Silverdale School | We change lives

Relational Behaviour Policy

2026 - 2027

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1. Aims

In Silverdale School, we aim for everyone to feel valued and safe. We support learners to approach school with confidence, resilience and hope for their future.

The policy is available on the school website and a paper copy can be provided if requested. Any significant changes to the policy will be communicated with parents/carers.

This policy aims to enable staff to:

- Understand the whole-school approach to implementing a relational behaviour policy
- Have a clear proactive approach to building relationships
- Have a framework of reactive approaches focused on co-regulation and de-escalation
- Understand the unique needs and context of each learner
- Understand behaviour as a form of communication
- Reflect on professional practice
- Work with our learners to overcome the barriers previously experienced in education and develop into well-rounded adults

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Positive Handling
- Suspensions and Exclusions

2. Underlying Research and Theories

- Trauma-informed care
- Child development theory
- Attachment theory
- Behavioural science, including Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)
- Research in neuroscience
- Branded approach (such as Thrive)

3. Rationale

The ethos and values of Silverdale School are informed by multiple theories, built on evidence-based research. These theories are underpinned by the need to develop solid and trusting relationships with each learner.

The need for connection is wired into us from birth. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954) explains the importance of connection and belonging. Being part of a family, group or community make it more likely for a person to grow and develop. Physiologically, positive connections boost mood and lower blood pressure, which in turn supports the ability to regulate emotions and learn effectively.

Children who are able to self-regulate will have improved outcomes and greater success throughout their lifetime. At Silverdale, we understand that each young person's journey is different; their unique needs are developed through the context of their life experiences across home, school and their community.

> "The teacher - child relationship is an intrinsic reward and the withdrawal of approval an intrinsic 'sanction', which in most cases [removes the need for a positive/negative behaviour point system]. … I have never met an effective teacher who relied on these as a substitute for relational approaches. Though they were always good at praise and clear boundaries, it was their relationships with their children that gave their responses worth and authority, not the value of a token, or the threat of a sanction. Were it otherwise; were rewards and sanctions sufficient to change behaviour, we might end up with children who only behave because of what was in it for them, or because they feared punishment – hardly conducive to developing pro-social adults."
>
> Tony Clifford (2023)

Staff at Silverdale are supported to be reflective practitioners. Managing behaviour and supporting children is difficult. When their behaviour is challenging, the first challenge is to staff. At times, it can be difficult to not take the words and behaviours of learners personally. We cannot always expect learners to understand the unintentional impact of their choices on staff who care about them. Working within an Attachment Aware, Trauma-informed (AATI) approach means moving past knee-jerk, punishment-based responses, to instead focus on how to meet the child's need for restoration and repair. Understanding is different from accepting or condoning behaviour. To combine safe relationships and fair rewards and consequences is fundamental to young people overcoming trauma and becoming resilient, pro-social adults (Clifford, 2023).

Staff promote the accountability and resilience of learners, whilst recognising when the external environment (staff approach, enabling environments) needs to be adapted to facilitate their success.

We support the development of our learners through our 3Cs curriculum.

Character - who you are and who you want to be

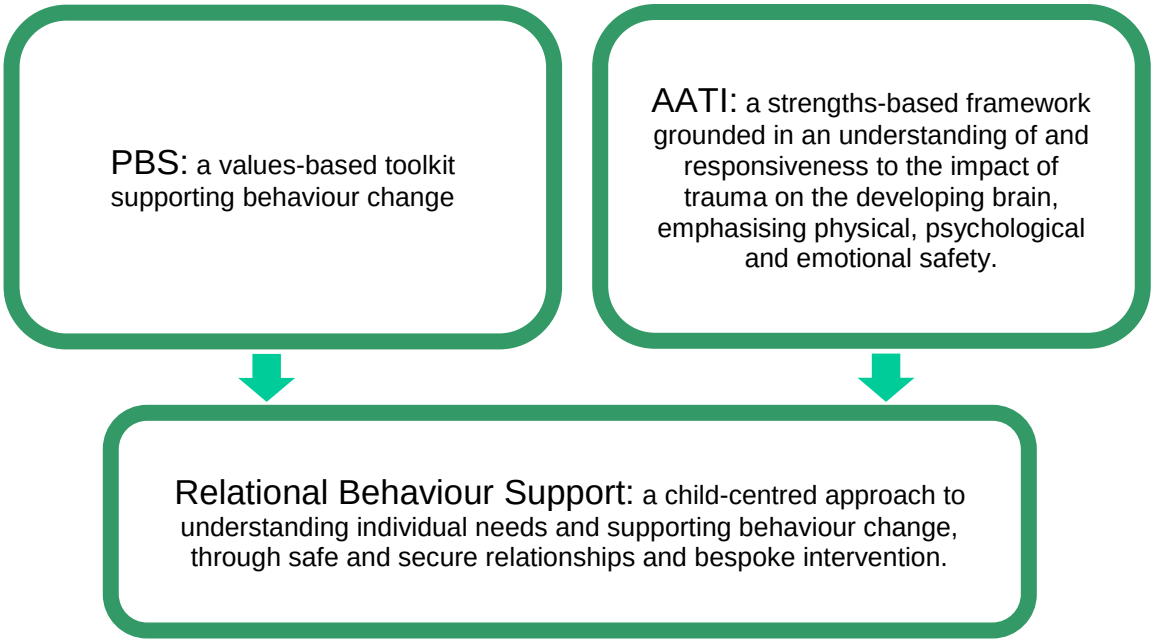
Community - links to others and the wider world

Currency - learning for your future

4. Relational Behavior Support (RBS)

RBS is a behaviour change model used at Silverdale, incorporating the principles of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) from an Attachment Aware, Trauma-informed (AATI) perspective.

This model aims to equip staff with strategies and empower learners to develop tools to regulate their own emotions and make positive choices.



The aim of PBS is to prevent and reduce challenging behaviour with the underlying goal of improving quality of life. The focus is on developing the skills of the person and those who support them and reducing restrictive practices.

When we perceive behaviour as challenging, a learner is often communicating that a need is not being met. Staff at Silverdale aim to actively listen to the learners and explore what their behaviour is trying to tell us. Behaviours can be broken down into the following functions:

1. Escape – getting away from an activity or person
2. Attention – gaining attention beyond what is already available
3. Tangible gain – gaining an item or activity

4. Sensory needs – using behaviour to replace discomfort or experience a pleasant sensation

Once we understand the function of behaviour, we can support the learner to develop the skills to express their needs positively, without turning to challenging behaviour.

5. Tiered support at Silverdale School

At Silverdale, we understand that supporting Social, Emotional and Mental Health (or SEMH) of our learners increases the likelihood of them accessing a quality education and becoming a well-rounded individual who can achieve their hopes and aspirations.

More than one in three children and young people are exposed to at least one potentially traumatic event by age 18 (Lewis et al., 2019). The right support can make a substantial difference to the extent that trauma impacts their lives. SEMH support for learners at Silverdale involves bespoke intervention from a tiered approach.

- Behaviour support is delivered through a graduated four-tier model, ensuring pupils receive the right level of support at the right time.
- The framework provides a clear escalation pathway for responding to behavioural, emotional and regulation needs.
- Support progresses from classroom-based strategies (Tier 1) to additional support (Tier 2), wider team involvement (Tier 3), and senior leadership intervention where required (Tier 4).
- Each tier identifies the staff responsible for supporting the pupil and the level of intervention required.
- The model is linked to the school's Zones approach, helping staff match support to a pupil's level of need and regulation.
- Following any intervention, the aim is always to repair relationships, re-establish regulation and support a return to Tier 1 classroom provision wherever possible

Please refer to Appendix A for the full tiered approach.

6. Proactive Approaches

Skills teaching

Skills teaching is a model used to support a learner to learn a skill that will ultimately lead to an improvement in quality of life. An example of a skill would be the ability to communicate the need for a break when feeling overwhelmed. The development of this skill will then lessen the need to communicate by using challenging behaviour.

A skills teaching approach breaks down tasks into manageable chunks, sequenced in a way that the individual learner can feel success.

Positive school environment

A positive school environment is fundamental to developing positive relationships between peers and staff. When learners feel safe, valued and respected, they are more likely to engage with learning and develop a growth mindset.

- The physical environment feels enabling, inclusive and promotes collaboration.
- Staff take time to get to know each individual learner's context – their strengths, interests and needs.
- Staff use a strengths-based approach, recognising and focusing on the behaviour we want to see more of, including seemingly small steps of progress.
- Typically, children respond far better to positive reinforcement than to punishment, and this often leads to a decrease in challenging behaviour. Research continues to validate this social dynamic (e.g. Rumfola, 2017).
- Whilst punishment as a behaviour management technique can have a short-term effect, it does little to change behaviour in the long term (Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2022).

Positive reinforcement - the addition of a positive outcome to strengthen a behaviour, e.g., awards, praise

Punishment - the addition of a negative outcome to 'weaken' a behaviour, e.g. a detention

- Staff appreciate the importance of separating the behaviour from the learner, e.g. 'disruptive behaviour made it hard for me to teach' rather than 'you made it hard for me to teach'. These messages over time contribute to the learner's view of themselves and their identity. If learners are repeatedly told they are bad or have negative qualities, they may continue to act up to this, believing it is just the way they are.

- School rules and consequences are clearly communicated, consistent and predictable (see section 9). Empowering learners to recognise and respect the boundaries within school provides the foundation for feelings of safety and trust.
    - Silverdale staff take the approach of every day is a fresh start where possible; consequences are rarely carried into the following day or after a suspension. Staff model the behaviour of letting things go so learners can gradually mirror the ethos of learning from negative choices and moving on. When time and space to reflect is required for successful mediation.
- Silverdale staff understand that every learner and situation is nuanced and unique. Whilst we aim for consistency in consequences, a 'one size fits all' approach does not always meet the needs of our learners.

When we are concerned about a learner's behaviour, this should be discussed at the school's Vulnerable Learners Meeting (VLM). VLM is a forum to gain multiple staff perspectives to explore the holistic context of the learner, understand possible underlying drivers of behaviour and decide on the tier of intervention required.

7. Reactive Approaches

Despite proactive interventions, there are times where behaviour may escalate. High levels of dysregulation can lead to risks for the learners and those around them, necessitating responsive interventions.

When a learner presents aggressive behaviour, it is likely their fight or flight response has been activated. This is often an involuntary response and not within the learner's capacity to control. At this point, the overriding aim is to support the learner to regulate their emotions and behaviours. When an individual is in a high state of arousal, higher-level thinking tends to go offline; they are unable to access skills such as reasoning, reflection, understanding of consequences or long-term thinking.

In the crisis / recovery phase:

- Processing becomes impaired - staff use clear and simple language to tell the learner what we would like them to do (as opposed to what we would not like them to do)
- Avoid threats of punishment
- If we can compromise with the learner, we do this – we do not need to be concerned about reinforcing a behaviour in the crisis phase
- We avoid power struggles, i.e. the need to be 'right' or 'win'

It can take up to 90 minutes for a learner to recover fully, e.g. for adrenaline and cortisol levels (stress hormones) to return to baseline. Once a learner

appears regulated and ready, restorative conversations can take place. This may involve:

- Reflecting on choices
- Discussing the impact of actions
- Finding ways to repair harm and restore positive relationships
- Identifying interventions to support the learner (skills teaching)

Safe Touch

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact is appropriate and necessary.

Safe Touch is entirely different to physical restraint. Physical restraint should be used in line with Team Teach Training, when a learner is being unsafe to themselves or others or committing a criminal act.

Examples of when touch might be appropriate:

- Comforting a learner in distress (staff know the learners well, e.g., for some, even a hand on the shoulder could further escalate the behaviour)
- Congratulating or praising a learner
- Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument
- Demonstrating techniques during PE lessons
- First aid

**Please refer to Positive Handling Policy and Team Teach Training*

8. Rewards and Consequences

Rewards	**Communication with parent/carer**
Verbal praise	Shared with parent/carer when appropriate, including seemingly small steps of progress
Certificates, e.g. subject or 3Cs awards	Shared with parent/carer when appropriate
Attendance incentives, e.g. reward trips	Shared with parent/carer when appropriate
Reward interventions, e.g. if targets are met	Shared with parent/carer when appropriate

Although our approach is relational and strengths-focused, there are occasions where learners may display unacceptable behaviour. Our aim is to prepare our learners to become pro-social adults who take responsibility for their choices and understand the importance of adhering to the rule of law, in line with British values. Therefore, we recognise consequences can be necessary, however, these are always implemented within a relational and supportive framework. Please refer to Appendix A 'Behaviour table'.

9. Relational Behaviour Approach: Key Points

Silverdale's Relational Behaviour Approach	Behaviour is understood as a form of communication
	Positive and secure relationships between learners and staff are at the centre of our approach.
	Opportunties for success are created and celebrated.
	Interventions are tailored to each individual; we recognise a one size fits all approach is not always best for our learners.
	Skills key to personal development are taught and reinforced, such as emotional regulation and positive communication.
	Where possible, every day is a fresh start.

10. Searching & Confiscation

It is our first priority to ensure that pupils are in a safe and secure environment in school. Searching can play a critical role in ensuring this and can be a vital measure to safeguard and promote staff and pupil welfare. Following guidance set out by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Searching, Screening, and Confiscation – Advice for Schools (July 2022), Head teachers (and staff they authorise) have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may

have a prohibited item or any other item that the school rules identify as an item which may be searched for. The list of prohibited items is:

- knives and weapons;
- alcohol;
- illegal drugs;
- stolen items;
- any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used: to commit an offence, or o to cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the pupil).
- an article specified in regulations:
- tobacco and cigarette papers;
- fireworks; and pornographic images.

As well as prohibited items, the school does not allow the following items in the school community (banned items):

- E-Cigarettes / Vapes
- Mobile telephones

Where we need to conduct a search for a prohibited item, the Headteacher will authorise this. The Headteacher can authorise the member of staff to search for specific prohibited or banned items or all items set out in this behaviour policy. It will be explained to the pupil what is being searched for and the reason for the search. Where the pupil does not agree to be searched, our school will consider the best way of moving forward. Depending upon the risk associated with any prohibited or banned item, the use of reasonable force may be necessary. The use of reasonable force will
differ depending on whether the member of staff is searching possessions, such as a bag, or the pupils themselves. Searching should be conducted by two members of staff where possible. The Headteacher will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead regarding any potential searches of prohibited items, and this will be recorded on the safeguarding database by the person conducting the search. 11.7 Where a search for prohibited and/or banned items has been undertaken this will be recorded on Behaviour Watch by the person.

Behaviour Policy (SILVP0010)

In relation to mobile phones, as indicated above (and in the Staff Mobile Phone Policy) they are banned items and the following practice has been adopted;

- Primary students will be expected to hand over their phones at
the start of the day and have them returned for home time. School preference is that phones do not come into school for young children but accept families may wish to have contact with children when transitioning between home and school.
- Primary students in exceptional circumstances, can ask to check their phone
at break times in the presence of a member of staff if they need reassurance

relating to a family matter.

- Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 students are expected to hand their mobile phones in,

on arrival to school. All students will be 'wanded' by staff using a hand- held scanner and are expected to hand their mobile phone in. Mobile phones are stored in a locked, secure area and returned to students at the end of the school day.

11. Dedicated Contacts

- Angela Noble - Executive Headteacher
- Rachel Collins - Assistant Headteacher
- Chris Brierly - Assistant Headteacher
- Aaron Spence Rutherford - Assistant Headteacher
- Amy Common - Assistant Headteacher
- Michael Pearson – Senior Leader (Behaviour)

12. Glossary

Active listening: active listening requires you to listen attentively to a speaker, understand what they're saying, respond and reflect on what's being said, and retain the information for later.

Emotional dysregulation: the state in which we are unable to control or modulate our emotional responses to stress. At a physiological level, our bodies are unable to maintain our levels of arousal within the optimum range.

Fight/flight response: a state of hyper arousal (over arousal) in which the body is geared up physiologically and emotionally to take action to overcome perceived threats in the environment.

13. Further Reading

- https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/childhood-trauma-and-the-brain
- www.thriveapproach.com
- https://www.england.nhs.uk/6cs/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2016/07/bild-key-questions.pdf

14. References

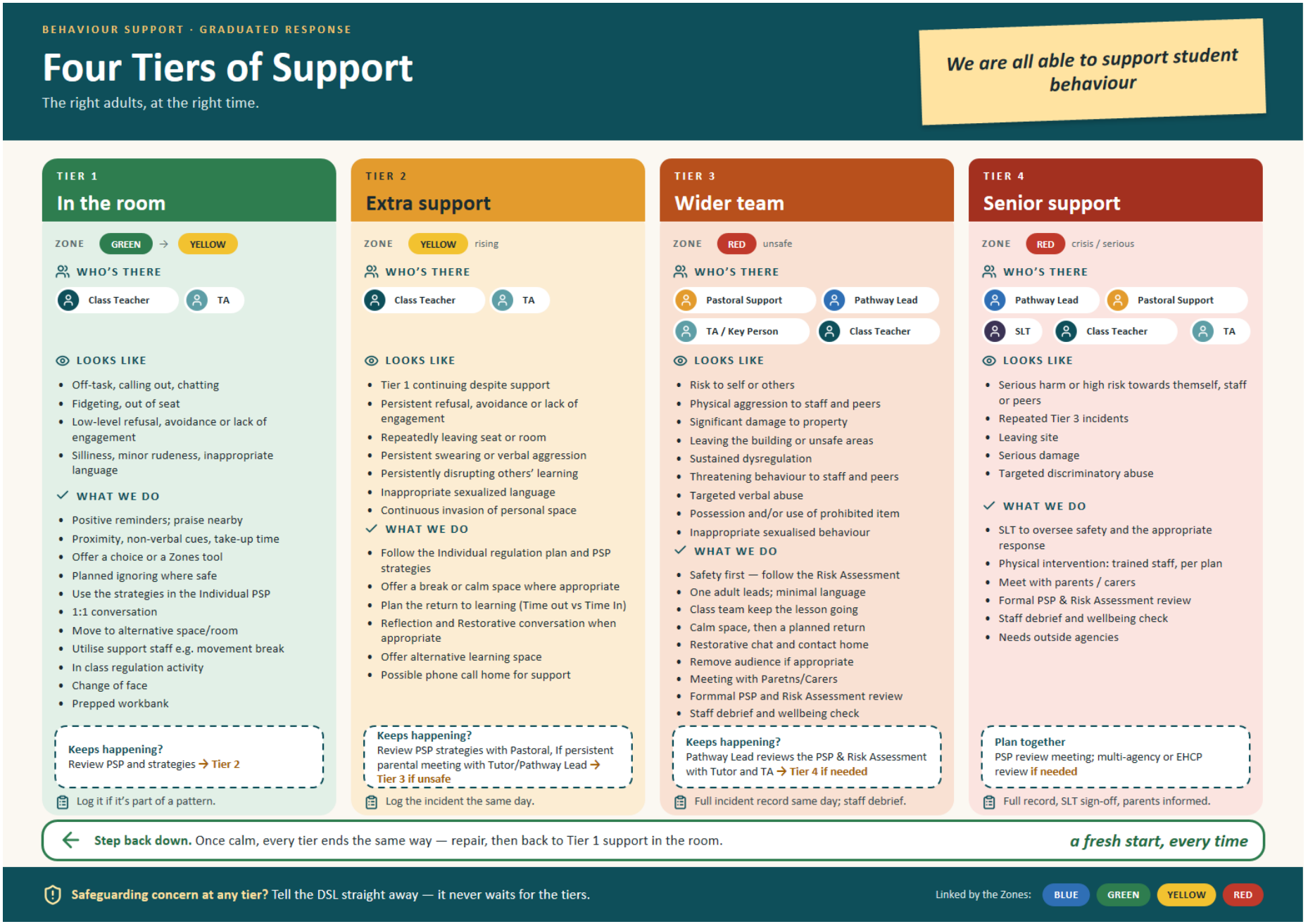
Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition (2022). Behaviour and Mental Health in Schools Inquiry. https://cypmhc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Behaviour-and-Mental-Health-in-Schools.-Key-Messages.pdf

Lewis, S. J., Arseneault, L., Caspi, A., Fisher, H. L., Matthews, T., Moffitt, T. E., Odgers, C. L., Stahl, D., Teng, J. Y., & Danese, A. (2019). The epidemiology of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder in a representative cohort of young people in England and Wales. The Lancet Psychiatry, 6(3), 247-256.

Rumfola, L. (2017). Positive reinforcement positively helps students in the classroom. Education and Human Development Master's Theses, 786. http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/ehd_theses/786

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/relationalists-v-behaviourists-tony-clifford-qus8e/

APPENDIX A


BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT · GRADUATED RESPONSE
Four Tiers of Support
The right adults, at the right time.
We are all able to support student behaviour
TIER 1
In the room
ZONE GREEN → YELLOW
WHO'S THERE
Class Teacher
TA
LOOKS LIKE
Off-task, calling out, chatting
Fidgeting, out of seat
Low-level refusal, avoidance or lack of engagement
Silliness, minor rudeness, inappropriate language
WHAT WE DO
Positive reminders; praise nearby
Proximity, non-verbal cues, take-up time
Offer a choice or a Zones tool
Planned ignoring where safe
Use the strategies in the Individual PSP
1:1 conversation
Move to alternative space/room
Utilise support staff e.g. movement break
In class regulation activity
Change of face
Prepped workbank
Keeps happening?
Review PSP and strategies → Tier 2
Log it if it's part of a pattern.
TIER 2
Extra support
ZONE YELLOW rising
WHO'S THERE
Class Teacher
TA
LOOKS LIKE
Tier 1 continuing despite support
Persistent refusal, avoidance or lack of engagement
Repeatedly leaving seat or room
Persistent swearing or verbal aggression
Persistently disrupting others' learning
Inappropriate sexualized language
Continuous invasion of personal space
WHAT WE DO
Follow the Individual regulation plan and PSP strategies
Offer a break or calm space where appropriate
Plan the return to learning (Time out vs Time In)
Reflection and Restorative conversation when appropriate
Offer alternative learning space
Possible phone call home for support
Keeps happening?
Review PSP strategies with Pastoral, If persistent parental meeting with Tutor/Pathway Lead → Tier 3 if unsafe
Log the incident the same day.
TIER 3
Wider team
ZONE RED unsafe
WHO'S THERE
Pastoral Support
Pathway Lead
TA / Key Person
Class Teacher
LOOKS LIKE
Risk to self or others
Physical aggression to staff and peers
Significant damage to property
Leaving the building or unsafe areas
Sustained dysregulation
Threatening behaviour to staff and peers
Targeted verbal abuse
Possession and/or use of prohibited item
Inappropriate sexualised behaviour
WHAT WE DO
Safety first — follow the Risk Assessment
One adult leads; minimal language
Class team keep the lesson going
Calm space, then a planned return
Restorative chat and contact home
Remove audience if appropriate
Meeting with Paretns/Carers
Formmal PSP and Risk Assessment review
Staff debrief and wellbeing check
Keeps happening?
Pathway Lead reviews the PSP & Risk Assessment with Tutor and TA → Tier 4 if needed
Full incident record same day; staff debrief.
TIER 4
Senior support
ZONE RED crisis / serious
WHO'S THERE
Pathway Lead
Pastoral Support
SLT
Class Teacher
TA
LOOKS LIKE
Serious harm or high risk towards themself, staff or peers
Repeated Tier 3 incidents
Leaving site
Serious damage
Targeted discriminatory abuse
WHAT WE DO
SLT to oversee safety and the appropriate response
Physical intervention: trained staff, per plan
Meet with parents / carers
Formal PSP & Risk Assessment review
Staff debrief and wellbeing check
Needs outside agencies
Plan together
PSP review meeting; multi-agency or EHCP review if needed
Full record, SLT sign-off, parents informed.
Step back down. Once calm, every tier ends the same way — repair, then back to Tier 1 support in the room.
a fresh start, every time
Safeguarding concern at any tier? Tell the DSL straight away — it never waits for the tiers.
Linked by the Zones: BLUE GREEN YELLOW RED