

Behaviour Policy

Positive behaviour, relationships and safe learning

SMS Changing Lives School



Policy owner	Head Teacher
Approved by	Hecabe DuFraisie, Head Teacher
Approval / update date	24 September 2026
Next scheduled review	December 2026
Review cycle	Annually, or earlier if required
Applies to	All pupils, staff and school sites / pathways

This policy should be read alongside the Anti-Bullying, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Physical Intervention (PI), Risk Assessment, SEND, Online Safety and Suspension and Permanent Exclusion policies.

1. Purpose and scope

SMS Changing Lives School is committed to creating calm, safe and supportive learning environments in which pupils are known well, treated with dignity and supported to succeed. Our behaviour approach is relational, consistent and informed by pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, SEND, individual plans and lived experiences.

This policy explains the behaviour expected from pupils, how positive behaviour is promoted, the consequences that may be used when expectations are not met, and how the school records and reviews serious incidents. It applies across Central, Thrive and Outreach, including school transport, educational visits, community-based learning, online conduct connected to school, and other circumstances where a pupil is representing SMS or where behaviour has a direct effect on the school community.

Core principle

Behaviour is communication, but it also has consequences. Staff seek to understand what is driving behaviour, teach safer and more appropriate alternatives, protect the rights and safety of others, and maintain clear boundaries.

2. Policy and legal framework

This policy has regard to the requirements and guidance relevant to independent schools in England, including:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including paragraph 9 (behaviour) and paragraph 10 (anti-bullying).
- Department for Education (DfE), Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff.
- DfE statutory guidance, Mobile phones in schools (2026).
- DfE guidance, Searching, screening and confiscation at school.
- DfE guidance, Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (effective from 1 April 2026).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- The Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Sections 93 and 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the 2025 regulations on recording and reporting seclusion and restraint, where applicable.

SMS is an independent special school. Where guidance or legislation contains governance procedures specific to maintained schools or academies, SMS follows the requirements that apply to independent schools and its own published policies and proprietor arrangements.

3. SMS behaviour principles

- Every pupil has the right to feel safe, valued and respected, and to learn without unreasonable disruption.
- Adults model calm, respectful and emotionally regulated behaviour.
- High expectations are maintained alongside reasonable adjustments and individualised support.
- Pupils are helped to understand the impact of their actions, repair relationships and develop safer behaviour.
- Consequences are proportionate, predictable and linked to the behaviour, not to a pupil's worth or identity.
- Discriminatory, abusive, threatening, sexualised or violent behaviour is challenged and never normalised.
- Safeguarding, SEND and risk information is considered before decisions are made about serious incidents.

- Suspension and permanent exclusion are not routine behaviour-management tools and are considered in line with the separate SMS Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Proprietor

The proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the school's behaviour arrangements and holds the Head Teacher to account for implementation of the policy and the Independent School Standards.

4.2 Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for approving and implementing this policy, ensuring that staff apply it consistently, overseeing serious behaviour decisions and making the final decision on any suspension or permanent exclusion under the separate SMS policy.

4.3 Senior leaders, pastoral and behaviour staff

Senior leaders and the Pastoral and Behaviour Team support staff with de-escalation, Inclusion, Step Out, post-incident learning, behaviour plans, risk reviews, family communication and reintegration. They monitor patterns and ensure that serious incidents and sanctions are recorded appropriately.

4.4 All staff

- build positive relationships and establish clear, predictable routines;
- teach and model expected behaviour;
- use de-escalation, take-up time and emotionally safe communication;
- apply rewards and consequences consistently and proportionately;
- make reasonable adjustments where required;
- record incidents accurately on the school's approved system; and
- report safeguarding concerns immediately in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

4.5 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to support the school's behaviour expectations, share information that may affect a pupil's regulation or behaviour, engage with review and support planning, and raise concerns promptly with the school.

5. Pupil expectations

Pupils are expected, with support and reasonable adjustments where needed, to:

- listen to reasonable directions from staff;
- use safe and appropriate language;
- show safe and appropriate physical behaviour;
- allow other pupils to learn and staff to work;
- engage with learning and complete work to the best of their ability;
- treat pupils, staff, visitors and the wider community with respect;
- look after school property and other people's belongings;
- follow school rules for mobile phones, online safety, prohibited items and transport; and
- take part in restorative or post-incident work where this forms part of the response to an incident.

6. Promoting positive behaviour

Positive relationships and reinforcement are central to SMS. Staff recognise effort, engagement, regulation, kindness, progress and responsible choices. Rewards may include:

- specific verbal praise;
- daily points and target recognition;
- certificates and celebration of achievement;
- weekly rewards or agreed privileges;
- positive calls, messages or letters home;
- additional responsibility or leadership opportunities; and
- individual rewards linked to a pupil's plan where appropriate.

Staff should notice and reinforce appropriate behaviour before escalating consequences. The aim is to help pupils understand what successful behaviour looks like and experience the benefits of making safe, respectful choices.

7. Responding to behaviour that falls below expectations

Staff respond in a way that is proportionate to the behaviour, the pupil's needs, the impact on others and the level of risk. A consequence may be accompanied by support, teaching, restorative work or a review of provision. Consequences may include:

- a reminder, discussion or restorative conversation;
- reflection through the daily points or target system;
- loss of a specific privilege where this is proportionate;
- time out or a short supported reset;
- completion of missed or additional learning at an appropriate time, including break, lunch or after school where safe travel can be maintained;
- referral to the Pastoral and Behaviour Team;
- Post-Incident Learning (PIL) or another targeted intervention;
- a behaviour support plan, report or contract;
- Inclusion within school;
- Step Out to another SMS site where this is safe, appropriate and educationally purposeful;
- parent/carer contact or a review meeting; and
- for serious cases, consideration of suspension or permanent exclusion in line with the separate SMS policy.

A pupil will not be informally sent home as a behaviour sanction. Any suspension is a formal decision made by the Head Teacher under the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy.

8. Classroom behaviour: Choice, Chance, Consequence

Where appropriate, staff use the SMS C1-C2-C3 approach. Staff may move directly to C3 where the seriousness or risk of an incident makes this necessary.

Stage	Purpose	Typical response
C1 - Choice	Low-level disruption or an initial concern.	A calm reminder of the expectation, take-up time and an opportunity to make a different choice.

Stage	Purpose	Typical response
C2 - Chance	The behaviour continues after C1.	A clear second warning/chance, with de-escalation and an explanation of the likely next step.
C3 - Consequence	Serious behaviour, unsafe behaviour, or behaviour that continues despite C1/C2.	Pastoral/Behaviour support is requested. The pupil may use a supervised reset, Inclusion or another proportionate response. The incident is recorded where required.

A restorative conversation should follow when the pupil is regulated and able to engage. Each new lesson or session should provide a genuine opportunity for a fresh start unless an individual safety plan requires a different arrangement.

9. Inclusion, Step Out and reintegration

Inclusion is a supervised school-based response used when a pupil needs to learn away from their usual group for a period. Work and educational support continue. It should be purposeful, time-limited and reviewed.

Step Out is a temporary arrangement for a pupil to receive education at another SMS site where this is appropriate to manage risk, provide a reset or support reintegration. Step Out is not a suspension and the pupil remains in education. The Pastoral and Behaviour Team records the arrangement, ensures work/provision continues and plans the pupil's return to their usual placement.

Parents/carers are informed about significant Inclusion or Step Out decisions in accordance with school procedures. Targeted intervention should be used where a pattern of incidents shows that consequences alone are not changing behaviour.

10. Serious misbehaviour and safeguarding

Serious misbehaviour may include, depending on context and severity:

- serious or repeated violence, fighting or physical aggression;
- credible threats of serious harm;
- possession or use of a weapon or an item intended to cause harm;
- possession, supply or use of illegal drugs, alcohol or other intoxicating substances;
- theft, serious vandalism or deliberate damage;
- bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying;
- racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist or other discriminatory abuse;
- sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, image-based abuse or other sexually abusive conduct;
- serious online behaviour that threatens, harms or targets another person or materially affects the safety or orderly running of the school; and
- repeated serious breaches of school expectations despite support and intervention.

Behaviour that may indicate abuse, exploitation, criminal activity, significant risk or another safeguarding concern is referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay. Behaviour processes do not replace safeguarding action.

SMS does not apply automatic suspension simply because a particular word or category of behaviour is involved. Discriminatory language and behaviour are always challenged, but the response considers seriousness, intent, impact, repetition, safeguarding, SEND and the need for education and repair. Where violence, intoxication, serious threats or other behaviour means safety cannot be maintained, the Head Teacher may consider suspension or permanent exclusion under the separate policy.

11. Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another person or group physically or emotionally and often involves an imbalance of power. It can be face-to-face or online and may be related to a protected characteristic.

All allegations of bullying are taken seriously. Staff report concerns to the Pastoral and Behaviour Team and, where safeguarding concerns arise, to the DSL. Responses may include investigation, family contact, restorative work where safe and appropriate, targeted intervention, supervision changes, sanctions and support for both the pupil harmed and the pupil displaying the behaviour. The separate Anti-Bullying Policy provides the full school strategy.

12. Mobile phones and personal devices

SMS operates a phone-free school day. Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must hand it in to the designated member of staff at the beginning of the school day. Phones are returned at the end of the school day. Pupils must not use a personal mobile phone during lessons, transitions, breaktimes or lunchtime.

If a pupil refuses to hand in a phone, or uses a phone without permission during the school day, staff will respond under this behaviour policy and will contact a parent/carers where appropriate. A reasonable exception may be agreed in advance where a phone or connected device is required for a medical, disability, SEND or other exceptional reason.

Pupils bring phones and other personal items to school at their own risk. SMS does not accept responsibility for loss, theft or damage to phones or other personal property brought to school, except to the extent that liability cannot lawfully be excluded. Families are therefore advised not to send valuable items into school unless necessary.

Contact during the school day

Parents and carers who need to contact a pupil urgently should contact the school office or the relevant school site rather than the pupil's personal phone.

13. Off-site and online behaviour

The school may respond to behaviour outside school where the pupil is taking part in a school activity, travelling to or from school, wearing school identification, representing SMS, or where the behaviour has a clear connection to the school community. This includes online behaviour that threatens or harms another pupil or member of staff, contributes to bullying or exploitation, or has a material effect on safety or the orderly running of the school.

Any school response will be proportionate and will take account of safeguarding, SEND, context and the extent of the school's connection to the incident.

14. Searching, confiscation and prohibited items

Searching, screening and confiscation are carried out in line with current DfE guidance, safeguarding procedures and the law. Prohibited or unsafe items may include weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, fireworks, pornographic images and any article reasonably suspected of being used, or likely to be used, to commit an offence, cause injury or damage property.

Items may be confiscated where this is lawful, necessary for safety or required to maintain good order. Decisions about return, disposal, police involvement or parent/carers contact are made in line with the relevant guidance and safeguarding considerations.

15. Physical intervention and restrictive interventions

SMS has a separate Physical Intervention (PI) Policy, which sets out the detailed arrangements for the use of reasonable force, restraint and other restrictive interventions. Staff must follow that policy and current DfE guidance.

- Restrictive intervention is never used as a punishment.
- Staff should use prevention, de-escalation and the least restrictive response that is safe and reasonable in the circumstances.
- The pupil's dignity, communication needs, SEND, trauma history and known risks must be considered.
- Only staff who are authorised and appropriately trained should use planned physical intervention techniques.
- Every significant incident of force, restraint or seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the statutory requirements and the PI Policy, including parent/carers notification as soon as practicable.
- Post-incident support and learning should be offered to pupils and staff where appropriate, and repeated incidents should trigger review of plans, risks and provision.

Any immediate safeguarding concern arising from a restrictive intervention must be reported to the DSL in addition to the PI recording process.

16. SEND, SEMH and reasonable adjustments

All pupils at SMS have individual needs that may affect communication, regulation, executive functioning, sensory processing, anxiety or behaviour. Staff must use available EHCP information, IEP targets, pupil profiles, risk assessments and agreed strategies when planning and responding to behaviour.

The Equality Act 2010 duty to make reasonable adjustments applies to behaviour systems. This does not mean that unsafe behaviour is ignored. It means staff consider whether expectations, communication, environment, support or consequences need to be adjusted so that the pupil is not placed at a substantial disadvantage because of disability.

Where a pattern of behaviour emerges, leaders should consider whether there is an unmet need, whether the curriculum or environment requires adjustment, whether additional assessment or intervention is needed, and whether the pupil's risk assessment or support plan should be reviewed.

17. Allegations or concerns about staff

Any allegation or safeguarding concern about a member of staff is managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the school's allegations/low-level concerns procedures. A pupil is not disciplined merely because an allegation is unfounded, unsubstantiated or cannot be proven.

If an allegation is shown, following the appropriate safeguarding process, to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Head Teacher will consider whether disciplinary action is appropriate under this policy. The DSL will also consider whether the pupil may need help, support or protection.

18. Recording, review and post-incident learning

Behaviour incidents and serious sanctions are recorded on the school's approved systems, including Sleuth where applicable. The Independent School Standards require the school to retain a record of sanctions imposed for serious misbehaviour.

Incident records should be factual, proportionate and sufficiently clear for another member of staff to understand what happened. Where appropriate, staff use an ABC structure:

- Antecedent - what was happening immediately before the behaviour and any known trigger;
- Behaviour - what the pupil actually did or said, using factual language; and
- Consequence / response - what staff did, including de-escalation, support, sanctions, safeguarding action and outcome.

Pupils involved in a C3 or serious incident may complete Post-Incident Learning (PIL) when they are regulated. PIL is used to understand the relationship between emotion and behaviour, identify safer alternatives and agree what needs to happen next.

Leaders review behaviour data to identify patterns by pupil, type of incident, site, time, trigger and other relevant factors. Where appropriate, this informs Plan-Do-Review work, staff training, individual intervention, risk assessment and school improvement.

19. Transition and information sharing

Relevant behaviour, support and risk information is made available to staff who need it so that pupils experience consistent support when changing group, subject, pathway or site. When a pupil moves to another education setting, information is shared lawfully and proportionately where this is necessary to support safe transition and continuity of education or safeguarding.

20. Suspension and permanent exclusion

Suspension and permanent exclusion are governed by the separate SMS Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy. They are used only where a formal decision is necessary and proportionate, and permanent exclusion is considered only where the Head Teacher concludes that the pupil should no longer remain at the school.

The Head Teacher makes the final decision on suspension or permanent exclusion. Where practicable and safe, SMS seeks to use support, targeted intervention, Inclusion, Step Out, risk-management changes and reintegration planning before exclusion. However, serious incidents may require immediate formal action where safety cannot otherwise be maintained.

21. Training, monitoring and review

Behaviour management forms part of staff induction and continuing professional development. Training reflects the needs of the role and may include SEMH, SEND, de-escalation, safeguarding, anti-bullying, trauma-aware practice, restorative approaches and physical intervention for staff whose duties require it.

The Head Teacher monitors implementation of this policy with senior leaders and the proprietor. The policy will be reviewed by December 2026 and at least annually thereafter, or sooner if there is a significant change in law, guidance, school practice or the needs of pupils.

22. Related SMS policies

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Physical Intervention (PI) Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- SEND Policy
- Online Safety Policy and Staff Code of Conduct
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Complaints Procedure