Trauma Informed Relationship and Behaviour Policy

Also includes **guidance on Physical Restrictive Handling**

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Associated Documents:	This policy should be read alongside all other relevant policies, procedures and guidance documents, including: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Exclusion Policy Anti - Bullying Policy Risk Assessment and Risk-Taking Policy Health and Safety Policy Whistleblowing Policy

All group companies are detailed in the current legal structure.

This policy forms part of the Group Quality Management system ISO 9001

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Introduction

Our school is committed to creating a supportive and respectful environment where every child is valued. We believe that all children have potential, positive qualities and strengths, and they have the right to be treated with dignity. Central to this policy is the understanding that behaviour is a form of communication, not simply categorised as “good” or “poor.” Instead, we recognise and promote socially acceptable behaviour.

This policy fosters a positive school culture where children can learn, play, and grow together. We support all children with a range of diagnoses and needs, including autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. Our aim is to help children understand, manage, and improve their behaviour.

Policy Statement

We are committed to creating a safe, nurturing school environment grounded in trauma-informed practices which recognise behaviour is a form of communication. We understand that all behaviour reflects underlying needs and experiences, and we aim to support children in expressing themselves in socially appropriate and constructive ways.

Our approach emphasises routines, structure, boundaries, high expectations, rewards, interventions, and consequences, ensuring consistency and security for every child. These principles create a supportive environment where all children feel respected, motivated, and empowered to reach their full potential.

We aim to acknowledge that some behaviours may be socially unacceptable and can create unsafe situations for others. We recognise that certain behaviours can significantly undermine the school's positive ethos and therapeutic philosophy, including violence towards another child or adult, significant deliberate damage and unprovoked or premediated bullying. Although such behaviours are comparatively rare a consistent and carefully considered response is essential. This may include consequences designed to reinforce boundaries and maintain a safe environment for all.

Our staff are trained to anticipate and reduce the likelihood of these behaviours through trauma-informed strategies, to minimise their impact, and to support children in making positive choices.

By fostering understanding, reflection, and emotional regulation, we encourage children to take responsibility for their actions where appropriate, while ensuring that any consequences applied are proportionate, supportive, and tailored to the individual needs of the child. This policy ensures that we maintain a respectful, supportive, and safe school environment for all pupils, staff, and stakeholders, promoting growth, wellbeing, and positive behavioural development.

The policy focuses on five key areas: **Protect, Relate, Regulate, Reflect,** and **Communicate**. These principles guide interactions between:

- Parents/carers and children.
- Children and their peers.
- Children and school staff.
- Staff and external partners.

These five areas form a consistent framework that supports safe, positive, and therapeutic relationships across the school community.

Purpose & Scope

This policy provides guidance for all staff working within the school, parents, external stakeholders, governors, and pupils to ensure alignment with Independent School Standards and relevant legislation. It supports the management of behaviour both within the school premises and beyond, outlining expectations for all parties involved to foster a positive, safe, and respectful environment for learning and development.

The school has statutory powers under Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 to regulate pupil behaviour outside the school premises, such as on school trips, during transport, or whenever pupils are under staff supervision. The school may take appropriate action, in line with its behaviour and safeguarding policies, where behaviour such as cyberbullying or inappropriate conduct impacts safety or reputation.

When addressing behaviour outside of school, the severity, location, and impact on the school community will be taken into account as well as potential risks or threats to others. The school will take reasonable steps to address and regulate such behaviours in line with the principles set out in this policy. In line with Polaris Education's commitment to pupil

safety and wellbeing, Polaris Education does not support the use of seclusion as part of routine practice. Staff must consistently use preventative and supportive approaches, recognising that seclusion may only be considered in rare and exceptional circumstances to manage an immediate risk of harm.

Aims and Objectives

Our goal is to:

- Create a calm, safe, and inclusive environment for learning.
- Help children build independence, self-control, and respect for others.
- Support mental health and trauma-informed approaches to behaviour.
- Promote effective communication as a tool for understanding and resolving issues.
- Provide consistent routines, clear boundaries, and high expectations for behaviour.
- Use positive reinforcement and rewards to encourage good behaviour.
- Apply fair, proportionate, and appropriate consequences to address inappropriate behaviour.
- Implement tailored interventions to meet children's individual needs.

Definitions:

Trauma-Informed Approach: Recognising and responding to how trauma affects a child's emotions and behaviour, and ability to engage in learning.

Relational Health: The development and maintenance of strong, positive, and supportive relationships among pupils, staff, and families.

Socially Acceptable Behaviour: Actions that align with shared expectations of safety, respect, cooperation, and positive participation within the school community.

Communication: The effective exchange of information, feelings, and needs in a way that fosters understanding, connection and appropriate support.

Legislation:

This policy aligns with:

Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE): Statutory safeguarding guidance for schools.

Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE): Non-statutory guidance used by inspectors and leaders to set expectations, respond to misbehaviour (including outside school premises and online), and run a whole-school behaviour system. Latest update 19 February 2024.

Independent School Standards (ISS) Part 3: Welfare, health, and safety of pupils: Legal standards require (among other things) a written behaviour policy, effective implementation, and a record of sanctions for serious misbehaviour.

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (behaviour powers): Primary legislation underpinning schools' authority to regulate off-site behaviour and apply disciplinary measures.

Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (effective from 1 April 2026; introduces statutory recording/reporting duties for significant incidents) (DfE).

Learning Behaviour (Steer Report, 2005): Sector-influential background on effective behaviour practice.

Human Rights Act 1998: Useful to frame fairness, proportionality, and pupils' rights alongside education law.

PSHE/RSHE: PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education) definition/role; RSHE statutory guidance (DfE) with revised guidance published December 2025.

Roles & Responsibilities

Effective behaviour management requires a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities held by all staff members. Establishing this clarity ensures consistency, safety, and a positive learning environment for all pupils. The sections below outline the key roles and responsibilities associated with each.

Governors

Ensure the school's behaviour support policies comply with Independent School Standards and other all relevant DfE regulations.

Monitor and review behaviour and restrictive intervention policies through regular meetings and reports.

Provide strategic oversight and hold the senior leadership team accountable for the implementation of behaviour support practices.

Ensure that behaviour support strategies align with the school's values, and promote a safe, and respectful environment for all pupils.

Review incident reports and behavioural data to identify trends, risks, and areas for improvement.

Review data relating to the use of restrictive interventions, including restraint, reasonable force, and any incidents of seclusion, to monitor patterns, frequency, and proportionality across pupil groups. Governors will use this information to identify potential safeguarding concerns, training needs, and opportunities to reduce the need for restrictive intervention.

Ensure the school has effective systems to *record and report every significant incident* involving the use of force, as required under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act (statutory from April 2026).

Ensure the school fulfils the new legal duty to *record and report all seclusion and restraint incidents* to parents in accordance with April 2026 guidance.

Oversee the use of restrictive intervention data to monitor proportionality, frequency, and emerging safeguarding concerns, in line with DfE expectations.

Ensure that prevention, early intervention, and de-escalation strategies are embedded across the school to minimise the need for restrictive practices. Support the school in addressing significant behaviour issues or incidents, ensuring a fair and transparent process.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Oversee the development, implementation, and monitoring of behaviour support policies.

Ensure staff receive ongoing professional development, including training in trauma-informed practices and in the lawful, safe, and appropriate use of physical contact, reasonable force, and other restrictive interventions (including seclusion), with a focus on prevention and de-escalation.

Identify any areas of learning and development for staff to improve understanding and practice.

Provide support and guidance in complex behavioural cases.

Approve disciplinary actions such as internal suspensions or exclusions in line with DfE behaviour guidance and the school's policy.

Communicate with parents/carers and external agencies regarding serious behavioural concerns. Parents/carers are informed about serious incidents, including by phone or letter. For suspensions or exclusions, supporting agencies are also notified.

Ensure compliant systems are in place to *record and report every significant incident involving the use of force* (statutory from 1 April 2026 under section 93A EIA 2006), and to *record and report all incidents of seclusion and restraint* to parents.

The school uses a structured Serious Incident Report form (online) to ensure statutory recording and reporting duties are met.

Quality-assure incident recording and reporting (including timeliness and completeness), and ensure leaders review patterns and trends — by pupil group, staff, location, time — to identify risks, disproportionality and training needs, taking action accordingly.

Embed whole-school prevention, early support, and de-escalation strategies to minimise the need for restrictive interventions, and ensure any use is proportionate, for the minimum time necessary, and never used as punishment.

Ensure post-incident processes are in place (debrief, pupil support, staff support, medical checks where appropriate) and that learning from incidents informs practice, training, and individual plans.

Classroom Teachers

Day-to-day, teachers are expected to prioritise prevention and de-escalation, use force only where lawful and necessary, and follow local recording/parent-notification procedures.

Set clear expectations for pupil behaviour and model positive behaviours.

Establish and maintain classroom routines that promote a productive learning environment.

Use preventive and de-escalation strategies to manage emerging behaviours and support pupils to make positive choices; restrictive interventions (including reasonable force or seclusion) are used only when necessary to prevent injury, serious damage to property, criminal behaviour, or serious disorder, and never as punishment.

Apply school behaviour support strategies and enforce rules consistently and proportionately, in line with the school policy and DfE guidance.

Where any use of force occurs, ensure it is proportionate, for the minimum time necessary, avoids prohibited practices (e.g., anything that interferes with breathing or circulation), and follows immediate safeguarding steps (including seeking medical attention where appropriate).

Report significant behavioural issues /incidents to senior leadership and engage in restorative practices when appropriate. Where there has been a *significant* use of force, complete the school's incident record promptly and escalate in line with statutory recording/reporting requirements.

Keep parents informed about any concerns or behavioural progress. For incidents involving seclusion, restraint, or significant use of force, ensure parents/carers are notified in accordance with the school's procedures and the April 2026 reporting duty.

Participate in required training on safe, lawful physical contact and restrictive interventions, and contribute to post-incident reviews (including pupil/staff debriefs) so that lessons learned inform future practice and plans**.**

Teaching Assistants and Support Staff

- Support teachers in managing classroom behaviours and provide additional support for pupils requiring individualised strategies (with a strong emphasis on preventive and de-escalation approaches before any restrictive intervention is considered).
- Encourage positive behaviours and assist with interventions when necessary — ensuring any physical contact is safe, appropriate, and never used as punishment; any restrictive intervention (including reasonable force or seclusion) is used only to prevent injury, serious damage to property, criminal behaviour or serious disorder, and for the minimum time necessary.
- Observe and report behavioural trends to teachers and senior leadership and contribute to data reviews by recording relevant context (location, time, triggers) to inform prevention and staff training needs.

- Ensure that pupils in need of additional support are guided through structured, therapeutic interventions when required and participate in post-incident support (e.g., pupil debriefs, staff reflection, and arranging medical checks where appropriate) so that learning informs future plans.
- Where any use of force, restraint or seclusion occurs, complete the school's incident record promptly and escalate in line with statutory recording/reporting requirements ensuring parents/carers are notified in accordance with school procedures.
- Undertake required training on safe, lawful physical contact and restrictive interventions, including recognising prohibited practices (e.g., anything that interferes with breathing or circulation), and refresh training as directed by the school.

Pastoral Support Team

- Provide targeted interventions for pupils struggling with emotional regulation and behaviours with a strong emphasis on preventive and de-escalation strategies (e.g., coaching in self-regulation, calm spaces, co-regulation) to minimise the need for restrictive interventions.
- Lead restorative practices and mediation sessions to support pupils in understanding the impact of their behaviours and reintegration following incidents, in line with whole-school behaviour systems.
- Offer guidance and counselling for pupils dealing with trauma or external factors affecting their behaviours and coordinate personalised support plans (e.g., behaviour plans or individual support plans) that prioritise early help and de-escalation.
- Communicate regularly with parents and other agencies to ensure the well-being and support of pupils — ensuring timely, clear updates after serious incidents and collaborating with external partners where needed.
- Where any use of force, restraint or seclusion occurs, complete the school's incident record promptly and escalate in line with statutory recording/reporting requirements ensuring parents/carers are notified in accordance with school procedures.
- Support post-incident processes, including pupil debriefs, staff reflection, and arranging medical checks where appropriate; ensure learning from incidents informs future plans and adjustments to support.
- Contribute to data reviews (patterns by pupil group, location, time, triggers) to identify risks, disproportionality, and training needs; recommend responsive actions to SLT and governors.
- Undertake and refresh training on trauma-informed practice, safe and lawful physical contact, and prohibited practices (e.g., anything that interferes with breathing or circulation).

Pupils

- Take responsibility for their own behaviours and choices by following the school's behaviour expectations and accepting fair, proportionate consequences when they occur.
- Engage in learning, following classroom rules and respecting others to help maintain a calm, safe, and productive environment for everyone.
- Participate in restorative practices when required, reflecting on actions and learning to make better choices in the future (including cooperating with re-integration plans after an incident.
- Follow adult instructions during de-escalation and safety procedures and seek help early if they feel unsafe or worried about the behaviour of others.
- Treat staff, peers and school property with respect, and contribute to a culture where physical intervention is rarely needed because pupils use self-regulation strategies and accept support.

Parents/Carers

- Support the school's Trauma Informed Relationship and Behaviour policy and work collaboratively with staff to address behavioural concerns. Uphold the school's routines, rules, and proportionate responses, including restorative approaches where appropriate.
- Maintain open communication with teachers and staff to ensure a consistent approach to behaviour support at home and school. Share relevant information that may affect behaviour (e.g., medical needs, changes at home) so support can be planned early.
- Attend meetings or interventions where necessary to help support their child's behaviour development. Engage with agreed support plans (e.g., behaviour or support plans) that prioritise prevention and de-escalation.
- Respond promptly to school communications following any serious incident. Where there has been seclusion, restraint, or significant use of force, read the school's incident report/communication and work with staff on next steps for repair, reintegration, and support.
- Encourage their child to follow adult instructions during safety procedures and to seek help early if worried about their own or others' behaviour.

Procedures - including Key Principles & Practices

Key Principles

PROTECT

We prioritise creating a safe and predictable environment where children feel secure, valued, and supported throughout their school day. This commitment is reflected in a range of strategies designed to protect both the emotional and physical well-being of every student. Our approach includes, but is not limited to:

Increased "Safety Cues": Establishing clear, reassuring signals in daily routines, such as greeting children at the door, to help them feel safe and welcomed.

Emotional Availability: Ensuring that students have access to at least one emotionally available adult throughout the day and providing a confidential, non-shaming system for self-referral when they need help or someone to talk to.

Pedagogic and Pastoral Support: Implementing interventions that help staff understand and support children's unique emotional and academic needs, such as using tools like "I wish my teacher knew."

Open-Door Policy: Encouraging informal discussions with parents, carers, and pupils to maintain open lines of communication and strengthen relationships.

Trauma-Informed Training: Providing staff with training in trauma-informed practices, the "PRICE" Principles, and positive behaviour strategies to create a supportive and understanding school climate.

Protecting Emotional Well-being: Avoiding harsh criticisms, shouting, or shaming, and instead fostering a culture of respect and emotional safety.

Non-Use of Punishment or Harsh Sanctions: Non-use of Harsh Punishments or Disproportionate Sanctions: Rejecting the use of punitive or fear-based responseswe focus on understanding, reflection, and restorative approaches that help students learn from their actions and rebuild relationships.

Dedicated Support for Vulnerable Children: Ensuring that every vulnerable child has access to a trusted and emotionally available adult to guide and support them.

Robust Risk Assessments: Regularly evaluating potential risks within the school environment—physical, emotional, and social—and developing clear strategies to mitigate identified hazards, ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils and staff.

RELATE

Building strong, trusting relationships is at the heart of our approach, fostering a sense of connection and belonging for every child. This includes:

Foster Trusting Relationships: Create an environment where children feel valued, safe, and understood through consistent, empathetic interactions.

Prioritise Emotional Connections: Engage in activities that nurture a sense of belonging and connection with peers and staff.

Model Empathy and Compassion: Demonstrate understanding and care, showing children how to relate to others in positive ways.

Repair Relationships Post-Conflict: Use restorative practices to mend and strengthen relationships after disagreements or incidents.

Recognize Individual Strengths: Celebrate each child's unique abilities and contributions, fostering mutual respect.

Encourage Peer Support: Facilitate opportunities for children to build positive relationships with one another, including collaborative and team-based activities.

Establish Predictability: Provide consistent routines and behaviour from adults to help children feel secure in their interactions.

REGULATE

We focus on helping children manage their emotions and stress levels through calming strategies, supportive interactions, and nurturing environments. This involves:

- **Proactive Strategies for Calming and Stress Reduction:**
    - Implementing techniques such as deep breathing, mindfulness, and relaxation exercises to help children calm down and manage stress.
    - Providing consistent and predictable routines that promote a sense of safety and control for children.
- **Utilising Creative Activities for Emotional Expression**:
    - Using play, art, and music as outlets for children to express and process their emotions in a healthy, constructive way.
    - Encouraging children to use these activities to explore and articulate their feelings.

- **Supporting Smooth Transitions**:
    - Offering clear, consistent cues and visual schedules to help children transition smoothly between activities or settings.

- Using countdowns, visual prompts, or calming techniques to reduce anxiety during transitions, helping children feel secure and prepared for changes.

- **Co-regulation with Staff and Children:**
  - Encouraging staff to model calm, positive behaviour and provide consistent emotional support to children.
  - Fostering an environment where children can feel safe to co-regulate with trusted adults, allowing staff to guide children through emotional challenges and teach self-regulation skills.
- **Supporting Staff Well-being**:
  - Providing staff with training, resources, and regular support to prevent burnout and manage their own stress.
  - Creating a supportive work environment where staff feel valued and equipped to provide emotional support to students effectively.

REFLECT

Encouraging thoughtful conversations and self-expression helps children process their experiences and develop a positive sense of self. We believe that reflection is key to emotional growth and resilience. Our approach to reflection includes, but is not limited to:

Empathetic Listening: Ensuring staff listen attentively and empathetically, encouraging children to share their feelings in a safe and non-judgmental space.

Trauma-Informed Reflection: Providing staff development focused on helping children move from "behaving" their trauma or painful life experiences, to reflecting on those experiences. Through empathetic conversation, staff support children in addressing negative self-referencing and guiding them towards developing positive, coherent narratives about their lives.

Creative Outlets: Offering opportunities for children to express and process difficult experiences through creative outlets like art and drama, allowing them to explore their emotions in a safe and constructive way.

Mental Health and Emotional Education: Integrating lessons on mental health, emotions, and relationships into the curriculum, including areas such as PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education), RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education), and psychoeducation.

These lessons help children build a deeper understanding of themselves and others, fostering emotional intelligence and resilience.

COMMUNICATE

Effective communication underpins our approach, fostering clear, respectful, and empathetic exchanges between pupils, staff, and families. This approach is rooted in inclusivity and understanding, with a commitment to respecting all protected characteristics under the Equality Act. This includes:

- *Promoting Respect for Diversity*: Teach children the importance of respecting and valuing differences in race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other protected characteristics, ensuring all feel seen and appreciated.
- *Modeling Inclusive Language:* Staff consistently use language that upholds dignity and promotes acceptance, avoiding stereotypes or biases, and encouraging others to do the same.
- Creating Safe Spaces for Expression: Provide opportunities for pupils to share their thoughts and experiences, ensuring a non-judgmental environment where everyone feels safe to express their identities and values.
- *Addressing Discrimination Promptly and Thoughtfully*: Ensure robust responses to any language or behaviour that undermines the rights or dignity of individuals based on protected characteristics, fostering accountability and understanding.
- *Celebrating Diversity in School Culture:* Integrate learning opportunities and school-wide practices that highlight the value of diversity, using communication to reinforce that every individual belongs.

Key Practices

Consistency and Leadership

To maintain a consistent approach, the following key practices are implemented:

High expectations are communicated and maintained to encourage positive behaviour and academic achievement.

Clear rules, consistent boundaries, rewards, interventions, and consequences are established with input from staff, pupils, and families to ensure clarity and fairness.

Trauma-informed practices are embedded throughout the school, recognising and addressing the impact of trauma on behaviour and learning.

We help children understand and address inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, by promoting empathy and supporting appropriate conflict resolution.

Staff nurture and support children with kindness, understanding, and effective communication to build strong, trusting relationships.

Ongoing training and support for staff ensure they are equipped to apply these practices effectively, maintaining a consistent and supportive approach across all levels of the school community.

Communicating High Expectations

Our school promotes good behaviour by clearly communicating high expectations, implementing consistent policies, and fostering an ethos of discipline and mutual respect between staff and pupils.

Expectations and routines are explicitly taught to ensure consistency and understanding. These expectations are reinforced daily and displayed reinforced daily and are displayed prominently in classrooms and communal areas.

Schoolwide Values and Expectations

Our school upholds a set of core values that guide behaviour and conduct. These values are presented in a simplified manner to ensure they are accessible to all pupils and members of our community. The expectations are visually displayed throughout the school and are consistently reinforced by all staff and community members. This approach ensures that everyone, regardless of their individual needs, can easily understand and uphold the standards that promote a positive and respectful school environment.

Consistent boundaries

Consistent boundaries are essential in supporting positive behaviour, especially in a trauma-informed environment. These boundaries refer to the clear, consistent, and respectful limits set to guide behaviour and interactions, creating a sense of safety, predictability, and stability. For individuals who have experienced trauma, maintaining such boundaries helps reduce anxiety and fosters trust, providing a foundation for healthier behaviours. For example, in a classroom setting, a teacher might establish a boundary by calmly stating, "We use our words to express feelings, not our hands," reinforcing the expected behaviour while ensuring the individual feels supported and safe. When boundaries are applied consistently and compassionately, they empower individuals to thrive in a structured and secure environment.

Classroom Behaviour Management

Classroom behaviour management focuses on teaching and modelling positive behaviour for learning, helping pupils develop the skills needed to succeed. Teachers and staff emphasise the importance of good behaviour by setting clear expectations and modelling respectful, engaged, and cooperative interactions. By developing and consistently enforcing classroom rules, staff ensure that routines are followed, and any disruptions to learning are minimised. This approach fosters a productive environment where all pupils can focus, participate, and achieve their potential.

Rewards

We emphasise celebrating pupils' achievements and positive behaviours as part of fostering a supportive and encouraging school environment. Recognising success motivates pupils and reinforces the school's positive ethos. We celebrate achievements in various ways, including:

Opportunities for Fresh Starts: Multiple times throughout the day.

Verbal Praise/Feedback: Immediate acknowledgment of good behaviour.

Certificates: Presented during celebration assemblies.

Reward Systems: House points, Dojo points, certificates, and stickers for exemplary behaviour.

Attendance Awards: Recognizing and rewarding consistent attendance.

Headteacher's Work of the Week: Highlighting exceptional work.

Special Awards: Honouring traits such as resilience, respect, and peer support.

Intervention to support Dysregulated Behaviours

Interventions are proactive and supportive measures designed to address the underlying causes of dysregulated or challenging behaviour. They aim to help the child self-regulate, learn better coping strategies, and prevent future incidents. Rooted in understanding behaviour as a form of communication, interventions focus on emotional support, teaching alternative behaviours, and restoring calmness. Interventions address why a behaviour occurred and aim to prevent recurrence by supporting the child.

Some interventions used include but are not limited to:

Emotion Check-Ins: Provide opportunities for pupils to identify and communicate their feelings through emotion charts, zones of regulation, or one-on-one discussions.

Calm and Regulating Spaces: Offer a quiet, safe area where pupils can step away to self-regulate with guidance from an emotionally available adult.

De-Escalation Techniques: Use a calm tone, active listening, and non-threatening body language to reduce stress and re-engage pupils.

Flexible Expectations: Adjust demands temporarily to match the child's emotional state and capacity to participate.

Pre-emptive Strategies: Identify and address triggers early by providing clear transitions, sensory tools, or movement breaks.

Visual Supports: Use visual timetables, clear instructions, and behaviour cue cards to create predictability and reduce anxiety.

Positive Reinforcement: Celebrate small steps of progress to encourage continued self-regulation and positive behaviour.

Collaborative Problem-Solving: Work with the pupils to identify challenges and agree on strategies that empower them to succeed.

Involvement of Key Adults: Ensure pupils have access to trusted adults who can offer consistent support during challenging moments.

Dialogue: Engage the child in conversation to understand their feelings and redirect their behaviour. Dialogue is the primary response before considering further actions.

Persuasion or Dissuasion: Use focused discussions to encourage positive choices or discourage harmful actions, providing clear guidance and support.

Physical Presence: Staff may use their physical presence to re-establish safety by standing nearby or momentarily restricting a child's movement while maintaining a calm and non-threatening demeanor.

Restriction of Access or Exit: Temporarily limit access to potentially harmful spaces or prevent a distressed child from leaving a room when necessary. This action is time-bound, crisis-focused, and accompanied by de-escalation dialogue. Where this supportive measure prevents a pupil from leaving a space—or leads them to believe they cannot leave—it constitutes *seclusion* and must be treated accordingly: used only when necessary, proportionate and for the minimum time, never as punishment; recorded and reported in line with statutory duties; and never using prohibited practices (e.g., anything that risks breathing or circulation).

Staff should be aware that positioning themselves in a way that prevents a pupil from leaving a space may constitute seclusion and must therefore only occur where necessary to prevent immediate harm and must be recorded and reported accordingly.

Withdrawal: Move the child to a less stimulating environment where they can regain self-control under supervision. This approach ensures their safety and provides an opportunity for emotional recovery.

One-to-One Supervision: Assign a dedicated staff member to provide continuous, focused support for a child experiencing distress or disruption. This intervention is positive, constructive, and aimed at reintegration into regular activities.

Time-Out: Remove the child from a rewarding or stimulating activity as a therapeutic measure to help them manage their behaviour. Time-out is always temporary and non-restrictive. This should never be in a locked room.

Positive Handling and Restrictive Physical Intervention

Some more serious behaviours may require for staff to intervene physically: this may involve briefly guiding, supporting or, where necessary, restricting a pupil's movement to keep people safe.

Where an intervention prevents a pupil from leaving a space—or leads them to believe they cannot leave—this constitutes *seclusion*. Seclusion and any *significant use of force* must be used only, when necessary, be proportionate and for the minimum time, and are never used as punishment; they must also be recorded and reported in line with the April 2026 statutory duties.

Polaris Education does not support the routine use of seclusion in its schools. Seclusion may only occur in exceptional circumstances where it is necessary as a safety measure to prevent immediate harm to the pupil or others and where no less restrictive option is viable. In such circumstances the pupil must be continuously supervised, allowed to leave once the immediate risk has reduced, and the incident must be recorded and reported in line with statutory guidance.

Staff must not use any practice that risks interfering with breathing or circulation (for example, pressure on the neck, nose, mouth chest, or abdomen), or any unsafe or degrading method.

All incidents must be documented promptly, with the required details, and parents/carers notified in accordance with the statutory recording and reporting duties from 1 April 2026.

All incidents must be documented promptly, with the required details, and parents/carers notified in accordance with the statutory recording and reporting duties from 1 April 2026.

After any incident, the school will provide post-incident support (medical checks where appropriate, pupil and staff debriefs) and use learning to update plans and training.

In certain high-risk situations it may be necessary to temporarily restrict a pupil's movement to prevent immediate harm to themselves or others. Any such restriction must be lawful, necessary, proportionate, and used only for the minimum time required to restore safety. Staff will always seek to de-escalate the situation and use the least restrictive option available. Where a pupil is prevented from leaving a space, this may constitute seclusion and must be managed, recorded, and reported in accordance with statutory guidance.

Circumstances under which temporary restrictions may be applied include:

***Temporary Restriction of movement for Safety or Learning*:** If a pupil poses an immediate risk to their own safety, the safety of others, or is seriously disrupting the learning environment, their movement may be briefly limited using the least restrictive means, for the minimum time necessary, and never as punishment.

***Controlled Environment*:** In cases of crisis or high-risk behaviours (e.g., violence, self-harm, or potential harm to others), it may be necessary to restrict access to certain areas. If staff

positioning prevents a pupil from leaving a room—or the pupil believes they cannot leave—this is seclusion and must be recorded and reported under the April 2026 duties.

Supervised Withdrawal:. A pupil may be moved to a quieter space to regain control. This is supportive, supervised, and not a sanction. If the pupil is prevented from leaving, it meets the definition of seclusion and triggers the recording/reporting duty.

Physical Presence*:* Staff may position themselves to re-establish safety and engage the pupil using calm, non-threatening communication; any restriction must be proportionate and time-limited, avoiding prohibited practices.

Physical Diversion / Supportive Contact:

A low-level, supportive contact (e.g., offering a hand, light touch to forearm, guiding at the shoulder) may help redirect a pupil; this differs from restraint by degree of force and must cease immediately if the pupil resists or shows distress. It must never create sexual expectations or feelings; if it does, the intervention stops immediately. If resistance occurs, staff switch to alternative, non-physical de-escalation.

Physical control: Restrictive Physical intervention. Employed only when de-escalation has failed and there is a necessity to prevent injury, serious damage to property, criminal behaviour, or serious disorder; any force used must be reasonable, necessary, proportionate and for the minimum time, never as punishment. Where used, it is treated as a *significant incident* for statutory recording/reporting if thresholds are met. Whenever foreseeable, strategies are planned within the pupil's support plan.

Particular care must be taken where pupils have SEND, autism, trauma histories, or other vulnerabilities. Staff must consider individual triggers, reasonable adjustments, and any existing behaviour or support plans before any restrictive intervention is used. Where foreseeable risks are identified, strategies should be recorded within the pupil's individual support plan to reduce the likelihood that restrictive intervention will be required.

Further guidance –Restrictive interventions

Must be rare, reasonable proportionate and necessary. They are never for punishment or compliance and must not affect breathing or circulation.

Recording and Reporting –All uses of restraint, seclusion and any significant use of force must be reported promptly to senior staff and recorded in line with statutory April 2026 duties; parents/carers are notified as soon as practicable (same day where possible).

Where the pupil is a Child Looked After the child's allocated social worker and/or placing Local Authority will also be notified in accordance with the school's notification procedures. Incident records must include time, date, location, duration, justification, type and degree of force used, and any injuries.

Post incident management – Debriefs occur in a calm environment without blame. Pupils are checked for injury and offered first aid and pastoral support; staff are also supported. Learning from the incident informs plans, reasonable adjustments, and training.

Consequences

Restrictive interventions (including any use of force or seclusion) are never used as a sanction and are separate from behaviour consequences; they are used only, when necessary, proportionate and time-limited to keep people safe, followed by statutory recording/reporting and post-incident support.

Consequences are learning responses applied after a behaviour has occurred to reinforce boundaries and accountability. They teach the child that actions have outcomes and help maintain a safe and orderly environment. Consequences emphasise responsibility and fairness, ensuring the child understands the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others. Consequences address what happened and focus on ensuring accountability and reinforcing boundaries.

Verbal Warning: Clearly explaining the unacceptable behaviour and expected improvement.

Missing break time: Taking away some of break time

Loss of Privileges: Taking away specific opportunities, such as playtime or class rewards.

Extra Work: Repeating or completing additional tasks to make up for missed learning.

Removal from the classroom: Removal is a serious disciplinary measure where a young person is required to spend time outside the classroom under staff supervision due to severe behavioural issues. This differs from a brief step outside for a conversation and return. While removed, the young person should continue their education in a meaningful way, though the provided curriculum may differ from the mainstream classroom content.

Restorative Conversations: Allow pupils to reflect on their behaviour, understand the impact on others, and collaboratively find solutions to move forward. We encourage pupils to reflect on their behaviour, take responsibility, and make amends through restorative justice practices. However, restorative actions are complemented by clear and consistent consequences.

Detention: Allocating time to reflect on behaviour and discuss improvements.

Parent Communication: Informing parents about the incident and discussing solutions.

Internal Suspension: Temporarily removing the child from the classroom while ensuring they remain in school. (See Exclusion policy)

Fixed-Term Suspension: Temporarily excluding the child from school to highlight the severity of their actions.

Restitution: Requiring the child to repair damage caused, such as cleaning up after a mess.

Written Reflection: Asking the child to write about their behaviour, its impact, and ways to improve.

Behaviour Contracts: Creating agreements outlining expectations and consequences for repeated actions.

Confiscation of inappropriate items: Staff have the authority to confiscate items from pupils under two provisions: one for general discipline and another for searching prohibited items such as weapons, drugs, or stolen property. Items like knives, weapons, or explicit content must be handed over to the police, while other items are returned at the teacher's discretion. Confiscation should be reasonable, in line with school policy.

Staff Induction, Training, and Ongoing Support for Managing Relationship and Behaviour

Trained staff are expected to complete and stay up to date with PRICE training to meet the following objectives:

1. Recognising the importance of and using de-escalation techniques and working as a team when managing situations where children present dysregulated behaviours prioritising prevention and early support.

2. Applying an understanding of the legal framework (including April 2026 statutory duties on recording/reporting significant use of force, and seclusion/restraint parent notification).

3. Using a gradual and graded response to restrictive interventions as a last resort only, ensuring any force used is necessary, proportionate, and time-limited.

4.. Completing accurate documentation and notifications within required timescales, including the pupil/parent communication required by the guidance.

5. Participating in post-incident processes (active listening, debrief, repair and reflection) so practice and plans improve.

Review Dates

This procedure must be reviewed annually, after any serious incident or near miss, following changes in statutory guidance or after significant organisational changes.

Date:	**Version:**	**Summary of Changes:**
April 2026	05	Updated following new DfE legislation on Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools.
August 2026	06	Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices section strengthened and updated in Appendix A.
October	07	Added Local Authority/social worker notification requirement for Children Looked After in the Positive Handling and Restrictive Physical Intervention section.

APPENDIX A Guidance on specific behaviour issues

Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

Following any report of child-on-child sexual violence or sexual harassment whether offline or online, the school will follow the general safeguarding principles set out in KCSIE, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (or deputy) will lead the initial response, advise on next steps, and coordinate with multi-agency partners as required. If a child is at immediate risk of harm, staff will call 999/police and follow local children's social care referral pathways without delay.

The schools take its responsibility extremely seriously and is clear across the whole culture that sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable or tolerated. Reports will be taken seriously, recorded, and acted upon; pupils whose behaviour falls below expectations will be sanctioned in line with the Behaviour Policy, while safeguarding processes are followed.

Each incident will be considered on a case-by-case basis, led by the DSL, with a risk assessment (safety plan) to support and protect the victim and manage risks for all pupils concerned; risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and updated as circumstances change.

The school will make clear to all staff the importance of challenging and recording all inappropriate language and behaviour between pupils. Staff will not downplay behaviours by describing them as 'banter' or 'just having a laugh.' The school will draw on the Respectful School Communities toolkit to support a culture where sexual harassment in all forms is treated as unacceptable.

Victim care and support: All victims will be listened to, supported, believed as appropriate, and kept safe; they will be reassured that their concerns are taken seriously, regardless of when the incident occurred. The school will consider the victim's wishes and feelings, manage information on a 'need-to-know' basis, and avoid any action that could discourage reporting.

Confidentiality and information-sharing: Staff will never promise confidentiality. Information will be shared lawfully and proportionately in line with safeguarding duties and data protection principles, recording relevant decisions and rationales.

Sanctions and parallel processes: Where relevant, the school may apply proportionate sanctions (including removal from class/activities) while police and/or children's social care investigations are underway, ensuring actions do not compromise those investigations.

Abuse that occurs online or outside school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. The school will address harmful online behaviours (including image-based abuse) in line with KCSIE and the Behaviour Policy. A victim will never be made to feel they

are creating a problem by reporting, nor made to feel ashamed or that their experience is minimised.

Support for pupils who display harmful sexual behaviour: The school will seek appropriate assessment and support (e.g., early help, targeted interventions, and multi-agency input) for pupils exhibiting sexually inappropriate and/or harmful sexual behaviour, alongside proportionate disciplinary responses.

Where an allegation is found to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider appropriate disciplinary action, while ensuring the decision is recorded with the DSL and the pupil is supported as needed.

Recording and reporting: All reports, decisions, actions, rationales, and safety plans will be recorded by the DSL; parents/carers will be informed where appropriate and safe to do so, and referrals to children's social care and/or police made in line with KCSIE.

Staff training and culture: The school will ensure staff are trained to recognise, respond to, and record child-on-child sexual violence/harassment, to challenge inappropriate behaviour, and to promote respectful relationships, drawing on DfE behaviour guidance and whole-school culture tools (e.g., Respectful School Communities).

Behaviour incidents online

The school holds pupils to the same behaviour standards online as offline, addressing issues such as bullying, inappropriate language, and the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes in line with the school's policies. Any safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and *Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)*, with staff reporting concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

In cases that may involve criminal behaviour (for example, harassment, threats, or illegal images) or the sharing of explicit images, the DSL will advise on next steps in line with KCSIE and the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance and will liaise with children's social care and/or the police as appropriate.

The following guidance supports school staff and DSLs:

Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) (DfE).

UKCIS: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (updated March 2024) and the one-page overview for all staff. All staff must follow the overview and refer incidents to the DSL immediately.

Sanctions and behaviour expectations
The school may sanction pupils for online behaviour where it threatens or causes harm to others, disrupts school operations, or adversely affects the school's reputation or environment, even if the behaviour occurs outside school hours, in line with DfE *Behaviour in schools*.

Important operational points

Staff must not view, copy, store, or share nude/semi-nude imagery; any accidental viewing is reported to the DSL immediately, and devices/imagery are handled per UKCIS procedures.

Victims are supported and taken seriously; information is shared on a 'need-to-know' basis and recorded in line with KCSIE.

Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy

Pupils must not use or have access to mobile phones or other smart technology (including smartwatches and devices with messaging, internet, audio or video recording functions) at any point during the school day, including lessons, movement between lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes and any other supervised school activities, unless an agreed exception has been authorised by the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for medical, safeguarding or other exceptional circumstances.

Mobile phones and personal devices must be handed in on arrival (or stored in accordance with the school's agreed arrangements) and remain inaccessible to pupils until the end of the school day. Any device used, accessed or found in a pupil's possession contrary to this policy may be confiscated in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance and the school's Behaviour Policy. Responses to breaches will be proportionate, reasonable and take account of individual needs and circumstances.

Restrictive interventions (including any use of force or seclusion) are never used as a sanction for mobile phone breaches. Any intervention is only used where necessary to prevent injury, serious damage to property or serious disorder, is proportionate and time-limited, and is recorded and reported in accordance with the school's legal duties.

Where a device is linked to safeguarding concerns (including bullying, online abuse, exploitation, or the sharing of nude or semi-nude images), staff must immediately refer the matter to the DSL and follow KCSIE and UKCIS guidance. Staff must not search for, copy, forward, delete or ask a pupil to display such imagery unless specifically directed through safeguarding procedures.

Bringing Weapons such as knives into school

Possession or use of any weapon is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate action: staff will secure safety, inform the DSL, and contact the police where a crime may have been committed; searches/confiscation will be conducted in line with DfE guidance; proportionate sanctions (including removal from class, suspension or permanent exclusion) may be applied in accordance with the Behaviour Policy. Any necessary restrictive intervention to prevent injury, serious damage or disorder will be lawful, proportionate, time-limited, never a punishment, and recorded/reported under the April 2026 duties. Victims and involved pupils will receive safeguarding assessment and support.

Criminal behaviour (suspected, actual, or threats): Where staff suspect, witness, or receive a report of criminal behaviour or threats (e.g., damage, drug possession), the school will secure safety, make an initial factual record, and refer immediately to the DSL. The DSL/SLT will decide on police contact and any children's social care referral, ensuring school actions do not impede police enquiries; proportionate sanctions may run in parallel where they do not conflict with investigations. All decisions, actions, and rationales will be recorded, with parents/carers informed where appropriate, in line with KCSIE and DfE Behaviour in schools' guidance (see also DfE suspension/exclusion guidance on police involvement and parallel proceedings).

APPENDIX B Guidance on De-escalation

Guiding principles

Reflecting on children's human rights, and the school's therapeutic approach, the key principles that should guide all policy and practice in relation to the use of physical intervention, restraint and seclusion in schools are:

• all behaviour is communication, and a child or young person's distressed behaviour may indicate unmet needs. All efforts should be made to address underlying needs through prevention, early support and de-escalation before any restrictive intervention is considered.

• all children and young people have a right to have their views sought and taken into account in decisions about them. Information is shared lawfully and proportionately, and the pupil's wishes and feelings are considered within safeguarding duties.

• all children and young people have the right to be cared for, protected from harm and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights are respected and their needs met; and

Restrictive interventions (including restraint and seclusion) are never used as punishment or for compliance. They should not be viewed as, or become, routine practice in schools, nor routinely form part of a pupil's support plan. They should only be used:

- within a culture that prioritises positive relationships, behaviour, wellbeing, and planned preventative approaches.
- to avert an immediate risk of injury to the child or young person, or to others, or to others, or to prevent serious damage/criminal behaviour/serious disorder, where no less-restrictive option is viable (principle of last resort) for the minimum time necessary and in the safest, least restrictive manner; any practice that risks interfering with breathing or circulation (e.g., pressure on the neck, nose, mouth or abdomen) is prohibited by those who are trained (except in a genuine emergency where no trained staff are available and immediate action is necessary to keep people safe
- where the intervention is recorded and reported in line with April 2026 duties: every significant use of force must be recorded/reported under s.93A EIA 2006, and all

seclusion/restraint incidents must be recorded and parents/carers notified; 'seclusion' includes preventing a pupil from leaving a space or causing them to believe they cannot leave.

- where it does not degrade or punish or deprive a child or young person of their liberty other than the least-restrictive and time-limited measures necessary to reduce immediate risk; post-incident medical checks (where appropriate), debriefs and learning reviews follow every incident.

APPENDIX C Supporting Staff to Manage Behaviour

These principles provide a practical framework to help staff create a supportive, effective environment for managing pupil behaviour, fostering a culture of respect, responsibility, and positive learning outcomes. They offer evidence-informed strategies and approaches that contribute to a calm, predictable learning environment. The list below highlights key influences on behaviour management that staff should be aware of when supporting pupils.

1. **Know Your Pupils and Build Positive Relationships**

Build trust and understanding with pupils through consistent, respectful interactions and clear boundaries. Maintain strong, professional relationships, which can positively influence behaviour.

2. **Be Punctual and Prepare Well**

Be on time and prepared for all activities to set a professional tone. Efficient planning and a clear grasp of tasks reduce anxiety and help prevent potential behavioural issues.

3. **Display Calm Confidence**

Maintain relaxed, non-threatening eye contact and body language to foster a calm environment. Avoid nervous gestures or mannerisms that may escalate tension.

4. **Give Clear Instructions and Guidance**

Use clear, concise language so pupils understand expectations. Offer clear guidance, check for understanding, and encourage questions. Praise positive behaviour more frequently than correcting negative behaviour more than criticising negative behaviour.

5. **Be Consistent and Fair**

Set clear, consistent, and fair expectations for all pupils to avoid confusion.

Apply rules equally to foster a sense of fairness and security.

6. **Be firm, proportionate, and timely when issues arise**

Be clear and decisive when addressing behaviour; intervene early using low-key, de-escalatory strategies first.
Use appropriate body language and non-verbal cues to reinforce authority without escalating emotion.

7. **Maintain awareness of what is happening**

Stay alert and aware of pupil interactions and potential issues.

Remain mobile and present to engage with all pupils, not just a single group.

8. **Set Realistic Ambitious Standards**

Ensure expectations are appropriate for each pupil's ability and maintain consistent expectations across staff. Show belief in pupils' abilities and provide positive reinforcement.

9. **Foster Enjoyment and Enthusiasm**

Display enthusiasm and enjoyment in activities to engage pupils and reduce boredom.

A positive attitude towards tasks can reduce behavioural challenges.

10**. Use consequences, not threats**

Follow the school's Behaviour Policy (rewards and consequences), focusing on positive reinforcement and proportionate, restorative responses.
Avoid vague or unrealistic threats that cannot be enforced.

11**. Professional attitude and approach**
A calm, impartial, and listening stance helps manage rising tensions and maintains professional relationships.
Adopt a flexible, supportive, problem-solving approach and seek help early when needed.

12. **Non-Verbal Behaviour**

Use non-verbal cues to de-escalate situations or signal low-key involvement.
Be mindful of posture, proximity, and tone to communicate attentiveness and control.

13**. Verbal Behaviour**

Effective communication is key to resolving behaviour issues and de-escalating tense situations. Use clear, respectful language, reflective listening, and give pupils time to express feelings.

14. **Reprimands**

When behaviour is unacceptable, reprimands should be brief, private where possible, and focused on the behaviour—not the pupil.
Keep tone neutral, avoid sarcasm, and follow up with a clear path back to success (repair and restore).