



inspiring the journey for
independence together

Trust Relationship and Behaviour Policy

This policy fulfills statutory requirements for behaviour policies under the Education and Inspections Act 2026 and applies across all Trust schools

Reviewed annually

A small rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink.

Signed by: (Chair of the Trust)

Date: February 2026

Date of Next Review: February 2027

1. Policy Statement

The Rivermead Inclusive Trust is committed to creating an environment where exemplary relationships, behaviours and attitudes are at the heart of productive learning. Everyone is expected to maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, to accept responsibility for their behaviour and encourage others to do the same.

This Relationship and Behaviour Policy guides staff to teach self-discipline and self-regulation. It echoes our core values with a heavy emphasis on respectful behaviour, a partnership approach to managing poor behaviour choices and research informed interventions that support staff and learners.

- High quality relationships and the promotion of emotional well-being underpin everything that we do.
- We show unconditional positive regard, valuing and respecting each other. This means we treat each other with respect and dignity, always aiming to build self-esteem. We are honest, kind and nurture the strengths and talents of others.
- We aim for all students to strive to be the best they can be, enjoy learning and be intrinsically motivated to succeed.
- We believe in simple learning habits that are designed to reinforce high expectations:
 - Follow the school dress code where appropriate.
 - Be on time, every time.
 - Be ready with the right equipment.
 - Be focused and on-task in lessons.
 - Be respectful and safe in all you say and do
- We believe that explicit rules that are taught and reinforce our learning habits, help students to learn, keep them safe, and feel secure.
- We believe that simple routines are essential to the smooth running of our Trust schools and should be taught and reinforced through simple, consistent routines to establish a calm and purposeful environment.
- We value the individuality of our schools and therefore expect that the Local School Relationship and Behaviour Policy, reflects this policy and is devised locally by our schools detailing an approach to recognising and celebrating positive behaviour habits alongside implementing a stepped approach to consequences, which are appropriate for the students, the incident and context and follows the model of reflect and repair.
- We work as leaders across the Trust to ensure we have broad agreement on the reasonableness and proportionately of stepped consequences.
- Our schools are aware of the range of research available with regards to positive approaches to behaviour management, including that of restorative practices.

2. Scope and Focus

This policy is underpinned by legislation and statutory requirements and is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- Behaviour in schools (DFE, 2024)
- Searching, screening and confiscation at school (DFE, 2022, updated 2023)
- The Equality Act 2010
- Use of reasonable force in schools 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2025)
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice.
- Schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- DfE guidance explaining that academies should publish their behaviour policy and anti-bullying strategy online.
- Suspensions and permanent exclusions guidance (updated 2026)

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

The principles and practice are supported by regular and appropriate staff training; close parental and community links; student-led participation in school life; promotion of students' self-esteem through positive reinforcement and extra-curricular activities.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Trust Anti-Bullying Policy
- Local School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies
- Trust Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Trust Equality and Diversity Policy
- Local School SEN and Disability Policies
- Trust Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- Trust Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

Trust schools may **search, screen and confiscate items** in line with the Department for Education guidance on **Searching, Screening and Confiscation**.

This includes prohibited items and any item that may pose a risk to safety or disrupt learning. Local school policies set out the **procedures and safeguards** for carrying out searches lawfully and respectfully.

The Rivermead Inclusive Trust recognises that all of our behaviour is a communication, and we respond accordingly based on this. We know that our schools will succeed, and achieve high attendance and outcomes, when the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of staff, children/young people and families is prioritised. We uphold the following principles:

- Everyone understands they have the right to feel safe, valued and respected, and

learn free from the disruption of others.

- The Trust Relationship and Behaviour Policy Overview and the Local Relationship and Behaviour Policy are shared and understood by staff, students, parent and carers.

- All students, staff and visitors are free from any form of discrimination.
- Staff and volunteers always set an excellent example to students.
- Recognition and consequences are used consistently by staff, in line with the school Relationship and Behaviour Policy
- The use of reasonable force is used consistently in line with the local school

Relationship and Behaviour Policies

Suspensions and permanent exclusions will be used **only as a last resort**, and **only in line with statutory guidance** issued by the Department for Education.

Decisions will be **lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate**, taking account of individual circumstances, including SEND and vulnerability.

The Trust Exclusions Policy is in line with Suspension and Exclusion Guidance (DFE, 2026) and sets out the full statutory process including the Trust boards role in providing independent review panels.

In practice our schools:

- Have the highest expectations of behaviour to maximise students' opportunity to achieve.
- Ensure all students develop the good learning habits that they need to be successful in school and in life.
- Realise and celebrate the potential of all students though promoting independence, high self-esteem and enabling students to reach their full potential.
- Deliver a curriculum and create environments in which students are enabled to mature, become self-disciplined and self-regulated, work hard, able to accept responsibility for their own actions and understand the impact that their behaviour has on others.
- Have a no tolerance approach to low-level disruption in lessons, bullying or sexual bullying and harassment and work hard to create a positive and safe learning environment.
- Actively involve parents and carers to support their children's learning.

3. Definitions

Difficult behaviour is defined as:

- Disruption in lessons, in corridors between lessons, and at break and lunchtimes
- Refusal to respond or engage where appropriate (Taking into account lack of engagement due to particular identified needs)
- Non-completion of classwork or homework
- Poor attitude
- Persistent refusal to comply

More serious behaviours are defined as:

- Repeated breaches of the school rules
- Any form of bullying
- Verbal abuse
- Physical aggression

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Trust Relationship

Destructive behaviour, damage and vandalism

- Sexual bullying, harassment, abuse or assault
- Any unwanted sexual behaviour that causes humiliation, pain, fear or intimidation, including online behaviour
- Theft
- Fighting
- Smoking or vaping
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory behaviour
- Possession of any prohibited items

Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying is, therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult to defend against

Bullying can include:

Types of Bullying	Definition
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Racial	Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

Details of each school's approach to preventing and addressing bullying are set out in the relationship policies of each of our schools.

The Trust has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

- All concerns are taken seriously and followed up by school staff and appropriate consequences implemented.
- The Trust recognises that sexual violence and harassment and consequences applied will reflect the harmfulness of the behaviour. Section 5 of KCSIE is used to support staff to respond.
- Behaviour concerns that may indicate safeguarding issues must be managed in accordance with the Trust Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education

4. Roles and Responsibilities

This policy supports the Trust's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010), including eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations."

The Trust Board will:

- Establish the policy for promoting positive relationships and behaviours in consultation with schools, parents/carers and students.
- Ensure the policy does not discriminate and that it advances equality and good relations for those with protected characteristics.
- Be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the Relationship and Behaviour Policy and holding Headteachers to account for its implementation.
- Ensure the policy is communicated to students and parents/carers.
- Keep the policy under review.
- ***The Trust Board delegates operational implementation to the Executive Team in line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation, and local governance committees monitor school-level implementation where applicable."***

The Executive Headteacher / Headteacher / Head of School is responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of the Relationship and Behaviour policy and will:

- Create a school culture which is inclusive and embodies the mission and values of the Trust.
- Have a Local Relationship / Behaviour Policy that is aligned with Trust Relationship and Behaviour Policy
- Ensure that the school environment encourages positive relationships leading to behaviours and that staff recognise and reward positive relationships and intervene

effectively with poor behaviour choices.

- Monitor consistency and high expectation to ensure the Local Relationship and Behaviour Policy is fairly and consistently applied by staff.
- Support staff who face challenging behaviour.
- Ensure that the concerns of students are listened to and appropriately addressed.
- Foster close working relationships with parents and carers.

Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the Relationship and Behaviour policy consistently and fairly.
- Modelling positive relationships and behaviour.
- Providing a personalised approach to the specific behavioural needs of SEND and other vulnerable students.
- Listening and following up on the concerns of students so that they are appropriately addressed.
- Recording behaviour incidents.

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Working positively and confidently with children and find the least intrusive way possible to support, empower and keep them safe. They should invest in building relationships of trust and understanding, seek to understand triggers and find solutions. If incidents do occur, defusing the situation and/or distracting the child wherever possible.

Parents /carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly, is punctual, properly equipped to learn and that they provide an explanation if their child is absent.
- Work in partnership with the school to assist the school to maintain high standards of behaviour, including following the school dress code.
- Sign and support the home school agreement.
- Work with the school to support their child's behaviour at school.
- Support their child in adhering to the student behaviour code.
- Inform the school of any changes in circumstances that may affect their child's behaviour.
- Discuss any behavioural concerns with the class teacher/form tutor promptly.

5. Behaviour Management from the ECF (Early Careers Framework)

Trust Teachers should develop a positive, predictable, and safe environment for students, by:

- Establishing a supportive and inclusive environment with a predictable system of reward and sanction in the classroom.
 - Working alongside colleagues as part of a wider system of behaviour management (e.g., recognising responsibilities and understanding the right to assistance and training from senior colleagues).
 - Giving manageable, specific, and sequential instructions.
 - Checking students' understanding of instructions before a task begins.
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- Using consistent language and non-verbal signals for common classroom directions.
- Using early and least-intrusive interventions as an initial response to low-level disruption.
- Responding quickly to any behaviour or bullying that threatens emotional safety.

Trust Teachers should establish effective routines and expectations, by:

- Creating and explicitly teaching routines in line with the school ethos that maximise time for learning (e.g., setting and reinforcing expectations about key transition points).
- Practising routines at the beginning of the school year.
- Reinforcing routines (e.g., by articulating the link between time on task and success).

Trust Teachers should build trusting relationships, by:

- Liaising with parents, carers and colleagues to better understand students' individual circumstances and how they can be supported to meet high academic and behavioural expectations.
- Responding consistently to student behaviour.

Trust Teachers should motivate students, by:

- Supporting students to master challenging content, which builds towards long-term goals.
- Providing opportunities for students to articulate their long-term goals and helping them to see how these are related to their success in school.
- Helping students to journey from needing extrinsic motivation to being motivated to work intrinsically.
- Treat all members of the school community with respect and politeness.

Students are expected to:

- Take responsibility for their own behaviour both on and off the school site.
- Behave in an orderly and self-controlled way.
- Show respect to members of staff and each other.
- In class, make it possible for all students to learn.
- Move quietly around the school.
- Treat the school buildings and school property with respect.
- Always wear the correct uniform.
- Accept consequences of poor behaviour choices when given.
- Report incidents of disruption, violence and any form of bullying and harassment.
- Refrain from behaving in a way that brings the school into disrepute, including when outside school.
- Engage with and complete home learning.

6. Rules and Routines

- Trust schools establish rules that are explicit, as short as possible, compact and memorable. They must be widely known and demonstrated throughout school life.
- Teaching, modelling and reinforcement of the rules ensures that they are communicated, widely understood and that compliance is recognised, praised and celebrated.

7. When rules are broken, school staff will follow up and apply an appropriate consequence all using a reflect, repair and restore approach.

Sanctions and Consequences

Trust schools operate a **clear, proportionate and graduated approach** to sanctions, which is consistently applied and underpinned by the principles of **reflect, repair and restore**.

Sanctions may include (but are not limited to):

- Verbal reminders and warnings
- Restorative conversations or actions
- Loss of privileges
- Detentions
- Internal exclusion or time out of class
- Fixed-term suspension
- Permanent exclusion (in exceptional circumstances)

All sanctions will be:

- **Reasonable and proportionate**
- **Age-appropriate**
- **Consistent**
- **Adjusted where necessary for pupils with SEND or additional needs**

Local school Relationship and Behaviour Policies set out the **operational detail** of sanctions and their application.

Trust schools may use **detentions** as a sanction to respond to breaches of behaviour expectations. Detentions will be applied **reasonably and proportionately**, and **parents/carers will be informed** in line with local school procedures.



8. Reflect, Repair and Restore

- There is strong research evidence that restorative processes, where reflections and learning take place, are successful in supporting wellbeing and long-term behaviour change.
- Our schools recognise that during any incident the child or young person's behaviour is likely to be influenced by a strong emotion such as a feeling of anger, frustration, or disappointment. They may present as not be ready to engage in anything until they have calmed sufficiently.
- Equally, the impact of the incident on the staff and others involved is recognised.
- Once it is considered the child or young person (or member of staff) is ready for the restorative process, this can take place and should involve all relevant persons (for example, key staff, parents, other children, and young people).
- The purpose of reflect, repair and restore is to re-visit the experience with the child or young person when they are calm, relaxed and receptive to being reflective about the incident.
 - Explore what happened (tell the story)
 - Explore what people were thinking and feeling at the time
 - Explore who has been affected and how
 - Explore how relationships can be repaired
 - Summarise what has been learnt so there can be different responses next time.
- Schools can follow by using restorative questions within this discussion:
 - What would you like to happen next?
 - How can we make things better for you and others affected?
 - If everything was going to be alright, what would need to happen?
 - How can you help to put this right?
 - How can we teach you to make a different behaviour choice if this happens again?
- To be effective, the reflect, repair and restore process should be adjusted according to the age, understanding and other needs of the child or young person.

9. Liaison with parents and carers

- Our Trust schools work in close partnership with parents/carers, communicating expectations, recognising effort and achievement and intervening to support behaviour to improve where needed.
 - All schools have in place a home-school agreement that sets out the duties and responsibilities of our three-way partnership.
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Trust schools work actively within local partnerships (Local Authority Partnership, Behaviour and Attendance Collaboration, Fair Access Policy).

10. Training

- Rivermead Inclusive Trust staff are provided with training on managing behaviour, including annual safeguarding training, behaviour training on induction and ongoing CPD monitored by the Trust. Where it is appropriate, training is also provided in the proper use of positive handling, as part of the induction process.
- Approaches to behaviour management is reviewed regularly in schools and forms part of continuing professional development

11. Rasing Concerns and Complaints

- Parents and carers who have concerns about behaviour decisions should raise these initially with the school.
- Formal complaints may be made in line with the Trust's Complaints Policy, available on the Trust website.

