

*Never look down on anybody unless you are helping him up. Jesse Jackson*

## **Barley Lane School**

*Hard work, humility, kindness*

### **Happiness and Wellbeing and so “behaviour” and then learning 2021-22**

**(updated as required and at least annually every September)**

“The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is love”.

Bruce Perry – The Boy Who Was Raised As A Dog. (2007)

#### **Introduction**

What follows comes from doing the work and watching and working alongside many good people over many years.

We asked our attached educational psychologist and her colleagues to contribute and help us identify where and how what we have come to understand works well is connected to ideas, approaches and theories about the wellbeing and happiness of children and young people: this is what they shared.

Big thanks from us all at BLS to Bryony and Michaela ☺

The key psychological theories and approaches that we feel underpin this behaviour policy are as follows, with some examples of how they relate to whole school practices which are cited in the document.

- Family Systems Theory (Bowen) - build safe, influential and warm but authoritative relationships; fair and reasoned consequences or limitations has its place in any “parenting”.
- Positive Psychology (Seligman) – Optimism; there is a prevailing atmosphere of warmth and kindness and optimism; the only real and impactful “therapy” is the steady and relentless drip of kindness and the day to day interactions; recognising and celebrating the innate worth and talent and efforts of every child and young person at every opportunity; When times are hard remind them of their many successes and honourable efforts and how much you value both those achievements and them as people; Fresh starts and glasses that are always half-full

- Attachment Theory (Bowlby) – Friendship; staff have a strong and authentic and emotional connection; staff are able to manage their emotions and remain self-aware and self-controlled; each classroom must embed a positive climate rooted in good relationships; the emphasis is on the space and time and kindness to reflect and recover; Check-in with the children and young people; Keep them in mind; Validate don't judge: empathise and be curious, seek to understand them; They are present – Both in actually being in work and being attuned in feeling what they feel day to day
- Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Maslow) – there is plentiful and on demand good food, and drink and comfortable and welcoming surroundings and a prevailing atmosphere of warmth and kindness and optimism
- PACE approach (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) (Dan Hughes) - all staff are encouraged to develop fun and engaging ways of tangibly rewarding the children; I was just wondering: explore how things might feel by saying it out loud;
- Social Learning Theory (Bandura) - Model the behaviours you want to encourage in the young people.
- Restorative Approaches (Humanistic Psychology) - everyone in our diverse school community is committed to forgiveness, redemption and fresh starts; time to reflect on and put right and repair relationships, learning and behaviour.
- Solution Focused Approaches (from Brief Therapy)(de Shazer) - Remember successes: when things are hard look back on the good times and get them to revisit and tell you about them;

### **What About Looked-after children?**

We are a school full of wonderful, able and talented children and young people but they are complex and vulnerable and challenging too and in this they are like all children and we have some sensible reservations about the labels our children attract whether that is SEMH or CIC.

At bottom this whole document is about children in care because it is about the quotation that begins this document because trauma is common to so many of our young people and all of our children in care so it is reasonable to argue and assert they underpin and drive everything we do.

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## 1. Our core values

These must imbue and flow through and are tangible every day in all of us and all our work:

- **Friendship:** respect-empathy-forgiveness-compassion–protection
- **Optimism:** self-aware- self-improving -problem solving –happy-affirming
- **Hardwork:** gritty-determined-resilient- makes a difference –things get done

For us it is helpful to pause and unpack our core values a little more for example if we consider matters of equality, diversity and inclusivity true “friendship” with its respect and compassion and empathy must by its nature offer them unconditionally and universally.

If we consider the crisis in wellbeing and mental health to have a “growth mind-set”; to be an optimist is a building block of good mental health as is to be valued and cared for with authenticity.

No one can succeed beyond school in college, in work, in life without a secure sense of their own worth and so the value of others.

The matter of wider societal values might be in a state of flux even crisis but notions of respect and kindness and hard work are timeless.

## 2. Our core aspirations for the children and young people

They are simple and few but we’d rather have clarity and simplicity and so focus and they are expressed above and embedded in our core values but we can again unpack them a bit...

We model and promote and seek to imbue and embed these qualities and they are incrementally more evident in the children and young people in our care throughout their time with us:

- **Friendship:** kind-can cooperate-has fun with others-can recover and move on (resilient)
- **Optimism:** engages with work and play-can be happy-has hopes and dreams
- **Hardwork:** is increasingly able to do more and different and challenging things across school life.

The children are more and more fluent in these core ambitions for them as people:

- **Be a good friend** and have good friends
- **Yes you can** because you are brilliant and talented and do loads of things well
- There is dignity and success always in **trying your best**; we learn and grow from our mistakes...

### **3. Our ethos and culture as a team: this impacts hugely on the children and young people and their happiness**

- Our children and young people's dignity and their enormous worth and their progress as people and learners are all better supported by the reasoned acknowledgment that we are all "SEMH" in some ways or at some time but...
- That in no way defines or limits us and more than that it is often a characteristic of the most talented and best people who have battled with and learned from challenge and adversity and that is how we see our students as universally talented and good people who have shown courage in adversity.
- The children and young people and their families and carers in all their diversity have a right to high expectation and the best possible service and outcomes.
- We "change us to change them" and we each take personal responsibility in a bottom up model that understands and is committed to the power of positive role "modelling" and is innately and instinctively optimistic, proactive and problem solving;
- We focus our professional energies and curiosity always on the children and young people; our teaching and "parenting" on being there and being engaged and "present";
- We are curious and enquiring and want to better understand the children and young people in all their diversity and complexity and nuance so we can develop our practice so every interaction brings the steady drip of skilful kindness from a team that is self-aware and self-improving.
- We believe there is greater power in the collective and coaching; we learn and develop and improve together with a team ethic;
- We intelligently challenge and question all meetings and admin' and paperwork so only what is purposeful and helpful to the children and young people in our care is tackled and we focus our energies on teaching and caring and supporting.
- We will then keep our best talent and practitioners with the children and young people and intelligently challenge too traditional notions of "leadership" and "career progression" to keep our best people working directly with our students.
- In all of this we must therefore have the highest expectation of the youngsters and of ourselves in a context where everyone in our diverse school community is committed to forgiveness, redemption and fresh starts.

- In challenging and improving our own practice we will model and promote the humility and healthy self-evaluation and self-motivation our young people must acquire to thrive beyond school.
- In caring for and respecting and guiding the children and young people we will model and promote the reason, kindness and compassion they must acquire to be happy people and to make others happy.
- When we challenge and seek to change inappropriate behaviours in the young people we do so safely and in that context of reason, kindness and compassion and encourage the making of good choices and promotion of self-control.

#### **4. Keeping everyone safe in our setting can present some serious risks and challenges.**

Every day starts and ends as a team together and the first question is about the safety and happiness and welfare of the children and young people; this begins with powerful risks across the range of child protection and safeguarding themes be it neglect or County Lines and from the explicit and tangible to the intuitive and instinctive and coalescing concerns so explicit disclosures to gut feelings and this includes vigilance about our own behaviours.

We move then to the things we must and can do each day to sustain the “calm and respect” that Ofsted noted permeated our community; no easy thing in context because it is true some “behaviours” are very risky and our student body by its nature as SEMH contains and presents a whole range of known and unknown (latent risk) and also emerging and shifting risks because being multiply and diversely risky is a core and common feature of the children and young people in our care

There is also a risky “chemistry” in their interactions and relationships with each other and all those they encounter from teachers through visiting professionals to delivery drivers and the neighbours....

These risks shift and slide and they rise and fall constantly in all the children as so many factors home and school can and do impact upon them

The complex and mercurial nature of our young people and the shifting chemistry of their relationships with each other and the sometime turbulence of their lives and the latent quality of unknown and emerging risks in their nature and in their lives make the notion of “dynamic risk assessment” critical to keeping everybody safe: we must be proactive and on our toes in our work.

Such potential for risk and difficulty can seem overwhelming and unmanageable; how can we, how should we respond?

Appendix 3 attempts to describe on a page the pragmatic and practicable steps we take every day to keep everybody safe and so underpin health and safety, wellbeing and good order and discipline that in turn facilitate good behaviour and learning and personal development.

Our “Safeguarding Portfolio” contains a range of guidance for staff from absconding to roof climbing that describes what we do to manage a range of risk [www.barleylaneschool.org.uk](http://www.barleylaneschool.org.uk)

Weekly risk summaries and individual pupil plans are generated and regularly reviewed and updated and shared with the team so we can respond to these ever-shifting risks.

## **5. You can’t “behave” or be happy and so learn and grow as a person if you don’t feel secure and safe and cared for (wellbeing is everything)**

The SEMH student community is a complex and diverse one, mercurial and shifting and the school and its team must bend and flex to understand meet pupil needs and achieving a secure positive and purposeful prevailing climate in every classroom and in the wider school community is a serious challenge every day.

It is a bit like the 100 metre runner whose critical work is done in around 10 seconds but underpinned and made possible by years of training...no member of our team succeeds in our setting without a sustained and skilled investment in the happiness and sense of belonging and safety of our children and young people; something many have not experienced in their schooling so far.

This is why we have to relentlessly protect and promote that precious climate of safety and positivity in every class and across the wider community and to do this each one of us must sustain an indestructible rigour and energy and optimism in our mentality and practice

The recruitment and retention and development of resilient self-managing and self-improving people of the kind described in what follows is then essential for the children and young people to be happy and behaviour to be “good” and learning and personal development to happen; not everybody can do this work.

Simpler but more powerful still is plentiful and on demand good food, and drink and comfortable and welcoming surroundings and a prevailing atmosphere of warmth and kindness and optimism; without these there can be no positive behaviour, no happiness and so no learning.

In recent years skilled teachers and able support colleagues have demonstrated that a primary model with its stability and familiar expectations, rhythms and routines brings a security and comfort that moving from class to class and teacher to teacher cannot replicate.

We have then moved as a whole school to a “primary model” (with certain tweaks to accommodate specialist subjects for example IT) because we have a team capable of meeting the challenges and

opportunities it brings most notably to create that ethos of belonging and calm that promotes safety and happiness and then encourages good behaviour and so allows learning and personal development to happen.

We have also recognised that a minority of our student community are significantly more complex and whilst for the majority our core offer of skilled and flexible teaching in small nurturing classes is enough for this minority something even more flexible, bespoke and pragmatic is needed.

## **6. The wellbeing of staff and students is symbiotic: the tricky business of balancing challenge and support for staff**

The built-in and considerable challenges of choosing to work in our setting are set out below in section 7 but what do we do to support each other and create an authentic esprit de corps?

- The matter of who we choose and who chooses to join the team and to stay and develop their career is the starting point and our recruitment process works hard and transparently to make sure there is a good fit and folk are in step with the school's prevailing culture and values.
- Good choices lead to essentially happy and motivated staff because we are all happier and so more effective and productive if we are in-step with the organisation's core values and culture and goals.
- Folk should draw a deliberate inference from what our best practitioners look like (see section 8 below) and our people must be by nature resilient, optimistic, driven, robustly self-aware and self-critical, self-reliant and self-improving; they are curious and problem solving; they find a way...
- We have a dedicated risk document appendix 2 that acknowledges *"Hard work -high risk: these are a part of our work and like soldiers we cannot complain we are being metaphorically shot at as we chose to be "soldiers"... "*
- The document also makes clear *"The work is honourable and profoundly worthwhile so value yourselves and each other as you do the children and young people and be proud and know you matter and that an unexpected bacon sandwich and orange juice and coffee or a handwritten card at Christmas mean that too and don't lose sight of the kindnesses offered you ...Praise and encourage and support not only the children and young people but each other and be quick to forgive and move on and try to avoid being petty or political as the children demand so much from us unnecessary negative emotional demands on each are damaging and certainly a distraction."*
- Practical support for example what we have described in school improvement as *"How we best deploy our people and how best to promote and protect their wellbeing and morale and so the energy*



*and effectiveness of everyone in our community.”* is paired with authentic emotional connections and friendship amongst us rooted in our shared values and strong work ethic.

We can only promote good mental health and healthy wellbeing in our students if we are “healthy” and fundamental to this is building a team that is united in values and purpose and who are both collectively and individually psychologically healthy.

A significant minority of our children and young people are in or have been in care and we are powerfully aware of our particular and powerful and often poignant duty to live out and deliver what is described here for them but mindful too that in a small special school of this nature children in care have much in common with their peers and we share the rationale set out by the Devon Virtual School for them...for all the children in our “care”.

- Supporting them to raise their aspirations;
- Giving them a sense of the control they have over their own lives;
- Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours;
- Providing continuity and ‘normality’ for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption.

#### **7. What then do we expect of teachers and our support team in this specialist setting: “change us to change them”.**

- The school needs a critical mass of staff who can achieve a level of compassionate authority that in turn delivers the whole school community stability that is always vulnerable to the latent and risky sub-culture that is a result of placing many and diverse, complex, risky and mercurial students in one place.
- We all share a particular and obvious responsibility in an SEMH setting to show leadership and initiative in managing the complexity, challenge and vulnerability that characterises our young people with compassion, creativity and skill and the following expectations are made clear to everyone who wants to join and work in our community.
- We have chosen to work in a challenging SEMH setting therefore overcoming complex and diverse and enigmatic and sometimes seemingly insurmountable obstacles to learning is our responsibility and our colleagues are a resource to help and assist not to take over our duties and responsibilities;

- That maintaining good order and discipline in class and beyond and across school life and the creation of a stable and secure and positive climate for learning is both an individual and collective responsibility for everyone in all but the most complex cases;
- The dignity and credibility of our specialist work is built on all of us being “leaders” in our work and being resourceful, problem solving and creative not excuse making and at upper pay levels it is reasonable and proportionate to expect sustained high performance.
- That curiosity to understand the children and young people driven by a commitment to help them behave and learn and the humility and awareness to see how others are succeeding essential to be successful and absent in those who fail with SEMH youngsters because there’s always a reason, an excuse to explain their lack of success and no drive to understand better.
- That the quality of teaching and the support and guidance we give the children in our care should always be at least good and expectations are quite reasonably higher commensurate with experience and pay and so support should be proportionate also;
- There is a dynamic and shifting balance of a) support/facilitation and b) independence/autonomy that begins heavily weighted with a) but shifts to b) over time as staff move from inexperienced and vulnerable to experienced, independent and assertive but the team-working never stops.

This progress and development is rarely smooth and uneventful and can experience sharp reverses and unexpectedly sharp improvements: it is a dynamic and shifting by its nature.

- Experienced staff must always be generous in support but explicit in demanding an appropriate and maturing level of ownership and independence from less experienced colleagues.
- Less experienced staff must own and manage issues but then seek an appropriate and safe level of support in securing good behaviour; one that both keeps them and the children secure but moves them steadily to greater independence and authority.
- Folk will therefore be moving along their own development path at different speeds and facing a variety of setbacks and improvements. Staff will need stoicism, determination, vigour and resilience on this journey to genuine compassionate authority and influence.
- This a then “bottom-up” model led by teachers and support staff who are the critical and essential and most important people in our community after the children and we look to recruit and retain and develop independent, resourceful and problem solving professionals who want the dignity and autonomy and responsibility of owning their work and who embrace being accountable for the progress and happiness of the students and as learners and as more powerfully as people.

People who believe and live out that “old school” and clichéd, but no less powerful or pertinent for that, belief that we must “change us to change them”.

## **8. What does best practice look like in encouraging and embedding good behaviour rooted in content and happy students?**

It has always been striking how some teachers and support staff are able to soften and ameliorate the struggles and frustrations and hurt that characterise the experiences of so many of the children and young people in our care?

Striking too is how a whole array of “labels” and “needs” seem almost to disappear and become irrelevant when our children and young people are being taught and supported and “parented” by our best people?

Pertinent too is whilst it remains both appealing and “current” but too often only superficially useful notions of multi-disciplinary working most notably in mental health and wellbeing often aren’t there and don’t work and in this context the only real and impactful “therapy” is the steady and relentless drip of kindness and the day to day interactions with compassionate and skilled teachers and support staff in turn supported by reliably present professional partners for example the school nurse, our attached educational psychologist, careers practitioners and authentically collegiate, proactive and visible colleagues across disciplines.

So what do these best people look like? What do they do? Appendix 1 documents our attempts over time (this is something we revisit regularly) to describe the behaviours and characteristics of those who do the work to best effect.

Our most recent attempt to summarise:

- They are warm and authentic, “present” and engaged but also securely and safely boundaried, ethical and transparent.
- They are by nature resilient, optimistic, driven, robustly self-aware and self-critical, self-reliant and self-improving.
- They are curious and problem solving; they find a way to better understand our complex and diverse student body and improve their practice
- They have a strong and authentic and emotional connection and commitment to their professional craft, the children and young people in their care and their colleagues.
- They bring clarity of expectation and embedded routines and rituals imbued with strong and safe relationships rooted in a warm assertiveness that brings both affirmation and challenge.

- They relentlessly live out and model the values and behaviours they want to inculcate in the children and young people.
- Those values are rooted in that “friendship” that unpicked means we model and we work hard to personify the respect-empathy-forgiveness-compassion-protection that encourages and nurtures these qualities in the children.
- Under stress and duress in a testing and risky and stressful context our best people are able to manage their emotions and remain self-aware and self-controlled and make informed and good decisions under pressure.
- They know the value of the figurative “pee break” and that pausing to reflect and share and explore with others is essential in all but the most pressing and immediate of risks and challenges but can be safely decisive too when necessary.

**9. Sometimes we hold children to keep everyone safe: to prevent a greater harm to promote a wider good and this is done with care and with kindness**

Our children and young people are in a large majority never held and for the minority who are it is a rare and speedy and relatively light touch event as our records over time evidence (nearly 80% of events are over in 60 seconds or less and involve moderate or low levels of force)

Holding children happens in our school within the framework of the law, government DfE expectation and guidance and our own best practice.

Core elements are last resort (although in an emergency a last resort is in practice a first resort for example a child about to run across a busy road that can be decisively and safely held will be), reasonable, proportionate and to prevent greater harm or to promote a greater, a wider good.

Detailed records over time have generated themes of risk where holding a child is necessary and reasonable typically and most frequently to prevent an assault on another person but they range from the prevention of an abscond to preventing very significant damage to property; the greater good and greater harm justifications are clear in these cases but less so in what follows.

In the maintenance of good order and discipline we must be particularly clear in our thinking. Students known or who emerge as youngsters who repeatedly escalate, physically challenge, confront or avoid doing what is best for them and their peers or are known or judged to be aggressive towards others will be identified and risks assessed and planned for.

Staff will plan their possible intervention to uphold what is fair and stop the fabric of justice and fairness that contributes to good order and discipline being damaged and undermined.

We undertake annual specialist accredited training and we keep detailed and regularly reviewed individual plans for individual children that ask “what is the exit plan?” because...

We want to intelligently and sensibly avoid holding children and how to create a climate and context and values that all prevent holding is a far bigger part of our work.

It begs the question again what does that look like? How can we and do we create a context and climate and ways of being and working across our community that makes holding a rare and always a thought-through and so necessary and ethical thing?

- Do our work reliably well: build safe, influential and warm but authoritative relationships and scaffold these with a wider positive culture and climate (albeit a highly skilled and nuanced and bloody hard-work in our setting) in a warm, orderly and welcoming environment with good and plentiful food and a willingness always to change us to change them: do these things reliably and many potential physical interventions will simply never happen
- Behaviours can be complex and high risk in our setting and physically intervening can become necessary and proportionate but we must always ask:
  1. Is our reasoning clear and credible and our motives sound?
  2. Is there a greater good if we do? A risk of greater harm if we don't?
  3. Will our decisions and actions stand up to scrutiny? Is there another way? There nearly always is and will be...de-escalation is everything.
- When holding seems likely and reasonable, calm and reflection are still essential and the following applied:
  1. If the risk is significant and pressing "last resort" can become "first resort" to prevent a greater harm and speedy and decisive physical interventions are reasonable in that context however...
  2. In most cases we have wriggle-room and can and must use the third party approach and pause, reflect, consider and plan options with supporting colleagues; everyone benefits from time and space not least as it allows the adrenaline that fuels episodes to diffuse and diminish.

You will be required to document events and to *"Describe in as much detail as you can the context: recent history, your and our efforts to be supportive and preventative over time and as incident and risks unfolded."*

3. Dynamic risk assessment by its nature happens under pressure and in stressful situations but we can still seek and achieve clarity and good judgment
4. Always then seek to soften and to make safe never escalate but assert calmly and fairly what is fair and responsible and safe: children need and deserve that calm clarity and a warm assertiveness.
5. Keep in mind we know the children are powerfully susceptible when elevated to our behaviours and modelling so be the change you want to see in them
6. Always seek win-win outcomes where reasonable choices and fair-play and dignity are preserved for everyone.
7. If the student's behaviour remains strident, demeaning, unsafe and unreasonable staff have a duty to protect health and safety, maintain good order and discipline and to preserve the dignity and rights of all members of the school community; most powerfully the right to feel safe and the right to learn.
8. A physical intervention can be necessary and justified if the above are seriously and or persistently threatened and staff have acted in good faith and the positive routes of high quality teaching and care, intelligent behaviour management and positive reinforcement have been exhausted.
9. We should then be clear and comfortable in our thinking and decision making and any intervention within our PRICE training or improvised in good faith.
10. We must act on what our recording framework asks: *"What kindness and support was offered and what opportunity was given to the young person to reflect on how they felt and behaved? What can be usefully learned?"*

- We should be mindful still and throughout of the following:
  1. What do we know about this child (what has happened)? What don't we know (what could happen)?
  2. It is simple enough; some youngsters are too powerful and aggressive and escalatory to hold safely?

3. What about the risks of misrepresentation and malicious allegation?
4. What will be the impact on the child, you, your colleagues and the wider school community?
5. Will it make matters worse? Will our actions electrify and damage others?
6. Who is around to help and support us? How capable and experienced are they?

The critical question for us is in all this and the one we hang on to amidst the hubbub and challenge and sometimes adrenaline triggering stresses the work can bring; is there a greater good if we do and a risk of greater harm if we don't?

There is always a powerfully focussing supplementary question we can apply throughout all our work: what would we want for our own child and then some because there is no greater responsibility than the care of someone else's...

#### **10. How do we promote good relationships and sustain a positive climate each day? What does it look like; what would you see if you spent a day with us?**

- The school day begins and ends with an almost forensic conversation about how best to deploy staff (and where practice has been strong or weak); how best to organise ourselves and this in a bigger picture always focussing our energies on and our people with the children and young people as our ethos and culture demands of us

*"We intelligently challenge and question all meetings and admin' and paperwork so only what is purposeful and helpful to the children and young people in our care is tackled and we focus our energies on teaching and caring.*

*We will then keep our best talent and practitioners with the children and young people and intelligently challenge too traditional notions of "leadership" and "career progression" to keep our best people working directly with our students."*

- We are big fans of what Basil Fawlty called "the bleedin' obvious" and so a warm welcome on arrival each morning and unlimited cereal and toast, tea and coffee (decaffeinated!) and milk and juice and a range of activities indoor and out are there to start the day positively and beginnings and transitions are critical in our setting .

- Younger and some more complex older children are discreetly but closely supported and guided with the majority moving freely into school and breakfast and then activities and finally to their tutor rooms for the day to begin: both approaches encourage and scaffold calm and goodwill.
- The team knows each classroom must embed a positive climate rooted in good relationships and a warm assertive style and equally that lesson content and teaching style must bend and flex to the needs and nuances of a very “nuanced” and complex student body and that relationships thrive and learning happens; when we as adults get this right and that good habits in adults and children embed something we call ritual, rhythm and routine and it is very powerful.
- They collect points for being kind and cooperative and engaging with their learning and these accumulate and they can select from a range of rewards including bespoke ones and all staff are encouraged to develop fun and engaging ways of tangibly rewarding the children and young people and celebrating the many good things they do.
- Most children and young people most of the time are in class and pretty content and productive as a result but some children sometimes are neither and what do we do? What happens?
- There are always experienced people to support these youngsters and invariably there is an offer of food or drink and some skilled but light touch listening and questioning and time in a range of spaces from available classrooms or often in practice the dining room for a cup of tea (our kitchen team are some of our best people and instinctively brilliant practitioners with the children) but there are a number small quiet spaces with comfortable seating and no doors that many children use habitually where they can reflect or ventilate or talk and most children return to class quickly and successfully.
- Some children are given “strategic capitulation” typically a distracting and ameliorating physical activity that works better for some than the less energetic but consistently effective have a cup of tea and a natter option and throughout there are opportunities for supporting staff to engage and to both support and challenge the young person.
- As the day unfolds it is roughly divided into three chunks of double periods; points are collected and accumulate for positive behaviours and offering access to rewards and activities with each “chunk” punctuated by an opportunity to access a range of activities or to recover learning and reflect on behaviour.



- The school always privileges the safe supervision and support of students and where this is secure and staffing allows breaks/play and lunch and tutor times can offer an opportunity for lost learning to be recovered or behaviour to be discussed and challenged; time to reflect on and put right and repair relationships, learning and behaviour.
- Some of our young people have faced and face very tough and poignant things and colleagues are quick to be flexible and offer support to distressed children if they have an established rapport and our school counsellor and ELSA lead will make themselves available outside planned interventions; in practice we know the children and young people seek out those they trust and respect and we will always try to facilitate this when a child is hurting and upset and get the best person, their person of choice to them.
- Although relatively rare we can encounter some pretty intense and angry behaviours sometimes where the children and young people become very heightened and dysregulated and we try to find the physical space and time in a prevailing supportive climate rooted in those good relationships to enable them to calm and recover mindful such episodes are distressing and unsettling for not just the child experiencing intense feelings but for those children who witness it.
- In this way we can deal fairly and promptly with the day to day difficulties and move youngsters on quickly to a fresh beginning.

### **11. The elephant in the room: what about challenging, risky and inappropriate behaviours?**

- We are not big fans nor users of punishment and the emphasis is on the space and time and kindness to reflect and recover and successfully return to class and to learning without any negative consequence.
- In all our work there must a strong sense and spirit of putting things right of repairing and recovering a “restorative” approach where the children and young people can reflect and learn how to behave.
- The school has few rules but rather a clear expectation we are “kind” to each other and that our notion of “Friendship” is about respect-empathy-forgiveness-compassion and that we model and uphold all these and apply them as a template to all that we do together; children and adults alike.
- That said behaviours outside our core values must always be skilfully challenged by all staff and graded intervention from supportive guidance and advice to restorative justice that can sometimes mean a fair consequence must result: without this the school community cannot be a just, stable and safe place.

- The school believes affirmation and praise a more powerful and persuasive influence than criticism and sanction but the former can only be meaningful and valuable when there are fair limits on, and reasonable and reasoned consequences for behaviour that is inappropriate and critically that damages the learning and happiness of the individual and their peers.
- We know too that if both challenge and consequence are necessary they will only be effective if they are delivered by adults who are reasoned and respectful in applying them and those same adults are and have been consistently and in our setting necessarily authentically and relentlessly generous in recognising and celebrating the innate worth and talent and efforts of every child and young person at every opportunity.
- If both teaching and support staff in class and those supporting beyond are confident their work has been sound (they have reliably applied the “change us to change them” mantra and been usefully self-critical and considered too the complexity and needs in the child) and that a young person has still been powerfully and unfairly challenging or more often persistently so at a low level to their detriment and to the detriment of other children then reasonable consequences are a natural outcome for example if you can’t abide by the rules of football and play safely then you can’t play football and this always in a spirit of what is restorative so these are the expectations and boundaries and if you follow them you can play football and this just pragmatic good parenting and for “football” think learning,
- Staff will be and are dogged in seeking a just and restorative outcome and this can be tough where youngsters escalate and throughout the focus is on supporting the young person to develop the greater self-awareness and self-control that appears in so many of their EHCPs: key too is developing an emerging and embedding sense of “win-win” outcomes where everybody’s dignity is promoted and the ability to compromise and move on...fresh starts.
- Because we use them sparingly and we privilege proactive best practice and positive reinforcement negative consequences are reasoned and few and must be led by the adult who is challenging and supporting the child. This is so any intervention-typically time spent addressing the issues and the lost learning -has that integrity that comes from being there as opposed to the lazy “arm’s length” taking of privileges or denial of activities (this can be done but we need to be with the child during those times) that alienates the children.
- If needed we will persist beyond the school day and the school assumes parental support in this without 24 hour notice because in our experience issues are best dealt with promptly so youngsters can then move on.

## **12. What guidance and steer do we give staff about our expectations and how to respond to complex and sometimes challenging behaviours?**

- In all our work there must be a strong sense and spirit of putting things right of repairing and recovering a “restorative” approach where the children and young people can reflect and learn how to behave.
- Do not feel the need to rush to judgements and decisions give yourself and the child time to consult and consider and reflect.
- Seek support from senior and experienced staff promptly as issues emerge to secure appropriate behaviour and outcomes at an early stage; do not rush to sanction but give lots of dignified routes to redemption including recognising and acknowledging previously positive behaviour and therefore a willingness to offer some “slack”.
- We know our best people relentlessly live out and model the values and behaviours they want to inculcate in the children and young people and that those values are rooted in that “friendship” that unpicked means we model and we work hard to personify the respect-empathy-forgiveness-compassion-protection that encourages and nurtures these qualities in the children.
- We do not run on a rule book but on reasoned judgements by the adults about what is fair and reasonable and “kind”. This hinges on mutual respect but the adults are in the end the disinterested referees who must win trust and respect by their fairness and good judgement over time , show a willingness to make unpopular decisions but equally demonstrate their obvious determination to be scrupulously fair; they decide.

But you must be credible in this...

- Please then be continually self-evaluative and suitably prepared so both any challenge and support is rooted in the student’s complex and genuine needs and/or challenging behaviour not because of a scruffy and uncared for classroom or an ill-prepared lesson or clumsy behaviour management on your part.
- Please do not apply consequences when responsibility lies with you (nothing is more destructive to the adult-student relationship) but learn from such incidences and seek to avoid repetition. You need to win the confidence and trust of your students so when you do apply sanctions they accept and respect them because they accept and respect you and trust your judgment.

- Do not panic if the child is obstructive or escalates matters further. Accept this and determine to pursue the matter quietly and fairly. Each school day offers the same opportunities for a student to engage reasonably and resolve and move on. Don't be rushed into confrontation and escalation. Give him time to comply. Give yourself time to reflect and plan
- Be present and engaged and authentic; notice and care about and acknowledge and affirm the children and young people's efforts and both their successes and honourable failures.
- When times are hard remind them of their many successes and honourable efforts and how much you value both those achievements and them as people: create and embed a culture of mutual respect and positivity to frame and support the challenging times; this will empower you.
- Reminding children of their successes and asking them to describe and reflect on and learn from them is very powerful and this in contrast to our human capacity for the glass to be half-empty so please be vigilant about your own subconscious negativity...
- A most successful strategy used by staff is the "wait and see approach" where previous successes are remembered and the next lesson or activity offers the student a chance to show goodwill and make real an apology; to restore and make good and what has been damaged.
- Use a light and supportive touch and reframe what the pupil may see as punitive as healing opportunities to deal with and resolve issues fairly and promptly.
- Although such judgements are tough to call please try to distinguish between inappropriate behaviours rooted in the genuine difficulties the child has faced and continues to wrestle with and wilful childish testing of boundaries and in the latter we still need to be asking why?
- Be prepared in our setting to go many extra miles for and with the children to compassionately challenge and resolve and repair regardless of hours or duties and be there when the critical post-intervention reflection and healing goes on.

### **13. There are some things we won't accept in our community...not "rules" but about values**

We will educate and support our children and young people in all these things and seek positive changes but if they persist our students put themselves at risk of fixed term and whilst very rare permanent exclusion and these are used not to punish but to protect others' dignity and worth and to keep everyone safe and throughout we must try to understand and ameliorate risks and secure healthier attitudes and behaviours ask what can we do differently or better to help?

Making other people feel or tangibly and seriously unsafe and unhappy and unable to learn and by other people that includes everyone in our extended school community and neighbourhood and in ways that are irrecoverable or we cannot reasonably make safe and children and young people will leave this school ideally and most commonly in a planned and agreed way but we will not rule out permanent exclusion.

- We will always challenge racism, homophobia, ableism and misogyny and any irrational unkindness and disrespect and hostility towards people because of who they are or where they come from or what they believe: difference and diversity are to be embraced and celebrated and people cared for and respected.

Prejudice and inequality are wholly incompatible with our core value of "friendship" and its compassion and kindness and we are all safer and happier by being explicit and clear and consistent in this. This means there are some "beliefs" we judge faulty and out of step with our core values and will not accept.

- Bullying physical or verbal or psychological that is serious and or persistent and unrepentant where the person feeling hurt and unsafe must be heard and supported and made safe.

Bullying is wholly incompatible with our core value of "friendship" and its implied compassion and kindness and we are all safer and happier by being explicit and clear and consistent in this.

- Whilst rare sometimes we can face levels of aggression and intimidation and destructiveness that it is simply not safe to experience or witness and whatever the root causes or the mitigating circumstances no child or young person or adult should attend any school or workplace and face behaviours that are frightening even traumatising both for those subject to the aggression and those witnessing it.

Of course we will work hard to help and to be supportive and preventative but some childhood experiences and their impact and consequences need insight and expertise and people and resources we do not have **and a new school or setting is needed.**

- Equally highly reckless and dangerous behaviours are rare but can happen and the risks they generate and emotional impact they have cannot be sustained unless they can be reliably softened

As described above we will work hard to help and to be supportive and preventative but if matters are judged irrecoverable or we cannot reasonably and quickly make them safe and children and young people will leave this school ideally in a planned and agreed way **but we will not rule out permanent exclusion** given necessary support and expertise and intervention in reality are often at best hard to secure and too often absent.

#### **14. We do have some rules that can look petty and are often unpopular but we'd like to explain...**

With vigilance pragmatism and persistence and creativity plus parental trust and support we can and do successfully navigate these risks but if they are persistent and impact other children again to protect the community not to punish the individual we could use fixed term exclusion to make matters safe.

- Mobile phones are not allowed unless you are an independent traveller to school on foot, bike or public transport and then the phone is handed in to the office on arrival (this works well)

Mobile phones are not needed and a distraction and their misuse can range from the irritating to the risky and the very risky with bullying and accessing corrosive material on the web all obvious and sensible reasons just to leave them at home; we are all safer and happier without them.

- Doing things that are unhealthy typically smoking but there have been occasions where substance misuse whilst very rare has happened and it is another one of those “bleedin’ obvious” ones where no good or responsible parent would allow or condone it.

These things have a very risky subculture where bullying of all kinds for example can thrive because they are by their nature secretive and furtive: we are all inarguably safer and healthier in their absence.

We ended the smoking sub-culture some years ago now and we will respond decisively and strongly to protect the children and promote their safety and will exclude if necessary to stop smoking and all its risks getting any foot-hold in our community and we are clear SEN does not justify concessions around smoking.

#### **15. And some housekeeping that just makes life easier for everyone but we need the help of parents and carers with these please.**

- The expectation is uniform is worn every day with the exception of year 11 students and when children are out and about doing things beyond school they can of course wear clothes suitable for the activity for example if they are at college doing building trades or going on a country walk or as has been the case this term horse riding.

The uniform code is simple: black sweatshirt; plain black or white polo or t-shirt and black trousers or tracksuit bottoms and we will always provide explanation and clarity before being punitive but recurrent challenges are around trainers that are not mostly black as they should be and children and young people wearing fashion hoodies and sweatshirts over their uniform and also trendy coats they don't need that they then refuse to remove.

- We provide everything the children need in school from freely available water, squash, juice, milk, tea and coffee (decaffeinated) and a range of healthy snacks are available all day and in all classes so only children who bring a packed lunch need a bag.

Common sense argues in a school where a significant minority of our children and young people can make poor decisions that we plan to prevent difficulties for example multiple bottles of water and juice brought into school daily and in the possession of the children will lead to mischief.

- We also have a large stock of outdoor clothing and rucksacks for rainy days and trips out so there is no need and we do not allow bags or rucksacks (these have been used to conceal inappropriate things) again with the exception of our independent travellers who may need them to carry their lunch and warm clothing and they again hand in their bags with their phones on arrival in school.

Like no bags we discourage personal belongings and do not allow gadgets because they are not needed and get damaged, broken and lost leading to conflict and upset.

Notable throughout is we rely upon the support and vigilance of parents and carers because they control and have responsibility for what their children wear and bring to school: that said we will always be patient and pragmatic and flexible for example we keep a stock of spare uniform and we will look to sort things out but persistent breaches of these expectations could lead to a short fixed term exclusion.

## **16. Managing possible fixed-term exclusion: working supportively and pragmatically with parents and carers**

FTE is still sometimes a necessary and appropriate step; a suitable response to issues that impact upon the health and safety, wellbeing and happiness of all members of the school community.

It is not applied to punish the excluded student but to support and give justice to those hurt by behaviour and give a strong message to the wider school community.

We must work hard and creatively and flexibly to prevent and avoid it because it can generate risk to wellbeing and safety and if it is applied we must be confident it can be done safely and supportively and carers and parents are able to supervise their children safely and without punitive economic consequence.

We need a way of working with families that enables us to do so co-operatively and supportively.

- We share known facts of any incident with a potential for FTE with parents quickly but with the caveat that complex cases may necessarily require further and careful investigation. Parents should therefore be promptly told one way or the other.
- In most cases (this may not always be possible) the staff members most closely engaged with and who witnessed any incident should speak with the families of students involved so events are promptly, reliably and fully understood
- The views of parents and children on events and our possible collective response must be explored, taken seriously and a consensus sought.
- Parents should trust staff and not subject them to informal cross examination or question the accuracy or truth of their accounts.
- If parents have a genuine concern about staff integrity they should raise this with the head-teacher and a meeting should take place because any reasonable and credible doubt about the truth or authenticity of staff reporting to and sharing with parents is most serious and should be investigated



- The school must take into account the domestic reality for families and be flexible about timings and timescales seeking to apply the shortest and fairest period of exclusion.
- Parents, particularly when dangerous violence, recklessness or criminality are involved, ultimately must accept that the school has the right to exclude unopposed and without appeal for up to five days.
- The school should use this power rarely and wisely and strive at all times to agree a period of exclusion that is brief and regarded as fair by all parties including the victim and his family also.
- If matters become contentious and agreement cannot be reached and in fact there is dispute and upset it is essential that a meeting is set up and any decision deferred until that face to face meeting can take place. We invariably understand each other better when we speak person to person, face to face. That meeting should seek to achieve agreement and consensus.
- In the absence of agreement the head-teacher will decide the outcome as she or he has the authority to do so. It may be that this will cause short term friction even contention but we hope over the longer term firstly such intervention will be rare and secondly over time such decisions will come to be regarded as necessary and reasonable.

The matter of permanent exclusion is set out in above

*“Making other people feel or tangibly and seriously unsafe and unhappy and unable to learn and by other people that includes everyone in our extended school community and neighbourhood and in ways that are irrecoverable or we cannot reasonably make safe and children and young people will leave this school ideally and most commonly in a planned and agreed way but we will not rule out permanent exclusion.”*

*“highly reckless and dangerous behaviours are rare but can happen and the risks they generate and emotional impact they have cannot be sustained unless they can be reliably softened...we will work hard to help and to be supportive and preventative but if matters are judged irrecoverable or we cannot reasonably and quickly make them safe and children and young people will leave this school ideally in a planned and agreed way but we will not rule out permanent exclusion.”*

**Professional characteristics of best SEMH practitioners:**

*Can you demonstrate and evidence them?*

1. Are safe and transparent and have integrity and humility; they admit their errors and recognise their frailties and seek support and guidance. *When did you last admit a meaningful professional error or seek and apply advice? When did your professional ethics and values influence your decision-making and actions? When did you last do a difficult thing because it was the right thing?*
2. Believe we must change to change the students: we own the behaviour and must seek to change it positively. They look **in** for solutions not **out** for blame. *What have you done recently to improve your practice? What was its impact?*
3. Reflect usefully on successes and challenges and seek solutions together to those difficulties they face: they are always optimistic never gloomy; the glass is always half full for them and challenges are opportunities, they make the clichés meaningful again. *What challenges are you currently facing and more significantly what are you doing about it?*
4. Are prepared to graft and be generous in their discretionary effort to achieve those solutions: they go the extra mile. *When did you last do something in your own time professionally?*
5. Dislike the behaviour but always like the child and are quick to forgive the children, their colleagues and themselves and move on positively. *Can you give a recent example of showing this generosity of spirit?*
6. Are wise to the worst outcome but expect the best at all times: they have “withitness”, they pay attention to the detail. *When did you last prevent a difficulty through anticipatory, proactive and “withit” behaviour; give an example?*
7. Are on-time, visible, rigorous, energetic and proactive throughout their work. Have you been late recently? When were you last early? *When did you last lead or were you in charge of something; an activity, a trip, a team? What have you done to be proud of and celebrate?*
8. They make policy and guidance real by living it. *Quote some even loosely and evidence its significant application in your work recently*
9. They are diligent and meticulous in their recording and administering: they value it and do it even though it’s often irksome. *When did you last make an entry in the school record keeping book? Do you record serious incidents promptly and fully? Do you read the school recording/communication documents frequently? What was the last entry you made or read? Quote it?*
10. Believe reward changes and consequence discourages and use both imaginatively the latter powerfully but in moderation and with restraint the former with sincerity and often. *When did you last reward or sanction a student? Describe its nature; was it imaginative, impactful?*

## What do we see and experience when we encounter...

### The outstanding SEMH teacher in the school community

1. Is ever present and has an outstanding attendance record: however good you are you are no good if you are not there.
2. They care about how they look and make an appropriate effort to be dressed appropriately and in context to show respect to the pupils: the PE teacher's trainers are clean; the DT teacher's apron too...
3. In all things they are the "extra-milers" who give discretionary effort freely because they have a strong pride in their vocation, in their profession, they are proud to be teachers because they authentically like and respect the children and young people and the students tell us so when asked.
4. However tough life may be personally and professionally they are "troopers" and present to the children always as committed and caring and enthused; their warmth and energy are contagious and adults and children feel better around them.
5. They go where the children are: they sit on the liveliest table at lunch; they ref the most fractious football game; they look to be useful; they offer themselves to colleagues; they never hide; they are true team players ☺
6. They engage with parents and carers and professionals with care and sometimes necessary caution but they are accessible and seek to build a positive network of grown-ups around the child.
7. They contribute intelligently to the diverse conversation formal and informal about best practice and they have a platform to do so and are seen as authentic and credible by their peers because they are reliably successful in their teaching

### Outstanding teaching in the SEMH classroom

1. The classroom environment hits visitors immediately the very best draw instant praise with its warmth and good order and care with attractive cared for displays and a tidiness and attention to detail.  
  
Resources and equipment are diverse, pertinent, attractive and well cared for
2. You feel their energy and warmth and presence as you enter a lesson and as a result you feel the security and calm in the children and young people.
3. Praise and affirmation and celebration are ever present but also credible and supported by constructive criticism and a warm polite assertiveness about behaviour
4. It is clear the children and young people feel they belong and have an affiliation to their teacher and their classroom and their school.
5. Strong and familiar expectations, routines, rhythms are all embedded creating a climate in which...
6. ...the children are engaged and enthused and there is an element of risk and fun in learning and subject knowledge robust supporting and extending with confidence and skill.
7. Assessment for learning can happen freely and deep down and children and young people know where they are and what to do next in their learning and can tell you.
8. Progress is good and increasingly outstanding and can be seen happening...
9. Support staff are embedded and confident in this context and an extension of the teacher and able to operate independently and under direction.

What do we see and experience when we encounter...	
...outstanding learning support in the school community	...outstanding learning support in the classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our best colleagues are ever present and has an outstanding attendance record: however good you are you are no good if you are not there.</li> <li>• In all things they are the “extra-milers” who give discretionary effort freely because they have a strong pride in their work, they are proud of their role because they authentically like and respect the children and young people and the students tell us so when asked.</li> <li>• However tough life may be personally and professionally they are “troopers” and model for the children always commitment and care and positivity; their warmth and energy are contagious and adults and children feel better around them.</li> <li>• They like their best teacher colleagues go where the children are: they sit on the liveliest table at lunch; they play football with energy and humour; they look to be useful; they offer themselves to colleagues; they never hide; they are true team players 😊</li> <li>• They listen hard and with compassion and are always alert to the children’s safety and wellbeing.</li> <li>• They ceaselessly seek to build their understanding of and respect for and rapport with the children and young people but also as they are so often the “glue” that holds the community together they do so with colleagues and as their confidence grows beyond to sharing with and challenging...</li> </ul> <p>Parents and carers and professionals of all kinds and they are humble but confident in their insights and sharing and folk listen because they are clearly good at the work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They contribute intelligently to the diverse conversation formal and informal about best practice and they have a platform to do so and are seen as authentic and credible by their peers because they are reliably successful in their work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The best LSAs relentlessly and skilfully build trust and rapport in the classroom with teachers and pupils as a result...</li> <li>• ...they have status, influence and are a “presence” in the classroom.</li> <li>• They are fluent in the expectations and rhythms, rituals and routines of the classroom and can assert them.</li> <li>• They have clarity about the learning objectives and goals and support them.</li> <li>• They are intelligently proactive and have sound judgment knowing when to intervene and when to hold, when to support when to assert and encourage greater independence in the child and they are always vigilant about the risks of dependency.</li> <li>• They are equally comfortable working under the direction of the teacher or using their growing insight and confidence to work autonomously and take the initiative and they move intelligently between the two.</li> <li>• <b><u>They are never passive</u></b> and if uncertain will speedily seek instruction if they need it.</li> <li>• As their confidence grows they not only work as a partner with the teacher but can challenge them and...</li> <li>• ...when necessary increasingly initiate and lead work in the classroom both in behaviour and learning.</li> <li>• In time they can lead small groups and purposefully cover classes as they develop and learn...</li> </ul>

professional standards	Best practice example Rob Dean and DoE	Wider pertinence and significance	What this could look like in a different discipline?
Personal responsibility and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rob led DoE through many risks and challenges and took total ownership and responsibility</li> <li>• He handled health and safety, wellbeing, CP, safeguarding, home school liaison and the specific learning and personal challenges DoE brings...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and safety, child protection, safeguarding, wellbeing these are your are our responsibilities.</li> <li>• It is tough leading in class on corridors in lunches, on the playground, in activities but the best staff regardless of status or rank do just that.</li> <li>• With responsibility and accountability comes the respect of peers and students and success.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the teacher who autonomously manages her class and thinks hard on how to do it better and responds with resilience and creativity to the challenges she faces.</li> <li>• It is the colleague who is always alive to risk and the children's wellbeing at all times and doesn't assume someone else is doing it.</li> <li>• Such people are widely valued and respected: Marilyn, Mike Muir, Leanne all gone all people who in their own way took "ownership".</li> </ul>
High expectation of the children and self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of DoE is innately challenging and worthwhile.</li> <li>• It demands a great deal from the adults leading and in our and this context made huge demands of Rob's energies and character with both emphatically celebrated by the end.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children need to feel a sense of value and purpose in the things they do but that can be spectacularly diverse from the physical demands of DoE to the intellectual challenge of algebra.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling GCSE and in an academic subject</li> <li>• Not dumbing down on content and risks in lessons: the teacher challenges themselves to deliver a testing syllabus or course that stretches them too...</li> <li>• There is an end product, something tangible is achieved whether DoE or GCSE or recently the first batch of IT success (thanks JC) or the appreciation of an audience (the DoE presentation)</li> </ul>
The humility and self-awareness to face up to things not going well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing and motivating the children proved hugely challenging as did the pupil combinations and "chemistry" Rob didn't hide from this even when matters tipped into crisis and he remained focus on succeeding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believing in and striving for success and not dumbing down and taking responsibility and seeking to overcome obstacles and lead the children through positive example has universal application and worth and is an essential characteristic of successful SEMH practitioners and more widely successful people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our measurably and consistently most effective colleagues across disciplines take responsibility and find a way look at Kevin's work always creative, pragmatic problem solving.</li> <li>• Our best teachers and support staff find a way to engage with and motivate the children and young people by developing their own practice and always striving to improve.</li> </ul>
The curiosity to understand more...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rob despite some huge challenges and really dispiriting moments where despondency even anger and resentment reasonable responses driven on by the bigger goal of success and commitment to the children came to understand and respond differently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That curiosity to understand the children and young people driven by a commitment to help them behave and learn and the humility and awareness to see how others are succeeding essential to be successful and absent in those who fail with SEMH youngsters because there's always a reason, an excuse to explain their lack of success and no drive to understand better.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at the examples of Carl, Wendy, Kat, Anne, Vicki, Judith all in very different places to where they started successful people are curious.</li> <li>• Look at Alyssa's ability to come to understand the most complex of learners or PTG build rapport with the most disaffected again driven by an engagement and curiosity to understand more and better.</li> </ul>
The drive and energy to make necessary changes and improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those of us familiar with the depth and breadth of risks and challenges and adversity Rob overcame to make DoE successful we know the drive and energy he invested and were and are hugely inspired by it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't bring me your problems bring me your solutions. Stop telling me why things can't be achieved but like Bill Yates how you are going to overcome them and be the "completer finisher" that delivers...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you reflected on how DJ has transformed vocational and alternative provision, do you know as described above JC has secured his first accreditation successes, have you admired Raz's stepping into the biggest shoes in school Mr Moore's...you get my drift and there are many more driven and determined and optimistic because you must be a doer in SEMH</li> </ul>

## What do our best people do to promote well-being in the children and young people?

- Authentically care for each other: we need essentially happy grown-ups to do the best for our young people.
- A comfortable, clean and welcoming place: which bits of school can you, can we, make better?
- Plentiful and good food: plenty to drink too and when you want it.
- Model the behaviours you want to encourage in the young people.
- Check-in with the children and young people: good to see you, how's life? And.. • Look out for them: how are things, how you doing? How can I help?
- Keep them in mind: take an interest in and know about their lives. How was your birthday? How is gran doing after her op'?
- Be present: give them your full attention and participate, do stuff with them!
- Be warm and affirming and notice and celebrate hard work and success but also those honourable failures we all learn from.
- Having fun: give them opportunities to enjoy learning and life.
- Validate don't judge: empathise and be curious, seek to understand them.
- Give them the words to express their feelings.
- I was just wondering: explore how things might feel by saying it out loud.
- Remember successes: when things are hard look back on the good times and get them to revisit and tell you about them. What did it look like?
- Fresh starts and glasses that are always half-full: the children need and deserve forgiving, optimistic and positive adults around them.

*Never look down on anybody unless you are helping him up. Jesse Jackson*

## **What do the best practitioners do that promotes and embeds a feeling of safety and wellbeing and happiness in the children and young people and so enables them to learn and grow as people?**

- They are alive and disciplined in privileging rhythms, routines and keeping boundaries consistent. They see and understand the benefits to paying attention to the detail.
- They listen authentically and find time to listen.
- Play and being actively engaged. Does wonders for relationship building and also provides a platform to explore, scaffold and educate when confrontation occurs. We get through it together.
- Validate feelings and explore emotions. They create a safe space to explore and validate.
- They are present – Both in actually being in work and being attuned in feeling what they feel day to day.
- See things through. Completer finisher, if we say it will be done it will be done. Be honest if you can't.
- They model the behaviour we want to see. Good behaviour & kindness is infectious also.
- They meet the basic needs. Food for an example. There is an understanding of why we need to meet these basic needs and how it has a positive effect on behaviour, happiness and learning. Life lone positive, healthy eating habits can be achieved. The fruit situation for example.
- The best practitioners have high expectations and are disciplined to keep them high. If we are motivated we keep CYP motivated. We find a way.

## **2. What sustains and promotes and embeds happiness and wellbeing and high motivation in us as people so we have the energy and commitment to do our best work?**

- Reflection together – It's a big part of our work but the group discussed how motivating and helpful it can be to reflect together. Learning and developing together. Share Ideas, use others successes.
- We also talked about experience and knowledge of the team. It feels good to be asked how you did that. What is it you do that he responds so well to?
- The small kindnesses we offer each other go a long way. "There is a coffee on the side for you" "You've been outside all day I'll take a turn". The positives knock on to the CYP we model when we offer these small kindnesses.
- Having someone to offload to, someone that listens. It's a tough job but we are all in it together.

- Knowing there are others you can call on if you need to. People willing to swap out if required or corridor support if the going is tough.
- Finding ways to get some variety. Sometimes we need a break from a group and sometimes it's remembering to get the group out and about.
- It's good to get away – The kindness shown to “share and go home” really helps after a busy, demanding day in our setting.
- Events and doing things together. Simply heading to the local on a Friday or something a little more planned like a monthly event.



Appendix 2

**Managing the risk of managing risk (health and safety):** looking after staff in our setting (the biggest risk to health and safety in our school is the student body and our most important and pressing health and safety work is done to keep them and us safe and cared for: we can only do that if we are cared for)

The risks to us...	Reconciling the need for safe and preventative and proactive high levels of staffing with staff wellbeing and morale
<p>In responding and managing risk we paradoxically create another risk to our own wellbeing as our work is innately risky, labour intensive and hugely emotionally demanding and draining and can be physically risky: plus there are the associated high and distressing risks in our sector for example physical assault and malicious allegation, suspension and investigation.</p>	<p><b>Hard work -high risk: these are a part of our work and like soldiers we cannot complain we are being metaphorically shot at as we chose to be “soldiers”...</b></p> <p><b>Emotional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work is honourable and profoundly worthwhile so value yourselves and each other as you do the children and young people and be proud and know you matter and that an unexpected bacon sandwich and orange juice and coffee or a handwritten card at Christmas mean that too and don't lose sight of the kindnesses offered you and be balanced and recognize the leadership team's (including governors) job is to both challenge and support.</li> <li>• Praise and encourage and support not only the children and young people but each other and be quick to forgive and move on and try to avoid being petty or political as the children demand so much from us unnecessary negative emotional demands on each are damaging and certainly a distraction.</li> <li>• Metaphorical and literal hugs have a place in our hugely emotionally demanding work and an arm around the shoulder and a kind word necessary and powerful.</li> <li>• Always speak up and ask for help as however skilled, resolute and experienced you are because this work will ambush you emotionally and you can suddenly feel overwhelmed and that is normal and okay and you deserve compassion and help and understanding...maybe you need to go off duty or go home...</li> <li>• It is okay to admit you cannot do everything so please prioritise always the safety and wellbeing of the children and that meeting can wait...we are a team maybe someone can help you?</li> </ul> <p><b>Practical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respite and breaks and preparation are necessary and an entitlement and so is offering that bit extra too so know your own strengths and limitations and be both healthily selfish and generous and negotiate within the boundaries of reasonableness and practicality the best rhythm to your working day for you day by day if necessary because demands and challenges shift and so do our abilities physical and emotional...keep sharing.</li> <li>• Seeking to reconcile financial good health with safe supervision but privileging the latter and if cornered by financial constraints and or uncertainty in current climate pupil numbers may have to be reduced to maintain good order and discipline and therefore health and safety.</li> <li>• Keeping meetings and paperwork to just the essential and statutory (even then strip it to the bone) and all the other distracting and wasteful stuff of bureaucracy that doesn't improve the service to the children ignore it or keep it to an absolute minimum and put the tangible invaluable business of high quality teaching and care above all other tasks.</li> <li>• Thinking and sharing and planning together day by day, session by session, lesson by lesson how to deploy staff to best and safest effect we know is our most powerful practical tool and a pragmatic, dynamic, flexible approach is essential so keep talking, sharing and planning together.</li> <li>• Organizing the school day and week in ways that break up key negative and risky student combinations and alliances and triggers amongst students and stops the mob mentality a constant risk in BESD work bedding in; the variety and stimulation of off-site specialist learning and the fun of social and cultural visits and activities are powerfully ameliorating and make the work more manageable and therefore safer for all of us.</li> <li>• Sometimes we can't cope and that is okay and we need help and the children and young people become too risky to safely manage and respite through FTE or a planned change of provision is sadly unavoidable as is seeking Police intervention in the immediate crisis.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3

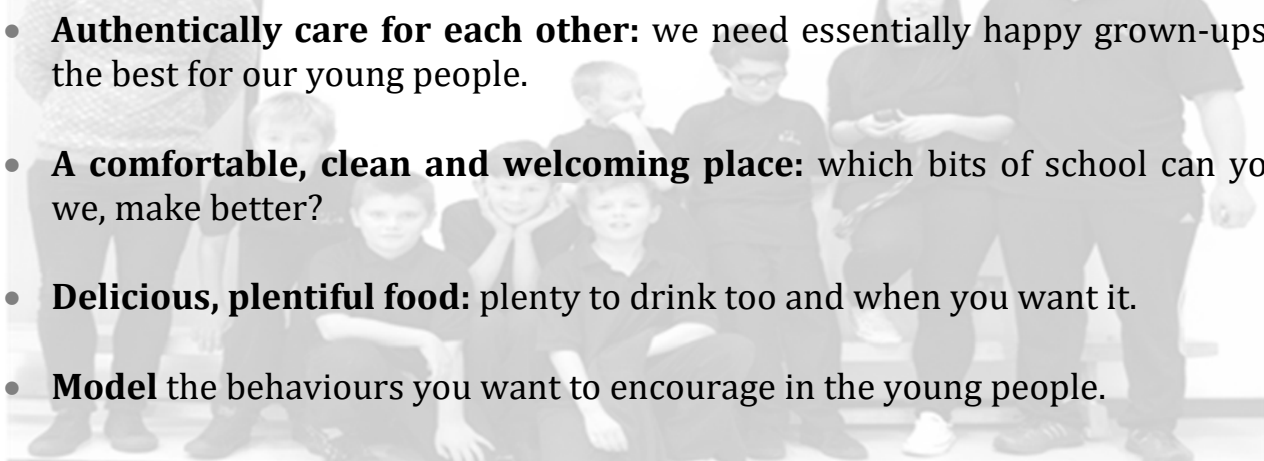
Student Risk	Managing that risk safely
<p>The student body by its nature as SEMH contains and presents a whole range of known and unknown (latent risk) and also emerging and shifting risks because being multiply and diversely risky is a core and common feature of the children and young people in our care</p> <p>There is also a risky “chemistry” in their interactions and relationships centrally with each other and all those they encounter from teachers through visiting professionals to delivery drivers and the neighbours....</p> <p>These risks shift and slide, rise and fall constantly in all the children as so many factors home and school can and do impact upon them</p> <p>Such potential for risk and difficulty can seem overwhelming and unmanageable; how can we, how should we respond?</p>	<p>Culture and ethos: bringing the right values and attitudes to our work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and apply the notion of personal responsibility for maintaining one’s own and the health and safety of others.</li> <li>• Understand too that we can only do what is reasonable and practicable about things we can reasonably anticipate.</li> <li>• A culture of no blame and one also where risk and its management are spoken of freely and frequently is essential</li> <li>• The application of dynamic risk assessment is critical; we are ever alert to emerging risk and take reasonable steps to manage; this key in that context of personal responsibility</li> <li>• Particular to our own school culture is the benchmarking against what we would want for our own children that is the highest levels of care and vigilance and protecting against becoming institutionalised and desensitized.</li> <li>• A culture of praise, affirmation, compassion and forgiveness that promotes good and therefore less risky behaviours in the children and young people.</li> </ul> <p>Rhythm and routine: making sure the framework and prompts for sharing risk and reflecting and acting are in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The daily accessing of the dedicated safeguarding email account and now CPOMs alerts as risks emerge and our responses set out...</li> <li>• The daily ritual of our morning briefing sessions in Simon’s room on the bell each morning Tue-Thu for the critical briefing and Mondays and Fridays for our more developed operational reflection and planning and the sharing of best practice respectively where every day the set agenda triggers sharing and discussion and plans for the safety and wellbeing of the children and the immediate operational risks and challenges plus any emerging burning issues.</li> <li>• We will ask every day what do we need to do reliably well, better and or differently to keep the children safe.</li> <li>• Whilst logistically more awkward because of staff working patterns we can and do regroup at the end of the day to share, reflect and plan and will continue to do so.</li> <li>• We have all accessed e-mail, text and mobile messages to share also and the conventional boundaries of the working day should not restrict our sharing and in practice we all often share significant insights, anxieties or practical operational information after the school day and then coalesce them at the following morning’s briefing</li> </ul> <p>A way of working: once the day begins the dynamic and shifting and surprising nature of our work needs thinking about and constant intelligent tweaking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once the working day begins we must be rigorous in our professional housekeeping and if the conventional work-place deals with emerging trip hazards then we must be alive to who steps off a taxi in a risky frame of mind intent on dispute or how events and consequent tensions and risks unfold as the day progresses and so our working day begins and continues as the children are the risk.</li> <li>• The “walkabout” system is critical with staff offering not just practical help but a reference point for sharing with the nominated in-charge a member of the SLT there specifically to provide the capacity to absorb, think about and act on emerging risk and difficulty from small operational tweaks to more significant interventions.</li> <li>• Related to this is the massive significance always of putting children and their supervision first, no trips to make tea no brief stop-overs at the staff room as it is exactly in these nooks and crannies of staff frailty and absence that the SEMH student can do most mischief and harm and is most at risk.</li> <li>• Being prompt, punctual and visible; where we should be, when we should be, all these are essential to safety in our setting as are simple practical things like having a charged walkie-talkie on the right frequency, a school mobile that is similarly charged and a brain switched to super vigilance mode that expresses and shares emerging risk freely</li> <li>• If the daily morning briefings with their set agenda and prompts for risk awareness and management provide structured talking and sharing and action then once the day starts our established, ongoing and multiple and diverse professional conversations are critical and it is in habitually, obsessively and in time instinctively sharing with each other every significant nuance of the children’s behaviours, state of mind and physical movements that we keep everybody safe</li> </ul>

*Never look down on anybody unless you are helping him up. Jesse Jackson*

## Barley Lane School

*Hard work, humility, kindness*

### Simple and doable but powerful ways to promote wellbeing

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- **Authentically care for each other:** we need essentially happy grown-ups to do the best for our young people.
  - **A comfortable, clean and welcoming place:** which bits of school can you, can we, make better?
  - **Delicious, plentiful food:** plenty to drink too and when you want it.
  - **Model** the behaviours you want to encourage in the young people.
  - **Check-in** with the children and young people: good to see you, how's life? And..
  - **Look out for them:** how are things, how you doing? How can I help?
  - **Keep them in mind:** take an interest in and know about their lives. How was your birthday? How is gran doing after her op'?
  - **Be present:** give them your full attention and participate, do stuff with them!
  - **Be warm and affirming and notice** and celebrate hard work and success but also those honourable failures we all learn from.
  - **Having fun:** give them opportunities to enjoy learning and life.
  - **Validate don't judge:** empathise and be curious, seek to understand them.
  - **Give them the words** to express their feelings.
  - **I was just wondering:** explore how things might feel by saying it out loud.
  - **Remember successes:** when things are hard look back on the good times and get them to revisit and tell you about them. What did it look like?
  - **Fresh starts** and glasses that are always half-full: the children need and deserve forgiving, optimistic and positive adults around them.