

Date written/reviewed:	13 th May 2026 (reviewed)	
Written/reviewed by:	Andy Moughtin (Director of Services)	
Board approval:	Date:	25/09/23
	Signed:	
	Position:	Chair of Trustees
Review due by:	13 th May 2027	
Table of contents:	Context Trauma-informed approach Referral Process and Student Conduct Agreement Addressing behaviours within the curriculum (RESET themes) CPI Safety Interventions Physical Intervention including restraint and the use of force Undesirable and Unacceptable behaviours and sanctions applied Additional interventions Serious behaviour incidents Confiscation of prohibited items Bullying Behaviours resulting in suspension Recognising and rewarding desirable behaviours Partnership with parents/carers and referrers Appendix A – Acorn AP Student Conduct Agreement Appendix B – Behaviours and Sanctions Table	
Substantive changes since last review:	<i>Included reference to Education & Inspections Act 2006 (Current version)</i>	

Behaviour Policy

Context

Most young people that attend Acorn AP Centres have been referred as a result of their challenging behaviour in school. Many are at risk of or have already received suspensions. Some have already been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. In addition, for some students, placements in other alternative provision or pupil referral units have broken down. Students come to Acorn AP with a range of complex issues that have been a barrier to them engaging with learning. Some of the main aims of the Acorn Centre focus on this – we seek to: *address the individual social, emotional and learning needs of young people, developing self-esteem; challenge and help modify bad behaviour, teaching young people to make appropriate choices; and facilitate reintegration back into school or onto further education or employment.* Because of this, our approach with behaviour is a key component of our programme.

Trauma-informed approach

All Acorn AP staff are introduced to a 'trauma informed' approach during induction and receive follow-up training each year. Acorn recognises that many of the negative 'behaviours' we see in our students have underlying causes – Adverse Childhood Experiences – and that addressing the behaviours alone will not help. At Acorn there is a strong focus on developing relationships with our students, using empathy, active listening and acceptance to help develop secure attachments, setting a foundation on which students can begin to learn to regulate themselves. Staff are trained to be able to recognise attachment styles and how to differentiate their approach accordingly for students with different styles. Sanctions include a restorative element wherever possible, and staff may also need to walk through or model a sanction or action with a student who is not able to carry it out on their own. Staff use specific tools within the curriculum and in one-to-one work with students that are therapeutic, reflective and restorative.

Referral Process and Student Conduct Agreement

During the referral process, questions will be asked to identify the types of behaviour that have been a cause for concern in the past and a behaviour record should be provided by the referrer. Questions are asked of the young person and parent/carer to help ascertain how the young person is performing in respect of their relationships with others, in their learning and self-view. This information will help staff plan an individual approach and set priorities and targets for each young person. It will also inform the content and focus of individual risk assessments.

Staff will set out Acorn AP's expectations for behaviour with the young person, parent/carer and referrer during the referral interview using the Student Conduct Agreement (Appendix A). This sets out conditions of acceptance that students are required to sign up to before they will be admitted on an Acorn AP placement. Attending parents/carers/referrers can help identify which conditions expected by the Acorn Centre are likely to cause issues for

the young person and an agreement is reached to help the young person comply and to help them see the need for the rules.

Addressing behaviour within the curriculum (RESET themes)

Acorn uses a programme that can be embedded into the curriculum, creating opportunities to explore and learn around key behaviour themes. The themes cover areas which allow young people to progress in their relationship with self, others and the curriculum. There is a framework within which progress can be assessed.

CPI Safety Interventions

All Acorn staff receive initial and ongoing training through the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). This is the level 1 Safety Interventions foundation course. This is a trauma informed approach which includes de-escalation strategies which staff should apply when dealing with students. The course also trains staff to safely undertake physical interventions and holding.

Physical Intervention including restraint and the use of force

Physical restraint should ONLY be used by staff trained under the CPI programme. Any physical intervention is to be used only as a last resort when an individual is presenting an immediate physical danger to themselves or others. Even in those moments, an assessment is necessary to determine the best course of action to maintain the care, welfare, safety and security of all involved in the crisis situation. There are many times where other strategies, such as continued verbal intervention, removing dangerous objects, or calling for further assistance would precede any physical interventions and may, in fact, reduce the need for physical intervention.

Staff who have undergone relevant training and certification will be authorised by Acorn AP to implement the taught strategies when called upon in any potential critical situation. The following principles apply:

- Staff are permitted to use restrictive interventions to keep young people safe as long as they do not breach their human rights. This will be used in accordance with Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (updated version in use) and current Department for Education guidance.
- Restrictive interventions should feel safe. They shouldn't cause pain or injury. They should never be used as a punishment or to enforce rules.
- If staff use restrictive interventions, they will always treat young people with respect, dignity, and kindness. They will always be:
 - A last resort
 - Least restrictive
 - Used for the shortest time possible
 - Used to maximise safety and minimise harm
- After all physical interventions there will be a 'lessons learned' reflections process through use of CPI documentation.
- All physical interventions are recorded on CPOMs and reviewed by the director of services.

Undesirable and Unacceptable behaviour and sanctions applied

Acorn AP makes a distinction between 'undesirable' behaviour types and 'unacceptable' behaviour types and will apply a different approach and range of sanctions or consequences for each.

Undesirable behaviour (including rudeness, work avoidance, low-level disruption, swearing) will always be challenged but may not always carry a sanction. When challenge does not result in an improvement, first and second level sanctions may include escalating warnings, moving a student within the class, working away from the group, time out from the class, losing points for that lesson and contacting parents/carers. Staff use ClassDojo to log and monitor occurrences of undesirable behaviour. If this shows that there is no improvement over time, a summative entry may be made on CPOMS so that interventions can be escalated and monitored more closely.

Unacceptable behaviour (including any kind of abuse, (including child on child abuse)) – fighting, assault (hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm), aggression towards others, bullying; sexual violence and/or harassment; sharing nudes and semi-nudes; initiation/hazing violence; deliberate damage to property; persistent and deliberate refusal to follow instructions, smoking) will not be tolerated and will always have serious first and if necessary, second level sanctions applied. These sanctions may include escalating warnings, isolation, contacting parents/carers, suspension, withdrawal of place, repairing or covering cost of damage and/or police involvement. All incidents of unacceptable behaviour must be logged on CPOMS along with details of sanctions and interventions applied.

Appendix B sets out the types of unacceptable and undesirable behaviours along with appropriate first and second level sanctions for each behaviour type. Staff should use this behaviour and sanctions table as a guide, when dealing with unacceptable and undesirable behaviour to ensure consistency and appropriateness in the sanctions used.

Additional interventions

As well as applying sanctions for unacceptable and undesirable behaviour, staff should consider what further interventions may help the student reduce occurrences of this type of behaviour in future. These may include; re-establishing expectations, creating or adapting individual risk assessments, extra pastoral support, professional counselling, involvement with specialist external agencies, target setting, and/or an additional focus within curriculum on particular issue. Further interventions should also be logged on CPOMS along with details and the outcome of anything requiring follow-up.

Serious behaviour incidents

Any behaviour incidents where students or staff are harmed (e.g. fighting, assault, physical aggression), or there is a serious safeguarding implication (e.g. sexting) or where there is

physical contact (including restraint), or where there is damage to property, or where a crime has taken place (e.g. sexual violence and/or harassment, theft, supplying drugs) are classed as *serious behaviour incidents*. When incidents of this type are recorded using CPOMS, this will automatically trigger oversight by a senior leader within Acorn and details will be collated separately for analysis and response. The sanctions and interventions applied must be recorded using this form. Reports may be required to agencies such as the police, children's social care as appropriate. Parents/carers and referrers should be informed of all serious behaviour incidents.

Confiscation of prohibited items

If there is a need to confiscate inappropriate/prohibited items and carry out a search of a young person then the policy and procedures as set out in the Weapons Policy will be referred to for guidance and legislation.

Bullying *See 'Anti -Bullying Policy' for more information*

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally and that is difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

All staff should be engaged in encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of young people, and in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among young people. Bullying in any form – including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying – will not be tolerated. Nor will remarks made towards another person that could be early signs of bullying behaviour. Both will be dealt with as unacceptable behaviour, with the type of bullying and sanctions applied logged on CPOMS.

Staff will actively encourage young people to talk about bullies and bullying. Young people are encouraged at all times to talk to staff about bullying issues affecting them.

Behaviour resulting in suspension

When behaviour results in suspension and is logged on CPOMS, the system will collate information relating to this, and any prior suspensions for analysis. Only the Head of Centre, or Directors are authorised to suspend a student and the procedure for notifying parents/carers and the referrer outlined in the Attendance, Suspensions and Exclusions Policy must be followed.

Recognising and rewarding desirable behaviour

It is also important to recognise and respond to good behaviour and improvements in the behaviour presented by young people, particularly when it demonstrates progress in areas that have typically been a problem. Rewards systems at Acorn AP are based on a points system that always acknowledges and encourages desirable behaviour and progress towards achieving behaviour targets. Staff record desirable behaviour on ClassDojo as it happens throughout the day. The Dojo reports will be used to help set targets and in conversations with young people, parents/carers and referrers. These points will also be

linked to rewards where young people have demonstrated behaviour that is above and beyond expectations.

Partnership with parents/carers and referrers

Students' behaviour – both positive and negative – is discussed with parents/carers and referring agencies on a regular (sometimes daily) basis. It is also discussed as part of the on-going 'review' process that takes place at least twice a term with students and staff. Information from ClassDojo and CPOMS should provide the basis for this.

Appendix A – Acorn AP Student Conduct Agreement

At Acorn AP we have a Christian ethos and operate in partnership with a local church. This means that our foundational Christian values of love, grace, compassion, forgiveness and hope underpin our holistic approach and are woven through everything we do. We really hope that this is your experience with Acorn:

- We commit ourselves to you. We offer you our support as you become a valued and important part of this centre. We expect that you really give it your best effort at Acorn so that you get the most out of your time with us.
- We expect you to behave safely, responsibly and with consideration to all students, staff and others you come into contact with.
- It is required that you will make every effort to keep the peace by sorting out personal differences that may arise.

Conditions of Acceptance

In any placement, there needs to be conditions about the way students are expected to behave, and Acorn AP is no exception. These conditions are there to keep us safe and give us all freedom and security and to help you make good choices.

For the above reasons, we ask that you commit yourself to the following conditions:

- *Staying in the right areas*
During your induction it will be made clear of where students should be during their time in centre. You must stay in these areas unless directed otherwise by a member of staff.
- *Leaving the premises*
Under no circumstances are you to leave the premises without permission. Parents of you will need to leave early or arrive late for a genuine reason.
- *Violence, threats of violence, offensive or abusive behaviour*
These will not be tolerated at all. Anyone acting in such a way may be asked to leave the centre. All incidents will be recorded and discussed with parents/carers.
- *Damage in the centre*
Any damage in the centre caused intentionally or through inappropriate behaviour will result in a repair bill to parents or carers and will be considered a serious incident.
- *Drugs and alcohol*
You must not take or be in possession of any drugs, other mood altering chemicals or alcoholic substances at any time whilst in the centre. Anyone found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol may be asked to leave immediately and parents/carers will be informed.
- *Smoking*
Smoking is not permitted in any part of the building at any time. This included the use of vapes.
- *Abusive Language*
We ask you not to use offensive or abusive language. This includes swearing, put downs and any similar type of language. This includes racist and homophobic language. This is totally unacceptable in any circumstances.
- *Mobile Phones*

Mobile phones can be brought to the centre. Before the start of the first lesson all mobiles must be totally switched off and handed in. Please note we do not accept any liability for mobiles brought onto our premises. Parents/carers are requested to contact Acorn staff directly if they need to speak to you for any emergency situation.

- *Literature*

No offensive media will be allowed at Acorn AP. If any is found in your possession, it will be confiscated, and parents or carers will be informed. This includes having offensive images or videos on mobile phones as well as printed material.

- *Personal appearance*

All students are expected and will be encouraged to be well presented at Acorn. The dress code for the centre is

- *Medication*

If you are taking any medication prescribed by your doctor, you must tell staff straight away. They will keep the medicine for you and allow access to it at the appropriate times. A parents or carer must complete a form for us giving details of the medication.

- *Safety*

It is important to be familiar with and closely follow all the fire safety instructions given by the staff. If there is a fire, follow the instruction of staff without question. All accidents must be reported to staff immediately.

- *Attendance & Timetable*

We hope you want to attend Acorn AP. We will do all we can to make that the case. You should attend on time each day that you are supposed to be here. Please do not arrive earlier than 10 minutes before the start of the day. Please leave the premises promptly at the end of the day or when requested. Your school is updated every day about your attendance.

- *General Conduct*

In class you should make it as easy as possible for everyone to learn and the teachers to teach. This means arriving on time, behaving in a polite and orderly way, listening carefully, following instructions and not eating or chewing. You are responsible for playing your part in keeping all areas you use clean and tidy. Privileges may be dependent on your behaviour.

- *Review meetings*

In order to monitor progress and sort out problems, student will have review meetings with members of staff. It is expected that, on occasions, parents or carers will be involved in such meetings.

- *Breaking of Conditions*

If you fail to keep to the terms of this agreement, staff will discuss this with you, and if no agreement is reached, it will be assumed that you no longer wish to be part of Acorn AP. Steps will then be taken to find you a different place.

I have read the above Conduct Agreement and agree to abide by its conditions.

Full Name:

Date: / /

Signed:

Parent/carer Signature:

Appendix B – Behaviour and Sanctions Table

Unacceptable behaviours		
<i>Behaviour</i>	<i>First level sanctions</i>	<i>Second level sanctions</i>
Abuse, including child on child abuse – Fighting, assault, causing physical harm, aggression towards others, including staff. Bullying in any form (physical, verbal, emotional, online), or malicious derogatory or discriminatory remarks made to another person that could be early signs of bullying behaviour – making the school an unsafe place to be where others feel frightened.	Separation from group, contact parents/carers. Think about some restorative justice sessions.	Police involvement, (must be willing to prosecute) suspension 1-5 days. If this is persistent on more than 3 occasions think about permanent exclusion.
Damage – deliberate. Either to school property or someone else's including graffiti, firefighting equipment, deliberately causing fires.	Repair damage either cleaning off graffiti if possible or pay for cost of cleaning or repair or replacement.	Cost of replacement/repair is taken out of rewards pot if no-one has been seen doing the damage and if no-one owns up. Involvement with the external services i.e. community police fire brigades educating on consequences.
Refusal to Follow Instructions (RFI) – This is <u>not</u> just someone not doing as they're told, this is a persistent and deliberate refusal to follow an instruction from a member of staff.	Follow the 3 is the magic number principle. Ask for cooperation, second time ask firmly reminding them that they need to make the right choice and what will happen if they don't (not threats, just a reminder of the consequence of making a wrong choice) third time of asking is stated as a question to the student, 'Are you refusing to follow my instruction?' wait and repeat question until you get compliance or until they say yes.	Removal from the rest of the group, contact parents/carers and continued RFI throughout the day leads to suspension. Continued RFI throughout a term could lead to place being withdrawn.

Smoking	Expectation that vapes, cigarettes and lighters are handed in at the start of the day. Make it clear that if they are not handed in that staff will assume you are planning to smoke and will be keeping a watch out and may request you stay inside at breaks.	Removal from the rest of the group, contact parents/carers over a break in contract, risk of place being withdrawn if consistent abuse of trust and breaking of centre rules. If the student is a year 11 young person, come to an agreement that they leave site at lunch time to facilitate the need and maintain the relationship and placement. Have you had lessons on smoking cessation?
Undesirable behaviours		
<i>Behaviour</i>	<i>First level sanctions</i>	<i>Second level sanctions</i>
Rude – Deliberate ignoring of staff, lying, talking over the teacher.	3 is the magic number: 1 st time – verbal warning and reminder of expected behaviour and what will happen if they choose to continue. 2 nd time – Name on the board or flip chart as a visual reminder they have been spoken to twice. You can use this in the lesson to point to if they continue reminding them that they are just one more warning away from being removed from the lesson. 3 rd time – moved in the class away from others with a member of staff to work on their own, taken outside the room and spoken to by a member of staff.	Separated from the group, no points awarded for lesson. Look at the history of the child, is this normal for the student? Look for patterns. Do you need to do some lessons on communication? Contact parents/carers.
Work Avoidance – trying to take teacher off task by going off the subject, being distracted by stuff in the room e.g. pool table	3 is the magic number: 1 st time – verbal warning and reminder of expected behaviour and what will happen if	Refusal to work during break needs to be followed up in the same way as RFI, give 3 chances to comply then ask the question are

etc., out of seat, trying to get out of the classroom.	they choose to continue. 2nd time – name on the board and warning that time wasted will be taken out of breaks and work will be done in that time. 3rd time – name circled on board to indicate that work will need to be completed at break time.	you refusing to follow instructions. Then follow through sanctions outlined above for RFI. Working away from the group . No points awarded for lesson. Contact parents/carers.
Low level disruption – chatting and off task behaviour.	3 is the magic number: 1st time – verbal warning and reminder of expected behaviour and what will happen if they choose to continue. 2nd time – Name on the board or flip chart as a visual reminder they have been spoken to twice. You can use this in the lesson to point to if they continue reminding them that they are just one more warning away from being removed from the lesson. 3rd time – moved in the class away from others with a member of staff to work on their own, taken outside the room and spoken to by a member of staff.	Given time out from the group. After 5 mins ask the question are you ready to learn. No points awarded for lesson. Contact parents/carers.
Swearing	This is always to be picked up on and students to be reminded about appropriate language, but no need for sanctions to be applied unless it turns into abuse or rudeness.	Could make it a target for some students that they can gain points for if they manage to avoid swearing during the lesson.