

Mid-Essex Primary Schools' Behaviour Policy (Including bullying and racial incidents.)

Ratified by governors: July 2024

Review due: July 2027

To be read in conjunction with LIFE Trust's Behaviour Principles and Anti-Bullying Policy and the DfE Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>.

At the LIFE Education Trust Mid-Essex Primary Schools, we believe that everybody has the right to feel safe, to be happy and to learn. Our main aim will always be to provide the best education we can, in the most effective way possible, ensuring the Christian ethos, our visions and values that we stand for are incorporated into all we do. We promote our school values: heartfelt compassion, courageous optimism and boundless creativity every day and expect children to understand and live by these.

The prime objective of the school is learning and teaching. For this to take place effectively there must be a calm and purposeful atmosphere where children and adults can listen to each other without undue distraction. We believe in promoting good behaviour and having positive expectations for each child's learning potential.

All staff have undertaken Trauma Perceptive Practice Training and through this we have compassion and kindness, hope and connection and belonging at the heart of our Behaviour Policy. This document outlines the underlying philosophy, purpose, nature, organisation and management of pupil behaviour at our school. It is designed to enhance the development of positive relationships between children, adults working in schools, parents/carers and members of the wider community.

Aims:

- To create a safe, happy and secure environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviours
- To define acceptable standards of behaviour
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To promote self-esteem, self-discipline and positive relationships
- To provide a positive atmosphere that is driven by our vision and values
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

Code of Conduct

- Be kind
- Have the courage to make the right choices
- Be respectful

Expectations

At the LIFE Mid-Essex Schools, we recognise that children bring to school a variety of behaviours based on different experiences, values, attitudes and parenting skills. We understand that staff have a central role to play in the children's social and moral development as well as their academic development.

We actively teach positive behaviour through the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) learning, the National Curriculum, Collective Worship, focus days and weeks. We take every opportunity to promote and model positive behaviour.

At school we must work towards standards of behaviour that allow every child to be and feel safe, to be happy and to learn. The Code of Conduct is based on our values and Christian ethos. We define acceptable behaviour as that which reflects these principles.

Our expectations are that the children at the LIFE Mid-Essex Schools follow the Code of Conduct in the following:

- Before and after school
- In and around the school
- In lessons and clubs
- At lunchtime and play times
- On school visits and when meeting visitors

The fair and consistent implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff. All staff are aware of the policy and model the desired behaviours. We believe in the use of positive language and look at the behaviour rather than the child.

Staff Responsibilities

Our handling of any situation will emphasise the points listed in the Code of Conduct.

- We aim to positively encourage co-operation with the Code of Conduct by modelling, praising and rewarding positive behaviour in and around the school, as well as hard work in a variety of ways
- Through effective class organisation and management, children will be encouraged to maintain positive patterns as laid down in our Code of Conduct
- Specific class rules will be agreed in collaboration with children, teachers and teaching assistants at the start of each academic year and revised / reminded frequently
- Playground rules will be discussed by the children, teachers, teaching assistants and midday assistants at the start of each academic year and revised / reminded frequently
- We ensure a good rapport with parents, enabling action should any issues arise. Please phone or contact the office if you need to see a member of staff

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

Parents/Carers should work with the school to promote the ethos of the school by:

- Being aware of and contributing to the Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct, in order to reinforce principles at home, in school and in the wider community
- Signing the Home-School agreement
- Reinforcing the school rules before and after school
- Respecting each other and setting a good example
- Supporting any sanctions the school deems necessary
- Ensuring that their children arrive to school on time and wearing the correct uniform and having the right kit for P.E. and clubs
- Keeping school informed about any situations at home that could affect their child's wellbeing
- Being involved with the school's activities including meetings and realising that by helping the school they are helping their own children
- Supporting their own children whilst being aware of the views of other children

Governors are responsible for setting the school policy in collaboration with staff and have a duty to ensure policies are implemented.

Positive Behaviour

Our emphasis is to reinforce and model good behaviour. Strategies include:

- Recognising and praising good behaviour as it occurs
- A smile or thumbs up sign
- Thanking individuals or groups of children who have worked together well and explaining to others how they have achieved this
- Positive verbal feedback
- Displaying children's work
- Awarding House Points
- Sharing work with the class or wider audience, for example, in Collective Worship
- Sharing work with another member of staff and/or SLT
- Whole school assemblies to promote and celebrate positive behaviour, including being given a certificate or an award

Inappropriate Behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour is defined as:

- Disruption in lessons, assemblies, in corridors between lessons, and at break and lunchtimes
- Non-completion of classwork
- Poor attitude

Serious Misbehaviour

Serious misbehaviour is defined as:

- Repeated breaches of the school Code of Conduct
- Any form of bullying
- Sexual violence, or sexual assault (intentional sexual touching without consent)
- Sexual harassment, meaning unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, such as:
 - Sexual comments
 - Sexual jokes or taunting
 - Physical behaviour like interfering with clothes
 - Online sexual harassment, such as unwanted sexual comments and messages (including on social media), sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos, or sharing of unwanted explicit content
- Vandalism - Willful destruction or damage to school or personal property
- Theft
- Fighting
- Causing deliberate physical harm
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, prejudiced or discriminatory behavior
- Use of abusive or threatening language to another adult or child
- Possession of any prohibited items. These are:
 - Knives or weapons
 - Illegal drugs
 - Stolen items
 - Cigarettes
 - Tobacco and cigarette papers
 - Fireworks
 - Pornographic images
 - Any article a staff member reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil)

Bullying

The LIFE Mid-Essex Schools take bullying seriously and it will not be tolerated. **Bullying is the persistent, wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else.** It is expressed by name calling, verbal aggression, physical abuse, racial abuse, singling out, silent intimidation, threats, taking possessions, spoiling work, belittling or cyber bullying. **Incidents will be followed up and sanctions will be implemented.**

All children are encouraged to tell an adult about any incident in which they believe they are a victim of, or that they have been witness to, or have reason to suspect a bullying issue. Children should not be encouraged to retaliate in any way.

It is important that any sort of bullying should be dealt with immediately. Time will be given to both the victim and the perpetrator. Adults must be seen, as listeners for the victim and the bully. Both parties must acknowledge that what has happened is wrong. Children will be given opportunities to discuss issues in class during discussion, question times, R.E., PHSE or talk to the class teacher. There is also a worry box that children can use to express their fears.

All incidents on the playground must be reported to the Head of School/Executive Headteacher and logged. Bullying is best tackled by staff acting as a team eliciting the active co-operation of the parents. All bullying must be reported to both sets of parents.

Sanctions

Despite positive responses as a means of encouraging good behaviour in the LIFE Mid-Essex Schools, we employ a stepped approach to enforce the school values and Code of Conduct and ensure a safe and positive learning environment.

De-escalation techniques can be used to help prevent further behaviour issues arising, such as the use of pre-arranged scripts and phrases.

All pupils will be treated equitably under the policy, with any factors that contributed to the behavioural incident identified and taken into account.

When giving behaviour sanctions, staff will also consider what support could be offered to a pupil to help them to meet behaviour standards in the future.

When dealing with all forms of inappropriate behaviour adults follow these principles:

Be calm- children should be dealt with calmly, firmly, with compassion and understanding, referring to what the action is and why the action is being taken.

Logical consequences- a logical consequence is a sanction that should “fit” the offence. It generally has two steps. The first step is to stop the misbehaviour and the second step is to provide an action that recalls children to the values/Code of Conduct, reinstates the limits and teaches alternative behaviours.

Fresh Start- although we record persistent and serious misbehaviours, every child must feel that every day is a fresh start and where possible that every session is a fresh start. This is in keeping with the restorative approach outlined in TPP.

The Zones of Regulation are used in KS1 and KS2. These promote positive management of feelings and behaviour. The zones of regulation help children recognise their triggers, understand the different emotions and the language to be able to communicate these feelings and most importantly give them strategies to be able to manage these emotions. All children in the school have access to this and a higher level of intervention is put in place for those children who may require extra support with their social, emotional and mental health.

If a child is not following the agreed Code of Conduct, they will be given a **reminder**. If the behaviour continues, they will be given a **warning**. If the behaviour persists, then the child will be given some **time to reflect** on their behaviour using the Time Out system. Time Out is when a child will be sent to another class to complete their work, if they are constantly disturbing the learning in their own classroom, after reminders from their class teacher. Years 1 and 2 will complete their work in Years 5 and 6 (and vice-versa). Years 3 and 4 will complete their work in EYFS (and vice-versa). The child will then be spoken to about their behaviour afterwards and the Time Out Sheet will be filled in and signed by the class teacher and senior staff.

Reflective time may also be for a period of time the following day during play or lunchtime, if lost learning time needs to be made up. This time away from learning and peers gives children an opportunity to reflect on their behaviour, the choices they have made and to return to the green zone (see zones of regulation above) where they are calm and ready to learn. It can also prevent the behaviour escalating. Each incident will be treated individually, and the child will return to their learning when they have agreed with the adult they are ready.

Individual Behaviour Plans

If a child's unacceptable behaviour is persistent over time, then a personalised stress/distress management plan will be developed to change and monitor behaviour. The plan will be developed for the individual child by the class teacher, parents and the child themselves with support from the SENCo. Plans often take the form of a chart or tracking table that is designed to reinforce positive behaviours, raise self-esteem, communicate a shared understanding, ensure consistency and monitor progress. They provide a clear understanding of sanctions or consequences.

A Personalised stress/distress management plan will:

- Involve parents at an early stage
- Look at the stressors/triggers for the child
- Create strategies to deal with stressors/triggers
- Set SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time Bound)
- Provide rewards linked to targets
- Are subject to regular review by original parties
- Includes an adult response plan to ensure consistency of approach from all staff
- Includes the use of STAR (Setting, Trigger, Action, Result) analysis to identify the communication behind the behaviour.
- May involve support from outside agencies

Zero Tolerance

At the LIFE Mid-Essex Schools, we do recognise that some more serious behaviour requires more immediate and effective action. These behaviours are listed below and result in immediate removal from the location to see the Head of School/Executive Headteacher. In situations where the child cannot be removed then the class will vacate the area and the Head of School/Executive Headteacher will be notified.

Zero tolerance behaviour will result in parents being informed and the incident recorded on My Concern (where applicable). Depending on the severity of the incident, the minimum consequence will be an internal exclusion for the remainder of that session (if the incident occurs towards the end of a session, then the internal exclusion will be for the following session) or with more persistent or extreme behaviour the child will be internally excluded for the remainder of the school day. The consequence will be specific to the behaviour and circumstances and is down to the Head of School/Executive Headteacher's discretion.

Zero tolerance behaviours include:

- Causing deliberate physical harm
- Use of abusive or threatening language to another adult or child
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, prejudiced or discriminatory behavior
- Wilful destruction or damage to school or personal property (Vandalism)
- Theft

Reasonable force

Reasonable force covers a range of interventions that involve physical contact with pupils. All members of staff have a duty to use reasonable force, in the following circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- Causing disorder
- Hurting themselves or others
- Damaging property
- Committing an offence

Incidents of reasonable force must:

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

It is important to have a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind. Wherever practical, staff will issue a warning to a pupil that force may have to be used before using it.

When considering using reasonable force, staff should, in considering the risks, carefully recognise any specific vulnerabilities of the pupil, including SEND, mental health needs or medical conditions. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil. Force

must never be used as a punishment and is illegal to do so. Positive Handling Training will be offered to all staff.

Systematic records of any serious incident are kept using the specific form below (see Appendix 1). After any recordable incident, parents will always be informed (telephone first and then confirm in writing) and first aid and emotional support will be offered to the staff and pupils involved. Punishments, such as exclusions and pastoral support programmes, may follow.

Searches and Confiscation

The schools recognise that we have a duty of care to all of our pupils; in all cases, the need to safeguard all pupils attending Mid-Essex Schools by confiscating harmful, illegal or disruptive items is vital. There is also a requirement to safeguard the needs and wellbeing of pupils suspected of possessing these items.

We will confiscate any item that is harmful or detrimental to school discipline. These items will be returned to pupils after discussion with the Head of School/Executive Headteacher and parents, if appropriate.

Searching a Pupil

A search can be considered if the member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item or any item identified, or if the pupil has agreed. The member of staff will contact the Head of School/Executive Headteacher, who has authorisation to conduct the search.

The Head of School or Executive Headteacher will carry out the search of a pupil. The search should be conducted by the same gender as the pupil and with another adult present; before any search is undertaken consent will be sought from the pupil.

If the authorised member of staff considers a search necessary, but is not required urgently, they will seek the advice of the Head of School/Executive Headteacher who may have more information about the pupil. During this time the pupil will be supervised and kept away from other pupils.

An authorised member of staff of a different sex to the pupil can carry out a search without another member of staff as a witness if:

- The authorised member of staff carrying out the search reasonably believes there is risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency; and
- In the time available, it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out by a member of staff who is the same sex as the pupil; or
- It is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff

When an authorised member of staff conducts a search without a witness they should immediately report this to another member of staff, and ensure details are reported on the school's Safeguarding Tool to ensure the DSL is immediately notified.

The school will only search a pupil if the school has good reason to and all searches will be conducted in such a manner as to minimise embarrassment or distress to the pupil. The school recognises that the action of the school in such cases could infringe on the pupil's wellbeing and rights. The school will consider that all pupils have the right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy, under Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

In all cases the school will

- Seek consent from the pupil
- Conduct the search in a calm and respectful manner
- Explain to the pupil why the search is happening
- Explain how the search will be conducted and by whom
- Inform the pupil where this will take place
- Ask the pupil if they have any questions

If the pupil refuses to agree to a search, the member of staff can give an appropriate behaviour sanction. If they still refuse to co-operate, the member of staff will contact the Head of School/Executive Headteacher to try to determine why the pupil is refusing to comply.

The authorised member of staff will then decide whether to use reasonable force to search the pupil. This decision will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration whether conducting the search will prevent the pupil harming themselves or others, damaging property or from causing disorder.

Where there is suspicion of knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs or stolen items (referred to in the legislation as "prohibited items"), the pupil may be searched without their consent. Where possible the school will inform the parents that a search will be carried out for a prohibited item, prior to the search being carried out. However, in circumstances where it has not been possible to make contact the parents will be informed of the search and outcome after the event and within a timely manner. All searches will be treated as a safeguarding concern; the DSL will be informed and details will be logged on the school's safeguarding tool My Concern, recording:

- The date, time and location of the search
- Which pupil was searched
- Who conducted the search and any other adults or pupils present
- The reason for the search
- What items, if any, were found
- What follow-up action was taken as a consequence of the search

Authorised staff will search a pupil's bag, pockets and require pupils to remove outer clothing, meaning clothes that are not worn directly next to the skin or over underwear. Outer clothing also includes:

- Gloves
- Scarves
- Shoes

The school will search for:

- Any items with the pupil's informed consent
- Prohibited or banned items, with or without the pupil's consent

Prohibited items are:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco, cigarette papers & Vapes
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Scissors
- Razor blades
- Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to:

Commit an offence

Cause personal injury (including the pupil) or damage property

Pupils who have been in the possession of drug, alcohol or weapons will be considered vulnerable and at risk of exploitation. The school will work with and endeavour to seek the appropriate help from professional services to support the young person.

When items are found, they can be confiscated if it is reasonable to do so and they are not allowed under the school rules. Where any article is thought to be a weapon, it must be passed to the Police.

The staff are not allowed to carry out strip searches, including the Head of School and authorised staff. Only police under the Police and Criminal Act 1984 (Code A) and in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (Code C) who have been asked to come to the school may decide whether a search is necessary and carry it out.

Before calling the Police into school, staff will assess and balance the risk of a potential strip search on the pupil's mental and physical wellbeing and the risk of not recovering the suspected item. Once the police are on school premises, the decision on whether to conduct a strip search lies solely with them. The school will advocate for the safety and wellbeing of the pupil(s) involved. Staff retain a duty of care to the pupil involved and should advocate for pupil wellbeing at all times.

Behaviour Outside of School

The LIFE Mid-Essex Schools expect pupils to represent the school positively in the local community and whilst on school trips. Our Behaviour Policy applies to off-site trips and visits. For behaviour outside of school but not on school business, sanctions will apply if there is a clear link between that behaviour and damage to the reputation of the school or maintaining good behaviour and discipline amongst the pupil body as a whole.

Sexualised Behaviour

Whilst it is normal for children to exhibit curiosity with regards their own bodies and physical development it is essential that clear boundaries are set to protect all children from abuse and to reflect cultural and societal expectations. It is appropriate to discuss incidents with the child, suggest alternative games, make a record of event and inform designated safeguarding officers (Head of School/Executive Headteacher). If a child discloses inappropriate serious sexual behaviour involving other children or adults it is the legal duty of the adult to inform the designated child protection teacher immediately. Repeated or serious sexualised behaviour will result in a referral to Children's Social Care/Police Services.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

To be fully inclusive the school expects the same standards of safe and respectful conduct from all of its pupils. This behaviour policy applies to all pupils who attend the school however, the school acknowledges its duty not to discriminate on the basis of special educational need or disability and that it has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that all children are included and receive their education entitlement. For children with additional needs who present behavioural challenges the school will additionally seek the support and advice of external agencies. Reasonable adjustments may include changes to timetabling, to the received curriculum and the provision of resources and scaffolds such as visual timetables and additional adult support.

Suspensions and Exclusions

If the measures designed to modify pupil behaviour fail, and/or the severity of the behaviour is such that the safety and welfare of pupils and staff is compromised, then a temporary suspension or permanent exclusion will occur. Although the school's ethos is one of inclusion, if circumstances demand it then the school will not hesitate in using exclusion to protect the welfare of the school community.

From September 1998, Heads of School/Executive Headteachers are able to exclude a pupil for up to 45 days in a school year. Whenever a pupil is excluded, the parents must be informed without delay, ordinarily on the day of exclusion: in person, by telephone, email or a hand delivered message. If the initial notification is by telephone or in person, then written confirmation should be sent within forty-eight hours. We follow guidelines provided by Essex County Council.

Monitoring

This policy is to be reviewed and ratified on a bi-annual basis. In order to inform this process and ensure that it helps to achieve whole school improvement it is important that this policy is rigorously monitored.

The Head of School/Executive Headteacher will be responsible for monitoring the impact on pupil behaviour. Reference will be made to measurable criteria such as the number of pupil referrals to the Head of School/Executive Headteacher, or behavioural consultations with parents/carers, the number of children with social and emotional plans or the number of suspensions/exclusions. Comments from visitors, the general appearance of the school environment and levels of attendance at consultation evenings and social events are also indicative of pupil behaviour and support for the school.

APPENDIX 1 – Record of Serious Incident Form

NAME OF SCHOOL	
Details of pupil or pupils on whom force was used by a member of staff	
Name	
Class	
Date, Time, location	
Names of staff involved (directly or as witnesses)	
Details of other pupils involved (directly or as witnesses), including whether any of the pupils involved were vulnerable for SEN, disability, medical or social reasons	
Description of incident by the staff involved, including any attempts to deescalate and warnings given that force might be used	
Reason for using force and description of force used	
Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid and/or medical attention required	
Any information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies	
When and how those with parental responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed.	
Has any complaint been lodged (details should not be recorded here)?	
Report compiled by: Name, role and date	
Report countersigned by: Name, role and date	