

Behaviour Policy

Our Ethos

Portal House School endeavours to create a challenging and inspiring learning environment, where staff work together to encourage all students to reach their full potential. We celebrate the success of our students and encourage their individual talents and skills. We aim to maximise their access to and engagement with social and educational settings and provide choices and opportunities which are appropriate to their present and future needs and aspirations.

School Values

Portal House School works towards providing learning opportunities where students experience:

- A sense of personal security
- Enjoyment of learning
- Respect and being valued
- Supportive relationships
- Sharing their lives with positive adult role models
- Clear, meaningful and flexible boundary setting
- Successful achievement boosting their self-esteem
- Opportunities to obtain academic qualifications
- Chance to flourish and exercise personal responsibility

Through developing personal resilience and providing students with the motivation to succeed, Portal House School encourages students to be the best they can be!

Behaviour Principles

Portal House School's Social and Emotional Behaviour Support Policy is a set of shared values, key principles and support systems, student and staff expectations and rules reinforced by rewards and sanctions. Students, parents and carers are asked to sign a Home School Agreement which outlines the principles of the policy before joining the school. Current government legislation underpins the Policy for Supporting the Behaviour of students with SEMH Needs.

Portal House school is an environment where students may learn much of what they require to help them to become successful adults. Students need support to begin to develop internal controls, to take responsibility for their behaviour, to learn to develop interpersonal skills in order to help their relationships with others and in their attitude towards the learning process.

The school works hard to foster a welcoming, supportive and well-boundaried atmosphere dependent upon the interaction of many important factors. It involves students, parents/carers and staff and governors working in partnership to communicate effectively and accept responsibility for the creation of that environment. It is not something that 'just happens'. It relies upon good organisation and the implementation of a number of key principles.

These principles include:

1. The staff and governors accepting their responsibility to:

- ensure that consistent and high quality programmes are delivered, both behavioural and academic, to meet each individual student's needs
- ensure that a positive partnership with parents/carers is developed. Recognise that the overall care and responsibility of each student lies with the parents/carers and that their support and encouragement throughout the education process is vital.
- provide a secure base on which to build trusting and nurturing relationships in order that students may receive the differentiated emotional and social support they need to settle to learn.

2. The quality of the relationships between staff and students are:

- built upon trust, mutual respect and understanding
- able to provide security, predictability, advocacy, challenge, modelling, develop curiosity, translating and explanation.

3. All students are treated equally in:

- the fair allocation of resources to all groups, tailored to individual needs
- the way in which all students are treated by staff
- that no student is given authority over other students; only staff may instruct a student in what to do

4. Respect forms the basis of the learning ethos and is everybody's responsibility to:

- respect themselves and their needs
- respect other people and their needs
- respect their own and other people's property
- respect the learning process
- respect school property, buildings and their surroundings
- Respect the local community

5. Staff being competent to complete their specific roles in order to make the system work:

- having a broad variety of professional, personal skills and competencies to work successfully and build positive relationships with students who have complex Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties
- having a well-structured programme of staff training, utilising both internal and external resources
- responding with confidence and in an appropriate manner
- being aware of the principles and procedures employed by the school
- receiving in-service training in the aims, objectives, procedures and methods of working within the school

6. High staffing levels providing for:

- small groups
- good supervision
- development of sound relationships
- support at social times
- awareness of situations that could be developing

- understanding of group dynamics and potential risks
- ability to introduce preventative techniques in order to manage discipline problems
- differentiated interventions

7. A structured approach maintaining:

- the overall discipline in the school
- stability and security for the students
- behavioural boundaries and clear value statements
- routines allowing all students to know what's expected of them and what the arrangements are for their 'care'
- individual student targets, which are monitored regularly and understood by each student

8. The organisation of the school day allows all students to:

- enjoy the 'freedom' of the school grounds in a safe and constructive way
- be supervised and supported by a member of staff whilst they engage in break- time activities
- be kept safe from harm
- develop skills and interests

9. Matters concerning discipline are dealt with as quickly and fairly as possible by:

- not leaving incidents unresolved, as doing so can create feelings of anxiety for students
- the member of staff concerned wherever possible
- staff reporting the incident as soon as possible to a member of the Senior Leadership Team

10. Inappropriate behaviour is always recorded as follows:

- Tutors and staff use the points sheets for each student to identify minor incidents of behaviour record
- More serious incidents are recorded on SIMs
- Senior Leadership Team meet at the end of the school day to review the daily behaviour report produced using SIMs and sanctions imposed by the staff involved and decide upon any further sanctions in line with this policy
- further discussion takes place in the form of a daily morning meeting between the Senior Leadership Team and Tutors and Teaching Assistants (TA's). Actions, sanctions and support interventions are planned and recorded
- incidents of racial abuse, bullying or harassment are specifically recorded. (See Anti-Bullying Policy)
- any incident which has required the escorting, moving or handling of a student is recorded on SIMs it is also recorded in a bound and numbered book and reported immediately to the Senior Leadership

11. All members of staff have realistic expectations of the students in their care:

- understanding that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are a normal part of child development as students explore the boundaries of what is permissible and that all behaviour is a form of communication
- helping students to understand that staff care enough to let them know if and when this behaviour becomes unacceptable
- guiding is reinforced with consistent praise and sanctions
- displaying expectations and rewards throughout the school

12. A commitment to applying Restorative Approaches to conflict resolution:

Portal House believes in using Restorative Justice Practices, whenever possible, to repair and rebuild relationships. Restorative practice can involve both a proactive approach to preventing harm and conflict, and activities that repair harm where conflicts have already arisen. It offers a framework that enables students to develop their social communication and reflective skills. It can be used to address bullying issues or other relationship difficulties, but also to:

- encourage all students to reflect on their behaviour and to understand the consequences of their behaviour choices
- ensure that students develop the skills to repair and rebuild relationships that have been affected by their behaviour choices

Expectations

Students and staff are to be very clear about expectations of student behaviour throughout the day. It is expected that students will:

- Attend every day - students are encouraged to attend on a regular daily basis. Parents/carers are requested to inform staff about any absence as soon as possible, in accordance with the Attendance Policy. The Pastoral team phone home on each day of absence
- Wear school uniform - it is expected that all students will wear the uniform. School fleeces, school polo-shirts and black trousers/shorts and any appropriate footwear. All students are expected to wear the PE uniform
- Leave personal possessions at home - as the school cannot accept any responsibility for personal property, students are requested not to bring personal possessions to school. For safety reasons students are asked to remove, and hand in, all items of jewellery and to tie back long hair when appropriate. Watches may be worn but the school cannot accept liability for any loss or damage. If personal possessions are brought to school students will be required to hand these in on arrival. These will be stored in a safe place ready for collection at the end of the school day. Failure to hand in items may result in confiscation; items will then only be returned to parents or carers. Portal House will not be responsible for any possessions that are damaged, lost or stolen, and it is for this reason we will discourage them from school
- Mobile phones are best left at home - if they are brought in they should be handed in to Tutors for safekeeping and collected at the end of the school day
- Walk when moving around the school - for Health and Safety reasons it is inappropriate for students to run around the school and on staircases. It is also unacceptable for students to climb internal or external walls/fences
- Behave appropriately while in school - students are expected to be punctual for all activities throughout the school
- Behave appropriately while on the way to and from school - students are expected to be polite and safety conscious in the transport provided for travelling to and from school
- Refrain from smoking - Portal House School is a non-smoking environment, and as such, smoking is not permitted on school grounds. Students are not permitted to leave our school sites during the day, unless they have express permission to do so. Smoking paraphernalia should remain at home or be handed in to Tutors on arrival at school

The School Rules

Are short and simple:

1. We are always in the right place – to be safe
2. We do as we are asked
3. We speak politely to everyone
4. We do not hurt anyone
5. We respect other people's possessions and property
6. We do not swear

Certain activities require additional rules that are specific to that activity and these will be made known to the students when necessary and displayed in each teaching/work area. Failure to conform to the health and safety requirements of a specific activity may result in the temporary withdrawal from the activity or curriculum area.

Rewards

Encouragement and praise are very important for students.

This constant feedback provides recognition of the effort that students are making. It helps them to realise that their efforts and improvement are noticed. 'Catching them being good' and illustrating the results of their efforts reinforces the concept that things do not happen merely by chance or fate, but that their actions, both positive and negative, will have consequences. This empowers the students to begin to monitor and regulate their own behaviour.

Students are encouraged and rewarded for appropriate work and behaviour. This informs them in clear, specific terms what it is that they are being rewarded for (co-operation, kindness, ignoring others inappropriate behaviour, etc.) Rewards are to be given as soon as possible after they have been earned. Rewards can take the form of social reward, private praise; symbolic reward (points), tangible rewards (certificates, trips, raffle tickets etc.)

Non-Verbal Praise - It is important to remember that at least 55% of a message is given non-verbally and that the use of body language and gesture can be very affirming for a young person. It is not always necessary to verbalise encouragement and praise.

Verbal Praise - Staff will be aware of, and actively seek, opportunities to encourage and reward appropriate work and behaviour using verbal praise. To be most effective, this needs to be given immediately after it has been earned. Some students may be uncomfortable with public praise and staff will be sensitive to individual need and respond accordingly

Points Reward System – To provide an incentive and recognition that good behaviour is valued, a whole school point's scheme operates across the school day. The theory behind this is from a 'token economy'.

It is based around the six school rules which are relevant at all times during the school day. These rules were agreed following consultation between staff and students and are displayed prominently in all areas. They are taught and referred to when staff are dealing with pupils.

Purpose

1. To provide a framework for rewarding and celebrating success and monitoring behaviour over time.
2. To provide an incentive to motivate students to make an effort to change their behaviour.
3. To use as a discussion point with students to bring about change in behaviour (formative assessment of presenting behaviours).

Our Whole School Points Scheme – How it works

Pupils are encouraged to achieve points. They are monitored and awarded points every 30 minutes during lessons and every 15 minutes during all other times while they are at school.

- Following the 6 schools rules (general behaviour): 6 points
- Provision Plan Target 1: 1 point
- Provision Plan Target 2: 1 point

In each one hour lesson students can achieve a maximum of 16 points. Up to 8 points awarded for the first ½ (30 mins.) and a further 8 points for the second half. This allows students, if need be, to receive points for a change in behaviour part way through a lesson i.e. a fresh start every 30 mins.

Where appropriate, students should be made aware of the points that they have been awarded. It is the responsibility of the teacher/member of staff designated in charge/responsible of the student/group to award points and ensure that they are recorded. Students do not at any time, make up un-awarded points, nor have previously awarded points taken off them.

Throughout the day, these points are recorded and entered onto the school network system. Form Tutors often discuss point achievements with students, congratulate and/or plan strategies for improvement.

BEHAVIOUR IN CLASS AND LUNCH Awarded every ½ hour	PROVISION PLAN TARGETS (T1, T2) Awarded every ½ hour	BEHAVIOUR IN ASSEMBLY AND BREAKS Awarded every ¼ hour
6.points Conforms to all 6 school rules. 5 points Conforms to 5 rules. 4 points Conforms to 4 rules. And so on. 0 points No attempt to conform to any school rules.	1 point = Target 1 achieved 1 point = Target 2 achieved	6.points Conforms to all 6 school rules. 5 points Conforms to 5 rules. 4 points Conforms to 4 rules. And so on. 0 points No attempt to conform to any school rules.

Off site/out of class activities

When a student is taken off site for an activity the teacher will make a judgement on behaviour based on the school rules and whether the objectives of the visit have been met by the student. An overall point's score will be awarded for the duration of the visit.

Points Scheme Awards

On Thursday afternoon points for the week are totalled and awards allocated on the following basis:

PLATINUM AWARD - achieving 100% of available points

GOLD AWARD - achieving over 97.5% of available points.

SILVER AWARD - achieving over 95% of available points.

BRONZE AWARD - achieving over 90% of available points.

On Friday morning during Praise Assembly, students are:

- Awarded a Certificate for their weekly point's achievement.
- Publicly praised and acknowledged.
- Their name is displayed on the relevant Awards Ladder for the week.
- The relevant number of raffle tickets are placed into the end of term raffle draw.

The rewards for achieving sufficient points to receive either a Gold, Silver or Bronze award are as follows:

Platinum Award

- A platinum Certificate
- 4 raffle tickets for the end of term raffle
- 4 tokens towards the end of term trip
- Gold Activity (time out of class on Friday morning 1030 - 1200 to take part in a choice of activities)
- An option to wear own clothes on Friday (non-uniform day)

Gold Award

- A Gold Certificate
- 3 raffle tickets for the end of term raffle
- 3 tokens towards an end of term trip
- Gold Activity (time out of class on Friday morning 1030 - 1200 to take part in a choice of activities)
- An option to wear own clothes on Friday (non-uniform day)

Silver Award

- A Silver Certificate
- 2 raffle tickets for the end of term raffle
- 2 tokens towards an end of term trip
- An option to wear own clothes on Friday (non-uniform day)

Bronze Award

- A Bronze Certificate
- 1 raffle ticket for the end of term raffle
- 1 token towards an end of term trip

Students who have not achieved sufficient points to be awarded a certificate receive extra support and guidance to help them achieve.

Termly Raffle - Each week tickets are added into the raffle drum. During the End of Term Praise Assembly, the termly raffle is drawn. Ten different student names are drawn from the drum (if the same name is drawn twice, then another ticket is drawn and so on). Students are able to choose a

prize off a table displaying a good range of desirable items (prizes which pupils have requested, such as a snooker cue, a watch, footballs or shop vouchers etc.)

Termly Token Exchange Trips - The Top 10 point achievers receive additional recognition and an option tokens accumulated over the term may be exchanged to attend a special activities arranged at the end of term e.g. Thorpe Park, Chessington, Ice Skating, PaintBalling, Clip and Climb).

Senior Pupils - A further incentive for those students who consistently attain high point scores is to achieve Senior Pupil status. Senior pupils are not monitored via the points scheme with the aim of promoting self-regulation and motivation to and prepare students for future placements which could be in a less structured environments This is with the proviso that they can return to the point's scheme for monitoring, support and reward if necessary.

The criteria for becoming a Senior Pupil:

A Pupil must:

- consistently achieve Gold or Platinum Awards over a period of time (10 weeks or more).
- be self-motivated, confident and trustworthy and capable of self-regulating own behaviour
- present as a positive role model to others and have excellent attendance
- want to be a Senior Pupil

Privileges

- taken off points scheme, name displayed on Senior Pupil Shield in the dining room
- receive 4 raffle tickets each week for the termly raffle
- first choice of Gold activity on Friday morning each week
- trusted to complete un-escorted errands around school
- public recognition of achievement
- choice of wearing a 'senior top' instead of the usual school uniform, fleece or jumper.
- leaving assemblies first un-escorted.

The criteria for remaining a 'Senior Pupil'

- Adhere to school rules, policies and procedures
- Self-motivated to do well at school not relying on regular feedback re: points achievements
- Aim to achieve individual behaviour and subject specific learning targets regularly.
- General performance at school is consistently sound across all areas and times of the day.
- Able to accept correction/disappointment in an age appropriate manner.
- Capable of reflecting upon one's own performance and adjusting behaviour accordingly.
- Demonstrate positive behaviours towards own school work, the work of others and education in general
- Accept and carry out additional/above and beyond tasks i.e. helping to show visitors around school occasionally, be part of an interview panel for prospective new staff, represent the school on off-site activities.
- School attendance is very high at least 96.5% or valid reason given.
- Occasionally, behaviour may fall short of standards expected ('a blip', usually due to reasons outside school). Support, advice and time will be given to achieve time related targets for improvement. (Form Tutor and Senior Leadership Team will manage and monitor this process through analysing points, behaviour incidents data and general presentation).

If ongoing behaviour concerns are raised, then the following procedure is adopted.

- a. Discuss concerns with the form tutor.

- b. Form tutor monitors the student's behaviour for 2 weeks and gives advice for improvement. Either the student's behaviour will improve back up to standard, and no further action is required.
- c. If, still presenting difficulties managing behaviour, the form tutor will devise new strategies to help change inappropriate behaviours and put the student back on points for 6 weeks for monitoring purposes.
- d. After a period of 6 weeks back on points, the situation will be reviewed with the form tutor and the Senior Leadership Team. A joint decision will be made as to whether the student retains his Senior status and comes off points or loses his Senior Status.

Reward for retaining 'Senior Pupil' status

- Receive a whole school behaviour shield at the end of every term.
- Plus all the usual perks that come with achieving 'Senior Pupil Status'.

Gift Certificates - Gift certificates are issued for students who have managed 95% or higher attendance for a term. These certificates will be presented at the end of term Celebration Assembly.

Award Shields - Award shields are issued for outstanding effort or achievement in all subject areas and activities. These are awarded at the end of term Celebration Assembly. Each student will take home the Award shield to share their success with their parents/carers.

Phone Call Home - Parents and carers are kept informed of the positive aspects of a student's academic and behavioural progress with daily/weekly emails/phone calls made by the tutor/supporting TA in addition to calls made regarding poor behaviour and absence

Letters Home - Letters will be sent home reinforcing the positive achievement for parents/carers to share in their youngster's success. Letters may also be sent home by the Senior Leadership Team expressing teachers' concern regarding behaviour, attendance or work output.

The discretionary use of Special Treats - Special treats or rewards are available as a very effective approach to rewarding positive individual (or group) behaviour. Staff need to be mindful of the students health and dietary needs when rewarding with sweets. It is important to have special rewards to use when the group is working well or which the group can work towards. Staff are able to take groups out during the day for special day trips to motivate a group and reward them at the same time. All special treats or trips need to be authorised by the Senior Leadership Team prior to implementation.

Special Group Activities – These may be for individual classes, or year groups and are primarily to reward positive behaviour and improvement.

Residential Trips – Portal House school runs residential activity trips, which are organised and managed by the teaching staff. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour and effort in work to 'earn' places on these residential trips.

Sanctions

Positive behaviour Leadership relies upon relationships and the environment to give a firm and commonly understood structure and sense of order. However, it is accepted that sanctions are required from time to time and need to be kept to a minimum. There will be occasions when students

find it difficult to follow expectations, and prevent the staff from working and other students from learning. When this occurs staff will be prepared to deal with it in a planned way, calmly, quickly and consistently and without undermining the student's sense of responsibility or self-esteem.

This is a shared responsibility, requiring consistent input from all members of Portal House. The skills and preventative techniques employed will be effective only if they fit with the ethos and philosophy of the school.

Permitted Sanctions

Stage 1

- a) **Withdrawal of attention:** Attention given to inappropriate behaviour should be limited, whilst praising those around who are working and behaving appropriately.
- b) **Use of Communication Skills:** Non-judgmental, unconditional responding can defuse a potentially volatile situation. Awareness of the young person's level of self-esteem will be invaluable here.
- c) **Distraction and Deflection:** Timely physical presence of another adult to offer distraction with another activity or deflection from the difficulty can provide adequate diffusion of a problem.
- d) **Reminder of expectation:** A gentle verbal reminder of the expectations of student behaviour may be sufficient for a student to self-regulate.
- e) **Mild or more severe verbal reprimand:** In most cases all that is required is a verbal reprimand. The student needs to be informed of what he/she has done wrong and what you expect him/her to do in the future.
- f) **Loss of Points:** Points may be deducted from the student's point sheet for behaviour and work. Consistency is vital as students can be misled and confused in their understanding of adult's boundaries and what they need to do to demonstrate they have achieved their targets.

Stage 2

The following sanctions must be recorded on SIMs.

- a) **Detention** - If a student behaves in such a way that his learning is restricted then he will be asked to make up time with the class teacher or activity instructor, either in morning break or lunch time break.
- b) **Phone Call** – From Tutor, TA or Senior Leadership Team, informing parents/carers about their child's inappropriate behaviour.
- c) **Detention at the end of the school day** - Parents will be contacted and the necessary arrangements made to transport the student home.

Stage 3

These sanctions will be reported to parents/carers.

- a) **Internal seclusion as appropriate** - Students begin each subject lesson or activity with a fresh start but there may be occasions when, for their own physical and psychological safety, or for the safety of others, a student may be requested to remain in seclusion from other students for a period of time decided by the Senior Leadership Team.
- b) **On Report** - Close involvement of parents/carers in the Leadership of their child's needs is encouraged and there may be occasions when, for a fixed time, a student is required to be placed on a daily report/positive report/Gate card. Comments on behaviour can be recorded. It is important that positive comments are also recorded.

Stage 4

These sanctions must be supported by a Pastoral Support Plan

- a) **Suspension** - If all the above sanctions have proved to be unsuccessful, then the student's needs will be discussed with the Senior Leadership Team with a view to a possible fixed term exclusion. An individual Behavioural Support Plan will be produced after 5 days of fixed term exclusion in any one term. Following any exclusion parents/ carers may be invited to attend a meeting at school with their child, to discuss their return.
- b) **Variation in Educational Programme** - The Behavioural Support Plan may indicate the necessity for an individually tailored educational programme for a student who is experiencing difficulty in accessing the curriculum as it is delivered to the whole school population.
- c) **Emergency Annual Review** – In the event of a student failing to make social and emotional progress, showing increased stress, causing significant harm to others and in need of a different form of intervention that Portal House cannot provide, an Emergency Annual Review may be held to recommend a change of provision.
- d) **Permanent Exclusion** – (See Appendix 1) Portal House School reserves the right to act with discretion in the application of any sanction.

Incidents of physical violence

In the case of physical violence the sanction procedures are as follows:

Physical violence towards adults or students – Depending upon severity, the student will:

- be removed to internal seclusion for a period of time*
- receive a fixed term suspension*
- be provided with alternative educational provision*

* Police involvement will be at the discretion of a member of the Senior Leadership Team in response to Health & Safety concerns. In the absence of a Senior Member of Staff the appropriate responsible adult will make the decision to involve the Police.

If the Student Risk Assessment indicates Police intervention this will take place according to the planning.

Following an incident of physical violence, the incident report forms must be taken as soon as possible to a member of the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that sanctions can be applied as a matter of urgency.

Physical damage to property

Depending upon severity the student will be:

- spoken to by a member of the Senior Leadership or appropriate staff
- may be asked for financial recompense
- Possibly Internally secluded
- Subject to a fixed term suspension followed by a meeting with parents/carers
- under some circumstances, a student may be asked to mend or 'make good' damage

Physical intervention must only be used:

- for the shortest period of time to enable a safe environment to be re-established
- after telling the student to stop the inappropriate behaviour
- after informing the student of what will happen if they do not stop
- after summoning assistance from other colleagues, if possible
- To prevent harm to self, peer, adult or property
- after exhausting all other techniques (depending on environmental factors)

Staff should remain calm and continue to communicate verbally with the student. Whenever possible a member of the Senior Leadership Team should be summoned.

Physical intervention may take several forms. Portal House School staff follow the Team Teach approach to Positive Handling.

Team Teach aims to use de-escalation and behaviour strategies as a standard response to challenging behaviour. The approach focuses on fostering a positive environment where physical handling is used **only as a last resort**. However, this is incorporated with positive handling techniques that are graded as the situation requires. 'Whilst these techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, as an infrequent side effect of ensuring that the service user remains safe' – excerpt of quote from George Matthews, Team Teach Director,

Staff may:

- physically interpose between students; blocking a student's path
- escort or lead a student by the arm, or
- (in extreme circumstances only) using more restrictive holds
- make it clear that the physical contact will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

If a student has been involved in an incident of assault to aid staff communication and ensure a consistent approach the following strategies will be put in place:

- information regarding the emotional volatility of the student is recorded on an individual risk assessment plan. A copy is placed on the student's individual file.
- A Risk Assessment is carried out by the school's SENCo and Student's Tutor or qualified person. This details the length of time staff may use positive handling techniques prior to Police intervention, and suggests helpful strategies if known.

Following an incident where positive handling techniques have been used.

- All incidents will be recorded by the lead member of staff on individual sequentially numbered Physical Intervention Record Sheet which are kept in a bound and numbered incident book
- Immediately following any such incident, members of staff will inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Interviews will take place with the staff and students involved
- Tutors or Pastoral staff will inform parents and carers by the end of the day on which the incident occurred
- Staff and students involved in the incident will participate in a Restorative Conversation with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to give the opportunities to discuss feelings, receive emotional support and discuss reparation of relationships

Absconding/Leaving Lessons

Every effort is made to encourage students to remain in school and to deal with any problems they may be experiencing. However, should a student leave the school buildings or grounds without permission, the following procedure is adopted.

Leaving the School Buildings without Permission

- A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be informed
- A member (or members) of staff will keep a watching brief on the student without engaging in 'chasing' the student
- If the Health and Safety or welfare of the student is deemed to be at risk staff may take action in the form of 'escorting' to ensure the safe return of the student.

Leaving the School Grounds without Permission

- A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be informed
- A member (or members) of staff may follow the student on foot or by car to encourage a safe return
- If the student refuses to return to school he will be considered to have absconded
- If a student has absconded the student's age, past behaviour and emotionality will be considered
- The parents/carers are informed as soon as possible, and they will be asked if they want to inform the police
- If the parent cannot be contacted the Police are informed and a description of the student given
- If a child/young person is a Child in Need, Child Protection or Child in Care (Looked After Child), Social Services will be notified
- Should the student subsequently return the parents/carers will be informed and the Police notified.
- The Senior Leadership Team will interview the student to identify the causes of absconding

Prohibited Sanctions

Portal House School does not condone the following sanctions in any circumstances.

- **Corporal Punishment:** This covers any intentional application of force as punishment including slapping, throwing missiles and rough handling. It also includes punching or pushing in the heat of the moment in response to violence from a student
- **Deprivation of Food & Drink:** This means denying a young person access to the normal amounts and range of food that is available to all students within the school
- **Requiring a student to wear distinctive or inappropriate clothing:** This includes: the wearing of any clothing/badge that is recognised as a punishment, wearing any clothes that are inappropriate for student or activity being undertaken
- **The Use or the Withholding of Medication or Medical or Dental Treatment:** This is unacceptable in all situations, whether it is a punishment or a measure to control a student
- **The Use of Accommodation to Physically Restrict the Liberty of a Student:** There may be exceptional circumstances when a student may be prevented from leaving a room if it is judged that they or another person would be at considerable risk of harm if they were to leave. A situation such as this could result in the Police being called to assist
- **Imposition of Fines** – Students should not be fined as a punishment for inappropriate behaviour. However, it is appropriate to request that a parent/carer make reparation for any willful damage

- **Intimate Physical Searches:** Any such searches are never appropriate. However, a student's clothing may be searched if it is believed that he is concealing any object that may cause harm to themselves or others, e.g., a weapon. A student may be requested to turn out his pockets. Should this request be refused, this is dealt with in the normal disciplinary procedure as a failure to comply with a reasonable request. If it is suspected that a student is concealing drugs then the Police should be notified
- **Excluding from Curriculum Opportunities** – e.g. Curriculum Trips. Students will not be precluded from engaging in curriculum opportunities as a sanction for poor behaviour, unless the student presents as a serious health and safety risk. The decision would be made with consultation with the Senior Leadership Team.

Managing Extreme Situations

The students with whom we work have internal factors of emotional disturbance and low self-esteem. These, allied with external factors, such as environmental and personal relationships, combine to create the potential for aggressive behaviour. Reducing such behaviour is a realistic aim, eliminating it completely is not.

Portal House, as a truly inclusive school, operates differentiated emotional and behavioural strategies tailored to students' needs. Understanding students' histories and working alongside students will create a compassionate framework conducive to building confidence, self-worth and self-control, so improving behaviour and settling to learn.

Staff are requested to be familiar with the following de-escalating techniques:

1. **Be Proactive** - Ensure that every student knows the expectations, limits, boundaries and sanctions of the school. Ensure a consistent staff approach by reading the Holistic Picture which outlines effective behaviour Leadership approaches and the risk assessment of each student.
2. **Respond, Don't React** - Intervention at an early stage by verbal response, deflection, distraction, minimises the risk of escalation. Develop awareness of body language, eye contact, personal space and mood swings. Attempt not to allow situations to develop.
3. **Monitor Situation** - Dispassionately, assess the level of emotionality and risk displayed by the aggressor. 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.'
4. **Walk Away** – Consider how the student is making you feel. Do you need to walk away and ask a colleague to take over?
5. **Behind and Beyond Behaviour** - 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 child is aggressive. Threats of sanctions and/or punishments can act as further triggers to escalate anger.
6. **Salvage Self-Esteem** - Do not enter into an either/or', 'win/lose' situation. Beware of belittling the student's 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.
7. **Defuse Feelings** - Before attempting any logical rational discussion about the behaviour, allow the student 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 them personally, avoid emotional hijack. Until the level of emotional arousal is reduced the young person will be unable to

'hear' logical reasoning. If necessary remove the whole group and / or the individual from the situation.

8. **Offer Choice** - Allow the child to choose their next move (within reason) Follow choice to logical consequence. This empowers and reduces anger, allows feelings to be acknowledged, engaging the child in taking responsibility for the resolution of underlying problems.
9. **Acknowledge own 'triggers'** - Effective, affective communication depends upon self knowledge and behaviour patterns. New behaviours do not become internalised quickly; in crisis Leadership Reactions are often based upon past coping strategies.
10. **Reparation** - A short (or long term) goal needs to include the steps that the student can take towards reparation. This may include an interview with the focus of his anger and managing the consequences of his actions. It may be appropriate for a student to do a specific task in order to make amends for the situation caused, or damage done. This must be decided in the light of the situation and it must be fair. It is important for many students that they feel they have 'made up' for the problems they have caused.

Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Any prohibited items found in a student's possession will be confiscated. These items will not be returned to the student.

We will also confiscate any item which is harmful or detrimental to school discipline. These items will be returned to pupils after discussion with senior leaders and parents, if appropriate.

Searching and screening pupils is conducted in line with the DfE's [latest guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#)

Positive Handling

When the situation becomes dangerous and alternative strategies have not worked it may be necessary to take further action.

Physical intervention must be the last option; not utilised merely because staff feel they cannot maintain and contain a young person's emotionality without it. Such interventions must be a part of the planned process and include distraction, timely physical presence and the suggested methods of de-escalation.

Only when it is clear that none of these techniques will have the effect of creating a safe environment for all concerned should physical intervention be considered. This must always be employed in a sensitive manner and one that allows a student to retain dignity.

A relationship based on trust and respect cannot develop if a student feels placed in situations where physical handling occurs in order to 'teach a lesson'.

- Any physical intervention must take into account Health and Safety Regulations and the Children Act requirements and recommendations
- The Education and Inspections Act (2006) allows teachers at school to use reasonable force to control or restrain students. It also permits other people to do so, provided they have been authorised by the Headteacher.

Within Portal House School, the Headteacher will authorise staff who may use physical intervention if necessary. The Headteacher will inform those concerned and ensure that they are aware of what the authorisation entails. A current list of authorised people will be kept and all staff informed. Physical intervention may be considered in the following situations:

- when a student attacks a member of staff or another student
- when another person is in danger of being attacked
- when students are fighting
- when a student is hurting himself
- when a student is in danger of harming themselves
- When a student is attempting to damage buildings or property

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

- [Behaviour and discipline in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff, 2016](#)
- [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2022](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation at school 2018](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2022](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England 2017](#)
- [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement - 2022](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in school](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice.](#)
- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils
- Sections 88 to 94 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), which requires 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 must publish their behaviour policy online

Appendix 1

Permanent Exclusion: Portal House's ethos and philosophy does not consider that permanent exclusion is a supportive intervention or sanction for our SEND students and the action would only be taken if the other appropriate agencies fail to cooperate in the spirit of the SEN Code of Practice i.e. unable to identify an alternative provision that can meet the needs of the identified student. This action would only be invoked under exceptional, extreme or unforeseen circumstances whereby other students/staff were at risk of very serious harm.