



# ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre

## BEHAVIOUR POLICY

### Rational

ASPIRE: Lifeskills provides a caring and supportive learning environment that encourages positive behaviour where all bodies present feel valued, safe and respected. We consider promoting and teaching positive behaviour as central to ensuring academic achievement, independence, lifeskills and community participation.

People with autism often experience high levels of anxiety which, if not managed appropriately, can result in behaviour that can be challenging. People with autism also experience difficulty communicating their needs effectively, which may lead to high levels of frustration.

People with autism can behave in ways that hinder their access to opportunities, restrict their social inclusion and adversely affect their quality of life. Working with families to enable the children and young people we support to learn to behave appropriately in different situations is central to achieving our aim of their acceptance and inclusion.

### Aims

ASPIRE: Lifeskills aims to:

- Recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication, and escalating behaviour is the communication of increasing distress.
- Understand the underlying factors causing behaviours, in order to respond positively, consistently and effectively; (see appendix Definitions and causes)
- Apply knowledge of individual students when applying safety and support strategies
- Provide structures and strategies to empower the individual to manage their own behaviour, promote emotional regulation and independence, enhance communication and socialisation; and raise self-esteem;
- Treat all students with respect and fairness;
- Provide a caring, safe and supportive learning environment;
- Support students to participate in their local community;
- Celebrate the achievements of all students.

## Approach

Behaviours are functional and communicative acts, which are meaningful because they achieve important results for an individual (e.g. gaining attention or coping strategy). As behaviours serve a communicative function, it is therefore more effective and valid to teach an alternative, appropriate response than to try and stop a behaviour by using aversive techniques. Positive procedures are constructive, in that they teach an appropriate alternative means to achieve the same goal and ultimately build self-esteem.

The term behaviour support is used in this document, as opposed to behaviour management, as it implies the need to consider all aspects of each student's behaviour, rather than just those identified as 'problem, difficult or crisis'. Passive, non-assertive behaviours restrict a student's independence and learning as much as those which are perceived as being 'problem' behaviours. Behaviour that challenges, serves a necessary purpose for an individual, as it is largely learned through a history of interactions between the person and the environment.

## Guiding Principles

Young people learn effectively if they are motivated and positively reinforced. We therefore aim to establish environments where praise and encouragement are the norm. We will assist the young people to learn by using their interests and preferences as motivators wherever practicable. Praise and encouragement, will be used to emphasise appropriate behaviour.

When supporting students with their behaviour at the Learning Centre we are guided by the following principles;

- ASPIRE: Lifeskills understands that challenging behaviour has a communicative intent. We recognise that the ultimate function of all behaviour is to get needs met. People with autism may have different needs and more limited means of achieving those needs.
- ASPIRE: Lifeskills has a duty to protect and keep safe the individual concerned and the other people around him or her, including other staff and parents.
- ASPIRE: Lifeskills is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying as well as promoting equality of opportunity and wellbeing of students during sessions.
- ASPIRE: Lifeskills accepts that each person has a right to make choices and to express themselves, using satisfactory means.
- ASPIRE: Lifeskills aims to teach and promote the skills necessary to meet the needs of all individuals, to enable them to change the behaviours that tend to stigmatise and isolate them.
- ASPIRE: Lifeskills promotes a non-aversive approach to behaviour support. (See appendix)

## Implementation

ASPIRE: Lifeskills will implement behaviour support in the following way;

### Individual Support Plans (ISPs)

Each student has an Individual Support Plan (ISP) to assist in the management of his or her behaviour. We use the term support as we recognise most behaviour results from unmet needs and therefore we focus on the support to meet needs not the behaviour causing concern. The intention is for people to increasingly be responsible for managing their own behaviour.

Wherever possible students will be involved in the development and implementation of their individual support plans. Positive expectations have a positive effect on the behaviour of others. Every student is of equal value and deserving of the same respect.

ISPs clearly identify behaviour(s) that are barriers to learning and positive interaction for the student, the alternative behaviour(s), that serve an equivalent function, the modifications to the environment that the student needs, and active and reactive strategies for managing challenging situations. Prior to writing an ISP, functional analysis of the behaviour that challenges will be carried out.

All staff must be fully informed of relevant procedures in order to ensure continuity across all settings and support and guidance must be available to address their needs.

### All ISPs should be written in line with the following principles:

- ASPIRE: Lifeskills will use planned, agreed and risk assessed approaches to support challenging behaviour
- All young people in ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre's care will have person centered support plans that are appropriate to their needs, abilities, skills and knowledge
- ISPs are drawn up by ASPIRE: Lifeskills staff who know the person well with advice from other staff and professionals when appropriate. Families and, where appropriate, the young person themselves will be consulted on these plans.
- All ISPs identify motivators (likes), triggers (dislikes), proactive strategies and reactive strategies. General support strategies are given as well as specific strategies for all frequent known behaviours. The ISP should be clear and functional to ensure that consistency of behaviour support is achievable across different settings and with different staff.
- Designated staff at ASPIRE: Lifeskills will review each student's ISP as and when required according to individual need. The relevance and effectiveness of each ISP will be assessed at least termly and modifications made as necessary.

## **Safety and Support plan**

In the event of a student experiencing crisis behaviours where they are presenting risk behaviours that could cause injury to themselves or others, then the ISP will be reviewed and a Safety and Support plan (SSP) implemented, identifying preventative interventions to avoid the need for restrictive intervention.

Restrictive intervention can be described as any physical, chemical, environmental, or mechanical intervention used to restrict a person's liberty of movement. An example of restrictive intervention is physical holding skills which maximise safety and minimise harm.

The same principles apply to the SSP as the ISP.

## **Whole School and Individual Positive Reward System**

Having a one size fits all approach to behavior support is challenging for students at the ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre due to the diverse needs of its students. Therefore, systems across the Learning Centre are person centered, they are tailored to the individual needs of the student and are fair and equitable. We are mindful that a transactional model for good behaviour, rewarding students for desirable behaviours could undermine their desire to do them without rewards.

In principle all students are encouraged to make positive choices during timetabled sessions and in unstructured times e.g breaks and lunch.

The following supports behaviour

- Effective consistent classroom management, expectations, environment, timetabling.
- Acknowledge student's good behaviours and offer praise.
- Sharing the positives with parents and carers
- Encourage cooperation by giving students a sense of choice e.g. offering informed choices
- Offer explanation, supporting their understanding of the 'rule' and why they need to follow instructions.
- Create opportunities for success. Preventing difficulties should be the focus, rather than punishment. You can do this by setting up daily routines, warn children about transitions, planning ahead to manage challenging situations etc.
- Staff modelling the desired behaviours
- Support interoception by describing feelings of pride/ selfworth. Often the best reward for doing the right thing is the satisfaction we feel from doing it. After a positive action, draw attention to these feelings by making comments such as, "It feels good to try your hardest and do your best!" etc.

We do not seek to treat children the same; we seek to provide each child with what they need as an individual.

At the end of each half term ASPIRE; Lifeskills celebrates all students progress and behaviour, in key stage or whole school activities.

## Unwanted Behaviours

Unwanted behaviours may present in the following ways

- Disruption in lessons, at break and lunchtimes
- Non-completion of classwork or homework
- Poor attitude
- Any form of bullying or intimidation
- Sexual assault, which is any unwanted sexual behaviour that causes humiliation, pain, fear or intimidation
- Possession of any prohibited items such as weapons, alcohol
- Showing repeated disrespect to peers, staff, the learning environment and wider community

## Procedures for Dealing with Unwanted Behaviours

At ASPIRE:Lifeskills we uphold a zero tolerance to any form of bullying. We ensure that any form of bullying or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently (see Anti-bullying policy/ Peer on Peer abuse policy)

When understanding and responding to unwanted behaviour, staff need to take the following into account

- The student's level of communication
- The student's flexibility of thinking
- The student's sensory needs
- The student's level of self awareness/self esteem

When making sense of a challenging situation it is important to ask the right questions:

- What does this behaviour mean? What does it say about how the student is feeling?
- What is the student trying to communicate to us or to achieve?
- What is the trigger here and am I responding in a way which is making the situation better or worse?

Following a significant episode of challenging behaviour it is important, as part of the debrief, to ask these further questions:

- How can we plan for prevention?
- How can we replace the problem by teaching new skills and "growing new behaviours"?
- How can we maintain that positive change?

**Self-injurious behaviour (SIB):** is any behaviour initiated by the individual which results in physical harm to that individual.

- Ritualistic, routine-led behaviours are often connected with self-injurious behaviour. Physically intervening to stop self injurious behaviour that is part of a routine is often

counter productive as the young person being supported may try to complete the routine later, often when they are in a heightened state of anxiety resulting from the previous prevention.

- Whilst distracting the person can be successful, sometimes the best support strategy is to ensure that they are as safe and as comfortable as possible; but make no direct intervention until the episode is over. This usually results in shorter episodes, with less likelihood that the self-injurious behaviour will escalate and result in more serious injury. Wherever possible, such supervision without direct intervention should be agreed with relevant external parties such as parents and local authority. Although interventions will be led by the staff member present, external experts may be consulted for advice for all incidents of self-injurious behaviour.

All incidences of unwanted behaviour should be recorded using the 'ABC' approach so that the cause can be analysed and ISP or SSP updated if needed, incidents will be recorded on CPOMS.

## Consequences

ASPIRE: Lifeskills believes in using a non-aversive approach to behaviour support with a focus on 'Natural Consequences' not punishment. (see appendix) As such we take the following graded approach to applying 'Natural Consequences'

## Graded Approach

At the Learning Centre, we adopt the following graded response approach:

- It is the responsibility of class teachers/support staff to address the **minor incidents** which occur in the classroom.
- It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher/key stage workers to monitor each student's behaviour across the curriculum. If a student's behaviour is causing concern in a number of subject areas, then incidents should be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate action taken.
- **More serious incidents** can be dealt with by the teacher/ keystone workers, but must also be recorded on CPOMS and passed on to a member of SLT.
- If the behaviour is causing frequent concern a member of SLT will give advice and support. In some situations external professional advice will be sought – and the referral route for this is always through the SLT.

In all stages staff will apply limit setting strategies, offering the student clear choices and clarifying boundaries of acceptable behaviour. This will be supported with the implementation of Social narratives.

Social narratives will be developed from the student's perspective to develop executive functioning skills, by assisting them in understanding the appropriate behavioural response and identifying personal strategies to apply the information.

## **De-escalation – Guidance for Staff**

All staff at ASPIRE are trained in Verbal Descalation

To support de-escalation of any behaviour and potential crisis behaviours staff will consider the following when interacting with the student.

Verbal communication includes the words you use to send messages. Staff will consider the significance of their words. Keep messages short, simple, and clear. Convey respect and phrase your words positively. For example, instead of saying ‘You are not supposed to be in this area,’ you might say, ‘You seem lost. How may I help you?’

Paraverbal communication is the tone, volume, and rhythm of speech that all work together to express thoughts and feelings. It relates to the way you say things and does not include the words you use. Staff will ensure they are using appropriate tone, volume and rhythm when talking to the student.

Non-verbal elements that support de-escalation are ensuring personal space, relaxed body language/ posture , ( communication through touch) and listening with empathy.

Although we cannot manage how a student escalates or descalsates, staff’s response can make a significant positive impact on the outcome.

Our approach changes everything - our behaviour affects their behaviour.

## **Restrictive Intervention**

ASPIRE: Lifeskills staff have a duty of care to keep people safe and must act in the best interests of all the students they are supporting.

There may be rare occasions when it is necessary to use a restrictive intervention with a student. When a student is in crisis, presenting risk behaviours that could harm themselves or others, (excluding known SIBS ritualistic behaviours see sub heading). Restrictive Intervention will only be used as a last resort and nonrestrictive strategies and de-escalation techniques will be applied in the first instance.

### **Only staff members trained in CPI Safety Intervention may perform restrictive intervention**

- Restrictive interventions will only be used to support crisis behaviour where there is clear and imminent danger and there is no alternative.
- Non-consensual touch may be considered assault when not used in the context of restrictive intervention.
- The use of restrictive intervention must be reasonable and proportionate to the behaviour and potential harm the behaviour might cause. The use of physical intervention must be for

the least time necessary and apply the minimum necessary force.

- The rights and dignity of students must always be considered.
- Where it has been agreed that physical intervention is a necessary reactive strategy a Safety and Support Plan will be in place.
- Any planned restrictive intervention strategies used must be carried out according to the principles and guidance of the ASPIRE: Lifeskills training provider – CPI Safety Intervention.
- The use of all restrictive intervention will be regularly reviewed, and monitored for consistency and effectiveness.
- Any incident involving the use of restrictive intervention must be recorded within 24 hours.
- In the exercise of their duty of care staff may, on occasion, need to use unplanned, emergency restrictive interventions in response to unforeseen events. In such cases a case review will take place within 48 hours a SSP will be written to put preventative measures in place to ensure the safety and welfare of the student.

### **ASPIRE: Lifeskills Directors' responsibilities**

- ASPIRE: Lifeskills Directors are responsible for this policy and will monitor its implementation during sessions.
- To ratify and regularly review this policy to ensure it conforms to relevant law and guidance.
- To ensure all staff are aware of this policy, receive appropriate training and procedures are followed.
- To implement the policy throughout sessions, ensuring all students have an appropriate Individual Support Plan (ISP) or Safety Support Plan (SSP).
- To ensure effective joint working with all staff.
- To ensure adequate ratio of staff, particularly those who support students with extremely challenging behaviour.

### **Responsibilities of all staff:**

- To notify the Head Teacher (Vivienne Boulton) of any serious incident and to follow ASPIRE: Lifeskills procedures concerning incidents and accidents.
- ASPIRE: Lifeskills are responsible for ensuring all staff are well supported and have the opportunity for post incident debriefings.
- All employees have a duty of care that requires them to act in the young persons' best interest and to treat all young people we support fairly, with respect and understanding.
- All employees have a duty to report any concerns about practice to a Director.
- To respond to all young people in a calm and positive manner.
- To provide positive role models to all students ensuring that their behaviour reflects the good practice of ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre.
- To always make clear that what they would like a student to do rather than over-emphasising what they do not want them to do.
- To value every young person, even if their behaviour needs a high level of support.



- To enable and support students to recognise a range of feelings, both positive and negative, and to develop their emotional regulation.
- To work with staff, students, parents and carers to ensure that strategies are developed together and that there is consistency of approach.

### **Responsibilities of parents:**

- To keep ASPIRE: Lifeskills informed about concerns, problems and family circumstances which may affect their child's behaviour or well-being.
- To work with ASPIRE: Lifeskills staff to plan and implement ISP and SSPs.

### **Assessing , Reviewing, Recording, Reporting and Monitoring**

- All serious behavioural incidents that require restrictive intervention must be recorded immediately, or by the end of the working day in which they occurred on CPOMS and in the serious incident book located in the Learning Centre office
- Behavioural data is monitored to ascertain trends and patterns, and regularly analysed to assist in ascertaining the effectiveness or otherwise of the behavioural interventions.
- Every use of a restrictive intervention arising from a behavioural incident must be recorded immediately, or by the end of the working day in which it occurred at the very latest .
- ASPIRE: Lifeskills Director and parent must be informed of any incident where restrictive intervention was used, on the day of the incident.
- Injuries or accidents arising from behavioural incidents must be recorded on CPOMS with the account of the incident.
- All serious behavioural incidents should be reported to the ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre Head Teacher (Vivienne Boulton).
- ASPIRE: Lifeskills Directors must be notified of any significant increases in incidents and where appropriate this should be investigated,

### **Whistleblowing**

The ethos and policy of ASPIRE: Lifeskills is to encourage openness and honesty. All ASPIRE: Lifeskills employees have a duty to report any concerns about practice. ASPIRE: Lifeskills provides a confidential process and employees who make disclosures will be protected against harassment or retribution. If you have concerns about a member of staff you should report it to a Director or designated safeguarding officer.

### **Training**

- All ASPIRE: Lifeskills staff will receive autism training, safeguarding training, online safety training, and first aid training as part of their initial training induction.
- Three members of staff are trained trainers in the delivery of CPI Safety Intervention.
- Staff are trained in Verbal deescalation.

- A core team of staff are trained in Safety intervention which includes the use of restrictive interventions.
- Verbal and Safety Intervention training is renewed annually.

## Staff Support

After a crisis it is important to re-establish the relationship to create a sense of calm and safety for all involved in a crisis. ASPIRE Lifeskills directors will address any immediate needs of the person in distress, bystanders, family members, or other staff who might have been involved.

ASPIRE: Lifeskills recognises that one of the most important and effective support structures is that which colleagues provide to each other. This may be about reflecting upon a situation or being a sympathetic ear at the end of a difficult day.

Staff must support each other whenever difficult incidents occur. It is important that if a colleague encounters another who is managing a difficult situation s/he should be non-judgmental and should unobtrusively let it be known that they are there to support if required. All staff should bear in mind that an audience to a challenging situation is not usually helpful and involving oneself, uninvited, may lead to increasing the sensory stimulation, tension levels and therefore the anxiety of the student.

### POLICY REVIEW STATEMENT

This policy will be reviewed every year or earlier should legislative change or other event require it.

SIGNED:... 

POSITION ..... DIRECTOR

DATE: .....20<sup>th</sup> January 2021

REVIEW DATE: ...20<sup>th</sup> July 2022

FOR & ON BEHALF OF  
ASPIRE: Lifeskills

## Appendix

### Terminology / Definitions

**Crisis behaviour;** can be defined as behaviour of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person concerned or of other people is at serious risk, or the behaviour results in the person only having limited or no access to ordinary community facilities. What is crisis behaviour to one person is not necessarily crisis to another and therefore it is our responses to a behaviour that determines whether it is perceived as challenging. Thus it can be defined as any behaviour that hurts, scares or upsets us.

**Restrictive intervention;** can be described as any physical, chemical, environmental, or mechanical intervention used to restrict a person's liberty of movement. An example of restrictive intervention is physical holding skills which maximise safety and minimise harm.

#### Non Aversive Approach

ASPIRE: Lifeskills recognises that negative reinforcements and punishments are not successful with most people with autism as we can never be sure that they make the right connection between their behaviour and the negative reinforcement. However young people learn from experiencing the outcomes of their behaviour - the natural consequences. We shall ensure that the individual is well aware of the likely consequences of the behaviour and has the ability to make a choice. This is not a punishment or a sanction but is a consequence of his or her behaviour.

ASPIRE: Lifeskills promotes a non-aversive approach to behaviour support (A non-aversive approach meaning that we focus on positive reward and teaching new skills, not consequences and sanctions). Some of the non-aversive techniques used are:-

- **Adapting The Environment** - Changing an individual's environment to reduce behavioural episodes - removing stimuli, such as persons, locations, or situations that are observed to create tension, anxiety, and frustration.
- **Positive Behaviour Supports** - Behaviour management system used to understand the reasoning behind inappropriate behaviour, instead of simply reprimanding that behaviour. Some techniques used are celebrating strengths and successes by accentuating positive feedback. Respecting and listening to the child and their reasoning for their actions. Validating the student's concerns and emotions instead of brushing them off. Providing clear and concise expectations of behaviour.
- **Teach Replacement Skills** - the goal here is to replace potentially inappropriate behaviours with more adaptive skills, focused on communication, social skills, and self-regulation. **Social narratives** will be developed from the student's perspective to develop executive functioning skills, by assisting them in understanding the appropriate behavioural response and identifying personal strategies to apply the information.

While people we support will experience natural consequences, such as not having as much time in reward time due to the length of time avoiding doing planned task, we do not support the use of punishment. ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre recognises the need and responsibility to help

students understand and respect boundaries and rules in order to prepare for adult life and the rule of the law.

## Factors That Affect Behaviour

- **Anxiety:** The behaviour exhibited by individuals with autism is largely governed by the level of anxiety and arousal they experience. If an individual is feeling frustrated and confused they are more likely to behave in an inappropriate manner.
- **Theory of Mind:** Because of neurological differences people on the autism spectrum may have difficulty understanding other people's thoughts and feelings, which may lead to students not understanding how their behaviour affects others.
- **Communication:** Difficulties with communication, particularly social communication are key. We will seek to reduce the likelihood of inappropriate behaviour by ensuring that each person has a functional communication system, that those supporting the person individualise their communication system and that our expectations of each individual are appropriate.
- **Environment:** ASPIRE: Lifeskills seeks to sensitively and imaginatively manage the environments for the young people we support to reduce sources of stress and thereby reduce the need for behavioural difficulties.
- **Sensory differences:** People on the autism spectrum are likely to have difficulty modulating and processing all types of sensory information - this can lead to hyper or hypo-arousal. Hyper-arousal results in high levels of anxiety, whilst hypo-arousal can result in passivity and under-responsiveness. We will establish any sensory differences that may be limiting an individual's opportunities and arrange to reduce or remove the source of difficulty wherever possible.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Young people with autism often experience high levels of anxiety, over-stimulation and emotional deregulation that can compromise quality of life. They may not understand the nature of the emotions they experience let alone what causes them. Young people must learn coping strategies to maintain the optimum level of emotional arousal in order to attend, engage or learn. Equally, staff must recognise the signs of deregulation and recognise behaviour (such as rocking), which is actually part of the young person's coping strategy, if they are to respond appropriately and support their emotional regulation.
- **Trauma:** is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea.