

Behaviour in Context: A Relational and Therapeutic Approach



FUTURES-ESSEX
EDUCATING MINDS, SOARING HIGH

Approved by:	Lauren Collin	Date: May 2024
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1. Aims

At Futures-Essex, we uphold high standards of behaviour and personal achievement, rooted in our **core values of Accessibility, Stability, Resilience, and Ambition**. Our approach is guided by *Therapeutically Thinking* (formerly Essex Steps), recognising behaviour as communication and prioritising safety, dignity, and repair.

This policy aims to:

- Create a calm, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils can learn and thrive.
- Establish a consistent, whole-provision approach reflecting our values and therapeutic principles.
- Embed person-centred practice by linking behaviour responses to Individual Behaviour Plans (IBPs).
- Apply restorative approaches to repair relationships and build resilience.
- Align with the Voluntary National Standards for Non-School Alternative Provision (DfE, 2025) to ensure safeguarding, quality, and accountability

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is informed by:

- [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2024](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2022](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)
- [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement 2023](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#)

3. Definitions

We view behaviour as a form of communication, often signalling unmet needs, difficulties with regulation, or contextual triggers.

Misbehaviour includes disruption to learning, non-completion of work, or poor attitude.

Serious misbehaviour includes repeated breaches of rules, bullying, discriminatory behaviour, sexual harassment/violence, theft, vandalism, fighting, possession of prohibited items, and online harassment.

4. Bullying

Bullying is deliberate, repetitive harm involving a power imbalance. It may be emotional, physical, prejudice-based, verbal, sexual, or online. We:

- Educate pupils on respect and inclusion, embedding our values of Accessibility and Respect.
- Provide clear reporting routes for pupils, parents, and staff.
- Investigate fairly and record incidents consistently.
- Respond using restorative approaches to repair harm and support all involved.
- Monitor trends and adapt proactive strategies.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Directors

- Approve and monitor the behaviour policy.
- Hold leadership accountable for consistent, fair implementation.

Provision Leaders

- Create a relational culture aligned with therapeutic practice.
- Ensure staff apply the policy consistently.

- Provide induction and training for staff.
- Monitor behaviour data for disproportionality.
- Ensure alignment with safeguarding and inclusion policies.

Staff

- Model respectful relationships and regulation strategies.
- Teach, reinforce, and adapt behaviour expectations.
- Use de-escalation and restorative conversations.
- Apply IBPs and personalised approaches.
- Record incidents accurately.

Parents and carers

- Support consistency between home and provision.
- Share information relevant to their child's behaviour and wellbeing.
- Engage in restorative and review meetings.

Pupils

- Learn and practise expected behaviours.
- Take part in restorative conversations.
- Contribute to shaping the behaviour culture.

6. Provision Behaviour Curriculum

Our relational expectations, linked to core values, are:

- **Be Safe** – look after yourself and others (Stability).
- **Be Respectful** – show kindness and fairness (Accessibility).
- **Be Ready to Learn** – try your best, even when it is hard (Resilience).
- **Be Ambitious** – set goals and work towards them (Ambition).

These expectations are explicitly taught, modelled by staff, reinforced positively, and revisited through restorative work when challenges arise.

7. Responding to Behaviour

7.1 Principles

- Behaviour is responded to consistently, fairly, and proportionately.
- Responses are therapeutic and restorative, focusing on repair and learning.
- Context (SEND, trauma, mental health, home factors) is considered in all decisions.

7.2 Everyday management

Staff:

- Greet pupils warmly.
- Use positive reinforcement.
- Maintain clear routines.
- Plan for low-level disruption.
- Create stimulating environments.

7.3 Safeguarding

Behaviour concerns may indicate safeguarding needs. Staff follow child protection procedures in line with Part 1 of the Voluntary National Standards for Non-School Alternative Provision

7.4 Recognition and response

- Positive behaviour: verbal praise, responsibilities, celebration.
- Low-level misbehaviour: de-escalation, reminder, reflection.
- Serious incidents: restorative meeting, IBP review, temporary removal.
- Always restorative: focus on understanding, repairing, and learning.

7.5 Reasonable force

Used only to prevent immediate harm, in line with statutory guidance. Always last resort, minimal, recorded, and reported.

7.6 Off-site and online behaviour

Pupils remain ambassadors of the provision. Misbehaviour beyond site may be addressed if it threatens safety, reputation, or wellbeing.

7.7 Criminal behaviour

Alleged criminal incidents may be referred to police and safeguarding partners, in consultation with parents/carers and commissioners.

7.8 Sexual harassment and violence

Zero tolerance. All reports are taken seriously, responded to supportively, and risk assessed. Responses prioritise safety, dignity, and recovery.

7.9 Malicious allegations

Unfounded allegations are addressed appropriately, with consideration of pupil support needs.

8. Serious sanctions

Graduated responses are prioritised. Serious sanctions are only used when therapeutic strategies have been exhausted:

- **Removal from activity:** short-term, with reintegration and IBP review.
- **Suspension/Exclusion:** last resort, decided by the Provision Manager, in consultation with the commissioner.

9. Responding to Behaviour from Pupils with SEND

- Anticipate triggers, adapt environment, and provide regulation strategies.
- Adapt sanctions where SEND limits understanding or control.
- Conduct risk assessments and maintain IBPs.
- Work with SENCO, specialists, and parents.
- Cooperate with commissioners on EHCP provisions and reviews.

10. Supporting Pupils Following a Sanction

- Restorative conversations with staff and peers.
- Re-integration meetings with updates to IBPs.
- Additional support through mentoring, pastoral care, or external agencies.
- Emphasis on resilience and rebuilding ambition.

11. Pupil Transition

- **New pupils:** induction, risk assessment, IBP development, and therapeutic orientation.
- **Moving on:** effective information sharing with next provision, school, or placement, ensuring continuity of support.

12. Training

Staff training includes:

- *Therapeutically Thinking* and relational approaches.
- De-escalation and restorative practice.
- Understanding trauma, attachment, SEND, and mental health.
- Safeguarding and compliance with the Voluntary National Standards for Non-School Alternative Provision.

13. Monitoring Arrangements

- Behaviour data collected: incidents, attendance, exclusions, pupil/parent/staff surveys.
- Regular analysis for disproportionality.
- Reports shared with governors/directors, commissioners, and stakeholders.
- Policy reviewed annually, or sooner if patterns demand.

14. Links with Other Policies

- Safeguarding and child protection
- SEND policy
- Equality and diversity policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Exclusions policy
- Staff code of conduct
- **Voluntary National Standards for Non-School Alternative Provision** (DfE, 2025)

Appendix 1: staff training log

TRAINING RECEIVED	DATE COMPLETED	TRAINER / TRAINING ORGANISATION	TRAINER'S SIGNATURE	STAFF MEMBER'S SIGNATURE	SUGGESTED REVIEW DATE

Appendix 2: Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) – Template

Section	Details
Pupil Name	
Date of Birth	
Provision	
Key Worker/Mentor	
Review Date	

1. Pupil Voice & Strengths (Accessibility & Ambition)

What I enjoy / am good at	What helps me learn best	My goals and ambitions

2. Challenges & Triggers (Person-Centred)

Areas I find difficult	Possible triggers	Signs I am becoming dysregulated

3. Regulation & Support Strategies (Stability & Resilience)

Strategies that help me calm	Support staff can use	Things that don't help	Agreed tools (breaks, sensory aids, safe space)

4. Relational Approaches (Therapeutically Thinking)

What staff will do	What I can do	Restorative approach
Calm tone, clear choices, consistency	Ask for help, use my strategy card	1. What happened? 2. Who has been affected? 3. How can we put it right?

5. Risk Assessment (if needed)

Please see separate risk assessment document.

6. Success & Review

What progress looks like	How we measure it	Review frequency

Signatures	
Pupil	
Parent/Carer	
Key Worker	

Example IBP – “Alex” (fictional pupil, age 13)

Section	Details
Pupil Name	Alex
Date of Birth	12/04/2012
Provision	Futures-Essex AP
Key Worker/Mentor	J. Smith
Review Date	Every 6 weeks

1. Pupil Voice & Strengths

What I enjoy / am good at	What helps me learn best	My goals and ambitions
Football, drawing, computers	Short tasks, movement breaks, clear instructions	To join a local football team and improve my reading

2. Challenges & Triggers

Areas I find difficult	Possible triggers	Signs I am becoming dysregulated
Long written tasks	Loud noises, sudden change	Fidgeting, raising voice, leaving seat
Group work	Feeling picked on	Going quiet, head down

3. Regulation & Support

Strategies that help me calm	Support staff can use	Things that don't help	Agreed tools
5-minute football outside, drawing	Offer choices, quiet space, clear countdowns	Shouting at me, removing me suddenly	Fidget toy, regulation card, access to safe space

4. Relational Approaches

What staff will do	What I can do	Restorative approach
Use calm voice, script reminders, be consistent	Use "time out" card, talk to mentor	1. What happened? 2. Who was affected? 3. How can I fix it?

5. Risk Assessment

Known risks	Controls in place	Responsible staff
Running off when angry	Exit plan: safe adult, radio check-in, escort if needed	Key Worker & Duty Lead

6. Success & Review

What progress looks like	How we measure it	Review frequency
Fewer classroom exits, completing more tasks	Daily check-ins, weekly logs, parent feedback	6 weeks

Signatures	
Pupil	Alex (prefers to draw signature)

Parent/Carer	Mrs. Brown
Key Worker	J. Smith