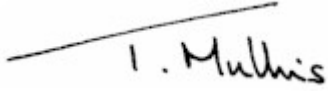




BEHAVIOUR POLICY

BEDSTONE COLLEGE

Last Reviewed	September 2023
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Behaviour , Sanctions and Rewards

This policy applies to all members of our college community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting. Bedstone College is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the [UK Equality Act \(2010\)](#). Every effort is made to make reasonable adjustments for those students who have special educational needs/disabilities. Each case is considered individually and within the context of the students involved. Further details are available in the college's Equality and Diversity Policy document.

References:

School Standards and Framework Act 1998
Education and Skills Act 2008
College Restraint Policy
College Admissions Policy
DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (2016)
Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2019
Boarding schools: national minimum standards (Department for Education (**DfE**), Sept 2022);
Children Act 1989
Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
Equality Act 2010

Behaviour

Objectives of this policy

- To develop a whole college behaviour policy supported and followed by students, parents, teachers and governors, based on a sense of community and shared values.
- By applying positive policies to create a caring environment in which teaching and learning can take place in a safe and happy environment
- To complement the aims of the college and ensure that these aims are met.
- To promote responsible behaviour, encourage self-discipline and encourage in all students a respect for themselves, for other people and for property.
- To encourage good behaviour by providing a range of rewards and publicising those rewards available.
- To publicise sanctions that may be imposed on students not adhering to the College rules and procedures.

This policy is part of the more general policy on welfare, health and safety of students. It is linked to the Child protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and the Policy on Equality and Diversity.

This Policy addresses the following relevant criteria:

- NMS: Standard 15
- ISI Regulatory Requirements: Part 3, Para 9

Behaviour

Rationale

1. *"We consider the best way to encourage good standards of behaviour in school is a clear code of conduct backed by a balanced combination of rewards and punishments within a positive community atmosphere. Establishing a whole school behaviour policy is an important step in that direction."* (p. 99 Elton)
2. Corporal punishment is never used, or ever threatened, and we do not use or threaten any punishment which could adversely affect a child's well-being.
2. A calm, orderly environment is essential if pupils are to learn most effectively. It is the responsibility of the school to provide that environment in order that students and teachers can make most use of lesson time for the real purpose of education.
3. Both academically and socially, we have the highest expectations of all our students. Students are expected to relate well and behave considerately to others. In this regard, a culture of positive, mutual respect lies behind our day-to-day interactions with each other, and expectations of good behaviour and attitude to others are the norm.
4. It is, therefore, worthwhile spending time setting the ground rules and asserting the school's code of conduct (see appendix) as a prerequisite to curriculum delivery. This document aims to provide the framework to enable an orderly environment to prevail and to allow members of the school community to concentrate upon its chief purpose.
5. It also recognises that within a climate of inclusion there will be students who need a personalised approach to their specific behavioural needs. In some cases this will mean that the sanctions, stages and rewards are not the most appropriate means of dealing with their behaviour and other programmes of intervention and support may be used in conjunction with external agencies.
6. The importance of taking a multi-agency approach to behaviour management is central. Following the introduction of 'Every Child Matters' we, as a school, recognise the lead we may be required to take in consulting and communicating with other agencies.

Aims

7. The College's Behaviour Policy should:
 - identify the roles and responsibilities of members of the school community in relation to encouraging and promoting good behaviour;
 - Identify the roles and responsibilities of members of the school community in relation to discouraging unwanted behaviour
8. The chief aims of our approach to behaviour are:
 - The maintenance, encouragement and promotion of good behaviour wherever possible
 - The shared and agreed identification of what we consider to be unacceptable behaviour
 - Actively to promote and safeguard the welfare of students at the school
 - The establishment and shared understanding of class and school rules
 - Agreed sanctions where rules are broken
 - A firm, consistent approach across the school
 - An opportunity at each stage for students to make amends and redeem themselves

- The involvement of parents at an early stage
- A shared understanding of consequences
- The involvement of students — encouraging students to take responsibility for their actions eg School Council
- The discussion with students in PHSE about the need for rules and the responsibilities we each have to one another
- A readiness to be flexible and look for a variety of strategies in those cases where students cannot conform to the normally expected patterns of behaviour
- The use of a multi-agency approach wherever appropriate.

Scope and Application

9. This policy applies to the whole College and (together with the school rules and all school policies on behaviour and discipline) applies to all students at the school and at all times when a student is:
 - in or at school;
 - representing the school or wearing school dress;
 - travelling to or from school;
 - on school-organised trips;
 - associated with the school at any time.
10. This policy shall also apply to students at all times and places in circumstances where failing to apply this policy may:
 - affect the health, safety or well-being of a member of the school community or a member of the public;
 - have repercussions for the orderly running of the school; or
 - bring the school into disrepute.

The following Bedstone College policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:

- Anti-bullying policy;
- Acceptable use policy for Mobile Devices;
- Internet Access Acceptable Use Policy;
- Drugs, Alcohol and Smoking Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Admissions Policy (Including Exclusions)

Promoting Good Behaviour

12. It is important that we try to remain as positive as possible at all times. We have a supportive school with a caring ethos. In order to make the most of this, it is expected that there will be a number of means within the school of rewarding and celebrating achievement and good behaviour. These include:
 - (a) In Class
 - Every student is able to receive positive and negative daybooks on the Schoolbase system, which is closely monitored by Heads of Section/Tutors.
 - Additional group and class rewards decided by the class teacher in conjunction with the students. The Merit System will include House Points and Tuck Shop vouchers.
 - Extra privileges in class e.g. giving additional responsibilities.

- Opportunity for students to show good pieces of work and talk about their achievements and interests.
- (b) On Display
- The maintenance of wall displays demonstrating work of which students are proud.
- (c) In Newsletters
- Students to be congratulated for particular achievements, competitions etc.
- (d) School Assembly
- Announcement of achievements including academic, performing arts and sporting.
- (e) End of Term
- Presentation of academic, performing arts and sporting awards trophies and certificates.
- (f) End of Year – Speech Day
- A ceremony to celebrate the achievements of the school, students and staff over the year. The day includes:
 - The presentation of awards to all age groups of outstanding academic, musical, effort and sporting achievement.
 - Special awards are also presented.
- (g) Other Opportunities to Celebrate include:
- Musical evenings and concerts – where students can demonstrate their talents
 - Friday morning ‘Head’s Assemblies’ – where trophies and certificates received outside of school can be acknowledged.
 - The issuing of certificates from sporting activities and performing arts.
 - The announcements of the performance of sports teams in newsletters and assemblies.
 - The inter-house competitions

Rules and Sanctions

13. The Bedstone College Basic Principles include:
- Respect
 - Support
 - Consideration
14. The Bedstone College ***Ten Basic Courtesies*** are:
- i. Greet people: all members of staff, all visitors to the College
 - ii. If you note visitors to the College looking lost, offer to help them: “Are you looking for someone? Can I help you?”
 - iii. If adults come into your study, classroom or any room in which you are sitting down, your first movement should be to stand up
 - iv. If you approach a doorway at the same time as adults or visitors, you should allow them through the doorway before you go through. Do not push ahead. Refrain from boisterous corridor behaviour.
 - v. Open doors for adults, and let them through first
 - vi. Take your hands out of your pockets when talking to members of staff or other adults
 - vii. Listen attentively to people when they are talking to you; look interested; don’t interrupt until it is your turn to speak

- viii. It is considered discourteous not to look directly into the eyes of a person who is talking to you
 - ix. The greatest courtesy of all is merely to add “Please” to all requests and to say “Thank you” for all services rendered
 - x. When you have received a formal social invitation, reply in writing both before and after the event to express acceptance and thanks
15. Bedstone College has a set of classroom expectations (see appendices) which are discussed with students at the beginning of each school year. These include:
- Follow instructions straight away
 - Keep unhelpful hands, feet, objects and comments to yourself
 - Keep your voice quiet unless told otherwise
 - Let others work without your interruption
 - Only use acceptable language
 - Put things away in their proper place

Sanctions can be selected from:

- Withdrawal of a privilege for a limited period of time
 - Writing out of appropriate set work, letters of apology
 - Student seated in a particular area of the classroom for a defined time
 - Missing a break time Name recorded in Daybook on Schoolbase— warning
 - Completing work elsewhere or with someone else
 - Sent to Head of Section or member of SMT
16. Students should be given clear warnings in class if in danger of being sent out from the lesson. This should be applied where the student is causing obvious disruption to others’ learning.
- a) **Warning 1** – ‘You are disrupting the lesson. Please stop immediately. (*Explain issue with behaviour*)’
 - b) **Warning 2** - ‘You are disrupting the lesson again. If this behaviour continues I will send you to the SMT Office and you will receive a conduct detention
 - c) **Behaviour Repeated on a third Occasion** – Student sent to the SMT Office. The appropriate Head of Section will enter the student in the Detention System

If a student repeats this level of disruption to lessons repeatedly in the same half-term period, then this could result in a suspension.

17. Bedstone College has a set of major school rules. These are:
- ❖ Substance abuse of any kind
 - ❖ Fighting or being in possession of any sort of offensive weapon, including laser pens
 - ❖ Possessing, purchasing, using or supplying any sort of smoking or incendiary materials (including e-cigarettes/vaping). Intentionally setting off fire alarms and extinguishers
 - ❖ Consuming alcohol - the exception being for members of the Sixth Form attending an organised and approved School event monitored by members of staff
 - ❖ Theft/stealing or malicious damage to school or individual property

- ❖ Sexual relationships between students of any age. Possession of pornographic material including that which can be accessed, stored and viewed by computer, or mobile phone, including Sexting
- ❖ Any form of bullying (including race, religious, disability, sexuality, learning differences or gender offences) by any means including cyber bullying (internet, mobile telephones etc). This includes any form of offensive or threatening behaviour towards another student
- ❖ Breaking bounds, truanting, or breaking the school's driving policy
- ❖ Bringing the College, its staff or students into disrepute or danger through poor behaviour at any time (inside or outside of school) or via any media including the internet, inappropriate use of mobile devices, or by breaking the appropriate use of the school Network Policy
- ❖ Serious classroom disruption, or rudeness to any member of staff both academic or support.

Please Note:-

- ❖ Any student supplying illegal substances or alcohol to another student will be asked to leave the school.
- ❖ The school will take appropriate action against any transgressions committed both during and outside of normal school hours.
- ❖ Any student transgressing one of the major school rules risks exclusion at first offence.

18. There are less serious offences which include:

- Late or unsatisfactory work
- Poor levels of appearance
- Littering
- Lack of appropriate equipment for lessons
- Being dishonest
- Low level disruption in class
- Using mobiles phones/music players during the school day without permission
- Not attending meals
- Chewing gum
- Rowdiness in corridors or the classroom

Repeated and persistent breaching of the rules above will result in students being placed within our Disciplinary System. A diagram of this is included in The Appendices.

19. Such transgressions as listed above will be referred to the Head of Section. The Head of Section will then document the incident and will decide a fitting punishment. This might include:

- contacting parents
- detention
- referral to the Deputy Head and or the Head (this will always occur where the students has transgressed a major school rule)

20. If the Head of Section judges it necessary, the student will be sent to the Deputy Head and/or the Head. They will then implement the following stages:

Stage 1	Review of Discussion/investigation of incidents leading up to this, explanation of what will happen next.
Stage 2	Parents are contacted and the concerns are explained. Further discussion with the students and consideration of strategies to avoid further incidents
Stage 3	Student is kept for detention and a letter is sent home informing parents of this and inviting them in to discuss the student's behaviour. Further consideration of intervention strategies and programmes will be considered.
Stage 4	<p>Student may be placed on a weekly report card. This is done including the parents, student and class teacher where possible. The student is seen on Friday afternoon by the Head of Section to review their progress and contact is made with parents on a weekly basis to consider the week's behaviour. A review date is set with parents.</p> <p>Further support may be sought and agencies informed as appropriate. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Referral to the Counsellor/Learning Support/Welfare Officer• Referral to an educational psychologist

21. If none of these sanctions are effective and the student continues to disturb the education of others within the school then the Deputy Head or Headmaster will begin a process of:
- a) Fixed-term exclusion/ internal suspension
 - b) Permanent exclusion.

Low Level Disruption in Class

Yellow & Red Card System

22. October 2022/23 saw the introduction of a Yellow and Red Card system to ensure lessons run smoothly without low level disruption impacting upon the learning of students in class. The system will be trialled before the half term break, and it will come into force after the October half term.
- Verbal warnings will be given by a teacher ahead of a student being issued with a Yellow Card for low level disruptive behaviour.
 - If a student's behaviour falls short of the highest standards we expect in lessons, he or she will be issued with a Yellow Card with immediate effect. The Yellow Card will be placed on the desk of the student. The student will be told at that point why the Yellow Card has been



issued. The teacher may at any point rescind the Yellow Card if it is deemed appropriate to do so (improved behaviour). The issuing of Yellow Cards will be recorded on Schoolbase and parents will be informed.

- A first Yellow Card represents a warning and will remain on the record until the end of that week.
- The issuing of a second Yellow Card in the same week (from any member of staff) will result in a Red Card. A Red Card will result in a same day detention to be served 5.00-6.00pm. Parents will be expected to collect their child from school at 6.00pm.
- An automatic Red Card will also be issued if behaviour reaches a certain threshold of seriousness.
- Further sanctions will be employed if three or more Yellow Cards are issued in a week.

Examples of when a Yellow or Red Card may be issued.

YELLOW	RED
Constant chatting/needless talk about things unrelated to the lesson.	Two Yellow Cards issued in a week.
Persistent calling out.	Lack of respect/rudeness to teachers.
Lack of concentration/apathy.	Arguing with teachers in an aggressive manner.
Persistent failure to follow instructions.	Use of offensive language/swearing.
Getting out of their seat and moving about without permission.	Unsafe behaviour.
Lateness to lesson with no reasonable excuse.	Mobile phone use.
Cheating.	Tantrums.
Annoying others.	Using class equipment without the permission of the teacher. For example, desktop computer.

Behavioural Difficulties

23. In most cases, difficulties with behaviour will be dealt with by the sanctions and processes already described. However, in some cases the normal procedures used may have little effect upon the student. This might be because of other circumstances at home or because of medical conditions. In some cases, students have very low self-esteem and find it difficult to find a place for themselves within the normal school routines and reward/sanction process.

24. In these cases, different approaches will be necessary and 'personalised' according to the needs of the student, and informed by other professionals' views, and potentially an EHCP.
25. It is worth remembering that for some of these students:
- a. **friendships and relationships are** crucial. They may develop a particular rapport with any member of the school community - this should be built into the support for the student.
 - b. **a chaotic home life is experienced.** Their behaviour in school might be directly linked to events at home and awareness of these issues (whilst acknowledging confidentiality) can help those supporting them to understand where their actions might originate from.
 - c. **find it difficult to be praised.** For some students, praise is not part of their normal expectation and as such they can find it almost a threat. This might be seen where a student is close to obtaining a major reward only to 'fail' at the last moment. Quickly administered incentives very closely linked to the desired behaviour should be considered. It might also be appropriate to 'freeze' rather than remove rewards. This can help remove the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' of constant failure.
 - d. **actions are not easily linked with consequence** — their pattern of behaviour may be so entrenched that they continue to repeat it even though they dislike the resulting consequence.
 - e. **feeling 'cornered' will result in extreme reactions. Being shouted at will often bring a reciprocal response.**
 - f. **Children with ASD (Autism spectrum disorder) or ADHD** might well need a different approach. See article by the Head in the Appendices.
26. There are no quick fixes and time and patience are needed. This can be draining on the staff most directly in contact with difficult students. They should also be given counselling as appropriate and provided with the opportunity to vent their frustrations.

Dealing with difficult students is always a balance between:

- a. the needs and inclusion of the individual student concerned
 - b. the entitlement of the class
 - c. the capacity of the teacher to remain calm in what can be extremely testing circumstances.
27. Where a student is 'acting out' a no-blame approach should be taken. Adults involved with the student can take extremes of behaviour as a personal attack. This is rarely the case. Often the student will retain little of the actual events leading up to the behaviour or the behaviour itself. They may not be able to explain themselves why they behaved as they did and can just as suddenly revert to the normal behaviour expected of them.
28. In cases such as this, opportunities for the student to 'fit back in' should be provided whilst also acknowledging that follow-up action may need to be taken but when circumstances are more settled and the student can be encouraged to reflect on their behaviour. Every attempt should be made to avoid the escalation of problems through direct confrontation or 'backing students into a corner'.

29. Students should be encouraged to consider and discuss their own feelings and the feelings of others and come up with their own solutions where possible. Involving the student in a particular activity which invites discussion can be one way of calming down a situation and providing the opportunity for reflection and discussion.
30. Difficult students can make great demands on individual members of staff. It is crucial that we maintain our climate of support and understanding both for the student and the members of staff involved with them.

A Positive Environment

30. Perhaps most important of all is the overall climate and ethos of our school. Our ethos of care, forgiveness and recognition of individual need and worth should be maintained.

This can be seen through:

- a positive climate that relies upon and promotes reward and praise rather than criticism and sanction
- the example set by members of staff in their relationships and communications with students
- the support and relationships that members of staff have with one another
- the sense of community within the school and that all students are ambassadors for us
- interesting and well-prepared lessons that cater for individual need
- a colourful and stimulating environment in and around the school building
- varied opportunities for students with different gifts and talents to see these celebrated
- a recognition that we are all different and that there is no 'best fit' model for a human being.

Major Disciplinary Meetings

31. Where a pupil has committed a Major School Rule transgression which might result in suspension or exclusion, a meeting is held with either the Deputy Head, or the Headmaster.
 - Present at the meeting will be the pupil concerned, his/her parents, the Headmaster/Deputy Head and then either: Head of Sixth Form, Head of Section, or the student's Housemaster/Housemistress (as appropriate). In some instances, a member of the Learning Support Team may also be in attendance.
 - The Senior member of staff will then go through the results of his/her investigation into the offence. The pupil will have an opportunity to respond. The other team members will also be given the opportunity to speak on behalf of the student.
 - The Headmaster/Deputy Head then will consider the appropriate response from the School with the various members of staff involved and the parents of the student concerned.

- This will be done whilst the student waits outside. Once the Headmaster/Deputy Head/Head of Prep has decided on what course of action to take, the student will rejoin the meeting and the Headmaster or Deputy Head will give his/her verdict and the reasons for it.
- As regard to Permanent Exclusion, parents have the right of appeal to the Headmaster and or Governing body if they so wish (please see Exclusions Policy for protocol).

Expectations

1. Arrive on time

(If you are late, apologise appropriately)

2. Bring all of your equipment with you

(Text book; work book; exercise book; file; pens; ruler; iPad)

3. Listen and participate as required

(No chatting when you should be listening, or working quietly)

4. Put your hand up, don't call out

(If you need help, if you want to contribute, politely signal this)

5. Remain seated during the lesson

(Unless directed otherwise. If you need to get something, or leave the room, put your hand up and ask politely if you may do so)

6. Only use your Laptops in lessons as directed by your teachers

(Tech must remain on 'silent', and used appropriately. *Mobile phones should only be used in classrooms with the express permission of the teacher, and should be kept on 'silent'*)

7. Use Schoolbase regularly to keep track of prep work set

(Teachers will set a reasonable amount of prep on a regular basis, and with clear and fair deadlines using Schoolbase)

8. Hand prep in on time and to a good standard

(Complete ALL tasks to the best of your ability, and on time.

Ask the teacher for help if necessary, or if you need extra time)

9. Manners

(Everyone should show manners and courtesy to all other members of the class, the teacher, and to any guests who enter the room. Remember to notify teachers in advance if you are going to be absent, e.g. for a sports fixture)

Appendix 2 – Rewards and Sanctions



Appendix 3 - Junior School Behaviour / Sanctions



Bedstone Junior School

In addition to the processes and procedures outlined above for the senior school. There are some practices that apply to the junior school only.

Introduction

Students should have opportunities to be rewarded for their efforts. The greatest reward can often be a simple word of thanks. Recognition on a personal level is key. We also operate systems, whereby good behaviour, effort and attainment can be rewarded. Sanctions are applied for poor behaviour or effort.

Academic Rewards

Merits

Students who produce a very good piece of work or have accumulated stars/stickers, will be given Merit.

Merits can be awarded by teachers of curriculum subjects ie. those lessons which are timetabled and are in a classroom (Art, music and food tech/CDT/IT are included). Non-curriculum subjects, such as Learning Support and individual music lessons, are not included in the Merit system. They have their own reward systems in place and should keep these in-house and refer to them in end of term/year reports.

- Merits are awarded in Three ways;
 - On the accumulation of 5 stars awarded by a subject teacher. These can be awarded for effort or attainment
 - For a one off outstanding piece of work or effort
 - Students who are noticed being exceptionally kind or helpful.
- All students have the Merit sticker insert in their prep diaries and as stars are awarded, they are recorded in the prep diary by the subject teacher. When a student achieves 5 stars, the student shows his/her prep diary to their tutor and the tutor crosses off the 5 stars and awards the Merit, recording it on computer system.
- Students who produce an exceptional piece of work in any subject, are sent to the Head who will award them with a personalised message, which can be shown to parents and stored in Head's Book.
- Merits are added up and those achieving more than 10 merits at the end of each term the names of those who have done well are read out in Assembly.

Sanctions

Minor breaches of discipline for any inappropriate behaviour will cause 'minutes' to be lost from free-time. 'Minutes' given recorded in the Day Book. Any persistent disruption by a student should be flagged-up at the weekly Junior School staff meeting.

The following is a guide to how minutes are deducted:

	Junior 2 & 3	Junior 4
Arriving late to lesson	5	10
No books, equipment needed for lesson	5	10
Running in corridor	5	10
Untidy appearance	5	10
Belongings not put away	5	10
Inappropriate classroom behaviour, after warning Eg chair rocking, calling out	5	10
Disobedient	10	20
Bad language	10	20
Unkind behaviour	10	20
Disregard to safety	10	20
Dishonest/ untruthful	10	20
Disrespectful to person or property	10	20
Hurting another	10	20
Inappropriate behaviour	10	20
Misuse of computers	10+ban	20+ban

These are the number of minutes given in the first instance; some behaviour might warrant further minutes after discussion and investigation. Parents are contacted either by e-mail or with a note by the Form Tutor if a student accumulates more than 15 minutes in one week.

If a student regularly appears in the conduct book then the form tutor will speak at length to the students concerned. The DEPUTY HEAD will also be involved. It may be necessary to put the student on Report Card and, once again, parents are contacted. If a student fails to complete work or it is of an unsatisfactory standard, students will be given a warning and asked to complete the work in their own time. Students whose work continues to disappoint or who disrupt lessons may be issued with a 'Report Card' which is signed by the teacher at the end of each lesson. The report card is monitored by the Form Tutor, who keeps in close touch with the student's parents

Serious Breaches of Discipline

Any particularly serious breaches of discipline will ultimately be dealt with by the DEPUTY HEAD or Head. The tutor will be the first point of contact with parents over serious breaches of discipline such as theft, fighting or bullying that may lead to fixed-term exclusion or in extreme cases or for repeated offences, offenders may be permanently excluded

The Junior School Policy for Rewards and Sanctions is reviewed annually

Children with ASD in Mainstream Education – A Head’s Perspective

Toby Mullins, Chair, The United Westminster and Grey Coat Foundation

As a Head of a school with a high proportion of SEN pupils, although one is never a specialist in the area, one learns a great deal about the issues that come with a high degree of inclusion. Over the last few years, it has been increasingly common to have pupils with autism (ASD) being educated in mainstream schools. Some autistic youngsters manage to adapt to the rigours of mainstream schooling and achieve excellent results, many do not. It is also interesting, but maybe not surprising, that the underperforming ASD students often do relatively less well than pupils with other disabilities.

Inclusion should provide benefits for all the pupils at the school. The ASD pupils should gain the benefits of experiencing a broader social environment and the opportunity to develop the social skills that will assist them in later life. For their peers, there is the chance to promote the diversity agenda and to become more aware of the problems faced by others of their own age. This is certainly the case where pupils have a physical disability. A child with cerebral palsy, who is wheelchair bound and severely limited, will often receive a lot of support from

Inclusion should provide benefits for all the pupils at the school.

their peers and have a circle of friends that will rarely, if ever, be available to the child with ASD. The eccentricity of their behaviour makes acceptance so much more difficult to achieve.

Teachers too ought to be able to benefit from the inclusion of ASD pupils in their lessons. There are, indeed, many members of staff who view the involvement of ASD pupils in their lessons as an opportunity to become better and more skilled professionals. In my first headship, our Learning Support Centre led the teaching and learning initiatives at the school. All teaching staff were briefed on the exact nature of each child’s difficulties, and strategies for success were provided in an attempt to ensure their smooth progress.

A teacher’s knowledge and understanding of autism has a profound effect on ASD pupil success in their classroom. Some believe passionately that the behavioural issues that ASD pupils bring take up too much of their time and prevent progress for the other pupils in their classes. In a special school, such as that at the Children’s Trust where students are profoundly disabled, the teachers completely

understand the limitations of their learners. They find ways to communicate with their students, which are often impossible for the casual observer to understand, and they create a curriculum that is bespoke to the learner and allows them to show their progress. Such a bespoke package is often missing from a mainstream school where the teachers neither fully understand the behaviour of ASD pupils nor the accommodations needed in their teaching to produce successful outcomes.

Preconceptions about ‘autistic’ behaviour, and unawareness of ASD characteristics, can result in misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations. Actions by pupils can often be misconstrued and result in a sharp escalation of classroom problems. ASD pupils can experience high levels of stress and anxiety triggered by environmental factors such as noise, over-crowding, limited mobility, curriculum demands and changes in routine. Teachers need to understand these factors, be responsive to these increased stress levels and flexible enough to make the necessary adjustments. For these ASD pupils, making it through each day at school without a crisis might be more important in the short run than academic progress.

Preconceptions about ‘autistic’ behaviour, and unawareness of ASD characteristics, can result in misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations.

The behaviour of students with ASD is regularly viewed by some teachers as inappropriate in the context of a mainstream school, and disruptive in the classroom. However, subtle changes to the school routines and the curriculum, for particular ASD pupils, can make a huge difference. The ability to move to a ‘quiet space’ where they can recover their equilibrium is one strategy used with great effect in a number of schools. It may be that a pupil cannot cope with the ‘hurly-burly’ of break times and needs to be encouraged to find a quiet spot in the library during those peak times. Even the most conscientious of peers will be willing to assist ASD students, and support them in class, but this is much less evident during breaktimes. PE lessons are often purgatory for ASD pupils; they are often loud, not as structured and can involve physical contact, all of which are frequently difficult for the ASD child.

Parents with ASD children are usually very keen to have them in a mainstream school. They realise the social benefits to the child of being with other children and learning the skills to survive in later life. They ask for a collaborative approach to the education process, with both teachers and parents understanding the issues and working towards agreed goals. On occasion, where this collaboration doesn’t occur, parents become frustrated with the lack of focus on social outcomes at the school. They complain about the poor understanding of autism, the lack of training for teachers and the negative impact of uninformed teacher behaviour on their children; in many cases, they are correct. If a school takes on these youngsters,

knowing of their problems, it is duty bound to inform its staff and make the necessary adjustments to ensure a successful outcome.

In some cases, parents have chosen not to tell the school of their child's diagnosis for fear of them being treated differently by both the teachers and their peers. Pupils with ASD commonly behave differently from their peers and their inability to respond to social cues routinely results in them experiencing isolation, teasing and bullying. Ironically, the emotional volatility of ASD pupils allied with severe tantrums and physical aggression towards other pupils often lead to they themselves being labelled as bullies. A Head can often find themselves in the middle of both sets of parents, each accusing the other's child of unacceptable bullying.

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What should we expect from our pupils when interacting with their ASD peers? Can they be expected to make allowances for extreme behaviour all the time? We can preach tolerance and understanding, but these are exceedingly difficult concepts to grasp when you are young, full of hormones and have only limited life experience. Any school with ASD children in its ranks will need to make allowances and accept that children will, on occasion, get these relationships badly wrong.

Classroom teachers frequently find it difficult to explain to peers why pupils with autism are being treated differently. The situation in the classroom is often not improved by the responsibility for managing the behaviour of the ASD child being frequently given to Teaching Assistants and a perceived lack of clarity in schools' behaviour management procedures.

Teachers who experience problems with behaviour in the classroom, often expect the school to 'throw the book' at the offending youngsters. A colleague of mine had an expression that she used to describe the situation where behavioural sanctions take on a life of their own and spiral out of control; she called it "black shoes to exclusion". An appropriate, early and well-planned response to a minor infraction can usually ensure a swift and acceptable resolution. Understanding of the underlying issues, knowledge of the condition and well-practised and proportionate remedial actions are the keys to success.

The effective inclusion of ASD pupils into mainstream schools will not be achieved while the majority of teachers continue to express concerns about their limited knowledge of autism and relevant teaching strategies. Classroom teachers believe,

quite rightly, that students with ASD require more support than other students with disabilities, and the support required is often unique to each child. The availability of resources and support personnel, therefore, remains the most significant factor in relation to the capacity of mainstream schools to meet inclusion needs.

