

## Behaviour and Exclusions Policy

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## 1. The Context

The Ambitious Approach to education, applied in Ambitious College, requires all policy and practice to afford our learners with dignity, compassion and respect. Our Ambitious Approach is centred around improving the quality of life of autistic young people while they are in our settings and ensuring this quality of life continues into adulthood. It is based upon a person's indisputable rights to be:

- treated with dignity and compassion
- valued
- listened to
- supported to have the best quality of life possible
- empowered to make choices and decide on how they want to live their life.

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

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) Policy
- Debriefing Policy

## 2. Our Principles

- Ambitious College promotes college wide Positive Behaviour Support (PBS); providing the right support at the right time. We teach our learners new skills to minimise behaviour that challenges and seek for our learners to engage in these new skills because they improve their life/make life interesting/meaningful for them.
- For some learners we will also pay regard to function-based interventions, motivation and reinforcement.
- We understand that behaviour that challenges has a communicative intent.
- Where RPI is required it will only be used as a last resort; where a learner is putting themselves or others at risk and all other non-restraints have proved to be unsuccessful. It must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and must never be used as a punitive measure.
- We are committed to making learning motivating and engaging. We carefully monitor attendance and put systems in place to support learners and their families if attendance falls below the required target. This will often include working with external agencies.
- We are committed to a lasting reduction of restrictive practices and we will always use the least restrictive practice possible.

We want to understand learners' behaviour and will use the principles of behaviour analysis to do this. How we support the learners will be based on this understanding and will be detailed in Behaviour Support Plans (BSP's). All staff who support the learner will contribute to these plans, as well as the learner themselves, whenever possible. We recognise and respect everyone's individuality and will support learners based on their individual needs. This means we will support different learners differently.

Staff at all levels, and in all roles, will have the necessary skills and competencies to implement PBS. Individuals will need varying degrees of knowledge around behaviour so we will use everyday language that everyone understands.

The Leadership Team will have key roles in implementing PBS and maintaining a PBS culture; they will support and coach staff, assuring their competency to follow the ethos and values of the PBS Frameworks, and modelling excellent support always.

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### 3. Positive Behaviour Support Procedures

#### 3.1 Our values

- During all interactions we will maintain dignity and respect for each other. Staff behaviour will reflect and model our values.
- All staff will role-model appropriate behaviour at all times, as well as coach others in this area.
- We will focus on increasing quality of life by teaching appropriate replacement behaviours to decrease behaviours that challenge.
- We will reduce the use of restrictive interventions. Physical interventions will always be used as a last resort and we will always use the least restrictive practices possible. All restrictive practices will be audited, reviewed regularly and BSP's will include a restrictive practice reduction strategy.

#### 3.2 Quality of life

- Quality of life means teaching new skills to maximise independence on an individualised basis. Additionally, general well-being, life satisfaction, physical health and happiness are key elements for consideration.
- Learner voice is a fundamental to quality of life and we will be proactive in promoting it
- Improving quality of life will be the focus of all interventions and detailed in BSP's.

#### 3.3 Participation

- All learners and staff will be involved in maintaining a culture of PBS.
- Family members and other significant individuals, including stakeholders, will be active participants in embedding our PBS values for the learner.

#### 3.4 Interventions to support learners

- Within the PBS model there are 3 tiers of support.  
**Tier 1** supports apply to all learners and supports prosocial learning and activities. It is referred to as the universal offer.  
**Tier 2** supports are “targeted” interventions that support learners who are not responding to the tier 1 supports alone.  
**Tier 3** supports are “intensive” interventions who help learners who have not responded to the tier 1 or 2 supports. Tier 3 supports are highly individualised and specialised interventions based on individual need and learning history.
- In order to check that the BSP is working we will collect on-going data which will be analysed. If these data show that the plan is not working the Transdisciplinary Team will meet and change it.

#### 3.5 Staff development

- A portion of the training for all staff, will be based on our PBS competency framework and Autism Education Trust (AET) standards<sup>1</sup>.
- PBS leaders across the establishments will provide ongoing support for staff to ensure that they are competent to follow the PBS framework and any Behaviour Support Plans.
- Staff will have opportunities to reflect on practice and to learn outside of formal training events, including debriefs and team meetings.
- Leaders will also ensure that staff are appropriately supported, in terms of having their emotional support needs met.
- Any de-escalation and/or physical intervention training will come after PBS induction training, must be in-line with a PBS approach and must be clearly seen as the reactive element of a PBS approach.

<sup>1</sup> AET colleges autism standards [www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/shop/colleges-standards-shop/](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/shop/colleges-standards-shop/)

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- Staff will be given clear guidance in the use of unplanned restrictive intervention in an emergency.
- Leaders will access PBS professional development through British Institute of Learning Disability (BILD) and other leaders in the field of PBS.

### 3.6 Recording and data collection

- A range of data (including behavioural incidents and the use of restrictive practice) will be collected across the organisation on BehaviourWatch and reported to the Senior Leadership team, Governing Bodies and Education Committee on a regular basis so that decisions can be made based on these data.
- Staff will be trained in how and what to record.

### 3.7 Debriefing /post incident support

- Learners and staff will receive emotional support following a behavioural incident.

## 4. Relevant Guidance and legislation

- [BILD guidance consultation](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [Department for Health Positive and Proactive Care: reducing the need for restrictive interventions](#)

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## Specific to Ambitious College

### Audit, review, restrictiveness check & authorisation

Sometimes challenging behaviours occur that can place the safety of the learner and/or others in danger. Behaviour Support Plans (BSP) detail reactive strategies that staff must follow, should these occur. These are generally implemented in the sequence of least to most intrusive reactive strategies, unless specific risk patterns have been identified.

Where less intrusive (i.e. non-physical) reactive strategies have been unsuccessful in redirecting the challenging behaviour, staff may need to use physical interventions in order to keep the learner or others safe. This will require staff to use interventions they have been trained in, as prescribed in the learners BSP and Risk Assessment for Challenging Behaviour. Physical intervention strategies should only be used as a last resort where a learner is putting themselves or others at risk.

Ambitious College staff will:

- follow the strategies agreed and set out in the BSP
- conduct themselves in a calm and professional manner
- not unnecessarily draw attention to the challenging behaviour
- use preventative strategies based on person centred approaches and positive behaviour supports
- give learners an opportunity to engage in calming techniques and avoid confrontational situations where possible
- communicate clear instructions to learners, which are followed up as necessary
- review environmental structure of the classroom, or other location of the learner and adjusting it to their needs where possible
- Where appropriate remove learner from the immediate environment to reduce risk to their dignity and safety, and that of others.
- Ambitious college does not restrain learners in ground holds or in prone face down position, if staff see this practice, they should immediately report this to the Head of College.

### Criteria for Tier 2 and 3 support levels, how this will be developed (including stakeholder and learner participation) and what details this will include:

PBS has been embedded at Ambitious College since its inception. A detailed framework of support offered to learners follows.

**Tier 1** supports are available to all learners throughout the day from all staff and across all college environments. Tier 1 consists of a collection of preventative, proactive strategies that focus on developing a general atmosphere of support by building rapport and trust between learners and staff so that young people can access from the teaching and learning opportunities presented at Ambitious College. An example of a Tier 1 support for behaviour is the whole- college 'shout out' session to acknowledge learner and staff accomplishments.

**Tier 2** supports are for learners who require more support than Tier 1 offers to fully access the college curriculum, community programmes, and employment experiences. In Tier 2 support, group interventions are employed to further support learning and behaviour. For example, a learner may benefit from group social skills building sessions lead by a teacher in **addition to Tier 1** general supports to improve appropriate social interactions.

**Tier 3** supports are **provided in addition to Tier 2 & Tier 1** support for learners with significant support needs. Tier 3 interventions are delivered individually and directly between one learner and one (or more) staff. A learner may receive individualised and intensive interventions from a Speech Language Therapist to increased communication skills focussed on social interactions (**Tier 3**), for example. This learner would continue social skills group work (**Tier 2**) and receive general supports, such as acknowledgement of individual progress in college 'shout outs' (**Tier 1**).

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## **Who is responsible for development, implementation, and review of the BSP?**

All learners have BSP, some more detailed than others. A more detailed BSP defines the target behaviour(s), provides details of how to monitor the occurrence of the behaviour, and gives detailed descriptions of the procedures used to decrease the challenging behaviour and increase the appropriate functionally equivalent alternative replacement behaviours.

To ensure that BSP are accessible to our learners, and those supporting them, one-page profiles are written with the learners that outline the key information in the Behaviour Support Plan as a 1-page visual summary but is much more accessible and is easily transferable between environments.

The BAs are responsible for developing the BSP. They will seek out information from the learners, the trans-disciplinary team around the learners (Allied Health Professional's, Qualified Teachers, Class Teacher, Learning & Behaviour Supports, and Senior Learning & Behaviour Support) and other people who are familiar with the learners and their behaviours that challenge as a part of the functional behaviour assessment process. The BA team will also seek out clinical advice and support from other professionals, where necessary. BSPs are reviewed every six-months and as necessary, i.e. as interventions are changed, added or removed.

All BSP should have targets towards decreasing challenging behaviour levels/frequency/rate as outlined in their BSP. This should also include help criteria to inform when staff need to notify their BA that the BSP needs to be reviewed. This process will highlight when a BSP requires more than a six-monthly review and the above-mentioned steps will be repeated to identify where amendments to the BSP are required.

## **Staff training, including induction training**

All line managers in Ambitious College hold responsibility to ensure that staff supporting learners complete appropriate training, e.g. PBS Competency Framework, Person Centred Approaches, and individualised learner inductions (T1-3) for Learning and Behaviour Specialists (LaBS). The delivery of training can be supported by Senior LaBS (SLaBS) where appropriate

## **Details of data collected, reporting procedures and analysis/review process**

The outcome of a PBS approach should be that the learner has an improved quality of life. This should be evident in many ways, such as in his or her relationships, levels of independence and in the choices available to him or her in work, leisure and community (including beyond college). The One Page Profile, Functional Assessment, BSP and Individual Learner Plans (ILP) document the PBS approach and prescribe consistent support strategies for staff to follow. This is created and reviewed in collaboration with the full TDT, with the Behaviour Analyst leading on Functional Assessment and BSP.

## **Range of support that will be provided, when, what and how.**

PBS is a means of supporting an individual's behaviour using proactive and positive strategies. The PBS approach in Ambitious College entails:

1. Person-Centred Supports: All learners in the college are supported using person-centred strategies informed by the learner. That is, college staff uses information about what works best for them, what's important to them etc. incorporated into their college day and curriculum. In supporting learners in a way that is preferential to them and suited to efficiently meet their needs it is anticipated that the need to engage in behaviours that challenge is diminished. The features of a learner's person-centred approaches will be documented in their One-Page Profile.
2. Functional Assessment: Where behaviours that challenge do occur, a Behaviour Analyst will complete a Functional Assessment to identify why this behaviour is occurring (what purpose does it serve?). Information is gathered pertaining to the definition or description of the behaviour, patterns in occurrence such as frequency, duration, time or location of occurrence, what happens before the behaviour in question and what happens afterwards.

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The Behaviour Analyst will gather details from the learner where possible, in observations, using questionnaires, and in discussion with those who know the learner well. The outcome of the Functional Assessment informs the following components of a BSP.

3. Proactive Strategies: Minimising the likelihood of the behaviour occurring through proactive strategies. This encompasses environmental changes, person-centred timetables, consideration of the individuals' health and wellbeing needs, and other measures relating to quality of life.
4. Skills Development: The learner is supported to learn 'replacement skills' that serve the same purpose as the behaviour that challenges. Therefore, over time, the learner will be supported to engage in alternative behaviour patterns that should minimise the need for them to engage in the behaviour that challenges.
5. Reactive Strategies: The focus of a reactive strategy is to keep the learner and others safe if the behaviour does occur. This may be achieved through verbal feedback, environmental changes, redirection tactics, etc. If all non-physical reactive strategies have been proved ineffective physical intervention might be needed as a last resort.

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## Exclusions

**Ambitious about Autism does not use exclusion as a punishment, as we recognise that our learners are not able to comprehend that the exclusion is a consequence of their actions.**

### Introduction

At Ambitious College we believe that our learners best learn, thrive and achieve in a positive, ambitious, nurturing environment where all members of our college community feel safe and supported in their day to day participation in College life.

Often young people are placed in our College following a breakdown in the previous setting and sometimes as a result of exclusion. As such some of our young people and their families have experience of exclusions before they reach us.

The Department for Education guidance explains that young people with special educational needs (SEN) and looked after children are especially vulnerable to the impacts of exclusions. The advice to leaders is that, as far as possible, they should avoid permanent exclusions.

It is therefore all the more important that learners and their families are aware that although the Head of College retains the power to authorise fixed-term and permanent exclusions, the decision to exclude, whether for a fixed term period or permanent is a very serious consideration and in normal circumstances will only be used as a last resort when a range of other strategies has been exhausted. Only the Head of College or, in his/her absence, a member of the college senior leadership team acting with the authority of the Head of College can exclude a learner.

Excluded learners should be enabled and encouraged to participate at all stages of the exclusion process, considering their age and understanding.

### Policy summary

All children have a right to education. A decision to exclude a learner on a fixed term or permanent basis will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and only when all alternatives to exclusion have been implemented and exhausted.

A decision to exclude a learner for a fixed term might be considered as the last resort when:

- Serious and repeated incidents have taken place that have led to staff injury and hospitalisation.
- Allowing the learner to remain in college would seriously harm the education or welfare of other learners.
- A 'cooling off' period is considered essential for the learner and/or time over and above what can reasonably be expected within the normal responsibilities of teaching or facilities staff is required in order to reorganise rooms, repair and make safe property damage, adjust teaching arrangements or to prepare new materials.

A decision to exclude a learner permanently would only be considered in very rare and exceptional circumstances and only when all alternatives to exclusion have been implemented and exhausted. These might be:

- Where allowing the learner to remain in College would seriously harm the education or welfare of the learner or others in the College.

The decision to permanently exclude is an acknowledgement by the College that it has exhausted all available strategies for supporting the learner.

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### The 3 stage approach:

To avoid the need for exclusion the College initiates three stages of support and recording prior to any fixed-term or permanent exclusion. The only exception being when the impact of one incident is so severe that an immediate decision to exclude on a fixed-term basis is required in order to avoid serious harm to the education and welfare of the learners or others in the college.

#### Stage One:

Staff working with the learner observe (or feel) that there may be an escalation of behaviour that, without further targeted intervention, might lead to circumstances where a fixed term or permanent exclusion may be the only action available.

Reporting and responding to Stage One concerns:

- Internal reporting of the incident(s) to the Leadership using BehaviourWatch. It should be noted that email alone is not considered sufficient communication with the Leadership Team when a Stage One concern is being raised.
- Staff use the Incident/Accident software to report what management action is taken in response to the incident. Data is analysed to identify trends or patterns to the incidents. This may include reasonable adjustments such as changes to the behaviour plan, additional staff training, a review of the individualised curriculum and programmes or adaptations to the environment.
- Parents/carers are informed of the actual incident(s) via the home-college book or their preferred method of receiving information from College.
- Key staff (Teachers, Senior Behaviour Analyst) alert Senior Leadership Team (specifically a member of Senior Leadership) that a Stage One concern has been raised. Advice is sought from the Head of College around alternative behaviour support strategies.
- Key staff ensures the Assistant Head (PWDB) is informed and involved in planning support for the learner.
- Support is offered to both monitor and develop strategies to overcome the issues. The learner's BSP is revised if appropriate.

Parents/carers are notified by a Senior Leader of the actions being taken and the timeframe within which improvements are expected to be observed. Parents/carers are advised that these are being implemented as an alternative to exclusion. Where there is concern as a result of persistent or repeated incidents of a similar nature, it should not be a surprise to parents/carers that the College is implementing alternative to exclusion.

#### Stage Two:

Reporting and responding to Stage Two concerns:

- An internal discussion involving the College Senior Leadership Team is held to explore further strategies (e.g. whether to agree a fixed-term intervention of an increased staff ratio, or a fixed-term intervention of a learner receiving individual teaching in a separate space).
- Parents/carers are contacted in person and subsequently in a letter written by the Head of College informing them that the behaviours that challenge are continuing and that the strategies being implemented are not having the desired effect. Parents/carers are advised that should further strategies fail to have a positive effect, a 'Case Conference' will be held in College to discuss the matter.

#### Stage Three:

- Staff working with the learner observe (or feel) that the escalation of behaviour support and internal strategies implemented thus far have failed to positively affect the behaviour within the time period agreed at Stage Two and that without further targeted intervention, might lead to circumstances where a fixed term or permanent exclusion may be the only action available.
- A 'Case Conference' is called by the Head of College. The Case Conference should involve the parents/carers, staff working with the learner as appropriate and the Head of

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College. A letter is sent to the Local Authority (LA) informing them of the Case Conference and the details of the issue and inviting them to attend should they wish to.

- The key objective of the Case Conference is to determine whether it might be possible to change the behaviour of concern or whether a fixed-term exclusion would be appropriate.

A permanent exclusion may not be given at Stage Three whilst waiting for a Case Conference to be organised.

### **Unlawful exclusions**

It is unlawful to exclude a learner or increase the severity of an exclusion for non-disciplinary reasons such as:

- The learner having additional needs or a disability that the college feels unable to meet
- Academic ability or attainment
- The learner failing to meet specific conditions before he or she is reinstated following a fixed-term
- The actions of the child's parents/carers (Paragraph 12, DfE guidance 2012)

When deciding whether to exclude a learner the Head of College must consider its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Colleges must not discriminate against, harass or victimise learners because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation; because of pregnancy/maternity; or because of gender reassignment. The Head of College must ensure that all College policies and practices do not discriminate against learners by unfairly increasing their risk of exclusion.

'Informal' or 'unofficial' exclusions such as sending a learner home to 'cool off' or reducing the length of a learner's day in College should be only as a last resort. Any exclusion of a learner, even for short periods of time, must be formally recorded.

### **Fixed term exclusion**

A decision to exclude a learner for a fixed term will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. These might be where:

- serious and repeated incidents have taken place
- allowing the learner to remain in college would seriously harm the education or welfare of other learners
- a 'cooling off' period is considered to be essential for a learner or learners and/or time is needed to reorganise the classroom, teaching arrangements or prepare new materials, in the context of adapting the college environment in order to continue to meet the learner's needs and where the necessary time to do this is over and above what can be carried out within the normal expectation on teaching staff.

Before any decision to exclude for a fixed term is reached the Head of College will consider all the relevant facts in the context of the college's policies for behaviour, safeguarding and child protection of children and vulnerable adults and equal opportunities and consult with colleagues. A fixed-term exclusion will not take place without prior discussion with parents/carers about the issues that have led to considering the exclusion and the implementation of the 3 Stage process outlined above.

The length of the exclusion must be fixed for a precise period, and reasons for the exclusion given in a letter within one College day. Usually the parent/carer will be informed by telephone on the day of the exclusion by the Head of College.

The maximum amount of time for which a learner can be excluded is 45 days in any single College year.

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## **Permanent exclusion**

A decision to permanently exclude a learner would only be considered in very rare and exceptional circumstances and only when the three stage process has been completed and exhausted. These might be

- in response to serious breach, or persistent breaches of the College behaviour policy **and**;
- where allowing the learner to remain in college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the learner or others in the college

Before any decision to permanently exclude is reached, the Head of College will take account of any contributing factors that are identified after a serious incident of behaviour that challenges have occurred. These might include where a learner has suffered a bereavement, has been subject to bullying or where their needs beyond college have been identified as not being met.

Behaviour that challenges can be an indication of unmet needs. Where the college has concerns about a learner's behaviour it will try to identify whether there are any causal factors and intervene early in order to reduce the need for a subsequent exclusion. In this situation the college will give consideration to a multi-agency assessment that goes beyond the learner's educational needs.

The Head of College will consider all the relevant facts in the context of the college's policies for behaviour, child protection and equal opportunities and consult with colleagues. It is highly unlikely that any permanent exclusion will take place without a history of discussion with the learner's parents/carers and LA. The decision to permanently exclude is an acknowledgement by the college that it has exhausted all available strategies for supporting a learner.

Where a permanently excluded learner has an EHC Plan, the LA must ensure that an appropriate full-time placement is identified in consultation with parents/carers. Parents/carers retain their right to express a preference for a college should they wish their child to attend or may make representations for a placement in any other college. The DfE guidance clarifies that the placement does not have to be full-time if the learner's EHC plan indicates that the maximum number of hours' education per week should be less (paragraph 42 and 43 of DfE guidance, 2012).

## **Management of a permanent or fixed period exclusion**

### Notification

Except in very rare circumstances a permanent exclusion will be planned. Parent/caers and LA representatives will be informed well in advance through their involvement in meetings to discuss prior steps and any on-going management issues. Any exclusion must be treated in the strictest confidence.

If permanent or fixed term exclusion is considered necessary the Head of College must inform the learner's parents/carers and the LA immediately, ideally by telephone followed up by a letter explaining the circumstances. When the parent/carer must be notified in writing depends on when the learner is excluded.

- Where the learner is excluded at the end of the afternoon session and the exclusion takes effect from the next college day, notice must be given before the start of that day;
- Where the learner is excluded in the morning session and the exclusion takes effect from that afternoon, notice must be given before the start of the afternoon;
- Where the learner is excluded in the afternoon session and the exclusion takes effect that afternoon, the notice must be given by the end of the afternoon session.

Notices must be in writing and must state:

- for a fixed period exclusion, the precise period of the exclusion;
- for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is a permanent exclusion;
- the reasons for the exclusion;
- the date of the commencement and ending (if fixed term);

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- the person the parent/carer should make contact with if they wish to make representations about the exclusion;
- The Head of College must inform the chair of the governing body about
  - permanent exclusions
  - Fixed term exclusions
  - exclusions which would result in the learner missing a public examination.

All exclusions are reported on to the Quality Committee, the Governing Body and the Education Committee.

Length of fixed period exclusion

The Head of College will report short term fixed period exclusions when they happen to the Chair of the Governing Body and once a term to the Governing Body

Preparation for reintegration to college

A plan will be drawn up to support reintegration to college following any period of exclusion. All members of staff working with the learner need to be informed of this by the Head of College.

A programme of reintegration will be put in place following a fixed-term exclusion. This will be discussed with parents/carers before the learner returns to college. Other key members of staff may be involved in this discussion. Reintegration programmes will be based on a functional analysis of the learner’s behaviour that challenges and may involve:

- Returning to college initially on a reduced timetable and gradually building up the time spent in college.
- Having one-to-one provision made on-site with gradual reintegration into class. This will usually be reviewed on a weekly basis.
- Placing the learner on an individualised timetable. This will usually be reviewed on a weekly basis.

The aim is always to successfully reintegrate the learner back into class full-time, as far as possible.

**Alternatives to exclusion**

If the college feels that it can no longer manage the behaviour of a particular learner, the college may ask the LA to identify another college to take over his or her education. This should only be done with the full knowledge and co-operation of all parties involved, including the parents/carers and LA, and in circumstances where it is in the best interests of the learner concerned.

Parents/carers should never be pressured into removing their child from the college under the threat of a permanent exclusion.

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