Positive Behaviour Policy (V1.6)

In this policy, the following definitions apply:

"Appeer"	Appeer Community Interest Company ("We, our, us")
"Session"	An activity Session, talk or other event, run either by Appeer or a third-party service provider contracted by Appeer, whether one-off or as part of a Programme
"Online Session"	Activity Sessions, talks or group meetings utilising the Zoom or other remote online meeting platform, either delivered by Appeer or a third party service provider contracted by Appeer.
"Programme"	A package of Activity Sessions delivered during a set period (including online Sessions), taking place at predetermined times and locations, and run either by Appeer or a third-party service provider contracted by Appeer.
"Participant" and "Adult Participant"	A person registered with Appeer and/or who has, is or will attend an Appeer Session, talk or another event
"Representative"	A parent or carer (legal guardian) of the Participant

1. Policy Statement

Appeer CIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and other beneficiaries, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We believe that fostering positive behaviour is essential to creating a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment in which beneficiaries and staff can fully engage in our sessions without disruption or harm.

Guidance and legislation have been used to inform the writing of this policy. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools 2016,
- Behaviour in Schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2024
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014,
- The SEND Code of Practice 2015.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Use of reasonable force in schools 2013
- NICE guidance on autism and mental health
- Local safeguarding policies and procedures

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2. Purpose

The purpose of this Positive Behaviour Policy is to outline Appeer CIC's approach to promoting, supporting, and maintaining positive, respectful, and safe behaviour across all activities, programmes, and sessions. It also clarifies expectations for behaviour and sets out processes for effectively managing behaviours when they arise.

This policy provides a clear and consistent framework that:

- Prioritises wellbeing, dignity, and safety of autistic girls, young women, adult participants, and other beneficiaries.
- Recognises behaviour as a form of communication, reflecting a person's needs, emotions, or environment.
- Supports staff, volunteers, and families to respond to behaviour with understanding, compassion, and skill.
- Ensures reasonable adjustments are made for autistic and neurodivergent participants, in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Protects the rights of all participants to enjoy and benefit from Appeer's sessions without discrimination, disruption, or harm.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all Appeer CIC programmes, sessions, events and online activities
- all children, young people and adult participants accessing Appeer's services
- all staff members, sessional workers, volunteers, contractors and third-party providers acting on behalf of Appeer
- all parents/carers ("Representatives") engaging with Appeer in relation to a participant

4. Aims of Policy

The Positive Behaviour Policy aims to:

- **Promote a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment** where all participants, staff, and volunteers feel respected and supported.
- **Encourage positive behaviour** that enables all participants to benefit fully from Appeer CIC's sessions without disruption or harm.
- **Recognise behaviour as a form of communication** and respond in ways that are compassionate, understanding, and tailored to individual needs.

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- **Support staff, volunteers, and families** with clear guidance, strategies, and training to manage behaviour effectively and safely.
- **Ensure reasonable adjustments are made** for autistic and neurodivergent participants in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- **Safeguard children, young people, and other beneficiaries** by identifying and responding to behaviours that may indicate unmet needs or risks.
- **Promote emotional wellbeing and self-regulation** by helping participants develop strategies to understand and manage their own behaviour.
- **Provide a consistent framework** for monitoring, reporting, and reviewing behaviour, ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability.

5. Commitment to Safeguarding

Appeer CIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and other beneficiaries, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We recognise that promoting positive behaviour is essential for creating a safe, supportive environment and for enabling all participants and staff to engage fully in sessions.

Appeer CIC acknowledges its duty to safeguard children and young people, including protecting them from:

- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Child-on-child abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Online harm
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Exploitation
- Any other behaviour or exposure to, that may be detrimental to wellbeing

Duty to safeguarding the wellbeing of participants

Behaviour may be an indicator of safeguarding needs. Any concerns about behaviour that raise safeguarding questions must be reported without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL can be contacted at DSL@appeer.org.uk

6. Understanding Behaviour

As an organisation working with autistic and neurodivergent girls and women, we recognise that behaviour may be influenced by:

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- Sensory needs
- Communication differences
- Emotional regulation
- Social understanding
- Past trauma and experiences

Behaviour should always be considered in context, and responses should focus on understanding and addressing underlying needs rather than simply reacting to the behaviour itself.

7. Reasonable Adjustments

In line with the Equality Act 2010, Appeer CIC will:

- Anticipate potential barriers to participation for neurodivergent participants
- Make ongoing adjustments to activities, communication, and environment
- Ensure no participant is disadvantaged due to individual need or barriers to participation.

Staff must:

- ✓ Recognise that a Participant's behaviour may reflect their neurodiverse profile, individual learning needs, or ways of processing and responding to the environment.
- ✓ Understand that a participant's insight into their own behaviour may vary, and reasonable adjustments should be made to ensure support strategies are accessible, clear and effective.
- ✓ Follow the Positive Behaviour Policy and procedures

8. Expected behaviours

All participants, staff, and volunteers at Appeer CIC are expected to:

For Participants

- Treat others with respect, kindness, and consideration.
- Follow instructions and guidance provided by staff and volunteers.
- Communicate safely and appropriately, verbally or non-verbally.
- Take responsibility for their own actions where appropriate.
- Report any behaviour that could harm themselves or others.
- Participate in sessions positively, contributing to a supportive and inclusive environment.

For Staff and Volunteers

- Always model positive and respectful behaviour.
- Respond consistently and fairly to behaviour, recognising underlying needs.
- Use proactive strategies to encourage positive behaviour and prevent challenges.
- Apply reasonable adjustments to support neurodivergent participants.

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- Maintain professional boundaries while building positive relationships with participants.
- Report and address behaviour concerns promptly, including safeguarding issues.

General Principles

- Everyone is expected to uphold Appeer CIC's commitment to safeguarding and wellbeing.
- Behaviour that disrupts learning, puts anyone at risk, or causes distress to others is not acceptable but must be challenge proportionately and in the interest of positive outcomes.
- Positive recognition of good behaviour should be encouraged to reinforce a nurturing environment.

9. Inappropriate Behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour is any action, verbal expression, or omission that:

- Harms or has the potential to harm participants, staff, or volunteers.
- Disrupts sessions, learning, or the ability of others to participate fully.
- Shows a lack of respect, dignity, or consideration for others.
- Breaches the organisation's safeguarding or equality principles.
- Includes bullying, discrimination, harassment, or exploitation.
- Poses a risk to the safety or wellbeing of self or others.
- Disregards reasonable instructions or boundaries set by staff.

Examples of inappropriate behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Physical aggression (hitting, kicking, pushing)
- Verbal aggression, threats, or intimidation
- Bullying or discriminatory language/actions
- Sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Damage to property
- Refusal to follow instructions that ensure safety or wellbeing
- Behaviour that causes distress or anxiety to others

Smoking and Vaping

Appeer CIC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all participants, staff, and visitors. Smoking and vaping are strictly prohibited in all indoor areas, vehicles, and on Appeer CIC premises, including entrances, exits, and outdoor spaces used for sessions.

- This includes cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vaping devices, and any other smoking-related products.
- Participants, staff, volunteers, and visitors must not smoke or vape during sessions or when representing Appeer CIC in any capacity.

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- Any participant found smoking or vaping will be reminded of this policy and asked to stop immediately. Staff will follow appropriate behaviour management procedures if the behaviour continues.
- Staff and volunteers must always model compliance with this policy.
- Exceptions may be made in designated areas off-site, in accordance with local law and organisational guidance, but these must never compromise the safety, wellbeing, or supervision of participants.

10. Behaviour Outside Appeer Sessions, Activities or Events

- Parents/carers remain responsible for Participants' conduct outside of Appeer premises, including any behaviour that takes place online. If staff become aware of behaviour that appears to constitute a criminal offence, the police will be informed, in line with safeguarding requirements.
- In line with this Positive Behaviour Policy, Appeer staff may offer support or take necessary action if behaviour concerns arise outside Appeer premises but during an Appeer-organised or Appeer-related activity (e.g., trips, online sessions, off-site events, or transitions to and from activities). This includes applying relevant behaviour procedures when appropriate to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all Participants.

11. Supporting Positive Behaviour

11.1 Creating Inclusive Environments

Appeer CIC is committed to creating and maintaining environments where all participants feel safe, included, understood, and able to thrive. We support inclusive, positive environments by:

- Helping participants and those around them understand feelings and behaviour, including how emotions influence actions and how behaviour impacts others (with further exploration in extended weekday programmes).
- Fostering good relationships and a strong sense of belonging within the Appeer community.
- Positively reinforcing kindness, consideration, and supportive interactions through gentle encouragement, praise, and recognition of positive behaviour.
- Providing a supportive, enjoyable, and stimulating programme of activities designed to meet the needs of all participants.
- Using visual supports and a range of communication strategies to promote understanding, reduce anxiety, and support positive choices.

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- Sharing clear guidelines, including those related to kindness (from our Community Charter), with participants and families through joining instructions and during sessions. Our Appeer policies and guidelines are widely shared and available on our website.
- Modelling positive behaviour consistently across all staff and volunteers.
- Teaching and reinforcing key "Legal Rules" where appropriate, ensuring they are explained in ways each participant can understand:
    - Do not hurt others
    - Do not threaten to hurt others
    - Do not damage things that do not belong to you
    - Use only appropriate touch
    - Keep private things private
- All Participants are asked to agree to our community charter which illustrates the expectations toward behaviour.
- Maintaining small group sizes and high staffing levels, typically a ratio of 1 staff member to 4 participants, with a maximum of 1:6 for older groups.
- Building positive relationships with participants and their families, recognising the importance of shared understanding and consistent support.
- Ensuring policies and procedures are consistently applied across settings and staff teams.
- Working collaboratively with participants and their families to develop individual plans and risk assessments, identifying proactive strategies tailored to each participant's needs.

11.2 Working in partnerships with families:

- building positive relationships with Participants and their families where we can.
- working together according to this policy and our related procedures and to understand the cause of behaviour, what this means and what we can do to help to address the cause as well as the behaviour itself.
- ensuring Parents/Carers have the opportunity to share full information about their child including information relating to behaviour, their social communication needs, stress and anxiety as well as their thoughts, strategies and insights through their application form and further conversations.
- making Parents/Carers aware of relevant policies and our general terms and conditions upon booking sessions and in communications
- ensuring we are regularly communicating and collaborating with Parents/Carers to support their young people in this regard.

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- allowing children to take increasing personal and social responsibility as they progress throughout the programme/s.

11.3 Supporting issues as they arise:

- Using modelling and other strategies
- Providing opportunities for Participants to have access to sensory toys or a quieter space with Parents/Carers or staff as appropriate
- Helping to understand reasons behind less positive behaviour and put support in place to help in partnership with Parents/Carers as necessary and according to our positive behaviour procedures and levels of intervention/support.
- Providing opportunities for Participants to discuss their thoughts and behaviour, and support understanding and positive choices in certain situations
- Ensuring Parents/Carers are informed of concerns in behaviour quickly, discreetly, and not in hearing of other Participants or Parents/Carers, by staff during sessions so they are aware can support
- Ensuring that any related info can be filed in the Participant's notes and folders accessible by staff only

12.Risk Assessing

Appeer CIC is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all Participants, staff and volunteers. Risk assessments are an essential part of proactively identifying and managing any factors that may impact behaviour, safety or participation.

We will do this by:

- Completing individual risk assessments for Participants where additional needs, behavioural concerns, medical needs or safeguarding vulnerabilities have been identified.
- Working collaboratively with parents/carers, and where appropriate the Participant, to ensure risk assessments are accurate, up to date and reflective of current needs.
- Reviewing risk assessments regularly, and immediately following any significant incident, change in need or escalation in behaviour.
- Using risk assessments to identify triggers, early warning signs, sensory or environmental factors, and agreed proactive strategies that support regulation and safe participation.
- Outlining clear responses and procedures for managing foreseeable risks, including strategies to prevent crises and steps to take if behaviour becomes unsafe.

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- Ensuring staff are aware of relevant risk assessments and trained to follow them consistently.
- Adjusting environments, groups or support levels where needed to reduce risk and promote positive behaviour.
- Putting in place additional safety measures—such as increased staffing ratios, structured transition plans or personalised support—when risks cannot be mitigated through standard procedures.
- Pausing or reviewing attendance if risk levels escalate to a point where Appeer cannot safely meet the Participant's needs, even with reasonable adjustments.
- Risk assessments are living documents designed to support safety, dignity and participation. They will always focus on understanding needs rather than assigning blame, and on enabling engagement wherever possible.

13.Training and Development

Appeer CIC recognises that effective support of positive behaviour relies on well-trained, knowledgeable, and confident staff. We are committed to ensuring all staff and volunteers receive ongoing training and development in behaviour management and inclusion.

We will do this by:

Induction Training: All new staff and volunteers will receive induction training covering Appeer CIC's Positive Behaviour Policy, safeguarding procedures, autism and neurodiversity awareness, and strategies for supporting participants' social, emotional, and behavioural needs.

Ongoing Professional Development: Staff will have access to continuous learning opportunities, including workshops, seminars, and specialist training relevant to working with autistic girls, young women, and neurodivergent participants.

Behaviour Management Skills: Staff will be trained in de-escalation strategies, proactive behaviour support, and, where appropriate, safe physical intervention techniques in line with safeguarding guidance.

Individual Needs Awareness: Training will include understanding sensory, communication, emotional, and social needs, and how these may impact behaviour.

Regular Updates: Staff will be kept informed of any changes in policy, legislation, best practice guidance, or procedures relating to behaviour management.

Reflective Practice: Staff will be encouraged to reflect on their practice, share insights and strategies with colleagues, and participate in supervision and mentoring to continuously improve their skills.

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Supporting Families: Staff will be trained to work collaboratively with parents/carers, sharing strategies and guidance to promote consistency and positive behaviour both at Appeer and at home.

Through robust training and development, Appeer CIC ensures that staff and volunteers are equipped to create safe, inclusive, and supportive environments where participants can thrive.

14.APPEER CIC Principles of Positive Behaviour

At Appeer CIC, we aim to create an environment in which everyone feels safe, supported, and able to participate positively. Our principles of positive behaviour are:

1. Safety First	Everyone at Appeer CIC activities should feel safe and stay safe. Participants, staff, and volunteers are encouraged to act in ways that protect their own and others' wellbeing.
2. Promoting Positive Choices and Responsibility	We help participants and those around them learn how behaviour affects themselves and others. We encourage positive decision-making and personal responsibility in interactions and activities.
3. Supportive and Inclusive Environment	Participants, families, and staff should feel comfortable, supported, and understood within Appeer CIC sessions. Predictable and consistent environments reduce anxiety and promote positive behaviour.
4. Behaviour as Communication	Behaviour is a form of communication, whether verbal or non-verbal. Understanding the cause of behaviour is essential to respond effectively and support participants.
5. Understanding and Managing Emotions	Learning to understand, manage, and regulate emotions is a lifelong skill for participants. Staff support participants to develop these skills through modelling, guidance, and structured activities.
6. Duty of Care and Kindness	Appeer CIC has a duty to promote kindness and positive behaviour while safeguarding all participants, families, and staff.

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	Planning for and supporting behaviour issues is essential to maintaining safety and wellbeing.
7. Consistency and Structure	Clear expectations, structured routines, and visual aids help participants understand and meet behaviour expectations. Staff responses are consistent and adapted to individual needs, anticipating triggers such as sensory or communication differences.
8. Collaboration with Families and Staff	Families are partners in supporting positive behaviour. Insights and strategies from staff and parents/carers are shared and incorporated into planning. Experienced staff are recruited and receive ongoing training to respond effectively to behaviour challenges.
9. Promoting Positive Relationships	Encouraging kindness, consideration, and supportive relationships among participants and staff fosters a sense of belonging and community. Positive reinforcement, praise, and modelling are used to encourage desirable behaviour.

15. Assessing responses to Challenging Behaviour

When challenging behaviour occurs, staff will:

- Assess the situation calmly and safely
- Consider the individual's needs and triggers
- Respond proportionately, using de-escalation strategies wherever possible
- Avoid punitive measures that could be harmful
- Document incidents clearly and report safeguarding concerns immediately

Using and applying our Positive Behaviour procedures responsibly and fairly when there are behavioural concerns and adhering to the guidance within them relating to the below levels of intervention and support:

1. Minor incidences of inappropriate behaviour
2. Continued incidences of inappropriate minor behaviour
3. Serious behaviour, e.g., emotional or physical damage to others or to equipment/setting

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4. **Extremely serious behaviour or repetition of #3 above 3 or more times**

15.1 Addressing challenging behaviour
When addressing challenging behaviour, staff will;

- Use proactive strategies to prevent challenging behaviour
- Recognise and reinforce positive behaviour
- Make reasonable adjustments to support participants' individual needs
- Provide guidance and strategies to help participants manage emotions and behaviour
- Encourage self-regulation and problem-solving skills

16.Physical Intervention and Use of Force

Appeer strictly prohibits corporal punishment and the use of inappropriate or excessive force under all circumstances.

However, physical intervention may be appropriate in a very limited number of exceptional situations, where it is necessary to prevent harm. These may include:

- Ensuring the immediate safety of a participant
- Restraining a participant who is physically threatening another participant or member of staff
- Separating participants when behaviour presents a risk of harm
- Preventing significant damage to property

This list is not exhaustive.

Any physical intervention must:

- Be reasonable, proportionate, and necessary in relation to the circumstances
- Be used only as a last resort, unless a participant is at immediate risk of harming themselves or others
- Be applied for the shortest possible time
- Aim to reduce risk, not to punish
- Be consistent with safeguarding principles and Appeer's training and procedures
- Only be implemented by fully trained members off staff.

Where parents/carers are on site, they will be contacted and asked to support their child as soon as is safely possible, taking into account the safety of all participants and staff.

Reporting Requirements
If a participant is hurt, marked, or distressed as a result of physical intervention by a member of staff, that staff member must immediately inform:

- The Programme Lead
- The CEO

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- The Head pf Programmes and Communications

A written record of the incident will be completed in line with organisational safeguarding procedures.

Parental/Carer Support
While Appeer staff are experienced in supporting participants with diverse social communication needs, parents/carers may be asked to assist where violent or highly challenging behaviour occurs and poses a risk to staff or other participants. This will always be managed sensitively and with the participant's best interests in mind.

17. Managing Persistent Violent or Disruptive Behaviour

Whilst the social communication needs of all Participants are fully understood, and our experienced staff work proactively to support them, Parents/Carers may be asked to attend and support their child if violent or significantly challenging behaviour occurs towards staff or other Participants.
The safety and wellbeing of the whole group is paramount. Appeer therefore reserves the right to pause or withdraw a Participant's place in some or all future Sessions or programmes if:

- Persistent violent or disruptive behaviour continues despite adherence to Appeer's Positive Behaviour procedures and agreed strategies
- The behaviour has significantly impacted the physical safety or the social, emotional or mental wellbeing of other Participants in previous sessions
- It is determined that the Participant's continued attendance would prevent Appeer from ensuring a safe, supportive environment for them, their peers, or staff
- There is a clear and evident record of instances to support the decision

This step will always be taken as a last resort, once:

- Agreed proactive strategies and reasonable adjustments have been implemented
- Relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team (Programme Managers, CEO, Head of Programmes, DSL and/or Directors) have reviewed the situation
- It has been clearly established that we can no longer safely or effectively meet the Participant's needs within the programme
- A thorough risk assessment has been carried out, and agreement has been reached that the placement is not tenable.

In all cases, Appeer will work collaboratively with Parents/Carers to explore next steps and alternative support where appropriate. This may include external referrals or signposting to other specialist services.

18. Roles and Responsibilities to promote Positive Behaviour

Staff and Volunteers

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- Promote and model positive behaviour
- Respond to behaviour with understanding and compassion
- Implement reasonable adjustments
- Report safeguarding concerns promptly

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Oversee safeguarding concerns
- Provide guidance on behaviour that may indicate safeguarding needs
- Liaise with external agencies if required

Participants and Families

- Support the principles of positive behaviour
- Share relevant information about needs and triggers

Review and monitoring

This policy and any associated guidance will be reviewed annually, or where necessary if legislative or changes are required. The CEO has the overall ownership of this policy and any supplementary guidance.

Should you require any further information, please contact our DSL or the individual programme manager for further assistance. DSL@appeer.org.uk . or CEO@appeer.org.uk

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APPEER Connecting autistic girls and women

Appeer Community Charter

We want to help make sure everyone is safe and benefits from and enjoys our Groups.

In the Appeer Community we must:

1. Be Ourselves 

You can just be yourself in this Group and make choices to enable yourself. You or your parent/carer can let us know if you would like us to do something different to help you.

2. Be Kind and Respectful 

We try to be kind to others and ourselves.

3. Keep Safe 

We follow instructions to help keep ourselves and others safe and well.

4. Care for our environment 

We look after equipment and the buildings we use. We also try to recycle where we can.

We believe everyone in our Community has a right to:	During Appeer Sessions we all:
• Be themselves, as part of an equal and inclusive group. • Be and feel safe, with boundaries, preferences and pronouns being respected. • Participate how they want to - we have choices, including saying no. • Communicate in a way that feels comfortable and be heard. • Have their social and sensory needs met in a group of autistic peers.	• Respect everyone's preferences. This includes their names, pronouns and sexuality. • Respect everyone's boundaries. If they want time to themselves or do not want to talk or join in, we respect this. • Listen to others, including people we may not know or are friends with yet. Everyone at Appeer is equal and valued. • Let Appeer staff know if we are finding anything difficult, so they can support us. If it's easier, we write this down or ask someone else (like a friend, parent or carer) to tell staff.

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POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY Version No: 1.6	
Summary:	Our policy outlining the principles of and our commitments to supporting and implementing a positive behaviour approach throughout the work of Appeer CIC.
Policy Owner:	Annaliese Boucher
Author:	Annaliese Boucher
Target Audience:	Participants, Parents/Carers, Appeer staff, management and volunteers
Approved and Ratified By:	Cathryn Jagger
Signature:	
Version Date:	13th March 2026
Date of issue:	13th March 2026
Next Review Date:	13th March 2027 or earlier if changes in programmes or legislation.

Change Record				
Date	Author	Version	Page/s	Reason for Change
10/02/2020	Jo Dilworth	1.0		n/a
01/06/2021	Jo Dilworth	1.1	Throughout	In-person Groups restarting
26/11/2022	Jo Dilworth	1.2	As relevant	Updating job titles and terminology
20/03/2024	Jo Dilworth	1.3	Throughout	Changes in roles
22/04/2024	Jo Dilworth	1.4	Throughout	Amendments to parent/carer areas and references to related procedures
14/11/2025	Sam Emmerson	1.5	Throughout	Changes in roles
02/12/2025	Annaliese Boucher	1.6	Throughout	Additional Information re vaping and smoking
13/03/2026	Annaliese Boucher	1.6	Throughout	Staff changes

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