



# **Behaviour Management Policy**

***Date Written: June 2009***

***Timescale of Review: Annually***

***Most Recent Review: May 2022***

***Review Next Due: May 2023***

# Behaviour Policy

## **A Policy for the Positive Management of Children's Behaviour** **Which is in accordance with The Children's Homes Regulations 2015, Behaviour** **Management – Section 35**

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**This Policy Should be read in Conjunction with the  
'Use of Physical Intervention Policy'.**

## 1. Aims of the Document

Due to our children's adverse childhood experience involving trauma and abuse and corresponding developmental and emotional problems, they will often lack the resources to enable them to manage and contain their emotions, feelings and behaviours. Their fears and anxieties will therefore on occasion be acted out through difficult or disruptive behaviours. Their views of themselves and the world around them may be fractured and fragmented. Alongside this they may have distorted views of adult care and little belief that adults can provide safe, consistent boundaries and understandable limits. It is therefore our aim to provide firm and consistent boundaries thus offering experiences, over time, of adults who can appropriately and thoughtfully manage children and of an environment that is both safe and nurturing.

It is also the aim of the document to detail how we work with and understand the children's behaviour and define acceptable standards of behaviour that would be worked towards. It is understood that the children coming to Amicus will display challenging behaviours because of their previous experiences and in not knowing how to verbalise how they are feeling and therefore show us through the way they behave. Therefore we see behaviour as a communication for the child and seek to understand and modify this and help them to instead verbalise their feelings instead of acting them out. Staff at Amicus are tolerant in terms of the behaviours children in placement may display but not permissive and have an awareness that behaviours from the children need to be acted out to be understood and then worked with and the unconscious motivations process to enable the children to modify and move on from these and develop healthier coping strategies.

In this document as well as understanding the behaviours the children bring we also seek to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations which are either fulfilled or not. The children bring to Amicus a wide variety of behaviour patterns based on differences in their early life, early values, attitudes and the parenting/ care they have experienced, as well as their own personality. Each child is treated as an individual with individual histories and needs. However, we aim for children to work towards good standards of behaviour by having high expectations of our children and by creating a secure and organised environment where children know what is expected of them in terms of behaviour (this is supported through the daily routines and boundaries of the home and the 'Therapeutic Day) and attitude and why these things are important and how we will understand and help them with their behaviours. By showing an understanding of what they are communicating and that we value and respect them, that their presence and actions have an effect upon others as well

as their own life in the home, children are helped to realise they have a positive contribution to make in terms of discipline and enjoyment in the home and school.

## **2. Organisational Ethos on Behaviour**

### **2.1. Our Aims for Good Behaviour**

Our aims are:

- For staff to work with the understand that behaviour has meaning
- To work within our therapeutic model with the child and encourage them to speak about their feelings and emotions in relation to their behaviours
- For children to understand and know the boundaries and routines of the home and why they are in place and what is expected of them and to be supported with this
- to work consistently and fairly in the positive management of behaviour;
- to create a positive environment with high yet realistic expectations;
- to promote good behaviour through example, kindness, honesty and courtesy;
- to provide a caring and effective learning environment;
- to help our children feel good about themselves;
- to encourage our children to co-operate with one another and with the adults at home and in the school;
- For the children to be able to listen to each other's experiences and be respectful of their feelings and to be able to share their own also.
- encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others;
- ensure fair treatment of all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability;

- to work alongside all other areas of the community (home and school) and their staff, promoting and supporting the work carried out in the homes and school
- to encourage the development of the whole child – academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually;
- to show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.

## 2.2 Aims for Our Children

We aim for our children to feel confident that they are cared for and valued by adults and each other by creating a culture where we promote:

- acceptance of others for who they are;
- curiosity and interest
- tolerance and forgiveness;
- being able to think of others and hear their experiences;
- sharing and honesty;
- respect for life
- Respect for others;
- respect for property;
- respect for environment;
- co-operation;
- communication;
- politeness.

## 3. Why is Behaviour Important?

We believe that behaviour is the key to understanding the unconscious. Sometimes preverbal and expressed events and emotions from childhood experiences and traumas can be shown through the children's behaviours. All of the children placed at Amicus have

difficult and challenging behaviours a varying degrees and are at Amicus to have this and their previous trauma worked with and though and made sense of to bring to the conscious awareness and supported to manage their emotions and feeling without needing to act them out in extreme ways.

Every child should have the right to live in a home free from abuse, disruption and negative behaviour which makes forming attachments with others and learning difficult for them. In the home, as in society simple rules are established to ensure that the best interests of everyone are safeguarded. It is not enough, however, for a home to have children who conform to a set of rules and punishments where challenging behaviour is controlled and suppressed. It is necessary that a positive attitude to discipline is developed which helps children behave differently by encouraging them to take responsibility and control of their own behaviour and for this to be understood and worked with and they can then develop contextually appropriate behaviour without the need for adult intervention. It is a vital aspect of the work at the home that children are given time to openly talk about and think about their emotions and feelings and what their behaviours means and how adults will be able to help support them and understand this. The children are supported to think about their day and aspects of their behaviour within the therapeutic milieu and there are formal and informal opportunities for children to think about their feelings, experiences, relationships and interactions, both in terms of their behaviour and everyday home and school life. It is important that the children at Amicus have the chance to consider why behaviour and how they treat each other and manage their corresponding feelings and emotions is important and all the ways in which good behaviour helps them, both emotionally and in their relationships and attachments with each other and in being able to better process their feeling and behaviours and that we don't appear to just arbitrarily focus on what and what not to do.

### **3.1. What is appropriate behaviour?**

For the children we work with what is 'appropriate' is back to front – their security is often in the chaos as it is what they know and have previously experience. Often taking the risk to depend on others etc is a huge step and risk and felt to be more frightening. Therefore we work with children to help them make sense of what is / is not appropriate in modelling, reflecting and processing.

The underlying principle of appropriate behaviour is also the development of respect for others, their opinions and the environment in which they are in. Due to the degree of experiences trauma and emotional and behavioural needs of the children at Amicus, the boundaries of acceptable behaviour may need to be established and communicated,

perhaps negotiated to meet individuals' needs. Therapeutic Placement Plans for each child and their Personal Handling Plans detail how behaviour is managed and describes in detail their presentation/ behaviours and the plan and aims. The children receive a child friendly version of their Therapeutic Placement Plan which is discussed with them by their Link Workers. In school the children will also have their own Individual Behaviour Plan where personal targets are monitored and worked upon.

At Amicus we have identified the following as acceptable standards of behaviour:-

- a positive response to others;
- the emergence of self control and holding;
- taking responsibility;
- an awareness of what is acceptable;
- empathy and consideration for others;
- the ability to be aware of and resist peer pressure;
- tolerance;
- appropriate responses to new situations and experiences.

This is a long term piece of work with the children at Amicus and a part of each child's journey is to develop these capacities over their time at the Amicus therapeutic community.

#### **4. Encouraging Appropriate Behaviour.**

Sets of rules, codes of conduct and consequences although necessary in and understanding and meaningful context, can draw attention to negative behaviour but will be able to provide the expectations and boundaries of expected behaviours to work towards. Appropriate behaviour will be achieved by staff understand and working with the children's behaviours in a meaningful way and helping the children to process and reflect on them, staff themselves will set good examples of behaviour and conduct. They will also celebrating and recognise appropriate behaviour in a way that is manageable for the child through praise and reward, both personal and public. Appropriate behaviour will also be achieved through reparative consequences that help to put things right with what has been attacked / damaged (relationships/ people / objects / environment) and develop the children's ability to reflect and show remorse and understand our their behaviour can

impact not only them but also others and that they can work to make things better through reparative gestures.

#### **4.1. Example**

It is not possible to over-estimate the importance of example and role modelling in setting the pattern for positive behaviour. Role-modelling by all adults at Amicus must be a starting point. We must set the qualities we seek in the children.

We show:

- That we can think about our feelings and not act them out, that we are pre-occupied with the children and can emotionally contain them.
- calmness, patience, fairness, consistency, co-operation, respect for others, pre-empting of conflict and being positive with praise;

We challenge:

- sarcasm, cruelty, aggression, victimisation, damaging self-esteem and directing personal criticisms at children.

#### **4.2. Rewards and Praise**

The Department of Health (1991) recommends that in normal circumstances children should be encouraged to behave well by the frequent expressions of approval and by generous use of rewards, rather than extensive imposition of disciplinary measures.

Reward systems at Amicus are to include frequent praise of good behaviour and this is to be practised effectively by all members of the team. In addition to praise and commendations, privilege and treats are also effective as rewards for good behaviour, this is evidenced through the home's reward logs. As long as rewards and praise are carried out alongside regular discussion and thinking with the child about their behaviour, this can help develop a child's self-esteem and help promote positive change. However it is important to also hold in mind that the children can often find it incredibly difficult to accept praise and rewards so and often doesn't marry with their internal view and sense of themselves feeling valued worthy – therefore this needs to be delivered in a way that is sensitive and mindful of their own internal sense of themselves in an encouraging and supportive manner.



Examples of rewards include:

- Praise – which needs to be at the age and stage appropriate and with the child's experience at heart.
- Trips out
- Small items purchased, e.g. magazines, sweets, posters etc.
- Additional pocket money / allowance

Example must be reinforced with reward or praise. Rewards and praise can be exercised at individual, group or in , home, school, class level and there is a natural progression of rewards and praise evident at Amicus although many are used in conjunction with each other and this list does not presume an order in which praise and rewards are given:

- non-verbal approval – a smile or sign
- clearly show that you value the behaviour
- make public comment about good behaviour
- related rewards e.g. extra art time after a well-behaved art lesson
- Rewards or points system (in home or school)– If felt a suitable method for the children, this can be a big motivator and a good visual of the achievements and progress, where stickers or points are given for each achievement on a chart which can then lead to a bigger reward at the end.
- To acknowledge safety and respect for the computer equipment, children know that they are only able to use it if they are managing their behaviour or using the support on offer to them in the home and school. They are fully aware and it is acknowledged and accepted that if negative behaviour is displayed they will not be able to use the computer equipment until calm enough to do so, and will work towards this provision with support.
- An overview of the day for the child (what went well and what was more challenging) is reported daily between the home and school teams. This will include examples of good behaviour and what went well for them between staff in front of the child so that they hear this being, remembered, recognised and acknowledged. Difficulties

and struggles had are also reported with the children present too and the support they needed and may need to continue with the staff

### **4.3. Minimising Opportunities for Disruptive Behaviour.**

There is an awareness that we will have some difficult days and that these are all learning experiences as much as the happier and easier times. There is good planning and preparation for staff and children so that difficult news, potential for difficult feelings has been thought about and thought through and support put in place. The children through their experience at Amicus and within our therapeutic milieu will experience being and feeling 'held in mind' and have adults who are interested and pre-occupied with them.

Below is a list of recommended practise, which will help the children, interact, play meaningfully and with purpose. The list refers to more than just behavioural issues containing as it does the fundamentals of day to day life in the home and school organisation and good care/teaching practise. It is through good care, understanding of behaviours, reflection and processing that opportunities for disruptive behaviour are minimised.

In the home and school environments there should be;

- good preparation and sound organisation,
- resources available when children need them,
- differentiated tasks and high expectations,
- various / sympathetic seating and groupings,
- a calm and nurturing environment.

Or;

For children who know what they should be doing and have been in placement longer, they would be working towards the following - knowing;

- why they are doing it,
- are capable of doing it,
- have the resources to do it,
- and they are doing it.

## 5. What is Inappropriate Behaviour?

Simply, inappropriate behaviour is activity which runs against the best interest of our home and school and the children and adults within it.

### 5.1. Definition

The list below is designed to further break down what is considered to be inappropriate behaviour and refers to all children and adults within the home. The list is not presented in any special order as circumstances will always be influential. The list is not intended to be an absolute but a guideline to our ethos regarding inappropriate behaviour which needs to be worked with and explored.

Inappropriate behaviour is:

- physical or verbal abuse;
- Sexualised contact / content displayed to self / peer or adults;
- Coercive control ;
- discrimination;
- lack of respect for others or property;
- taking unacceptable risks;
- not taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions;
- lack of co-operation or defiance and confrontation;
- behaviour which inhibits others learning and / or experiences

### 5.2. Managing and Containing Inappropriate Behaviour

Due to the children's early adverse difficulties and experiences and trauma and abuse, they will often lack the resources to enable them to manage and contain their emotions, feelings and behaviour. Their fears and anxieties will therefore on occasion be acted out through difficult, disruptive and dangerous behaviours. Their views of themselves and their experiences of the world will often be fractured and fragmented.

Alongside this they may have distorted views of adult care and little belief that adults can provide safe, consistent and predictable boundaries and understandable limits. This adds to the sense of inhabiting a frightening world where they may regularly feel unmanageable,

uncontainable and uncontrollable. One vital aspect of the care of these children will therefore consist of providing firm and consistent boundaries thus offering experiences, over time, of adults who can appropriately manage them and contain their behaviour and feelings.

If there is any chance of this being genuinely accepted by the children and not appearing merely arbitrary or persecutory it must be carried out in a culture where it can be openly thought about with them. The entire structures and practices of Amicus are based around providing for the children, both formally and informally, spaces and opportunities to think about their feelings, experiences, relationships and interactions. At the same time, due to their young age and emotional impairment it is possible that the children will not always be able to take up these opportunities and may even show aggression towards them. The adults will therefore often have to hold the thinking for the children while continuing to maintain their the boundaries and structures in place to support them. The hope is that this thinking and processing of disturbed and at times overwhelming material can be communicated to the child over time in a manageable way as they become more able to hear and accept it.

### 5.3 Consequences

Consequences will inevitably play a part in the children's management but only when they benefit the child's development and understanding. They are used to help the child understand that there are consequences to their behaviour and associated feelings, this will give them the opportunity to make steps towards restitution and reparation, an important aspect of their recovery. All consequences will be appropriate and reparative where possible to the actual incident, and in line with the child's specific needs and their level of emotional development.

Consequences given will be discussed with the child close after the event, so that the reasons for them are clear. The aim is to enable them to think about the possible feelings and anxieties that underlie the behaviour that precipitated the consequences and to find alternatives to the child's disruptive or destructive behaviour and where this may come from and how this may relate to their trauma and can be worked with to make it more manageable. Any consequences given will be recorded, as will the child's responses to, and understanding of them. This recording will continue to measure the effectiveness and usefulness of the consequences to the child. It will also allow them to be discussed and thought about by the staff team and child group as part of the therapeutic experience. This culture of openness, scrutiny and dialogue around consequences is essential to help

safeguard against them becoming overly relied upon, arbitrary or merely used as complacent practice.

As stated above, consequences will be appropriate to the misbehaviour, therefore consequences will necessarily have degrees of severity. Listed below are examples of consequences, levelled to show the increase of severity.

**Level 1** – Working towards an intervention (the child probably doesn't even know it's happening)

- correct misunderstanding
- use eye contact
- distract the child
- move closer (awareness by proximity)
- a gentle word i.e. 'calm'
- general statements to help the child become aware of their actions 'I'm waiting for everybody'

**Level 2** – Drawing the child's attention to their actions

- draw attention to the action, so the child knows you are aware
- speak to the child – to determine the facts - to move the situation on 'what shall we do now?'
- Consider group and / or individual discussion (away from the group or together)
- Consider group dynamics and name these
- re-position the child, explaining why
- draw the child's attention to the consequences of their actions
- offer help to the child

**Level 3** – Action must be seen to be taken

- have time and space away from the group / peers or withdrawal from an activity to calm down, have period to think with an adult
- apologising to 'victim'
- involve the child 'how do you think we should do this, how are you feeling now?'

**Level 4** – Repeated misbehaviour

- as level 2 responses plus
- detailed behaviour plan focussing on one behaviour at a time. Expectations on the child's behaviour to be realistic and known by the child
- arrange close work with the children's school / Link worker, focusing on the anxieties, fears behind the behaviour, home's awareness of all behaviour targets.
- Withdrawal from privilege or an agreed consequence and reparative work undertaken. As long as it is made clear to the child why this is happening and there is a clear and formal opportunity to talk about this.

#### **Level 5 – Help needed**

- Discuss the child in internal case conference or Child Focused Meeting and discussed concerns and share experiences and think of what maybe going on for this child at that particular time and how we support them
- Involve network professionals where necessary on their advice and consultation and make aware of the behaviours occurring for the child and how they are being worked with.
- further intervention / involvement of home – school link
- Staff to make good use of the clinical and child focused meeting spaces to share idea, experiences and actions on how to support the child best

An integral part of our work at Amicus is that children get the chance to think about the possible meaning behind their behaviour. The aim is to make it available for thought and thus to eventually reduce the need for it to be acted out. The children at our home may not be able yet to take on any thinking and it will have to 'held' by the staff for them, until hopefully they are enabled to take an active part of this process.

#### **5.4 Physical Intervention**

The children's inability to manage and contain themselves and their feelings can lead to situations where they put themselves and others at physical risk. It may therefore be necessary, at times, to use physical holding techniques to keep the children, adults and environment safe and in order to demonstrate the adult's ability to both manage and care for them fully emotionally and physically when they have lost control. It can also provide an opportunity for the child to experience, during these often emotionally overwhelming periods, an adult that is neither reactive nor overwhelmed and can continue to think with and for them and essentially 'hold them together' when they cannot. This links to primitive

states of mind -Mummy / baby and a dependency of an unmet need that they are driven to seek out and experience.

After any physical intervention it is essential that an opportunity for it to be discussed with the child is offered as close to the time of the incident as possible. The need and reasons for the physical intervention and the child's responses and experiences of it can be thought about and responded to. An integral part of this is to think with the child about the possible meaning behind their behaviour. The aim is to make it available for thought and thus to eventually reduce the need for it to be acted out. The children will often be unable to take on any thinking and it will have to be 'held' by the staff for them, until hopefully they are enabled to take an active part in this process.

Due to many of the children's past experiences of adult care they may perceive any physical intervention as extremely threatening and frightening. Staff must also be mindful that it may trigger traumatic memories and experiences of their past. It must therefore always be made clear that this is part of the adult's care and protection for the child and not a form of punishment or retribution and will only be used as a last resort when all other de-escalation techniques have not worked. It should be reasonable, proportionate and necessary. For this reason, our physical intervention procedure and the possibility of its use must be thought about openly with the children, not just when it occurs but at other times as part of all their overall care. An adult (where possible the child's Link Worker) not involved in the incident will sit and think with the child after the physical intervention to help them reflect on the experience. A manager always oversees the use of a physical intervention and monitors use and makes manager's comments on the recording – this is achieved within 5 days of the incident. The main recording of the incident ideally needs to be completed within 24 hours. It needs to be thought about in the context of all the children, for the physical intervention of a particular child can often induce great fear and anxiety in the others. Therefore, other children exposed to physical intervention will also be offered an opportunity to discuss their feelings and experiences in the Daily Children's Meeting or separately with an adult. The children must be prepared for the possible use of physical intervention during their placement at Amicus to lessen the chances of it appearing merely arbitrary and anxiety inducing and to know when and why children may need to be physically supported – to keep them and those around them and the environment safe. Discussions are had with the children upon arrival at Amicus to discuss this and there is also information on the use of consequences and physical interventions and expectations around behaviour and how they will be supported in the home and school Children's Guide.

As with consequences, all physical interventions will be thoroughly recorded and sent to the child's Social Worker and, where appropriate, parents or other carers. The children will be

given the opportunity to have their views and feelings recorded. All physical interventions will be monitored and considered within the context of the child's overall development and will be carried out in accordance to the child's Positive Handling Plan. Physical interventions are also discussed in the monthly Physical Interventions meeting in which data around interventions are looked at and analysed and any trends noted and reflected on with action points implemented if required.

Any staff member involved in a physical intervention will be given the opportunity to have a space to think about the often-strong feelings and emotions it may have evoked. This will take place at the end of a shift between the adults on-shift to help as colleagues to think about the incident, what has happened, the feelings evoked and leftover - and what could have worked better. In situations that have been particularly difficult or when new behaviours have come up to be reflected on this will be followed up by Line Managers or a member of the Management team in the area being worked in the following day. These dates need to be recorded in the physical intervention record - so it is clear when these have taken place between adults'.

Staff are also encouraged to talk in monthly individual Line Management and Clinical Supervision and also in group Clinical and Group Process Meetings spaces to further reflect on dynamics and incidents that have felt challenging.

Debriefs with the children also take place as close to the incident as possible and are recorded with the date and time of the conversation and who the conversation was had with. Shift Leaders will need to have in mind the need for these follow-up conversations and ensure these take place ideally on the same day or if not the following day. It may be worthwhile – though not always necessary - for an adult **not** involved in the incident to talk with the child about it for 360degree feedback and awareness which helps to safeguard adults and children with any issues that may come up. It can also be important for the adult involved to have these discussions but this requires thought as a team about.

All staff are trained in safe in physical intervention techniques in accordance with the requirements of the Children's Homes Regulations (2015) and the Quality Standards. The physical intervention methods used at Amicus are Team Teach and all staff are trained to at least intermediate level with many also advanced Team teach trained. Amicus also have two of their staff who are qualified Team Teach Instructors who are able to internally train staff and monitor the use of physical interventions and provide support and advice in this area.



Please see our corresponding policy – The use of Physical Intervention Policy for more in depth details our on our practices and procedures in this area.

## **6. Transitions and Communication**

For children at Amicus the transitional parts of their day such as moving from breakfast to school or returning to school after lunch and transitions between home and school can be very difficult. To help the children with these transitions and to connect home and school, adults share information on the child's day at transition time in front of the child. When back in the home the daily Children's Meeting is used so adults and explore with children how their days have been and explore and acknowledge the struggles and possible anxieties as well as what went well.

There are plenty of spaces where adults talk and handover information about the children often with the children present – through Sharing Times, Well-being session / time, Children's Meetings, Staff daily Clinical Setup and the Morning Therapeutic Community Meeting.

We give high priority to clear communication between the home and school and to a positive partnership with therapeutic practitioners / managers since these are crucial in promoting and maintaining high standards of behaviour and thinking and linking. Where the behaviour of a child is giving especial cause for concern it is important that all those working with the child in the home and school are aware of those concerns, and the steps that are being taken in response. The key professional in this process is the Home Manager or Class Teacher who has the initial responsibility for the child's welfare whilst in home or school and this information will also be shared with the children's Social Worker and family / parents / carers where appropriate and necessary. Early warnings of concern should be reported to all who work with the child so that strategies can be discussed and agreed and meaning behind the behaviours as a communication, explored, reflected on and understood to enable this to be worked with and the child supported.

## **7. Overview**

For the children to work towards and aim for good and acceptable behaviour and allowing the adults to help support them and understand what is going on for them, is an essential part of their journey at Amicus in being able to begin to recover from their trauma and be

able to better manage their feelings and experiences. The best results, in terms of promoting good behaviour arise from it being understood that we work on the belief that behaviour has meaning and is being used as a communication and we seek to understand this to have better insight into the internal world of the child and how to help them. At Amicus, staff will promote and role model good behaviour and emphasise potential, reward success and giving praise for effort and personal achievement, rather than focusing on shortcomings, struggles and challenges – although it is important that these too are understood and explored and recognised. We believe that our children will develop self-discipline and positive behaviour through being heard and understood in the communication through behaviours and this being modified back to them in a digestible way and also from the example of the adults who care for and educate them. This will also be through well planned and stimulating learning opportunities and developing relationships and attachments and through listening to and offering understanding and meaning to our children.

**Signed by Director : R. Newton**

**Rebecca Newton**

**Date: May 2022**



# Policy Reviews

Date of Review	Information on Updates	Reviewed By
January 2021	General Policy Review	NY
April 2021	Update to terminology (Sanctions / consequences)	NY
June 2021	Adding further detail to reflect current and more updated practices - especially in relation to our therapeutic model and working with traumatised children and with the unconscious and belief that behaviour has meaning and will be reflected on a worked with. Whole policy overhaul carried out.	RN
May 2022	Further information added around PI's and reflection and feedback for staff and children  Additional information added relating to our therapeutic / psychoanalytic way of working	RN