



BEHAVIOUR, DISCIPLINE AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Context

At Ian Mikardo our aim is that our students should achieve their academic potential and lead independent and fulfilling adult lives. We enable this by building mutually respectful relationships with them and showing them how to have respectful relationships with each other and with other people. This helps them to reflect and take responsibility for themselves, and is a form of discipline that is constant, immediate and consistent. We achieve discipline through discussion.

This document explains our approach. The warmth, humour and pleasant firmness with which our staff engage with students from the moment they arrive in the school each day demonstrates the way in which we set boundaries on behaviour, and is reflected throughout the school.

Aims of our behaviour policy

- To provide a structure that supports and enables effective teaching and learning throughout the school community
- To maintain clear expectations and a code of conduct that revolves around mutual respect and that is adhered to consistently by everyone in the school community
- To create a safe and caring environment in which all students are valued equally
- To encourage students to reflect.

Our ethos

Our ethos revolves around awareness, understanding, consideration of others' needs, compassion, equality, tolerance, and inclusion. Acceptable standards of behaviour are those which reflect these principles.

Every member of staff is responsible for creating this environment which enables young people to engage with effective learning. We believe that by treating our students as individuals and providing them with comprehensive support they will be able to fulfil their potential. We also believe that education can and should be fun, and that our students benefit from the sense of playfulness that permeates the school, and the creative opportunities we offer.

Our ethos aims to:

- Encourage mutual respect throughout the school community
- Help each student to develop a sense of responsibility for his/her behaviour
- Foster each student's emotional wellbeing, including their ability to express their feelings and emotions
- Develop each student's social and communication skills.
- Develop a sense of social and moral responsibility within the school and the wider community

Our practice

Building relationships and using praise

At Ian Mikardo, everything we do is based on building mutually respectful relationships with our students. Unlike most educational establishments, we do not have a reward system. We explain our practices to students, offer them reasons to work with us and encourage reflective dialogue and self-regulation. Our tone can be light-hearted and playful, which can be liberating and enabling for young people who may previously have felt stifled by authority figures, and does not in any way dilute our messages.

We treat students as individuals, ensure that the curriculum is appropriate for each student and that teaching styles are varied, and we use praise as our main tool. There is a lot of encouragement in this school, and because we are quick to tell a student when they are behaving inappropriately, we constantly reinforce the barriers that differentiate respectful behaviour from inappropriate behaviour.

Teaching

At Ian Mikardo teaching is delivered through structured classroom activity, and through the social curriculum, which enables students to learn in an informal setting. Our students have long histories of failing to engage with education. Their complex emotional needs, and their inability to focus on formal learning for long periods of time, mean that it would be inappropriate and unhelpful to expect them to meet the National Curriculum framework by engaging with five hours of formal learning each day. Our curriculum, which is designed to meet their needs, includes a strong element of learning through play within the five hours of contact time between students and staff.

This means that effective teaching depends on the relationship each member of the teaching staff has with each student, and on the staffs' ability to manage behaviour with measured firmness and humour, rather than the blanket use of authority. These techniques combine to deliver consistent behaviour management throughout the day in all settings.

Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution is the verbal process through which staff address any inappropriate incident in which a student has been involved. Staff point out immediately that the student's behaviour has been disrespectful and inappropriate, and encourage them to think about what they have done, its impact on other people and any other consequences, and how they might make reparation.

Our use of conflict resolution is not an act of coercion, it is an open discussion facilitated by an objective and impartial member of staff. Our aim is not to punish but to help students to understand why they acted as they did, and that what they have done is inappropriate; we regard conflict resolution as a learning strategy. We believe punishment merely reinforces authority and does nothing to encourage students to reflect on their behaviour. We want to empower our students, not reduce and humiliate them.

If appropriate, we involve the injured party in the discussion and encourage the perpetrator to apologise to the victim.

Liaison with parents/carers and external professionals

Our work with parents and carers and with external professionals is central to supporting students to manage their behaviour. This work is co-ordinated by the Welfare department.

- The Welfare team's thorough and wide-ranging assessment of each new student enables an individualised plan to be put together to support the student from the point of admission.
- The Welfare team shares appropriate information updating student's circumstances with staff at briefings and debriefings. This enables staff to tailor their support and responses to meet each student's needs.
- The school's Parent Engagement Worker (PEW) provides on-going support to parents and carers. This is facilitated by a weekly coffee morning, home visits, and the PEW's availability to parents and carers by phone and text.
- The Senior Welfare Practitioner attends meetings for students who are LAC, on the CP register or CIN, and liaises with external professionals. These include the Attendance officer and the School Nurse.
- The Senior Welfare Practitioner provides an immediate point of contact for students who present in crisis. This may relate to an issue outside school which the Senior Welfare Practitioner or PEW will follow up.
- The Senior Welfare Practitioner refers students to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and may refer members of their family. She also works with CAMHS to ensure that students known to the service receive the therapeutic support they need.
- The school's Senior Welfare Practitioner co-ordinates Non Violent Resistance (NVR) training and referrals for parents, carers and staff, and is available for consultation with staff about the use of NVR tools.

Exclusion

At Ian Mikardo exclusion from the school community is used as a last resort and for the shortest time possible; a student may be sent home in the course of the school day and return the next day. It is not a punitive measure but a planned intervention initiated by the Head Teacher or, in their absence, the Deputy Head of Inclusion or Acting Head when it is felt that it is unsafe for a student to be in school, and when other strategies have failed. It is done in the interests of a student's own health and safety, and the health and safety of others because we feel that, at that time, the school is not an appropriate environment for the student.

When a student is sent home we immediately plan how best to support them and get them back into school. If the student is to return the following day, arrangements are made to reintegrate them. This involves the student and their parent or carer attending a meeting with a member of the Senior Management Team. If the exclusion is for more than part of a day, we support them at home so that our work with them continues. Home visits can be made by

a member of the Welfare team and/or teaching staff who may work with the student off-site at a library or ideas store. A reintegration meeting will be held as soon as is appropriate.

Criminal activity

If a student commits a criminal act in the school we do not hesitate to involve the police. We regard this as part of the process through which he/she learns about the boundaries of acceptable and respectful behaviour both inside and outside the school. If the student faces a criminal charge, we immediately put together a plan to support the student within the criminal justice system, as well as continuing to support him/her in the school and at home.

Physical restraint

We do not use physical restraint because it conflicts with the school's ethos which revolves around mutually respectful relationships. Displays of power would damage these relationships and be at odds with the safe and productive environment we strive to create.

This does not mean that staff never physically intervene. On the rare occasions when it is necessary, staff may block or stand in between students, and guide them away from the area.

Anti-bullying policy

At Ian Mikardo we actively promote a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion. We encourage students to welcome difference, embrace diversity and strive to provide them with a safe and supportive environment that is free from intimidation.

We regard all forms of bullying as unacceptable and always challenge them. Bullying can involve: ageism, racism, sexism, homophobia, disability, gender, gender identity, religion, lack of faith and other issues relating to identity or difference. It can happen in the school, off-site or online.

Staff are vigilant and because the school is an open community, we ensure that students feel both physically safe and comfortable to report and discuss any bullying, including cyber-bullying. We work with both perpetrators and victims and use conflict resolution when appropriate.

We also recognise that students' attitudes and aggression can be rooted in cultural influences, such as computer games and pop videos. These can inform their expectations of masculinity and how they interact with women, as well as with each other. We challenge gender-based stereotypes and encourage students to build relationships based on mutual respect.

How do we define bullying?

Threats of physical violence, assaults, verbal abuse, and any verbal attack that targets a sense of difference are all forms of bullying because they cause distress to another person

or group. We discourage play-fighting and other physical games that can be a route for bullying.

Bullying can include:

- teasing
- humiliation
- swearing and shouting
- horseplay and play-fighting
- threats
- whispering
- inappropriate touching
- sexist, racist or homophobic remarks, or taunts relating to appearance or family circumstances
- exclusion from groups or activities
- not talking to someone because of their race, colour, religion, gender or disability
- damage to or theft of personal belongings
- cyberbullying: threats, harassment and abuse by email, text, using social networks or any other form of digital technology.

Preventative strategies

At Ian Mikardo we:

- Ensure that students are supervised at all times
- Raise awareness of what constitutes bullying through discussion
- Give students opportunities to talk about bullying in all forums, including tutorials
- Educate students on bullying both formally in PHSE and citizenship, and informally at break and meal times and in 1:1 discussions
- Liaise with parents
- Promote anti-oppressive practice at all times

We deal with incidents immediately. We ask students whether they understand what they are saying, and make sure that they understand why they are being hurtful and offensive and that their language/action has had a negative impact on other people. This immediacy and openness means that it is easy for our students to discuss bullying, and that acts of bullying can be contained.

Our anti-bullying stand was at the heart of the school's design when it was rebuilt in 2011. The building is light, bright and welcoming, with windows between rooms and corridors. This creates an invigorating and open environment for learning, and enables close supervision of students. It also means that there are no enclosed spaces that could promote bullying.

Risk assessment

Safety is always our prime consideration: neither pupils nor staff must be placed in situations that expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. For this reason risk assessment is embedded into school practice. We constantly monitor and assess our students' behaviour

and our responses to them, ensuring that they have appropriate levels of supervision and striving to find the most effective ways to reduce and manage potential risk.

If a student becomes angry and leaves the site alone, a member of staff will follow at a distance and at no more than a brisk walking space; running after them could jeopardise the student's safety. This enables us to supervise the student until they have calmed down and are able to return.

We simultaneously operate a policy of inclusion. To maximize our students' learning opportunities we manage potential risk so that we can involve them in educational opportunities that could otherwise be closed to them. The process for students to take part in educational visits is one of continued risk assessment and involves careful planning.

Students are involved in their own risk assessments, which we call Safety Plans. This is to empower them and to enable them to learn strategies to keep themselves safe when they are off site. Risk assessment can involve our therapeutic staff.

If we become aware that a student is at risk because of issues outside the school, we follow Tower Hamlets' safeguarding procedure.

Problematic sexual behaviour that requires intervention

All staff working at Ian Mikardo High School have a responsibility to respond to behaviour that could be considered sexually inappropriate in a public place. Staff challenge any unacceptable or harmful behaviour and take the following steps:

- Stop the behaviour – remove the student away from others to speak with them.
- Describe the behaviour - to avoid any misunderstandings.
- Point out the impact on others.
- Remind student of the norm.
- Report the incident to a member of the Senior Management Team.
- Record the incident on the Management Information System.

If appropriate, a support plan will be created and followed.

Monitoring and reviewing

We are always striving to maximise the support we give to our students and to define new, creative ways to engage them. We review students' progress constantly and this policy is reviewed as frequently as is necessary to incorporate new practice. It meets statutory obligations as defined in the *Education and Inspection Act 2006*.