



POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Last Review Date	August 2025
Policy Reviewer	Director – Kane Wilson
Version	V2.16/09/25
Changes since last review	Recording and reporting procedures outlined along with incident debriefs
Next Review Date	August 2026

ENGAGEMENT FOR WELLBEING

At The Ark we work to create an environment which encourages and reinforces positive engagement; recognising this is a necessity for effective social and emotional development to take place. The purpose of the Positive Engagement Policy is to ensure that staff have a consistent approach to rewarding positive engagement and achievement, and challenging inappropriate behaviours, and that this is a transparent process for learners, host schools and parent/carers. Positive engagement is most effectively achieved when there are clear expectations of learner conduct.

Learners bring with them a wide variety of behaviour patterns and at The Ark we work with them using the principles of honesty, respect, responsibility and consideration, promoting our core values of being considerate, kind, responsible and engaged. The intention of applying rewards and sanctions is to demonstrate to learners that their behaviour and actions have 'real-world' consequences.

The policy is intended to protect the rights set out below:

RIGHTS OF THE LEARNER

All learners have the right to feel safe and secure in their environment, free from discrimination or harassment, regardless of protected characteristics as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

All learners have the right to make good choices, develop emotionally, academically and socially without the fear of others.

RIGHTS OF THE STAFF MEMBER

The right to perform their duties without fear of violence, intimidation or criminal acts being committed against them.

That Leadership & Management will safeguard their rights and support them in the delivery of their duties.

PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT

Fundamental principles which underpin a sound approach to positive engagement management include the following:

- The quality of the relationship between the adult and learner and the creation of a positive ethos
- Expectations of positive engagement must at all times be realistic and clearly communicated
- Discipline and control techniques must be fair and consistently applied
- All learners must be valued equally
- Upon application, sanctions and rewards must be clearly explained so that learners know what is expected of them
- If the needs of all individual learners are always met, incidents of challenging engagements are likely to be minimised

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTISE

The Ark is focused on developing learners' social and emotional wellbeing and as such there is a focus on providing learners with opportunities to better understand themselves, the impact of their actions, and how best to reach their aspirations. We use established, evidence-based approaches and strategies to support these goals.

We incorporate the PACE model used to build positive, trusting relationships and help staff better understand and respond to children's needs.

USE OF REWARDS

Reinforcing positive choices through the careful use of praise and rewards is central to highlighting the value of such choices to learners.

INFORMAL

Verbal confirmation of positive engagement e.g. 'well done, that was a good choice' or 'that was very polite, thank you'.

FORMAL

Contact with parent/carer/host school at the end of a day. Relaying positives and encouraging a conversation between parent/carer and child to reinforce positive choices.

ADDRESSING NEGATIVE/HARMFUL BEHAVIOURS

The Ark recognises there may be occasions when sanctions need to be applied to reinforce acceptable standards of positive engagement. In the case of positive engagement falling below recognised acceptable standards, sanctions should not only clearly inform the learner, but aim to amend the situation and help the learner accept responsibility for their actions. In implementing sanctions for positive engagement, staff should remember that a system of positive rewards and incentives for appropriate engagement is always preferable to the imposition of punitive sanctions.

With minor behaviours, the following low-level positive engagement strategies should be implemented informally.

EXAMPLES OF LOW-LEVEL POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT CONTROL STRATEGIES

'Catching' other learners demonstrating the required behaviours

Tactical ignoring

Rule reminder/reinforcement of expectations

Simple redirection

Moving pupil to another seat

Staff moving closer to the learner

Providing choices (within reasonable limits, and not compromising established expectations)

USE OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES

Physical intervention with a young person is always the very last option when managing behaviours. It is to be undertaken only when reasonable and safe and only under circumstances where one or more of the below are true:

- The learner is engaging in a behaviour that is potentially dangerous to themselves or others. This could range from climbing furniture to physically assaulting staff/peers/members of the public.
- To prevent a learner from committing a criminal offence. E.g. criminal damage to property, causing harm to another person.
- The learner is engaging in behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline.

The techniques used to physically intervene with a learner must be proportionate and reasonable. Physical intervention should only be undertaken by staff trained to do so and it is important that at all times there are at least two staff members on site who are trained. Restraints and physical interventions are undertaken with two staff members to one learner and CCTV footage can be made available to schools as well as a restraint form completed after the incident is resolved. Techniques can include 'shepherding', 'guiding' or 'restrictive restraint'. Staff may also block routes with their bodies where necessary (especially when doing so can avoid a restraint or more serious intervention). Staff have the legal right to act with 'reasonable force' in circumstances where there is a serious threat to their safety or the safety of another, especially if this threat to life. Staff have received and are fully trained in using the Team Teach approach. These rights are protected by law.

"Team-Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent "side-effect" of ensuring that the service user remains safe".

PARENT/CARER COOPERATION

A positive partnership with parents/carers is essential to developing a common approach to behaviour expectations and strategies for dealing with issues. Where behaviour is causing concern parents/carers will be informed at an early stage. Where appropriate, cooperation will be requested to help support learners to resolve the situation.

SCHOOL/OUTSIDE AGENCY COOPERATION

The Ark seeks to work in partnership with all those involved with the young person. Relevant information about behaviours will be shared with all relevant people in order to ensure that those with professional relationships with the learner can continue to interact effectively and with up to date information. The Ark may request specific support from a school or agency where we feel that we are unable to carry out our work with the learner effectively or that the school or agency have specific skills or capabilities that we do not possess.

SEARCHING, SCREENING AND CONFISCATION

The Lead Coordinator has statutory power to search pupils and possessions if there are reasonable grounds to suspect pupils have prohibited items. Searches may also be carried out by members of staff and contractors authorised by the Lead Coordinator. All authorised staff will be up to date with screening and searching procedures as laid out in government guidance . When conducting searches, the Lead Coordinator will consider the age and ability of students and make reasonable adjustments where necessary. Where possible searches will be conducted with the student present and away from other students (unless there is reason to believe that significant harm could happen if we wait).

The Ark can search a student for any item with their consent and in their presence (e.g. turning out pockets / looking in bags). Staff have the power to search (without consent) if they have reason to believe a student possesses any of the following items:

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- cigarettes
- e-cigarettes
- lighters and matches
- fireworks
- pornographic images

- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence , cause personal injury or damage to property

Wherever possible, searches will be carried out by two authorised members of staff, or contractor by staff members of the same gender as the student, and with the student present as a witness. Searches that require physical contact or use of force will always be a last resort. Where the risk is considered significant, they will be conducted by a trained member of staff of the same sex as the pupil, or, if possible, and preferably, by a family member. If this is not possible (due to urgency of the situation) searches will be conducted by a permanent member of staff, with the appropriate training, of the same sex and an appropriate adult (of the same sex). In all cases, only outer clothing will be searched (pockets, bags, shoes etc). No member of The Ark will conduct a search that reveals a student's underwear or skin (beyond shirt sleeves).

Staff will confiscate and retain a student's property if it is a banned item or any item being used to cause harm to self or others, damage to property, or disruption to the maintaining of a purposeful learning environment. For any confiscated item that is not deemed to be dangerous or potentially / known to be illegal, the confiscating staff member is required to make a proportionate and fair decision about what happens next with the item, for example:

- returning the item to the student at the end of that lesson
- returning the item to the student at the end of that day
- discussing with the student's family about how best to return or dispose of the item

Retention of, damage to or disposal of a student's personal property should not be used as a sanction and confiscation, including how the confiscation is followed up, should only be used to ensure the maintenance of a safe and purposeful learning environment.

Screening

If a student refuses to be screened, The Ark may refuse to have the student on the premises. Health and safety legislation requires The Ark to be managed in a way which does not expose students or staff to risks to their health and safety and this would include making reasonable rules as a condition of admittance.

If a student fails to comply, and The Ark does not let the student in, the student's absence will be treated as unauthorised. The student should comply with the rules and attend.

RECORDING AND REPORTING OF BEHAVIOUR

Recording and reporting behaviour consistently helps The Ark to:

- recognise and celebrate positive engagement;
- track progress over time;
- identify patterns and triggers to inform individual support plans;
- ensure transparency with schools, parents/carers, and commissioning partners;
- provide evidence of interventions used and their effectiveness;
- meet local authority and school expectations around behaviour management.

WHAT TO RECORD

Staff must keep clear, objective records of:

Positive Behaviour & Engagement

- Notable improvements in effort, cooperation, or self-regulation.
- Instances of pupils meeting or exceeding personal behaviour targets.
- Contributions to group work, peer support, or acts of kindness.
- Achievements linked to behaviour support plans.

Behavioural Incidents

- Disruptive behaviour that prevents learning or participation.
- Defiance, refusal, or withdrawal that impacts engagement.
- Verbal aggression, swearing, or intimidation.
- Bullying, discriminatory remarks or behaviour.
- Physical aggression (towards peers, staff, or property).
- Any behaviour that leads to removal from an activity or session.

Responses & Outcomes

For each incident (positive or negative), record:

- Date, time, and location.
- Who was involved.
- Triggers (where identifiable).
- Strategies used (de-escalation, choices offered, restorative conversations).
- Outcome of the incident (e.g., resolution, calming, repair and restore).

- Impact on learning and others.
- Any follow-up or support agreed (review of risk management plan, additional strategies).

HOW TO RECORD

- Incidents are to be recorded in the pupil's behaviour log.
- Keep language factual and objective — describe what was seen/heard, not opinions.
- Include the pupil's voice where possible (e.g., "X said...").
- Record as soon as practicable, ideally on the same day.
- Staff should sign and date each entry.

REPORTING & ESCALATION

- **Day-to-day:** Behaviour logs are reviewed regularly by staff to monitor progress and adapt support.
- **To schools/parents/carers:** Significant incidents and notable achievements are shared with the pupil's school and/or parent.
- **Escalation:**
 - Repeated patterns of concern should be highlighted to the Designated Lead.
 - Behaviour that raises safeguarding concerns (e.g., persistent bullying, violence, disclosures) must also be reported following the safeguarding policy.
 - Serious incidents (e.g., requiring physical intervention or removal from the setting) must be reported to the pupils host school the same day.

MONITORING & REVIEW

- Behaviour records are monitored by senior staff to identify trends and evaluate interventions.
- Regular summaries may be provided in the form of a pupil profile to schools, parents and commissioning partners.
- Individual pupil behaviour data informs reviews of Behaviour Support Plans and Positive Handling Plans.

FOLLOW-UPS AND DEBRIEFS AFTER INCIDENTS

PURPOSE

Follow-ups and debriefs are not just about closing an incident — they are opportunities to repair relationships, promote reflection, and build skills for future success. They ensure that pupils, staff, and families feel heard, supported, and included.

FOR PUPILS

- **Restorative conversation:** When calm and ready, the pupil is invited to talk through:
 - What happened?
 - What were you thinking/feeling at the time?
 - Who has been affected and how?
 - What needs to happen to put things right?
- **Child's voice:** Their perspective is recorded in their own words and respected in follow-up planning.
- **Repair and restore:** Practical and relational steps are agreed (e.g., apology, mending damaged work, peer reconciliation).
- **Learning forward:** Update the pupil's Behaviour Support Plan where new insights about triggers or strategies emerge.

FOR STAFF

- **Reflective debrief:** Staff directly involved take time to consider what went well, what could be improved, and what support is needed.
- **Relational focus:** Emphasis is on maintaining positive connections with the pupil while ensuring boundaries are clear.
- **Support and supervision:** Staff wellbeing is valued; managers provide space to process the incident and identify any training needs.

PARENTS/CARERS AND SCHOOLS

- **Transparent communication:** Significant incidents are shared promptly (same day where possible), with a focus on both what occurred and how it was addressed.
- **Restorative language:** Discussions emphasise repairing relationships, learning from the incident, and planning together for success.
- **Joint planning:** Where behaviour concerns are repeated or significant, a meeting with the school, family, and The Ark may be held to co-produce next steps and ensure consistency across settings.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- This policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner if guidance changes) in consultation with staff, schools, pupils, and parents/carers.
- Behaviour records, incident data, and pupil voice will inform updates to the policy.
- Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring practice reflects Leeds City Council's restorative and child-centred approach.