



Bardwell School

Together We Thrive

Behaviour and Relationships Policy

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1.0 Aim of this policy

The aim of this policy is to provide clarity and guidance on Bardwell School's approach to positive behaviour support, ensuring consistency across our school community. We aim to promote emotional regulation, build trusting relationships, and celebrate each student's unique strengths by understanding behaviour as communication and providing personalised, proactive strategies to meet individual needs.

Safeguarding Links

This Behaviour and Relationships Policy must be read alongside Bardwell School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Where behaviour presents a safeguarding concern (including child-on-child abuse, bullying, harmful sexual behaviour or online harm), staff will follow safeguarding procedures without delay, ensuring timely reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and engaging with external agencies where appropriate.

2.0 Philosophy

We understand that each pupil's behaviour reflects their individual strengths, needs and regulatory state. We recognise behaviour as a meaningful form of communication, providing insight into how a pupil is experiencing their environment and interactions. Emotional regulation is the gateway to engagement, safety and meaningful learning. By understanding that behaviour serves a function, whether to express a need, seek connection or signal distress, we respond with curiosity, compassion and personalised strategies. Our aim is to create a supportive, inclusive environment where pupils feel understood, valued, and empowered to build self-regulation skills, confidence and positive relationships.

Equality and Reasonable Adjustments

Our behaviour approach complies with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments so that pupils with SEND or health conditions are not disadvantaged in how expectations are applied. Staff are proactive in adapting environments, routines and supports to ensure equity of access and to reduce barriers to participation.

3.0 Our values

We are committed to creating a protective and nurturing environment where all pupils feel safe, respected and supported. We avoid labelling or deficit-based assumptions, recognising behaviour as communication that reflects each pupil's experiences, strengths and needs. Staff maintain a growth mindset, celebrating progress and effort while supporting the development of regulation, coping skills and resilience. Through consistent, compassionate and reflective practice, we build trusting relationships that form the foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing

4.0 Our Approach

We recognise that dysregulation is often a neurobiological response to unmet sensory, emotional, cognitive, or environmental needs. Dysregulation is not a conscious choice but reflects activation of the brain's survival systems (amygdala, limbic system), particularly for pupils with trauma histories, sensory processing differences or neurodevelopmental needs. At Bardwell, support is our response to dysregulation.

We are professionally curious in our approach to identifying what unmet needs a behaviour may serve to communicate, and what accommodations and/or strategies of support we can employ to meet the student's needs and build their trust.

We focus on all students as individuals, and we work collaboratively with parents, professionals and students themselves to identify a student's barriers to learning and then to develop personalised strategies so that they can build confidence and celebrate their own and others' unique strengths and qualities.

Co-regulation is central to our practice. Staff intentionally regulate their own emotional state to model, scaffold and support pupils to return to a calm, engaged state, offering non-judgemental support during moments of distress. The adult is the external regulator until the pupil is able to internalise their own regulation strategies. Where dysregulation occurs, staff will allow flexible, extended processing times beyond 10 seconds as necessary, recognising that the prefrontal cortex may be temporarily offline during heightened arousal. Staff will avoid repeated verbal prompts, which may exacerbate anxiety.

Our overarching goal for all students is to support them to develop independence skills, self-advocacy and the ability to utilise self-regulation strategies. We are committed to embedding consistent approaches across our school so that students feel secure, understand expectations, and are empowered to engage meaningfully with learning.

Key elements of our consistent approach include:

Routines of the day

- Regulation time in the morning
- Communication of the daily timetable, using approaches appropriate to individual students.
- Discussing feelings and news from home
- Story time
- Use of visual timetables to support understanding and anticipation of what will happen next
- Now and Next boards to break tasks into manageable steps
- A Total Communication Approach, combining spoken language, Makaton, symbols, AAC devices, gesture and other individualised supports to maximise every student's ability to communicate and understand.

These routines provide predictability and a stable foundation for students to feel safe, settled and ready to learn.

Processing and take-up time

- Awareness that pupils need time to process instructions or directions, and that rushing can lead to frustration or dysregulation.
- The principle that, when regulated and engaged, a minimum of 10 seconds will always be given for students to process information and requests. ○ Understanding that when students are dysregulated, processing time may increase significantly, and they may not be able to receive communication in the same way. Staff will adapt their approach, accordingly, ensuring Total Communication strategies are used flexibly and compassionately.

Celebrating Successes

We believe that recognising effort and achievement is key to building pupils' confidence, self-esteem, and intrinsic motivation. At Bardwell School, we:

- Create a culture where celebrating effort and achievement permeates our daily interactions, ensuring that every pupil's strength, progress and unique contributions are valued.
- Dedicate time at the end of each day to identify and share individual and group successes, reinforcing positive experiences and fostering a sense of pride and belonging.
- Celebrate individual achievements through our 'Star of the Week' award, highlighting moments of progress, perseverance, kindness or exceptional engagement.

Through consistent celebration of successes, we aim to nurture students' self-belief and encourage them to take positive risks in their learning and social interactions. Learning environments are carefully structured to promote predictability, safety and regulation through:

- Access to sensory regulation spaces (e.g. The Bubble, Playground).
- Environmental controls
- Adapted classroom design that minimises sensory overwhelm and maximises comfort for sensory differences.

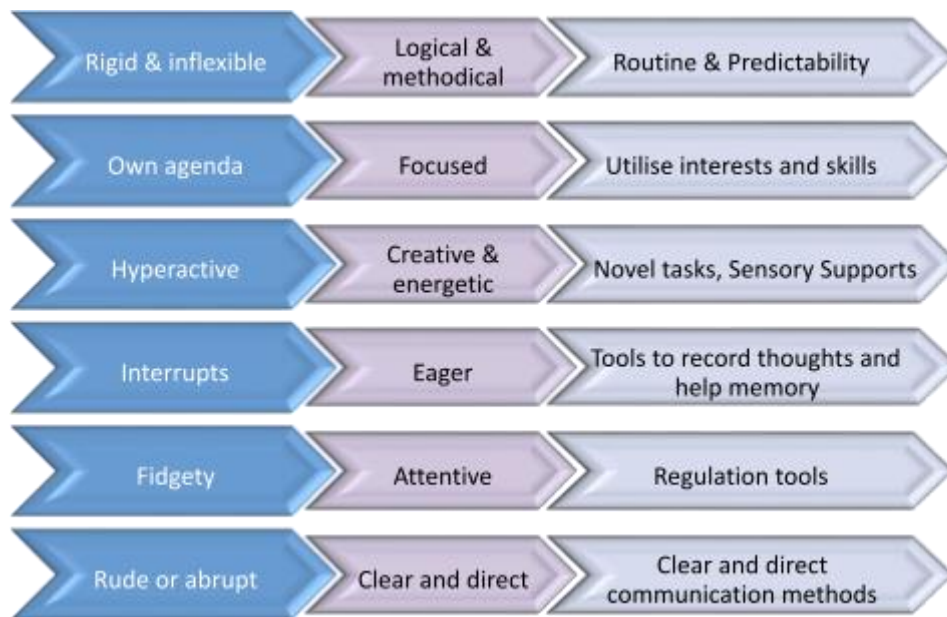
Staff regulation is recognised as essential to student regulation. All staff are trained in emotional self-regulation strategies and supported through check ins and reflective practice.

Staff use praise and encouragement and work collaboratively with students on tasks to promote success, gradually reducing the level of support as students build confidence and independence. At Bardwell we understand that whilst external rewards can motivate students to complete tasks; they can also lead to rushing or focusing solely on the reward rather than engaging meaningfully in learning. This can limit opportunities for exploration, curiosity, creativity, and taking positive risks To

support pupils in becoming flexible, innovative thinkers who can solve problems. Our primary aim is to foster intrinsic motivation through consistent support, encouragement and ongoing praise.

4.1 Respectful Language

At Bardwell School we use considered and respectful language when reflecting on behaviours, as this underpins our solution focused approach. The table below illustrates, from left to right: commonly used descriptors, examples of descriptors; examples of the strengths-based language we use at Bardwell School and insights into potential strategies and accommodations to support students with co and self-regulation.



4.2 Regulation Profiles and Planning

At Bardwell School we understand that when students are dysregulated, they may exhibit 'Fight', 'Flight', 'Freeze' or 'Fawn' responses. Through careful observation and detailed regulation profile planning, staff work proactively to support students and help prevent escalation to extreme dysregulation.

Every student at Bardwell has a Regulation Profile, recognising that everyone benefits from clear, personalised strategies to help achieve and maintain regulation throughout the day.

This profile is developed collaboratively with parents, school staff, other professionals, with pupil voice included at the centre. Each profile includes information on what regulation looks like for individual students, the functions of their behaviour, known antecedents and proactive strategies identified to support self-regulation or coregulation, ultimately improving the student's quality of life. Regulation Profiles are dynamic, student-focused documents that are reviewed and updated in response to any observed changes in a child's regulation, and they help staff maintain high aspirations for every individual.

Planning at Bardwell School takes each student's Regulation Profile into consideration. This includes implementing strategies such as movement breaks, appropriate positioning during activities, integrating movement into learning tasks, providing sensory support, and adapting environmental factors. Staff conduct ongoing observations and dynamic risk assessment meaning planned activities can be flexibly adjusted in response to a child's regulatory state. For example, staff may extend a learning activity beyond the planned finish time if a child is highly engaged and making excellent progress, or shift focus if a child becomes disengaged or starts to show signs of dysregulation.

We pro-actively design classroom environments to support sensory and emotional regulation as appropriate to individual cohorts, including quiet spaces, sensory tools, flexible lighting and calm colour schemes. These environments help prevent dysregulation and prompt a state of balance.

4.2 Child-on-Child Abuse and Bullying

Bardwell School recognises that children and young people can be harmed by other pupils. We are vigilant to signs of bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying), sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, and peer-on-peer violence.

Our approach is to:

- Respond immediately to any concern or disclosure.
- Support the pupil who has experienced harm and also work with the alleged perpetrator(s) through regulation profiles, restorative approaches and external agency input where required.
- Maintain accurate records of all incidents and actions taken.
- Teach pupils explicitly, through our PSHE, RSE and safeguarding curriculums, how to recognise and report unkind or unsafe behaviour.
- Ensure that no behaviour is dismissed as "banter" or "part of growing up"; all staff are trained to challenge harmful attitudes and language

5.0 Touch and Restrictive Physical Intervention

At Bardwell School we recognise the importance of building trusting relationships and fostered secure attachments with caregivers. Our aim is for all children to have a stable base from which they can explore, take risks and learn; achieving this requires staff to be responsive to children's emotions and to validate their feelings, especially during times of dysregulation. Staff approach any physical contact through a trauma-informed lens, recognising that touch can sometimes trigger dysregulation for some students. Consent, trust, and predictability underpin all touch-based interventions.

Touch is used in a highly individualised way at Bardwell School, taking into account each student: age, circumstances and specific needs; for example, a child who has sensory processing difficulties who is tactile defensive may require a carefully considered approach to touch when they are dysregulated. As with every aspect of

our practice at Bardwell, we are committed to ensuring that behaviour support strategies are thoughtfully designed to meet each student's unique needs.

5.1 Contingent touch

Contingent touch is touch that responds to a child's cues and needs in a sensitive and appropriate way. Touch is the first sense that develops in the womb and research has shown the importance of touch for children's cognitive, social and emotional development. Studies have found that children who receive physical affection feel safe, secure and loved tend to have lower levels of stress and anxiety and are more resilient in the face of life's challenges.

Appropriate contingent touch may include many different types of touch; following is a summary but not an exhaustive list:

5.1.1 Contact touch through play

This type of touch is aimed at promoting positive relationships, intensive interaction, communication and high levels of engagement. Examples include catch and chase games; hand over hand or under hand support to physically access play such as building with blocks, cutting with scissors or placing a counter in a game; rough and tumble, physical support for actions songs or nursery rhymes and holding hands for circle games. Staff always consider the age and developmental stages of students when engaging in play. Staff should not engage in touch games that involve taking a child's weight, lifting or carrying a child which could put both the child and staff at risk.

5.1.2 Comforting touch

This type of touch is used when a child is distressed, anxious, frightened, sad, angry etc. It may include placing a hand on, or around a shoulder; a gentle pat on the back; squeezing an arm, hand or foot, holding a hand, wiping a tear or sitting very close to a child. For younger children, this may involve a hug, or sitting on a knee, although staff should consider the position of themselves, to avoid full frontal contact. Comforting touch is intended to soothe and calm a distressed child.

5.1.3 Proprioceptive touch

This touch supports pupils in developing better awareness of where their body is in space, helping them to be well-regulated and ready for learning. Examples include body taps for counting or song rhythms; brushing programmes, massage, deep pressure; or supporting the use of vibrating toothbrushes for oral sensory seeking. Staff may work under guidance of an occupational therapist to provide individualised programmes of support.

5.1.4 Therapeutic touch

This type of touch supports pupils' physical development and can include passive stretches—or assisting a child in continuing an active stretch to achieve their full range of movement as advised by therapists.

5.1.5 Encouraging touch

This type of touch is used to support children's understanding of expectations such as gently guiding them towards the board when it is their turn in a learning task; a high five or fist bump to offer praise or recognition or placing a hand on a shoulder to reassure them as they complete a task. Encouraging touch can also include holding a hand or a 'caring c' to support communication and connection when moving between locations (i.e. from the school bus to the classroom, or from the classroom to the hall).

5.2 Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

Restrictive physical intervention and seclusion will only be used as a last resort, where there is an immediate and significant risk of harm.

Staff will always use the least restrictive option available.

All members of school staff have a legal power under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to use reasonable force where necessary to:

- prevent injury to a pupil or others
- prevent serious damage to property
- prevent the commission of a criminal offence
- maintain good order and safety within the school.

Reasonable force means using no more force than is necessary and for the shortest time required.

Only appropriately trained staff should use restrictive physical intervention unless there is an immediate emergency where action is required to prevent harm.

At Bardwell School, staff are trained through Team Teach to adopt a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to managing behaviour. Staff use preventative strategies to support children to remain emotionally regulated and engaged in learning. When a child becomes dysregulated, staff employ a range of de-escalation strategies to promote co-regulation and self-regulation. Team Teach training equips staff with a variety of de-escalation techniques as well as Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) holds.

At times, a child may become extremely dysregulated and exhibit fight, flight, freeze, or fawn behaviours that place themselves or others at risk of harm. In these circumstances, staff may use RPI to support the student to a place of safety. In line with the Department for Education's guidance, *Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools (2026)*, any restrictive physical intervention must always be reasonable, proportionate, and necessary in order to:

- o Prevent injury to the student or others.
- o Prevent serious damage to property;
- o Maintain the safety and good order of the school environment.

Staff must use the minimum force for the shortest time necessary, and interventions must never be used as a punishment or to cause pain, humiliation, or fear.

As set out in DfE guidance on *Supporting pupils with medical conditions*² and *Behaviour in Schools*³, all incidents involving RPI must be accurately recorded and reported. At Bardwell School, staff report every RPI incident to a senior leader and document it promptly on Behaviour Watch. Parents or carers are informed of the circumstances of the incident and the details of the RPI used.

Our approach is also consistent with DfE advice on supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or other vulnerabilities, recognising that some students may have a greater sensitivity to physical intervention or past experiences of trauma. Staff must always consider the individual needs and known regulation strategies for each student, adapting their response accordingly.

Through this approach, we ensure our practice is transparent, accountable, trauma-informed, and fully compliant with legal obligations under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Equality Act 2010, and relevant DfE guidance.

6.0 Seclusion

Seclusion will only be used as a last resort, where there is an immediate and significant risk of harm and no less restrictive option is available.

Staff will always use the least restrictive option available.

Seclusion is defined as enforced isolation where a pupil is prevented from leaving, including where staff actions, positioning or environmental controls restrict exit. for safety reasons.

At Bardwell School, seclusion is:

- never used as a punishment or disciplinary sanction
- only used to reduce immediate risk of harm
- supervised at all times by staff
- time limited and ended as soon as it is safe to do so

Any use of seclusion will be recorded and reported to parents in accordance with statutory guidance

7.0 Recording and Analysing

Behaviour incident data is analysed not solely for frequency but for patterns in regulation, triggers, environmental factors, and staff interventions. Leadership teams regularly review data to inform adjustments to environments, staffing, and support plans, rather than simply tracking behaviours as isolated events.

We reinforce a non-punitive curiosity driven tone. All incidents are approached with professional curiosity. Staff are encouraged to look beyond the behaviour to explore regulation state, environmental triggers and the student's communication needs. Our approach to behaviour tracking is rooted in compassion, professional curiosity, and a commitment to building trusting relationships. We use behaviour watch and tracking systems to:

All significant incidents involving reasonable force, restraint or seclusion will be recorded as soon as practicable and normally on the same day by the staff involved.

Records will include:

- names of pupil and staff involved
- date, time and location
- antecedents and de-escalation strategies used
- reason intervention was necessary
- type and duration of intervention
- any injury or medical follow up

Parents or carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable following any significant incident involving restrictive intervention or seclusion, and normally on the same day.

Identify patterns and triggers

Regular monitoring of behaviour incidents helps us notice emerging trends or changes in a student's regulation, allowing timely, proactive support.

Understand function and context

By logging antecedents (what happens before), behaviours, and consequences (what follows), staff can better understand the underlying reasons for behaviours and adapt strategies accordingly.

Inform Regulation Profiles and planning

Data from Behaviour Watch feeds directly into each student's personalised Regulation Profile, ensuring strategies and accommodations are tailored to their evolving needs.

Collaborate with families and professionals

Behaviour tracking supports meaningful conversations with families, therapists and other professionals, helping us create a holistic understanding of each student's strengths and barriers.

Celebrate progress and success

Tracking isn't just for challenges, it also allows us to recognise positive changes in behaviour, engagement, and emotional regulation, celebrating students' efforts and growth.

Regular reviews of this data are integral to our reflective practice, enabling staff to evaluate strategies, share effective approaches, and ensure that our behaviour support remains dynamic, responsive, and student-centred.

Senior leaders receive notifications of incidents recorded on Behaviour Watch and any children exhibiting increased episodes of dysregulation are discussed during senior leadership meetings. Following any restrictive intervention or seclusion incident, a structured debrief will take place to support learning, repair relationships and promote wellbeing for both pupils and staff.

Communication with other stakeholders, such as family members, respite providers, social care teams, therapists, paediatricians or consultants may also be required to gain a fuller understanding of the child's context and ensure a holistic, coordinated approach to support.

Where a student experiences frequent episodes of dysregulation and displays a range of behaviours, staff will be asked to complete an ABC chart or High Frequency Chart to log these behaviours. The information gathered from these records will be used to inform the student's Regulation Profiles and plan tailored, supportive strategies that address their individual needs.

7.0 Evaluating data and planning intervention



Behaviour tracking includes both 'lagging skills' and 'missing skills' analysis. Rather than categorising behaviours as problematic, the focus is on identifying the regulation gaps, skill-building needs, or adjustments required to better support the pupil.

Data systems capture not only incidents, but also successful regulation supports, co-regulation strategies that worked, and pupil self-advocacy moments.

Attendance and Behaviour

We recognise the strong connection between regulation, wellbeing, and attendance. Where behaviour difficulties contribute to non-attendance, we work closely with families to co-develop strategies, aligning with the school's Attendance Policy. Early identification of patterns allows us to provide holistic, multi-agency support to reduce barriers and sustain high attendance.

8.0 Implementation of this policy

This policy was implemented in November 2023, and a transition period took place throughout the Spring Term 2023- 2024 to move from Individual Support Plans to Regulation Profiles. Through training, guidance and modelling by leaders and staff, all team members have increased their knowledge of a range of strategies to enhance their toolbox for supporting pupils who are dysregulated.

Regulation Profiles are intended to be dynamic, working documents that are reviewed following any observed changes in behaviour. These Profiles are shared with all stakeholders during annual review meetings, ensuring a consistent, collaborative approach to supporting each student.

The Local Academy Board and Trust will regularly review data relating to restrictive interventions to ensure lawful, proportionate and equitable practice and to identify any patterns or disproportionality.

The successful implementation of this policy requires:

- Ongoing CPD on trauma-informed practice, neurodiversity, emotional coaching, and co-regulation.
- Supervision and reflection sessions for staff to embed practice and maintain adult regulation.
- Whole-school ownership of the principles that *“regulated students learn; dysregulated children can’t”* and *“connection before correction”*. These beliefs underpin our commitment to prioritising emotional regulation and relationships as the foundation for meaningful learning and positive behaviour.

10.0 Complaints and Allegations

Any complaint or allegation relating to the use of restrictive intervention will be managed in line with the school Complaints Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education procedures.

