Behaviour and Relationships Policy 2026/2027

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The GALLERY TRUST
A community of special schools

Transform – Empower – Belong

At Orion Academy, we believe every young person deserves the opportunity to grow, connect, and feel that they truly belong. Our Behaviour and Relationship Policy outlines our commitment to nurturing a safe, positive, and inclusive community where relationships are at the heart of everything we do.

We recognise that behaviour is often a communication of internal experience, including emotional states, sensory sensitivities, or unmet needs. Our practice is rooted in trusted relationships, understanding of trauma, and affirming neurodiversity. Relational practice guides positive decision making at Orion Academy.

Our Vision

- **Transform** – nurturing growth and resilience.
- **Empower** – amplifying voice, confidence, and independence.
- **Belong** – creating an inclusive, safe, and supportive community.

Our Core Values

These values shape every relationship and interaction within our school:

- **Self-Awareness** – nurturing insight and emotional expression
- **Teamwork** – promoting inclusion, cooperation, and shared success
- **Resilience** – encouraging flexible thinking and recovery from challenge
- **Commitment** – recognising sustained effort and celebrating progress
- **Problem Solving** – guiding students through reflective decision-making
- **Empathy** – creating a culture of kindness, understanding, and compassion

Relational Practice and Supportive Responses

At Orion Academy, we work from the belief that all behaviour is a form of communication. Our approach centres on understanding the ‘why’ behind behaviour and responding with curiosity, compassion, and consistency. Staff aim to co-regulate with students and model self-awareness, respectful problem-solving, and emotional attunement.

Student Support Plans (SSPs)

Every student has a co-created Student Support Plan (SSP), developed in partnership with the student, their family, and key staff. These plans include:

- A celebration of the student’s strengths
- Strategies that support co-regulation

- Communication preferences and sensory considerations
- Known triggers and proactive support strategies
- Collaborative actions agreed by the student and adults

SSPs are reviewed regularly and evolve alongside the student's development.

The Learning Hub

The Learning Hub provides a calm and inclusive space for students to reflect, reset, and reconnect with learning. It offers a staged model for support:

- Supportive regulation following high stress or overwhelm
- Re-engagement support after challenges in accessing learning
- Targeted wellbeing and relational interventions
- Restorative reflection and repair
- Supported return to classroom learning

Each stage allows for graduated support that meets students where they are.

Community Learning Team (CLT)

Our Community Learning Team (CLT) includes Youth Workers, Pastoral Support Workers, and Behaviour Support Workers. They form the relational backbone of our behaviour and wellbeing support. The CLT:

- Builds trusted relationships with students
- Offers responsive, in-the-moment regulation and de-escalation
- Leads reflective and restorative conversations
- Provides 1:1 and small-group interventions
- Engages with families and wider professionals
- Delivers enrichment and holiday programmes
- Supports reintegration following time away or significant challenge

Return to Thrive Timetables

In situations where students benefit from a supported transition back to full engagement, we implement Return to Thrive timetables. These are:

- Time-limited (usually no longer than 6 weeks)
- Co-produced with student voice at the centre
- Regularly reviewed and adjusted
- Shared with parents, and where appropriate, professionals
- Monitored by SLT and The Gallery Trust to ensure best practice

The goal is always full reconnection with learning, relationships, and community.

Monitoring and Partnership

Behaviour is understood in context. Staff note observations of regulation, emotional state, and interactions through our online systems. This helps:

- Tailor support and review SSPs
- Identify patterns or emerging needs
- Ensure shared understanding across teams
- Include parents and carers in problem-solving

Weekly pastoral reviews ensure a collaborative and proactive approach.

Understanding Behaviour as Communication

At Orion Academy, we understand that all behaviour communicates something — often reflecting a student's emotional state, sensory needs, or level of connection. We use shared language to guide how we respond and support, always considering context, underlying need, and the student's voice.

Examples of Student Experiences We Respond To:

- **Signs of Disconnection** – e.g. withdrawal, low motivation, lateness
- **Indicators of Distress** – e.g. emotional overwhelm, shutdown, refusal
- **Expressions of Frustration** – e.g. verbal outbursts, ruptured relationships
- **Safety Responses** – e.g. physical actions, use of objects to create space or control environment

Our responses are always rooted in relationships, emotional regulation, and consistent support. We adapt our approach to the unique needs and lived experiences of each young person.

Bullying and Repairing Relationships

At Orion Academy, we understand that bullying is defined as intentional and repeated behaviour directed to cause harm or distress. However, in SEND settings this may present differently. We also recognise the concept of "counter-connecting" — where a student may be attempting to connect, regulate, or express themselves but ends up impacting another negatively without intent to harm

Both bullying and counter-connecting behaviours are taken seriously and are always addressed with care, curiosity, and support.

We respond with a two-fold approach:

1. Clear, compassionate intervention — working to repair trust and support everyone involved.
2. Targeted support — helping students develop communication strategies, emotional expression, and relationship-building skills tailored to their needs.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

- Develop warm, boundaried relationships
- Model regulation and reflective language
- Apply SSPs with consistency
- Create inclusive learning environments

Students

- Contribute to shared expectations
- Practice self-awareness and empathy
- Engage in restorative conversations

Parents/Carers

- Share insights into their child's needs
- Attend meetings and reviews
- Partner with school to support next steps

When Support is Needed Beyond the School Day

Behaviour expectations extend to off-site activities, including:

- School trips and visits
- Journeys to and from school
- Time in the wider community

We support students in these settings just as we would in school — relationally, reflectively, and in partnership with families.

Responding to Complex Concerns

Where a student shares information or makes a claim that is later found to be unfounded, we do not apply blame. Instead, we explore the meaning behind the communication, the context, and any unmet needs — always ensuring the wellbeing of all involved and safeguarding standards.

Transitions and New Beginnings

Transitions can be exciting and challenging. We provide:

- A supported induction for all new students
- Transition plans for changes between settings or classes
- Predictable routines and visual timetables
- Regular key adult check-ins
- Planned support for times of emotional or developmental change

Suspensions and Time Away

If a student experiences extreme distress that affects safety, a temporary period of time away may be considered. This is:

- Not punitive, but used to reduce harm and allow reflection
- May be followed by a Return to Thrive plan
- Reviewed by SLT and The Gallery Trust
- Shared transparently with parents/carers
- Used only after other strategies have been explored

Supportive Checks and Safety

We follow DfE 2024 guidance on supportive checking. If there is concern that a student may be carrying a harmful item, we:

- Work sensitively and explain the process
- Offer regulation support throughout
- Consider SEND, sensory, and trauma factors
- Safely store and return any items
- Involve parents and DSLs when needed

Mobile Phone Agreement

Phones can impact wellbeing, focus, and regulation. To support all students, our approach is:

- Phones are handed in each morning and stored securely
- Staff support students who need reminders
- Repeated use may lead to family conversations
- Exceptions are made for agreed use in SSPs or medical plans
- Respect is given at all stages

Connected Policies

- Student Support Plan Guidance (2025)
- Positive Handling Policy (2025) - Accessible here
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy - Accessible here
- Anti-Bullying Strategy - Accessible here
- Attendance and Engagement Strategy