

# Behaviour Policy



**WATERGATE SCHOOL**

'I Can, You Can, Together We Will'

**Implemented:** January 2023

**Review Date:** January 2024

**Implemented by:** Linda Matthews - Headteacher

**This policy was agreed by the Headteacher and Governors (and supersedes the previous Behaviour Policy)**

# Watergate School – Behaviour Policy

## MISSION AND ETHOS STATEMENT

At Watergate, in line with our Mission Statement, we prioritise learning, well-being and achievement and value individuality and diversity. Positive, child-centred relationships are at the heart of everything we do and we treat our children with dignity and respect at all times.

We recognise that, because of their disabilities, many of our children face significant challenges in processing information and understanding the world around them. Additionally, their difficulties with understanding and being able to use effective communication can lead to high levels of stress and anxiety, which can sometimes result in behaviours that challenge. As a school we are committed to understanding the functions of behaviours and therefore to teaching children to use alternative ways of communicating and functionally equivalent skills. We also aim to teach children coping and self-regulation skills.

We understand that our pupils demonstrate differences in how they communicate, learn and engage and that this has a significant impact on active engagement and emotional regulation. A strong emphasis on supporting the development of social communication and self or co regulation through the building of relationships, providing a safe environment with a consistent structure and routine, and ensuring predictability as often as possible will naturally lead to a reduction in behaviours of concern. We believe that children interact with the world in a way that is meaningful to them and that the role of the adult in school is to support and develop these interactions as a way of teaching appropriate behaviour while respecting the preferences of children with neurodevelopmental differences.

We subscribe to a low arousal, approach to understanding and supporting behaviour and any associated physical intervention strategies.

## RATIONALE

This policy has been written and implemented with reference to the DfE Guidance 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools 2016'. However, it also reflects the fact that Watergate is a special school for children with very specific and in some instances, unique needs regarding the management of behaviour. To this end, we choose the language we use very carefully and we never use words such as 'punishment' and 'sanction'.

We believe that the best schools promote good behaviour in a nurturing way, through a mixture of high expectation, positive reinforcement, clear policy and an underpinning ethos which fosters self-regulation and mutual respect.

Watergate is committed to empowering children and adults to use positive behaviour management strategies to promote the wellbeing, learning and enjoyment of children. Watergate expects high standards of behaviour and conduct from children, staff and parents to ensure the safety and happiness of everyone at the school.

Our adherence to this policy will ensure that our practice and procedure is the best it can be.

## Policy objectives:

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- To provide guidance for class teams, parents, carers, governors and other stakeholders about how to support our learners to respond to co-regulation, to self-regulate, manage their behaviour and feel safe so that they are ready to learn
- To provide a framework for our collective beliefs, understanding and insight into human behaviour as it relates to learners with complex learning needs at Watergate School
- To provide a holistic, whole person, inclusive model for our understanding of co-regulation, self-regulation and behavioural needs
- To underpin our beliefs with evidence-based practice and current research
- To ensure that every member of the community feels valued, respected and treated fairly
- To promote an environment where everyone feels happy, safe and secure and where children care for and show respect for one another

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All learners must be accorded respect for their rights as individuals. Any response to behaviour displayed is based upon consideration of what is in the learner's best interests and what they would recognise themselves as in their own interests, were they of the age and capacity to make such decisions themselves (UN Declaration).

Each member of staff, without exception, has a part to play in responsibly developing and maintaining a positive, supportive, fair and inclusive school culture with regard to management of behaviour. This includes having high but realistic expectations of all learners, having and fairly demonstrating respect for each pupil. Staff have a professional responsibility to provide good social role models for all learners while continuously looking to celebrate achievement.

## KEY BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOUR PRINCIPLES

At Watergate School we want our Positive Behaviour Policy to reflect our understanding and insight of the complex needs of our learners and how this contributes to their ability to self-regulate and manage their behaviour in a positive way so that they are ready to engage with learning. We incorporate a holistic, whole person approach to ensure that we are continually reflecting and planning for the needs of **all** our learners with complex layered needs. This includes learners with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Severe Learning Difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Downs Syndrome, Communication Disorders, Sensory Needs, Physical needs and/or Social Emotional Mental Health Needs.

We consider that behaviours which concern always happen for a reason and might be the only way the learners can communicate, which may arise for different reasons that are personal to the individual.

The way children behave, conveys their needs and emotions and all staff play a role in supporting children to learn how to manage these more positively.

At Watergate School we believe that:

- Our learners want to behave well
- Behaviour is a means of communication – we must ensure that all learners are supported to communicate their needs safely and appropriately using their preferred communication systems and that all communication methods have equal importance
- Behaviour provides staff with important information about how children are feeling and with the right support and intervention, children can learn to self-regulate and manage their own behaviour. Our learners have a wide range of communication styles and a number of them are pre or non-

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speaking, using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems to communicate their physical and emotional needs

- Supporting learners to effectively communicate alongside supporting staff to listen to and respond to all communication attempts, is a very important way to promote them to self-regulate and behave in a positive way
- Mistakes are part of the learning process and we recognise that all our learners are at different stages of the developmental process.
- All our learners have learning difficulties and other complex needs which impact on how they learn to regulate and manage their behaviour
- Teachers and class teams must be given the opportunity to learn, understand and have insight into why learners become dysregulated and reflect on how/why it impacts on their behaviour; to work collectively with our learners, their parents/caregivers and other professionals to develop strategies as part of a Relational Support Plan to support them to self-regulate and manage their behaviour in a positive manner
- All adults can learn strategies to support learners to improve their behaviour based on a combination of personal and professional experiences and training, and experiential learning
- Learners are happy when their needs are met and understand and that every effort to manage themselves and their behaviour should be recognised and acknowledged by adults and their peers. We consider communication styles, social interaction skills, sensory and emotional needs as well as the role we play in supporting them to develop these skills. Learners are better able to behave well when their needs are well met in school, at home and in the community

Class team and support staff can support our learners by:

- Being mindful and reflecting on the quality of our relationships
- Reflecting and being committed to continuously improving the quality of our provision
- Reflecting with parents, carers and other professionals so that we are well informed and have insight and understanding of their individual needs
- Reflecting and planning the 'scaffolding' we put in place to support them to learn self-regulation skills
- By observing, gathering and analysing data of behaviour – to ensure our interventions are personalised, well informed and planned according to the needs of each individual within the context of their class or within particular lessons on and off-site
- To work in close partnership with our learners, their parents and carers and other professionals working with them, for example speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, CAMHS etc.

The resources, interventions and learning consist of:

- An assortment of individualised and accessible modes of communication
- Clear and realistic expectations
- Rules and boundaries
- Routines
- The language of choice
- Praise
- Rewards
- Reparation wherever possible and appropriate
- Fair and predictable responses to both negative and positive behaviour

## **SUPPORTING SELF-REGULATION AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

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The quality of our relationships is crucial and each adult is a significant adult for all of our learners. To foster successful and enabling relationships we need to:

- Actively build and develop trust and rapport – which has to be earned and is not a given
- Invest time in our learners and have fun together
- Have high expectations for all of our learners. We need to demonstrate our belief in them as it supports them to succeed
- Treat learners with dignity and respect at all times by communicating carefully and clearly in a way that is accessible to them and their current level of need.
- As adults, we need to listen respectfully to the learner and make a judgement on how/when to respond
- Consider what might be behind the behaviour, why the learner is behaving in this way. There is always a reason as the behaviour is a symptom of something that we need to identify and understand
- Identify the strengths of the learner – identify these with the learner where possible and build on them. If a learner is not able to do this, advocate for the learner within the team or professional group
- Apologise if you make a mistake – you are modelling this for the learner and this will support you to build trust and respect
- Name and manage your own emotional reactions to the learner's behaviour, that is demonstrate emotional intelligent behaviour at all times. Seek help if you are finding it difficult to manage your feelings about a learner.
- It is important to resolve difficult feelings about learners' behaviour as it is unhelpful history, focus instead on getting it right in the future
- Quietly but firmly hold appropriate boundaries for learners
- Always be respectful to learners and not talk about their needs in front of other learners, visitors or staff
- Be non-judgmental about our learners' life experiences, but use behavioural data to inform our planning for them
- Keep our word – and if, for some reason, we are unable to honor a commitment to a learner, to communicate clearly and honestly about why this has happened
- Seek support from wider professional networks to problem solve behaviours that concern

The quality of our relationships with parents and carers is vital, as it is important to reflect and plan with parents to ensure consistency in approaches between home and school. Relational Support Plans need to be shared with parents and regularly reviewed and treated as a working document. Any form of restraint or seclusion has to be shared with parents or carers.

The quality of relationships with other professional is important to ensure that we are working collaboratively with other therapists or professionals working with learners to ensure their input into the planning and strategies with other teams, for example, occupational therapists, speech and language therapist and CAMHS. It is also the class team's responsibility to share any needed information or strategies with other teams, for example play provision, to ensure consistency in strategies and enabling learners to succeed in self-regulating and managing their behaviour in different contexts, lessons and environments.

## **BULLYING**

Watergate School is committed to promoting equality, diversity and an inclusive and supportive environment for its children and staff, it affirms the rights of individuals to be treated fairly and with respect. We recognise that the most effective way of minimising bullying is to provide a positive

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atmosphere of caring and friendship, through the ethos of the school. Every child and member of staff at Watergate School should be valued and be able to learn and work without anxiety or fear from bullying.

Bullying is unacceptable at Watergate School and as such we aim to:

- Develop a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable and that everyone has a responsibility to be proactive in ensuring that bullying is challenged and reported
- Provide a safe and secure environment where all can learn and work without anxiety, humiliation, harassment, oppression or abuse
- Respond effectively to any bullying incidents that may occur
- Ensure all children, parents, staff, governors and others connected with the school are aware of our opposition to bullying and know that appropriate action will be taken if bullying occurs
- Ensure that everyone takes responsibility for the prevention and elimination of bullying in our school

Bullying is one of the most damaging forms of discrimination and at Watergate School all staff are committed to eradicating it.

Any form of bullying such as verbal threats, physical injury, damage to property, rumour spreading, shunning or ridicule should be reported to the Headteacher and recorded on CPOMs.

## THE QUALITY OF OUR PROVISION

If we are able to meet each learner at his or her point of need and learning, it is more likely that the unhelpful behaviour or behaviour that is of challenge will decrease or stop. To do this we need to:

- Demonstrate understanding of child development, social communication differences and learning differences
- Have communication systems in place and readily available at all points, including when a child or young person is presenting as dysregulated. This is their 'voice' and should be accessible at all times, but especially during times of dysregulation or distress, as this is often when it is more difficult to use other communication methods
- Know their sensory processing difficulties and have appropriate strategies and resources available to support the learner to access sensory strategies that may allow them to remain regulated or to de-escalate and return to a state of better regulation
- Accurately assess and understand the learner's needs by referring back to their EHCPs, minutes from their Annual Reviews and any other relevant documentation
- Provide personalised learning to ensure that each learner has their needs met, at his/her point of development and learning
- Know what motivates each learner and use this as positive reinforcements
- Plan to meet the learner's range of needs specific to the plans drawn up by their professional group, i.e. equipment, staffing, sensory needs and diets
- Support the learner to develop high self-esteem, so that they believe that can succeed
- Support the learner to develop high levels of resilience and have high expectations for every learner
- Be present to offer co-regulation support at all points
- Give frequent positive reinforcement when things are going well and minimal feedback for low level undesirable behaviours. Remember to focus on what you want the learner to do
- Where appropriate, include learners in their target setting and evaluation process for outcomes measurement, using appropriate language and methods (self-assessment)
- Give the learner feedback on progress in a supportive way that makes sense to them, focusing particularly on their achievements and what they need to do to make further progress
- Praise the learner for their specific achievements, for example, descriptive praise and do this often

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- Actively teach the learners behaviour for learning.

## ORGANISING THE CLASSROOM FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOUR

The guidance offered to class teams is to reflect on the support our learners need to learn how to self-regulate and manage their own behaviour successfully.

### Class Rules

Rules needed to support positive behaviour should be:

- Stated in the positive and few in number
- Where developmentally appropriate, agreed with learners
- Communicated in a way that the learners can understand, including visual cues, objects of reference, social stories etc.
- Regularly referred to by the class team with learners
- Appropriate to the activity/lesson and developmental range of the learners.

### Communication and social interaction difficulties

Most of our learners need support in developing their communication, social interaction skills and social imagination skills (to cope with changes to familiar routines) to develop effective self-regulation skills that enable them to positively manage their behaviour throughout the day. Behaviour that is of concern is often the result of a breakdown in communication. To support a learner that has become dysregulated or is in distress we should aim to understand the function of the behaviour. For example, what is causing the learner to become distressed. Class teams need to have strategies in place to support learners to express how they are feeling and how we can meet their needs proactively. Class teams need to have structures and routines in place that increase predictability and safety for learners with the aim of maintaining regulation and reducing incidents where learners will become dysregulated. Class teams need to consider the following and how it can impact on our learners' ability to regulate and manage their behaviour positively:

- Communication devices and strategies should work both ways – to give instructions but also to allow learners to have a voice, make choices and express their needs. Listening is a skill to be developed, particularly with less conventional means of communication.
- Learners often need time to process information
- Learners may have difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication
- Learners may have difficulties in understanding facial expression and tone of voice
- Learners may have difficulty in understanding, or consistently remembering social rules and conventions.
- Learners may have difficulty in understanding their own emotions and how to express how they are feeling and also have difficulties in understanding other people's emotions
- Learners may have difficulty in predicting what is going/could happen next, which can cause anxiety
- Learners may have difficulty generalising rules from one situation to another
- Learners may have a lack of awareness of danger
- Learners may have difficulties in coping with new or unfamiliar situations and will need to be prepared for changes and transitions
- Learners may have difficulties with managing social expectations and/or interactions with peers including friendships and bullying



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- Learners may display attention seeking behaviour as a way of communicating that they need attention

Class teams should use visual resources and other Augmentative and Alternative Communication systems as:

- Visuals are permanent – spoken words disappear
- Visuals prepare learner
- Visuals prepare learners for transitions allowing them to feel less anxious and self-regulate better
- Visuals allow time for language processing and help learners retain the information
- Visuals help build independence, confidence and self-esteem
- Visuals are helpful when learners have become dysregulated as it replaces verbal communication and social interaction which in time of distress can hinder de-escalation
- Visuals reduce anxiety which impacts on self-regulation and positive behaviour
- Visuals are transferable between environments and people, for example, between home and school, or when going on trips or off-site visits
- Visuals have no emotion so are a neutral communication tool when learners are dysregulated
- Visuals develop memory skills and can remind learners of previous experiences where the situation has been resolved positively.

## Routines

Consistent class/activities/lesson routines support our learners to understand expectations, manage anxiety, mentally and physically prepare themselves for their day – allowing them to learn how to self-regulate, engage in learning/activities and manage their behaviours positively. This must be explicitly taught – you cannot assume that they know them. You will need to teach routines for **all** activities. The more consistency there is in routines, the easier it is for our learners. Routines also support behaviour for learning. Once learnt, routines need to be consistently reinforced, you can never assume that a learner no longer needs the support that was present to teach the routines.

Class teams should reflect on how they support learners to adapt to changes to routines and how they prepare them for changes, as this is an important life skill. Changes to routines should be practiced using appropriate visual resources to allow our learners to learn that changes can be managed in a positive manner.

## Sensory processing needs

Sensory processing difficulties can have an impact on our learners' ability to self-regulate and manage their behavior. Sensory processing is the ability to register, discriminate, adapt and respond appropriately, both physically and emotionally to sensory input from the environment. Class teams should ensure that they:

- Organise the environment clearly, with visual cues and signposts (written information, symbols, objects of reference etc.)
- Speak clearly, slowly and calmly and provide learners with time to respond
- Learning environments should be adjusted to support learners sensory processing issues and support understanding of learners' actions, i.e. low arousal with clearly designated areas for learning
- Teach learners to recognise when they are becoming dysregulated (label emotions and feelings) so they are able to learn to request a break or an appropriate self-regulatory strategy to support them in regulating better



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- Embed sensory diets and movement breaks into daily class routines and ensure that learners have access to sensory equipment (chewy's, fidget toys, adapted seating, vibrating cushions, weighted blankets/vests etc.)
- Consider the social demands of working with other learners
- Regularly monitor physical and emotional well-being of learners and recognise signals of being distressed, unwell, upset or in pain
- Remember that enabling environments through making reasonable adjustments is a statutory obligation in disability law (Equality Act 2010)

## Understanding self-injurious behavior

Self-injurious behavior is when a learner physically harms themselves. It is sometimes referred to as self-harm. This could be head banging on walls, floors or other surfaces, hand or arm biting, hair pulling, eye gouging, face or head slapping, skin picking, scratching or pinching, forceful head shaking etc. The learner may have no other way of telling us their needs, wants or feelings. Head slapping or banging their head on a hard surface, may be a way of informing us that they are frustrated, a way of getting an object or activity they like, or a way of getting us to stop asking them to do something. Hand biting might help them cope with anxiety or excitement they might pick their skin or gouge their eyes because they are bored. Ear slapping or head banging could be their way of coping with discomfort or letting us know that something hurts.

When it happens staff should work collaboratively with the learner, their parents/carers and other professionals to try and find ways to prevent or replace this behavior:

- Respond quickly and consistently when a learner self-injures, even if you think the learner is doing it to get attention, it is NEVER appropriate to ignore severe self-injurious behaviours
- Reduce demands – the learner may be finding a task too difficult or overwhelming
- Remove physical and sensory discomforts – consider their sensory processing difficulties and diets
- Re-direct – inform learners what they need to do instead of the self-injurious behaviour, for example, "Isaiah, hands down". Use visual cues such as picture symbols to support instructions.
- Keep responses low key, limit verbal instructions, facial expressions and other displays of emotion. Try to speak calmly and clearly, in a neutral and steady tone of voice.
- Distract the learner with a highly motivating activity or object without referring to the reason for the distraction
- Provide light physical guidance if the learner is having difficulty stopping the behaviour, e.g. gently guide their hand away from their ear, using as little force as possible. Immediately redirect their attention to another activity or motivating object and be prepared to provide gentle guidance again. This approach **must** be used with extreme caution as it may escalate the behaviour or cause the learner to target others

## The language of choice

This is part of helping our learners to take responsibility for their behaviour. We actively encourage them to choose the right thing to do and, when they make the right choice high levels of praise should be given.

We use specific descriptive praise when we see them making a good choice – we can never do too much of this.

We link natural consequences to the choices the learners make, this is to help them make the best choice.

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We use clear, simple, visually supported communication. We focus on the behaviour we would like to see, e.g. “hands down” rather than “stop hitting.”

We communicate firmly but quietly – we do not shout at the learners for their behaviour

This communication:

- Increases learners' sense of responsibility
- Removes the struggle for power
- Regards mistakes as part of learning
- Is positive
- Where appropriate, overtly links responsibility, choice and consequence
- Helps learners to manage their own behaviour
- Helps learners take responsibility
- Increases learner's independence
- Promotes a respectful and trusting relationship between adults and learners

## Rewards and consequential rewards

- Descriptive praise
- Symbolic rewards
- Special responsibilities
- Communication with parents/carers to inform them of the behaviour or achievement
- Access to preferred activities, above and beyond, the scheduled daily activities (e.g. sensory room, bike, iPad, choosing time)

These should be linked to positive choices and achievements as they focus on the specific behaviours we wish to improve.

## Natural consequences

- We **do not** believe in sanctions or punishment. For example:

Behaviour	Natural consequence
A learner disrupts an activity or behaves in a way that makes other learners feel unsafe.	Learner has a break  Learner is supported by an adult to consider their behaviour  Learner apologises in their preferred communication method to the group for his/her specific actions if and when they are able to, or an adult apologises on their behalf and carries on with the activity.

- It is important for our learners to clearly link a specific behaviour with its natural consequence.
- The natural consequence needs to support the learners understanding of both positive and negative actions.
- It is also important that adults review what has happened. Was there anything they could have done differently to support this learner to manage?

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## Descriptive Praise

If we tell learners what it is exactly that we like about what they are doing, we are reinforcing the behaviours we want to promote, for example:

"I like how you used your communication book to tell me how you are feeling"

"I noticed you were being a good friend by helping Tabitha"

"I liked that you asked me for a break when you needed it"

"Well done for coming back to your work so quickly"

We are also giving them personal recognition and feedback. This will raise their self-esteem and leads to improved behaviour. The use of descriptive praise supports behaviour for learning.

## Reparation

Reparation means repairing relationships, or 'making good' in some way.

We believe that our learners should always be given the opportunity to repair, and that they want to do this. We do not believe in the concept of punishment, as it focuses on learner's mind on punishment, rather than what she/he did. This often leads to learners feeling angry about the punishment, rather than thinking about the impact of their behaviour on others.

Staff need to reflect on their own practice, to consider if their actions have escalated a situation and what they could do differently and proactively next time.

Where developmentally appropriate, we support learners to take responsibility for what they have done and to repair it with the other person(s) involved/affected without forcing an apology that may lead to resentment.

Learners with complex difficulties can be supported to repair, this will look different for each learner. We cannot make assumptions about what learners feel. Unresolved difficulties can make learners very anxious and this can cause behaviour to escalate or become habitual.

## LEARNERS WITH EXCEPTIONAL BEHAVIOURAL NEEDS

The majority of learners at Watergate School will respond positively when class teams and support staff work within these guidelines, but some learners may need additional support to learn to self-regulate and manage their behaviour in a positive manner.

We do this by:

- Working in-line with this policy and the school's physical intervention policy
- Putting in additional support, tailored to meet the specific needs of learner
- Observe learners in a range of different contexts
- Seek advice from other professionals, medical, speech and language, occupational therapy, CAMHS etc.
- Make strategies and routines more detailed and predictable
- Draw up risk assessments and Relational Support Plans detailing actions that should be in place at all times to support regulation, as well as actions to be taken when identified behaviours occur. These are shared with the learner, parent/carer, all other staff and professionals involved with the learner.
- Involving parents/carers in implementing the change in strategies

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We also work collaboratively with our learners, their parents/carers and other professional to deliver a Relational Support Plan. These are person-centred in approach to supporting learners who display or at risk of displaying behaviour which challenge.

It involves understanding the reasons for the behaviour and considering the person as a whole – including their life history, physical health and emotional needs – to implement ways of supporting them. The plan focuses on creating physical and social environments that are supportive and capable of meeting learners' needs and teaching them new skills to replace the behaviours which challenge.

## RESTRAINT

At Watergate School staff believe that restraint is the very last resort and should only be used if all other options have been exhausted. Any form of restraint should be used only when Reasonable, Proportionate and Absolutely necessary. It should only be used if the learner is putting himself/herself or others in danger and where failure to intervene would constitute neglect. (see Physical Intervention - Restraint of Pupils Policy). Watergate subscribe to the Studio 3 which is a low arousal approach to understanding and supporting behaviour and any associated physical intervention strategies.

Once the incident has been de-escalated and the learner is regulating well again, class teams need to consider which appropriate repair work needs to be done to offer a debrief for staff and maintain a positive relationship with the learner. If restraint is used, parents/carers will be contacted, incidents logged on CPOMS, Relational Support Plans will be reviewed and updated and shared with the relevant staff who support the learner.

## RISK ASSESSMENTS

Informal and dynamic risk assessment should be a routine part of life for staff working with children that display very challenging behaviour. Staff should always think ahead to anticipate possible incidents; should a proposed activity or situation involve unacceptable risk, then the correct decision is to do something else.

All children at Watergate School have an individual risk assessment linked to their RSP and this reflects their needs, strategies to be used with them and any other important information.

## MONITORING

Consistent behaviour management is required throughout the school, appropriately adapted to the age/ability of the learner; this is partly achieved through monitoring and reflection. All instances of behaviour that challenge should be logged on CPOMS.

## EXCLUSIONS

We do not believe that exclusions are the most effective ways of supporting learners with SEND at Watergate School, we will always try to adapt and personalise provision for all of our learners in order to ensure that they are able to access education.

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## LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Behaviour and Discipline (2016)  
Equalities Act (2010)  
Physical Intervention and Restraint Policy  
Bullying Policy  
Communication Policy

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