

## OAT London Academies

### Behaviour for Learning policy

#### Policy version control

Policy type	Statutory
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## **Vision Statement**

Staff at OAT London Academies are committed to helping learners become resilient, emotionally literate and, where appropriate, to successfully re-integrate back into mainstream schools. Traditional behaviour management approaches have often not worked for our learners. Instead, OAT London Academies take an attachment and trauma-aware approach to behaviour management which recognises that:

- All behaviour is a form of communication
- concerning behaviour can be a signal for support
- understanding our emotions is a key aspect of managing behaviour
- learners can learn to self-regulate their own emotions and behaviour with the support of skilled adults
- learners need high expectations, clear rules and boundaries to feel safe

## **Our Approach**

### **1. All behaviour is a form of communication**

*“Thinking of a child behaving badly disposes you to think of punishment. Thinking of child as struggling to handle something difficult encourages you to help them through their distress”*

***Colebourne Primary School***

- Behaviour is anything that a person does that we can see or hear.
- When we feel frustrated, upset or misunderstood we can struggle to respond to these feelings which can result in less acceptable behaviours.
- It is the job of OAT London Academies’ staff to “tune in” to identify what our learners are trying to communicate.
- Once a learner feels understood and cared for, they can learn to express their emotions in an acceptable way.
- Staff at OAT London Academies respond to concerning behaviours by:
  - having a non-judgmental, curious and empathic attitude towards behaviour
  - focusing on the underlying feelings and emotions that drive certain behaviours
  - viewing a child displaying concerning behaviour as vulnerable not troublesome

## **2. Relationships are at the heart of what we do**

At OAT London Academies, we understand that relationships are key to how we feel and behave. Many children arrive at OAT London Academies having experienced low self-worth. It is the job of all adults in the school to build up the self-esteem of the child by nurturing, promoting and modelling positive relationships. We believe that:

- Children who feel valued are much less likely to display inappropriate behaviours.
- Children's interactions with adults from the moment they step into the building are positive, respectful and ensure the child feels that they matter.

## **3. We are attachment and trauma-aware**

OAT London Academies believe poor attachment, or experience of trauma, leads to young people struggling to learn and often displaying concerning behaviours. It is the responsibility of all adults in OAT London Academies to be attachment and trauma aware, and to help provide a secure base by:

- Being available as a trusting adult for the child
- Helping the child feel that they belong
- Helping the child to manage their feelings
- Unconditionally accepting the child as they are in order to build their self-esteem

## **4. We believe in clear boundaries and expectations**

OAT London Academies acknowledge the need for an approach that balances nurture **and** structure. We believe that:

- children need clear routines, boundaries and responses to help them feel safe, protected and cared for.
- All children have the right to feel safe and a right to learn.
- All feelings are acceptable but not all behaviours are.
- Understanding behaviour as a form of communication does not mean that children do not experience consequences for their behaviour.
- High expectations should be maintained for all learners and they should be supported to meet them

## **Our Responses**

At OAT London Academies, we always disapprove of the behaviour never the person. Each school is expected to have a clear and well-communicated reward and consequence system in place. We believe that being fair is not about everyone getting the same but everyone getting what they need. It is therefore not always possible to respond to behaviours in the same way. However, it is useful to have a guiding framework of responses to good and poor behaviour.

## **Responses to Positive Behaviours**

It is vital that the majority of interactions learners have with staff are positive ones.

- All learners should be welcomed with positivity when they first enter the school building.
- Smile and greet learners as they enter your lesson
- Take the time to find out about their interests and show a genuine interest.
- All learners should be told something they have done well in each lesson
- Praise should be specific, e.g. *“Well done for being able to remember the order of calculations.”*
- Give praise for effort, e.g. *“Well done for give it a go even though you weren’t sure.”*
- Some young people find public praise difficult to accept. Find ways to praise learners on a 1:1 basis
- All learners should have at least one phone call home a week informing their parent / carer of something positive they have done or achieved.

## **Responses to Concerning Behaviours**

Whatever concerning behaviour a child is displaying we should always follow the 3Rs:

**Regulate** - *calm and soothe the learner*

Children are not able to reason when they are in a state of anxiety or distress.

**Relate** - *validate feelings and label them*

Help children to label their emotions to manage their behaviours. It is important that we ‘name it to tame it’.

**Reason** - *set limits on their behaviour and problem solve with the child.*

Once the learner is calm we can reflect on the situation with the learner, problem solve and discuss consequences. Our responses need to be based on our knowledge of a child. We aim to identify, support and de-escalate at the early signs of distress.

Underlying Communication	Behaviour	Possible Responses
<p>I don't feel safe</p> <p>I don't trust you</p> <p>I don't know how I feel</p> <p>I feel rubbish or stupid</p> <p>I feel anxious or scared</p> <p>I feel sad</p> <p>I feel angry</p> <p>I can't cope with my difficult feelings</p> <p>I feel overwhelmed</p> <p>I need to escape</p> <p>I need to protect myself</p> <p>I don't know whether I still exist</p> <p>I need you to attend to me to feel safe and loved</p> <p>This is the only way I know to make you like me</p> <p>I need to be in control to feel safe</p> <p>I don't have the skills your expecting</p> <p>I don't believe you won't leave me</p>	<p><b>Low level behaviours</b></p> <p>Fast breathing</p> <p>Restlessness</p> <p>Stiff body posture</p> <p>clenched fists or jaw</p> <p>Rapid or high-pitched speech</p> <p>continually talking, asking questions</p> <p>making noises</p> <p>not sitting still</p> <p>leaving their seat</p> <p>talking under their breath</p> <p>talking to peers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Respond to attachment-seeking by moving closer to child, using their name and acknowledging their need, e.g.</b> <i>"I haven't forgotten you Sam. I will just finish marking this work and then I'll come to you."</i></li> <li>• <b>If appropriate, use a soothing touch</b></li> <li>• <b>Offer a movement break</b></li> <li>• <b>Offer a sensory support such as a stress toy</b></li> <li>• <b>Move things on without making demands, e.g.</b> <i>"It can be hard to stay calm when we're not sure what to do. Maybe we can try the next question together and come back to this one later."</i></li> <li>• <b>Use "I wonder..." to help child identify feelings, e.g.</b> <i>"I'm wondering if you are shouting "it's boring" because you feel scared about getting the answer wrong?"</i> (Use this technique 1:1 so as not to embarrass)</li> <li>• <b>Validate their feelings, e.g.</b> <i>"I know what that feels like. It can be scary to have a go in case you fail at something."</i> <i>"I know it's hard to think right now"</i> <i>"I'm sorry that it's made you so cross"</i></li> <li>• <b>Use "might" to help them problem solve, e.g.</b> <i>"You might find it helpful to take 4 deep breaths and then try again."</i></li> </ul>

	<p><b>Mid-level behaviours</b></p> <p>refusal to do work  refusal to follow instructions  non-compliant behaviour  Disrespectful language  lying  minor damage to school property  argumentative non-directed swearing</p>	<p><b>See responses above</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Quiet correction</b> 1:1 with child to avoid public shame</li> <li>• <b>Acknowledge their feelings of unfairness</b></li> <li>• <b>Re-phrase requests so they don't imply a demand, instead of "Tidy away your books" try "we can't go to break with everything out on the desks"</b></li> <li>• <b>Try to problem solve with the child, e.g. "You want to go to break. I want you to complete your work so you can do well in Maths. How are we going to solve this?"</b></li> <li>• <b>Link the consequence to the action e.g.</b> if they have broken a calculator, they will not be allowed to use one in the next session.</li> <li>• <b>Use a light tone of voice</b> to suggest a child has another chance using different words</li> <li>• <b>Give choices about what will happen next calmly, repeating as often as necessary</b></li> <li>• <b>Repeat your request or expectation and don't become drawn into an argument</b></li> <li>• <b>Use distraction</b></li> </ul>
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	<p><b>Harmful behaviours</b></p> <p>Aggressive / threatening / racist / homophobic / sexist language</p> <p>Damage to school property</p> <p>Threats</p> <p>throwing objects</p> <p>kicking objects</p> <p>kicking, hitting, spitting</p>	<p>See responses above and also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use self-regulation techniques to keep yourself calm</b></li> <li>• <b>Make sure your hands are visible, palms towards the child so they now you will not hurt them</b></li> <li>• <b>Keep your body posture, facial expression and tone calm.</b></li> <li>• <b>Keep a distance so the child does not feel trapped</b></li> <li>• <b>Use a low, slow, strong voice</b></li> <li>• <b>Speak rhythmically like you would to an infant</b></li> <li>• <b>Narrate what you see in a calm voice e.g. “I can see you are feeling very frustrated right now.”</b></li> <li>• <b>If a child needs to be removed ensure they are with an adult who can support them to self-regulate</b></li> <li>• <b>Do not chase a child unless they are in danger as it can seem like an attack. Reassure them e.g. “I’m still here when you’re ready.”</b></li> </ul>
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### Repairing Relationships

Restorative approaches focuses on repairing the harm that has been done through conflict. Through our restorative approaches practice we hope to develop learner’s ability to empathise, reflect and take responsibility for their own actions and ultimately find more positive ways to deal with conflict and upsetting emotions. This approach should be used some time after the event (such as the end of the day) when the learner is calm and able to reflect.

**A restorative response to an incident of conflict involves asking the following questions:**

- What happened?
- What were you thinking and feeling at the time?
- What do you think and how do you feel now
- Who has been affected by this?
- What is needed to “put things right”?
- How can we make sure this doesn’t happen again?

**Responses which are not attachment aware**

- Dismissing a child’s feelings by telling them they are over-reacting, being silly or wrong
- Using shaming language or sanctions
- Using tokenistic praise
- Telling children how they are feeling
- Being confrontational with our verbal or body language
- Ignoring the child
- Using too many words which can overwhelm them
- Using a points or public rewards system
- isolating or leaving children on their own when they are distressed
- expecting children to self-regulate by themselves

**Staff Well-Being**

OAT London Academies acknowledge that to build effective relationships with children we need to prioritise our own emotional well-being and have an awareness of our own triggers. Asking adults to walk towards learners in distress and to hold uncomfortable or upsetting feelings requires emotional resilience from our staff.

OAT London Academies have a responsibility to give staff the right support to equip them to help children manage their behaviour responses and emotionally self-regulate. Staff should feel safe and encouraged to talk about how their work impacts on their emotions and vice-

versa.

The OAT London Academies support staff by offering:

- Appropriate and regular training to support them in their understanding and approaches
- a safe and non-judgmental work environment
- a chance to de-brief when staff have the opportunity to reflect truthfully around incidences without fear of blame or retribution
- a peer support network
- access to supervision if needed