



**National Nurturing
School Award**

Behaviour and relationships policy

**Independent
School Standards
and guidance**

Paragraphs 7, 9, 10 and 34; the DfE's 'Behaviour in schools' non-statutory advice (February 2024); 'Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools' statutory guidance (April 2026).

**Last updated by
senior leaders**

January 2026

**Last reviewed by
advisory board**

January 2026

Next review due

September 2026

Terminology

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill-treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others.

Behaviour: anything that individuals say and do.

Being therapeutic: An approach to behaviour that prioritises the helpful feelings of everyone within the dynamic. This policy establishes the methodology by which valued behaviour replaces detrimental behaviour through planned and sustained positive experiences.

Bullying: the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Dangerous behaviour: a form of detrimental behaviour which will imminently result in injury to self or others, damage to property, or behaviour that would be considered criminal if the person was the age of criminal responsibility, such as racist abuse.

Detrimental behaviour: anything that creates a negative experience, leads to unhelpful feelings, and is in opposition to the school's values.

Discrimination: any behaviour that disadvantages or treats differently individuals and/or groups as a result of one or more protected characteristics.

Educational consequences: the essential learning, rehearsing or teaching that is required to enable behaviour change. We use 'consequences' in place of 'sanctions'. Educational consequences progress the pupil's understanding and engagement, should allow the gradual removal of adaptations, and return freedoms.

Protected characteristics: as defined in the Equality Act (2010): age, disability, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave.

Protective consequences: necessary measures to reduce the risk of harm. Protective consequences may limit freedoms.

Special educational need and/or disability (SEND): a learning difficulty or disability that calls for provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.

Valued behaviour: anything that provides a positive experience, creates helpful feelings, and is in line with the school's values. A more detailed description of the valued behaviours linked to school values can be found in Section 6a.

Please also see definitions relating to use of force and seclusion, including restrictive interventions and restraint, in the final section of this policy.

Aims

At St John's Preparatory and Senior school, we recognise the links between behaviour, feelings, and experiences. Our approach to behaviour management is aligned with our *Therapeutic Thinking* training and our status as a National Nurturing School. We strive to know all our pupils really well, and prioritise building and maintaining strong and lasting positive relationships.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of behaviour in our school in line with this relationships and nurture-centred approach.

Every school relies on its staff behaving in certain ways to achieve its purpose. A school's central purpose is concerned with children's learning and their overall well-being. Therefore, this policy, and its application, has the following aims.

- To create positive experiences for all pupils.
- To protect the physical and emotional wellbeing of all members of the school community.
- To maintain a safe, calm environment that enables all pupils to learn.
- To analyse and interpret behaviour as a form of communication.
- To ensure all pupils are provided with what they need to develop valued behaviour.
- To explicitly teach valued behaviours, so that pupils make progress.
- To eliminate prejudice, discrimination, bullying, and all forms of abuse.

A culture of learning and support

- We recognise that in order to teach valued behaviour and modify detrimental behaviour adults at the school need to be emotionally available to pupils. When an adult does not feel they are emotionally available to manage a situation with an individual / group they will ask for, and be provided with, support from colleagues.
- Where requests for support form a pattern, a senior leader will explore with the colleague what ongoing support and training they may find beneficial.
- All adults working at the school are expected and supported to reflect on their practice. This is designed to identify how they can enhance ways of teaching valued behaviour and modifying detrimental behaviour.

Roles and responsibilities

Advisory board

- Reviewing this behaviour policy in conjunction with the Principal and Headteacher.
- Monitoring the policy's effectiveness through conversations, feedback and data.
- Holding the Principal to account for its implementation.

Principal/Headteacher

- Reviewing and approving this policy with oversight of the Advisory Board.
- Ensuring that all staff understand the principles and approaches to pupils' behaviour described in this policy.
- Ensuring all staff have appropriate training and support to teach valued behaviour and reduce pupils' detrimental behaviour.
- Reviewing data relating to pupils' behaviour to ensure no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by the policy and its implementation.

Leaders

- Supporting colleagues to reflect on and develop their practice, for example through informal conversations, observations and performance review.
- Addressing and subsequently supporting colleagues where the implementation of this policy is found to be inaccurate and/or inconsistent.
- Analysing patterns of pupils' behaviour, using this information to support our School's stated aims and values.

All members of staff

- Teaching valued behaviour
- Modelling valued behaviour
- Analysing and interpreting pupils' behaviour as a form of communication
- Applying the principle that all behaviour is linked to feelings, which result from experiences
- Creating positive experiences for pupils
- Supporting pupils to reduce detrimental behaviour
- Maintaining their own physical and emotional welfare
- Supporting colleagues to maintain physical and emotional welfare
- Working in partnership with pupils' parents / carers
- Implementing this policy consistently.

Parents and carers

- Collaborate with the school around the support provided for their child.
- Get to know the school's behaviour policy and reinforce it at home where appropriate.
- Support their child in understanding and following the school's behaviour policy.
- Inform the School of any changes in circumstances that may affect their child's behaviour.
- Discuss any behavioural concerns promptly with the relevant member of staff.

- Raise any concerns about the teaching of valued behaviour or reduction of detrimental behaviour with the school directly.
- Engage in the life of the School and its culture.
- Commit to working in partnership with the School to secure the best possible outcomes for their child.

The school endeavours to build a positive relationship with parents and carers and is committed to working in partnership to meet the needs of pupils. The School will inform parents / carers about their child's valued and detrimental behaviour.

Pupils

Pupils will be made aware of the following during their induction into the School.

- They will be taught about valued behaviour and that by attending school they understand these ambitions.
- They will be recognised and celebrated for valued behaviour.
- This policy remains relevant beyond school, for example on the way to and from School, on trips and visits, as well as in the community where they can be identified as a member of the School.
- Some pupils will need more teaching and support than others, in order to secure valued behaviour and reduce detrimental behaviour.

St. John's Values

Valued behaviour creates helpful feelings in self or others. It includes actions that are characterised by a concern for the rights, feelings and welfare of self or others.



Optimism

- We believe that fostering a positive mindset enables pupils to approach challenges with confidence and resilience. By promoting optimism, we encourage pupils to see mistakes as learning opportunities, to persevere in the face of setbacks, and to believe in their ability to improve. This outlook supports both academic progress and emotional wellbeing, helping children to develop self-belief, empathy, and a constructive attitude towards school life. Staff model optimistic behaviours and language, reinforcing the message that effort, reflection, and kindness contribute to personal growth and a thriving school community.

Resilience

- Resilience is fundamental to personal growth and academic success. We teach pupils to persist in the face of difficulty, adapt positively to change, and recover from setbacks with determination. Developing resilience enables pupils to manage challenges with a problem-solving mindset and a strong sense of self-worth. Through supportive relationships, clear expectations, and a culture of encouragement, we empower pupils to take responsibility for their actions, reflect on their experiences, and continue striving towards their goals with confidence.

Valour

- Valour is the courage to act with integrity, speak up for what is right, and face difficulties with bravery. In both academic and social contexts, pupils are encouraged to demonstrate valour by participating confidently, defending others from unkindness, and making principled choices even when difficult. We recognise that showing courage does not always mean being loud or bold—it can also be seen in quiet acts of honesty, fairness, and strength of character. We celebrate and nurture valour as a vital quality that builds self-respect and inspires others.

Kindness

- Kindness is actively embedded in our daily interactions, expectations, and classroom culture. We believe that a kind environment is one in which all pupils feel valued, safe, and supported. Acts of kindness—both large and small—are recognised and encouraged, as they foster empathy, deepen friendships, and contribute to a respectful and inclusive community. By promoting kindness, we help pupils understand the power of compassion, the importance of helping others, and the value of treating every individual with dignity.

Nobility

- Nobility refers to the consistent pursuit of high moral standards, self-respect, and service to others. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate noble behaviour through honesty, humility, and a willingness to act for the good of the wider community. This includes taking pride in their conduct, being gracious in success and failure, and contributing positively to school life. Nobility is not defined by status but by character, and we aim to guide pupils towards becoming principled individuals, who lead by example and inspire those around them.

Recognising and celebrating valued behaviour

St. John's staff take every opportunity available to recognise and celebrate valued behaviour. Where possible, this happens as soon as possible once the valued behaviour has been observed.

We recognise that specific praise is the best recognition for pupils because it is immediate, genuine, and reinforces valued behaviour. Some pupils will benefit from additional recognition and celebration because of their needs.

There are different ways in which adults can recognise and celebrate valued behaviour. In all cases the pupil's individual needs should be considered and may alter the approach taken. The strategies adults deploy at St John's Prep. and Senior school are likely to include some of the following:

- Non-verbal recognition / affirmation such as smiling, nodding, thumbs up.
- Specific verbal praise / recognition (e.g. telling the pupil what they have done and how it made you feel).
- Contact with home: e.g. phone call home, meeting with parents, daily feedback.
- Celebration awards: e.g. merit badges, award certificates, growth mindset awards, Class Dojo points and house points.

Many pupils thrive when their valued behaviour is publicly identified, while others may find the experience negative, resulting in unhelpful feelings. In this instance, private feedback can be a powerful motivator, boosting confidence and reinforcing valued behaviours.

Detrimental behaviour

Detrimental behaviour is defined as anything that hurts or hinders an individual, the community or the environment. Detrimental behaviour contributes to negative experiences and leads to unhelpful feelings.

At St John's Prep. and Senior school, we recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication, and it is the responsibility of adults to analyse and interpret what the behaviour is communicating. We also recognise that all behaviour is driven by thoughts and feelings, which are influenced by experiences.

For some pupils, incidents and patterns of detrimental behaviour may indicate an unknown or unmet need, which requires further consideration. For some pupils their known additional and/or SEND needs may influence their behaviour.

Adults always respond to detrimental behaviour with the aim of reducing it and identifying opportunities to teach pupils about valued behaviour. Adults' responses should be consistent, logical and happen as soon as possible after the detrimental behaviour. The responses will always consider the needs of the pupil(s) displaying detrimental behaviour and be adapted accordingly.

Responding to detrimental behaviour

Staff are expected, encouraged and supported to respond to low-level detrimental behaviour themselves.

Examples may include (but are not limited to): talking over instruction, not attempting work, interrupting, lack of care for equipment or the environment, not following instructions.

Responses to detrimental behaviours of this kind could include one or more of the following, listed broadly in sequential order:

- Restating the expected valued behaviour – calmly making clear what the pupil should be doing.
- Non-verbal intervention – moving closer to the pupil(s), using simple hand gestures, whilst continuing to teach, using other non-verbal communication technique etc.
- Proximal praise – recognising and celebrating those pupils who are doing what has been asked; restating the specific valued behaviour is helpful.
- Check-in – asking ‘are you okay?’ ‘what do you need?’ or ‘how can I help?’ during or immediately after a detrimental behaviour.
- Refocus – gain the pupil’s attention, use their name, then restate the specific valued behaviour that is expected at that moment.
- Describe the behaviour – use the pupil’s name then tell them simply and calmly what they are doing that is detrimental.
- Positive phrasing – gain the pupil’s attention, give a clear, unambiguous instruction, delivered with clarity. End with ‘thank you’. *E.g. Adam, put the pen down on the table. Thank you.*
- Limited choice – provides two options of equal value to give the pupil an element of control over what happens next, within the boundaries set by the adult. *e.g. Adam, shall we talk here or in the corridor?*
- Disempower the behaviour – a planned response to detrimental behaviour to make the detrimental less successful and effective in the moment for the pupil. *e.g. Adam, you can listen from there.* The adult should then focus on catching the pupil getting it right.
- Intervene – gain the pupil’s attention, use their name, then deliver instruction designed to enable change behaviour. This may require the pupil to move seats temporarily so that the teacher or other adult can deliver the intervention or consequence. This is likely to focus on the impact of detrimental behaviour as well as the significance and impact of the valued behaviour and its links to the school values.

Some detrimental behaviours may be less common and/or have increased severity. Examples may include (but are not limited to): increased frequency of detrimental behaviour, dismissive/offensive language, significant or repeated disruption to others' learning, invading others' personal space, aggression, withdrawal, internal truancy.

Responses to these behaviours are likely to include those outlined above, and in addition, staff may need to:

- **Intervene** – gain the pupil's attention, use their name, then deliver an intervention or consequence designed to enable behaviour change by increasing the level of support / scaffolding / teaching. This may require the pupil to move seats temporarily so that the teacher or other adult can deliver the intervention or consequence. This is likely to focus on the impact of detrimental behaviour as well as the significance and impact of the valued behaviour and its links to the school values. The intervention or consequence should only last as long as it takes for the pupil to make progress and demonstrate understanding.
- **Apply educational consequences** - any pupil displaying detrimental behaviour may be subject to consequences designed to mitigate harm. Educational consequences will always be implemented following incidents or patterns of detrimental behaviour. These must be designed to enable behaviour change by teaching pupils about valued and detrimental behaviour, based on the principle that all behaviour is a result of feelings, which are influenced by experiences. Educational consequences are best applied by those working directly with pupils. They may include one or more of the following:
 - **Reflective time during a break**
Rationale: If learning time is disrupted, time is given to calmly reflect with an adult. The aim is not to remove enjoyment, but to repair missed learning and relationships in a calm space.
 - **Pause in participation in off-site or enrichment activities**
Rationale: These activities require a foundation of trust and safe behaviour. Pupils are supported to work towards rejoining once they have demonstrated readiness through improved choices and reflection.
 - **Loss or delay of rewards (e.g. house points)**
Rationale: Rewards are earned through consistent positive choices. If behaviour falls short, the reward may be delayed until reflection and progress have occurred, reinforcing natural consequences.
 - **Temporary pause from leadership or responsibilities**
Rationale: Responsibilities are earned through trust. If behaviour does not reflect school values, roles may be paused with a clear path to restoration once readiness is shown.
 - **Restorative reflection sheet**
Rationale: A short, structured reflection helps pupils understand the impact of their behaviour, take responsibility, and identify strategies for next time. This is always discussed with a trusted adult.

- **Time with a member of staff during lunch or after school**
Rationale: This time is used to talk, reflect, and restore, not to shame. It may involve completing unfinished work or engaging in a restorative conversation to rebuild trust.
- **Supportive conversation with the Principal or Headteacher**
Rationale: Involving senior staff is a way to reinforce the seriousness of the behaviour while preserving relationships. It shows the pupil that their wellbeing and success matter at every level.
- **Parental partnership through calls or meetings**
Rationale: Working with parents or carers builds a consistent approach and strengthens the circle of support around the child. Meetings focus on solutions, not blame.
- **Daily check-ins with a senior leader – placed on report**
Rationale: This builds connection and accountability. Pupils are supported to reflect on their goals each day and receive positive reinforcement for their efforts and progress.
- **Internal reset (internal suspension)**
Rationale: When a pupil is unable to manage within the classroom, a reset day in another space provides time for calm, reflection, and re-engagement, with support and supervision.
- **Short-term time away from school (external suspension)**
Rationale: Used only when safety or repeated behaviours require a more formal intervention. It gives space for the pupil and family to reflect and plan for a supported return.
- **Permanent exclusion (as a last resort)**
Rationale: Only considered when all therapeutic and relational pathways have been exhausted. The safety and wellbeing of all pupils remains paramount, and permanent exclusion is always a last step.

'Instant consequences' for not following school rules ('non-negotiables')

Staff may impose a proportionate 'instant consequence', such as catch-up time during break or lunchtime, or reflection time at the end of the school day, where school rules are not followed. These may include, as non-exhaustive examples, bringing chewing gum into school, lateness to lessons, uniform infringements, and/or non-completion of homework.

There are specific, clear consequences in place for when pupils fail to hand in their mobile devices. Please see the mobile devices policy for further detail.

Dangerous behaviour

Dangerous behaviour is defined as any action(s) which will imminently result in serious harm (physical, emotional, mental, reputational) to self or others, damage to property, or behaviour that would be considered criminal if the person was the age of criminal responsibility.

Dangerous behaviours include:

- i. **Bullying.** Bullying is the repetitive, intentional harming (physical, emotional, mental, reputational) of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying is always unacceptable at St John's Prep., and Senior school and the school will always take action to address it, as per the anti-bullying strategy.
- ii. **Prohibited items.** These include: knives or weapons; any article a staff member reasonably suspects has been used or has been threatened to be used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person; illegal drugs; other toxic or psychoactive substances; stolen items; fireworks or other explosives; pornography or sexual imagery; alcohol; tobacco; e-cigarettes and vapes. The Principal / Headteacher and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil **may be concealing an illegal item**. More detail about searching and confiscation can be found here [Searching, screening and confiscation in schools - GOV.UK](#)
- iii. **Discrimination.** Actions that intentionally (or otherwise) disadvantage or treat differently individuals and/or groups as a result of one or more protected characteristic/s.
- iv. **Sexual violence and/or harassment.** This can be defined as behaviour that is most likely to include (but may not be limited to):
 - non-consensual sexual activity, including sexting and upskirting
 - sexual harassment, including misogynistic comments and behaviour, unwanted sexualised remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment.

All staff must report any concerns immediately to the DSL. All staff must also recognise that downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for pupils and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises misogyny and abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. Further consideration of the school's response to child-on-child abuse, in addition to those outlined it can be found in the school's safeguarding policy.

Responding to dangerous behaviour

Incidents and patterns of dangerous behaviour may well require consequences to be applied for the specific aim of mitigating risk. To enable adaptation of provision or approach to be planned and implemented one or more of the following may be used:

- separation from adults and/or peers
- limiting access to named areas of the school
- accessing different activities / equipment to peers
- increased levels of adult support and supervision
- temporarily reduced timetables
- suspension, or permanent exclusion.

Parents will always be informed as soon as possible once the decision to apply consequences has been made. These decisions will be taken by the Principal or Headteacher, or staff authorised by them (in which case the Principal or Headteacher will be informed on the same day the decision is taken).

In all cases educational consequences will be applied with the aim of reducing future risk and enabling behaviour change.

External suspension

- When the difficult, and rare, decision is taken to suspend a pupil from school, usually for no more than one or two days, parents are informed by phone and an explanatory letter is always then sent on the same day.
- During a suspension, the pupil must not come on to the school premises; we provide homework of a suitable quantity and quality. Following the suspension, the Principal or Headteacher, or another senior leader, will lead a reintegration meeting (before or at the beginning of the pupil's return to school) to discuss the necessary strategies and support for the pupil in order to avoid repetition of the behaviour/s leading to the suspension.
- In extreme cases, parents may be asked to collect their child from school for dangerous behaviour. This will always count, and be marked as, a suspension.

Permanent exclusion

- In very exceptional circumstances the Principal or Headteacher may make the difficult but reasonable decision to permanently exclude a pupil.
- An exceptional circumstance may include, as non-exhaustive examples, extreme violence and/or being in possession/bringing prohibited items into school such as a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs.
- The school will always inform the parents without delay and provide details of the reasons and next steps. The school will also inform the pupil's local authority.

Recording incidents of 'serious misbehaviour'

- Serious incidents of misbehaviour, including those resulting in a consequence ('sanction') such as suspension, are recorded on our incidents of serious misbehaviour log as per paragraph 9(c) of the independent school standards.

Restrictive interventions, including the use, recording and reporting of reasonable force and seclusion

- Everybody at St. John's knows that it is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. We reject both the use of corporal punishment and the unrealistic and unhelpful nature of 'no contact' policies. Our overriding focus at St. John's, as per this policy and our status as a National Nurturing School, is on building and sustaining positive relationships, rewarding positive behaviour, facilitating reflection, and actively preventing and de-escalating challenging behaviour.
- Use of force at St. John's is exceptionally rare, and as such there are no allocated staff members deemed likely to need to use it, or trained in specific physical intervention and/or restraint techniques. However, all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions; 'reasonable' means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time) and restraint (a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement) in certain circumstances, including to prevent or stop a pupil from:
1. causing injury to themselves or others; 2. committing a criminal offence; 3. damaging property; 4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.
- All our staff are therefore trained to know that, in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to use reasonable force to prevent harm, for the reasons outlined in the above point. Reasonable force will only ever be used as a last resort following exhausted preventative attempts at de-escalation.
- Such use of force goes beyond what constitutes *age-appropriate reasonable contact*, such as in providing first aid, guiding or escorting pupils, comforting distressed pupils, congratulating success (e.g. handshakes or a pat on the back), and demonstrating exercises or techniques during music or physical education lessons.
- Use of seclusion (a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving) is also exceptionally rare at St. John's and would only ever be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional and/or behavioural dysregulation. Seclusion is never implemented by staff through threat of punishment. The place to which a pupil is confined will be safe, unthreatening and supervised at all times. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil will be supported to leave.
- For some pupils with additional needs, including those with SEND, we will work closely with parents to facilitate effective strategies to support individual identified needs, including through the development of behaviour support plans.
- Any use of reasonable force and/or seclusion reflects relevant legislation as outlined in the latest Department for Education's guidance (['Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies'](#) up to 31 March 2026, and ['Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools'](#) statutory guidance (from 1 April 2026)).

- All incidents requiring the use of force and/or seclusion (*including those for pupils with behaviour support plans but excluding those for whom it would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil; in this instance, the staff member will report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident*) are recorded thoroughly and promptly on the same day, in writing, and parents are also informed on the same day in writing, usually via email following an explanatory phone call.
- Incident reports include those involved, the pupil's needs and/or circumstances including SEND status, time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention, brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained, a brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance, and any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts.
- Following all incidents involving the use of force and/or seclusion, senior leaders will facilitate follow-up conversations with both involved pupils and staff members to facilitate reflection, learning and support. These conversations form part of the overall debriefing process and look to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved, as well as to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue. This process is facilitated by a senior leader who was not involved in the incident.