



### Attitudes to Learning; Character Development Policy

Signed

*Tim Bridger*

Chair of the Board of Directors

Date approved:	20.07.2021
Approved by:	Board of Directors
Version:	0.1
Date for Review	September 2022

#### Version History

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Change	Owners Name
0.1	20.07.2021	New Policy	Wendy Ainscough

## **Aims**

At Alumnis Multi Academy Trust, we value the power of relationships, strong attachments and the social, emotional and wellbeing of each child within our schools.

This policy outlines the way in which all members of our Alumnis family can live well together, learning to disagree well and cope when things do not go as expected. It aims to set out an environment through which all children can become confident, compassionate, critical thinkers who are aware of their role as global citizens. There are many elements to this, but we believe that through a positive supportive framework we will enable all of our pupils to become inspiring change makers and make a positive contribution as global citizens.

## **Character Expectations**

As a Trust, we use Character Education to consider how we should grow our behaviours within our communities, and as global citizens, to ensure pupils understand how to conduct themselves appropriately both inside and outside of school enabling all to flourish.

Character Education is taught and children have opportunities to practise their Character Virtues through all curriculum subjects, enrichment and wider experiences. Character Education is woven throughout, enhancing the curriculum to ensure children have experiences beyond the classroom, and providing them with opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge in a wider context. This includes Character Virtues and development, offering children the opportunity to learn and develop virtues in the classroom, on school trips, and at less structured times both in school and offsite.

Children are encouraged to:

- **Engage** with memorable first hand experiences of kindness, compassion and positivity, modelled by all Alumnis staff members.
- **Innovate** by applying positive aspects of the character development in the classroom, at break and lunchtimes and at home
- **Develop** and practice their character, reflecting on successes
- **Express** and evaluate their achievements, celebrating and sharing success with others

## **Removing Barriers**

Alumnis Multi Academy Trust acknowledges that behaviour is a form of communication from a child, and often an indication of an unmet need. If a child is not displaying the expected Character Virtues, it is important to consider some key aspects:

- Is the child stressed or anxious? How can we reduce these feelings and increase feelings of safety?
- Is there a skills deficit? How could we support with this?
- Is there an unmet need? What can we do to help?

There are some key actions an adult should take when considering these questions:

- Remind the child of the expected behaviour / character expectations
- Ask the child to move to another space and support them to do this
- Ensure the child has time with an adult to calm, regulate and consider next steps - during this time, support the child to reflect on their behaviour and think through next steps alongside the child.
- Consider reparation?

### **Vulnerable Pupils and Pupils with SEND / SEMH Needs**

Each school within the Alumnis family recognises its legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent pupils with a protected characteristic from being at a disadvantage. Consequently, our approach to conduct that challenges may be differentiated to cater to the needs of the pupil.

The school's SEND team will evaluate a pupil who exhibits conduct that can challenge to determine whether they have any underlying needs that are not currently being met.

Where necessary, support and advice will also be sought from specialist teachers, an educational psychologist, medical practitioners and/or others, to identify or support specific needs.

When acute needs are identified in a pupil, we will liaise with external agencies and plan support programmes for that child. We will work with parents to create the plan and review it on a regular basis.

We have a graduated approach to SEND for pupils whose additional needs present a barrier to achievement. We will support children through:

- Quality First teaching
- Small group support
- 1:1 interventions
- Support from outside agencies e.g. Social Emotional Mental Health Team, School Nursing Team, Communication and Interaction Team, Inclusion Officer, Education Welfare Officer, Educational Psychologist and Social Workers

All support will be recorded in a plan e.g. an Individual Education Plan, Pastoral Support Programme and / or an Early Help Plan.

Following support it may be necessary to consider other approaches e.g. an Education, Health and Care Plan, attendance at a short stay placement away from the main school site.

### **Helping Children Feel Safe**

We recognise that children need to feel safe if they are to develop positive relationships in school, therefore all adults at each Alumnis school will:

- Treat children fairly (and be explicit in this)
- Build positive relationships with all children
- Apologise if mistakes are made
- Avoid shouting or using derogatory or humiliating language when speaking to children or to one another
- Teach children ways to manage minor incidents independently and tell other children when they don't like what is happening
- Encourage children to identify a 'safe adult' in the school they would feel comfortable speaking about difficulties with friendships, behaviour or issues at home etc.
- Recognise that when children demonstrate conduct which distracts themselves or others that there is usually a reason behind this
- Teach children how to stay safe on the internet, and particularly when using social media
- Be vigilant in recognising changes in children's behaviour and speaking to parents about this if appropriate
- Follow the school safeguarding policy at all times

### **Helping Children to Resolve Difficulties**

When children fall out they are supported and given time to listen to each other's points of view, consider how their actions have made others feel and come to an agreement about how arguments and disputes can be resolved and avoided in the future.

Members of staff are trained in restorative thinking and character development – an approach which focuses the individual on their responsibilities to the rights of others, and enables those who have been harmed to convey the impact of the harm to those responsible. We aim to deal with conflict peacefully and fairly, while promoting a safe caring environment where problems can be resolved successfully.

The Restorative Approach does not preclude using sanctions, but it does provide a framework for making them more meaningful as everyone is involved in decision making.

See Appendix A and B for further information.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### The Local School Committee

The LSC is responsible for approving and monitoring this Character Development policy's effectiveness and holding the headteacher to account for its implementation.

### The Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is delivered within their school.

The Headteacher will ensure that the school environment encourages positive Character development and that staff deal effectively with behaviours that challenge, and will monitor how staff manage children who are not meeting the expectations, implement this policy to ensure that encouragement of Character Virtues and Development is consistent.

It is also their responsibility to ensure the health and safety and welfare of all the children within the school.

### The Role of the Class Teacher

It is the Class Teachers' responsibility that the school vision and character virtues are consistently displayed and discussed in their class and across the school.

The Class Teacher has high expectations of children coupled with respect and understanding in terms of character expectations and strives to make sure that all children work to the best of their ability. Children become less distracted with planned and creative lessons that provide challenge, motivation and aspiration.

Class Teachers treat each child fairly and with dignity, respect and understanding.

If a child demonstrates behaviours that challenge repeatedly in the class, the Class Teacher keeps a record of this on CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System). The Class Teacher will first seek to remove barriers, however, if the unwanted behaviour continues, the Class Teacher will seek help and advice from the Head Teacher, SENDCo, Social Inclusion Team and will inform the parents.

Class Teachers will liaise with the SENDCo regarding any on-going concerns and work collaboratively to create an Individual Character Development Plan for those children that may require it.

The Class Teacher will also contact a child's parents if there are concerns about behaviour or a child's well-being.

Classroom staff will be present in the classroom to welcome children in with a smile and positive greeting, whether this is first thing in the morning or after break and lunchtimes.

Children should always be referred to by their name, never surnames or derisory names.

Classroom staff will be aware of their tone of voice and manner in which they say things.

### Teaching assistant

Our Teaching Assistants are highly valued members of staff who are class based at key times throughout the day, assisting the Class Teacher in delivering tasks to ensure pupils can access learning at their level. They help to ensure that our Character programme is consistently applied and refer to our key vision and virtues when they lead groups or carry out interventions. Where children are demonstrating conduct that challenges, despite applying positive strategies and removing barriers, the Teaching Assistant will refer to the Class Teacher for further support.

### Break and Lunchtime

In the playground, we have similarly high expectations of all children. Consistency of support and keeping contact between members of staff on duty and the Class Teachers is integral to the smooth running of the school.

Staff members on duty have allocated areas of the playground to ensure all children are supervised at all times and know where to find an adult should they need one. Staff on duty will promote Character Virtues, and are encouraged to join in and play games with the children to promote a playful atmosphere and model expectations.

There are a range of different activities available in the playground at lunchtimes to ensure that children have lots to do, which helps sustain positive behaviour and our young people act as 'Inspiring Leaders' to organise equipment, support any young people who may need this and are identified by wearing high visibility jackets.

### The Role of Parents

We believe it's important to involve parents as soon as possible when a child's conduct gives cause for concern. This may involve setting individual Character Development charts as an emphasis on positive achievements, and to provide a platform on which further success can be made.

It is expected that parents will support the learning of their child and cooperate with school expectations as set out in the home school agreement, signed by each parent when their

child starts at one of our family of Alumnis schools. We endeavour to build a supportive dialogue with parents, ensuring parents are kept informed if there are concerns about a child's behaviour or well being.

Our Alumnis family of schools work collaboratively with parents, operating an open door policy where we actively encourage parents to come in and discuss any concerns or positives they would like to share.

If a parent has any concerns about how their child has been dealt with they should in the first instance speak with the class teacher and then to the Head Teacher where appropriate.

<https://alumnismat.org/download/alumnis-complaints-policy/>

### **Definitions / Significant Incidents of Behaviours that Challenge**

Significant incidents could include leaving class without permission; being rude and disrespectful to adults; being disrespectful to school or other children's property; swearing; threatening behaviour; being deliberately or persistently unkind to others; fighting; and/or deliberately hurting other children and repeatedly not following instructions.

The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 effective from September 2007, gives schools powers to screen or search pupils. Staff will not be requested to undertake searches as the power to search should only be used where it is judged to be safe. As directed by senior leadership, if the school decides that a search may be necessary then the police would be called.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. The act of bullying, either in school or outside of school, will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of all (parents, staff - including non-teaching, and students) to report a bullying incident to any member of the teaching staff.

Type of bullying	Definition
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Racial	Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

Bullying will be dealt with seriously. Senior management and pastoral staff are very experienced in dealing with bullying incidents and will advise / support any member of staff who has to deal with any such incident (see Anti Bullying Policy on our website - <https://alumnismat.org/policies/> ).

In our schools, various systems are in place to support children. These include supporting and promoting anti-bullying week; participation in national annual events such as the 'odd-sock' campaign; worry boxes in all classrooms for children to voice any concerns in confidence; regular promotion of the anti-bullying message and the celebration of diversity and tolerance through the C360 curriculum.

### **Encouraging Character Virtues and Development**

Displays of expected / positive Character Virtues and Development could be recognised in the following ways:

- Verbal praise
- Class Dojo Points
- Letters or phone calls home to parents
- Special responsibilities and privileges
- Receiving Proud Certificates
- Receiving Head Teachers Award
- Character Recognition Certificates



Each year EVERY child in school will work towards 6 inspiring changemaker challenges that support with the development of character.

Disregard for the expected Character Virtues or unacceptable behaviour may result in one or more of the following:

- A restorative discussion.
- Time, outside of learning time, to finish off work.
- Access to a safe place to regulate or think about their behaviour
- Creation of an Individual Character Development Plan.

Significant incidents or persistent inappropriate behaviour could result in:

- A meeting between teacher and parents
- A meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team / SENDCo / Social Inclusion Team as appropriate
- Creation of an Individual Character Development Plan
- Internal or external exclusion

### **Physical Handling**

In some circumstances, staff may use reasonable force to restrain a pupil to prevent them:

- Causing disorder
- Hurting themselves or others
- Damaging property

Incidents of physical restraint must:

- Involve a senior member of staff in school
- Always be used as a last resort
- Never be used as a form of punishment
- Be applied using the minimum amount of force and for the minimum amount of time possible
- Be used in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned
- Be immediately reported to the headteacher or SLT
- Be reported to parents on the day it has occurred
- Be recorded on CPOMS
- Result in an Individual Character Development Plan, put in place by the Class Teacher with assistance from the Headteacher / SENDCo / Social Inclusion Team
- Trigger a review of the Individual Character Development Plan.

## **Confiscation**

Any prohibited items found in pupil's possession will be confiscated. These items will not be returned to pupils.

We will also confiscate any items which are harmful or detrimental to the school discipline. These items will be returned to pupils after discussion with senior leaders and parents, if appropriate.

Searching and screening pupils is conducted in line with DfE's latest guidance on searching, screening and confiscation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

## **Fixed-Term and Permanent Exclusions**

Only the Head Teacher has the power to exclude a pupil from school. The Head Teacher may exclude a pupil for one or more fixed periods, for up to 45 days in any one school year or 15 days in one school term. The Head Teacher may also exclude a pupil permanently. It is also possible for the Head Teacher to convert a fixed-term exclusion into a permanent exclusion, if the circumstances warrant this. If the Head Teacher excludes a pupil, he informs the parents immediately, giving reasons for the exclusion. At the same time, the Head Teacher makes it clear to the parents that they can, if they wish, appeal against the decision to the Governing Body. The school informs the parents how to make any such appeal. The Head Teacher informs the LEA and the Governing Body about any permanent exclusion, and about any fixed-term exclusions beyond five days in any one term. The Governing Body itself cannot either exclude a pupil or extend the exclusion period made by the Head Teacher. The Governing Body has a discipline committee. This committee considers any exclusion appeals on behalf of the Governors.

When an appeals panel meets to consider an exclusion, they consider the circumstances in which the pupil was excluded, consider any representation by parents and consider whether the pupil should be reinstated. If the Governors' appeals panel decides that a pupil should be reinstated, the Head Teacher must comply with this ruling.

## **Pupil Transition**

To ensure a smooth transition to the next year, pupils have transition sessions with their new teacher(s).

In addition, staff members hold transition meetings.

To ensure behaviour is continually monitored and the right support is in place, information related to pupil behaviour issues may be transferred to relevant staff at the start of the term or year. Information on behaviour issues may also be shared with new settings for those pupils transferring to other schools.

### **Staff Training**

All our staff are provided training in safeguarding, managing behaviours that challenge, proper use of physical restraint which also form of continued professional development

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

This Character Development policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher and LSC every year. At each review, the policy will be approved by the LSC.

### **Legislation and Statutory Requirements**

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education on

- Behaviour and discipline in schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>

- Searching, screening and confiscation at school

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

- The Equality Act 2010

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

- Use of reasonable force in schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

## Appendix A

### **Stages and Script for Managing Conduct that Challenge**

(check whether child has an Individual Character Development Plan)

Use a calm voice, use the child's name, get to their level, remember that every child should feel known and valued.

#### **1. Ask**

First make sure the child understands the instructions.

Break the instruction down into smaller parts and/or use simpler words.

Check the child understands by asking them to repeat the instruction in their own words.

If a learning activity is involved, make sure the child is able to access the learning and has the appropriate support.

#### **I have noticed that you...(state noticed behaviour)**

E.g. (After checking the above) I have noticed that you haven't started your work. I am asking you to start your work, please.

#### **I am asking you to...(state instruction), thank you**

E.g. You are disrupting the learning and I am asking you to please stop calling out.

#### **2. Reminder**

#### **I have noticed that you...(state noticed behaviour)**

E.g. I have noticed you still haven't started your work. I'm reminding you to make the right choice and get started, thank you.

#### **I am reminding you to make the right choice and...(state instruction), thank you**

E.g. I have asked you to stop calling out. I am now reminding you to make the right choice and stop calling out, thank you.

#### **3. Choices**

This is very similar to 30 second script for dealing with behaviours that challenge

**I have noticed that you are...(state noticed behaviour). You can choose to... (state instruction) or choose to... (state sanction). Remember when you chose to... (state a time when the child made the right choice)? That is the behaviour I expect from you. Think carefully. I know you can make the right choice.**

E.g. I have noticed that you haven't started your work. You can choose to start your work now or you're choosing to do it at break time/at home. Remember when you finished all of your work yesterday and you felt so happy. That's what we need to see today. I know you can make the right choice.

E.g. I notice you're still calling out. You can choose to stop calling out or you're choosing to have 'time out' outside the classroom. Remember when you listened carefully on Tuesday and we had a great lesson. I know you can make the right choice.

#### **4. Consequence**

**You have refused to follow 1, 2 or 3 so you've chosen to... (state consequences\*).**

E.g. You have refused to follow 1, 2 or 3 so you've chosen to do your work at lunchtime.

E.g. You have refused to follow 1, 2 and 3 so you've chosen to have 2 minutes time out outside the classroom to think about your choices.

DO NOT DESCRIBE THE CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR TO ANOTHER ADULT IN FRONT OF THE CHILD

#### **5. Follow up**

The Restorative Approach

Incidents of unacceptable behaviour should be dealt with in a fair, respectful and appropriate way, with the key focus is on individuals taking responsibility for their behaviour, repairing any harm done, rebuilding and restoring relationships.

The key principle when dealing with issues is to give all the people involved a chance to have their say and become actively involved in the process. All members of staff and children know that issues will be dealt with fairly with a 'no blame' approach.

When there have been incidents between two children, key questions will be asked to find out what has happened and how the individuals involved can make things right again, or repair the harm caused.

Our aim is not necessarily to ask *why* something has happened but to determine what has led up to an issue and resolve it in a positive way. Everyone involved in an incident is taken through the restorative dialogue (questions below) and is therefore supported in coming to

understand the impact of the incident on all parties. This approach encourages those involved to identify ways in which a relationship can be repaired or how they can move forward.

By giving pupils this responsibility we are supporting them in developing their own strategies for avoiding and resolving conflict. We also believe that if pupils reach their own agreement as to how to move forward after a conflict, they are more likely to abide by it than if it is suggested by an adult or imposed upon them.

All staff working within our Alumnis family of schools are expected to use active listening skills when dealing with a conflict. This enables them to draw out more from those involved.

**Encouraging** Tell me some more about that?

**Summarising** So there seem to be several things bothering you...

**Reflecting** So you felt that..... (Repeating back last few words)

**Checking** So did I hear you say.... ?Am I right in thinking.....?

**Empathy** It's understandable that you are worried / upset about this; that sounds tough;

**Affirmation** Thanks for telling me that; Thank you for trusting me; Clarification Can you help me understand that a bit more?

Children will be given time and space (and support if necessary) to reflect on the causes and impact of their actions.

### The Restorative Questions

#### **What happened?**

Drawing out each person's story one at a time, starting with the person who has caused the harm. The aim is not necessarily to come to a definitive conclusion on what has happened, but for each person to be heard..

#### **What do you think and feel about that?**

What each person was thinking and feeling at the time, before and since.

#### **Who has been affected and how?**

Who has been harmed/affected and how?

Older children are encouraged to think about the wider implications of who has been affected e.g. families.

#### **What are the needs of those involved?**

What those affected need to feel better, move on, repair harm and rebuild relationships.

**What do you think needs to happen to make things right?**

Is there a natural solution? e.g. tidy up a mess that has been made, finish work at lunchtime

**How could you do things differently next time?**

Staff support pupils in this process but try to ensure the pupils form their own agreement when possible.

## Appendix B

### **30 Second Script for dealing with Behaviours that Challenge**

- I noticed you are... (kicking the desk/struggling to sit on the carpet)
- I understand you are...(angry/ upset/ frustrated)
- You need to... (state desired behaviour)
- Then we can... (state what the outcome will be)
- You can choose to... (state desired behaviour) or you're choosing to... (state sanction)
- Do you remember when you...? (refer back to a positive event)
- That is who I need to see today!
- I know it's tricky but I believe you can do it – thank you. (Walk away and don't turn back! Allow take up time and show you believe they can do it.)