**Covid 19. Temporary changes to behaviour policy – guidance for schools**

Health and Safety considerations in light of the Covid 19 pandemic are of paramount importance in school and school leaders have made significant adaptations to their policies and processes in response to this. This will include the behaviour policy and practice in light of the new conditions in which schools need to operate. This document is intended **as guidance** and to support schools to make any necessary amendments to their policies and procedures following consideration by the Headteacher, governing body and senior leaders. It should be noted that there has been no updated guidance from Welsh Government at the date this document is issued, should updates be received this document will be reviewed accordingly.

**Behaviour Policy**

It is the responsibility of the governing body to set the principles for behaviour and inclusion. It the responsibility of headteachers and school leaders to develop operational policy and practice based on the guidance available and in line with governing body expectations. The governing body should approve or ratify any changes, temporary amendments or additions to school policy by school leaders.

It is acknowledged that the return to school is a very challenging time for school communities and changes in routine, expectations and the structure of days combined with heightened anxiety can impact on behaviour. In addition to this school leaders must also consider the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and all other children attending the setting and certain behaviours which could ordinarily be tolerated could cause an increased risk to health, safety and wellbeing and must be addressed.

It is also likely that there will be full or partial closures of schools when members of the school communities test positive for the virus. In these cases remote learning will be delivered and schools will need to consider behaviour expectations in relation to virtual learning.

**Additional items for behaviour policy during the pandemic**

Items schools may wish to add to their behaviour policy during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic:

* Following any altered routines for arrival or departure
* Following school instructions on hygiene, such as handwashing and sanitising
* Following instructions on who pupils can socialise with at school
* Moving around the school following specific instructions (for example, one-way systems, out of bounds areas, queuing, lunch routines)
* Expectations about sneezing, coughing, tissues and disposal (‘catch it, bin it, kill it’)
* Telling an adult if they are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus
* Rules about sharing any equipment or other items including drinking bottles
* Amended expectations about break & play times, including where children may or may not play / socialise
* Use of toilets and cloakroom facilities
* Clear rules about coughing or spitting at or towards any other person
* Amended rewards and sanction system where appropriate.

Schools will need to identify any reasonable adjustments that need to be made for pupils with more challenging behaviour or special educational needs.

**Risk of exclusion**

While it is likely that further guidance will be issued from the Welsh Government where schools are predicting risk which may lead to exclusion of a pupil the following would be useful:

* School teams should risk assess and consequently develop a school-based plan designed to meet the pupils needs, reduce the risk of incidents occurring and which consider the safety and wellbeing of the pupil themselves, other pupils and school staff.
* Swansea Council Education Directorate advocate a graduated response to behaviour management based on school leader’s understanding of individual child’s needs.
* Reactive plans may need to be amended
* Where the individual planning for identified pupils is proving challenging, school staff should liaise the Behaviour Support Team or Educational Psychologist as well as other agencies who may be involved with the child and family.
* Where a Pastoral Support Plan is being considered schools should liaise with the Education Directorate’s Inclusion Officer.
* School -based plans should be monitored, reviewed and adapted when required.
* If despite detailed planning and implementation, behaviour proves to be challenging, schools should again seek the support of the Inclusion Officer. This may be on a virtual basis.

**Exclusion**

No school wishes to exclude a child or young person however, where there is a significant breach or persistent breaches of the school 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):

* Head teachers can consider either fixed or permanent exclusion as a response.
* For permanent exclusions reference should be given to the Welsh Government guidance.
* During coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, consideration should be given to maintaining contact with the child and family during the period of exclusion. If other agencies such as Evolve, Child and Family Services or YOS are involved it would be helpful if they could be notified of the exclusion via the Early Help Hubs.
* During the exclusion period, schools should review the pupil’s school-based plan considering what will need to be different about provision for the pupil to be successful on their return.
* On their return the pupil should be involved in a reintegration meeting which will outline how the school aims to support their successful inclusion.
* For permanent exclusion the duty lies with the local authority to provide education from day 16 of the exclusion, however you should have notified your chair of Governors and may wish to adjourn the Governors disciplinary meeting until all parties are able to access the hearing.
* The usual processes apply in terms of pupil discipline hearings although these may be conducted on a partly or fully virtual basis depending on the school’s risk assessment.

**Suggested Amendments to XXX School Behaviour Policy** **during Covid-19 Pandemic**

*This exempla policy can and should be personalised to the individual school. It is not a requirement of the local authority that these changes are made, rather they are suggestions which may support schools if considered appropriate.*

**Behaviour Principles. Covid 19**

School acknowledges that children will have had a range of different experiences during the lockdown period which may have an impact on their behaviour presentation upon return to school. Some may present with frustration as a result of being isolated from friends or having missed a significant event or experience others may have experienced bereavement or loss or another, real or perceived, traumatic episode. For many, the process of re-engagement with learning and the school community, under unusual circumstances, may require some additional input and encouragement. As a result of these varied experiences children may present with behaviour that is not usual, this may include;

• Anxiety; lack of confidence

• Challenging behaviour

• Anger; shouting, crying

• Hyperactivity and difficulties maintaining attention

In light of the need for children to behave differently and to follow specific rules on their return to school during the Covid-19 epidemic, this amendment to the Behaviour Policy outlines specific changes to guidance that pupils will have to follow. Our sole guiding principle when making any changes or adjustments to policy is to be able to keep all of our children, families and staff safe and place their wellbeing at the forefront of everything we do. These amendments will need to be communicated to pupils, parents and staff.

**Behaviour Expectations:**

* amended expectations about breaks or play times, including where children may or may not play
* clear rules about coughing or spitting at or towards any other person
* rewards and sanction system where appropriate if changed from main body of policy
* clear rules for pupils at home about conduct in relation to remote education

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**School Routines and Procedures:**

* following any altered routines for arrival or departure
* following instructions on who pupils can socialise with at school
* moving around the school as per specific instructions (for example, one-way systems, out of bounds areas, queuing, one person only in the toilets)
* rules about sharing any equipment or other items including drinking bottles
* use of toilets

**Hygiene and Health Expectations:**

* following school instructions on hygiene, such as hand washing and sanitising
* high expectations about sneezing, coughing, tissues and disposal (re-enforce **‘catch it, bin it, kill it’**) and avoiding touching your mouth, nose and eyes with hands
* tell an adult if you are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus

**Face coverings / Masks:**

* it is the school policy, in line with Welsh Government guidance, that face coverings should be worn in communal areas e.g. corridors where social distancing is not possible and the mitigation of classroom contact groups is not in place.
* mask “designs” should be appropriate for the school environment.
* if medical exemptions exist, masks do not need to be worn but, other than for specific medical reasons refusal to wear a covering / mask could be considered a breach of the school discipline policy and the graduated approach to behaviour management used.
* exclusions for refusal to wear face coverings will be an absolute last resort but may be issued if there is a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of the school community. An exclusion should only be issued when all other strategies have been exhausted and are as the result of continual and deliberate refusal to comply with requirements

**Mental Health and Emotional Support:**

* Curriculum changes to support children,
* Additional support that pupils can access above and beyond classroom provision if required e.g use of school counselling provision

**Graduated response:**

**As part of a graduated response to supporting learners who are demonstrating difficulties in responding appropriately to the expected measures to keep everyone safe, an individual risk assessment should be completed. The aim of this risk assessment is to identify areas that are or may be a barrier to maintaining the safety of the learner or others, and supporting them by putting in appropriate control measures. It is important that this process in closely monitored, evaluated and revised to continue the provision of support, and that the learner and the parents/carers are part of this process.**

If a child’s behaviour is deemed high risk, for example, refusing to adhere to safety measures, such as, hand washing, social distancing, or deliberate behaviours that put themselves or others at risk the following sanctions and disciplinary procedures could be used:

• Conversation(s) with pupil(s) which could include a verbal warning, exploring reasons for not following the expected safety measures and if possible seeking alternatives, moving seats if logistically possible and other behaviour management strategies in line with the behaviour policy.

• Once all appropriate behaviour management strategies have been exhausted, contact should be made with pupil’s parent/carer.

• If the health and safety of other pupils and staff members are put at risk by the pupils not adhering to social distancing measures, then the parent/carer will be expected to collect the pupil and a fixed term exclusion will be applied in line with exclusion guidance.

**Pupils with Additional Learning Needs**

For some children, including those with attachment concerns or ALN, and especially those with ASD, the change in routines and lack of familiarity will require additional adjustment. School recognises that behaviour could be a sign that for some individual children there is an unfulfilled need and that the behaviour is communicating that there is a problem. The school will undertake an individual risk assessment for the child and use reasonable endeavours to make the necessary adjustments to reduce the stimulus that may be triggering the challenging response. Children with ALN are recognised as being particularly vulnerable and therefore have an urgent need to be re-integrated back into school as soon as reasonably possible. School will work closely with parents to implement supportive strategies that will inform an appropriate response. If necessary school will seek external support from other agencies such as Educational Psychologists, learning disability team, behaviour support team, health and safety officers or Early Help.