

Behaviour and Rewards Policy

including Positive Handling

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The North Herts Education Support Centre (NHESC) believes that all students have an entitlement to experience success. We take great care in providing an appropriate curriculum, for inappropriate curriculum breeds disaffection. Our curriculum is designed to improve the students' sense of self worth through the experience of success and the involvement in Centre life.

The staff at the Centre provide the students with a consistent environment with pattern and routine. The message is that we value the the students enough to provide a welcoming, bright, interesting environment, one in which they are able to feel safe and calm, and one in which they are able to succeed.

In order to achieve this, there needs to be strategies and measures in place to promote good behaviour and to deal with any negative behaviour.

The following are the strategies and measures we at the North Herts Education Support Centre attempt to have in place. These apply across all sites.

The start of the day

Members of staff are in the Social Areas to greet the students on arrival. This has a two-fold effect, in that it is a **friendly start** but it is also a **control strategy** designed to ensure the students enter the building in a calm and appropriate way.

The availability of breakfast, a game of pool or just a chat as the students arrive adds to the **welcoming approach** and helps to make the start of the day a positive one.

During this time staff are also **assessing the emotional state of the students**, attempting to determine whether there are any issues which are going to create problems for the students during the day at the Centre. If a student does become agitated by something then a one to one session takes place e.g. a member of staff talks with the student in an SLT office or in a quiet room.

During Lessons

The groups are small, no larger than six. This enables the staff to give each student the attention they need in order for them to achieve in the classroom. Many different strategies are employed in order to reduce the risk of behaviour problems in the classroom, including:

- Humour
- Flexibility of working methods
- Being fair and reasonable
- Awareness of other classrooms i.e. taking a difficult student or covering another group, if the need arises
- Use of behaviour management guide lines
- Specific planning for all groupings within the lessons

It is an expectation that students will remove hats and coats whilst in lessons. Mobile phones need to be on silent and not seen during lessons. If a student repeatedly takes their mobile phone out during a lesson, they will be asked to hand their phone in and it will then be returned at the appropriate time.

During Break Times

- The Centre provides a snack and a drink. Staff and students are encouraged to sit and eat together – there is an emphasis on good manners and appropriate behaviour in this setting
 - A whole Centre food policy promotes avoidance of ‘junk food’ or food and drink containing harmful additives
 - A variety of supervised activities can be provided to allow students the best opportunity to develop social skills.
 - During these times staff are interacting with students and supervising any activities. They attempt to **engage the students in conversation** and whilst doing so also **remind them of the general expectations** we have. See below;
- You sit next to the person to whom you’re talking i.e. no shouting across a room
 - No physical contact
 - Feet on the floor rather than on chairs or tables
 - Sit on chairs rather than tables
 - Sit up appropriately on the chairs rather than laying down across chairs
 - Food to be on a plate and drinks in a glass or mug, and the consumption of food and drink to occur in the dining area at both sites ideally whilst sitting at a table
 - Everyone is responsible for following kitchen rules and being responsible for their plates, cups etc, and leaving the kitchen in a clean, tidy state
 - Students can have their mobile phones out during break times.

During this time the students’ social skills are being developed, along with their **interactions with their peers, and with staff**; they are learning to interact in an appropriate way. The staff are using this time to not only **develop the students’ social skills** but also to become aware of any whispers of bullying, of drugs or any other **issues that need monitoring and addressing** with the students.

At the end of social time, students are dismissed group by group and are taken from the social area to their lessons by the teacher and support staff. Whenever students go up to lessons or come down, members of staff strategically place themselves along the route in order to reduce the risk of incidents occurring.

The Students

Right from the start at the student’s Admissions Meeting, the emphasis is on partnership and a community feeling. This is promoted by giving the students responsibility and emphasising ownership of one’s actions. This focus on responsibility for one’s actions is always emphasised and celebrated when a student has been successful. Their responsibility towards the running of the Centre is enmeshed in the daily routine and is overtly apparent in the Student Council. At the Student Council the students have the opportunity to discuss any issues or queries they have or changes they wish to make to the running and organisation of the Centre.

Partnership is evident in the Centre Code of Conduct, as it applies to staff as well as students; first name terms are used and the staff treat students as young adults rather than the traditional ‘pupil - teacher’ relationship. All these approaches are positive strategies in managing the behaviour of the students as are the high expectations that we set.

Other Systems and Procedures to Promote Positive and Appropriate Behaviour

At the NHESC the students have an increased sense of autonomy (under close supervision). All staff are trained and qualified in “Herts Steps” principles – including de-escalation techniques. There are many procedures in place that help promote appropriate behaviour;

- Students can be taken to a one to one room to discuss their behaviour; so as not to have the discussion in public
- Records are kept following each lesson in order to monitor the student’s progress and behaviour.
- Behaviour targets are negotiated with students and recorded in their ‘Student Passport’.
- Regular contact is made with parents/carers through phone calls, letters and home visits
- Staff discuss students continually, particularly at the end of the day, when daily notes are written up, issues can be dealt with immediately and strategies agreed
- During weekly staff and Tutor Team meetings major issues can be discussed in depth, and their decisions on strategies can be disseminated to all staff
- An incident book/log is kept plus a termly monitoring sheet
- Certificates are awarded for attendance, punctuality, completion of work units where requested by curriculum leads, and special events/achievements
- Trips and special events encourage community feeling and the partnership between student / student and student / staff.
- Students are supported and supervised from arrival to when they leave the Centre premises.
- Parents/carers are contacted daily over non-attendance and about any behaviour issues and additionally and very importantly, when a student has been successful
- Students may move groups if staff feel it would help a student’s behaviour within a particular group
- Alternative timetables may be used for a short period of time or it may be necessary to move a student to an alternative programme with a higher staff to student ratio (moving to a smaller garden in Herts Steps parlance)
- Students are encouraged to talk with whichever member of staff they feel most comfortable
- A positive telephone call needs to be made at least each half term to every parent/carer emphasising a particular aspect of a student’s improvement in either behaviour or attitude to work, and the call noted in the student’s daily notes.

Behaviour Management

We always attempt to use positives in our behaviour management, but there are occasions when a sanction is the most appropriate action. Strategies we use include;

- Asking a student to leave the room if a student does not react well to initial behaviour management in a classroom
- Calling a member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) if a student refuses to move or leave a room
- SLT will ask them to leave the room, if they refuse then there are several strategies that are used frequently
 - the student is spoken to individually in an attempt to persuade them to do as asked

- a flat hand can be placed gently on an arm or back in order to indicate that we really need the student to do as asked and leave the room
- the student is asked not to behave in that way and reminded that they do not need to as they are better than this
- If strategies such as the above do not result in the student doing as asked and leaving the room, then the rest of the group are asked to move.
- Parents are contacted by telephone regarding serious behaviour issues, and the student may be sent home. For more serious incidents, a reintegration meeting will be held before the student returns.
- Behaviour warning letters are sent home if students persistently behave in a negative manner.

Managing Inappropriate Behaviour

The following may need to be employed when a student fails to respond positively to the range of behaviour management techniques that are in place at the NHESC;

Herts Steps Principles De-escalation of Unacceptable Behaviour

(See also the NHESC Restrictive Physical Interventions protocol – Herts Steps techniques). All staff are trained and qualified in “Herts Steps” principles – including de-escalation techniques. If necessary the correct use of these Local Authority approved principles for restraints and debriefs will be used.

Use of Positive handling

All school staff have the legal power to use positive handling. This should only be used as a last resort and for the following purposes;

- To prevent a student from committing a criminal offence (this applies even if they are below the age of criminal responsibility)
- To prevent a student from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a student from causing serious damage to property (including their own property)

There is no legal definition of “positive handling”. However, there are two relevant considerations:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it
- The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent

Legal defence for the use of force is based on evidence that the action taken was:

- Reasonable, proportionate and necessary
- In the best interest of the young person

Occasionally physical intervention can be used to prevent students causing excessive disorder and distress to others. If there have been serious incidents involving the use of force, all relevant records will be kept and Parents/Carers will be informed.

Exclusions arising from Extreme Incidents

Where a student is acting in a way that is out of the control of the Senior Leadership Team and posing a health and safety concern and/or involved in behaviour which includes such aspects as;

- theft,
- assault,
- threatened violence or the endangering of life,
- having taken or in possession of illegal drugs, harmful substances or other such equipment linked to drug use,
- and other similarly serious offences.

These would normally result in police involvement and could lead to permanent exclusion from the North Herts Education Support Centre.

Fixed Term Exclusion

A student may be excluded from the Centre for a fixed term period from 1 – 45 school days in any school year. This sanction can only be authorised by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.

Before a student can return to the Centre following fixed-term exclusion, parents/carers must ideally, bring their son/daughter to a reintegration meeting.

At the reintegration meeting the student will be encouraged to accept responsibility for his/her actions and be willing to discuss how he/she will try to improve. If the student has abused a member of staff he/she must have a restorative meeting to resolve any residual issues. He/she will not be permitted into lessons until both have been completed.

The student could then be placed on report for a period of 2 weeks to monitor his/her behaviour. It could also be the case that it is decided to transfer the student to a different programme within the Centre. Although it is highly unlikely, if a student is excluded for 5 days, we would provide education from the 6th day and this would be either to place the student on another of our programmes or to provide a tutor to teach them on a one-to-one basis.

Permanent Exclusion

(see “Hertfordshire County Council guidelines document on exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and Education Support Centres”).

Only the Headteacher or, in absence, the Deputy Head Teacher may approve a permanent exclusion. This would be done in accordance with Local Authority guidelines.

To Conclude

The ethos of the North Herts Education Support Centre emphasises the partnership, community spirit and a sense of people working together towards a common goal as we attempt to assist the student in gaining the ability to **manage their own behaviour**.