Meadow Pathways Well-Being and Education Cornwall – MPWEC-

Behaviour Policy

Owner: Head of Service / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Applies to: All staff, contractors, volunteers and visiting professionals working with children and young people (CYP) engaged in Meadow Pathways EOTAS programmes (including tuition in homes, community venues and online).

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| **Purpose & Scope** |

Meadow Pathways provides Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) for CYP who require bespoke, flexible programs to access suitable education and therapeutic support. This policy sets out:

* our behaviour principles and expectations.
* our graduated approach to support, intervention and de‑escalation.
* arrangements when a CYP becomes significantly dysregulated (including, where pre‑agreed, pausing a session and returning the child home/ending the session);
* lawful use of consequences, searching, screening and confiscation.
* safe, lawful use of reasonable force (last resort only); and
* safeguarding, recording, data protection and partnership working with parents/carers and commissioning Local Authorities (LAs).

This policy covers all Meadow Pathways locations and modalities, including 1:1, small‑group, off‑site, and online sessions.

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| **2. Our Behaviour Principles** |

* **Safety first.** Safeguarding and welfare of CYP and staff are paramount.
* **Relational, trauma‑informed and neurodiversity‑affirming practice.** We assume behaviour is communication. We prioritise regulation, relationships and routines. All responses are rooted in trauma awareness and respect for individual histories.
* **High expectations with high support.** We teach prosocial behaviour explicitly and adapt teaching to need, making reasonable adjustments for SEND, neurodivergence and medical conditions.
* **Prevent, de‑escalate, restore.** We use early help, proactive planning, co‑regulation and restorative conversations to reduce recurrence.
* **Proportionate and lawful.** Any consequence is reasonable, necessary and recorded. We avoid humiliating or degrading practices.
* **Partnership.** Parents/carers and the CYP are partners in planning, review and reintegration after incidents.

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| **3. Legal & Policy Framework (summary)** |

**Meadow** **Pathways** operates in line with current statutory and non‑statutory guidance for England, including (latest editions at time of approval): Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Working Together to Safeguard Children, Behaviour in Schools (DfE), Alternative Provision guidance, guidance on Suspensions/Exclusions (as applicable to commissioning schools/AP), Searching, Screening & Confiscation, and Use of Reasonable Force. Local LA procedures and any commissioning agreement requirements also apply. (See internal reference library and updates log maintained by the DSL.)

**4. Roles & Responsibilities**

**Governing/Responsible**

* Zoe Waitz Director of Education approves this policy; oversees safeguarding and behaviour culture; receives termly incident reports.

**Head of Service:**

* Michelle Pascoe Director/DSL implements and quality assures practice; ensures adequate staffing, training, risk assessment and oversight; notifies commissioners of serious incidents.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) & Deputies:**

* Michelle Pascoe DSL will ensure consistent safeguarding practice; oversee risk assessments/behaviour support plans (BSPs); review incident records; liaise with LA/children’s social care; advise on thresholds for referral and allegations against staff.

**Staff, Tutors & Therapists:**

* follow this policy; maintain professional conduct; deliver proactive regulation strategies; log all incidents promptly; seek help early; complete mandatory training.

**Parents/Carers:**

* participate in planning and reviews; maintain agreed communication channels; support co‑regulation and reintegration; uphold the Home/EOTAS Agreement (Appendix A).

**Children & Young People:**

* are supported to understand expectations, rights and responsibilities; contribute to their BSP and reintegration steps (pupil voice captured).

**5. Behaviour Expectations**

We teach, model and rehearse the following core expectations (adapted visually for CYP):

1. **Be Safe** – keep self and others safe; follow instructions in safety plans.
2. **Be Ready** – arrive as **agreed**, with needed items, willing to try.
3. **Be Kind & Respectful** – use appropriate language, personal space, and online etiquette.
4. **Be Responsible** – look after equipment and spaces; repair/restore when harm occurs.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for SEND, neurodivergence and individual needs. Visual schedules, first/then, low‑arousal approaches, and predictable routines are standard.

**6. Graduated Response & Support**

**Universal (for all):** predictable routines; clear, positively phrased expectations; choice and control; movement/sensory breaks; task chunking; co‑created regulation toolbox; low‑arousal environments; reasonable adjustments.

**Targeted (some):** individual BSP with triggers, early warning signs and agreed scripts; emotion coaching; check‑ins; structured rewards; restorative conversations; social stories; mentoring.

**Specialist (few):** multi‑agency plan; clinical input; functional behaviour assessment (FBA); revised timetable/location; assistive tech; increased adult support; bespoke risk assessment (Appendix B).

All CYP accessing EOTAS will have a written **Behaviour Support Plan** and **Risk Assessment**, co‑produced with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the commissioning school/LA.

**7. Managing Dysregulation & Safety**

When early signs emerge, staff use calm, non‑confrontational strategies (time‑in, choices, regulation prompts). If risk escalates:

**Stage 1 – Pause/Adjust:** reduce demands; offer movement/sensory regulation; change task/environment; use agreed script.

**Stage 2 – Stop/Space:** end the activity; move to a safer space (or, if at home, reduce stimulation); remove unsafe items; maintain observation.

**Stage 3 – End/Exit (pre‑agreed):** where a **Home/EOTAS Agreement** is in place, staff may **pause or end the session** and either (a) support a planned hand‑over to a parent/carer at the session location, or (b) **return the child home** using the agreed transport/supervision arrangement. This is **not a sanction and not an exclusion**; it is a safeguarding measure to prioritise regulation and safety. The session is made up where feasible, and next steps are agreed in a **Re‑set & Reintegration Plan** within 48 hours (Appendix C).

**Emergencies:** If there is an imminent risk of significant harm that cannot be mitigated otherwise, staff may call emergency services. Parents/carers and the DSL are informed as soon as safe and practicable.

All responses must be trauma‑informed, emotionally attuned, and sensitive to the child’s history and profile.

**8. Consequences & Restorative Practice**

We use **restorative and instructional** responses wherever possible (repair, apology, re‑teaching, amends). Where a consequence is necessary it must be:

* **Proportionate and reasonable** (age, SEND, neurodivergence, trauma history and context considered);
* **Related** to the behaviour (e.g., supervised time to repair/clean where safe);
* **Recorded** with pupil voice; and
* **Explained** to the CYP and parent/carer.  
  Prohibited: degrading, humiliating or idiosyncratic punishments; unreasonable financial penalties; denying access to basic needs; extended isolation that prevents regulated learning; any unlawful discrimination.

**9. Searching, Screening & Confiscation**

Where risk assessments or context require, staff may screen for or search prohibited items *in accordance with current DfE guidance* and this policy. Prohibited items typically include knives/weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco/vapes, fireworks, pornographic/indecent images, and any item reasonably suspected to be used to commit an offence or cause injury/damage.

* Two adults present wherever practicable; same‑sex member of staff for any more intrusive search; **no intimate searches** (police only).
* Minimal, respectful, and recorded. Parent/carer and commissioner informed the same day where a prohibited item is found.
* Electronic devices may be searched where lawful and necessary for safeguarding (see Online Safety & Data Protection policies).

Local police liaison arrangements will be followed where relevant. See Appendix D for our quick‑guide and recording pro‑forma.

**10. Use of Reasonable Force (Last Resort)**

Staff may use **reasonable force** *only* to prevent immediate risk of injury to the CYP or others, prevent serious damage to property, or to maintain safety in an emergency when other strategies have not and will not work in time.

* Planned physical interventions (if ever required) must be risk assessed, agreed with parents/carers, and included in the BSP; only trained staff deploy such holds.
* **After any significant use of force:** provide first aid and reassurance; alert the DSL and Head of Service; notify parents/carers as soon as practicable; complete an incident record before end of day; consider a safeguarding referral if threshold is met; review the BSP/risk assessment.
* We record a daily report which will include details of challenging behaviours and if reasonable force has been used.

**11. Attendance, Session Pauses & Ending Sessions Early**

* In EOTAS, attendance is recorded per session. If a session is **paused or ended** for safety (Section 7), the register will reflect the appropriate code agreed with the commissioner/LA.
* Where we **return a child home**, a clear **handover protocol** is followed: two adults where possible; parent/carer receives the child; time and reason recorded; DSL informed.
* Ending a session early must trigger a **Re‑set & Reintegration** conversation with the CYP and parent/carer (Appendix C). Reasonable adjustments may include relocating sessions, changing timing/duration, or adding regulation breaks.

We do **not** use early endings or transport home as a punishment. Where patterns emerge, we convene a review with the LA/commissioner without delay.

**12. Safeguarding & Thresholds**

All staff follow the **Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy**. Behaviour concerns may be indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation or unmet need. Staff must:

* act immediately on safeguarding concerns;
* report to the DSL and record on the safeguarding system the same day;
* follow local multi‑agency procedures for early help or statutory referral;
* escalate professionally if concerned about practice (whistleblowing).  
  We consider cumulative low‑level concerns and contextual safeguarding (home, online, community). We work with parents/carers openly unless this places a child at additional risk.

**13. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

We comply with the Equality Act 2010. We anticipate and remove barriers for disabled CYP and provide reasonable adjustments. We analyse behaviour data for disproportionality (e.g., SEND, race, gender) and act to reduce inequity. Our practice is explicitly neurodiversity‑affirming and trauma‑informed.

**14. Training & Supervision**

All staff complete and refresh training in: safeguarding/KCSIE Part 1; behaviour and de‑escalation; autism/ADHD‑informed strategies; trauma‑informed practice; positive handling (where role‑required); searching and confiscation; data protection; online safety. Reflective supervision is provided following critical incidents.

**15. Recording, Data & Information Sharing**

* **Incident recording:** completed same day, factual and objective; includes antecedents, behaviour, impact, actions taken, pupil voice, parent contact, follow‑up, and any physical intervention used.
* **Data review:** DSL/Head of Service review incident trends half‑termly; summary dashboard to the governing body/proprietor and commissioners.
* **Information sharing:** in line with UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and safeguarding legislation; share what is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate and timely.

**16. Partnership with Parents/Carers & Pupil Voice**

* Parents/carers receive this policy and the Home/EOTAS Agreement.
* We offer simple, accessible summaries for CYP and families.
* Pupil voice is captured after incidents and in reviews; adjustments are co‑designed where possible.
* Complaints are managed under the Meadow Pathways Complaints Policy.

**17. Monitoring & Review**

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier following:

* changes to relevant DfE guidance or law;
* serious incident or safeguarding review learning;
* feedback from CYP, families, staff or commissioners.

**18. Linked Policies/Procedures**

* Child Protection & Safeguarding
* Safer Working Practice / Staff Code of Conduct
* SEND & Reasonable Adjustments
* Health & Safety / Educational Visits
* Online Safety & Acceptable Use
* Data Protection & Record Retention
* Complaints

**Appendices**

**Appendix A – Home/EOTAS Agreement (including arrangements if a child is dysregulated)**

**Purpose:** To ensure shared understanding of expectations, support strategies, and what will happen if a child becomes significantly dysregulated during a session.

1. **Agreed support strategies:** (visuals, breaks, sensory tools, scripts)
2. **Triggers and early signs:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. **What staff will do first:** offer breaks, adjust task, reduce demands, regulate.
4. **If risk escalates:** end activity; move to safer space; call parent/carer.
5. **If session must end early / child needs to go home:**
   * Who will transport/supervise: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   * Hand‑over point & protocol: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   * Items not to be carried (sharp objects etc.): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   * Who is notified and how (same‑day): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. **Aftercare & follow‑up:** check‑in call; reintegration planning meeting within 48 hours; any therapeutic input required.
7. **Contact details & consent statements:**
   * Parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   * Commissioning LA/school contact: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   * Medical/emergency info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   * Consent to share information for safeguarding: Yes / No
   * Consent for transport arrangements above: Yes / No
8. **Signatures:** Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ CYP (where appropriate) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Meadow Pathways \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B – Risk Assessment & Behaviour Support Plan (template)**

* **Context & need:** diagnosis/SEND, communication profile, sensory profile, trauma history.
* **Known triggers & early signs:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Protective factors & interests:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Risk scenarios:** harm to self/others, property damage, absconding, online risk.
* **Likelihood/impact matrix** and current controls.
* **Planned prevention & de‑escalation:** staff approaches, environment, resources.
* **Agreed scripts & signals:** e.g., first/then, choice of two, time‑in.
* **Physical intervention plan:** *only if essential*, named trained staff, medical considerations.
* **Emergency procedures:** when to call parents/police/ambulance.
* **Review dates & responsibilities.**

**Appendix C – Re‑set & Reintegration Plan (post‑incident)**

* **Summary of incident (factual):** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Impact on CYP and others:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Repair & restoration actions:** apology/repair/learning.
* **Adjustments to plan/timetable/location:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Therapeutic supports:** e.g., ELSA/mentoring, social story.
* **Parent/carer views & CYP voice:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Success criteria & review date.**

**Appendix D – Searching, Screening & Confiscation Quick‑Guide**

* **Before:** consider proportionality, safeguarding purpose, SEND needs, trauma history, same‑sex member of staff and witness where practicable; no intimate searches; record rationale.
* **During:** use least intrusive means; respect privacy and dignity; stop if risk increases; call police where appropriate.
* **After:** record items found/retained; inform parent/carer (same day where prohibited item found); update risk assessment; consider safeguarding referral if concerns arise.

**Appendix E – Incident Record (minimum content)**

* Date/time/location; staff present; activity; antecedents; behaviour; risk level; strategies used; whether force used (type/duration/justification/injuries/first aid); items searched/confiscated; parent/carer notified; CYP voice; next steps; manager/DSL review.