



# Woodlark Autism Provision

# Behaviour Policy

## School Values

ENJOYMENT HONESTY CARING RESPECT EQUALITY

## Aims of Policy - Supporting Positive Behaviour

This policy provides guidelines and strategies for staff to support pupils with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and to promote positive behaviour management.

All pupils must be treated as individuals. We strive to develop self reliance and confidence, and encourage each individual to be involved in their own programme, therefore encouraging them where possible to become independent in managing their emotional regulation.

A clear and consistent behaviour policy supports autistic pupils and related social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

This behaviour policy is intended to be circulated and promoted among all staff, with the explicit aim of raising awareness and encouraging positive and proactive intervention. Any parent wishing to view this policy may do so on request, it can also be viewed on the school website.

## Autism

Autism affects how people perceive the world and interact with others. Autistic people have differences in three areas of development:



At Woodlark Autism Provision we recognise that differences and difficulties in these areas can lead to



At times, children may display distressed and dysregulated behaviours, such as hitting, biting, spitting or hair pulling etc. These behaviours have a negative impact on their lives and their families.

We are mindful of the language we use when discussing distressed behaviour and always treat individuals with respect and dignity.

## Legislation and Statutory Requirements

This policy is based on advice from the Department of Education (DfE) on:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Guidance on sexual harassment and violence in schools
- Behaviour and discipline in schools
- The Equality Act 2010
- Use of reasonable force in schools
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school

It is also based on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice

This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school. It should be considered alongside the most recent LEA policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### All Staff:

Training and reflective practice ensures that all staff;

- Have a good understanding and knowledge of autism.
- Are aware of the difficulties and differences experienced by autistic pupils which may result in distressed behaviour.
- Seek to understand the underlying function of behaviour and offer more appropriate strategies.
- Understand that behaviour may change, and will respond to the pupil's changing needs.
- Are committed to providing a happy, secure and rewarding environment for autistic pupils.
- Work hard to understand the needs of each child and provide appropriate support.
- Model high standards and focus on praise and giving attention for positive behaviour.
- Are committed to providing a clear, consistent approach across the whole school.
- Are aware that Equality of Opportunity does not mean the same for everyone, but some pupils may require differences in opportunity and experience.
- Are committed to work in partnership with parents/carers, families and other agencies.
- Record any incidents where physical intervention has been used
- Will work as a team by
  - Using consistent approach
  - Communicating to share tasks and take turns
  - Making time to share ideas and observations
  - Valuing each others contributions

- Supporting each other and offering help using the key phrase "I'm here to help"
- Providing on-going training

## Parents/Carers

Great importance is placed on working in partnership with parents/carers. We value their knowledge and views, and work closely to provide consistency between home and school.

School will ensure that:-

- Parents/carers are given the opportunity to contribute and agree to the content of their child's Personal Support Plan.
- Parents/carers are informed when physical intervention has been necessary.
- There is regular communication with regard to any event or incident, at home or at school, which may affect the child's behaviour or emotional state.

Parents/ carers will ensure that:-

- School is informed of any changes in circumstances that may affect their child's behaviour such as moving house, sleep, relationships with siblings, etc.
- They discuss any of their own concerns about their child's behaviour with the school

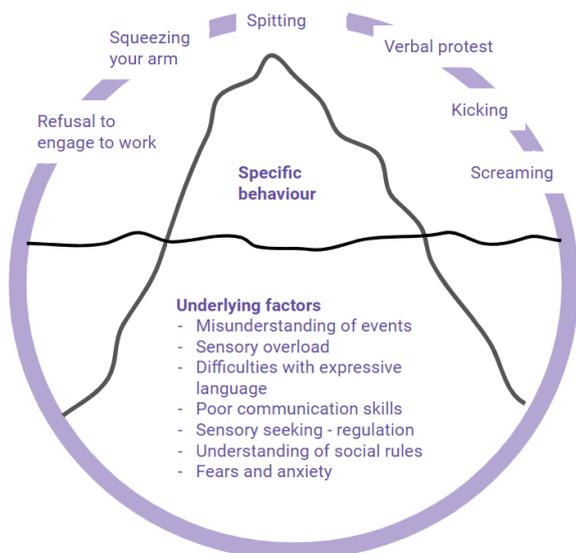
## Other Professionals

Various professionals work alongside Woodlark staff as part of a whole team approach. They will advise staff, offer training, write programs and monitor progress.

Professionals working at Woodlarks include:-

- Educational Psychologist – May carry out functional behaviour analysis and assessments on cognitive ability
- Occupational Therapist - Will investigate sensory issues which may be causing distressed behaviour. These could be personal to the child or caused by the school environment.
- Speech and Language Therapist - Will look at how difficulties with communication and social interaction may be impacting on the child's behaviour
- Other professionals who may be involved in supporting individual children depending on needs at any particular time e.g. music therapist, play therapist, social care, school nurse.

## Understanding Behaviour



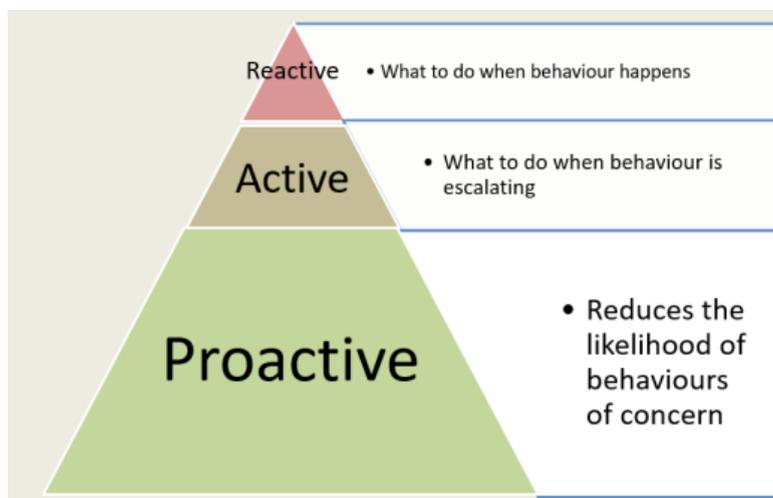
Our staff use their knowledge of ASD and knowledge of the child to try to understand why a child is exhibiting a particular behaviour, recognising that:

- Distressed behaviour is generally seen as serving a purpose for an individual e.g. communication, sensory
- Distressed behaviours are largely learned through a history of interactions between the person & the environment (sensory, habitual)
- Medical reasons, such as epilepsy or medication can have an impact on behaviour

To understand the function of the child's behaviour, particularly distressed behaviour, staff carry out a range of assessments. We work closely with other professionals to develop strategies to meet the child's needs. An [ABC Chart](#) may be used as part of our reflective process to unpick and seek to understand behaviours.

## Tiers of Support

At Woodlarks we use a tiered approach to promoting positive behaviour:



## Proactive Support and Strategies

At Woodlarks, strategies which are proactive, preventative and teach new skills strategies include:

- Giving choice and a sense of control
- Providing structure and repetitive routines to reduce anxiety and support understanding

- Providing a structured and predictable environment
- Using individual visual timetables as part of our daily routines
- Using a total communication approach including Makaton, core language boards, PECS
- Teaching regulation strategies and skills
- Setting clear rules, expectations and rewards
- Adapting the environment including physical environment and language used to communicate
- Preparing for changes in routine and transitions
- Communicating with parents about any issues
- Knowing the child and recording this information in Personal Passports
  - Likes, motivators and dislikes
  - Preferred communication style
  - Learning strengths and difference
  - Emotional Regulation
  - Sensory experiences
  - Other information including medical and diet
- Knowing triggers and warning signs and recording this information in Personal Support Plans (PSPs)
- Setting personalised Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets and working collaboratively with other professionals to plan and implement interventions

There are some key approaches and programs that underpin these strategies. These include:

## SCERTS

At Woodlark Autism Provision we use SCERTS to assess pupils and set targets relating social communication and regulation. Annual targets are set and a child's IEP breaks down targets and documents progress.

SCERTS also places a large emphasis on the responsibility of the adults working with the child to offer transactional support to enable pupils to achieve success.

Transactional Support Checklist:

- Respect the child's individuality and work with their strengths
- Know the triggers and early warning signs which are recorded in their Personal Support Plan (PSP)
- Use a range of visuals to support understanding
- Be clear and use direct language
- Know and use the child's preferred method of communication
- Give the child time to process information and adjust language input appropriately (All staff will be familiar with the child's needs through personal passports and PSPs)
- Think about the physical setting - Provide a safe, structured and predictable environment
- Model appropriate language and behaviour e.g. for learning, playing, regulating

- Set the stage for engagement, structure activities for active participation and provide opportunities to generalise learning
- Be aware and respond to sensory needs
- Work towards self regulation and independence
- Give children the opportunity to make choices
- Have high expectations and balance these sensitively
- Support transitions
- Teach to the child's level of understanding
- Be prepared to renegotiate and modify expectation and demand

## TEACCH

At Woodlarks we use the TEACCH approach to create environments that are structured, visually clear and predictable for our children. This is achieved by arranging furniture to create well-defined areas, using visuals, maintaining a reduced distraction/ low arousal environment and keeping the environment clutter-free and tidy.

Each class has a calm area and access to an outdoor area that can be used to support regulation. There are spaces available around the provision such as quiet spaces, library, sensory room and soft play which can also be used.

Visual timetables are also a central feature of the TEACCH approach. Each child at Woodlarks has access to a visual timetable with progression from objects → photos → symbols → written considered. Visual timetables help break up the day so routines are understandable and predictable to the child. It also builds visual processing skills and reduces reliance on verbal instruction.

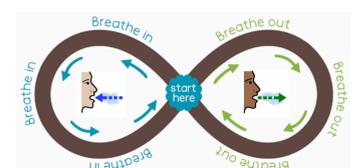
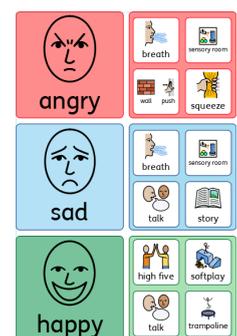
For more information about TEACCH refer to [Woodlark TEACCH Policy 2020.doc](#)

## Teaching Emotional Regulation

Teaching about emotions and regulation is embedded in daily routines as well as explicitly taught in curriculum time e.g. PSHE. IEPs include targets on emotional regulation and targeted interventions are set up accordingly.

Strategies and resources include

- Language for Thinking
- Modified Zones of Regulation
- Visual supports such as 5-point scales and regulation choices
- Teaching breathing and calming techniques
- Yoga sessions
- Comic Strip Conversations
- Social Stories
- Reflections
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA)
- Youth Mental Health First Aider (YMHFA)



## Personal Support Plans (PSPs)

Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence a child's behaviour and taking steps to reduce behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk.

If a child displays regular dysregulated and distressed behaviour and requires tier 2 and 3 strategies a Personal Support Plan (PSP) will be developed.

PSPs are a child-centred document that provides detailed information relating to all aspects of a child's behaviour and how to support them. Parents are encouraged to contribute and the final PSP is agreed with parents/carers and will be shared with all staff involved.

Where possible, children are encouraged to participate in the development of their own PSP by making choices between modelled regulation strategies and reflecting on what works for them.

An individual risk assessment will also be put in place where required.

## Active Support and Strategies

When behaviour is escalating, active support is put in place to support emotional regulation and de-escalate the situation. Staff should

- Follow strategies in a child's Personal Support Plan (PSP)
- Reduce verbal language and use visuals to support understanding and processing
- Use choice to give a sense of control
- Keep instructions clear and simple
- Recognise their emotions
- Offer assistance and support to regulate that is specific to the individual e.g. quiet space, breathing, deep pressure, food/water, physical break etc.
- Communicate with the team
- Switch adults and ask for support
- Make the environment safe
- Consider removing the 'audience'
- Modify the task, demands or environment
- Use distraction
- Provide a 'way out' or safe space
- Call a key member of staff who works closely with child

## Reactive Support and Strategies

In some cases de-escalation techniques will not be effective and the child's behaviour will become dangerous to themselves or to others. This may lead to physical intervention (see legislation). At Woodlarks we use the Team Teach positive toolkit approach which has a strong focus on de-escalation and understanding triggers. The physical techniques used are specifically designed to support and respond to distressed behaviour safely. Team Teach promotes a graduated and less restrictive approach to physical intervention.

Team Teach training will be provided to ensure that staff are equipped to deal with physical intervention. Posters are displayed around Woodlarks to show members of staff who have received Team Teach Level Two training.

## **Physical Intervention**

Staff have the responsibility to support all pupils and safely manage crises if and when they occur. Physical intervention will be used as a last resort.

If a child requires physical intervention, staff will:-

- Request assistance if necessary, other staff members will support the rest of the group
- Where possible, use agreed holds, as taught in Team Teach training, to take the child to a safe place to calm
- In certain circumstances, make a dynamic assessment as to how the child should be moved or restrained in order to keep them and others safe (this will be in line with legislation regarding reasonable force)

During physical intervention, staff will:-

- Avoid talking to the child about their behaviour this may inflame the situation (discussions can take place later)
- If appropriate, give the child time on their own to calm down (with adult observing to ensure the child's safety)
- Avoid looking the child in the eye and maintain safe distance and positioning
- Use minimal language/symbols, all staff will be consistent in the language they use
- Assume non - threatening body language e.g. crouch down to the child's level (if safe), not facing the child, approach from the side etc.
- Swap with another adult if they feel this will help diffuse the situation
- Call the parent if they are required to assist
- Be 'critical friends' to each other to ensure the child's safety at all times

After physical Intervention, staff will:-

- Record any physical intervention in the physical intervention book, which will be read and signed by the Head of Woodlarks.
- Report the incident to parents in person, by phone or by email.
- The head of Woodlarks will share incidents with the Head Teacher who reports to the Governing Body.

## **Calming Strategies and Support**

- Give the child time and space and, as always, respect any form of communication
- Use relevant OT strategies to help calm the child. This may include sensory regulatory activities such as deep pressure, chewy tubes, calming music or visuals or reducing the sensory stimulus.

- A distraction such as a favourite toy or activity may be used to help calm the child.
- Provide a comfortable place so that the child can recover at their own pace (i.e. soft area, pillows, blanket, cushions etc).
- Some children may wish to talk about the incident or repair with peers or adults involved. This should be done with a trusted, familiar adult and supported appropriately with visuals.
- In very rare situations if the child is distressed for a long period of time and not responsive to support, to ensure the best interests of the child, we will contact the parents/carers to discuss whether they should come in to help reduce the child's anxiety or take the child home to calm down.

## Extreme or Dangerous Behaviour

Some pupils with severe behavioural difficulties may present a risk to themselves and/or others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Head Teacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

If a child exhibits behaviour which is extreme or dangerous an individual risk assessment is put in place. This will be reviewed and updated termly or sooner if required.

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management.

## Staff Wellbeing

We recognise that supporting distressed and dysregulated behaviour can also impact the wellbeing of staff.

Creating a supportive and collaborative atmosphere and culture is at the heart of Woodlarks and we support staff by

- Using the phrases 'here to help' and 'more help' to offer support
- Switching adults normalised as good practice
- Facilitating breaks when needed
- Offering opportunities to reflect and debrief
- Having a supportive and 'hands-on' leadership team who know the children

*Updated/ Reviewed: April, June and Nov 2016, Sept 2017, Nov 2017, Sept 2018, Sept 2019, September 2020, September 2021, September 2024  
By: Sam Witchalls and Sami Rix*