Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed September 2026



The Stour Academy Trust

Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy

Aims

- To promote the inclusion of all pupils in the learning process by developing teaching strategies that avoid the need for exclusion in any form.
- To ensure that our planning, teaching and assessment results in the engagement of all pupils, regardless of their ability, in the learning process and thus diminishing any act of disruptive behaviour.
- To provide a system of rewards to establish good behaviour, and to reverse the continuous poor behaviour of individual pupils, ensuring good communication with parents to support this.
- To encourage and praise greater effort and achievement.
- To ensure the use of appropriate language by all adults throughout the school, using the language of 'choices.'
- To ensure a whole school restorative justice approach to discipline which is used and approved by all staff in the school – teaching and non-teaching.
- To ensure a safe, caring and happy school community.
- To promote self-discipline through using a restorative justice approach which encourages pupils to reflect upon their own behaviour and its consequences.
- To prevent bullying.
- To encourage respect of others in and beyond the school community both through our teaching and in our practice as exemplary role models.
- To promote team building and the care of one another.

Principles

The system is built upon:

- Values-Based Learning: Explicitly linking all behaviour expectations and recognition to the STARS values.
- Positive Reinforcement: Emphasizing and celebrating desired behaviours to encourage their repetition.
- Teamwork and Community: Promoting collective responsibility and a supportive classroom environment.
- Clear Expectations and Consequences: Ensuring children understand what is expected and the natural, logical outcomes of their choices.
- Display and Visibility: Providing a visual reminder of the system within each classroom.

School Values

Our school values and vision are built around the premise that at Thistle Hill we are all STARS. Our school values have been devised over a period and are made in school in conjunction with the children. At Thistle Hill we are STARS, and we show:

- **Support**
- **Togetherness**
- **Ambition**
- **Respect**
- **Success**

At Thistle Hill Academy, we are always ready to learn. Our vision is to make stars out of every child and help them to shine in their own unique way. We will achieve this by adopting these values in collaboration with our community.

Our Behaviour System: The STARS Journey



This system explicitly links all behaviour expectations and recognition to the STARS values, promoting positive reinforcement and encouraging teamwork across all school environments.

1: Classroom Display: The "STARS Journey Board"

Each classroom will feature a "STARS Journey Board." This display will be a visual representation of the class's collective progress in demonstrating the STARS values.
How it works: The board will feature a path or a ladder with different levels. The class, as a whole, work together to move their class Superhero along the "STARS Journey Board."
Achieving Movement: Movement up the board is earned through:

- **Whole-class demonstrations of STARS values:** For example, working together quietly on a task (Togetherness, Respect), all students showing perseverance on

a challenging activity (Ambition), or multiple children helping each other (Support).

- **Accumulation of individual "STARS Shout-Outs" and DoJo Points:** A certain number of individual recognitions contribute to the class moving up the board.
- **Reaching specific milestones** on the "STARS Journey Board" unlocks whole-class rewards. These could include a tech afternoon, a film, extra play, or free time.

Alongside the "STARS Journey Board," each classroom will have a "STARS Shout-Out Wall."

- **Individual Recognition:** This is a dedicated space where individual students are recognised for specific actions aligned with the STARS values. Teachers (and potentially peers, with guidance) can write brief notes or use pre-printed "STARS" slips to acknowledge positive behaviours, e.g., "Liam showed great 'Support' by helping a friend with their work today." This is non-competitive and focuses purely on recognition.

2: Positive Reinforcement & Rewards

All teachers aim to establish positive working relationships with the children, treating them fairly and giving them equal opportunity to take part in class activities. Teachers promote the school's values and ensure these values underpin all interactions with children. We praise and reward children for good effort and, by so doing, help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning. We insist on good order and behaviour at all times. We reward our children for positive behaviour using a variety of strategies, including:

- **Specific Verbal Praise:** Teachers will consistently use specific praise, explicitly linking it to the STARS values: "That was excellent Respect, Maya, waiting patiently for your turn to speak."
- **Do Jo Points:** Awarded for positive behaviour, including demonstrating excellent learning behaviour.
- **Stickers, including Value stickers:** For those children demonstrating our values.
- **Headteacher Awards:** For significant achievements and consistent positive behaviour.
- **STARS Tokens/Stickers:** Children can earn small, tangible tokens or stickers when they are "caught" demonstrating a STARS value anywhere in the school environment, including the playground. These can be collected by the individual for small, personal rewards or contribute to the class's progress on the "STARS Journey Board." Playground supervisors will be equipped with these.
- **Daily STARS Achiever:** In a class students who have consistently demonstrated STARS values are recognised with a special certificate/small prize.

It is important that rewards cannot be removed from any child for poor behaviour.

⭐ **STARS Rewards – Dojos and Badges**

At Thistle Hill Academy, we believe that positive behaviour should be **noticed, celebrated and rewarded**. Our reward system is built around our STARS values of **Support, Togetherness, Ambition, Respect and Success**. Pupils can earn **Dojos** throughout the school day when they demonstrate these values through their behaviour, attitudes, learning and relationships with others. Dojos build towards our **STARS badges**, providing children with visible recognition of their achievements and encouraging them to consistently make positive choices. assemblies, we ensure that children who consistently demonstrate our STARS values feel **seen, valued and proud of their achievements**.

3: Behaviour Expectations

Our Classroom Code:

- Listen to others and take your turn **(Respect, Togetherness)**
- Listen carefully, follow instructions and do your best **(Ambition, Respect)**
- Work quietly without disturbing our classmates **(Respect, Togetherness)**
- Always tell the truth **(Respect)**
- Be helpful, kind and polite **(Support, Respect)**
- Keep your hands and your feet to yourself **(Respect, Support)**

Playground Rules:

The STARS values provide the framework for expected behaviour on the playground:

- **Support:** Helping others who might be upset or excluded, offering to share equipment.
- **Togetherness:** Including everyone in games, playing fairly, resolving minor disagreements peacefully, collaborating on larger play structures or games.
- **Ambition:** Trying new activities safely, persevering even if a game is challenging, using play equipment appropriately and with increasing skill.
- **Respect:** Taking turns, listening to playground supervisors, caring for school equipment and the playground environment, using kind words and actions.
- **Success:** Enjoying playtime, making new friends, feeling safe and happy, solving problems, developing physical skills.

4: Choices and Consequences (Plan A)

All adults within school should use the language of 'choices' when talking to pupils about their behaviour and relevant consequences. The emphasis should always be on the positive choice. The aim of this approach is for children to understand their behaviour choices as their own responsibility and to promote self-discipline and self-regulation strategies.

It is the firm belief of the school that high quality detailed planning based on accurate on-going assessment, and the dynamic delivery of lessons which incorporate appropriate differentiated and challenging activities, will, in nearly all cases, eliminate disruptive behaviour. However, it is recognised that in certain situations there may be a need to invoke specific sanctions for pupils who do not respond to the above. A whole

school restorative justice approach is essential to ensure clear understanding, fairness and consistency in the implementation of sanctions.

Following the use of a restorative justice-based approach, sanctions, if required, should be applied in the following order (known as 'Plan A'):

A clear, consistent, and tiered system of consequences will be implemented to address undesirable behaviours. The focus is on teaching and guiding, rather than solely punishing. Consequences should be logical and related to the action. The tiered system of consequences applies consistently to behaviour observed on the playground as well as in the classroom.

Level 1: Reminder & Reteach

- **Action:** A quiet, private verbal reminder from the adult, linking the behaviour back to the relevant STARS value. "Remember our Respect value means we take turns on the climbing frame." "Remember our Respect value means we listen when others are speaking."
- **Purpose:** To give the child an immediate opportunity to self-correct and understand the expectation.

Level 2: Warning & Reflection

- **Action:** If the behaviour persists, a clear, private warning outlining the specific negative behaviour and the expected positive behaviour. This may involve a brief "reflection time" within the classroom (e.g., sitting at a designated "thinking spot" for a few minutes to consider their choices). Playground to also have designated 'thinking spot'.
- **Purpose:** To prompt the child to think about their actions and their impact, and to offer a chance to reset.

Level 3: Logical Consequence

- **Action:** If the behaviour continues after both warnings, a logical, consistent consequence is applied (by CT, TA or playground supervisor at playtimes). This should be directly related to the negative behaviour and, where possible, restorative.
    - **Persistent Classroom Disruption:** Loss of a few minutes (*1 minute per age*) of free time or a preferred activity.
    - **Damaging Property:** Participating in repairing or cleaning during their next free time.
    - **Conflict with Peers (impacting Togetherness):** Restorative conversation with adult support.
    - **Incomplete Work (impacting Ambition):** Completing the work during a designated catch-up time/ next free time (*1 minute per age*).
    - **Refusal to complete work:** Time given to reflect. Support offered. Language of choices.
    - **Disrespect towards adults and/or peers:** Time to reflect in partner year group's class. Restorative conversation between pupil and adult they were disrespectful to once returned to class.

- **Physical Level 1 and 2:** Loss of a few minutes (*1 minute per age*) of free time or a preferred activity. Restorative conversation with adult support.

Non-negotiables:
Certain behaviours are unacceptable in our school and will result in immediate and serious consequences, bypassing the tiered warning system. These are:

- **Persistent refusal:** SLT involvement (internal exclusion to complete work).
- **Exiting:** SLT involvement (internal exclusion).
- **Physical Violence Level 3:** SLT involvement (internal exclusion).
- **Swearing:** SLT involvement (internal exclusion).

Use of Reasonable Force and Restrictive Interventions

Our school is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful and supportive environment for all pupils and staff. We prioritise early intervention, positive behaviour strategies and de-escalation to minimise the need for restrictive interventions. However, there may be rare occasions where the use of reasonable force or other restrictive interventions is lawful, necessary and proportionate to prevent harm or serious disorder.

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force, in limited circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence
- damaging property
- causing serious disorder
- Reasonable force means using no more force than is necessary for the shortest possible time. Any decision to use force must be based on the individual circumstances of the situation and must be proportionate to the risk presented.

Force will **never** be used as a form of punishment.

Preventative Approach and De-escalation
Our approach is rooted in prevention. Staff are trained in behaviour management strategies and de-escalation techniques, including calm communication, use of appropriate tone, relationship-building, environmental adjustments, and offering pupils time and space to regulate.

- Before any restrictive intervention is considered, staff will assess whether alternative, less restrictive responses are available and likely to be effective. Restrictive interventions will only be used when necessary to

reduce immediate risk and when other strategies have been unsuccessful or are judged inappropriate in the circumstances.

- Particular care will be taken to preserve the dignity and welfare of the pupil. Wherever possible, staff will explain what is happening and why, and provide reassurance throughout.

Unacceptable Practice

The following practices are not permitted in this school:

- Using force as a punishment.
- Restricting a pupil in a way that impacts their airway, breathing or circulation (for example, pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen, or covering the mouth or nose).
- Using seclusion as a disciplinary sanction.
- Where physical contact is appropriate (for example, first aid, guiding a pupil, comforting a distressed child, or supporting PE activities), this will always be done in a professional and respectful manner.

Seclusion

Seclusion is defined as keeping a pupil confined away from others and preventing them from leaving. Seclusion will only ever be used as a safety measure when a pupil is experiencing significant emotional or behavioural distress and poses a risk of harm to others.

- Seclusion is not a disciplinary response and will never be used as a punishment.
- If used, the pupil will be:
- kept in a safe and non-threatening environment
- supervised at all times
- allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk has reduced
- All incidents of seclusion will be recorded and reported in line with statutory requirements.

Pupils with SEND

We recognise that pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) may experience heightened anxiety, sensory overload, communication difficulties or distress which can contribute to challenging behaviour.

We are committed to:

- identifying triggers and early warning signs
- making reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010
- working in partnership with parents and external professionals
- developing and reviewing individual behaviour support plans where appropriate

- Restrictive interventions will not be used as a substitute for appropriate support. Risk assessments and tailored strategies will be in place where there is a foreseeable risk.

Recording and Reporting

All significant incidents involving the use of force will be recorded in writing as soon as practicable, and normally on the same day. Records will include:

- the names of pupils and staff involved
- the date, time, location and duration
- what led to the incident and any de-escalation strategies used
- why the intervention was necessary
- the type and level of force used
- any injuries sustained and support provided
- Parents will be informed as soon as practicable and normally on the same day. This applies even where the intervention forms part of an agreed behaviour support plan.
- Incidents of seclusion and restraint (including those without direct physical contact) will also be recorded and reported in accordance with statutory regulations.
- The governing body will review data on the use of restrictive interventions to monitor patterns, ensure proportionality, and identify areas for improvement.

Post-Incident Support

- Following any incident involving restrictive intervention, the school will:
- ensure medical assessment where appropriate
- provide emotional support to pupils and staff
- conduct a structured debrief to understand what happened
- review risk assessments and behaviour support plans if necessary
- We are committed to fostering a culture of reflection, learning and continuous improvement, with the aim of reducing the need for restrictive interventions over time.

Playground-Specific Consequences:

- **Rough Play/Not taking turns:** Temporary removal from the game or activity (e.g., 5 minutes quiet time at the edge of the playground).
- **Misuse of Equipment:** Losing access to that specific equipment for the remainder of playtime, or assisting a supervisor in tidying up.

    - **Unkindness (impacting Togetherness/Support):** Restorative conversation with the TA to understand the impact on others and discuss strategies for inclusion.
    - **Persistent disregard for rules:** A short period of time-out from the main play area, within sight of a TA, for reflection.

- **Reporting:** All playground incidents will be reported on the playground incidents teams channel and added to Arbor.

- **Purpose:** To help the child understand the natural outcomes of their choices and to take responsibility.

Level 4: Parental Communication & Collaborative Support

- **Action:** For Level 3 behaviours or more serious incidents (e.g., repeated physical altercations, significant disrespect to adults, property damage), parents/guardians will be contacted to inform them and seek their partnership in supporting the child's behaviour.
- **Purpose:** To ensure consistency between home and school and to develop a shared strategy for the child's success.

Promoting Teamwork (on the Playground)

- **Organised Games:** Supervisors can facilitate inclusive group games that require cooperation and shared goals, directly promoting "Togetherness" and "Support."
- **Problem-Solving:** Encouraging children to resolve minor conflicts and disagreements amongst themselves using "Respectful" and "Togetherness" strategies, with adult guidance when needed.
- **Playground Leaders/Buddies:** Older children could be trained as "STARS Playground Leaders" or "Playground Buddies" to model positive behaviour, initiate games, and help younger children integrate, exemplifying "Support" and "Togetherness."

This extended "STARS Behaviour System" provides a unified approach to behaviour management across all areas of Thistle Hill Academy, ensuring that the school's values are consistently understood, practiced, and celebrated, creating a positive and safe environment for learning and play.

Promoting Teamwork

Teamwork ("Togetherness") will be explicitly promoted through:

- **Collaborative Learning:** Frequent group activities and projects that require students to work together and rely on each other's contributions.

- **Explicit Teaching:** Lessons on active listening, respectful communication, conflict resolution, and shared responsibility.
- **Team Challenges:** Regular opportunities for groups or the whole class to work towards common goals, earning collective rewards on the "STARS Journey Board."
- **Role Modelling:** Teachers will consistently model positive teamwork and cooperation in their interactions.

Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation is a complete social-emotional learning curriculum, created to teach children self-regulation and emotional control. The aims are to teach children about recognising their emotions and giving them the tools to make choices to support their regulation. There is a shared language and the use of visuals to support children in this recognition.

Restorative Justice

The aim of restorative justice is to create positive outcomes from negative behaviour. It is based on the 4 principles of: respect, responsibility, repair and reintegration. Restorative justice is used with the aim of:

- Confronting unacceptable behaviour
- Praising acceptable behaviour
- Modelling restorative approaches
- Developing self-regulating communities
- When holding a restorative justice conversation with a pupil or group of pupils the following script will be used:
- What happened?
- What were you thinking (feeling) at the time? What do you think (feel) about it now?
- Who has been affected by what has happened? - In what way?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

This script may be adapted dependent upon the age group or level of understanding of individual pupils. It is vital that restorative justice is the approach used and modelled by all members of staff within the school community.

Sanctions

The school's main approach to using sanctions and consequences to modify behaviour will be known as 'Plan A' and this will be sufficient to target the behaviour management of the majority (E.g.95%) of our pupils. Recognising an increased level of difficulty can

trigger planning within the school and possible use of alternative systems - 'Plan B' for more individually structured behavioural approaches and the sharing of an individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP) and in rare cases 'Plan C' for pupils where the plan is not working and the IBSP has been ineffective, then multi-agency support will be required and will be subject to a PASTORAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES – PSP

PLAN B (INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN)

This stage is for children for whom Plan A has not been effective in changing their behaviour (e.g. 5% of the school population), for example excessive loss of playtime, or frequent suspensions from lessons due to extreme disruption (time out) week after week. This plan will be developed by a referral to the Well-being and behaviour lead, who will initiate the preparation of an Individual Behaviour Support Plan and support the implementation of this into the classroom.

PLAN C (PASTORAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES – PSP)

A small percentage of children, whose behaviour and responses can be difficult to predict or manage as a result of their individual additional needs, could be into a pattern of exclusion within a few days if the main behaviour policy is applied to them. These children will therefore be subject to a Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) and the whole school will be informed and know who they are. Their individual programme will be drawn up through multi-agency working and will involve the parents and also the pupil voice. It will be reviewed regularly and all staff given a synopsis of outcomes

Internal Exclusion

Internal exclusion is when a pupil is excluded from the rest of the school and must work away from their class for a fixed amount of time. This will be in a different classroom or area within the school. An internal exclusion is a discretionary measure, where a pupil's behaviour is escalating, and more serious measures need to be taken but there are not yet grounds for an external suspension. Typically, a child receiving a consequence of this level should be receiving additional support for their behaviour, intended to help them to avoid their behaviour escalating to a point where a suspension is necessary (examples: behaviour chart to address specific behaviours causing a problem; support from the learning mentor etc)

Suspension

Only the Headteacher, or the person acting as Headteacher, may suspend a pupil from school. A suspension will only be used where it is lawful, reasonable and proportionate,

and where the pupil's behaviour meets the threshold set out in the Trust Suspensions and Exclusions Policy and the current DfE statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion.

Parents/carers will be informed without delay of the reason for the suspension, the period of suspension, their right to make representations, and the arrangements for the pupil's education during the suspension. Where required, the local authority, governing board/academy trust, social worker and/or Virtual School Head will also be notified in line with statutory requirements.

Following any suspension, the school will arrange a reintegration meeting with parents/carers and the pupil, where appropriate, to support a successful return to school. This meeting will consider the reasons for the suspension, any support or reasonable adjustments required, and agreed next steps to reduce the likelihood of further suspension.

Full procedures, including statutory notification, education from the sixth school day where required, governing board/academy trust consideration, and any review arrangements, are set out in the Trust Suspensions and Exclusions Policy.

Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the behaviour policy, and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school community.

Where a permanent exclusion is issued, the Headteacher will inform parents/carers without delay and will notify the relevant statutory parties in accordance with the current DfE guidance. The governing board/academy trust will consider the decision within the statutory timescales and determine whether the pupil should be reinstated.

Parents/carers may make representations and, if the permanent exclusion is upheld, may request an independent review panel in line with statutory arrangements. Pupils should be supported to express their views where appropriate, taking account of their age, understanding and any SEND or communication needs.

For full details, including notification duties, statutory timescales, education arrangements, independent review panels and reconsideration duties, please refer to the Trust Suspensions and Exclusions Policy and the current DfE statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion.

Anti-Bullying

Parents are encouraged to inform us immediately if they suspect their child is being bullied. The sooner we know, the sooner we can act to stop it. The information outlined below is designed to help parents understand what is meant by bullying and how to spot early signs of distress that may be caused by bullying.

DfE definition of bullying:
There is no legal definition of bullying.
However, it's usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

Our approach to bullying
Bullying both verbal and physical will not be tolerated in this school. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent it happening and this policy contains guidelines for all members of the school community. In our school children have a right to feel welcome, safe and happy. In our school we will not tolerate any unkind actions or remarks even if these were not intended to hurt.

Aims

- We aim to prevent bullying.
- We aim to raise pupils' awareness of bullying behaviour and the consequences to all parties.
- We aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied pupils and help build an anti-bullying ethos in the school.
- We aim to improve the play facilities so that we provide an interesting and stimulating environment for pupils alongside quiet seating areas that can be easily supervised.

The Board of Directors reviews and approves this policy every two years. It may, however, review this policy earlier than this if the government produces new regulations, or if it receives recommendations on how this policy might be improved.

The Stour Academy Trust

Early Years Positive Interactions & Relationships Policy

Effective: September 2025

Policy Statement

At The Stour Academy Trust, we believe that secure relationships and emotional well-being are the foundations of young children's development. Our approach is based on the principle that all children can learn how to make positive choices, supported by caring adults who model, guide and encourage them.

Aims

- Nurture children's self-esteem and emotional security.
- Promote kindness, cooperation and respect through modelling and guidance.
- Help children learn safe choices in their play and interactions.
- Work with parents as partners to ensure consistency.

How We Support Positive Interactions

- Modelling Positive Choices: Adults show children how to share, take turns and use gentle hands.
- Positive Language & Praise: Encouragement such as 'I like the way you are waiting' or 'That was kind.'
- Visual Prompts: Pictures, gestures, or objects support children's understanding of safe choices.
- Routines: Clear, predictable routines give children security and confidence.

Responding to Unsafe or Harmful Actions

We recognise that young children are learning self-regulation and may act impulsively. Unsafe or harmful actions (e.g., hitting, biting, throwing, unsafe climbing) are addressed calmly and

consistently.

Steps:
1. Immediate Safety: Ensure all children are safe.
2. Calm Intervention: Simple language such as 'That hurts, we use gentle hands.'
3. Redirection: Guide child to another activity or safe space.
4. Consequence: Unsafe action is stopped (e.g., removing dangerous objects, pausing play until ready to rejoin).
5. Restoration: Support the child to repair relationships by checking if the other child is okay or modelling 'sorry.'
6. Partnership with Parents: If unsafe actions continue, staff will work with parents and SENCO for support.

Supporting Self-Regulation

- Adults co-regulate children using calm reassurance.
- Quiet spaces are available for calming and reflection.
- Staff narrate feelings: 'I can see you are upset, let's take a breath together.'

Staff Guidance & Training

- All staff are trained in emotional wellbeing, attachment and self-regulation strategies.
- Staff reflect on team meetings and supervision to improve practice.

Monitoring & Review

- Repeated unsafe incidents are logged and reviewed by the reception teacher and a member of the SLT.

- Arbor is only used to log extreme violence or unsafe behaviour.
- Parents are kept informed by speaking with the reception teacher in a private space at the end of the session.

- If behaviours are repetitive or extreme then a meeting with a parent is called with the reception teacher and the most suitable member of the SLT.

Policy reviewed annually or sooner if guidance changes.