

## **Behaviour and Exclusions from School during COVID-19**

### **Behaviour Principles**

In light of changes to the way society is expected to behave around one another due to the COVID-19 pandemic, children are also expected to behave differently on their return to school. The current Behaviour Policy (2019) and ethos behind it still stands, however there are certain expectations that children will now follow in addition.

The disciplinary powers that schools currently have, including exclusion, remain in place. We are aware that the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents in a way that affects behaviour and will be taken into account when dealing with breaches of our School behaviour policy. Reasonable adjustments will be made for children with individual needs which are recorded on their individual needs assessments.

### **Additions to Wheatfields Behaviour Policy**

We have made the following additions to our Behaviour Policy for all children:

- Children and parents are expected to follow the altered routines for arrival and departure and adhere to social distancing at school, en route to school and outside school as per the UK Government guidance.
- Children will follow school instructions on hygiene, such as handwashing and sanitising.
- Children will follow instructions on who they can socialise with at school (their bubble).
- Children will move around school without touching things unnecessarily.
- Reminders of expectations about sneezing, coughing, tissues and disposal ('catch it, bin it, kill it') and avoiding touching your mouth, nose and eyes with hands will be shared regularly with the children.
- Children will be reminded to tell an adult if they are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus – there are posters up around school to remind children of what these are.
- Rules about sharing any equipment or other items including drinking bottles will be shared upon arrival into school each day.
- Children will be informed of their 'new' play areas and will be expected to stay within these bubbles.
- Use of toilets will be restricted to a minimum amount of children at any one time and supervision of hand washing will take place where this is practicable. There are posters on the walls to remind children how to do this.
- The purposeful coughing or spitting at or towards any other person will not be tolerated and will be treated seriously; parents of both the perpetrator and victim will be informed. Each case will be dealt with individually and fairly, with sanctions imposed as deemed appropriate following the restorative approach. These could include (but are not limited to) completing a letter or picture of apology, loss of playtimes, lunchtimes or independent choice activities to talk through with an adult

and give reminders of why these are unacceptable behaviours. In circumstances where this behaviour is repeated and causes a risk to children and staff, this can result in exclusion (see below).

- There are clear expectations for pupils at home about conduct in relation to remote education and lines of communication are available for parents to discuss any difficulty in completing Home Learning tasks.

## **Exclusions**

From March 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic has led to a change in how we define some of our children's behaviours in school and our assessment as to whether these are difficult or dangerous, particularly where a child or young person's behaviours could cause an increased risk to their own health or the health of others as detailed above. Examples of this might include (but are not limited to):

- spitting
- repeated disregard of social distancing rules
- not staying in their class bubble

Head teachers retain the power to exclude pupils on disciplinary grounds. Any decision to exclude should be lawful (with respect to the legislation relating directly to exclusions and a school's wider legal duties, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the Equality Act 2010); rational; reasonable; fair; and proportionate. Permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches of the school's 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.

In the case of repeated unsafe behaviours, the School will work together with the child, parents/carers to carry out a risk assessment which will explore whether a child can manage in the school environment, under current circumstances. In exceptional circumstances, the outcomes of the risk assessment may mean we are unable to offer a place in school, at this time. If a child is unable to manage within the safety rules to minimize Covid-19 risk, then an offer of a school place may be removed until a new plan and phased return can be implemented that ensures the current guidance can be adhered to. In all cases, the child's Risk Assessment and plan will be regularly reviewed and the school will work with the family to ensure support to the child is provided in other ways, through reasonable endeavours.

## **Reinstatement of excluded pupils, and the process for independent review panels (IRPs)**

The timeframes set out in the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 remain in force. This applies to all exclusions, including those that were issued before 23 March.

The government appreciates that it may not be possible to meet the timeframes set out in regulations for review meetings and IRPs, due to the disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the health risks of holding meetings. The Regulations

themselves envisage that the timeframes may not always be met, which is why they specify that meetings and panel hearings must still go ahead even if the relevant deadline has been missed. It is for the governing board or arranging authority to assess the facts of the case and decide whether the statutory deadlines are achievable or whether, in the circumstances, the meeting has to be delayed. Governing boards and arranging authorities should continue to take reasonable steps to ensure meetings are arranged for a time when all parties are able to attend.”

### **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Risk Assessment Guidance**

If the School feels that we are currently unable to offer a place or we need to withdraw a place due to a child or young person’s behaviours, we will undertake a risk assessment, to evidence and record that decision and look at what reasonable endeavours we can offer to the child and family in order to support the reintegration of the child. We will review and work in partnership with multiagency colleagues to mitigate against any repeating behaviours, including those behaviours that could be rooted in anxiety.