibility to support pupils to demonstrate behaviours that enable fulfilling relationships and full participation in

learning activities. This policy explains the philosophy and practices of the school in meeting the needs of learners who display behaviours that “challenge” others and increase the risk of harm. It is the duty of all staff to follow all policies, guidelines, reporting procedures, as well as specific individual behaviour support plans relating to promoting positive behaviour.

### **Shared Values**

At Mountjoy our values are demonstrated through each member of staff working as a member of a team, sharing achievements, successes, problems, concerns and stresses. The school’s core values that specifically relate to the support and management of behaviour are:

- Respecting the *dignity* of each person; their individuality, their feelings and their role in the school.
- Showing *respect* for each person, and empathy for their feelings.
- Building *confidence* and *self-esteem* by valuing each person’s successes and achievements.
- Building *trust*, by doing what is expected of us, showing that we believe in each other and our school, and by accepting mistakes as opportunities for learning.
- *Communicating* effectively, including *listening to hear*, so that each person feels able to contribute to the school’s mission positively and to do the best job they can.
- Building a sense of *enjoyment* and *fun* into the daily working life of everyone in the school, so that they want to go on learning here.
- Being prepared to accept and try out the decisions and ideas of the group, so that the school can continue to *improve*.

At Mountjoy School we recognise that the learning process is about the quality of relationships and that young people learn better when they have an emotional attachment to the person imparting information, knowledge or who is providing support.

### **Key areas of learning**

The key areas of learning at Mountjoy School relate to the development of:

- Communication
- Personal Development (including social interaction and relationships)
- Physical and sensory development

Progress in these areas will often reduce the need for a pupil to present problem behaviours.

### **Supporting pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) whose behaviour can place themselves and others at risk of harm**

The vast majority of young people those assessed as having SLD will have problems with...

- Communication.
- Short and long term memory
- Maintaining concentration
- Understanding abstract

concepts Many will have difficulties with:

- Establishing and maintaining effective and meaningful relationships.
- Understanding the effect their actions might have upon others.

When planning and support pupils with SLD it is important that adults consider that:

- There will always be a reason or purpose behind any behaviour that others find challenging and which can place the young person as well as other people at risk.
- It is the responsibility of those adults working to support the child or young person, to try to understand the motivation behind the behaviour; to try to interpret the behaviour from the young person's point of view.
- People with SLD are likely to spend a very large percentage of their life being controlled by others, so it is not surprising that some might try to exercise control in the only way they can – through their behaviour. At Mountjoy school staff enable the person to learn appropriate ways of achieving these goals and to take control of their own behaviour.
- The young person will exhibit their behaviour in order to try and get their need(s) met. Adults planning to support the person must try to find more appropriate means for the person to meet these needs. Within the classroom situation it is probable that the meaning of the behaviour may relate to either: task avoidance or seeking to interact with others.

### **Supporting pupils with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) whose behaviour can place themselves and others at risk of harm**

Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) may have a different perception of the world and its meaning. Their behaviour is a reflection of their difficulties in understanding the complexity of "ordinary life."

- Many will have complex sensory needs
- Many will experience high levels of anxiety.
- Most will encounter difficulties understanding and accepting change.
- The vast majority will experience problems in meeting and communicating basic needs such as hunger, thirst, pain and discomfort.

### **The way young people learn behaviour**

At Mountjoy School we understand that young people learn behaviour through:

- Their relationships
- Patterning and copying
- Reminding
- Repetition and structure
- Clear and agreed boundaries
- Praise and reward when successful
- Comfort when not successful

### **The way we teach positive behaviours**

At Mountjoy we teach positive behaviours through:

- Relationships
- Role modelling
- Consistency
- Scripts and routines
- Positive phrasing
- Planning

- Reward and positive reinforcement
- Comfort and forgiveness
- Empathy
- Social Stories
- EST
- Sensory breaks
- Work of the Week
- Rights Respecting Work
- PSHCE
- Positive and Differentiated Re-enforcement
- Attachment Support

### **Key elements in planning**

Dorset Steps provides guidance in assessment and planning which must be followed in planning for individual pupils. It is the responsibility of every member of staff to seek to understand the behaviour of the young person. The key elements to inform such understanding are:

- Think
- Plan
- Respond

### **Conscious and Subconscious behaviours**

An important aspect of the training that staff receive is understanding that some behaviours are conscious (behaviours over which the person has a choice) and others are subconscious (behaviours over which the person does not have full control) and that assessments must identify whether a problem behaviour is conscious or subconscious as this will have an important bearing on planning and practice.

### **Discouraging Inappropriate Behaviour**

Pupils are encouraged, where able to self-regulate

- We recognise the need for consequences and boundaries
- We use individualized and varied ways to manage pupils behaviour
- Pupils, where appropriate use Traffic Light Systems
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts for a small number of pupils are used
- Pupils may have a Sensory Diet in place

Inappropriate behaviours may include;

- Deliberate damage
- Inappropriate language, including unkind words
- Spitting
- Smearing
- Absconding
- Stripping
- Physical Assault

In order to assess conscious behaviours, the adult should consider:

- What is the expected outcome of the behaviour?
- What is the motivation to behave anti-socially?

- What is the motivation to behave pro-socially?
- What are the expected consequences?
- How can the adult impact on the young person's beliefs and values?

To assess subconscious behaviours the adult needs to consider:

- Are there medical issues?
- Is it a phenotype behaviour (relating to a genetic disorder)?
- What may be causing anxiety?
- What may be causing confusion?
- What is stimulating the young person?

### **A Therapeutic Approach**

At Mountjoy we recognise that negative experiences create negative feelings and that negative feelings create negative behaviour, whilst positive experiences create positive feelings and positive feelings create positive behaviour. It is the responsibility of every adult at our school to seek to understand the reason why a young person is presenting problem behaviour and change the circumstances in which the behaviour occurs. The Dorset Steps programme provides an assessment / planning tool called "roots and fruits" to assist adults in this area.

### **Risk assessment**

When a young person repeats a behaviour(s) that may place themselves or others at risk of harm, the teacher / tutor must undertake an Individual child risk assessment plan, using the Dorset Steps planning Tools. Support will be offered by one of the Steps Tutors if needed. Risk Assessments are overseen by the Deputy Head teacher.

### **When faced with a challenging behaviour**

Any adult seeking to support a young person whose behaviour is presenting a challenge can act in a way that can make the situation worse or can calm the situation. It is the responsibility of adults at Mountjoy to follow the guidance provided in the Dorset Steps training to support the young person. This can be achieved through one of or a combination of the following as appropriate:

- Positive phrasing e.g.
  - *"Stand next to me"*
  - *"Put the toy on the table"*
  - *"Walk beside me"*
- Limited choice e.g.
  - *"Put the pen on the table or in the box"*
  - *"When we are inside, Lego or drawing"*
  - *Talk to me here or in the courtyard"*
- Disempowering the behaviour e.g.
  - *"You can listen from there"*
  - *"Come and find me when you come back"*
  - *Come down in your own time"*
- Use of a De-Escalation Script e.g.
  - *Use the person's name – "David"*
  - *Acknowledge their right to their feelings – "I can see something is wrong" Tell them when you are there – "I am here to help"*
  - *Offer help – "Talk to me and I will listen"*

*Offer a “get-out” (positive phrasing) – “Come with me and.....”*

### **Consequences and sanctions**

At Mountjoy adults have the responsibility to use consequences, which have a relation to the problem behaviour and as a result help the young person learn and develop positive coping strategies / behaviour. Consequences act on internal discipline by creating a learning opportunity directly relating to the anti-social behaviour to the harm caused, that then contributes to the situation. Consequences may include: completing a task, limiting access to play resources; escorted when moving between classes, assisting with repairs, restorative meetings, internal exclusions, fixed term exclusions and in the most serious cases, permanent exclusions. The use of constructive consequences must inform planning and practice at Mountjoy.

Punishment is seen as a sanction imposed by an adult which does not have a direct relationship with the problem behaviour, as a result punishment can harden and numb the young person, produce obstinacy, sharpen the sense of alienation and strengthens the power of resistance. Punishment relies on external discipline. Punishment is not to be used as a sanction at Mountjoy School.

### **Bullying and Harassment** See also Bullying Policy

Bullying is a deliberately aggressive, habitual, hurtful behaviour causing pain or embarrassment to others. It is an abuse of relative power. It is often repeated over a period of time; It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take on many different forms and can be physical, verbal or indirect. It can be planned and organised or it can happen suddenly and spontaneously. It can be carried out by individuals or groups.

Bullying may include: Any form of physical violence such as, hitting, punching, kicking, pushing, spitting. Making aggressive, intimidating gestures or intruding into someone's personal space. Interfering with someone's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it. Making violent threats, using offensive names or insulting someone or his family. Telling lies, spreading rumours or making up stories about someone. Picking on someone or putting them down, belittling their ability and achievements. Making abusive or degrading remarks about someone's race, culture, religion or social background. Making sexually suggestive or insulting comments. Ganging up on someone or hurtfully excluding them from a group or activity. Ridiculing someone's appearance; Forcing someone to do anything against their will.

If allegations are made about staff, then the Managing Allegations Policy would come into force. If these proved to be vexatious then we would seek a restorative outcome

Mountjoy School does not tolerate bullying or harassment and recognises the damaging effects of all forms of bullying. All members of the school community are dedicated to establishing and maintaining an environment in which everyone can learn, develop and enjoy life while feeling safe and secure.

We recognise that many of the students at Mountjoy have difficulties with challenging behaviours which can be directed towards to other students and we are committed to helping with these problems. Some of our students have challenging behaviours and can be violent. Most of them direct their violence towards staff. Some are violent towards other children. This is not bullying if it is not done with the intention of causing harm to that person in



particular – if they are simply the unfortunate recipient of the problems the child is experiencing and expressing at that time.

Bullying implies a degree of forethought, and of malice. It has to be directed deliberately at a person and with the intent to hurt or harm that person with physical abuse or verbal insult.

Some children in the school are capable of doing this. However, the reasons for their doing so are frequently associated with the extent of their learning difficulty, emotional problems or their autism, and so the issues become less clear cut, pupils require positive structure, support.

As a school community we will not allow bullying to go unreported. All instances of bullying must be recorded in the school's incident book, and the Head or DSP informed immediately. It is the responsibility of the Head to report to the governors the number incidents of bullying.

**Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions** See also Restrictive Interventions Policy  
At Mountjoy we believe that pupils need to be safe, to know how to behave and know that adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. Only for a very small minority of pupils will the use of restrictive physical interventions be needed. On such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention are used.

All members of teaching and assistant staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviours might be communicating. They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour.

Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) is the term used to describe interventions where bodily contact using force is used to control or manage a child's behaviour.

Due to the learning and emotional difficulties of some pupils attending Mountjoy School there is a significant likelihood that they may present behaviours that place themselves and/or others at risk of harm, requiring adults to physically intervene in order to reduce this risk.

Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control and may only be used to reduce the risk of harm and never as a form of punishment. RPI must never be used to force compliance with staff instructions.

Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for RPI through dialogue and diversion. Only the minimum force necessary will be used. Staff will be able to show, when asked, that the intervention used was a reasonable response to the incident. As soon as it is safe the RPI will be relaxed to allow the pupil to gain self-control.

At Mountjoy all staff will receive training in restrictive physical interventions, using the Dorset Steps programme (Step Up). The training will be delivered by fully trained and accredited tutors in Dorset Steps. There may be specific pupils whose complexity of need requires further support. A written audit of need must be undertaken following which

support and guidance will be provided by a StepsTutor. New staff are all made aware of the Behaviour Policy as part of their induction. Staff receive initial and ongoing Steps training and the opportunity to attend regular Steps clinics, where fully risk assessed and evidenced, staff will be trained in Step Up techniques.

### **Debrief and Repair:**

Following a crisis incident, it is important that there is a repair exercise for the staff and the pupil. The purpose of this session is to explore what happened in a non-judgmental way in order to identify new strategies and skills for all concerned, so that they are better equipped to deal with challenging situations without the need to resort to restrictive physical intervention in the future.

Repair sessions should follow positive listening principles:

#### **Take time to listen.**

Listen to the pupil's perspective first.

Try to understand how the pupil felt and why they did what they did.

Try to explain why staff took the actions that they took.

#### **Try to connect feelings with behaviours.**

Talk about strategies, using visual prompts as appropriate, that the pupil can use when they are feeling anxious or upset.

Talk about how staff will help the pupil to manage their behaviour in the future.

Some pupils may not have the expressive or receptive skills to fully engage in a repair session. Where this is the case staff should explore alternative strategies such as social stories in order to explain why certain actions are taken and teach better management skills for the future.

The use of Restrictive Physical Interventions, either planned or unplanned must always be recorded in the "Numbered and Bound Book" which is located in the Head's office.

If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that RPI is likely, then a Positive Handling Plan must be completed. This must be shared with the Head, Steps Tutors and parents.

The PHP plan will help the pupil and staff avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing.

The plan will include: a risk assessment, a record of risk reduction options, techniques for managing the pupil's behaviour e.g. de-escalating conflict, stating at which point at RPI may be used; identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected; systems for summoning additional support; identifying training needs.

### **Planning, monitoring and recording**

In order to enable and recognise progress it is vital that clear, concise planning is undertaken and shared with all stakeholders (including the young person when appropriate). Dorset Steps provide resources to assist with this process. Planning includes anxiety mapping, Roots and Fruits and the oversight of behaviours.

The Deputy Head meets regularly with the STA for behaviour and directs from records,

where she will be and the work she will do in order to support and train staff and support excellent behaviour throughout the school.

Planning must specify how strategies are to be monitored and incidents recorded.

Incidents must be recorded. Each class uses SIMS which is monitored by the Senior TA for behaviour. All significant incidents must be recorded in the bound incident book (located in the head's office). This is monitored by the Headteacher.

Planning is overseen by the Senior TA for behaviour who will also monitor and undertake an analysis of incidents, ensuring that effective support and actions are taken in order to reduce risk and ensure progress.

### **Risk Assessments**

All pupils whose behaviour may place themselves and others at risk of harm must have individual risk assessments. Dorset Steps provides guidance to assist with this process.

Risk assessments are overseen by the Senior TA for behaviour, who will ensure they are reviewed and updated in order to reflect changes and progress.

### **Quiet Rooms**

Some of our classrooms have access to a Quiet Room - a quiet, safe, clear room with the minimum of distraction. Quiet Rooms provide a safe environment for pupils to calm from crisis. Staff do not send pupils to the quiet room as a form of punishment.

#### **1. Use of the Quiet Room:**

☑ A Quiet Room can be used to give a pupil time to:

- o calm and lower arousal levels
- o reflect on behaviour
- o support a pupil to understand and begin to take responsibility for their behaviour
- o come up with a solution
- o regain control
- o negotiate entry back in to the group

Staff can direct pupils to the quiet rooms or pupils can take themselves there to self-regulate. The quiet room doors should not be closed by staff when pupils are instead. Pupils may choose to close the door but then staff should monitor from the viewing pane.

There are some occasions where pupils display dangerous behaviour before choosing or being directed to the Quiet Room. On these occasions staff may choose to make the environment safe and move other pupils and staff on to an alternative room.

The Quiet Room is not used as a way of reprimanding a pupil and is not punitive in any way. Use of the quiet rooms should, unless pupil directed, be reported in the Home/ School book. Use of this facility should be monitored by the class teacher and if there are concerns, discussed with Steps tutors.

#### **. Exclusion:**

##### **a. Internal Exclusion**

Internal exclusion is used to:

Provide an appropriate consequence for unacceptable behaviour that is significantly challenging but can be managed within school. Support pupils to make more appropriate choices in future and to be able to respond more appropriately to situations.

Internal exclusion is implemented in the following ways:

Parents and pupils are informed when and why the internal exclusion is to take place, alongside the reasons and outcomes being sought

Staff are provided to supervise the pupil and discuss the expectations regularly or as needed

Work is provided (by class teachers) for the pupil to complete.

If staff need additional support they use the alarm and SLT will attend- and any other staff close by as needed

Staff supervising the pupil will complete the home/ school book

Whilst it is anticipated that the vast majority of internal exclusions are planned, there may be a very small number of occasions where a pupil needs to be immediately isolated from their peers.

#### **b. Fixed Term/Temporary Exclusion**

The school makes occasional use of short, fixed term external exclusions in response to serious incidents of challenging behaviour.

An exclusion of this nature gives the pupil a short period of time to reflect upon the incident and to consider how to avoid such behaviours in the future. It also gives school staff time to consider the consequences of the incident and how best to move forward following it.

In some situations, it may be necessary for pupils to agree an Acceptable Behaviour Contract, this will form part of the reintegration meeting.

A return to school interview with the Headteacher or another SLT member provides an opportunity for all to reflect on the seriousness of the incident and to discuss how to prevent a recurrence in the future.

#### **c. Permanent Exclusion**

Mountjoy School seeks to avoid permanent exclusion; however, it maintains the right to do this in exceptional circumstances. On rare occasions, where the needs of a pupil have been found to exceed the provision available, a managed move to another school or setting is negotiated with the local authority and parents if possible

The school follows the Government Guidance "Exclusions from Maintained Schools and Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England".

#### **Support**

Mountjoy has a team of staff who are trained as tutors in Dorset Steps. These tutors are an important resource, providing support and guidance to colleagues.

Members of the Senior leadership team (SLT) co-ordinate multi-professional communication and contribution.

Support for parents and carers is coordinated by members of the SLT and FLOs.