

# St Martin's SRP Behaviour Policy

## Feb 2018

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### Introduction

The Oasis, Specialist Resource Provision, at St Martin's CE Primary School aims to support children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in mainstream schools. To enable this to happen the children need to feel physically and emotionally safe within the school environment. For low level behavioural concerns, the mainstream behaviour policy is followed. Everything done in The Oasis (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children (TEACCH), structure, plain language, understanding autism, understanding particularly how autism affects each of our pupils, differentiation, social stories) is implemented to make understanding easier for our autistic pupils, alleviate their stress, bring them to calm-alert state, reduce stressed behaviours, this is also implemented as much as possible in their mainstream classes.

This policy is intended to help staff carry out tasks to create and maintain a safe environment for all, with a specific focus on working with behaviour that challenges, maintaining a nurturing environment and, within this, ensuring good practice is followed at all times. Staff are trained to apply their knowledge of autism to try to understand the behaviour in terms of how the autistic child may inevitably misunderstand much of what is going on, causing high levels of anxiety. Behaviours that challenge are then reflected on by staff in order to reduce anxiety and teach self-regulation skills.

The Oasis trains all staff in a system that promotes positive behaviour. This covers a wide spectrum of risk reduction strategies. It includes an integrative holistic approach involving training, policy and guidance, management of the environment, the deployment of staff and importantly, de-escalation techniques.

At the Oasis we believe that all behaviour is a communication and we are committed to exploring and understanding the meaning of this communication for each child. We recognise the national figures demonstrate over-representation in terms of SEND pupils being excluded and make every effort not to follow that trend. Our system encourages staff to use autism friendly strategies to promote alternative choices. This is done through:

- Distraction and redirection
- Use of visuals
- Reduced language to minimise demand
- Staff to be clear on the one voice strategy
- Additional processing time given - the 10 second rule
- Adults showing care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place if possible.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as 'weapons'.

- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

It is essential that the approach to working with behaviour that challenges is matched to the individual child's level of understanding and ability to make use of the approach.

The underlying belief of The Oasis is that children are most likely to be calm and ready to learn when:

- Expectations are clear and achievable
- They feel valued and cared for
- They receive regular praise and positive feedback
- They feel they are being successful
- They feel understood
- They are learning to understand their own autism, how it affects them, and how they can learn to manage it.

We encourage good patterns of behaviour by using:

- non-verbal signals
- positive verbal comments and praise
- positive comments written in home school communication books
- giving children responsibility
- sharing positive aspects with others
- awarding certificates and stickers
- recognition at celebration assembly
- allowing movement breaks, OT interventions and sensory room breaks when necessary

The Oasis uses a reflective approach to support the child to learn to regulate their emotions and manage their own behaviour. Each child has a first chance and a second chance to make the right choice with their behaviour. A visual traffic light system is used so the child can see their first and second chance go without the use of language, as the processing of language can be more limited when they are highly anxious. If their behaviour continues or they have hurt, used swear words or damaged property, then they are expected to have a reflection time. This is time to allow the child to stop and think about what they are doing and to calm down. The length of time is individual to the child and how much time they need in any moment in order to self-regulate. Some children will need assistance with this and this will be offered. A low arousal environment will be offered, including no eye contact, quiet voice and no physical contact (if suitable) and they may spend time in the sensory room with a member of staff. If a child does not understand the reflective approach and needs help to self-regulate they will be accompanied by staff to a safe and quiet space until they have calmed. Staff will then reflect on what triggered the incident and all information will be logged in the behaviour log. Once the child has had calming time, and we recognise that (scientific evidence shows that an autistic child is likely to take much longer to return to a calm-alert state once aroused than a non-autistic child), they have the opportunity to talk through events with an adult to help them understand what has happened and to hopefully take responsibility for their actions if appropriate. The child is then supported in the process of 'making it better'. This reparation is about rebuilding relationships and fixing any damage where possible. The rationale for this is that children will learn that when something goes wrong we can make it better and feel better in themselves for doing so.

### The Learning Environment

Considerable attention has been given to ensuring the learning environment meets the needs of the children with ASD.

We achieve this by creating a low arousal environment in The Oasis in the following ways:

- Non-intrusive lighting
- Management of daylight
- Focus on visual clarity and visually defined working areas with clear visual pathways
- Use of designated group work area and individual work stations,
- A sensory room.
- Low distraction teaching environment, with ASD friendly displays and a focus on meaningful and relevant visual information
- Staff are sensitive to children becoming overloaded with language or sensory input

By reducing the arousal levels in the mainstream environment using a range of strategies:

- Use of calming colours
- Use of carefully planned seating arrangements
- Use of individual work stations

By managing playtime opportunities according to individual needs in the following ways:

- Use of small group settings to develop play skills
- Adult led games in playground
- Structured play built into curriculum
- Supported access to shared play areas

There are many ways in which a child may be included with their mainstream peers, depending on the needs of the individual child. Inclusion planning for each child is reviewed with the child and parents at termly review meetings. Some of the ways used are as follows:

- Child is joined by children from the mainstream class for lessons in the SRP classroom
- Child attends school worship with mainstream peers
- Child attends mainstream class lesson with support from SRP staff
- Child attends mainstream class activity with support from SRP, such as class outings
- Children from the SRP class join mainstream peers during lunch time and playtimes

Children may be supported to access these activities in the following ways

- Preparation by use of social stories and pre-visits
- Development of appropriate routines
- Clear expectations and rule structure
- Clear instructions supported visually as appropriate
- Use of peer buddy systems and older buddy systems

There is a flexible and systematic approach to developing the necessary skills for children with ASD to join in whole school experiences. Depending on the needs of the child, this may include:

- Playtime
- Mealtimes

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- Worship
- Sports events
- School celebrations
- Festivals
- Special curriculum activities
- Breakfast club, after school club and additional clubs run in school.

### Range of approaches used

- 1) In the St Martin's SRP we provide flexible, responsive and highly individualised learning opportunities utilising a wide range of interventions which have been proven to be effective in the research literature. Interventions are selected to suit the needs of each child and will be incorporated within a differentiated National Curriculum.
- 2) In addressing **social communication and interaction**, interventions may also include PECS (a proven strategy for developing real and spontaneous communication skills), symbol programmes, signing programmes including 'singalong' and Semantic/Pragmatic programmes. All children follow individualised language and communication programmes devised by the Specialist Speech and Language Therapist.
- 3) In addressing **social understanding**, interventions may include child-centred approaches such as Interactive Play, Music therapy, Intensive Interaction and similar interventions.
- 4) In addressing **flexibility of thought and social imagination**, interventions may include TEACCH - an ASD-specific approach which provides visual information, structure and predictability and capitalises on many children's strengths in visual skills and adherence to routine in order to develop skills and minimise difficulties. All programmes are rooted in techniques derived from behavioural theory including task analysis, systematic positive reinforcement and chaining.
- 5) In **addressing sensory issues**, interventions may include a sensory curriculum devised and monitored by an occupational therapist and, where appropriate, programmes will include Sensory Integration, use of aerobic activity, sensory circuits and Conditioned Relaxation

### Communication

Within The Oasis all staff adopt ASD specific communication strategies depending on the needs of the individual child, this may include:

- Picture Exchange Communication System - PECS
- Visual cues, such as visual timetables, schedules, rule lists, reward systems.
- Allowing additional processing time
- Using simple clear instructions
- Ensuring 1 member of staff is talking

Communication is differentiated to reflect the language needs of the individual child and may include a hierarchy of communication supports such as specific objects, the beginnings of representations using part objects, photographs, line drawings, symbols and written text.

Within the mainstream school ASD friendly communication strategies are adopted depending on the needs of the individual child which may include PECS and visual cues and in addition

- Visual support for key subject words and language
- Attention is given to avoiding metaphor and overly long explanations



## GENERAL GUIDANCE ON WORKING WITH BEHAVIOUR THAT CHALLENGES

Behaviours that challenge can be categorised in 5 ways:

1. Behaviour which harms eg kicking, hitting, biting, pinching
2. Self -injurious behaviour eg head banging, hitting self, biting self
3. Socially inappropriate behaviours eg spitting, inappropriate urinating, swearing
4. Damage to property eg ripping down displays, break objects, smash windows
5. Dangerous occurrences eg absconding, setting off the fire alarm

It should always be remembered that when working with behaviour that challenges, interventions of any nature should be: ***in the best interests of the child, reasonable, proportionate and necessary***  
At St Martin's when dealing with behaviour that challenges we use the following strategies.

### I. Anticipate and prevent:

**Get to know each child well:** a strong relationship based on trust and respect is one of the most effective preventative measures – know their background information contained in their files and their behaviour plan where applicable.

**Involve the children:** in decision making around consequences and reasonable choices when formulating a behaviour plan - appropriate to each child's age and understanding;

**Teach by example:** model respect for the children and for each other in all of our work

**Encourage age appropriate behaviour:** notice and respond when children are being helpful or constructive, friendly or just quiet and co-operative;

**Be consistent:** as far as you can maintain consistent limits within the team and find out about the limits the child is used to at home and elsewhere;

**Be clear:** children need to be aware of what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour and responsibilities. Problems often occur when expectations are unclear or unreasonable.

**Work as a Team:** make use of your team to avoid unnecessary conflict and engage in ways that help the child think

**Praise and positively reinforce behaviour whenever possible:** remember you generally 'get more of what you talk about'.

### II. When things become difficult, what helps:

**Try and avoid head on conflict:** try distraction or compromise - defuse the situation wherever you can and stop it escalating. Relaxed humour can be used on occasions.

**Use the opportunity for the child to learn:** try and teach a positive alternative to an unacceptable behaviour - i.e. "let's do this" rather than "don't do that" – always aim to increase the child's own self- control, at least until they demonstrate that they have really lost it.

**Make a distinction between the child and the behaviour:** make it clear that you will go on caring for the child whatever he or she might do and recognise yourself that the behaviour is not really a personal affront to you.

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**Encourage children to find a way out of difficult situations:** offer alternatives, make sure the child has a way out of the confrontation without losing face and make sure there are gains in getting out of the conflict.

**If you have to use sanctions:** make them immediate, fair, and reasonable and try to ensure that the child understands why. If it does not make sense and means nothing to the child there is no point in doing it.

**Recognise the child's feelings:** it may be unreasonable for the child to kick, bite or scream but it is not unreasonable for them to feel cross or unhappy. Confirm the feeling with/for the child and help find acceptable ways to express the feelings. Many of our children struggle to label their feelings!

**Keep your own self-control:** get help and do not be afraid to go away and hand over the situation to others if you feel you are losing your own self-control.

**Move confidently but calmly**

**Make simple clear statements to the child:** use clear instructional language using the phrase "When.... Then....."

**Make sure your voice is quiet, firm and assured**

**Reduce the threat of your presence:** kneeling or sitting, if appropriate, or giving space for the child to move about. If you are challenging the child it can help to avoid direct eye contact.

**Talk to the child:** even if it appears he/she is not listening - try to maintain eye contact and focus on being reassuring, offering comfort and security through staying with the child when distressed and out of control. Don't try to sort things out in the heat of the moment; leave that for later when the child is calmer. Together you can agree what needs to happen next in order to resolve the entire situation.

### When things become difficult avoid further unnecessary problems:

- Don't take it personally or make it personal
- Don't go it alone if you feel out of your depth: ask for help or ideas or advice;
- Don't make alarming, vague or unrealistic threats you cannot carry out
- Don't corner and overcrowd or inhibit a child's movement unless the child or others are at risk
- Don't use sarcasm: or tease or belittle or shame a child into obeying you
- Don't EVER shout, or give complicated messages with a high-pitched voice
- Don't try to sort things out by bombarding the child with statements and questions, loudly or harshly put
- Don't leave the child in order to look for help
- ✓ Do use strategies included in the child's Behaviour Plan
- ✓ Do ensure that one person takes the lead in talking to the child during the interventions. This person should talk as little as possible. This can avoid creating further confusion.

### Managing very challenging situations

When managing situations with pupils within the Oasis where there is a high risk **it is most effective for just one person to be in dialogue with the child**, whilst other members of staff support that adult in any way appropriate. This support might be someone else who has more experience managing this type of situation, or, has a stronger relationship with the child.

It is often unhelpful to have a series of adults giving the child attention at these times, as this can prolong the incident or intensify it.



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### Role of Pupils

It is intended that, through participation in The Oasis curriculum and nurturing environment, as well as through the reflective process, children should come to understand their own behaviours that challenge and develop their capacity for communicating feelings. This increased understanding and ability to communicate should lead to reduction in *acting out behaviour*.

### Role of Parents / Carers

We know children make most progress when we are working well with the parents and carers. This means good clear communication and the parents and carers understanding the ways we are working with behaviour. It also requires common expectations to be agreed and understood.

### Rewards

Staff should take every opportunity to reward children for effort and achievement. This can be done informally through verbal feedback and encouragement, as well as through more formal assessments of their targets.

### Sanctions

### Glossary

**Conditioned Relaxation-** this approach is used to help teach children how to relax when feeling anxious or angry. It uses cycles of tensing, relaxing, deep breathing and visualisation to help ease anxiety and to relax.

**Intensive interaction-** intensive interaction is about developing early interaction abilities- how to enjoy being with other people-to relate, understand, know, understand and practice communication routines.

[www.intensiveinteraction.org](http://www.intensiveinteraction.org)

**Interactive Play-** The focus of interactive play for children with autism is to discover how to create a world together rather than try to enter the child's world to try and see it from their perspective.

**Music Therapy-**uses the medium of music to focus on assessing and assisting children to reach developmental or academic milestones; to develop transferable skills for learning; improve understanding of social interaction; promote independence and support and overcome functional, cognitive and emotional difficulties.

[www.chilternmusictherapy.co.uk](http://www.chilternmusictherapy.co.uk)

**Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)-** is an approach that develops early expressive communication skills using pictures. PECS is a functional communication system that develops important communication and social skills.

[www.pecs-unitedkingdom.com](http://www.pecs-unitedkingdom.com)

**Social Stories-** are a tool to help individuals on the autism spectrum better understand the nuances of interpersonal communication so that they could interact in an effective and appropriate manner.



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[www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx)

**Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH)**- The TEACCH approach tries to respond to the needs of autistic people using the best available approaches and methods known so far, for educating and teaching autonomy. It is not a single method and can be used alongside other approaches.

[www.teacch.com](http://www.teacch.com)

