


VOYAGE LEARNING CAMPUS



RELATIONSHIPS AND BEHAVIOUR POLICY

This policy has been adopted by the Management Committee on:	
Date adopted:	19 March 2026
Signed:	
Next review due:	Annually

1. Statement of Principles

At the Voyage Learning Campus we work to enable all of our young people to achieve more than they believe is possible. We help them develop the skills needed to make informed choices to lead active, fulfilling lives. We are committed to creating a safe, nurturing, holistic learning environment which supports students to thrive personally and academically.

At the VLC we believe that:

- Behaviour is a means of communication and something to be listened to;
- 'Poor' behaviour is never personal but a sign of an unmet need or difficulty coping;
- Relationships are the best way to support behaviour and de-escalation is key to managing any incidents;
- Students are developing and mistakes are part of their learning process; all of our young people are at different stages of the developmental process;
- All adults are responsible for supporting students with their behaviour; it is a team effort, not left to support staff, teachers or senior leaders;
- We believe that every young person is redeemable and, as such, consequences should be responsive to the behaviour. Students should be supported to understand their behaviour and make amends as part of a restorative approach; the focus should be on repairing the student's relationship with peers, adults and the school so they can flourish in their community.
- Positive behaviour approaches support safeguarding. All staff recognise that changes in behaviour may be an indicator of abuse, neglect or wider safeguarding concerns and must be reported in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

2. Aims of the policy:

This policy aims to:

- Define our expectations for positive behaviour across the school;
- Provide a consistent framework for adults supporting the behaviour in and out of the classroom, acknowledging and responding to the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences;
- Outline our methods of acknowledging and celebrating positive behaviours and nurturing positive relationships;
- Outline strategies used to de-escalate and support students in meeting our expectations.
- Ensure behaviour management supports safeguarding and protects students from harm.

3. Legislation and statutory requirements:

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- Behaviour in schools
- Searching, screening and confiscation at school
- The Equality Act 2010
- Use of reasonable force in schools
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units

In addition, this policy is based on:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils

- Sections 88-94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which require schools to regulate pupils' behaviour and publish a behaviour policy and written statement of behaviour principles, and give schools the authority to confiscate pupils' property
- DfE guidance explaining that maintained schools should publish their behaviour policy online
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 (for behaviour recording)

4. Expectations for positive behaviour:

Our expectations are for all members of the school community, including staff and students to be:

- Ready
- Respectful
- Safe

These expectations apply in school, during educational visits, and when students are representing the school.

We promote these expectations alongside our school values:

- Community
- Honesty
- Determination
- Kindness

5. Encouraging Positive Behaviours

Building trusted relationships so staff have a secure understanding of the needs of each student is fundamental to ensuring students are regulated and able to access the learning opportunities available to them in school. Quality first teaching, knowledge of our students and how to cater inclusively for special educational needs ensures VLC is setting students up for success on a daily basis.

We give **first attention to best conduct**, acknowledging when students meet or exceed expectations. Staff can use a range of strategies to acknowledge positive behaviours, such as:

- In class praise – appropriate to the student (not all will want public praise)
- Written praise and positive feedback in books
- Recognition wall in the classroom
- Share with other staff e.g. key tutors, senior leaders
- Contact home – texts, phone calls, postcards
- Certificates/displays/celebrations/ reward assemblies
- Immediate/tangible rewards

Positive behaviour may be recorded through the school's behaviour recording systems and shared with parents/carers where appropriate.

6. Framework for managing behaviour that is not ready, respectful or safe

Our approach is to de-escalate, with the adult remaining **calm, consistent and in control**. We adopt a trauma-informed approach to dysregulated behaviours and understand these are indicative of distress for the student so we are curious and remain alongside our young people to support them through these times. At times it may be appropriate for another adult to support, for example if the child would benefit from a change of face or if the adult responding to the behaviour needs to regulate themselves. This is viewed as a positive action and supports a whole team approach to support the child.

During the De-Escalation Period:

Staff will take a stepped approach to managing behaviour, providing students with take up time at each stage.

- Reminder of expectation, stating the expected behaviour, to give the student a chance to do the right thing
- Encourage the student to regulate the physiological symptoms – breathing, mirroring, talking calmly, reassurance
- Avoid being judgmental
- Ask the student what they need and respond, if appropriate
- Not conduct an investigation
- Allow the student to work on their own, if appropriate
- Provide the student with some control so they do not feel trapped
- Provide students with a choice:
 - Meet expectation
 - Time out of the class
 - Calm down – move to an area for a more extended period (an adult will supervise)
- State consequence- payback time to:
 - Complete work missed
 - Ensure restorative approaches are adhered to.

In some instances, students may be very dysregulated and consequently challenging to manage / support. This is likely to be distressing for the young person. In these instances, the focus will be to regulate, relate, reason and repair, ensuring physiological and emotional regulation comes first. Adults will:

- Use a PACE approach (Playful, Accepting, Curious, Empathic), demonstrating curiosity about the behaviour;
- Avoid confrontation by maintaining a calm approach: allowing the child to feel safe and contain their emotions;
- Acknowledge the fact that the student is in difficulty and validate their feelings;
- Use distraction, if appropriate, to refocus on a positive behaviour/provide an activity/offer food or drink
- Stay calm and keep a low/quiet voice
- Swap places with another member of staff if needed
- Keep talk to a minimum
- Encourage the student to stop and take deep breaths: providing them space and support to regulate themselves.
- Support the student to regulate their emotions and manage their behaviour – indicate this verbally and physically
- Where behaviour raises safeguarding concerns, staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the student cannot regulate, staff will use these strategies as appropriate for each individual and given the context of the incident:

- Allow students to remove themselves from the situation
- Remove from the scene– direct students to go to designated 'safe space' area and a key ~~teacher~~ adult with whom they feel safe
- Allow student to go outside for fresh air, if appropriate
- Provide some food/drink as a comfort or distraction

If the student presents a health and safety risk, staff will dynamically risk assess and use the following strategies:

- Ensure student and staff safety by removing others from the situation – provide space for all
- Consider whether containment is necessary (see positive handling below)
- Allow a safe exit
- Allow the student time to reflect and support them to understand why health and safety is an important and non-negotiable element of a happy and successful future.
- Staff have statutory authority to discipline students whose behaviour is unacceptable or dangerous, who break school rules, or who fail to follow a reasonable instruction after being given appropriate take-up time to regulate and respond safely.

Long-Term:

Adults will:

- Understand the situation from all perspectives – talk to staff and students involved
- Consider what consequences are most appropriate to support staff and students
- Consider whether it is appropriate to hold a restorative meeting
- Consider changing any working practices/procedures that contributed to the situation
- Consistently maintain the view that every child is redeemable and nurture positive relationships

Following a significant incident, support will be offered to staff by senior leaders – for example, time out, opportunity to discuss, debrief and agree next steps together.

At times, it may be appropriate to suspend a student for a fixed period. This will always be a last resort and only used to ensure the health and safety of all and not as a “punishment”. Time will be taken with the student and their family to ensure that they understand why this was done and how we will support them to return to school. It is rare that we suspend students, however if suspension is used then a safeguarding approach is adopted. This ensures that students are supported to understand the reasons behind the suspension and are given the tools to address the issue. A clean slate is given on return to school once repairs / amends have been made.

On rare occasions, it may be necessary to permanently exclude a student. This would only be as a result of extreme safeguarding issues, where it is felt the student's needs can no longer safely be met at VLC. Suspension and permanent exclusion will only be used in line with DfE statutory guidance and when other strategies have been considered, except where there is a serious breach of the behaviour policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

7. Positive Handling

In some circumstances, staff may positively handle a student, using Team Teach strategies, to prevent them:

- Hurting themselves or others
- Damaging property
- Disrupting the calm and safe learning environment

Incidents of positive handling must:

- **Always be used as a last resort**
- Be applied using the minimum amount of force and for the minimum amount of time possible
- Be used in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned
- Never be used as a form of punishment
- Be recorded and reported to parents/carers

Any use of physical intervention will be reported to senior leaders and recorded in line with school procedures. Safeguarding concerns arising from incidents will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

More information is provided in our positive handling and physical intervention policy.

8. Prohibited items

The following items are banned:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers – no smoking is allowed on, or outside, any of the school sites (this also includes vapes, puff bars and other similar items) (Please see Drugs, Alcohol and Smoking policy for more information)
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Energy drinks
- Any article a staff member reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the student)

Any prohibited items found in students' possession will be confiscated. These items will not be returned to pupils. Searching and screening pupils is conducted in line with the DfE's latest guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

School staff may search students and their possessions where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student may have a prohibited item. Searches will be conducted in line with DfE guidance and with due regard to the student's dignity and safeguarding.

Student mobile phones are to be handed in at reception. Please see Mobile Phone Policy for expectations around mobile phones