



The Rivers
C.of E. Academy Trust

Relational and Positive Behaviour Policy

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Officer Responsible	CEO/CFOO/Director of Education/Director of Inclusion etc

This document sets out the regulations for the MAT and all member academies

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Vision, Ethos and Principles

Unity Academy is a primary alternative provision that supports pupils with complex SEMH/SEND profiles through short- to long-term placements and outreach, with the core purpose of successful reintegration to appropriate settings. Our approach mirrors mainstream structures while tailoring support to individual need consistent with the Rivers mission of “*Extraordinary education for every pupil*”.

Unity Mission: **Safe to Belong. Ready to Learn. Reignite Confidence.**

Inclusion is at the heart of all we do, as a school we commit to a relational behaviour approach grounded in attachment, regulation, restoration and inclusion. We understand that behaviour is communication. Many of our pupils have experienced trauma, exclusion, disrupted attachments or unmet needs. We believe that strong relationships, high expectations and a sense of belonging are the foundations for behaviour change and success.

We are proudly relational and trauma-informed ensuring we establish routines, predictability and consistency, building trust and emotional safety. Behaviour is taught, supported, repaired and reflected upon, not punished.

Our policy is underpinned by attachment theories, adopted by Nurture, Thrive (WINE and PACE) and sensory processing theories, integral to zones of regulation.

We refer to behaviour as:

Expected behaviour:

The things we do and say are friendly, helpful, respectful to others. We are doing what is expected of us, including where we are and who we are with.

Unexpected behaviour

The things we do or say to make other people feel uncomfortable not respected, these are unkind actions that are harmful to others or the surroundings.

Legislation and Statutory Responsibility

This policy is also based on following statutory guidance

- DfE Behaviour in Schools (2022, updated 2024)—whole-school behaviour policy, SEND-sensitive responses, graduated support. [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)
- DfE Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions (Aug 2024)—last resort, proportionality, duties to inform and arrange education, and SEN expert role at IRP. [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Use of Reasonable Force / Restrictive Interventions—current guidance and the transition to the new framework from 1 April 2026. [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)
- Rivers CofE Trust policies—including Suspension & Permanent Exclusion, Behaviour/Relationships, Child-on-Child Abuse, and the Scheme of Delegation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with The Rivers CofE Academy Trust's Restrictive Intervention Policy and the Suspensions and Exclusions Policy.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Core principles

To promote positive behaviour, we follow the following core principles:

- **Building relationships first**
Predictable adults, emotional available adults, unconditional positive regard, co-regulation, and high expectations.
- **Providing consistency with adaptations**
Clear routines and responses, adapted for individual needs, aligned to the SEND/EHCP needs.
- **Creating a ready environment**
Providing a safe, predictable, calm working environment to support every child to thrive.
- **Providing a total communication approach:**
Ensures every pupil can understand expectations, express needs, and access support in ways that are meaningful to them. (Visuals, symbols, gestures and modelling)
- **Teaching positive and expected behaviour**
Behaviour is part of the curriculum; we explicitly teach regulation, problem-solving and repair using zones of regulation, PSHE and reflection time.
- **Prioritising inclusion and safe practice**
Behaviour management decisions prioritise safety, dignity and learning for all.
- **Working with our families**
Creating proactive, honest partnership with parents/carers.

The Four Functions of Behaviour

All behaviour serves a purpose. Understanding the underlying function of behaviour enables staff to respond consistently and effectively. Behaviours typically fall into one or more of the following four functions:

- **Attention**
Behaviour may occur in order to gain attention from adults or peers. This attention may be positive (e.g. praise or interaction) or negative (e.g. reprimands or correction).
- **Escape**
Behaviour may be used to avoid, delay, or escape a situation, task, demand, or interaction that is perceived as challenging, unpleasant, or overwhelming.

- **Tangible Access**

Behaviour may be displayed to gain access to a desired item, activity, or privilege, such as toys, food, technology, or preferred activities.

- **Sensory Stimulation**

Behaviour may occur because it provides sensory stimulation or supports self-regulation. In these cases, the behaviour is internally reinforcing and not dependent on responses from others.

At Unity Academy, staff recognise the four functions of behaviour and apply a relational, trauma-informed approach to support children in achieving emotional safety and self-regulation.

Relational and Trauma Informed Approaches

Relationships first

All behaviour management at Unity Academy is grounded in positive, trusting relationships between pupils and adults.

Staff prioritise:

- Predictable, emotionally available adults
- Unconditional positive regard
- Clear boundaries delivered with empathy
- Consistency with adaption for individual SEND and SEMH needs

Pupils are never defined by their behaviour. Instead, adults ask:

- “What is this child communicating, and how can we support them?”
- “What is happening for this child?” rather than “what is wrong with this child?”
- “What might this child need?” rather than “what does this child want?”

Trauma-informed practice

We recognise that trauma can significantly impact a child’s ability to self-regulate, trust adults and respond to traditional behaviour systems.

Staff are trained to:

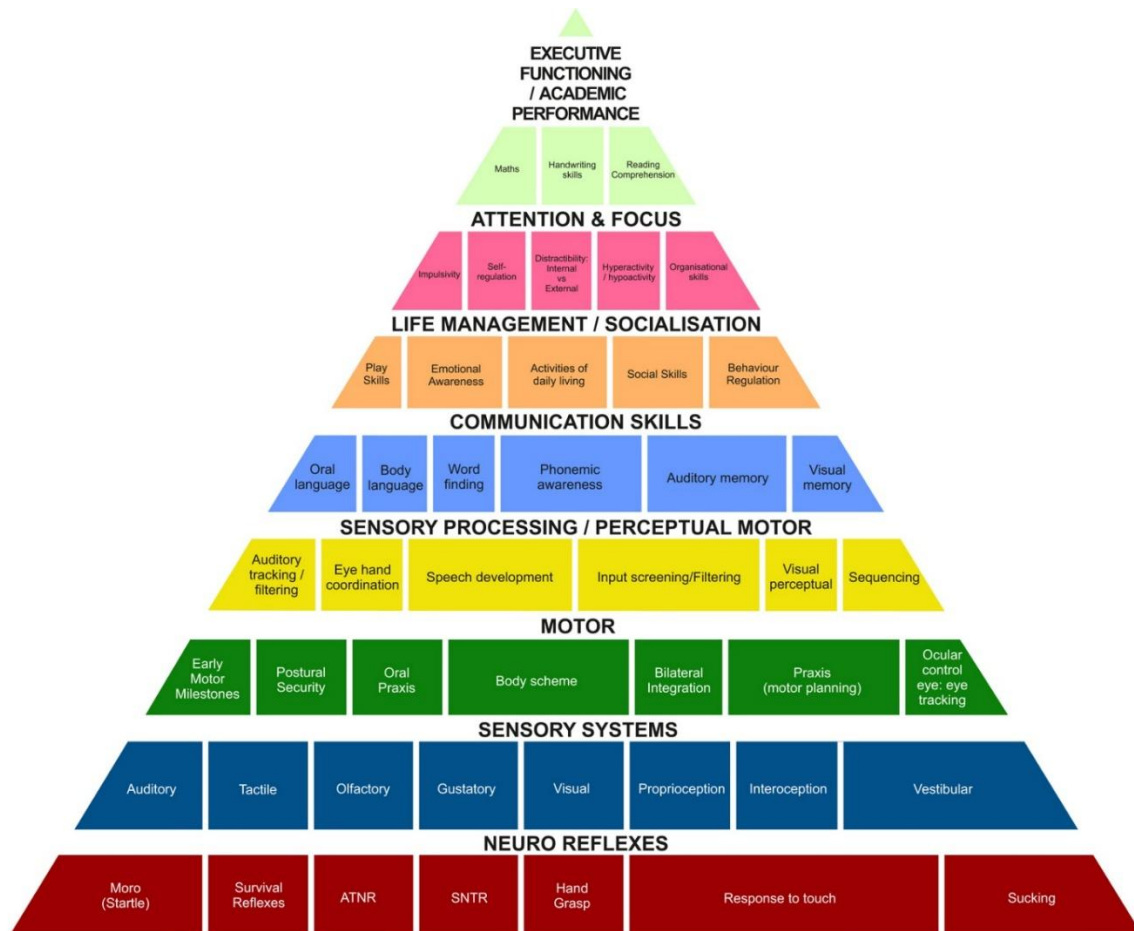
- Understand stress responses (fight, flight, freeze)
- Understand adverse childhood experiences (ACES)
- Understanding trauma and child brain development
- Recognise triggers and early warning signs
- Reduce shame and avoid public confrontation
- Use calm, minimal language, use of visuals in moments of dysregulation

Non-punitive behaviour management

At Unity Academy, behaviour is taught explicitly, just like reading or maths.

We do not assume pupils already have the skills needed for emotional regulation, problem-solving or social interaction. All children have personal profile passports, which highlight areas of development.

Pupil passports are created using the developmental pyramid, Individual EHCP targets or professionals assessments (e.g. SaLT), SEMH assessments and academic assessment data.



The developmental pyramid (Williams and Shellenberger, 1996)

Staff consistently:

- Teach and model expected behaviours
- Practise routines and transitions
- Create predictability
- Provide consistency
- Praise and celebrate progress
- Coach pupils through mistakes using reflection/ restorative practice
- Re-teach following incidents (e.g. comic strip conversations, back chaining, social stories, conversations, PSHE activities)

Sanctions are not used as the primary behaviour strategy. Instead, support, reflection and repair are prioritised, through restorative practice. Following any unexpected behaviour incidents, staff will complete reflection activities and may make agreed changes where needed to positively support the child. Any changes made to a child's timetable or placement will be agreed and will be in place to reduce the unexpected behaviour taking place again.

Graduated Response to Behaviour

Unity Academy follows a graduated and supportive response:

Stage 1 – Teach and Support

- Descriptive praise/celebrating success at all levels
- Positive pre-correction and reminders for safe behaviour
- Early identification of triggers – preplanning to needs
- Zones of regulation, regulation tools offered
- Adjustments to tasks or environment
- Adaptive practice

Stage 2 – Regulate and Restore

- De-escalation strategies (adults, communication, environment, sensory support)
- Time with an emotionally available adult
- Co-regulation strategies
- Calm or regulation space/sensory circuit room
- Use of Pastoral support plans
- Time in RESET room and/or work with Inclusion Support Team
- Restorative conversation when ready and appropriate

Stage 3 – Protect and Repair

- Temporary removal from class if safety or learning is compromised (children may access the reset room with adult supervision and support)
- Individual reflection supported by an emotionally available adult
- Repair relationships through targeted interventions and restorative conversations.
- Parent/carer communication where appropriate
- Pastoral support plan.

At all stages, the focus remains on supporting learning and emotional growth, not punishment.

Crisis management and restrictive intervention

Restrictive intervention is only used as a last resort to prevent immediate risk of harm to self, others or property. Decisions to implement a restrictive intervention follow Level 2 Team Teach training, best-interest, and proportionality, in line with DfE guidance. All incidents are recorded, reviewed and shared with parents as identified in the Restrictive Intervention Policy.

Zones of Regulation to support self-regulation





Unity Academy uses the Zones of Regulation as a shared, whole-school language for emotions and behaviour. This is a systematic, cognitive approach to teach self-regulation by capturing feelings and states of alertness in four concrete-coloured zones.

Zones of regulation are accessed and taught progressively throughout the curriculum and are tailored to individual needs where needed.

The Zones of Regulation framework provides strategies for children to become aware of and independently recognise, choose and name their emotions and thereby improves their ability to solve any potential conflict or incidents.

The ZONES of Regulation™ Reproducible E The Zones of Regulation Visual

The ZONES of Regulation™

			
<p>BLUE ZONE</p> <p>Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly</p>	<p>GREEN ZONE</p> <p>Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Relaxed</p>	<p>YELLOW ZONE</p> <p>Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control</p>	<p>RED ZONE</p> <p>Mad/Angry Terrified Elated/Ecstatic Devastated Out of Control</p>

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From *The Zones of Regulation*™ by Leah M. Kuypers • Available at www.socialthinking.com

How Zones Are Used

- Pupils learn to identify their emotional state
- All zones are recognised as valid
- Regulation strategies are explicitly taught
- Adults actively co-regulate with pupils
- Zones are never used for sanctioning
- Language, vocabulary and strategies are progressive from KS1-KS2.

Each classroom provides:

- Visual zones displays
- Staff visual lanyards
- Calm/regulation spaces
- Reflection books, time and activities
- Toolkits (movement, breathing, sensory tools)
- Choice and agency over regulation strategies (Individual to need)

Unity Academy's Inclusion Support Team provides:

- Additional support to the class team
- Additional activities, time, spaces
- Provide access to the reset room
- Provide additional access to the learning cove, galaxy room and immersion room
- Support to reintegrate children back into the class with additional transitional support.

The key message for all children:

“All feelings are okay – not all behaviours are. We can choose tools to help ourselves.”

De-escalation – Proactive and responsive support

De-escalation is the proactive and responsive use of calm, supportive strategies to reduce emotional intensity, prevent escalation, and help individuals regain a sense of safety, control, and regulation in their behaviour.

Proactive regulation support

- Planned sensory/regulation diets
- Predictable routines
- Staff attune and co-regulation
- Zones of regulation (Included on individual positive behaviour plans/ pupil passports)
- Positive phrasing and choices (“First... then...”, “When you’re ready...”) modelled by all staff. (WINE and PACE)
- Teaching and learning being planned and adapted to individual needs, considering potential triggers to behaviour.

Responsive de-escalation support:

- Check-in and co-regulate:
 - Adults remain calm
 - Soft tone of voice
 - Open body language
 - Pupils level
 - Emotion coaching (“I have noticed...” and “I wonder...” language)
 - Sensory input
 - Validation
 - Time
- Reduce demands/adjust environment
 - Simple tasks
 - Simple instruction
 - Remember behaviour is communication
 - Avoid confrontation
 - Adjusting positioning
 - Increase space
 - Reduce noise
 - Pause in work remove expectations
- Offer regulated choices/time-in/zones
 - Refer to zones of regulation (Which zone are you in right now?)

- All zones are normal
 - Offer two clear choices (Would you like a movement break or a quiet task?)
 - Access to regulation activities such as sensory items, breathing cards - prompt regulation tools linked to the zones
 - Use of visuals/lanyard communication
 - Encourage the pupil to choose their regulation tool
 - Use "first... then..." language
 - Guide behaviour safely
- Support moving to a calm space with adult supervision.
 - Inviting the pupil to move to a calm space ("Let's move and go and rest together)
 - Walking alongside
 - Keeping connection
 - Avoiding forced removal unless immediate safety risk
 - Allow pupil to rejoin when ready
 - Plan reintegration positively, celebrating recovery.

Scripts emphasise safety, regulation, and minimal language, avoiding public confrontation or shaming.

Management of restorative and reflective practice

Restorative and reflective practice is an approach that supports individuals to understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility, rebuild relationships, and reflect on choices to learn, repair harm, and promote positive behaviour moving forward.

After any unsafe behaviour, restorative and reflective practice will be completed by the class teacher, an emotionally available adult, with support of the family or by the senior leadership team. How and who this is delivered by will be determined by the needs of the child.

During an incident of unexpected behaviour:

Staff will notice and be curious, aiming to understand what the behaviour is communicating. Examples of this his may include whether the pupil is communicating a need for attention, avoidance, something tangible or requiring sensory support.

Staff will use positive comments and rewards, use in the moment de-escalation strategies whilst giving time, dignity and privacy as required.

Staff will use language such as:

I've noticed... You are looking very sad.
I wonder...If you are feeling worried about
I imagine...that you have lots of energy to get rid of

I wonder how...we can help you to feel happier (safe) should we...take a break, complete a sensory circuit?

If the incident of unexpected behaviour continues:

The member of staff can call for support from the Inclusion Support Team. Often a change of face supports the de-escalation process. The Inclusion Support Team may support/encourage the pupil to move to a quiet space, calm room or the reset room. The Inclusion Support Team may offer an alternative activity, discuss expected behaviour and, once regulated, support the pupil to complete work, identify possible ongoing issues/conflict and reintegrate back to the classroom.

Where incidents escalate and become unsafe, the Senior Leadership Team will provide further support.

After an Incident of unexpected behaviour

When a pupil is calm and regulated, emotionally available adults will engage in reflection time. This is a restorative conversation/activity, focusing on learning, responsibility and repair.

Restorative questions include:

- What happened?
- What were you feeling and thinking?
- Who has been affected?
- How can we make things right?
- What could we try next time?
- How do you feel now?

Restorative practice supports:

- Emotional literacy
- Accountability without blame
- Relationship repair
- A reduction in repeat incidents

Reflection is never rushed and never conducted while a pupil is dysregulated. Parents and families will be informed of significant incidents of unsafe behaviour and any actions taken to support their child to re-regulate.

All unsafe behaviours are reported and recorded by completion of a behaviour log (Abor Platform). These are then assigned to a key member of staff and resolutions/actions are added.

When unsafe behaviour is linked to a safeguarding matter, it is also recorded within safeguarding software (CPOMS) and raised to the DSL/DDSL.

Suspensions and exclusions

Unity Academy follows DfE statutory guidance regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions.

The headteacher of the school can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year) or may be permanently excluded.

Suspensions or exclusions are:

- Rare
- Used only as a last resort
- Never a behaviour management tool

They may only be where:

- There is a serious breach of the behaviour policy; and/or
- A pupil remaining in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of themselves or others

Serious breach examples include:

- Physical assault against a pupil
- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult
- Use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item.
- Persistent bullying
- Racist abuse
- Abuse against sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- Abuse relating to disability
- Significant damage to school property or equipment

Prohibited items:

These include but are not limited to:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol, illegal drugs, Tabacco, cigarettes.
- Stolen items
- Fireworks
- Violent or abusive images
- Any item/article that is likely to be used to cause harm, personal injury or damage to the property or a person.

All decisions:

- Are proportionate and lawful
- Take full account of SEND and SEMH needs
- Follow The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust's Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
- Include reintegration planning

Restorative reintegration meetings are standard practice including families and other external agencies who may need to attend.

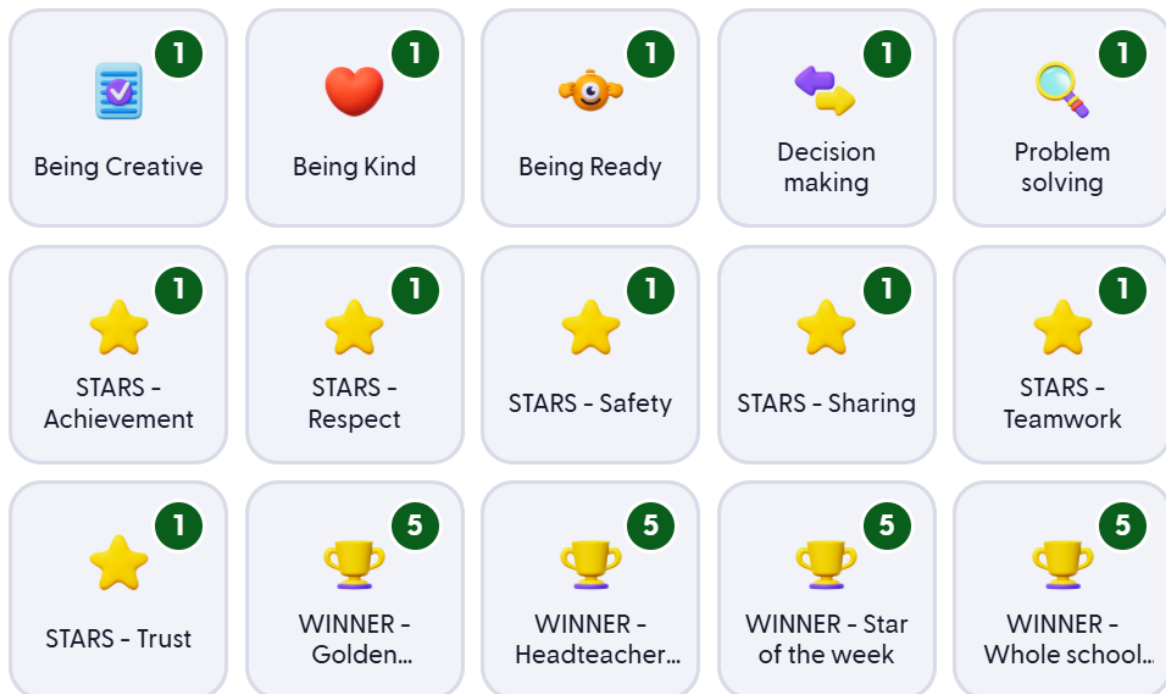
Positive recognition and celebration of success

Expected behaviours are aligned with The Rivers C.of E. Academy Trust's STARS values (Sharing, Trust, Achievement, Respect, Safety) are consistently noticed and celebrated.





Positive recognition through ClassDojo

Positive recognition is provided through our Dojo points system. These are given daily to pupils for the following reasons. All pupils should aim to gain one dojo point per session (a min of 5 a day). More points can be awarded when pupils are showing exceptional safe behaviours in the class and the wider school environment.



Dojo points will earn milestone awards:

Points	Awards	
25	Red Merit Award	★
75	Yellow Merit Award	★
150	Blue Merit Award	★

250	Green Merit Award	
400	Bronze Award (Headteacher postcard home)	
550	Silver Award (Headteacher postcard home)	
700	Gold Award (Hot chocolate with the head teacher)	
850	Platinum Award (Headteacher prize)	
1000	Diamond Award (Headteacher prize)	
1200	Sapphire Award (Headteacher prize)	

Any pupil with more than 700 dojo points in the academic school year, will be entered into the end of year prize raffle (including prize vouchers).

Celebration of success

There are a number of opportunities for successes to be celebrated:

- **STAR of the week** – Class teams will select a star of the week, this will be presented at the end of the week assembly. This will be a pupil who has shown exceptional progress in a subject area, activity or may have achieved more than 25 dojo points in the week.
- **Headteachers award** – The Headteacher will select a pupil who has shown the stars values and school mission throughout their week.
- **Praise assembly** – Staff will share the individual success/ progress of pupils and staff in the end of week assembly.
- **Newsletter spotlight** – Pupils achievements will be shared in ½ termly or weekly newsletters, shared with families and the wider community.
- **Stickers and postcards** – Stickers and postcards will be rewarded on individual work or sent home.
- **Treasure Chest** – Each week, stars of the day, stars of the week, Golden dust pan, headteachers star of the week and all pupils with a weekly score of 25 dojo points or more will be entered into the treasure chest draw.
- **Golden Dustpan** – Structure play award which is awarded weekly to a pupil who has shown progress in structured play.

- **Individualised achievement books** – This is for pupils to share their WOW moments in a book. Over time this allows pupils to build a sense of achievements and build confidence in their learning.

Recognition is specific, frequent, shared and meaningful.

WOW and class recognition

Each classroom displays a WOW Board to celebrate:

- Positive learning attitudes
- Regulation progress
- Effort and perseverance
- Demonstration of the STARS values

Work and achievements showcased on WOW Boards help pupils:

- Build pride in success
- Develop positive learner identity
- See themselves as capable and valued

Individual pupils may be provided with an individual WOW portfolio/ achievement booklet.

House points system

The house system at Unity helps pupils feel that they are part of something bigger than themselves, providing a sense of belonging.

All Pupils belong to a named group with a shared identity, colour or symbol.



House	Our house and its history:	Our house identity:
BRINTON	<p>Brinton Park A major green space in Kidderminster. The park was gifted to the town in 1887 by John Brinton, a local MP and philanthropist, to provide free recreation for working families</p>	 Celebration and Inclusion
STOUR	<p>River Stour It runs through Kidderminster. It powered mills, weaving and carpet manufacture, making Kidderminster an international centre of industry.</p>	 Hard work and resilience
WYRE	<p>Wyre forest Is one of the largest remaining areas of ancient woodland in England. It is just north of Kidderminster.</p>	 Renewal and wellbeing

- Success is collective, not just individual
- Promotes cooperation across age groups
- Celebrates shared experiences
- Children feel noticed and valued even when progress is small
- Creates predictability, positive experiences

This sense of belonging is especially important for pupils who have:

- experienced exclusion or disrupted attachments
- low self-esteem or fragile school identity
- SEMH or SEND needs

The house system:

- reinforces expected behaviours
- celebrates effort, regulation and repair
- makes positive behaviour visible and gives routine

House point celebrations and activities:

- Every week house points will be shared in assembly.
- Every ½ term house groups will take part in an internal house competition.
- Every term house groups will take part in an end of term house competition (e.g. sports day, easter egg hunt, Christmas card comp) and an inclusive reward trip/reward offer.

Personalisation and SEND/EHCPs

Unity Academy serves pupils with a range of Special Educational Needs including many pupils with complex SEMH profiles. Reasonable adjustments are embedded, and plans are individualised:

Pupil Passports: summarise needs, interests, dislikes, triggers, regulation tools, communication preferences, and proactive strategies.

Individual positive behaviour plans: outline early warning signs, de-escalation steps, withdrawal plans, and restrictive intervention criteria where necessary.

When a pupil has an EHCP, behaviour/regulation targets and provision are set out in Section E and F. These are reviewed at least termly, with the Annual Review process informing next steps and reintegration planning, meeting DfE expectations around responding to behaviour of pupils with SEND.

Unity's personalisation and reintegration focus is consistent with the Rivers C.of E. Academy Trust's inclusive ethos.

Parent/Carer Engagement

Unity Academy strives to have an open and honest relationship with all pupils. We aim to do this through a number of different mechanisms:

Induction:

A robust induction will include the following:

- Welcome meeting and school tour
- Home-school agreement
- Identification of communication preferences
- Permissions for celebrations

Partnership:

Continuation of a strong home-school communication culture are achieved through:

- Regular positive communication via Dojo or telephone call updates
- Parent workshops including access to regulation toolkits
- Invitations to assemblies, events and showcases

Same-day contact will take place for significant unexpected behaviour incidents and will include collaborative planning with transparent next steps. This includes where a suspension is being considered, with rights explained per the Suspensions and Exclusions Policy.

Concerns and Complaints

Should a parent/carer have they should in the first instance discuss this with the class teacher.

If concerns persist, parents/carers should discuss this with the Headteacher.

Should the concerns still not be resolved, the matter may then be raised in accordance with The Rivers C.of E. Academy Trust Complaints Policy which is published on the trust's website.