PROMOTING GOOD BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS

POLICY AND PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Introduction

Why is Policy and Practice Guidance needed?

During the last few years significant changes have taken place to the structure of Learning, Skills and Education in Northamptonshire, central government policy and local government priorities. Collectively these changes make it crucial that schools have a clear understanding of their own roles and responsibilities and those of the local authority, with regard to pupil behaviour.

Northamptonshire Local Authority has launched their strategy for improving outcomes for all students, “Race to the Top” aims to significantly improve education standards within the county. The Local Authority believes that improved behaviour will lead to less exclusion which will improve the outcomes of its most vulnerable learners.

Context of central government policy change

Central government is promoting a new role for local authorities and as schools become increasingly self-determining, a greater focus on partnership working

Local Authorities will:

- Increasingly move to a strategic commissioning with an oversight role.
- Have the freedom to define what role they will play in supporting school improvement for local schools.
Have an indispensable role to play as champions of children and parents, ensuring that the school system works for every family and using their democratic mandate to challenge every school to do the best for their population.

Support parents and families through promoting a good supply of strong schools – encouraging the development of Academies and Free Schools which reflect the local community.

Ensure fair access to all schools for every child.

Use their democratic mandate to stand up for the interests of parents and children.

Support vulnerable pupils – including Looked After Children, those with Special Educational Needs and those outside mainstream education.

Support maintained schools performing below the floor standards to improve quickly or convert to Academy status with a strong sponsor, and support all other schools which wish to collaborate with them to improve educational performance.

**Context of local government policy change**

In 2012, against a background of reductions in funding for local government and the Government’s academy agenda, Northamptonshire County Council repositioned itself and started to redesign services to become a commissioning led organisation. There has been a shift in focus away from the local authority being a provider of services to becoming a champion of children and families. In practice this means that the Council will continue to have a lead role in:

- Being a safety net for the most vulnerable people in our county and protecting the public. Signposting people to the services they need and providing good quality information to help people choose services relevant to them.

- Helping and enabling others to build and maintain strong, sustainable and caring communities, giving back community ownership of locally important priorities best tackled through local community action.

The direction of travel for schools and clusters of schools is towards greater self-determination and direct commissioning of the services they need for vulnerable groups of learners, using resources which are increasingly being delegated from funds which have previously been centrally held by the Local Authority on behalf of schools. With this comes increased responsibility for meeting the needs of all learners locally, with the Local Authority only commissioning services for those with the highest levels of need which could not easily be met within school or cluster-led resources.

**Who is the Behaviour Policy and Practice Guidance for?**

This guidance has been developed to be of use primarily to staff, leaders and managers with responsibility for schools and other education settings; for governors, Learning, Skills and Education strategic, advisory and operational
staff. We hope that other key stakeholders such as professional associations and parents/carers will also find it useful.

**What is the purpose of the Behaviour Policy and Practice Guidance?**

The Guidance is designed to:

- Set out NCC’s core values, underpinning beliefs and guiding principles with regard to behaviour and discipline in schools
- Explain the Local Authority’s role and remit in the context of reshaped services
- Clarify the legal requirements with regard to duties on schools

**What is the Behaviour Policy and Practice Guidance hoping to achieve?**

The Guidance will have fulfilled its purpose…

**If it helps schools and settings to:**

- Understand the importance of the ethos, culture and shared expectations in promoting pro-social behaviour
- Be aware of whole-school strategies which can be implemented to assist in promoting pro-social behaviour such as restorative justice.
- Create a learning environment which safeguards the wellbeing of both pupils and adults
- Become outstanding learning environments
- Have clear behaviour policies rooted in evidence-based best practice which also fulfil the legislative requirements
- Know how to access advice and support when things go wrong for individuals or groups of pupils
- Evaluate and evidence the difference they are making to behaviour

**If it helps professionals to:**

- Understand the links between strategies and policies
- Inform service users accurately about support, intervention and provision across the county.
- Understand their own role with regard to promoting positive behaviour and challenging poor practice
- Identify areas in which they can be most effective in supporting schools and settings

**If it helps Ofsted to:**

- See a coherent approach to behaviour as a thread which runs through all related policies, procedures and planning
- See clear links with operational guidance and procedure
If it helps parents to:
- Understand their pivotal role in promoting and supporting pro-social behaviour
- Be informed about what they can expect schools and settings to do/provide
- Know how and when to compliment, to challenge and to ask for help
- Access online Information, Advice and Guidance about the range of behaviour support and provision available in Northamptonshire

Overview: a brief review of behaviour basics

Governments change and policies change. Some issues and themes in education acquire high profiles while others quietly fade away. But to a great extent children continue to behave like children and the body of evidence about what works well, in terms of managing their behaviour in school, seldom reveals any wholly new approaches. The tried and tested methods are often the best. The 2010-11 House of Commons Education Committee report ‘Behaviour and Discipline in Schools’ reflected that:

“Much of what Lord Elton said in his Report, published in 1989, remains valid today. As Sir Alan Steer observed in Learning Behaviour, a report commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills and published in 2005, “the core message of [Lord Elton’s] report, about the need for a coherent whole school approach to promoting behaviour that is based on good relationships between all members of the schools community, still holds true”.

We agree with this statement and are pleased that the current government appears to regard the principles of the Elton Report as bedrock over which their own policies and more recent statutory guidance can lie. For that reason we have chosen to include a number of quotations from, and references to, The Elton Report in this document in preference to more recent reports. Nevertheless, we acknowledge and value a range of recent DfE publications that build on these foundations in a range of specific ways123. These inform comments within this document.

The behaviour of pupils in a school is influenced by almost every aspect of the way in which it is run and how it relates to the community it serves. Together they can produce an orderly and successful school in a difficult catchment area; equally they can produce an unsuccessful school in what should be much easier circumstances Elton Report 1989

For the purposes of this Guidance we are focusing on the achievement of expected standards of pupil behaviour in schools and settings. The

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1 DfE 2015, Mental health and behaviour in schools; Departmental advice for school staff , March 2015
2 DfE 2015, Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England
3 DfE 2014 Behaviour & Discipline in Schools
The Department has made it clear that the expected standards will continue to be determined by the Head Teacher of the school or setting, along with the measures necessary to ensure these standards are achieved. A large part of the following advice and guidance has relevance to all pupils. It deals with how the behaviour of the adults in schools and settings, individually and collectively, influence the behaviour of pupils. In highly effective institutions, the emphasis goes beyond ‘seeking to influence’ and recognises that behaviour is something that can be explicitly taught, rather than waiting for it to be caught. At all ages and across all aspects of the curriculum, staff can be helped to become more outwardly conscious of the benefits of not only modelling behaviour that enhances learning, but also explicitly describing it in ways that can be learned.

It also points out how the underpinning ethos, beliefs, culture and expectations of the organisation can increase or decrease the likelihood of pupils behaving well.

Some parts of the Guidance focus more specifically on the needs of particular groups of pupils such as those with identified emotional mental health or social difficulties.

Definitions

| Behaviour: ‘The observable action or reaction of a person to an internal or external stimulus’ |

What is ‘Good behaviour’?

In reality ‘good behaviour’ is a complex notion which means different things to different people and is therefore extremely tricky to define. It is used as a sort of shorthand to describe standards which may be expected by individuals or by various groups in society. Communities such as schools and educational settings set their own standards of expected behaviour.

Other terms which could be used instead of ‘good behaviour’ are ‘pro-social behaviour’ or ‘behaviours for learning’

The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme used in schools describes pro-social behaviour as that which demonstrates;

- A good level of self-awareness effectively
- Empathy for other people of all sorts, abilities and ethnicity
- A good level of motivation
- An ability to manage one’s feelings positively and
- Good social skills

‘Behaviour for learning’ is a theoretical approach which emphasises the link between the way young people learn and their social knowledge and behaviour. It centres around three relationships experienced by the pupil:

- relationship with themselves (how they feel about themselves and their self confidence as a learner);
relationship with others (how they interact socially and academically with all others in their class and school);
relationship with the curriculum (how accessible they feel a lesson is, how best they think they learn).

In order to foster a positive learning environment in the classroom it is important to recognise the importance of these relationships and the teacher’s own contribution to them. Teachers need to focus on helping pupils to develop appropriate skills which enable them to learn within a variety of social contexts.

Schools and settings are also inspected and judged against an external set of standards imposed by Ofsted. The government expects all schools to achieve at least a ‘good’ rating for behaviour and this Guidance aims to support schools in achieving it. Therefore in order to avoid confusion we have retained the use of the term ‘good behaviour’ despite its limitations. We feel that ‘behaviour for learning’ would be a more accurate description of what schools need to achieve.

From September 2015 the evaluation schedule which Ofsted uses when inspecting schools incorporates the following descriptors which would need to be in evidence for a school to be judged ‘Good’ for the behaviour element of ‘personal development, behaviour and welfare’:

- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They take pride in their work, their school and their appearance.
- Pupils’ attitudes to all aspects of their learning are consistently positive. These positive attitudes have a good impact on the progress they make.
- Pupils show respect for others’ ideas and views.
- Pupils are punctual and prepared for lessons. They bring the right equipment and are ready to learn.
- Pupils value their education. Few are absent or persistently absent. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance. The attendance of pupils who have previously had exceptionally high rates of absence is showing marked and sustained improvement.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day, including at lunchtimes.
- The school is an orderly environment. Pupils respond quickly to instructions and requests from staff, allowing lessons to flow smoothly and without interruption. Low-level disruption is rare.
- Pupils’ good conduct reflects the school’s efforts to promote high standards. There are marked improvements in behaviour for individuals or groups with particular behavioural needs.
- Parents, staff and pupils have no well-founded concerns about personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- Teachers and other adults are quick to tackle the rare use of derogatory or aggressive language and always challenge stereotyping.
- Teachers and other adults promote clear messages about the impact of bullying and prejudiced behaviour on pupils’ well-being. Pupils work well with the school to tackle and prevent the rare occurrences of bullying.
• Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that they are prepared to be reflective about and responsible for their actions as good citizens.

What behaviour characterises an Inadequate School?

Ofsted characterises the following behaviour as reflective of an Inadequate school.

• Pupils’ lack of engagement, persistent low-level and/or high-level wilful, disruption, contribute to reduced learning and/or disorderly classrooms.
• A significant minority of pupils show a lack of respect for each other or staff and a lack of self-discipline. Pupils ignore or rebut requests from teachers to moderate their conduct. This results in poor behaviour around the school.
• Pupils show negative attitudes about the value of good manners and behaviour as key factors in school life, adult life and work.
• Attendance is consistently low for all pupils or groups of pupils and shows little sign of sustained improvement.
• Incidents of bullying or prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, both direct and indirect, are frequent. Pupils have little confidence in the school’s ability to tackle bullying successfully.

In the same way as ‘good behaviour’ is used as a shorthand to describe a range of positive behaviours which are encouraged in schools, the term ‘challenging behaviour’ is often used to describe behaviours which are detrimental to learning: negative, unwanted or undesirable in the classroom and across school campus.

There is no universally accepted definition of challenging behaviour, although we generally recognise it when we encounter it. A report by HMI summarises the situation as follows:

When behaviour is discussed in schools there is little agreement as to the meaning or use of terms to describe challenging behaviour. Perception of challenging behaviour is relative and conditioned both by the context in which the behaviour occurs and by the observer’s expectations. There is, however, widespread agreement that two types of behaviour are challenging whatever the particular circumstances. The first is overtly aggressive behaviour: physical acts such as biting and pinching, throwing furniture and assaulting people. The second is aggression that is mainly verbal, for example, streams of abuse, temper tantrums, and invasion of personal space intended to be threatening. The second type includes behaviour which defies teachers’ authority in refusing to follow instructions.

By the time they start at pre-school or maintained school, many children have acquired a sense of ‘good’ behaviour and are able to conform to expectations quite readily. But for some, this is not the case. They need explicit support and teaching to learn how to behave. For a few, difficulties in behaving in ways that are conducive to their own and the learning of others persist and require targeted or specialist help.

**National context with regard to behaviour in schools**

In the light of recent political changes, the landscape with regard to behaviour in schools has shifted somewhat. This change is reflected in the Education Act 2011, which lays greater emphasis on teachers’ powers to discipline and maintain order. Nevertheless, the broadly accepted view is that good behaviour underpins learning and achievement. It remains crucial for all education settings to have the systems, structures and the ethos in place to support the promotion of good behaviour as well as minimising the impact of poor behaviour.

With this in mind the Department has published a suite of advice and statutory guidance to support schools and settings in developing these systems and structures. These can be accessed from the Department’s website [http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/beha" behaviour/behaviourpolicies](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/beha" behaviour/behaviourpolicies)

These documents should be used alongside the wealth of additional research and good practice that has been developed in recent years, to empower and enable schools to develop their own context specific, whole-school approach to support emotional wellbeing and inclusion and so empower children to feel listened to, respected, connected to their school community and behave as enthused, engaged and self-motivated individuals.

**Ofsted’s expectations with regard to personal development, behaviour and welfare in schools**

There is a clear expectation that schools will regularly review and rewrite their Behaviour and Discipline policies, to ensure that they meet all statutory as well as good practice requirements. The key roles, responsibilities and limits of authority for stakeholders with regard to behaviour in schools are set out in the guidance documents issued by the DfE in September 2014, (latest update) and summarised in the document entitled ‘Behaviour and Discipline in schools’ which can be found at: [https://www.gov.uk/govern" government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools](https://www.gov.uk/govern" government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools)

**The Local Authority’s position on behaviour in schools**

While some schools seem preoccupied with bad behaviour, others have concerted policies for raising expectations and improving standards. The schools we saw who had such positive policies seemed to be very successful in creating an orderly and purposeful atmosphere. They had marginalised bad behaviour by promoting good behaviour. The central
thrust of our recommendations is towards promoting good behaviour among pupils. Elton Report 1989

**General principles**

We want all children, including those with Special Educational Needs to:

- Access appropriate provision to meet their needs, irrespective of the school or setting where they are on roll
- Benefit from an inclusive learning environment which promotes and places a high value on pro-social behaviour, positive relationships and emotional wellbeing therefore limiting the likelihood of challenging behaviour occurring
- Have their needs met in the local community wherever possible
- Have access to appropriate specialist provision where this is not possible
- Benefit from assessment of, and intervention to address their needs at the earliest opportunity

**The importance of an effective behaviour policy**

A robust and well-led school behaviour policy consistently applied and underpinned by good teaching and an appropriate curriculum is critical to supporting good behaviour in schools.

*House of Commons education committee report on behaviour & discipline in schools 2010-11*

In order to draw up and implement a robust behaviour policy, schools and settings will need to acknowledge and adhere to key underpinning beliefs. Some of the most important of these are set out below. The list is not exhaustive.

**Underpinning beliefs**

We believe that all schools should recognise and value …

- Inclusion as a thread which runs through policies, organisation, ethos, community links, partnerships, curriculum and teaching and learning. Adopting inclusive beliefs is a necessary precursor to the school and its cluster taking responsibility for meeting the needs of each and every learner
- The importance of whole-school ethos and positive learning environment on behaviour and emotional wellbeing
- The need to establish, teach and model pro-social behaviours and emotional resilience
- The inextricable links between learning, emotional wellbeing, behaviour and attendance
• That their organisation needs to work at good behaviour, inclusion and emotional wellbeing in the same way as they do at academic standards
• That the voice of children and young people must be consulted, clearly heard and responded to through established and demonstrable inclusive participatory practices
• That all adults and young people have a right to feel and be safe within the school environment and a member of their community
• That restorative principles and practices are more successful than blame and punishment in building and maintaining relationships, and in preventing and resolving conflict between individuals or groups of pupils. There is a growing body of evidence to show that where restorative practices have been adopted on a whole-school basis this leads to a significant increase in attendance, reduction in exclusions, reductions in bullying and anti-social behaviour, increased confidence of staff to deal with bullying and conflict and a calmer and safer school environment
• That all strategies will be more successful if parents and pupils understand them, take ownership of them and perceive them to be fair.
• That a behaviour policy will only be meaningful if it is applied consistently by all members of staff to all pupils
• That pupils and parents should be involved in developing the behaviour policy

We believe that all schools should reflect in their policies that ….

• They are aware of their legal duties and responsibilities to ensure their setting is safe for all young people
• They use the curriculum to teach children and young people to understand how to resolve conflicts positively, be emotionally resilient, develop and maintain positive relationships and when to seek support
• They undertake to inform parents and carers about procedures and the support they can expect to get
• Adults need to model the good, respectful behaviour they want to see in pupils
• Restorative principles and practices are embraced by the whole school community.

We believe that all schools should ensure that in practice……

• Appropriate support strategies, including external help, are identified and implemented at the earliest opportunity using the Early Help Assessment (EHA) as a starting point. This will help to ensure that the pivotal role of families in determining the behaviour of children can be harnessed.
• All staff promote, encourage, expect and praise good behaviour
• All staff are respectful in all their dealings with children, using restorative principles and practices to build and maintain relationships which are based on respect, genuineness and empathy
All staff are trained to respond promptly and firmly when dealing with incidents and know the breadth of rewards, sanctions and strategies available.

All staff tailor responses to particular forms of behaviour and ensure that vulnerable groups are supported.

Provide and encourage a safe, listening environment so that children and young people feel able to report behaviour incidents anonymously or face-to-face and know that they will be dealt with effectively.

All staff monitor and record all incidents and gather relevant data to inform evaluation of practice and show how the setting is attempting to reduce inappropriate behaviours.

Adults consistently model the most appropriate behaviour.

All staff feel able to ask for help with dealing with behavioural issues without embarrassment or fear of negative responses.

Good or pro-social behaviour is recognised and celebrated for all.

All adults and young people feel and are safe within the school environment and part of their community.

To do so, will reduce the stresses and distress that all staff and pupils will otherwise experience from school attendance. In some schools and settings, recognition of these stresses will require explicit attention to be given to promoting staff resilience and welfare for all those who work there. Levels of staff absence, conflict and sickness are likely to be indicators of schools and settings where an explicit focus will be needed on the welfare of the adults who support and deliver education.

**Roles and responsibilities**

**Role of parents in the behaviour policy**
A key element to effective leadership of behaviour is engagement with parents. Although some of the factors which have an impact on children’s behaviour, such as parenting and family breakdown are beyond schools’ control, that does not mean to say that schools are powerless to support parents and carers in promoting the good behaviour of their children. Schools should see it as part of their core work to be proactive in establishing relationships with parents and carers, particularly those who are hard to reach, rather than waiting for problems to occur.

**Role of leadership teams in the behaviour policy**
The headteacher must determine the standard of behaviour to be deemed acceptable and must “determine measures” to promote good behaviour and wellbeing, self discipline and respect; prevent bullying; ensure that pupils complete assigned work and regulate the conduct of pupils.

S/he must:
• Take into account governing body’s statement of behaviour principles where this exists as well other guidance or notifications that this body provide
• Decide the standard of behaviour expected and determine the school rules including the rewards and sanctions related to these
• Publicise the behaviour policy in a written document to staff, parents and pupils
• Include the standard of behaviour expected in the home-school agreement where this is being used

All members of the school community need to be involved in construction and implementation of behaviour policies, in order to achieve a common understanding. It is vital that the behaviour policy is clear, that it is well understood and that it is consistently applied.

Role of governing bodies in the behaviour policy

Section 88 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a responsibility on the governing body of a school to “ensure that policies designed to promote good behaviour and discipline on the part of its pupils are pursued at the school”. Guidance published in 2011 places the specific responsibility upon Governors to:

a) make, and from time to time review, a written statement of general principles to guide the head teacher in determining measures to promote good behaviour and discipline amongst pupils

b) notify the head teacher and give him or her related guidance if the governing body wants the school’s behaviour policy to include particular measures or address particular issues

Before making their statement of principles, the governing body must consult (in whatever manner they think appropriate) the head teacher, school staff, parents and pupils.

They also have an important role in challenging and supporting headteachers to ensure that behaviour policies are applied consistently. The governing body will need to ask the head teacher to consider what the school’s response should be to any bad behaviour when the child is:

• Taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity or
• Travelling to or from school or
• Wearing school uniform or
• In some other way identifiable as a pupil at the school

Or, misbehaviour at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply, that:

• Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school or
• Poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public or
• Could adversely affect the reputation of the school
Role of the Local Authority in the context of acting as champions for vulnerable children including those with SEN or additional needs

- The Northamptonshire ‘Race to the Top’ strategy specifically supports the development and growth of ‘Inclusive School’ as point 2 of ‘The Northamptonshire Model’
- Schools and other settings deserve the best possible strategic advice and support from the local authority
- The local authority must ensure that all its advice support and intervention promotes the best moral and ethical approach to maintaining good pro-social behaviours and minimising poor behaviours
- The Local Authority currently provides an Educational Inclusion and Partnerships Team which provides advice to schools to avoid exclusions and challenges where all strategies to be fully inclusive have not been employed. This role sits within the Learning, Skills and Education Service, which comprises several layers of support and intervention for schools and governors experiencing challenging circumstances. The LA has a statutory responsibility to monitor the standard of provision being offered in schools, and to ensure that all schools are meeting their statutory obligations to pupils and parents.
- The Local Authority also provides Educational Psychology Services (EPS traded team) to provide schools with additional advice, support and training for schools in promoting pro-social behaviour and wellbeing. Schools may wish to access The Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) programme through the EPS. The Northamptonshire TaMHS Programme brings together and makes available evidence-based and evidence-informed approaches, programmes and interventions that schools can adopt in order to maximise promotion and intervention regarding the mental health and hence also of behaviour for all pupils. See www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/tamhsupdate
- The Social, Emotional and Mental Health Panel also supports primary schools in the inclusion of children with challenging behaviour.
- In addition to its role in supporting and challenging under-performing schools, the Local Authority also has a strategic role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision in commissioned services
- Increasingly the Local Authority is strengthening relationships with and between schools and other organisations, brokering partnerships in order to build capacity and strengthen confidence in commissioning their own services for vulnerable pupils.
- The Local Authority is working with school clusters and academy chains to jointly co-commission services that will enable schools to continue to develop their inclusion service.
- The Local Authority ensures sufficiency of places and support for vulnerable children within schools and externally.