



**Orbis**  
education & care

# Social, Emotional and Mental Health Behaviour Policy

**Written:** October 2024

**Updated:** November 2024

**Reviewed:** August 2025

*This policy relates to Articles of the UNCRC*

*Our schools are rights respecting schools. Throughout this policy all pupils are to be regarded as 'Rights holders', and all adults are to be regarded as 'duty bearers'.*

*This organisation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.*



Orbis Group includes Orbis Education and Care Ltd, Pembrokeshire Resource Centre Ltd, Priority Childcare Ltd and Gower Lodge (Swansea) Ltd. Our policies and procedures have been standardised across the Group and all references to Orbis within this document include the entities referred to above.

**1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following education policies:**

- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints and concerns policy
- Exclusion policy
- Incidents with Weapons Policy
- Use of Physical Interventions, Restraint and Withdrawal policy
- Curriculum policy

**2. Rationale**

2.1. Many pupils at Orbis Education and Care (Orbis) will, through the nature of their needs and difficulties, display some type of behaviour which challenges. This behaviour can be translated as an individual's response to their environment, an experience, an unmet request, or inability to communicate their wants and needs effectively.

2.2 It is essential that all staff have an understanding of a wide range of strategies and de-escalation skills which will aim to: -

1. Understand the purpose of these behaviours.
2. Replace them with more appropriate behaviours and skills.
3. Reduce the frequency of challenging behaviours by striving to improve the pupil's quality of life.

This is a fundamental part of the pupils' progress and ensures they reach their full potential and enjoy a good quality of life. This policy provides guidance, strategies and good practice for all Orbis Education and Care employees.

2.2 Orbis aims to encourage all pupils to behave responsibly. Education plans should support pupils to distinguish right from wrong, respect the law, accept responsibility for behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute to community life.

**3. Legal Guidance**

3.1 To support with behaviour management Orbis schools follow the *Welsh Government Guidance 'Safe and effective Intervention, use of reasonable force and searching for weapons'* and the *Department for Education Guidance 'Use of reasonable force'*.

3.2 The Welsh Government Guidance specifically states the following:

- Section 1.2: All school staff members have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property; and to maintain good order and discipline amongst pupils.
- Section 1.3: The focus should be on preventing, as far as possible, the need for the use of force on pupils, by creating a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that lessens the risk and threat of violence of any kind. The use of force should only be a last resort, schools should minimise the possibility of force being needed. However, this may not always be possible and in such circumstances, staff need to be aware of sensitivities associated with any form of physical contact with pupils.

- Section 1.4: Schools should never seek to inhibit the ability of staff to use force by adopting a 'no contact' policy. The power to use force helps ensure pupil and school safety and the risk with a no-contact policy is that it might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil, or prevent them taking an action needed to prevent a pupil causing injury to others.
- Section 1.8: Some examples of situations where reasonable force might be used are:
  - To prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff, or another pupil, or to stop a fight between two or more pupils.
  - To prevent a pupil causing serious, deliberate damage to property.
  - To prevent a pupil causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
  - To ensure that a pupil leaves a classroom where the pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to do so.
  - To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson.
  - To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school sporting event or school visit.

3.3.1 The Welsh and Department of Education guidance can be located here:

- Welsh Government guidance; <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/safe-and-effective-intervention-use-of-reasonable-force-and-searching-for-weapons.pdf>

Department for Education guidance:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a819959ed915d74e6233224/Use\\_of\\_reasonable\\_force\\_advice\\_Reviewed\\_July\\_2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a819959ed915d74e6233224/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf)

#### **4. Aim**

- 4.1 This policy is intended to help promote a culture of learning in a safe and structured environment. Pupils with complex social, emotional, mental health, traumatic experiences and cognition difficulties require a significant amount of skilled input if they are to make progress in their lives. For all pupils there needs to be a level of discipline, this can only be achieved through staff commitment to consistency, empathy, and dedication to the creation of a positive emotional atmosphere conducive to learning and personal growth.
- 4.2 Orbis believes that, in order for pupils to learn effectively, acceptable behaviour must be demonstrated in all aspects of school life. The school acknowledges that behaviour can sometimes be the result of educational, mental health, other needs, or vulnerabilities, and will address these needs via an individualised graduated response and in consultation with professionals where appropriate.
- 4.3 The school is committed to:
- Promoting a culture of Positive Behaviour Support throughout Orbis
  - Promoting desired behaviour.
  - Promoting self-esteem, self-discipline, proper regard for authority, and positive relationships based on mutual respect.
  - Ensuring equality and fair treatment for all.

- Praising and rewarding good behaviour.
- Challenging and appropriately managing poor or undesired behaviour.
- Providing a safe environment, free from disruption, violence, discrimination, bullying and any form of harassment.
- To prepare pupils for adult life, higher education, the work environment, and independent living.
- To enable all pupils to develop to their full potential.
- Encouraging positive relationships with parents/care givers.
- Developing positive relationships with pupils to enable early intervention.
- To ensure a collaborative approach to behaviour management involving pupils, staff, parents/carers and other agencies e.g. CAMHS etc.
- Promoting a culture of praise and encouragement in which all pupils can achieve.

4.4 The ultimate aim of our behaviour policy is to set the standard of behaviour we would like to see across the school community. It endeavours to make clear the boundaries of what is acceptable, through the promotion of responsibilities which promote systems of rewards and consequences, and addressing poor conduct in a fair and consistent way.

## 5 Implementation of the policy

Orbis Education and Care will support the implementation of this policy by:

- Ensuring that all employees are aware of their responsibility to set appropriate standards of behaviour, through induction, mentoring, ongoing training, and supervision.
- Ensuring all employees receive training in Positive Behaviour Support and Trauma informed practices.
- Ensuring all staff receive accredited physical intervention training to enable them to respond appropriately to any incidents of behaviours of concern using a coordinated, non-pain based, gradient response, and that this training is refreshed annually.
- Ensuring all staff have the relevant appropriate skills and qualifications as detailed by the organisation and the school's senior leadership team.
- Delivering an appropriate skills-based curriculum which teaches pupils, using a variety of methods, to promote Orbis' ethos and expectations. These are quality of life principles which include choice, individuality, dignity and respect, community presence, and participation.
- Undertaking thorough MDT assessments and education engagement days that will inform planning.
- Implementing person centred planning (PCP) for the individual needs of pupils and the active involvement of them in setting their own learning objectives in all aspects, including education, daily living skills, social skills, and coping strategies
- Effective communication and information sharing regarding the pupils is supported through morning meetings, MDT, and the use of communicative applications such as Seesaw.
- Liaising with parents, via telephone, email, Skype, parents' evenings, Seesaw, and other forms of communication.
- Liaising with the clinical team and the Wellbeing lead.
- Liaising with partners in Health, Social Services, Education and Regulators.
- Each pupil and their families' / carers, and other involved supporters, will be encouraged to participate in the development of all positive behaviour support plans to support consistency and inclusion.

Orbis is committed to a culture that increases desired behaviour by recognizing achievement. For positive reinforcement, we think of it as adding something positive in order to increase the desired response. For negative reinforcement, we think of it as taking something negative away in order to increase a desired response.

## 6 Models of Behaviour Promotion

Orbis are committed to promoting Positive Behaviour, to do this we use Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE)

- a. Positive Behaviour Support has evolved from a model that is advocated for education settings referred to as School-Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support (PBIS). This is a pro-active team-based framework for creating safe and effective schools.

Emphasis is placed on prevention of behaviours that challenge, development of pro-social skills and behaviours, and the use of data based problem-solving for addressing behaviours. These programs are applied to school settings from mainstream to special education but are not specifically tailored to the needs of young people with Autism, SEMH and behaviours that challenge in some cases significant learning disability. Parents and carers should always be vigilant of the behaviours of their own children and seek support and intervention when necessary.

- 6.1 PBS is the result of combining Social Role Valorisation and Applied Behavioural Analysis to create a new “values-led approach to achieving behavioural change.” It focuses on:

- Individualised quality of life gains & positive promotion of desired behaviours
- Person Centred Planning (PCP).
- Long term values-led focus
- Comprehensive assessment and functional analysis – why, when, and how behaviours occur
- Emphasis on preventative strategies
- Altering triggers and consequences
- Skill teaching
- Distinguishes between preventative and reactive strategies
- Minimises the use of punishment-based consequences
- Reduction of behaviours that challenge is a side effect of intervention
- Involvement of all stakeholders

- 6.2 PACE is a parenting model which is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating, and behaving that helps a child feel safe. It helps to promote secure attachments and enables a child to reflect on their thoughts and behaviours without being judged.

### 6.2.1 The Principles of PACE are:

- a. Playfulness

A light-hearted, relaxed, and playful attitude. Helps the child feel connected within their relationship. Helps the child experience fun and love.

- b. Acceptance

Accepting the child for who they are and not what they achieve is very important. It is important to make the child aware that it is their behaviour that is unacceptable not them as a person. The child needs to feel liked and accepted for who they really are.

- c. Curiosity

Figuring out what is going on. Understand the meaning behind the behaviour.

Wonder about the child.

Wondering with the child.

Make best guesses about the inner experience of the child.

#### d. Empathy

One of the most important aspects of the PACE approach.

- To understand a child's needs, you have to be able to "step into their shoes."
- Empathy allows an individual to feel their feelings and know that their feelings have been heard and are valid. You may not agree with their feelings and opinions, which is ok but by listening you are supporting them to not suppress their feelings, which is crucial to positive mental health.
- Think about your relationships in your own life. Do you open up to people who are harsh and do not listen to you? Or people who listen, are accepting of you, and value you as a person?

## 7 Education Positive Behaviour Plans

7.1 It is vital that each child has a school education PBS plan, this must have a record of triggers, how the behaviour presents and suggested approaches for supporting the pupil.

- a. In order to provide a consistent approach, all staff working with a pupil with behaviours that challenge must be informed of their positive behaviour support plan, and they must ensure they have read and understand the plan for the pupil they are supporting in class.

These plans will contain the following components:

1. All stakeholders will be invited to participate in the development of PBS plans
2. Pen portrait – a positive description of the pupil identifying skills, learning opportunities, likes and dislikes.
3. Behaviour Summary Statements – statements that include a description of the behaviour, triggers or antecedents for the behaviour, maintaining consequences, and the purpose of the problem behaviour.
4. Specific health needs – which describe how to support the pupil to maintain good health and wellbeing also identifying any contraindications for physical interventions.
5. Primary Prevention Strategies – Strategies that may be used to reduce the likelihood that the pupil will have problem behaviour. These may include environmental arrangements, personal support, changes in activities; new ways to prompt the pupil, changes in expectations, skills teaching that will replace the problem behaviour. Guidance on how to respond to problem behaviours in ways that will not maintain the behaviour. In addition, this part of the plan may include positive reinforcement and/or consequence strategies for promoting the pupils use of new skills or appropriate behaviour.
6. Secondary prevention strategies – which include recognizing and responding to early indicators that the pupil may be moving away from baseline, de-escalation techniques.
7. Reactive strategies – which provide a safe, coordinated, consistent response to managing crisis situations.
8. Monitoring – to ensure that the plan remains effective, completed by the MDT termly, or following a significant incident.
9. Evaluation – to ensure the plan is updated

## 8 Responding to Behaviours

8.1 To respond and manage behaviours, use the following to help support the pupil and guide you.

- Respond, Don't React - Intervention at an early stage by verbal response, redirection, distraction, minimizes the risk of escalation.
- Develop awareness of body language, eye contact, personal space, and mood swings.
- Attempt not to allow situations to develop.
- Monitor the Situation - Dispassionately, assess the level of emotionality and risk displayed by the pupil.

- Consider your own personal safety - send for assistance if in doubt. Where possible stay calm and resist over reaction -heavy handed approaches escalate situations.
- Consider your body language, tone of voice, personal space, gestures.'
- Walk Away – Consider how the pupil is making you feel. Do you need to walk away and ask a colleague to take over?
- Dispassionately, seek to understand the feelings and thoughts that are motivating the behaviour.
- Do not enter into a prolonged discussion about the 'behaviour' whilst the pupil is aggressive.
- Threats of sanctions and/or punishments can act as further triggers to escalate anger.
- Do not enter into an either/or,' 'win/lose' situation.
- Beware of belittling their loss of self-control.
- Encourage any movement towards the regaining of self-control.
- Do not rely upon status, presumed authority or even relationship to defuse the incident.
- Before attempting any logical rational discussion about the behaviour, allow them time and a safe space to gain self-control and exhaust emotional expression.
- This means acting as the 'emotional container' for powerful feelings.
- Do not take the behaviour personally.
- Remember that until the level of emotional arousal is reduced the pupil will be unable to 'hear' logical reasoning.
- If necessary, remove the whole group and / or the individual from the situation.

## **9 Praise, Rewards and Consequences**

### **9.1 Praise**

To strengthen the motivation of the pupil staff should follow and use the following principles when praising their behaviour:

#### **1. Make it immediate:**

Any praise for a pupil must be given immediately (or as soon as possible after the event) so that it is clear to them what they are being praised for and so pupils can link consequences to feelings and actions. (This is particularly important when helping them learn both academically and socially).

For example- "I saw how you managed to keep calm when X was winding you up. I was really impressed by how you did that!"

#### **2. Be descriptive and specific.**

Staff should clearly define the behaviour that is being encouraged. In order to reinforce more of the same behaviour, it is important that pupils know exactly what it is they are being praised for. Any ambiguity will weaken the link between behaviour and praise.

#### **3. Try not to be too judgmental**

Sometimes a pupil may feel that praise is inaccurate, unbelievable or is really trying to manipulate them. It might also raise expectations in them which they feel they cannot fulfil. Descriptive praise gives them accurate information that they can trust far more than praise that evaluates and judges even if that judgement is positive. Consider which of the following two examples would be more likely to encourage someone to continue painting:

"I really like the way you have used colours to make the sky look so bright."

"What a colourful painting."

#### **4. Tell the pupil how this made you feel.**

Staff should make sure that they let the pupil know how their positive behaviour makes them feel. It is important to make sure that the pupil makes a connection between their behaviour and others feelings.

When a pupil begins to see that actions can influence people positively, they learn that what they do is important. It also makes them more likely to listen to you if you have to challenge their behaviour and supports developing their sense of self.

As with all praise it should be proportional to the behaviour and can be an important way of giving compliments and expressing gratitude.

Effective praise provides nourishment for a pupil's personality and strengthens our relationship with them. Many will have had experiences where they have not received such positive reinforcement of their behaviour and may be suspicious or mistrusting. So, it is important that it is genuine and maintained over time to bring the best results.

Praise helps to build what is the most important and significant reinforcer for a pupil's behaviour - their own internal feelings of achievement, satisfaction, pleasure in having one's efforts recognised and celebrated.

## **9.2 Rewards**

Rewards can also be used; however, these should not be used as a way of persuading a pupil to behave, they should be a spontaneous act at the time or planned recognition which all can achieve.

Examples of these are:

- Approving look/smile/thumbs-up
- Verbal thanks/congratulations
- 'Star of the Week'
- Public praise (class/school/end of term party audience)
- Additional responsibilities

## **9.3 Consequences**

Pupils need to understand that there are consequences for everything we do, these are often natural such as they broke the wing mirror on the car, the natural consequence of this is that the car is no longer safe to use therefore they cannot go out in the car.

Consequences are directed towards a pupil's behaviour and not them as a person. Staff need to work to try and understand the meaning of the behaviour as every behaviour is a means of communication.

When using consequences, we must be prepared to support the pupil through them, spending time with them and repairing the relationship. This is an opportunity to hold a PACE style conversation about the behaviour. For example, cleaning areas of the school particularly where they have made a mess, picking up litter or time spent making up for missed work.

Consequences must be relevant, fair, proportionate and time limited, and a written record kept. All consequences should take into account the age, understanding and individual needs of the pupil and be mindful that behaviours that challenge may be the result of illness, bullying or disabilities.

Examples of consequences are:

- Reproving look
- Visual reminders
- Verbal reminders
- Complete tasks
- Required to leave a communal space



- Repair damage/clear mess
- Police contacted – Orbis' approach to education aims to minimise the need for police involvement to deal with challenging behaviour and avoids criminalising children unnecessarily. The school follows procedures and guidance on police involvement which are detailed in the Police Involvement Policy.

**Consequences must not include:**

- Any form of corporal punishment including the unnecessary use of force.
- Any punishment involving the consumption or deprivation of food or drink.
- Humiliation, including any requirement that a pupil wear distinctive clothes.
- Any measure which involves any pupil in the imposition of any consequence against another pupil.
- The punishment of a group of pupils for the behaviour of an individual pupil.

**10. Training**

- All staff will complete Awareness of PBS, Trauma and PACE training as a minimum.
- All staff during their induction will receive non pain based, training in pro-active strategies and physical intervention techniques as approved by the Board of Directors. Refresher training will be delivered on an annual basis, and this is mandatory for staff to attend this. Staff will be instructed in the techniques that are agreed with the training provider, through an annual organisational training needs analysis.

**11. Equality Impact Statement**

All relevant persons are required to comply with this policy and must demonstrate sensitivity and competence in relation to diversity in race, faith, age, gender, disability, and sexual orientation. If you, or any other groups, believe you are disadvantaged by this policy please contact the Regional Manager for the service. Orbis will then actively respond to the enquiry.

**Policy Review Date:** August 2026

Signature:  (Director of Education)

**Orbis is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all young persons in our care and expects all staff to share this commitment. This means that we have up to date Safeguarding & associated policies and procedures in place. All staff must ensure that they are aware of these policies and procedures.**

*This policy relates to Articles of the UNCRC*

*Our schools are rights respecting schools. Throughout this policy all pupils are to be regarded as 'Rights holders', and all adults are to be regarded as 'duty bearers'.*

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