Behaviour Policy

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Contributors	Rob Arrowsmith		
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Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

Table of Contents

Section	
1	**Supporting Documents**
2	**Introduction**
3	**Aim & Scope**
4	**Abbreviations/Definitions**
5	**Policy Content**
6	**Responsibilities**
7	**Training Requirements**
8	**Equality Impact Statement**
9	**Sources of Information / References**
10	**Version Control (where else is this policy located, ie. Circle, Nourish, Radar)**
11	**Appendices**

1. Supporting Documents

This policy should be read alongside our:

- Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy (EDU.POL.020)
- Safeguarding Children in Education Policy (EDE.POL.002)
- Anti-Bullying Policy (EDU.POL.007)
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy (EDU.POL.012)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy (EDU.POL.035)
- Mobile Phone Policy (EDU.POL.040)
- Online Safety Policy (EDU.POL.009)
- Attendance Policy (EDU.POL.005)
- SEND Policy (EDU.POL.022)

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

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Acorns School is a special school. Many of our pupils have experienced disruption, trauma or exclusion from previous settings, and their behaviour is often the clearest way they tell us how they are feeling. At Acorns School, we treat behaviour as communication, and we respond with warmth, structure and high expectations rather than blame.

This policy sets out how we promote positive behaviour, how we respond when behaviour falls short, and the standards every member of our community can expect. It is built on the belief that pupils behave well when they feel safe, understood and respected, and when the adults around them are calm, consistent and fair.

Our approach is grounded in Keys Connect, our relational and trauma-informed model. At Acorns School we build positive behaviour through strong relationships, a sense of belonging and a curriculum that engages every pupil.

3. Aim & Scope

This policy applies to all staff, pupils, parents and carers, and visitors at Acorns School. It applies in school, on school activities and visits, on the journey to and from school, and to behaviour online or out of school where it affects the school community or another pupil. It aims to:-

- Set clear, consistent and high expectations of behaviour which every pupil can understand and meet.
- Help pupils to develop self-regulation, responsibility and the social skills they need to thrive.
- Set out a fair, graduated and restorative response to behaviour that falls short of those expectations.
- Keep pupils and staff safe and make sure any response to behaviour is reasonable, proportionate and the least intrusive option.
- Meet our duties under the Independent School Standards and current statutory guidance.

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

This policy uses the following terms:

- Behaviour curriculum: the routines, expectations and social and emotional skills we teach explicitly so that pupils know how to behave well.
- Restorative practice: a structured conversation that helps a pupil understand the impact of their behaviour, repair harm and put things right.
- Sanction: a reasonable and proportionate consequence applied in response to misbehaviour.
- Suspension and permanent exclusion: a formal decision to remove a pupil from school for a fixed period or permanently, dealt with under our separate Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy (EDU.POL.012).

5. Policy Content

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5.1 Principles and Approach

At Acorns School our practice is guided by these principles.

- All behaviour is communication. We seek to understand the need behind the behaviour, including trauma, attachment, sensory and communication needs, before we respond.
- Relationships come first. Warm, consistent and predictable relationships are the foundation of good behaviour.
- Expectations are high and they are the same for everyone, adjusted only where a pupil's needs make that fair.
- Responses are calm, consistent and the least intrusive that will keep everyone safe. We repair rather than shame. We prefer natural and restorative consequences to punishment that isolates or humiliates.
- We notice the positive. Strength-based language and genuine praise shape our daily interactions.

5.2 Behaviour in Practice

Behaviour expectations and the behaviour curriculum

At Acorns School we teach behaviour, we do not assume it. We set out clear, simple expectations and we teach the routines, language and social and emotional skills that help pupils meet them. Expectations are shared with pupils, staff and parents, and they apply across the whole school day.

Recognising and rewarding positive behaviour

We recognise positive behaviour far more often than we sanction. Praise, positive contact with home and our recognition systems reinforce the behaviour we want to see. The local detail of our recognition and reward systems is set out in the school-specific annex at Appendix A.

Responding to behaviour that falls short

Our response is graded, calm and consistent. We start with understanding and early intervention, we use de-escalation and time to regulate, and we follow up with a restorative conversation to repair harm. Sanctions are reasonable and proportionate, and we always consider a pupil's needs before we apply them.

A record is kept of the sanctions imposed for serious misbehaviour, as required by paragraph 9 of the Independent School Standards. Sanctions are recorded on Arbor and reviewed by leaders to make sure they are fair and effective.

Behaviour support plans

Where a pupil needs an individual approach, we put a behaviour support plan in place. The plan sets out the pupil's strengths, known triggers, proactive strategies and agreed responses, and it is written with the pupil, the family and relevant

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professionals and reviewed regularly. Schools may use a different name for this document, for example an individual education plan. A template is at Appendix B. Plans are held in Arbor.

Mobile phones and electronic devices

At Acorns School we are a mobile-phone-free environment by default. Pupils are not to use mobile phones or personal electronic devices during the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

Where a pupil brings a phone or device to school, it is handed to designated staff at the start of the day, kept securely, and returned at the end of the day. Any agreed exception for a medical or special educational need is documented in the pupil's individual plan.

Any site-specific exception to the mobile-phone-free position must be set out here with a clear behavioural and safeguarding rationale that the school can defend:

Misuse of a phone or device, including bullying, sharing inappropriate content or accessing harmful material, is treated seriously and dealt with under this policy and the safeguarding and online safety policies (EDU.POL.009). Staff may search for and confiscate a phone in line with the guidance set out below. This approach reflects the Department for Education guidance on mobile phones in schools and the duty under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 to have regard to that guidance.

Searching, screening and confiscation

Staff authorised by the headteacher may search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect the pupil has a prohibited item, in line with the Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. Reasonable force may be used to search only for prohibited items such as knives, weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs or stolen items, never for an item identified only in the school rules. Where a search raises a safeguarding concern, the designated safeguarding lead is informed without delay. Detailed search procedures are set out in our Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy (EDU.POL.035).

Use of reasonable force and physical intervention

Physical intervention is always a last resort, used only to keep a pupil or others safe, and never as a punishment. How and when reasonable force may be used, the techniques staff are trained in, and how every incident is recorded and reported are set out in full in our Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy (EDU.POL.020). The recording and reporting of seclusion and restraint, including the duties under Standards 16A and 32A, is dealt with in that policy and is not duplicated here.

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Restrictive practices will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain lawful, necessary, proportionate and in the pupil's best interests.

Suspension and exclusion

Any decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil is taken by the headteacher under our Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy (EDU.POL.012). As an independent school we are not bound by the statutory exclusion process that applies to maintained schools and academies, but we have regard to the principles of fairness in the Department for Education Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance. Suspension and exclusion are never used to manage a pupil's needs in place of proper support.

Part-time timetables

At Acorns School a part-time timetable is never used as a behaviour management tool. A reduced timetable is only ever used as a short-term, planned measure to meet a pupil's medical or reintegration needs, agreed with parents and kept under review, in line with attendance guidance and our Attendance Policy (EDU.POL.005).

Behaviour beyond the school gate and online

We may respond to behaviour outside school, including online, where it affects another pupil, a member of staff or the reputation and safe running of the school. Online behaviour, including bullying through phones or social media, is dealt with under this policy alongside our Anti-Bullying and Online Safety policies (EDU.POL.009).

5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Behaviour incidents and sanctions are recorded on Arbor (and RADAR if it involves a restrictive physical intervention), including a record of sanctions for serious misbehaviour as required by paragraph 9 of the Independent School Standards. Leaders analyse behaviour data to identify patterns across pupil groups, including pupils with SEND and other vulnerable pupils, and use it to target support and improve practice. Behaviour data and the impact of this policy are reported to the proprietor and governors on a regular cycle.

5.4 Equality and Inclusion

At Acorns School this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. Many of our pupils have special educational needs or disabilities, and we make reasonable adjustments so that expectations and responses are fair for every pupil. We monitor the impact of this policy on pupils with protected characteristics and adapt our practice to remove disadvantage. Any concern that this policy disadvantages a pupil or group should be raised with the headteacher.

6. Responsibilities

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6.1 Pupils

Follow the behaviour expectations and take part in setting and reviewing them. Reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others, and engage with restorative conversations and support plans.

6.2 Staff

Model warmth, curiosity and consistent boundaries, and build positive relationships with every pupil. Teach the behaviour curriculum and apply expectations and sanctions fairly and consistently. Use de-escalation and co-regulation, and record incidents accurately and promptly on Arbor.

6.3 Leadership

Set and uphold a positive behaviour culture and make sure expectations are applied consistently across the school. Make sure staff are trained and supported, and monitor behaviour data to improve practice. Decide on suspensions and exclusions under the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy (EDU.POL.012).

6.4 Governance

Hold leaders to account for the behaviour culture and review behaviour data and the impact of this policy.

6.5 Parents and carers

Work with the school to reinforce positive behaviour and engage with communication, support plans and reviews.

6.6 Named leads

Acorns School Marple

The named lead for behaviour at Acorns School Marple is Simone Stopford, Assistant Headteacher. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Paula Tankard and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is Carrie-Anne Harrison.

Acorns School Ashley

The named lead for behaviour at Acorns Ashley School is Ellie Coot, Assistant Head Teacher and DSL. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Paula Tankard and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is Ellie Coot.

7. Training Requirements

All staff receive induction and ongoing training in trauma-informed practice, the Keys Connect model and de-escalation. Staff who may need to use physical intervention are trained in an accredited approach, refreshed in line with that accreditation. Our positive handling training is set out in the Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy (EDU.POL.020). Training needs are reviewed at least annually and after any significant incident or change in guidance.

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8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

9. Sources of Information / References

This policy reflects current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 3, paragraph 9 (a written behaviour policy, implemented effectively, with a record kept of sanctions for serious misbehaviour).
- The Independent School Standards: Guidance for independent schools, Department for Education, April 2026 (paragraph 9, 3.19 to 3.23).
- Behaviour in Schools: advice for headteachers and school staff, Department for Education, February 2024.
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 (the duty to have regard to national guidance on the use of mobile phones in schools).
- Mobile phones in schools, Department for Education, 19 January 2026.
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation: advice for schools, Department for Education, July 2022.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 from 1 September 2026.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance, Department for Education, July 2026, to which we have regard as good practice.

10. Version Control

This document can also be found in Radar. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The named owner for review at Acorns School is the headteacher.

11. Appendices

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11.1 Appendix A: School-Specific Behaviour Annex (Acorns School Marple)

Acorns School is set over 2 sites (Acorns Marple and Acorns Ashley). Each site has a range of pupil needs that differ between each site. For the purpose of this policy Appendix A has been split into 1A and 1B. 1A is the localized behaviour arrangements for Marple site and Appendix 1B is the localized behaviour arrangements for Acorns Ashley.

At Acorns School the following local arrangements apply:

Acorns School Marple

Behaviour policy Appendix 1A
This is how we do it here

Inspired by Paul Dix's "When the Adults Change, Everything Changes" (2017)

At Acorns Marple 5School, we believe that positive behaviour is built on strong relationships**,** consistency, and a shared understanding of expectations. We recognise that it is the calm, consistent, and kind actions of adults that create a safe and respectful school culture.

Our three core behaviour expectations are simple, clear, and apply to everyone in our community:

- **Ready** – We arrive prepared to learn, listen, and participate
- **Respectful** – We show kindness in our words and actions to others and 8urselves
- **Safe** – We make choices that keep everyone physically and emotionally secure

To reinforce our expectations, we use positive recognition boards in classrooms. These boards highlight pupils who consistently meet or go above and beyond our classroom expectations. The focus is not on reward but on acknowledgement, inclusion, and celebrating effort**.** The boards reset each lesson to give every child a fresh opportunity to succeed. We also believe in sharing pupils' achievements with parents and carers. Children will bring home praise notes and certificates, and we will make positive phone calls home when pupils have gone above and beyond in their learning, or with their engagement in school life.

Our values of ready, respectful and safe are not rules to enforce with punishment but principles to model, teach, and revisit**.** When behaviour falls short, we respond with empathy and consistency, not judgment. We focus on restoring relationships, re-establishing expectations**,** and helping each student re-engage positively with learning. We engage pupils in restorative conversations**,** guided reflection, and a chance to repair and return. Every child is treated with dignity and given the chance to learn from mistakes.

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Our trauma-informed approach to behaviour is rooted in our whole-school policy that prioritises safety, consistency, and relationships over punishment. We emphasise clear routines, predictable boundaries, and restorative practices, ensuring pupils understand expectations while feeling supported when they struggle. Staff are trained to recognise the signs of trauma and respond with empathy, using de-escalation, co-regulation, and calm communication rather than reactive sanctions. Practical strategies such as emotion coaching, safe spaces, and personalised regulation plans are embedded into daily practice, so pupils have constructive ways to manage feelings. Policies align with safeguarding and inclusion guidance, making sure that behaviour support is not about exclusion but about creating opportunities for re-engagement, reflection, and growth. By embedding trauma-informed principles in policy and practice, the school ensures behaviour support is consistent, compassionate, and designed to build long-term resilience.
In our school, consequences for challenging behaviour are carefully designed to be supportive rather than punitive, focusing on helping pupils repair, reflect, and re-engage. Instead of sanctions, responses may include restorative conversations, time to regulate in a safe space, or supported reflection sessions where the pupil can explore what happened and how to make amends. Natural consequences might involve making a positive contribution to the school community, such as repairing damage or helping others, to rebuild a sense of responsibility and belonging. Where behaviour disrupts learning, short, structured time away from the classroom may be used, but always with the aim of reintegration and relationship repair rather than exclusion. The emphasis is on natural and logical consequences that teach skills, strengthen resilience, and build trust, ensuring pupils feel safe to learn from their mistakes while knowing they remain valued members of the school community.

Low-Level Approaches (early intervention):

- Non-verbal cues, gentle reminders, or use of agreed signals.
- Offering choices to encourage self-regulation.
- Brief check-ins or “emotion coaching” conversations using scripts.
- Access to regulation tools (e.g., sensory equipment, calm corner).

Mid-Level Approaches (when behaviour persists or escalates):

- Guided time-out in a safe, supervised space to regulate.
- Emotion coaching conversation with a trusted adult.
- Restorative dialogue to repair relationships with peers or staff, following and incident.
- Logical consequences, such as re-doing work respectfully or helping tidy an area that was disrupted.

High-Level Approaches (serious or repeated incidents or the above hasn’t been the right approach):

- Formal restorative meeting with staff, peers, and parents/carers if appropriate.
- Individual behaviour support plan review or adjustment.

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- Multi-agency involvement, such as consultation with educational psychologists, behaviour specialists, or safeguarding teams when patterns of behaviour indicate deeper unmet needs.

In rare cases, suspension may be considered, but only as a last resort and alongside a robust support package to prevent reoccurrence.

This structure ensures consistency across the school while allowing flexibility for individual needs. Each approach emphasises relationship repair, teaching regulation skills, and maintaining the child's sense of safety and belonging.

Reward System (individualised and needs-led)

Our reward system is tailored to the individual needs, motivations, and developmental stage of each student. Rewards are agreed collaboratively with classroom staff and, where appropriate, with the student and their parents/carers. The aim is to reinforce positive behaviour, effort, and engagement in a way that is meaningful and achievable for each learner.

Key Principles:

Rewards are personalised, what is motivating for one student may not be for another.

Students work towards rewards on a daily, weekly, or half-termly basis depending on their needs, attention span, and capacity for delayed gratification.

Rewards are linked to clear, positively framed expectations and are delivered consistently by staff.

The system is flexible and reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and supportive.

Rewards focus on effort, progress, and self-regulation, not just outcomes.

Additional support

All our pupils have a PSP (pupil support plan) which has been written by their class teacher and teaching assistant, the adults who know them best. This details the individualised support our young person needs to be successful in school and the community.

Additional support is available from our SENCO and pastoral staff. Our SENCO contributes to PSPs and ensures that pupil's individual SEN needs are being met in class and throughout school. Our SENCO also liaises with our company EP, SALT and OT services. These services consult with school on a regular basis and provide advice and strategies for school staff to meet the needs of our young people.

Our Pastoral Manager and Assistant Head for Behaviour and Attendance work closely with pupils and families to build strong relationships and support networks for families in need. They work with our DSL (designated safeguarding lead) who

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ensures that safeguarding is a priority throughout school. Our support staff deliver CPD and work closely with teaching staff to ensure our pupils remain at the heart of our practice.

Non-negotiables

To adhere to our school ethos of ready, respectful, safe, there are some non-negotiables for pupils:

Mobile phones

Mobile phones are not allowed during the school day.

The school accepts that personal mobile phones are often given to pupils, especially if they take public transport or require it for medical purposes. In this scenario, pupils must hand the phone in on arrival at school. At the end of the day the phone will be returned for the journey home. If a pupil feels unable to comply with this, there is a set of procedures in place that are shared with pupils and parents.

Wanding on Arrival (Safety and Security Procedure)

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students, staff, and visitors, a wanding procedure is carried out at the school entrance each morning. This process is designed to be calm, respectful, and non-intrusive, helping to maintain a safe learning environment while supporting students to feel secure on arrival.

Purpose:

• To prevent prohibited or unsafe items from entering the school environment.

• To promote a culture of safety, consistency, and reassurance for all students.

• To reduce risk and support positive behaviour throughout the school day.

Banned items

To maintain good order and conduct in school and maintain a safe environment for pupils to live and learn the following items are banned:

- Weapons of any kind
- Alcohol, drugs or illegal substances of any kind
- Electronic recording devices, including cameras attached to drones unless the property of the school
- Fireworks.
- Any stolen items
- Pornographic paraphernalia or images
- Clothing that depicts association with, or symbolism of, extremist groups or hate messages of any type that are likely to cause offensive to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010) or promote any form of extremist ideology. Also, anything that links to illegal activities (such as weapon or drug paraphernalia)

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Acorns School Ashley

Behaviour policy Appendix 1B

Acorns School Ashley the following local arrangements apply:

- **Our school values and how they shape behaviour:**

At Acorns School Ashley, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to flourish in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.

Our vision is to provide a therapeutic learning community where children feel valued, understood and empowered to achieve success from their individual starting points. We are ambitious for every pupil and strive to ensure that they develop the confidence, skills and resilience needed to thrive in education, relationships and future life.

We achieve this through:

- Building positive, trusting relationships
- Providing a safe and nurturing environment
- Delivering highly personalised learning experiences
- Promoting wellbeing alongside academic achievement
- Supporting children to become confident and independent learners
- Celebrating progress in all its forms
- Encouraging participation, engagement and self-belief

Our trauma-informed approach recognises the individual experiences of every child. Through consistency, compassion and high expectations, we create opportunities for pupils to develop confidence, independence and a sense of belonging.

- Our daily routines, including start of day, transitions and breaks:

At Acorns School Ashley, the school day begins at 9:00 a.m**.** Students are welcomed into school and provided with the opportunity to have breakfast on arrival. This ensures that all students are settled, ready to learn and have their basic needs met before the start of formal learning activities.

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Once in the classroom, students participate in a social skills activity as part of their morning routine. This supports the development of communication, interaction and readiness for learning while providing a consistent and predictable start to the day.

Acorns School Ashley operates a primary model of education, meaning that students remain with the same staff team and within the same classroom environment for the majority of the school day. This minimises transitions between classrooms and staff members, helping to reduce anxiety, promote security and provide consistency for students.

Throughout the day, students are encouraged to access movement breaks or brain breaks between lessons or whenever required. These breaks are personalised to meet individual needs and are linked to each student's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes and sensory targets. Staff use their professional judgement to ensure that breaks are provided at appropriate times to support engagement, regulation and learning.

Structure, routine and consistency are fundamental to the ethos of Acorns School Ashley. All staff maintain high expectations and provide clear boundaries to ensure that students understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from others. Consistent routines help students feel safe, secure and prepared for learning, supporting their emotional wellbeing and personal development.

- Our recognition and reward systems:

At Acorns School Ashley we have 3 values which underpin our school ethos: Ready, Respect and Safe. We believe that positive behaviour should be recognised and celebrated. Our behaviour and rewards system encourages students to consistently demonstrate our three core expectations:

- **Ready** - prepared for learning, engaged during an input, ready to transition to the next part of the day.
- **Respectful** – use kind and appropriate language, take care of our school environment, treat people with kindness.
- **Safe** - making choices that keep themselves and others physically and emotionally safe.

By recognising these behaviours, we aim to develop responsibility, positive habits and a strong school community.

During the week, students have the opportunity to earn tokens for behaviours which show they are Ready, Respectful or Safe.

At the end of each week, students have the opportunity to either spend their tokens in the tuck shop or bank them. Once tokens have been banked:

- They cannot be withdrawn or spent until the end of the term.

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- Students commit to saving those tokens for a larger future reward.
- Banked tokens remain secure and are recorded by the school.

We will match tokens which are banked which aims to encourage students to work towards a long-term goal.

- Key pastoral and behaviour support roles and how to refer to them:

At Acorns School Ashley, we have a range of roles to help to support behaviour:

- SENDCo, Sarah Booth, supports teaching staff and TAs to ensure that needs are met to try to reduce behavioural concerns.
- Deputy Head, Naomi Mitchell, ensures the Behaviour Policy is implemented effectively, liaises with teachers and TAs and supports students in crisis.
- Assistant Head, Ellie Coot, is responsible for monitoring effectiveness of interventions, monitoring trends in behaviours and identifying areas of need and supporting teachers and TAs to manage behaviours.
- Pastoral Manager, Roxanne O'Gorman, oversees and implements interventions. These interventions cover emotion coaching, Zones of Regulation, work towards outcomes from EHCPs and precision teaching.
- All our TAs have completed training including Trauma Informed Boundaries, Emotion Coaching, de-escalation techniques, meeting sensory needs and Zones of Regulation. Staff regularly discuss ways to reduce and respond to triggers, so behaviours are managed before a student reaches crisis.

- Local and specialist agencies we work with, for example educational psychology and CAMHS:

As Acorns School Ashley is located in the countryside, it means we have many students who travel from different locations and local authorities to be at our setting.

- We have an in-house Therapy Team, which consists of an Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, and an Occupational Therapist.
- Many of our students access CAMHS.
- The school will also make use of the Key's specialist advisors when appropriate.

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11.2 Appendix B: Behaviour Support Plan Template

The behaviour support plan helps staff understand, anticipate and respond consistently to a pupil's behaviour. It is written with the pupil, the family and relevant professionals and reviewed regularly. Complete one row for each pupil.

Section	Details
Pupil name	
Year and class	
Date of last review	
Plan author(s)	
Context and the pupil's story	Background, experiences and how these inform behaviour
Strengths and interests	What the pupil enjoys, their strengths and signs of resilience
Known triggers	Situations, environments or interactions that may lead to distress
Proactive strategies	How we prevent escalation, including adaptations and engagement
Response strategies	How staff respond, including de-escalation and agreed support
Linked risk assessments	Any associated risk assessments to read alongside this plan
Targets	Specific, positive behaviour targets framed as learning
Review dates	Schedule for regular review and update
Signatures	Staff and, where appropriate, pupil and parent or carer

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