

Behaviour Policy

Document title		Behaviour Policy	
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Version number		V6	
Date approved		June 2023	
Review cycle		Annually	
Approved by		Senior Leadership Team	
Date of review		Jan 2027	
Document history			
Version	Date	Author	Note of revisions
V2	January 2023	DS	Re-visited in line with KCSIE 2022 and to bridge the timeline between changing status from a NMSS to Independent School.
V3	June 2023	DS	Updated in line with Cavendish information and Behaviour in Schools 2022 DfE
V4	April 2024	DS	Updated following DfE mobile phones policy guidance March 2024, change of MIS and KCSIE September 2023
V5	Sept 2024	CF	Updated following publication of KCSIE 2024
V6	January 2026	DS	Update following new guidance

Heathermount School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and outline the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular, it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core value of building confidence and preparing students for life.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Heathermount School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education's guidance 'Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility' considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.
- A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school contracts the services of third-party organisations to ensure regulatory compliance and implement best practices for:

- HR and Employment Law
- Health & Safety Guidance
- DBS Check processing
- Mandatory Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and other relevant training
- Data protection and GDPR guidance
- Specialist insurance cover

Heathermount School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Heathermount School.

The policy documents of Heathermount School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

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1. Introduction

Heathermount is an independent special school catering for children and young people (age 5-18) with autism. The school is owned by Cavendish Education and it works closely with several local authorities to provide a specialised education. We are committed to realising our vision of building confidence and preparing students for life beyond Heathermount, to take their next step into further education, training or employment. We also aim to prepare our students to contribute and live effectively in society beyond the specialist support and understanding of Heathermount School.

In order to communicate their needs, our students may behave in a way that challenges them. This can have a negative impact upon the student, upon others, their environment, their relationships and their quality of life.

At Heathermount, we believe that **all behaviours are a communication**. Behaviours that challenge may be used to express and communicate a wide variety of things, for example: not understanding an instruction or task, a dislike for something; a want or need; anxiety or stress, illness or pain; and emotions such as anger or frustration linked to the student's autism or other co-conditions. This policy has been written with due care and respect to the rights and individual needs of our students with a positive and caring attitude to working with them, to overcome their challenges, learn more effective ways of expressing themselves and to build a happy and purposeful life.

We are committed to understanding the function of the behaviours our students present in order to support them to learn an alternative, functionally equivalent and more socially acceptable ways of expressing themselves.

2. Values and Philosophy

At Heathermount we adopt a holistic approach to supporting the needs of our children and young people underpinned by the principles of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) in order to:

- Meet the needs of the student with a primary need of Autism
- Support students to find effective ways to communicate their needs
- Identify and meet individuals' sensory needs and diet
- Ensure the environment is suited to individual needs and preferences and that they have structure and meaningful activities in their daily lives
- Use proactive strategies to manage and support behaviour
- To use our curriculum and READY programme to meet every child's needs and prepare them for the wider world
- Provide strategies and experiences for our students to manage behaviour successfully and establish appropriate and meaningful relationships.

3. Legal context (Current Legislation)

The relevant statutory legislation in England and Wales relating to adults (aged 18 years or above - this relates only to OG until July 2024) is:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (applies to those over 16 years)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- The Care Act 2014.

The relevant statutory legislation in England and Wales regarding Children and young people includes:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Children Act 2011
- The Education Act 2011
- The Children and Families Act 2014

Schools also must comply with equalities legislation and the duty to promote the wellness and wellbeing of pupils.

The behaviour policy should be read in conjunction with the school's anti-bullying policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and Exclusions policy.

4. Statutory Guidance and Regulations

The relevant statutory guidance and regulations in England and Wales is:

- [DfE guidance February 2024](#)
- [Use of reasonable force: Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies \(July 2013\) DfE](#)
- [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention June 2019](#)
- [Behaviour and discipline in schools: Advice for Headteachers and school staff \(2022\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(September 2024\)](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies \(January 2018\)](#)
- [Behaviour in Schools \(September 2024\)](#)
- [Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools - Guidance for Schools in England - DfE April 2026](#)

5. Our approach to effective support

Definition of challenging behaviour

Challenging behaviour can be defined as:

“.....behaviour of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person concerned, or other people is at serious risk, or the behaviour results in the person only having limited or no access to ordinary community facilities.” Emerson, Eric (2001).

Children and young people with complex needs and autism are more likely to display challenging behaviour that may include disengagement, non-compliance, withdrawal from interaction, verbal or physical aggression, self-injurious behaviour, smearing, repetitive routines or questioning that can often challenge staff. Behaviour is a way of communicating a need or want and Heathermount will follow positive behaviour support principles in order to better understand the behaviour and find the function of that behaviour.

6. Factors affecting behaviour

A variety of factors may influence a person's behaviour and contribute to incidents of challenging behaviours. Autism itself is not a cause of challenging behaviour. Rather the impact of being on the autistic spectrum within this social world combined with other factors such as those highlighted below come together leading the individual to respond differently and display behaviours which challenge others.

Autism is a lifelong developmental condition which results in "hard wired" differences in how parts of the brain are structured. Autistic people are likely to perceive, interpret, process and experience the world in a different way. Many of our students will also have comorbid conditions or mental health issues that can affect behaviour.

All autistic people have a dyad of impairment as set out in DSM-5-TR (02/2022) that affects everyone to a greater or lesser extent. These impairments outlined in detail below:

- **Social Communication and Social Interaction:** Many autistic people tend to develop a "Theory of Mind" at different times or to a different degree as the rest of the population. This means that it is difficult for autistic people to understand that others have independent thoughts and thus different perspectives from their own. This can cause a variety of problems in terms of interacting with others as an autistic person will be at the very least delayed in their ability to understand others point of view, or struggle to realise that communication is necessary for others to understand and meet their needs.
- Some autistic people find it difficult to process and understand the social world. Social rules and conventions that most people learn intuitively often need to be explicitly taught and even then, may not be fully understood and applied. Many autistic people want social relationships, but most struggle to know how to interact, and experience high levels of anxiety and stress in social situations. Some people with autism may find the social environment so confusing that they withdraw from interacting with others.
- **Restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests or activities:** Some autistic people have difficulty with flexibility of thought. Some people with autism may find it difficult to shift the focus of their attention and may become stuck/fixated on a particular item or topic of conversation. They are likely to find dealing with new/unfamiliar situations challenging due to difficulties with generalising skills and experiences learnt from other situations.
- Often autistic people can find change and transition problematic, e.g. transitioning from home to school, transitioning between lessons / areas of the school or changes to expected activities or staff. This can contribute to a reliance upon routines and predictability.
- **Sensory Issues:** Many autistic people also experience differences in the way their sensory processing systems work. Some may be particularly (hyper) sensitive to noise so may hear, become upset or distracted by noise that neurotypical people would barely notice. Conversely others may be under (hypo) sensitive to touch so may need to exert extra pressure when touching objects or other people to receive the same sensory feedback.
- Most autistic people have issues with sensory processing and integration meaning that they may struggle to process and understand the information coming in from a variety of sensory modalities. They may struggle to filter out irrelevant information and to concentrate on what is necessary.
- **Additional stressors:** While we must always recognise a person's autism is likely to pose the above challenges, individuals with Autism are just as likely to be affected by other factors which impact upon their mental health and emotional wellbeing as the rest of the

population and are sometimes at increased risk. Lack or poor emotional literacy/regulation difficulties can also significantly contribute to incidents of challenging behaviours. These can fit into social communication and sensory needs. Autistic people are also at risk of developing mental health difficulties especially anxiety disorders which again can contribute to the onset of incidents of challenging behaviours.

- Other factors: Autistic people, like others, are affected by life events and experiences such as bereavement including changes (losses) of people supporting, moving to a new house, loss of a pet, going through puberty, family breakdown etc.
- Illness and pain can affect how a person behaves especially if unable to properly communicate this pain or unable to read the physiological signs that they are ill. Autistic people may also suffer from low self-esteem, school placement breakdown, exclusions and social isolation. Autistic people often experience high levels of stress. This is true for autistic people across the spectrum – those with limited verbal expression may experience stress and anxiety related to difficulties and differences in comparison with other people their own age.
- Individuals may present as a confident speaker, but this can often mask their reduced understanding. Those supporting them may overestimate their abilities and hence not always provide effective support.

7. Principles of Positive Behaviour Support

- Heathermount School follows an ethos of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). Staff are also trained in using MAYBO as a way of reducing risks surrounding behaviours of concern.
- PBS seeks to discover the function and/or communicative intent behind behaviours through the use of good quality functional assessment (e.g., incident logs (Arbor), observations, Antecedent Behaviour Consequence, debriefs etc) that will inform future strategies and effect positive change. Functional Behaviour analysis will be led by our therapy team.
- Interventions that teach functionally equivalent alternatives to difficult/challenging behaviours are implemented to support students.
- It is a non-aversive approach meaning that the focus is on desired behaviours, strengths and skills, rather than punishments and sanctions. Having said that, at Heathermount we will use appropriate and personalised **consequences**, when necessary, in partnership with the parents in order to help develop understanding and prepare students for the reality of life beyond the school gates. This will be tailored towards the individual and their ability to link any consequences to the behaviour.
- There is a focus on determining antecedents to behaviour and then removing or minimising the effects of these or teaching the student how to manage this situation.
- Teaching functional communication that is relevant and useful for the individual is paramount.
- PBS emphasises enhanced community presence, choice participation and a person-centred approach to behaviours rather than solely focusing on behavioural change.
- Restrictive practices and physical interventions (following MAYBO techniques) are kept to an absolute minimum and always used only as a last resort “There is no alternative” (TINA) principle.

8. Consequences and sanctions

- At Heathermount, students are supported to recognise the natural consequence of their actions and make positive choices. Any consequences used are personalised and appropriate to the individual student. As a result, consequences may well be different for different students in similar circumstances. They are restorative in nature, to help

students to recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other students, staff supporting them and on the wider Heathermount community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation or amends in some meaningful form, to anyone impacted by their behaviour. This may take the form of an apology or other appropriate action. Staff have the necessary training and knowledge of the student to help support them with this and carry it out at an appropriate time.

- At Heathermount we are fully committed to working with the students' parents/carers in order to prepare them for life outside and beyond the school. A key part of this is developing an understanding of societies rules and laws and where appropriate, the impacts of behaviours in school will be related to societies rules, expectations and the real consequences that these bring. There may well be occasions where support is sought from external sources, including Community Support Officers and the Police. There may also be a financial contribution requested or 'making good' completed if there is damage to the school building or site.
- We do not believe that suspensions are the most effective way to support students with autism, and we will always try to adapt and personalise provision for all of our learners in order to ensure that they are able to access education. This may take the form of a temporary bespoke programme or personalised curriculum. Suspensions are used as a last resort.
- In exceptional circumstances and for **serious misbehaviour**, it may be necessary to suspend a learner for a fixed term period and this would always be considered very carefully. Exceptional circumstances may include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
 - Incidents where the safety of the learner, other learners or staff is seriously compromised
 - Incidents of knife crime or the deliberate use of weapons in school
 - Incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment (e.g. rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent) (See KCSIE 2024 P138 for definitions)
 - Incidents of significant deliberate damage to property
 - Intent to supply illegal drugs and activities involving illegal drugs, smoking or alcohol.
 - Continued repeated disruptive behaviour and unwillingness to engage with support or learning.
 - Repeated, long term targeting of another or others including child on child abuse.

The context and the student's ASD profile and behavioural responses and any known factors concerning sensory difficulties will always play a key part in the decision-making process.

Decisions to suspend students are made on an individual basis and should always be a reasonable and measured response, which will have an impact and provide a learning opportunity for the student. The Headteacher will be responsible for authorising any suspensions or a permanent exclusion within the school.(DfE guidance, 2017) In his/her absence, the Principal alongside the Deputy Headteacher will have responsibility.

Following a suspension, it is usual practice for the student who is returning to the school to have a reintegration meeting with a member of the SLT in order to support a successful and positive reintegration into school. Appropriate preparative work will also be carried out with the returning students' peers and class.

Suspensions can also be managed internally through internal reflections where a student may be removed from a class for a fixed period of time. This will allow time for the incident to be unpicked and reflected upon and for work to be done with the other students/class involved. This will be recorded on the MIS.

Where the school has concerns about behaviour, or risk of exclusion, the school will work closely with others (parents/Local Authorities) to consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required.

- Permanent exclusion is a final consequence when the school has exhausted all means at its disposal to meet a student's needs. The school must be convinced that to keep a student on roll would seriously impair the education and/or safety of other students/staff. There may also be rare cases when a single incident may cause the headteacher to recommend a fixed term or permanent exclusion to the governing body.

9. Proactive strategies - Promoting good behaviour

- Good general proactive strategies that consider the factors that influence the wellbeing and behaviour of autistic people are vitally important to reduce the likelihood, severity and frequency of behaviours in the future.
- Communicating praise for positive behaviour from staff via verbal praise, assemblies, certificates, positions of responsibility (e.g., school council) and school reward systems.
- At Heathermount we use an autism specific approach/system called READY which includes areas such as the Zones of Regulation/therapeutic input. This focuses on student strengths and aims to reduce heightened levels of anxiety and distress. The READY principals are adapted to meet individual needs.
- The reward system is designed to reinforce and celebrate positive behaviours. Staff record positive slips on the school's MIS (Arbor) and these feed into a weekly "Star of the Week" and "Wow" awards and a longer-term reward system linked to school events, trips and visits.
- Secondary students receive a personalised reward points target and this is carefully monitored by the class tutor and points are given for positive and desired behaviours and students can lose points from negative behaviours. Regular discussions, encouragement and support, helps support students in a successful and motivational way.
- Primary students also receive daily personalised reward points as part of their reward system, using sticker charts to track their progress. A range of rewards are offered and agreed between the students and the class teacher and this acts as a motivator for desired behaviours.
- The school core values are encouraged and assessed every term, leading to awarding of the core value cups at the end of each term. There are core value cups for foundation, primary and secondary students.
- All pupils have a personalised **Behaviour and Risk Assessment (BARA) plan** to support their learning and the development of their social and emotional skills.

The BARA provides detailed information outlining known or historical behaviours, associated triggers and strategies for staff to use in order to support the student and the management of their behaviour. It should inform lesson planning and any off-site visits. Behaviour targets may be identified, and individualised recommendations put in place. The BARA is regularly monitored, reviewed and updated by the class teacher or tutor in conjunction with the wider staff team and parents. The document is signed and agreed with parents. This will be routinely reviewed at each annual review however may require

necessary changes throughout the academic year. Historic behaviours will remain on the BARA, as some behaviours may resurface later.

Where repeated patterns of challenging behaviour are demonstrated, any member of staff can make a request to SLT (Senior Leadership Team) to consider whether an Student Support Plan (SSP) is drawn up. This would be established within a TAC (Team around the Child) meeting amongst a wider staff team.

This is a detailed plan, based on a comprehensive assessment, which highlights the behaviours causing concern. It recommends how these behaviours will be best managed through:

- changes to the teaching environment;
- development of skills and coping strategies; and
- focussed approaches to manage specific behaviours.

An action plan is drawn up. These plans are developed collaboratively with the school's teaching staff, clinical team and parents and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

All staff at Heathermount must understand that positive changes to behaviour can take a long period of time to adapt and require consistent application of any strategies suggested with SSPs to see an impact. All strategies outlined in the SSP must be implemented consistently by all staff for a minimum of six weeks before a formal review is conducted.

If a member of staff has any concerns about a child's behaviour or the management of it, it must be referred to the SLT.

10. Reactive strategies

- The overemphasis of the role of physical interventions as a “management tool” for supporting those displaying challenging behaviours may be counterproductive to the cause and increase risk to vulnerable people. Reactive strategies are used once a behaviour of concern has occurred with the primary aim to de-escalate the situation as quickly as possible.
- Reactive strategies may include:
 - Reducing demands and requests
 - Removing triggers
 - Distracting and motivating
 - Listening, hearing and acting
 - Redirecting – providing an exit
 - Diverting the focus of attention
 - Controlling sensory input in line with the child's needs (e.g. using a swing, reducing noise, light and talking to the child).
- On some occasions when there is no alternative and as a last resort, it may be necessary to use a restrictive physical intervention (in line with MAYBO) to keep the student displaying challenging behaviours which harm or those around them safe. This is also in line with the use of “reasonable force”. (KCSIE 2024, P 45)

11. Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher & Senior Leadership Team

- Ensure the implementation of this policy within Heathermount School.
- Ensure there is a comprehensive recording and reporting process relating to behaviour support, is in place and regularly reviewed.
- Ensure there are effective student reward systems within Heathermount School and have a positive impact on student behaviour.
- Ensure that the behavioural support systems within Heathermount School are being used competently through regular monitoring and training of staff.
- Ensure that all students have a BARA that identifies behaviour support strategies.
- Ensure plans are shared with the student, using the method of communication most appropriate to them, parents, local authorities and other interested agencies, recognising the importance of consent in terms of the fundamental issues of respect and dignity and mental capacity.
- Ensure that student BARAs / SSPs are regularly reviewed and updated in the light of students' development and progress.
- Ensure that staff have access to advice and support from specialists in behaviour support where necessary. This may be inhouse support through psychology staff, therapists and through external consultants or Positive Behaviour Support lead within the Trust.
- Ensure that parents and carers are kept regularly consulted on their dependant's response to his or her BARA / SSP and that any significant events are communicated promptly. Parents and carers should be made aware of any serious behaviour matters without delay.
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate training in the management of behaviour. Where specific training needs to help staff support student behaviour have been identified, ensure that those staff have access to the advice, training and development opportunities appropriate to their needs.
- Provide regular information regarding student behaviour to both the Principal and Governing Body.

Staff

- To treat all students at Heathermount School fairly, with respect and understanding while having regard for their rights and responsibilities.
- To work with always the best interests of the student in mind, having high expectations of their behaviour and to ensure that all students work to the best of their ability.
- To assist all students to manage and improve their behaviour as part of everyday activities.
- To read and understand the BARAs / SSPs; consistently applying strategies to reduce challenging behaviours and promote desired behaviours.
- To satisfy themselves that they are clear on what they may and may not do in terms of behaviour support, and to seek clarification as necessary.
- To record and report behaviour incidents, both positive and negative on the school MIS (Arbor) and where appropriate, on MyConcern.
- To promote and encourage the various reward systems within school in order to reinforce positive behaviours.
- To contribute to the development of the students BARAs and SSPs.
- To report any changes, they notice in the individual's response to their BARA to the team supporting them.
- To follow and engage with the school's supervision and performance management process to confirm their understanding of this policy and to seek any further explanation or personal development as necessary.

- To take part in training in supporting students who display challenging behaviour. This will be ongoing inhouse training as well as externally accredited training (MAYBO). Staff are expected to implement the approaches and strategies that they have been taught in training when supporting a student.
- To support other staff in the team and demonstrate confidence in each other's skills and abilities to support students.
- Supporting behaviour is the responsibility of all, however there may be times when staff seek help and potentially withdraw themselves from a situation in order to de-escalate. It is not a sign of failure to do so and in some cases, the staff member may be the trigger.
- Staff need to reflect on their own practice to consider the approaches they have used. Staff should consider what they could do differently should a similar situation occur again.
- If applicable, wear clothing to help protect them when working with individuals in crisis as specified on student BARAs. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the dignity of the individual student and the safety of the staff. If protective clothing is required, it shall be as neutral and non-stigmatizing as possible, e.g., caps for tying hair back, discreet arm or shin guards etc.
- To make judgements in the light of this policy and to act within the school's procedures on managing behaviours of concern. However, as no policy or procedure can cover every eventuality, staff are expected to use their professional judgement and experience when supporting students. Staff will be supported when action in good faith follows such judgements. The following judgements can be reasonably expected of staff:
 - Deciding on the best course of action to keep the students they are supporting, and staff, including themselves, safe
 - When deciding on the need for action, however rapidly, considering the risk of immediate danger to persons or property
 - Deciding on the appropriateness of intervention in keeping with the behaviour incident that gives rise to it
 - Taking into account the age and understanding of the student in deciding on the degree of intervention necessary
 - Whether to intervene in an incident even if the member of staff has not signalled, they need assistance.
- Senior staff / middle leaders are responsible for ensuring staff support systems are in place and are being used. This will include ensuring that post incident debriefing is offered to the staff involved.
- Emotional debrief must be offered on the day of the incident in order to support the staff member before they go home. A reflective debrief will follow as soon as possible. The recipient can express a choice of who debriefs and the information for the emotional debrief will be kept confidential, unless there is a safeguarding concern.
- Senior staff have a responsibility to demonstrate trust and confidence in the staff's ability to manage the students they are supporting. If shortcomings in such management are identified, senior staff have a responsibility to address these through supervision, training and appraisal.

Parents and Carers

- It is the expectation that parents, and carers are to work collaboratively with Heathermount School so that students receive a consistent message about appropriate behaviours. This is part of the home/school agreement that is signed by the school, parent and student on entry.
- To take part in a supportive dialogue with the school about the student's behaviour, each informing the other promptly if there are causes for concern or celebration.

- To be familiar with and support the student's BARA/SSP, contributing to its development, if possible through the ongoing consultation process.
- To support and encourage positive behaviour in conjunction with the school.
- If parents or carers have concerns over the school's management of their child's behaviour, they should raise the matter with the tutor/teacher in the first instance. If the concern remains and/or the issue cannot be resolved, the complaints procedure can be used.

Governors

- The Governing body, through the Headteacher, shall review the policy on an annual basis to ensure it is still sufficiently robust and meets the needs of the school and its community.
- Hold the Headteacher to account and regularly review behaviour data via the Headteacher reports and with support from external advisors where needed.

12. Complaints and Whistleblowing

Individuals using the services of Heathermount School, their parents, friends or family have the right to offer comments and refer to the complaint's procedures in the case of any disagreement in the management of behaviour. Please refer to the Complaints Policy for further information.

Employees have a duty to voice any concerns over school practice. Please refer to the policy on Whistleblowing for further information. Cavendish Education is committed to support staff who engage in whistle blowing in good faith.

13. Self-injurious behaviour

Self-injurious behaviour is when a student physically harms themselves and is often referred to as self-harm. This could be displayed through head banging, biting, hair pulling, eye gouging, slapping, skin picking, scratching or pinching. In a minority of cases of self-injurious behaviour, the tissue damage from any one incident is serious but for most the injuries are minor e.g. bites that do not break the skin or head tapping. However, the cumulative effect of many instances of behaviours such as dropping to the floor on knees, hand biting or head banging could result in permanent tissue damage, so all instances of self-injurious behaviour must be carefully recorded, understood and analysed and inform appropriate individualised positive strategies/interventions to minimise the risk of harm.

Heathermount School recognises that self-injurious behaviour can be one of the most difficult behaviours to support. These behaviours may take place for many reasons. They may be a way of communicating a want or need, to seek attention or act as a sign of anxiety or excitement. Self-injurious behaviour should be supported using the same analytical, positive and low arousal approaches as any other behaviour that gives rise to concern. The function of the behaviour should be ascertained if possible and the individual taught alternative, less damaging, ways to meet his or her needs.

14. Management of Self-injurious Behaviour (SIB)

- Good quality functional assessment based on incident data/feedback and any further recording should inform strategies that are adopted. These strategies should be in line with positive behaviour support principles.
- In the first instance staff have a duty of care to intervene to reduce damage caused by these behaviours. However, sometimes the best support strategy to prevent an increase in potential injury is to ensure that the individual is as safe and as comfortable as possible but make no direct intervention and/or contact, especially trying to stop the behaviour, until the episode is over. This can result in shorter episodes with less likelihood that the

self-injurious behaviour will escalate and result in more serious injury. Such supervision without direct intervention should be agreed with relevant external parties such as parents.

- Pain relief and medical investigation should be considered in the presence of new self-injurious behaviours but always agreed as part of a multidisciplinary intervention.
- Chewy tubes, apples, oranges or similar may be offered as safe alternatives to those who may bite themselves.
- Pillows or cushions may be used to reduce impact of head banging behaviours.
- Increased structure, extra sensory opportunities, teaching self-regulation and relaxation strategies, and physical exercise can all help reduce frequency and intensity of self-injurious behaviour.
- Staff should try to respond in a calm neutral manner in the presence of SIB and reward and praise appropriate behaviours wherever possible.
- Care needs to be taken over the recording of self-injurious behaviour to ensure that persistent low intensity self-injurious behaviour, which could lead to long-term damage, does not go unrecorded. Parents and carers should be informed of any significant incidents involving self-injurious behaviour with the individual's knowledge, where appropriate and possible. Staff who have witnessed incidents of self-injurious behaviour in students should be provided with appropriate support, including opportunities for debriefing, emotional support, and access to relevant guidance or professional services such as mental health first aiders, therapy team or external agencies.

15. Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

Context

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBTQ+ children are at greater risk. Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- challenging inappropriate behaviours;
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and,
- challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Definitions

Sexual violence

It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school/college. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

- Rape
- Assault by penetration
- Sexual assault
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual “jokes” or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos. As set out in UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (which provides detailed advice for schools and colleges) taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence;
- sharing of unwanted explicit content;
- upskirting (is a criminal offence);
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

16. Reporting, recording and monitoring

Record keeping is an integral part of effective safeguarding and behaviour management practice. It is also a primary communication tool to inform all staff what is happening for a child or young person and to promote the student’s safety and welfare.

School MIS - Arbor

Behaviour-based events, desired behaviour or behaviours that challenge are recorded onto Arbor, the school’s electronic system for the monitoring and analysis of behaviour.

- Behaviour incidents should be recorded routinely by all staff with details including antecedents/triggers, a description of the behaviour and what actions were required and by whom.
- Challenging behaviours will be recorded and will assist in monitoring behaviours, functional assessments, and ascertaining the effectiveness or otherwise of behavioural interventions.
- Where behaviours are recorded routinely, data should be monitored regularly by the Senior Leadership team to ascertain trends and patterns.
- Unexplained/sudden changes or increases in challenging or concerning behaviours should always be investigated.
- Staff will be responsible for reviewing daily behaviour updates on Arbor.

- All serious behavioural incidents should be reported to the senior leadership team immediately.
- Results from behaviour recording or behavioural interventions should be shared with parents and carers, and funding authorities where appropriate.
- Injuries or accidents arising from behavioural incidents must be recorded in accordance with the relevant policies and will be recorded on the school's MIS, including the identification of injuries.
- Every use of any force, restrictive physical intervention (RPI) or seclusion arising from a behavioural event must be recorded on Arbor. This information will be shared with the Senior Leadership Team. Communication must go to the parents regarding any use of force (see below for minimum requirements - "Recording and reporting to parents")
- In the event of any physical intervention, parents/guardians must be notified on the same day.
- Any behaviour incident which requires subsequent First Aid must be recorded on Arbor.

17. Governors

Governors will monitor, challenge and support the school by analysing behaviour, consequence, suspension and physical intervention data provided for termly reports.

18. Recording a Physical Intervention

Behaviour incidents should always be recorded on Arbor before the end of the school day by staff involved in the incident. Reporting and monitoring are important for staff and students because it ensures their safety and protection. It also allows the school as a whole to keep a record of the number of incidents occurring and to examine patterns of behaviour and their possible functions. These incidents will be regularly monitored by the senior leadership team and the positive behaviour support practitioner.

A behaviour slip should be completed in the following instances:

- Where behaviour has had a significant impact on students, staff, visitors or the general public
- Significant damage to property
- A significant physical altercation
- Incidents of sexual violence
- Bullying / Racist incidents.

A physical intervention slip should be completed when:

- A member of staff has had to physically intervene with a student
- Where a MAYBO technique above a "non contact guide" is used
- This should include;
 - names of pupil and staff directly involved
 - any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
 - time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
 - brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
 - brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
 - any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

Recording and Reporting to Parents

- Staff must record and report any significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a student (an incident will be significant if it goes beyond appropriate physical contact as set out in the guidance - April 2026)
- Staff must record and report any seclusion or non-force related incident
- When reporting to parents, this should include;
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.

Additionally, staff should communicate this information to parents in writing. For example, via email or Arbor

19. Quality Assurance Framework

At Heathermount, the quality assurance framework has been developed as part of our ongoing commitment:

- To continuous improvement and raising standards of practice within the organisation; and
- To comply with registration and contractual requirements.

We will do this via:

- A trained and competent workforce. Staff receive safeguarding and MAYBO training as part of their induction process and annual refresher training, underpinned by our Safeguarding CPD programme.
- Staff also receive regular training in relation to positive behaviour strategies, de-escalation, attachment, emotional resilience, reflective practice sessions and child development training; all of which provides essential knowledge and skills to support children and young people and reduce behaviour escalating.
- Weekly SLT meetings will review data from weekly behaviour reports. Fortnightly Therapy Team meetings with key representatives from Education, Family Partnership, Psychology and Therapy will review the wider input required to support behaviour.
- Each half term a behaviour report is reviewed by SLT to identify trends/route causes. The aim of these reports is to identify any systemic factors contributing to and resulting in incidents so that we can understand spikes of activity, when strategies are having a positive impact and where specific plans need to be in place. The analysis is both qualitative and quantitative.
- All incidents where physical intervention has been used are counter-signed by witnesses to identify 'appropriate' or inappropriate' use of any physical intervention / restraint. Learning outcomes are identified and relevant supervision, disciplinary action taken if deemed appropriate.
- Staff complete a confirmation slip that they have read this policy and associated procedures, via MyConcern.
- Termly behaviour data and report of activity is scrutinised by the Governing body.

20. Items Prohibited and/or Banned at School

Heathermount operates in line with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance: Searching, Screening and confiscation – Advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies (January 2018).

This guidance explains the schools' powers of screening and searching students. In particular, it explains the use of the power to search students without consent. It also explains the powers the school has to seize and then confiscate items found during a search.

Headteachers, and staff authorised by them, have the statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item. Prohibited items are:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco, vapes and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used:
to commit an offence
to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property, of any person (including the pupil)

Headteachers and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for.

Included in the list of banned items at Heathermount are:

- lighters
- vapes, e-liquids etc.
- matches
- multi-tool gadgets/pen knives.
- mobile phones (not handed in)(please note there may be exceptional circumstances that the Headteacher may authorise a student having their mobile phone on their person with clear expectations)

Where a student is suspected of carrying banned or prohibited items and refuses to comply with the screening and searching procedures (in line with national guidance) they may be sent home for the remainder of the day and their parents informed. This will not be classed as a suspension but as an unauthorised absence.

Mobile phones and electronic games can be a distraction for students and allowing access to them during the school day would potentially cause a wide range of safeguarding concerns, disruption and potential bullying and abuse, distracting students from their learning.

Secondary students must hand their mobile phones/electronic devices in as they exit their taxi each morning. The device box will then be locked in reception until the end of the day.

Primary children will hand their devices into their class teacher on arrival, and these will be securely locked in the classroom.