Mid North Education Centre

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Behaviour Support Policy

Scope

This behaviour support policy guides the behaviour we expect of children and young people, how staff and parents/carers support positive behaviour, and how Mid North Education Centre supports the safe inclusion of students in learning. It applies across classrooms, yards, community access, excursions, transport arrangements organised by the site, online interactions where there is a reasonable connection to the site, and other site-led activities.

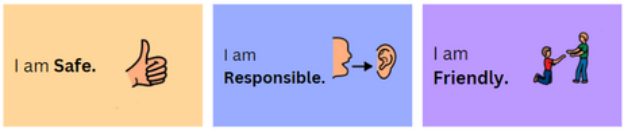
Mid North Education Centre is a special school context. Many students may have complex disability, communication, sensory, developmental, health, trauma and regulation needs. This policy recognises that behaviour must be understood within each student's communication profile, developmental stage, support needs, environmental context and lived experience.

This policy aligns with the Department for Education Behaviour Support Policy. It should be read alongside the Mid North Education Centre PBL Statement of Practice, the site Bullying Prevention Policy, the Regulation Statement of Practice, Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Children and Young People, and relevant Department procedures for safety, incident management, suspension, exclusion and recordkeeping.

The PBL Statement of Practice is the operational companion to this policy. It contains the site behaviour matrix, teaching schedule, recognition systems, behaviour response pathway and role-specific staff expectations used to implement this policy in day-to-day practice.

Our Values

Mid North Education Centre uses three shared values to guide behaviour support across all settings:



These values are explicitly taught, modelled, practised and reinforced through a whole-school Positive Behaviour for Learning approach. Expectations may be adjusted, represented differently or taught through alternative communication systems so that individual students can understand, communicate and participate.

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About Behaviour

Children and young people's behaviour occurs on a continuum. Behaviour can range from positive, inclusive and respectful behaviour through to behaviour that is challenging, complex or unsafe. Across that continuum, behaviour support at Mid North Education Centre is proactive, consistent, responsive and tailored to the child or young person's needs.

- Positive, inclusive and respectful behaviour is acknowledged, reinforced and built on through relationships, explicit teaching and encouragement.
- Low-level, developmentally appropriate boundary testing is responded to through universal supports, reteaching and predictable routines.
- Challenging behaviour that causes concern because of its severity, frequency or duration requires targeted support, consistent guidance and problem-solving with the student and relevant adults.
- Complex or unsafe behaviour that is severe, frequent, sustained or places the child, young person or others at risk requires intensive, individualised planning and coordinated support.

We recognise behaviour as communication. Behaviour may reflect communication barriers, regulation difficulties, sensory overload, anxiety, trauma responses, pain, fatigue, health needs, cognitive load, environmental mismatch or other unmet needs. Staff remain curious about what a student may be communicating through their actions, engagement, body language and responses.

Responses are grounded in safety, dignity, connection, co-regulation, explicit teaching and repair. Reflection and restorative processes occur only when the student is safe, supported and able to engage.

Student Voice and Communication Access

At Mid North Education Centre, student voice may be expressed in different ways. We recognise that many students communicate through AAC, visuals, gesture, behaviour, supported choices, observation, key communication partners and other individual communication systems.

- Staff will not rely only on spoken or written language when seeking student views.
- Students will be supported to express preferences, needs, feelings, concerns and repair choices in ways that are accessible to them.
- Behaviour support planning will use communication supports that match each student's profile.

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How we Implement the Department's Behaviour Support Policy

Promote

- Promote, model and support safe, positive, inclusive and respectful behaviour across the whole site.
- Maintain a whole-school Positive Behaviour for Learning framework that is understood by staff and students.
- Use calm, predictable, trauma-aware and culturally responsive environments that strengthen safety, belonging and engagement.

Teach

- Explicitly teach behaviour expectations through the school values, behaviour matrix, routines and supported practice.
- Use AAC, visuals, communication supports, modelling, rehearsal and repetition so expectations are accessible to all students.
- Teach regulation, communication, problem-solving and relationship skills with increasing independence over time, while recognising that some students will continue to require significant adult support.

Intervene

- Use the least exclusionary methods possible to prevent, reduce or redirect behaviours of concern.
- Use co-regulation, reduced language where appropriate, supported choices, environmental adjustments, sensory supports and agreed strategies to help students regain safety and readiness to learn.
- Provide supervised regulation or calming spaces and other reasonable adjustments where needed.

Work with Others

- Work with students, families, professionals and other key adults to understand the environmental, social, communication, sensory, health and family context of behaviour.
- Use One Plans, behaviour support plans, safety/risk plans, regulation profiles and Team Around the Child processes where required.
- Collaborate with allied health, student support services and multidisciplinary teams where appropriate.

Respond

- Provide visible, fair and equitable responses that foster confidence and trust.
- Collect and use behaviour, engagement and wellbeing information to guide the response required.
- Communicate with families and relevant staff as appropriate, while respecting privacy and confidentiality.
- Document planned responses and follow-up actions in line with site and Department requirements.

Repair and Restore Relationships

- Use restorative, reconnection and reteaching approaches when it is emotionally and physically safe and in the best interests of those involved.
- Match reflection and repair to the student's communication, developmental, sensory and regulation needs.

Create Safety and Wellbeing

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and others involved in behaviour incidents.
- Use suspension, exclusion or other highly exclusionary responses only as a last resort and where other reasonable interventions to create safety have been exhausted or are unavailable.
- Before any exclusionary response, consider reasonable adjustments, communication access, disability-related needs, known triggers, existing plans, risk controls and alternative support options.

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Behaviours of Concern

Behaviours of concern are behaviours that are challenging, complex or unsafe and that:

- are serious, frequent or sustained
- significantly interrupt learning for the child, young person or others
- create a risk to the safety or wellbeing of the child, young person or others
- require consistent guidance, targeted support or intensive individualised planning.

When behaviour disrupts learning or threatens safety, the response will consider both the support needs of the child or young person displaying the behaviour and the rights of others to safety, dignity and learning.

How we Respond to Behaviours of Concern

Educator Responses

- Teach and reteach the expected behaviour and the skills needed to participate safely and successfully.
- Use differentiated teaching, prompts, visuals, AAC, supported choices, sensory and environmental adjustments, and regulation supports.
- Provide time, space and support for self-regulation or co-regulation with supervision.
- Partner with students, parents/carers and relevant staff to create and review support plans.
- Use natural and logical consequences, reflection, repair and reconnection where this is safe, appropriate and understood by the student.
- Record incidents, follow-up actions and agreed next steps in line with site procedures.

Leader Responses

- Monitor behaviour patterns and act on reports of behaviours of concern, including serious incidents.
- Support staff to implement the behaviour support policy consistently and safely.
- Ensure appropriate documentation, communication and recordkeeping following incidents.
- Engage families and, where required, external professionals or Department supports to coordinate responses.
- Consider suspension or exclusion only as a last resort and in line with Department policy and procedural requirements.
- Lead whole-site review and communication processes after serious incidents as appropriate.

High-Support Contexts and Physical Assistance

- Some students at Mid North Education Centre require physical assistance for personal care, health, mobility, transport, positioning, communication access or immediate safety support. Physical assistance provided for these purposes must be lawful, planned, respectful and consistent with approved student plans, staff training and Protective Practices.
- Physical assistance for care, health, mobility or safety is not the same as using physical intervention to control behaviour. Physical force, restrictive practice or physical intervention must never be used for discipline, punishment, coercion, convenience or to gain compliance.

If Behaviour Poses Serious and imminent Risk of Harm

Staff must follow Protective Practices, individual safety/risk plans and site emergency procedures when behaviour poses a serious and imminent risk of harm. Any restrictive practice must only be used when no other option is available to prevent harm and must always:

- maximise safety and minimise harm
- be reasonable and proportionate to the risk
- be the least restrictive option
- be used for the shortest possible time
- never be used for discipline, punishment, coercion or convenience.

After any restrictive practice or serious incident, the site will complete required reporting and documentation, notify parents/carers as required, review supports and plans, and offer debriefing and follow-up support to those involved.

Responsibilities

Children and young people

- Treat others with dignity, kindness and respect, with support as appropriate.
- Use the school values to guide behaviour in classrooms, yards, the community and online where there is a reasonable connection to the site, with support as needed.
- Seek help from trusted adults when they need support or when behaviour is unsafe or harmful, using their own communication system.
- Participate in reflection, reconnection and repair with support, when ready and in ways matched to communication, developmental and regulation needs.

Parents and Carers

- Work collaboratively with the site to support safe, inclusive and respectful behaviour.
- Share relevant information that may help staff understand and support their child's behaviour, communication, sensory, health or regulation needs.
- Engage in planning and review processes for individual supports where appropriate.
- Raise concerns through the site's agreed communication and complaint resolution processes rather than approaching other children or families directly about incidents.

Staff

- Implement this behaviour support policy and the PBL Statement of Practice consistently.
- Create calm, predictable and inclusive conditions that support safety, connection, engagement and learning.
- Use the lowest level of prompting and the least exclusionary response needed, while recognising that some students require significant adult co-regulation and support.
- Use AAC, visuals and other communication supports so students can understand expectations and express needs.
- Collect and use agreed behaviour, engagement and regulation information to guide teaching and support decisions.
- Follow Protective Practices, safety/risk plans and Department requirements when responding to serious incidents.

Leaders

- Ensure this policy is implemented effectively and reviewed regularly.
- Provide staff with resources, professional learning, coaching and feedback needed for consistent practice in a special school context.
- Maintain local systems for behaviour support, bullying prevention, documentation, incident management and review.
- Use behaviour, engagement and wellbeing data to identify priorities and strengthen Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports.
- Ensure required policies are available to the school community and are reviewed within agreed timeframes.

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Bullying Prevention

Mid North Education Centre maintains a separate Bullying Prevention Policy. Staff apply this behaviour support policy together with the site's bullying prevention arrangements when responding to bullying, harassment, violence or harmful online behaviour.

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