



Relationship and Engagement Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with;

The Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Drugs, Tobacco & Alcohol Policy

Uniform Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Suspensions and Exclusion Policy

Restrictive Intervention Policy

The school follows the DfE guidance [Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/searching-screening-and-confiscation-at-school)
(www.gov.uk)

Date adopted by the Governing Body: 30th September 2026

To be reviewed: September 2027

Staff Responsible: Tom Cain, Assistant Headteacher

Link Governor: Jane Branson, Chair of Governors

Vision Statement

We are Willingdon

We are a united, vibrant community which demonstrates personal excellence in all that we do. Learning at Willingdon transforms lives by igniting curiosity and expecting the very best from staff and students alike. We value opportunities, aiming for success today to prepare for challenges and opportunities tomorrow. We are respectful, honest and courteous to empower each other on our unique learning journeys. We look after ourselves and each other, and show empathy, respect and compassion to all people and our environment along the way. We encourage tolerance, resilience and reflection, which in turn allows everyone to make progress every lesson. We work together as a harmonious community to be the very best versions of ourselves.

This makes us Willingdon

Ethos

At Willingdon Community School, we aim to develop, in all our students, key values which we consider contribute to the achievement of what we refer to as, Personal Excellence.

Ambition

To strive to do your best on all occasions. Take on new challenges and challenge yourself to reach the highest possible standards and be personally successful.

Respect

To respect and value all members of our community, recognising and celebrating our differences. Respect ourselves, valuing what we can each bring to our community.

Compassion

Understand the needs of others and support those who sometimes need our help. Contribute to charitable work which supports those less well-off in the world.

Courtesy

Be well mannered in all situations, displaying the basic courtesies that we all value. Greet those you work with regularly; be particularly welcoming and polite to visitors and show appreciation for those who support and work closely with you.

Honesty

Always be honest, even when it may appear difficult. Be honest to yourself - know your strengths and your weaknesses.

Relationship and Engagement Policy

A belonging-focused, relationship based policy that prioritises the ethos and personal excellence values of Willingdon Community School's Behaviour for Learning approach.

1. Purpose and Ethos

This policy sets out our school's relationship based approach to behaviour, engagement and inclusion. It prioritises the core ethos of our Behaviour for Learning approach by maintaining high expectations, clear routines, a calm and purposeful environment, consistent adult responses, clear teaching of behaviour, and a strong focus on pupils being ready to learn. At the same time, it reframes the policy through the language of belonging, participation, self-regulation and relational practice.

The purpose of the policy is to create a culture in which every pupil feels safe, known, valued and able to belong, and in which adults work intentionally to build the relationships, routines and learning conditions that allow all pupils to thrive. The policy therefore addresses disengagement, internal truancy, passivity, dysregulation and defiance through high expectations alongside high support.

This policy is written to align with:

- the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework in use from November 2025, including the evaluation areas for inclusion, attendance and behaviour, personal development and leadership and governance;
- the 2026 schools' white paper, Every Child Achieving and Thriving, which sets out the government's ambition for broader school experiences, stronger inclusion and better engagement with children and communities;
- the 2026 SEND reform proposals, Putting Children and Young People First, which emphasise early, fair support and stronger shared accountability across partners;
- the continuing principles of the 2023 SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, particularly early intervention, inclusive mainstream practice and strategic use of alternative provision;
- the statutory Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance published in July 2026.

Where this policy references 2026 SEND reforms, it does so in a reform-ready way: current statutory duties remain rooted in the SEND Code of Practice, equality duties and existing exclusion law, while the policy also anticipates likely implementation of National Inclusion Standards, Individual Support Plans and enhanced specialist access.

2. Core Principles

- Belonging comes first: pupils are more likely to engage, regulate and participate when they feel safe, respected and included.

- Relationships are the foundation: strong, consistent relationships between adults and pupils underpin behaviour, attendance, motivation and trust.
- Behaviour is communication: behaviour may communicate need, anxiety, frustration, overload, social difficulty or unmet expectation and must be understood as well as addressed.
- Engagement is a shared responsibility: all staff are responsible for creating the conditions in which pupils can participate successfully.
- High expectations remain central: a relationship-based policy is not allowing complete freedom to break the rules. Adults maintain firm boundaries, routines and accountability but with compassion and keeping respect.
- Repair matters: when things go wrong, the priority is to restore safety, repair relationships, secure learning and move forward positively and harmoniously.

3. Personal Excellence, Behaviour for Learning and Belonging Values

The school's values remain central to this policy and continue to underpin behaviour for learning:

- Ambition - we help pupils believe they can succeed and participate fully in learning and school life.
- Respect - we model care for self, others, difference, environment and community.
- Courtesy - we teach the everyday relational behaviours that build trust and positive interaction.
- Compassion - we notice need, respond thoughtfully and support one another.
- Honesty - we encourage reflection, accountability and truthful repair when harm has occurred.

These values are not simply expectations placed upon pupils; they are commitments shared by staff, pupils and families. They also reinforce our view that adults teach, model and reinforce the behaviours that enable pupils to learn well and contribute positively.

4. What Belonging and Behaviour for Learning Look Like in Practice

Belonging is built when pupils experience:

- predictable routines and calm environments;
- warm, respectful greetings and consistent adult presence;
- teaching that is accessible, adaptive and purposeful;
- recognition for effort, improvement, participation and kindness;
- fairness, dignity and proportionality when mistakes are made;
- opportunities to contribute, lead, be heard and then repair.

Behaviour for learning is strengthened when adults:

- teach routines explicitly rather than assuming them;

- set clear expectations for participation, listening, transitions and conduct;
- use calm, consistent and relational language;
- notice and respond early to signs of withdrawal, frustration or dysregulation;
- maintain boundaries without shaming, escalating or disconnecting from pupils;
- work collaboratively with families, pastoral teams, SEND staff and specialists.

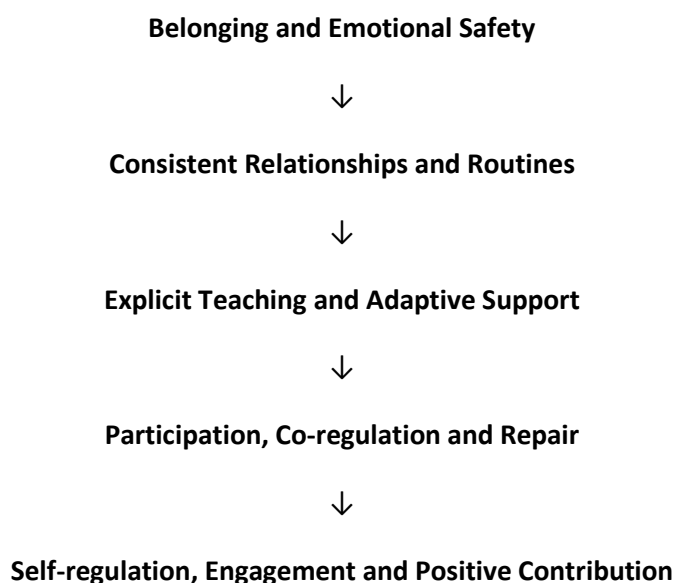
5. The School's Vision of Relationships, Engagement and Behaviour for Learning

The school's vision is based on the belief that engagement and behaviour are taught through relationships, routines and well-planned learning. Pupils are not expected simply to accept; they are supported to understand expectations, practice habits and develop self-regulation over time. This preserves the Willingdon ethos of Behaviour for Learning while strengthening the language of belonging and inclusion.

Key features of the school's pedagogy are:

- explicit teaching of routines, transitions, participation and relational expectations;
- high-quality adaptive teaching so that learning is accessible and pupils are not set up to fail;
- active engagement strategies that reduce passivity and increase participation;
- co-regulation, where adults first help pupils become calm enough to think before expecting reflection or correction;
- restorative practice, where harm is addressed through accountability, empathy and repair;
- consistent language and responses across the school so that pupils experience fairness and predictability.

5.1 Visual Relationship and Engagement Model



6. Universal Expectations and Everyday Practice

All pupils are entitled to a calm, respectful and purposeful environment. Universal practice secures this through coaching time, assemblies, coach interactions, classroom routines, corridor routines and consistent adult modelling. This aligns with the current inspection framework, which evaluates inclusion and attendance and behaviour, and with the 2026 reform direction that expects a strong universal inclusive offer in mainstream schools.

6.1 Universal Expectations for Pupils

- be ready to learn and participate;
- treat others with respect and dignity;
- communicate appropriately and listen carefully;
- respond to teacher friendly;
- take responsibility for repair, where harm has occurred.

6.2 Universal Expectations for Adults

- greet pupils positively and establish calm starts;
- teach and reteach routines and expectations;
- use adaptive teaching and inclusive scaffolds;
- notice and respond early to signs of disengagement;
- separate the child from the behaviour and preserve dignity;
- follow through consistently, calmly and relationally.

7. Recognition, Encouragement and Positive Culture

Recognition is central to a relationship-based culture. The school deliberately notices and reinforces effort, improvement, participation, attendance and when they represent personal excellence in all that they do. This supports the school's longstanding Behaviour for Learning ethos by reinforcing the learning habits and attitudes that enable success.

Recognition may include:

- reward points;
- specific verbal praise linked to values and effort;
- positive contact home;
- coaching acknowledgements and recognition;
- celebration through assemblies, displays and school systems;
- opportunities for leadership, trust and contribution.

8. Adaptive Teaching, Inclusion and SEND

This policy recognises that engagement and behaviour are closely connected to access, communication and regulation. Some pupils require adaptation so that expectations remain both ambitious and achievable. This is consistent with current SEND duties and with the 2026 reform direction, which emphasises a stronger universal offer, adaptive teaching, calm environments and earlier support.

Adaptive approaches may include:

- chunked instructions, modelling and processing time;
- visual supports, clear timetables and pre-teaching;
- structured transitions and reduced cognitive load;
- sensory adjustments, movement breaks and regulation support;
- targeted adult support, flexible grouping or short check-ins;
- strengths-based language and clear rehearsal of routines.

For pupils with SEND, particularly those with SEMH, communication and interaction needs or neurodivergent profiles, support is aligned to SEN Support plans and EHCP outcomes where relevant. The school uses a graduated approach and avoids interpreting unmet need as simple non-compliance. Reasonable adjustments and best endeavours must be evident before decisions about escalation, suspension or exclusion are taken.

8.1 Reform Readiness for 2026 SEND Proposals

- The school's graduated systems are designed so that they can align with future Individual Support Plans should these be introduced.
- The policy supports a universal, targeted and specialist model that maps well onto the proposed reforms and likely National Inclusion Standards.
- The school will continue to strengthen partnership working with families and specialists, anticipating the proposed Experts at Hand model and enhanced shared accountability across education, health and local partners.

9. Graduated Relationship and Engagement Framework

A tiered framework ensures that the response to need is proportionate, supportive and increasingly personalised where required.

- Tier 1 - Universal Belonging: build connection, participation and shared expectations through coaching curriculum, assemblies, routines, adaptive teaching, recognition and relational correction.
- Tier 2 - Targeted Support: re-engage pupils showing early signs of difficulty through mentoring, small-group work, family contact, SEND/pastoral support and attendance or engagement plans.
- Tier 3 - Intensive Relationship and Reintegration Support: provide enhanced, personalised support and restore stability through 1:1 support, tailored timetables, external professionals, alternative provision, restorative planning and reintegration.

10. Tier 2 – Targeted Support and Re-engagement

Where pupils begin to show signs of disengagement, internal truancy, repeated conflict, low-level defiance or emotional dysregulation, the priority is early relational intervention. Targeted support aims to reconnect the pupil to school, strengthen trust and remove barriers to

participation. This reflects both current good practice and the 2026 reform direction towards structured, clearly recorded targeted support.

Targeted work may include:

- Ambition and Motivation support for passive or internally truant pupils;
- Respect and Relationships work for pupils experiencing peer conflict or belonging issues;
- Courtesy and Communication interventions for pupils needing support with speech, language or social communication;
- Compassion and Empathy interventions for pupils with SEMH needs or relational difficulty;
- Honesty and Accountability work that helps pupils reflect, repair and take responsibility without disengaging from school.

Interventions are tracked for impact and reviewed through pastoral, SEND and inclusion systems. Pupils and families are included in planning wherever possible.

11. Tier 3 - Intensive Support, Alternative Provision and Reintegration

When concerns are persistent or complex, support becomes more personalised. The aim is to restore engagement, strengthen regulation, reduce risk and secure a sustainable pathway. Intensive support is not a punitive stage; it is an enhanced offer designed to stabilise and re-engage.

This may include:

- 1:1 mentoring or key adult support;
- tailored or adapted timetables;
- restorative meetings and structured reintegration planning;
- family meetings and multi-agency working;
- therapeutic, counselling or specialist intervention;
- strategic use of alternative provision where it offers a better route to engagement and progression.

11.1 Alternative Provision and Partner Offer

- East Sussex Skills Academy - vocational alternative provision with core GCSEs and Level 1/2 qualifications;
- East Sussex College Group - vocational and progression pathways to reduce the risk of NEET;
- Achieve Course - Year 11 focusing on preparation for post-16 including English and maths, online learning and work experience, alongside the Year 10 multi-vocational two day release pathway;
- East Sussex Academy - dual placements and outreach support focused on behaviour regulation, re-engagement and reintegration;
- Plumpton Agriculture College - land-based vocational pathways;
- St Catherine's College Motor Vehicle Provision - industry-based motor vehicle and engineering qualification;

- TASS, CACE, YJS and counselling services - targeted support addressing behaviour, risk, exploitation, wellbeing and trauma.

Where alternative provision is used, there will be a clear rationale, success criteria, review points and a clear plan for reintegration or onward transition. Alternative provision is not used as a substitute for appropriate SEND support. It is used strategically, in line with the 2023 AP improvement plan and the 2026 exclusions guidance.

12. Responding to Difficulties: Relational Correction and Repair

When pupils struggle, adults respond in ways that protect dignity, maintain safety and promote learning. Consequences may still be required, but they are used as part of a broader relational process rather than as an end in themselves. This keeps faith with the school's Behaviour for Learning ethos by retaining clear boundaries and accountability, while strengthening the language of repair and inclusion.

Effective relational responses include:

- quiet, calm correction and redirection;
- restating expectations clearly and respectfully;
- offering choice within boundaries;
- brief regulation time where needed;
- follow-up restorative conversation once the pupil is calm;
- repairing harm through apology, restitution, reflection or restorative action;
- using sanctions proportionately where needed, without humiliation or unnecessary escalation.

The school avoids public shaming, punitive escalation for its own sake and responses that can damage connection with the pupil. Where patterns persist, the answer is not necessarily more sanction, but deeper assessment of need, relationship, curriculum access and support.

13. Searches, Screening, Confiscation and Serious Safeguarding Concerns

Where a serious safeguarding concern arises between pupils, the school will respond with care, clarity and urgency, always keeping the safety, dignity and wellbeing of every child at the centre of its actions. The school will follow its safeguarding procedures and the guidance of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, recognising that some situations require a safeguarding response as well as, or instead of, a disciplinary one. Where necessary, the school may use its powers of screening, searching and confiscation in line with current DfE guidance, taking care to ensure that any action is lawful, proportionate, respectful and sensitive to safeguarding, privacy, SEND, vulnerability and reasonable adjustment. Where children need to be kept apart for safety reasons, the school will carefully write a risk reduction plan and consider the most appropriate response, including pastoral support, safeguarding-led separation, reintegration planning or, where lawful and necessary, suspension in line with current statutory guidance. Throughout this process, the school will work to protect all children from further harm, communicate

appropriately with parents/carers and relevant agencies, keep clear records, and ensure that every child involved is supported to feel safe, respected and able to continue in education successfully.

Where a student's mobile phone is involved in an incident, the confiscated device will need collecting from a responsible adult, parent or guardian. Following the guidance from the DfE, Willingdon Community is operating as a phone-free site for students during the school day and as such confiscated items will need collecting. To avoid the use of mobile phones in school, the expectation of students is to use Yondr pouches to ensure that mobile phones are locked away and inaccessible during the school day.

14. Monitoring Relationships, Engagement and Readiness to Learn

Monitoring is used to identify when a student may need additional structure, encouragement, support or intervention in order to engage successfully with school life. Monitoring systems are intended to be supportive, useful in identifying concerns and purposeful. They help staff and families identify patterns early, strengthen communication, celebrate progress and put the right support in place before concerns escalate.

Monitoring should always be used in a way that preserves dignity, promotes reflection and helps students experience a positive route back to success. It should not be used simply as a mechanism for punishment, but as part of a broader graduated response that combines high expectations with high support.

14.1 Monitoring Systems

- An amber card may be used where a student is beginning to show repeated difficulties with engagement, routines, conduct or readiness to learn. The amber card will usually contain up to three clear targets, agreed with the student, which are monitored over the course of the week. This allows the student and their Coach to review progress regularly, usually at break and/or lunchtime, and helps maintain close adult contact, encouragement and family communication. The amber card is designed to support early re-engagement and prevent further escalation.
- A red or red plus card may be used where concerns are more persistent or where a student requires closer daily monitoring and a more intensive level of pastoral oversight. In these circumstances, the student's progress will be monitored by the Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, alongside appropriate communication with home and coordinated intervention.
- A white department card may be used where concerns are specific to one subject area. This allows the class teacher and Head of Department to monitor targets, engagement and progress within that subject, while also providing timely support and subject-specific intervention where required.
- The school may also use golden time, attendance, progress and homework cards to recognise and strengthen positive engagement, particularly where a student is making every effort to improve, regulate their behaviour, maintain attendance or respond positively to support.

These systems are intended to promote pro-social experience, motivation and a stronger sense of success and belonging.

14.2 Principles Underpinning Monitoring

- be used early, before concerns become entrenched;
- involve the student in understanding targets and next steps;
- include communication with parents/carers so that support is joined up between home and school;
- sit alongside pastoral, restorative and adaptive support, not replace it;
- be reviewed regularly so that progress is recognised and intervention remains proportionate;
- help staff understand patterns and barriers to engagement, including where further pastoral, SEND or therapeutic support may be needed.

14.3 Review and Next Steps

Where monitoring shows improvement, students should be recognised and supported to move back to lower levels of monitoring as soon as appropriate. Where concerns continue, the school may strengthen support through additional pastoral intervention, family meetings, APDR (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) processes, departmental planning, targeted mentoring or other appropriate graduated responses. The purpose of monitoring is always to help students feel more successful, more connected and more ready to learn.

15. Support, Intervention and Consequences

The school will respond to concerns about behaviour, engagement or safety through a graduated, proportionate and relational approach. The purpose of intervention is to protect learning, maintain safety, support reflection, enable repair and promote successful re-engagement with school life. Consequences may be necessary; however, they will be used as part of a wider process of support, accountability and reintegration, rather than as an end in themselves.

In determining the most appropriate response, the school will consider the nature, seriousness, frequency and impact of the behaviour, together with any known vulnerability, safeguarding concern, SEND, SEMH need, therapeutic plan and pastoral support plan. Staff are expected to begin with the least intrusive effective response wherever possible and to escalate only where support, redirection and restorative approaches have not been sufficient, or where the seriousness of the incident requires a more immediate response.

15.1 Interventions and Consequences

- Low-level relational intervention, including a reminder, redirection, 1:1 conversation or supportive check-in, where this is sufficient to help a student regulate and return successfully to learning.
- A same-day break-time reset or call back, normally up to ten minutes, to allow for restorative conversation, reflection on impact and a positive return to learning.

- Curriculum or homework intervention, including supported completion of work at break, lunchtime or after school, where the concern relates to non-completion of classwork or homework and the priority is to restore engagement with learning.
- A formal detention or after-school intervention of an appropriate length, where further time is required for reflection, repair, support or completion of missed work. Parents/carers will be informed in line with school procedures.
- Restorative detention or reflective intervention, where the purpose is to support the student to understand what has gone wrong, recognise the impact on others and plan a more successful return to lessons.
- Escalated detention or formal follow-up intervention where a student fails to attend an initial detention, or where repeated concerns indicate that further structured support and accountability are required.
- Formal investigation and associated intervention, including liaison with external agencies where appropriate, where the school is dealing with serious incidents such as bullying, discriminatory behaviour, malicious allegation, harmful conduct, substance-related issues or other safeguarding matters.
- Internal suspension, used where the school judges that a student requires structured separation from peers and learning spaces, but where it is appropriate to retain the student in school under supervised provision. This will normally include reflective work, restorative planning and communication with parents/carers.
- A short-term directed placement or next-day placement in another school's internal provision, where this is considered necessary to prevent further escalation, strengthen the intervention and support a more effective reset.
- A suspension, authorised by the Headteacher or an appropriately delegated senior leader, where behaviour is sufficiently serious to justify temporary removal from school. Suspension will be used only where necessary and will be followed by a readmission or reintegration meeting with parents/carers.
- A directed placement at another school or setting for a fixed period, where this is considered to be the most appropriate way of securing safety, support and re-engagement.
- An extended directed placement, including placement at another school, East Sussex Academy or the East Sussex Skills Academy, where longer-term intervention is required and where this may support a successful onward transition.
- Intervention through East Sussex Academy, including outreach support or a part-time or full-time educational placement, where this is required to support regulation, engagement and continuation in education.
- Direction to alternative provision, where this is judged to be the most appropriate means of maintaining education, reducing risk and supporting a student's needs more effectively (see Appendix A).
- Permanent exclusion, which will only be used in response to a very serious one-off incident or persistent serious breaches of policy where allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education, welfare or safety of others, and where all other appropriate options have been considered or exhausted.

15.2 Principles Underpinning Intervention

- be timely, proportionate and purposeful;
- be used alongside support so that students are helped to reflect, repair and re-engage;
- be recorded and communicated appropriately in line with school procedures;
- be implemented and aware of SEND, safeguarding or vulnerability and any agreed support or therapeutic plans;
- be followed, where necessary, by structured reintegration planning so that the student can return to learning with positivity, calmness and support.

16. Suspension, Exclusion and Reintegration

The school's ambition is to build a culture in which suspension and exclusion are rarely necessary because students are supported to belong, engage and regulate successfully. However, in line with the July 2026 statutory guidance, the school recognises that suspension and permanent exclusion remain lawful disciplinary tools and may sometimes be necessary to protect safety, uphold standards and maintain a calm, safe and supportive environment.

Permanent exclusion remains a last resort. Decisions are made lawfully, proportionately and with careful consideration of safeguarding, SEND, equality duties, previous support, reasonable adjustments, the views of relevant staff and the wider needs of the school community. The school does not adopt a "no permanent exclusion" approach as an end in itself, but instead works to create conditions in which exclusion is less likely to be needed.

Where a suspension occurs, the school will prioritise a relational reintegration process involving pupil voice, parent or carer contact, review of support, clear next steps and renewed connection to learning. The policy also supports the lawful and appropriate use of off-site direction, managed moves and alternative provision where these are in the pupil's best interests and used as part of a planned support strategy.

16.1 Procedural Expectations Following Suspension or Exclusion

- Parents or carers will be informed without delay of suspension or permanent exclusion decisions, and the school will meet all statutory notification requirements.
- Where required by guidance, the Local Authority, social worker and/or Virtual School Head will also be notified without delay.
- Reintegration planning will be documented and will consider attendance, SEND, safeguarding, curriculum access and reasonable adjustments.
- Governors will receive relevant information to fulfil their duties under exclusion guidance and to review patterns and groups affected by exclusion. This will be quality assured at full governor meetings (FGBs) and at the governor vulnerable learners review group (VLRG).

17. Staff Development, Professional Expectations and Responsibilities

To implement this policy well, staff require shared understanding, consistency and confidence. Professional development therefore includes relational practice, restorative approaches, adaptive teaching, trauma-informed practice, de-escalation, attachment awareness, equality

and cultural, and understanding behaviour as communication. This also supports the likely direction of 2026 reform, which places increased emphasis on workforce development so that all staff can meet need more effectively in mainstream settings.

Our approach is rooted in the belief that students are most likely to engage positively when they feel safe, known, respected and supported. We therefore combine high expectations with high support, recognising that students may need different levels of guidance, adjustment or intervention in order to meet shared expectations successfully.

17.1 Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school's approach to relationships, engagement, inclusion and safety is clearly defined, consistently implemented and regularly reviewed. Governors must ensure that the school maintains a calm, safe and respectful environment in which all students can feel that they belong, engage positively and succeed.

- ensure this policy is reviewed regularly, approved and made available to staff, students, parents and carers;
- ensure the school promotes a calm, safe and inclusive environment in which all students can learn and feel valued;
- monitor the implementation and impact of the policy, including patterns in attendance, engagement, suspension, exclusion and reintegration;
- ensure that no group of students is unfairly disadvantaged by the implementation of the policy and that due regard is given to equality, safeguarding and SEND duties;
- hold leaders to account for the quality of relational practice, inclusion, staff training and equitable support;
- ensure serious consequences such as suspension and permanent exclusion are used lawfully, proportionately and only as a last resort.

17.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the overall leadership of the school's Relationship and Engagement Policy and for ensuring that the culture, routines, expectations and support systems reflect the school's values and ethos.

- lead the consistent implementation of this policy across the school;
- ensure that high expectations, strong relationships and inclusive practice are embedded in daily school life;
- ensure that students with SEND, SEMH needs or other vulnerabilities are supported appropriately within the school's resources;
- monitor the use of suspension, exclusion, internal suspension, directed placement and alternative provision to ensure they are used appropriately and proportionately;
- ensure allegations against staff are fully investigated and that malicious allegations are also dealt with fairly and lawfully;
- ensure that staff, students and parents understand the school's expectations and the support available to help students engage successfully.

17.3 Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for translating the Relationship and Engagement Policy into consistent whole-school practice. Senior leaders must ensure that the school's systems for relationships, routines, inclusion, wellbeing, engagement and safety work together coherently so that students experience both clear boundaries and strong support.

- ensure the policy reflects current practice and that any updates are communicated clearly to staff, students and families;
- monitor the impact of the policy on different groups of students, including disadvantaged students, students with SEND and those with protected characteristics;
- quality assure the use of reasonable adjustments and inclusive responses when implementing the policy;
- ensure staff receive regular training in relational practice, restorative approaches, nurture, adaptive teaching, trauma-informed practice, de-escalation and safeguarding;
- promote the six principles of nurture, inclusive practice, Personal Excellence and respectful community expectations across the school;
- monitor attendance, engagement and behaviour daily and oversee interventions for students at risk of disengagement or escalation;
- communicate with parents, carers and external agencies and coordinate higher-level support or consequences, including alternative provision, internal suspension, suspension and reintegration where appropriate;
- make recommendations to the Headteacher regarding the ongoing development of school systems for relationships, engagement and inclusion.

17.4 Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Leaders

Heads of Year provide strategic pastoral oversight and ensure that concerns about disengagement, conflict, emotional difficulty or repeated disruption are addressed through coordinated, supportive and proportionate intervention. They play a central role in family partnership, reintegration and targeted support planning.

- monitor behaviour, attendance and engagement daily across the year group;
- support teaching and support staff where concerns exceed classroom level or have become persistent;
- communicate with parents and carers where issues have escalated or where additional support is needed;
- use monitoring tools such as red behaviour cards, internal support arrangements and targeted year-group interventions where appropriate;
- make relevant referrals and establish Additional Needs Plans, Pastoral Needs Plans or APDRs (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) where concerns suggest unmet need, dysregulation or vulnerability;
- liaise closely with inclusion and SEND staff to ensure that support and provision are appropriate and consistently implemented;
- lead reintegration after suspension, internal suspension, directed placement or other significant incidents, ensuring that support, repair and expectations are clear;

- use data and professional judgement to balance high expectations with equitable support.

17.5 Heads of Department

Heads of Department lead the culture of engagement and readiness to learn within their subject areas. They are responsible for ensuring that curriculum delivery, classroom routines and responses to difficulty work together so that students can participate successfully and staff feel supported.

- support teachers and students with concerns relating to engagement, disruption or anti-social behaviour within their curriculum areas;
- monitor classroom behaviour across the department and use this information to strengthen consistency, support and inclusive classroom practice;
- ensure agreed systems and consequences are applied appropriately and fairly while also considering changes to teaching, curriculum access or support where needed;
- communicate with parents and carers where concerns are rooted in a specific subject area and persist despite classroom-level strategies;
- use departmental behaviour cards and interventions to monitor a student's progress within the subject area;
- support subject-based reintegration after removal, repeated disruption or return from suspension so that students can re-enter learning with clarity and support;
- reintegration should take place within 48 hours;
- work closely with Heads of Year, Coaches, pastoral leaders and SEND staff to ensure joined-up support.

17.6 All Staff

All staff share responsibility for creating a calm, safe, respectful and purposeful environment in which students feel known, included and ready to learn. Staff are expected to combine high expectations with high support, using consistent routines, positive relationships, adaptive practice and restorative approaches so that all students can engage successfully.

- model and uphold the Personal Excellence values and the relational ethos that underpin this policy;
- create and protect a calm, respectful and purposeful environment in which students can feel safe, included and ready to learn;
- challenge and record behaviours appropriately, follow agreed procedures consistently, and apply consequences in line with the policy while also considering context, support and reasonable adjustment;
- use restorative conversations and relational language to help students reflect, repair and move forward successfully;
- maintain positive relationships for students and seek to provide pro-social experiences that promote positive engagement and relationships;
- use positive reinforcement in the first instance and actively reward effort, readiness, kindness, resilience and engagement;

- preserve students' dignity and self-esteem, even when correcting behaviour, avoiding shame and unnecessary escalation;
- use positive language, redirection and support strategies that help students return to success;
- teach students the social, emotional and relational skills they need in order to engage well, regulate effectively and contribute positively to school life;
- accept that relationships, engagement and behaviour are everyone's responsibility and contribute to consistency across the school.

17.7 Teaching Staff

Teaching staff are central to the school's approach because they create the everyday classroom conditions in which students either feel ready and able to engage or encounter barriers to participation. They therefore play a key role in promoting readiness to learn, adaptive teaching, relational correction and restorative re-engagement.

- apply the school policies consistently while maintaining a calm, respectful and relational classroom environment;
- plan and prepare learning that is developmentally appropriate, suitably challenging and adapted where necessary so that all students can access learning and succeed;
- create a safe learning environment where students feel comfortable to engage, take part and develop socially and emotionally as well as academically;
- use meet and greet, Do Now tasks and clear routines to secure calm starts and purposeful engagement;
- challenge and record concerns around behaviour, uniform, mobile technology and lesson conduct using agreed systems, while using support and adaptation where needed;
- use restorative conversations within 48 hours of the incident as possible to enable reflection, understanding and repair;
- avoid relying on repeated consequences without considering whether seating, adaptation, relationship work, parental communication, behaviour cards or SEND support may be needed;
- communicate with parents and carers, Heads of Department, Heads of Year and relevant pastoral or SEND staff where issues persist;
- participate in CPD relating to relationships, adaptive teaching, engagement and inclusion, and request support where necessary.

17.8 Coaches

Coaches are key adults in helping students feel known, valued and connected. They provide regular relational contact and are central to helping students settle, maintain routines, develop organisation and access support early when difficulties begin to emerge.

- take an interest in each coachee as an individual and develop an understanding of their strengths, needs, circumstances and barriers to engagement;
- support students' sense of belonging, identity and readiness for the day by checking uniform, equipment, organisation and Yondr expectations;

- respond when students need additional academic or pastoral support and liaise with Heads of Year, pastoral leaders, teaching staff and SEND staff where appropriate;
- monitor student behaviour, attendance, reward patterns and pastoral concerns, using agreed systems such as behaviour cards where appropriate;
- provide regular positive feedback and recognition, while ensuring this is done sensitively and promotes pro-social experience for all students;
- communicate with parents and carers so that support at home and in school is joined up and constructive.

17.9 Students

Students are expected to contribute positively to the Willingdon community by showing ambition, respect, compassion, courtesy and honesty. They have the right to feel safe, supported and included, and also the responsibility to behave in ways that help others feel safe, respected and able to learn. The school recognises that some students may need additional support to meet expectations and is committed to helping them succeed.

- be ready to learn, engage positively in schoolwork and seek help where needed;
- behave respectfully towards staff, peers and the school environment, both on and off site;
- tell an adult if they experience or witness threatening, discriminatory, bullying or unsafe behaviour;
- take responsibility for their behaviour and engage in reflection, restorative conversations and repair when things go wrong;
- arrive on time, bring equipment, wear full uniform and follow school routines and Yondr expectations;
- remain in designated areas, move safely around the site and respect school property and community spaces;
- not bring banned, harmful or dangerous items or substances into school.

17.10 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are key partners in helping students feel settled, supported and successful in school. The school values positive, respectful communication with families and recognises that strong home-school partnership improves engagement, attendance, regulation and outcomes. This reflects Willingdon's nurturing ethos, commitment to equity and inclusive practice, and the wider direction of early support and strong mainstream inclusion.

- work in partnership with the school and support their child's learning, wellbeing, attendance, routines and readiness to learn;
- engage with communication from the school and attend meetings when requested;
- inform the school of issues that may affect their child's wellbeing, regulation, attendance or learning;
- support the school's use of restorative work, reflection, repair and proportionate consequences while raising concerns respectfully through the appropriate channels;

- work with the school to identify support, strategies or reasonable adjustments where their child has SEND, SEMH needs, communication difficulties, medical needs or other barriers to learning;
- reinforce safe and respectful behaviour beyond the school gate, including on journeys to and from school, online and in the wider community;
- support expectations regarding uniform, punctuality, Yondr procedures, phones and banned items;
- commit to shared values and expectations through the Parent Charter and ongoing partnership with the school.

18. Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability

The school monitors behaviour, attendance, participation, suspension, internal truancy, engagement and pupil experience to evaluate whether this policy is having the intended impact. Data is considered alongside pupil voice, family feedback, staff feedback and safeguarding information.

Leaders review patterns, hotspots, groups of pupils and the consistency of adult responses so that support can be adapted. The policy is successful not simply when sanctions are applied consistently, but when pupils increasingly feel that they belong, are known, attend, participate and succeed. This reflects the current Ofsted emphasis on evidence across inclusion, attendance and behaviour, personal development and leadership.

19. Intended Impact

Through this policy, the school aims for pupils to:

- feel safe, known, respected and connected to school;
- show improved engagement, attendance and readiness to learn;
- develop stronger self-regulation, relational skills and accountability;
- experience reduced conflict, exclusion and disengagement;
- benefit from earlier and more effective support;
- move into adulthood, further education, employment or training with confidence, aspiration and a stronger sense of belonging.

20. Review

This policy should be read alongside the school's safeguarding, uniform, suspension and exclusion, attendance, SEND, inclusion and alternative provision policies and/or procedures. It should be reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with school priorities, inclusion needs and national policy expectations. It should also be reviewed once the government publishes the formal outcome of the 2026 SEND reform consultation and any subsequent legislation or revised statutory guidance.

Appendix A – Alternative Provision Protocols

Purpose

At Willingdon Community School, Alternative Provision (AP) is a planned, time-limited intervention used within a relational, inclusive and outcome-focused framework to remove barriers to learning, strengthen engagement and support successful reintegration. AP is not a destination but part of a graduated pathway that maintains pupils' belonging, participation and entitlement to an ambitious education.

1. Principles

All Alternative Provision will:

- Maintain pupils on roll and connected to the school community.
- Promote belonging, safety and trusted relationships.
- Be outcome-focused, with clear aims, timescales and review points.
- Form part of the school's graduated response through the Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) process.
- Provide access to an ambitious curriculum, personal development opportunities and preparation for adulthood.
- Be co-produced with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals.

2. Threshold for Alternative Provision

Alternative Provision may be considered where:

- APDR cycles and in-school interventions have not secured sustained engagement or progress.
- Additional support is required to address barriers relating to attendance, behaviour, SEMH, SEND, wellbeing or access to learning.
- A clear plan is in place with defined outcomes, review arrangements and intended next steps.

Alternative Provision will not be used:

- As a substitute for high-quality SEN Support, Universal Available Provision or statutory SEND provision.
- Due to staffing, timetable or capacity constraints.
- Without clear reintegration, transition or progression arrangements.

3. Graduated Response (APDR)

All placements will follow the Assess, Plan, Do, Review process.

Assess - Identification of need, strengths and barriers, including attendance, behaviour, SEMH, SEND, safeguarding and learning needs.

Plan - Agreed outcomes, provision, success criteria, timescales and review arrangements linked to the pupil's wider support plan.

Do - Delivery of provision with ongoing communication, monitoring and maintenance of the pupil's connection to school.

Review - Formal evaluation of impact at least every six weeks, leading to decisions regarding continuation, adaptation, reintegration or transition.

Where a placement offers specialist accreditation, vocational learning or qualifications unavailable on site, the duration of provision may be determined by the agreed educational outcomes.

4. Types of Alternative Provision

Provision will be selected according to identified need and may include:

- Adapted curriculum pathways and targeted interventions.
- Relational, SEMH and therapeutic support.
- Trauma-informed and PACE-informed interventions.
- Vocational, aspirational and engagement-based programmes.
- Commissioned off-site Alternative Provision.

Examples may include:

- Forest School provision.
- PACE-informed therapeutic interventions.
- Eggtooth.
- Nudge Education.
- East Sussex Skills Academy.
- Plumpton College.
- East Sussex College Group.
- Peak Adventure.
- Achieve at East Sussex College.

All provision must align with the school's values, safeguarding requirements and curriculum ambition.

5. Commissioning and Quality Assurance

The school will use the East Sussex Alternative Provision Directory and internal quality assurance processes to ensure that commissioned provision:

- Meets safeguarding and statutory requirements.
- Delivers appropriate educational, personal development and attendance outcomes.
- Is regularly monitored for quality, suitability and impact.
- Represents value for money and meets identified pupil need.

6. Safeguarding and Oversight

The school retains responsibility for all pupils attending Alternative Provision.

Leaders will ensure that:

- Pupil attendance, engagement and whereabouts are known and monitored.
- Providers have appropriate safeguarding, safer recruitment and staff training arrangements.
- Effective information sharing takes place between school, providers and families.
- Regular communication, monitoring and visits take place.
- Any safeguarding, attendance or welfare concerns are identified and acted upon promptly.

Alternative Provision will only be commissioned where leaders are confident that the provision is safe, appropriate and subject to robust oversight.

7. Reintegration and Transition

Reintegration will be planned from the outset of every placement and may include:

- Graduated reintegration or dual-placement arrangements.
- Key adult support and mentoring.
- Reasonable adjustments to curriculum, environment or timetable.
- Ongoing pastoral, SEMH or therapeutic support.
- Success will be evidenced through improvements in:
 - Attendance and participation.

- Engagement and behaviour.
- Emotional regulation and wellbeing.
- Access to learning and curriculum achievement.
- Independence and readiness for adulthood.
- Sense of belonging and inclusion.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact

The effectiveness of Alternative Provision will be evaluated through:

- Attendance, participation and engagement data.
- Behaviour, suspension and exclusion trends.
- Academic progress and curriculum outcomes.
- Personal development and readiness for adulthood outcomes.
- Reintegration and transition success.
- Pupil, parent/carer and provider feedback.

Leaders and governors will monitor Alternative Provision to ensure it remains:

- Safe.
- Ambitious.
- Proportionate.
- Impactful.
- Inclusive.
- Value for money.

Statement of Commitment

Alternative Provision at Willingdon Community School is a targeted, relational and evidence-informed intervention designed to improve attendance, engagement, wellbeing, participation, independence and outcomes. It reflects the school's commitment to inclusion, belonging and ensuring that every pupil remains visible, valued and supported to thrive within their community and achieve positive long-term outcomes.