

Behaviour & Well-Being Policy

Rationale

The Switch Project aims to provide an outstanding and supportive environment for children and young people that enables everyone to realise their potential, with high self-esteem and respect for others in their communities, home and school. The Switch Project offers therapeutic interventions that provide a positive and safe environment for young people to access support in times of challenge or stress.

We have three guiding principles that we ask the young people and staff to observe whilst working with Switch, on which all our work is based:

Be Ready
Be Respectful
Be Safe

As a small, independent organisation that prides itself on supporting children and young people, it is vital that these guiding principles are met. If at any point these principles are not valued, then we will seek to understand why and how we can support the individual going forward.

An Understanding & Supporting Ethos

At The Switch Project we recognise the vulnerability of the children and young people we work with and that every referral has a need for security in a stable and reassuring environment. Our Behaviour & Wellbeing policy helps us to create a caring, stimulating and secure environment in which staff and young people can develop and achieve safely.

One of the organisation's chief aims is to nurture young people's self-confidence, combined with sensitivity and respect towards others, through an understanding of rights and responsibilities. We recognise that The Switch Project cannot do this in isolation, but it can be central in making a difference to the lives of those that attend. Therefore, we expect all members of The Switch Project, staff children and young people, to recognise the importance of positive shared values about behaviour and well-being.

In our experience children and young people's behaviour can be either arbitrary or communicative acts, and it is important to be able to distinguish between the two. Our staff need consider all aspects of each young person's behaviour, rather than just labeling it as 'challenging,' 'problem,' or 'difficult'. As professionals

working in a supportive environment we always endeavor to understand behaviours in the wider context of the individual, their difficulties and their response to their environment at school and at home.

Whilst we empathise that certain behaviours are unique to each young person's own set of circumstances, we teach appropriate social skills and coping strategies to help the young people understand and accept boundaries of reasonable behaviour. We aim to understand the underlying factors causing the behaviour, distinguishing between the arbitrary and communicative, in order to respond positively, consistently and effectively. We will provide structures and strategies to empower the individual to manage their own behaviour, promote independence, enhance communication and socialisation and raise self-esteem.

The strategies we use include the use of behaviour for learning, therapeutic inputs, restorative justice, praise and rewards. We believe that it is more effective to teach an alternative, appropriate response for young people, rather than try using aversive techniques i.e. sanctions/punishments. Positive procedures are constructive in that they teach alternative responses and build self-management. Punishment is not used as a means of managing a young person's behaviour.

In order to help support young people to the best possible level all our staff will ensure that they:

- Develop understanding relationships that are consistent, rewarding and respectful.
- Provide a safe, nurturing and consistent base with appropriate boundaries and support.
- Avoid actions and language that are inappropriate, demean or intimidate.

Key principals of our Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy

- To raise pupils' self esteem
- To promote/develop empathy and respect for self and others
- To develop in children and young people a sense of self discipline and an acceptance of responsibility for their own actions
- To ensure regular attendance
- To encourage pupils to value learning
- To acknowledge that the maintaining of good behaviour within The Switch Project is a shared responsibility
- To ensure that positive behaviour is always recognised
- To work with a positive and proactive approach to behaviour
- To ensure that The Switch Project's approach to behaviour and well-being is fully understood by young people, parents, carers and staff
- To ensure effective mechanisms are in place for the monitoring and evaluating of behaviour and wellbeing
- To ensure the rights and responsibilities of all members of The Switch Project are upheld and valued

Safe Space

Safe Space is defined as a positive procedure whereby a young person is given the opportunity to leave a situation, which she/he is finding over stimulating and/or stressful. The emphasis must be on helping the student to recognise she/he needs to leave the situation and to communicate that need in an appropriate way. Time out should be used as an opportunity to teach the young person self control and to manage his/her own behaviour. Safe Space should not be used as a punishment.

However, there may be occasions when a member of the staff team feels that it is in the best interests of the whole group for the student to leave the situation for a short while. The use of a Safe Space, such as our Calm Room or the outdoor grounds, should be used when all other proactive strategies have been tried but were unsuccessful in deescalating a situation.

Support for parents/carers

The Switch Project is proactive in working with parents/carers to liaise over agreed strategies in supporting young people's social and emotional well-being. This could be through telephone contact or face-to-face meetings. The aim is to always work collaboratively with parents and act as an advocate for both the young person and their family.

Cessation of support

Each of the young people we work with has their own journey and personal reasons for participating in The Switch Project. We have to ensure that everyone is kept safe, emotionally secure and feels comfortable in attending each session. Therefore, we are able to terminate with immediate effect any support we believe is detrimental to the development of the individual or others. We are under no obligation to provide support as we are an independent service, and whilst we only use disciplinary action as a final resort following attempted restorative interventions, it is important to understand that it is a course of action we do take where absolutely necessary.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: 9th October 2018