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Barnham CEVC Primary School

RELATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PROMOTION OF ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Intent

Barnham CEVC Primary school is committed to enabling children to flourish and achieve their fullest potential through providing opportunities to be 'the best they can be for themselves, for others and for God's world'. We want all children to feel respected and valued as contributors to our school family.

We are a relational, trauma-informed school. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and is shaped by children's experiences, including attachment patterns, developmental needs and adverse childhood experiences. We understand that dysregulation is not deliberate defiance but often a stress response.

Our approach is rooted in therapeutic thinking, attachment theory and an understanding of neuroscience.

At Barnham we:

- Regulate before we educate
- Connect before we correct
- Seek curiosity before judgement
- Prioritise restoration over retribution
- Balance compassion with accountability

We believe acceptable behaviour is central to a positive attitude towards learning, self-discipline and healthy relationships. Through explicit teaching, modelling and

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relational repair, we support children to develop maturity, self-esteem and a caring attitude within a safe and purposeful environment.

We are committed to

- promoting desired behaviour
- promoting self-esteem and positive relationships based on mutual respect
- ensuring equality and fair treatment for all
- providing a safe environment, free from disruption
- encouraging positive relationships with parents and carers
- promoting positive relationships with all pupils within which challenging behaviour can be understood and responded empathically to
- understanding 'behaviour as communication'
- creating opportunities for children to develop positive, attuned relationships with significant adults to mitigate against behavioural dysregulation
- enabling children to repair relationships when dysregulation has occurred
- enabling pupils to move on to the most effective provision, where a maintained school environment no longer meets their needs

Our Therapeutic and Trauma-Informed Principles

1. **Safety First** – Physical and emotional safety are prioritised at all times.
2. **Connection Before Correction** – Strong relationships underpin positive behaviour.
3. **Regulation Before Reasoning** – A dysregulated child cannot learn or reflect effectively.
4. **Co-Regulation** – Adults take responsibility for modelling calm and supporting children to regulate.
5. **Behaviour as Communication** – We seek to understand unmet needs beneath behaviour.
6. **Restoration Over Punishment** – Consequences are designed to teach and repair, not shame.
7. **Consistency with Compassion** – Boundaries are predictable, fair and relational.

While we understand behaviour as communication, harmful behaviour is never ignored. Compassion and accountability work together.

Thrive Approach and Vital Relational Functions

Barnham CEVC Primary School is proud to be recognised as a **Thrive School of Excellence** through Thrive. This accreditation reflects our whole-school commitment to supporting children's social, emotional and mental health through a relational, developmental and trauma-informed framework.

The Thrive Approach is embedded across our school and underpins our understanding that behaviour is communication. It provides a structured, research-

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informed model grounded in attachment theory and neuroscience, enabling staff to respond to behaviour through a lens of development rather than judgement.

The Thrive Approach in Practice

We use Thrive to:

- Assess children's social and emotional development
- Identify gaps in relational or emotional development
- Plan targeted support
- Track progress over time
- Provide whole-class and individual interventions

Weekly Thrive sessions take place in all classes, and targeted Thrive support is delivered by a licensed practitioner where appropriate.

Vital Relational Functions (VRFs)

Central to our practice are the **Vital Relational Functions (VRFs)** identified within the Thrive framework. These guide how adults interact with children, particularly those who may have experienced developmental trauma or attachment disruption.

At Barnham, adults intentionally provide:

- **Attunement** – noticing and responding to children's emotional states
- **Validation** – helping children feel understood
- **Containment** – providing calm, predictable boundaries
- **Regulation Support** – modelling and scaffolding self-regulation
- **Structure and Predictability** – creating safety through consistent routines

Through these relational functions, adults act as co-regulators, supporting children to develop the internal resources required for self-regulation, reflection and responsible decision-making.

Thrive and Our Relational Policy

Our behaviour expectations are taught within a Thrive-informed culture where:

- Dysregulation is understood as a stress response
- Repair and reconnection are prioritised
- Consequences are developmentally appropriate
- Emotional growth is celebrated as much as academic success

Being a Thrive School of Excellence means that relational practice is not an add-on, but central to our ethos, systems and daily interactions.

Legal Framework

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This policy is written in accordance with the statutory responsibilities set out in the **Education and Inspections Act 2006**, and is informed by the Department for Education's current guidance, including *Behaviour in Schools* and *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion*. It reflects the school's duties under the **Equality Act 2010**, ensuring that no pupil is discriminated against on the basis of protected characteristics and that reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Prejudice-based incidents (including racist, homophobic, transphobic and disablist incidents) will be recorded on CPOMS, monitored termly and reported to governors.

The policy also operates in line with the safeguarding principles of the **Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004** and the most recent version of **Keeping Children Safe in Education** recognising the school's duty to promote the welfare, safety and wellbeing of all children.

Teaching Behaviour Explicitly

Positive behaviour is taught, not assumed.

At Barnham we explicitly teach:

- School expectations and routines
- Emotional literacy and regulation strategies
- Respectful communication
- Conflict resolution
- Online conduct
- The impact of behaviour on others

Routines are modelled, rehearsed and revisited regularly, especially after holidays and transitions. Emotional understanding is embedded through PSHE, Collective Worship and Thrive sessions. We also subscribe to and access resources from TGMC for this purpose alongside Thrive Resources and ELSA.

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Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Barnham CEVC Primary School recognises that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, may require additional support to regulate their behaviour. In line with the Equality Act 2010, the school will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils with SEND are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. Behaviour will not be penalised without careful consideration of whether it arises as a direct result of a pupil's disability or identified need. Support will be provided through the graduated response of Assess – Plan – Do – Review, in partnership with parents/carers and, where appropriate, external professionals. This policy should be read alongside the school's SEND Policy. Particular care will be taken when considering suspension or permanent exclusion to ensure that all appropriate support and reasonable adjustments have been explored and implemented, please see our Suspensions and Exclusion policy for further information.

Implementation

At Barnham CEVC all staff apply the principle of 'noticing and naming' desirable behaviour, and the majority of children respond positively to this. All our children understand that they need to strive to be the best they can be for themselves and others.

Opportunities for positive reinforcement of desirable behaviour are applied through the consistent use of verbal praise, weekly awards presented in Collective Worship.

We always describe the most helpful choice to our children and guide them towards making the right choice for themselves and others. We actively use the 'language of choice' with our children and they understand that if they make the wrong choice, they will be choosing a negative consequence.

Staff at Barnham CEVC Primary work hard to secure positive relationships with pupils across the school, and within their own class. 'Noticing and naming' extends beyond the classroom, and all adults in school reinforce the expectation of 'being the best we can be'.

Opportunities for developing a compassionate approach to all is encouraged through our PSHE curriculum, through our Collective worship and through our focus on keeping children 'safe'. Staff model for the children how all of us have the potential to make wrong choices, and it is the repair that matters more - how we can make things better.

Staff understand that 'adverse childhood experiences' ACES can lead to an emotional response that is beyond a child's understanding, being deep rooted in a 'fight, flight or freeze' response. Children are encouraged to understand how their brain works and given resources to manage when they are feeling more stressed.

We use CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) which enables us to pattern spot when behaviour events appear to be escalating and plan accordingly.

For specific children, whose relational style is avoidant, we produce Relational Plans, so that key workers, triggers and strategies are identified.

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Creating a Relational Approach

Due to a whole range of 'adverse childhood experiences' ACES, trusting adults may be a challenge for some children. For these children, it is our actions and not our words which help to build a relationship where children can begin to trust and make different behavioural choices.

'Holding in mind' is one such strategy we apply, where we remember a child over the weekend or holidays, and we reflect this back to them during the school day - e.g. 'I was thinking about you on Sunday....'

Where undesirable behaviour is 'low level' staff may choose to acknowledge that they have noticed, but move swiftly on to positive ignoring, and then when appropriate engage in an attuned conversation with the child. e.g. 'I noticed you were, I wonder if you were feeling.....'. Expressing an interest in hearing what the child can communicate, verbally and non-verbally, without needing a response, also helps to build the possibility that staff at Barnham CEVC can be trusted adults.

Where behaviour may be suggesting an unmet need, staff will try to explore this creatively with the child. Many children need some additional support at particular times, in particular ways; at Barnham we will endeavour to work creatively to provide an alternative narrative for the child.

- If lunchtime is a trigger, alternative arrangements can be made;
- Noise cancelling headphones can reduce the stimulation in noisy environments
- Staff can work positively to develop a non-academic based relationship, following an interest of the child's
- Enrichment activities provide learning opportunities away from the classroom
- Forest school sessions can allow a child to flourish in a forest setting
- Supporting younger children can often have a hugely positive impact on older children who struggle
- Being alongside the school caretaker collecting bins can make the difference to some
- Providing breakfast and snacks can reduce the chances of 'hangry' outbursts
- Flexibly changing adults to provide an alternative relationship
- Sherborne movement and 'calm classroom' activities support self - regulation
- Friendship groups facilitated by our Inclusion and Wellbeing Lead
- Attendance at our Internal Alternative Provision, Thrive Hive may also be beneficial.
- Cub Club is a nurture group that meet before school (8:30-8:45am) and at the end of the school day (3:15-3:30pm) to support children that might struggle in school and is aimed to support children emotionally to be ready for the school day and to give them a chance to decompress at the end of the day.

When a child makes the wrong choice

For the majority of children, a gentle reminder about making a better choice is all that is needed to support them back into appropriate learning or play.

For a minority, 'unacceptable behaviour' may be recurrent and 'high level'.

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Definitions of Unacceptable Behaviour

For the purposes of this policy, the school defines 'unacceptable behaviour' as any behaviour which may cause harm to oneself or others, damage the reputation of the school within the wider community, and any illegal behaviour including

- discrimination on the basis of disability, race, gender, religion, age, sexuality or marital status
- bullying - persistent unwanted behaviour aimed at another designed to cause distress
- theft and damage to property
- physical and verbal assault
- persistent disruptive behaviour

Low-Level Behaviour may include:

- Calling out
- Minor disruption
- Off-task behaviour

High-Level Behaviour may include:

- Physical aggression
- Verbal abuse
- Discriminatory language
- Repeated bullying
- Persistent defiance
- Sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour

Graduated Response to Behaviour

Step 1 – Reminder

Gentle redirection and description of expected behaviour.

Step 2 – Reflective Conversation

Curious, attuned discussion:

- What happened?
- What were you feeling?
- What do you need right now?

Step 3 – Regulation Support

Time and space to regulate (in class calm space, in another classroom, The Snug or with SLT).

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Step 4 – Restorative Repair

Facilitated conversation addressing:

- Impact
- Responsibility
- Repair

Step 5 – Parental Communication

Phone call, meeting or written communication.

Step 6 – Behaviour Flow Chart / Individual Plan

Clear, structured expectations and support strategies.

Step 7 – SEN Review / External Agency Consultation

Step 8 – Suspension (Fixed Term)

Step 9 – Permanent Exclusion (Last Resort)

At every stage, safety remains paramount.

In addition to the flexible approaches identified above, Barnham prioritises the provision of specialist support for children's social, emotional and mental health through

- Committed licensed Thrive practitioner
- Close working relationship with the Mental Health Support Team
- Weekly Thrive sessions for all classes
- Family Thrive courses and support groups
- provision of enrichment activities, with a focus on building relationships

Where behaviour continues to be challenging and disruptive Barnham will seek permission from the parent to consult with specialists.

Some children's SEMH requires the provision of an Education Health Care Plan. These will be reviewed annually, unless behaviour continues to be a challenge despite the provisions made in the EHCP. For these children, an Interim Review will be held, and alternative provision may be sought.

At all times the safety of the child and the school community is paramount.

Restorative Practice

Repair is central to our approach.

Restorative questions may include:

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- What happened?
- What were you thinking/feeling?
- Who has been affected?
- What needs to happen to make things right?

Reflection activities are developmentally appropriate and never humiliating. Where possible, staff will also use age-appropriate visual supports to support restorative conversations.

Bullying

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. We recognise that there may be occasions when bullying occurs and have drawn up the following agreed policy in order to deal swiftly and effectively with any such occurrences.

Definition

Bullying is the deliberate, sustained desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It can be physical, verbal or emotional and can therefore include such things as physical injury, threats or intimidation, teasing, name-calling or exclusion from games and play. This can be face to face or through the use of modern technology. It can lead to a pattern of behaviour where the bully feels good due to the power held over others and the victim often feels powerless to prevent the situation.

NB The terms **bully** and **victim** are used in this document, but they are not used as labels in school. Calling a child by a name risks affecting their self-image. We are also conscious of the need to maintain and boost the self-esteem of **all** children. We do not blame children for being bullied and we stress that it is the **bully's actions** that we disapprove of.

Strategies for prevention

- Our relational approach as identified above
- The culture of the school, which includes its Christian ethos.
- Through the teaching of Personal, Social and Health Education using the SCARF (Safety, Caring, Achievement, Friendship) materials, children develop an awareness of themselves and others and in particular how one person's behaviour affects another. Assertive, self-help strategies are shared and the reassurance of adult support when required is given,
- Teamwork and cooperation are encouraged throughout the curriculum and through extracurricular activities (children are encouraged to care for and look after one another).
- Collective worship is used to explore and share a wide range of themes which link all the above, as well as to share, celebrate and reward personal, collective and academic achievement.
- Children receive the best possible quality supervision during work and play and their interactions are observed and monitored. Pupils are given support as appropriate during this process, whilst remaining sensitive to their need to develop their own effective and fair strategies for preventing bullying.

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Effective responses to bullying

- Children are empowered to assert themselves against bullying and to calmly but firmly tell the bully how their behaviour is making them feel and ask them to STOP (this may or may not be possible or appropriate for some children in some situations).
- Children are also encouraged to report any incidents of bullying whether to themselves or others to the nearest adult who will ensure that the class teacher is informed. Staff are aware of how to support and report incidents of bullying including those incidents linked to diversity of any kind.
- Children are reassured that they will be listened to and taken seriously and that they will be given support as appropriate.

The teacher will investigate the incident fully and will take the following steps to deal with the situation:

- Talk carefully to the bullied pupil, discussing his/her feelings and establishing who is allegedly involved.
- Talk carefully to the alleged bully and ask them to explain what has happened. If the bullying is admitted then a sensitive discussion might take place with all parties present, supervised by a teacher, in order that reconciliation may be reached, and further escalation avoided.

If the bullying is denied, it will be necessary to attempt to correlate views of the incident with third parties in order to establish the facts without hastily apportioning blame. It is important to note that both the victim and the bully will need careful support during this process in order to arrive at a satisfactory and remedial outcome for all.

A written record should be taken and filed and appropriate safeguards against any continuation or retaliation should be taken if considered necessary or likely. This may include close monitoring and supervision during the rebuilding of relationships. Parents of both the victim and the bully should be involved and kept fully informed of incidents in order that school and home might work together to give consistent messages and support.

In complex and intractable cases, where bullying is either extreme or repeated, then exclusion may be necessary.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Barnham CEVC Primary School recognises that children can abuse other children. This is referred to as child-on-child abuse and will always be taken seriously. Such behaviour is never dismissed as "banter", "part of growing up" or "just having a laugh".

Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- Sexual harassment (e.g. sexual comments, taunting, unwanted physical contact, sexist language)
- Sexual violence (e.g. assault, rape, or sexual activity without consent)

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- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Online sexual abuse, including the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, coercion, or exploitation
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying, including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying

All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be responded to in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and in accordance with the most recent version of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

The safety, welfare and dignity of the victim will always be the school's first priority. Victims will be listened to, believed and supported. Appropriate measures will be put in place to protect them from further harm, including risk assessments and safeguarding plans where necessary.

Perpetrators will also be supported appropriately, recognising that harmful behaviour may be an indication of unmet needs or exposure to inappropriate experiences. However, supportive intervention will not prevent the school from applying appropriate sanctions where required.

All incidents will be recorded on CPOMS and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where necessary, external agencies, including Children's Social Care and the Police, will be informed.

Online Behaviour / Cyberbullying

Our school community is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment, both in person and online. Pupils are expected to demonstrate the same standards of conduct in their online interactions as they do in school, including on social media, messaging platforms, and other digital spaces.

Expectations for Online Conduct:

- Pupils must not engage in bullying, harassment, or discriminatory behaviour through any digital platform.
- Sharing inappropriate content, private information, or images of others without consent is strictly prohibited.
- Pupils are expected to report any online behaviour that may harm themselves or others, in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Behaviour Outside School:

- Conduct on social media, gaming platforms, or other online forums outside school hours must reflect the school's values.

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- Actions that negatively affect the wellbeing, reputation, or safety of others in the school community, even when off-site, may result in disciplinary measures.

Links to Online Safety:

- Pupils should follow guidance outlined in the school's **Online Safety Policy**, which provides detailed advice on safe and responsible digital use, including protecting personal data, recognising online risks, and responding to cyberbullying.
- Staff, pupils, and parents are encouraged to consult the Online Safety Policy regularly to stay informed of best practices and reporting procedures.

By adhering to these expectations, we promote a culture of respect, responsibility, and resilience in both physical and digital spaces.

Disciplining beyond the school gate

The school may need to consider responding to non-criminal unacceptable behaviour when a child is:

- taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity or
- travelling to or from school or
- wearing school uniform or
- in some other way identifiable as a pupil at the school or,

misbehaviour at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply, that:

- could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school or
- poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public or
- could adversely affect the reputation of the school

In all of these circumstances the head teacher may also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the actions taken against a pupil. If the behaviour is criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed. In addition, school staff will consider whether the misbehaviour may be linked to the child suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm. In this case the school staff will follow its safeguarding policy.

Pastoral Care for School Staff

Members of staff who have been accused of misconduct, pending an investigation, will not automatically be suspended. The school will follow the SCC guidance on Managing Child Protection Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers' and DfE guidance (see Additional Resources) when setting out the pastoral support school staff can expect to receive if they are accused of misusing their powers.

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Screening and searching pupils and use of reasonable force

Screening and searching pupils - the school will adhere to DfE guidance with regards to this (see Additional Resources).

Use of reasonable force - staff adhere to the school's Positive Handling policy.

Suspension- fixed term

Exclusion will only be used as a last resort and only when every other avenue has been explored. **Any on-going behaviour which impacts upon the safety or well-being of the school community could potentially result in exclusion.**

In the first instance it is hoped that a fixed term exclusion will be sufficient to reinforce the need to adhere to the expectations of acceptable behaviour within school.

Returning from a fixed term exclusion will start with a reintegration meeting lead by the head or assistant head with the parent and child.

Ideally, the format will be to ensure the child and parent understands the reason for the fixed term exclusion; to identify any measures that may support the child to manage their behaviour more successfully; agree the expectations moving forward and thank them for reflecting on their behaviour and being willing to acknowledge their responsibility. Then welcome them back into school

Where a child is unable to acknowledge their responsibility, seek some commitment from the child to act in a different way in the future and welcome them back into school.

Exclusion - Permanent

Where there is persistent, high level, disruptive behaviour, and the process of consulting with parents and carers has not lead to a reduction in 'unacceptable behaviour' the headteacher and Governing Body will discuss the possibility of permanent exclusion, taking advice at all stages from Suffolk County Council (SCC) and following SCC's recommendations and procedures.

If a child is permanently excluded, parents/carers must be notified in writing without delay. The letter must include:

- the reason for the exclusion;
- the fact that it is permanent;
- the right to put parents/carers views in writing to the governing body;
- parents/carers right to go to a meeting of the governing body and put their views in person.

If a child is of compulsory school age, parents/carers must be told about their responsibilities for the child during the first five days of the exclusion.

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Schools should take reasonable steps to set and mark work for the first five days of any exclusion. During these five days, parents/carers are responsible for the child. They must make sure they are not in a public place without reasonable justification during school hours. This duty is similar to that on school attendance and parents/carers could be fined if in breach of it.

If a child has been permanently excluded, the Local Authority has a duty to provide suitable fulltime alternative education from day 6. That is most likely to take place at a pupil referral unit or other alternative provision. If a child has a statement of special educational needs, any alternative provision must be able to meet the child's needs as set out in the statement. For Looked After Children it is recommended that alternative educational provision start from the first day of an exclusion. Local Authorities do not have to provide alternative education for children who are below or above compulsory school age.

Responsibility for reviewing exclusions lies with the Governors of the school. This may be delegated to a sub-committee. The sub-committee must have at least 3 members. The Governors must be informed of a Permanent Exclusion without delay. They must meet within 15 school days to consider the exclusion.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the School Community are expected to support this policy.

Teachers are responsible for investigating any incidents following the steps outlined above and must report the incidents to a senior manager and update CPOMS with a written record of all reported behavioural incidents including discussions with pupils, staff and parents.

Incidents will be monitored closely to ensure action taken has been successful. The Family Support Practitioner will report on trends in behavioural incidents to the headteacher and governors.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy.

The Lead Governor for Safeguarding and Inclusion has responsibility for reviewing this policy.

Staff Training

All staff receive regular CPD on:

- Trauma-informed practice
- Attachment-aware approaches
- De-escalation strategies
- Safeguarding
- Restorative practice

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Impact

Barnham CEVC Primary School is a purposeful, calm happy environment where pupils thrive within supportive, nurturing relationships, enabling them to flourish and achieve their fullest potential, and embedded within our values of justice and compassion, enabling the healthy restoration of relationships when mistakes are made.

Resources

Link to Use of Reasonable Force – advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/behaviourpolicies/f0077153/use-ofreasonable-force-advice-for-school-leaders-staff-and-governing-bodies>

Link to Screening, Searching and Confiscation – advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation> Link to guidance on Dealing with Allegations of Abuse

against Teachers and Other Staff':

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f0076882/ensuring-good-behaviour-in-schools/allegations-of-abuse-against-staff>

Monitoring, Feedback and Review

Success is measured by:

- Reduction in repeat incidents
- Reduction in suspensions
- Increased pupil self-regulation skills
- Improved attendance for identified pupils
- Positive pupil voice regarding belonging and safety
- Parental feedback
- CPOMS trend analysis

SLT and Governors review the effectiveness of this policy termly, with CPOMS data and feedback informing updates.

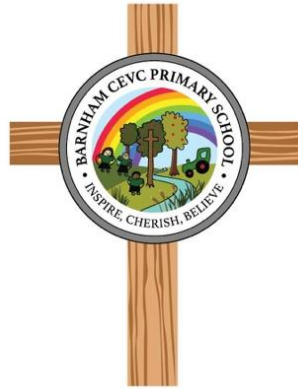
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This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body to ensure it remains effective and responsive to the needs of the school community.

Review Term:	Every two years
Led member of staff responsible for review:	Amy Arnold (Headteacher)
Lead governor responsible for review: (Full GB to approve)	
Date adopted:	
Dates policy reviewed	
Dates policy amended in between reviews	

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APPENDIX 1



We are the best we can be for ourselves, each other and for God's world at Barnham CEVC Primary in these three ways:

- **We are kind and safe**

We use kind words and actions.

We help others feel safe.

We look after our school and each other.

- **We try our best and take pride**

We try even when things feel tricky.

We take care with our work and our behaviour.

We share our learning and celebrate others.

- **We are brave and resilient**

We have a go.

We learn from mistakes.

We ask for help when we need it — from adults, friends and God.