Meadow Pathways Wellbeing and Education Cornwall (MPWEC)

Behaviour Policy
Education other than at School (EOTAS)

Responsibility to update: Zoe Waitz and Michelle Pascoe
Applies to: All staff, contractors, volunteers and visiting professionals working with children and young people (CYP) engaged in Meadow Pathways EOTAS packages (including tuition in homes, community venues and online).

Version No: 2
Date: September 2026
Review Date: September 2027

Summary of Changes – September 2026 Review

This policy has been reviewed and updated in September 2026 to reflect Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, and the DfE's updated Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance (in force from 26 July 2026). Key changes made at this review:

• Confirmed that ending or shortening a session, or a period on a part-time/reduced timetable, is never used as a punishment or disciplinary sanction – consistent with the DfE's updated Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance, which identifies placing a pupil on a part-time timetable for behavioural reasons as potentially unlawful.

• Clarified that Meadow Pathways' agreed hours (up to 15 hours a week) are a feature of the commissioned EOTAS package, set by the referring school/Local Authority, and are not a behavioural sanction or a substitute for full-time education.

• Added an expanded reference to KCSIE 2026 changes on serious violence, including recognising weapon-carrying, threats and assault as indicators requiring a safeguarding response.

• Added self-harm, suicidal ideation and suicide risk as standalone safeguarding concerns that may present as changes in behaviour.

• Strengthened wording on racism and other discriminatory behaviour as safeguarding matters within the behaviour framework.

This summary is provided for ease of reference; the changes are reflected throughout the policy below.

Introduction

Meadow Pathways provides Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) for CYP who require bespoke, flexible programs to access suitable education and therapeutic support. This policy sets out:

- our behaviour principles and expectations.
- our graduated approach to support, intervention and deescalation.
- Arrangements when a CYP becomes significantly dysregulated (including, where pre-agreed, pausing a session and returning the child home/ending the session);
- lawful use of consequences, searching, screening and confiscation.
- safe, lawful use of reasonable force (last resort only); and
- safeguarding, recording, data protection and partnership working with parents/carers and commissioning Local Authorities (LAs).

This policy covers all Meadow Pathways locations and modalities, including 2:1, 1:1, small group, offsite, and online sessions.

Our Behaviour Principles

- **Safety first.** Safeguarding and welfare of CYP and staff are paramount.
- **Relational, trauma-informed and neurodiversity affirming practice.** We assume behaviour is communication. We prioritise regulation, relationships and routines. All responses are rooted in trauma awareness and respect for individual histories.
- **High expectations with high support.** We teach prosocial behaviour explicitly and adapt teaching to need, making reasonable adjustments for SEND, neurodivergence and medical conditions.
- **Prevent, deescalate, restore.** We use early help, proactive planning, coregulation and restorative conversations to reduce recurrence.
- **Proportionate and lawful.** Any consequence is reasonable, necessary and recorded. We avoid humiliating or degrading practices.
- **Partnership.** Parents/carers and the CYP are partners in planning, review and reintegration after incidents.

Legal and Policy Framework (summary)

Meadow Pathways operates in line with current statutory and Non statutory guidance for England, including (latest editions at time of approval): Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Working Together to Safeguard Children, Behaviour in Schools (DfE), Alternative Provision guidance, guidance on Suspensions/Exclusions (as applicable to commissioning schools/AP), Searching, Screening & Confiscation, and Use of Reasonable Force. Local LA procedures and any commissioning agreement requirements also apply. (See internal reference library and updates log maintained by the DSL.)

Roles and Responsibilities:

Directors:

Zoe Waitz – Director of Education and DDSL

- Oversees the strategic development and delivery of the educational provision, ensuring high-quality, inclusive learning tailored to SEMH and SEND needs. Leads on curriculum design, compliance, and educational planning across Meadow Pathways and Treverno Meadows.

Michelle Pascoe – Director of Therapies and DSL

- Leads the therapeutic vision and wellbeing strategy, embedding trauma-informed practice throughout the provision. As Designated Safeguarding Lead, she ensures robust safeguarding procedures and provides direct therapeutic support to learners and families.

Staff, Tutors & Therapists:

- Follow this policy; maintain professional conduct; deliver proactive regulation strategies; log all incidents promptly; seek help early; complete mandatory training.

Parents/Carers:

- Participate in planning and reviews; maintain agreed communication channels; support coregulation and reintegration; uphold the Home/EOTAS Agreement (Appendix A).

Children & Young People:

- Are supported to understand expectations, rights and responsibilities; contribute to their BSP and reintegration steps (pupil voice captured).

Behaviour Expectations

We teach, model and rehearse the following core expectations (adapted visually for CYP):

1. **Be Safe** – keep self and others safe; follow instructions in safety plans.
2. **Be Ready** – arrive as **agreed**, with needed items, willing to try.
3. **Be Kind & Respectful** – use appropriate language, personal space, and online etiquette.
4. **Be Responsible** – look after equipment and spaces; repair/restore when harm occurs.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for SEND, neurodivergence and individual needs. Visual schedules, first/then, low arousal approaches, and predictable routines are standard.

Graduate Response and Support

Universal (for all): predictable routines; clear, positively phrased expectations; choice and control; movement/sensory breaks; task chunking; cocreated regulation toolbox; low arousal environments; reasonable adjustments.

Targeted (some): individual BSP with triggers, early warning signs and agreed scripts; emotion coaching; check-ins; structured rewards; restorative conversations; social stories; mentoring.

Specialist (few): multi-agency plan; clinical input; revised timetable/location; assistive tech; increased adult support; bespoke risk assessment (Appendix B).

All CYP accessing EOTAS will have a written **Risk Assessment**, coproduced with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the commissioning school/LA.

Managing Dysregulation and Safety

When early signs emerge, staff use calm, nonconfrontational strategies (time in, choices, regulation prompts). If risk escalates:

Stage 1 – Pause/Adjust: Reduce demands; offer movement/sensory regulation; change task/environment; use agreed script.

Stage 2 – Stop/Space: End the activity; move to a safer space (or, if at home, reduce stimulation); remove unsafe items; maintain observation.

Stage 3 – End/Exit (pre-agreed): Where a Home/EOTAS Agreement is in place, staff may pause or end the session and either (a) support a planned handover to a parent/carer at the session location, or (b) return the child home using the agreed transport/supervision arrangement. This is not a sanction and not an exclusion; it is a safeguarding measure to prioritise regulation and safety. Next steps are agreed in a Reset & Reparation Plan within 48 hours (Appendix C).

Emergencies:
If there is an imminent risk of significant harm that cannot be mitigated otherwise, staff may call emergency services. Parents/carers and the DSL are informed as soon as safe and practicable.

All responses must be trauma informed, emotionally attuned, and sensitive to the child's history and profile.

Consequences and Restorative Practice

We use **restorative and instructional** responses wherever possible (repair, apology, reteaching, amends). Where a consequence is necessary it must be:

- **Proportionate and reasonable** (age, SEND, neurodivergence, trauma history and context considered)
- **Related** to the behaviour (e.g., supervised time to repair/clean where safe)
- **Recorded** with pupil voice adapted to support the individual pupil (Verbal, written or visual)
- **Explained** to the CYP and parent/carer.

Prohibited: degrading, humiliating or idiosyncratic punishments; unreasonable financial penalties; denying access to basic needs; extended isolation that prevents regulated learning; any unlawful discrimination.

Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Where risk assessments or context require, staff may screen for or search prohibited items *in accordance with current DfE guidance* and this policy. Prohibited items typically include knives/weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco/vapes, fireworks, pornographic/indecent images, and any item reasonably suspected to be used to commit an offence or cause injury/damage.

- Two adults present during any search, at least one of the same sex; **no intimate searches** (police only).
- Minimal, respectful, and recorded. Parent/carer and commissioner informed the same day where a prohibited item is found.
- Electronic devices may be searched where lawful and necessary for safeguarding (see Online Safety & Data Protection policies).

Local police liaison arrangements will be followed where relevant. See Appendix D for our quick guide and recording proforma.

Staff are alert to indicators of serious violence, including weapon-carrying, threats or assault, and to risk factors such as disrupted education or a history of harm to others, treating these as safeguarding concerns requiring immediate escalation to the DSL – in line with KCSIE 2026.

Use of Reasonable Force (Last Resort)

Staff may use **reasonable force** *only* to prevent immediate risk of injury to the CYP or others, prevent serious damage to property, or to maintain safety in an emergency when other strategies have not and will not work in time.

- Planned physical interventions (if ever required) must be risk assessed, agreed with parents/carers, and included in the BSP; only trained staff deploy such holds.

- **After any significant use of force:** provide first aid and reassurance; alert the DSL and Head of Service; notify parents/carers as soon as practicable; complete an incident record before end of day; consider a safeguarding referral if threshold is met; review the BSP/risk assessment.

- We record a daily report which will include details of challenging behaviours and if reasonable force has been used.

Attendance, Session Pauses and Ending Sessions Early

- In EOTAS, attendance is recorded per session. If a session is paused or ended for safety (Section 7), the register will reflect the appropriate code agreed with the LA.

- Where we return a child home, a clear handover protocol is followed: two adults where possible; parent/carer receives the child; time and reason recorded; DSL informed.

- Ending a session early must trigger a Reset & Reparation conversation with the CYP and parent/carer (Appendix C). Reasonable adjustments may include relocating sessions, changing timing/duration, or adding regulation breaks.

We do **not** use early endings or transport home as a punishment. Where patterns emerge, we convene a review with the LA without delay.

This reflects the DfE's updated Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance (in force 26 July 2026), which identifies reducing a pupil's timetable for behavioural reasons as a practice that may amount to unlawful off-rolling. Meadow Pathways' commissioned hours (up to 15 hours per week) are agreed with the referring school/Local Authority as part of the EOTAS package itself, and are never reduced as a sanction.

Safeguarding and Thresholds

All staff follow the **Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy**. Behaviour concerns may be indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation or unmet need. Staff must:

- act immediately on safeguarding concerns;
- report to the DSL and LA record on the safeguarding system the same day;
- follow local multiagency procedures for early help or statutory referral;
- escalate professionally if concerned about practice (whistleblowing).

We consider cumulative lowlevel concerns and contextual safeguarding (home, online, community). We work with parents/carers openly unless this places a child at additional risk.

Self-harm, suicidal ideation and suicide risk are recognised as safeguarding concerns in their own right – not only as symptoms of another issue – and are reported to the DSL immediately, whatever form the behaviour takes.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We are fully committed to the principles of the Equality Act 2010. We actively anticipate and remove barriers for disabled children and young people, ensuring reasonable adjustments are in place to support access, inclusion, and dignity. We regularly review behaviour data to identify any imbalances or patterns such as those linked to SEND, race, or gender, we take thoughtful action to ensure fair and supportive responses for all. Our approach is proudly neurodiversity-affirming and grounded in trauma-informed practice, recognising the unique experiences and strengths of every learner.

Training and Supervision

All staff complete and refresh training in: safeguarding/KCSIE Part 1; behaviour and deescalation; autism/ADHD informed strategies; trauma informed practice; positive handling (dependent on role requirement); searching and confiscation; data protection; online safety. Reflective supervision is provided following critical incidents.

Recording, Data and Information Sharing

- **Incident recording:** completed same day, factual and objective; includes antecedents, behaviour, impact, actions taken, pupil voice, parent contact, follow up actions required, and any physical intervention used.

- **Data review:** DSL/SLT/Directors review incident trends half termly; summary dashboard to the governing body/proprietor and LA.

- **Information sharing:** in line with UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and safeguarding legislation; share what is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate and timely.

Partnership with Parents/Carers and Young Persons Voice

- Parents/carers receive this policy and the Home/EOTAS Agreement.
- We offer simple, accessible summaries for CYP and families.
- Pupil voice is captured after incidents and in reviews; adjustments are codesigned where possible.
- Complaints are managed under the Meadow Pathways Complaints Policy.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier following:

- Changes to relevant DfE guidance or law;
- Serious incident or safeguarding review learning;
- Feedback from CYP, families, staff or LA.

Linked Policies/Procedures

- Child Protection & Safeguarding
- Safer Working Practice / Staff Code of Conduct
- SEND & Reasonable Adjustments
- Health & Safety / Educational Visits
- Online Safety & Acceptable Use
- Data Protection & Record Retention
- Complaints

Appendices

Appendix A – Home/EOTAS Agreement (including arrangements if a child is dysregulated)

Purpose: To ensure shared understanding of expectations, support strategies, and what will happen if a child becomes significantly dysregulated during a session.

1. **Agreed support strategies:** (visuals, breaks, sensory tools, scripts)

2. **Triggers and early signs:** _____

3. **What staff will do first:** offer breaks, adjust task, reduce demands, regulate.

4. **If risk escalates:** end activity; move to safer space; call parent/carer.

5. **If session must end early / child needs to go home:**
    - Who will transport/supervise: _____
    - Handover point & protocol: _____
    - Items not to be carried (sharp objects etc.): _____
    - Who is notified and how (sameday): _____

6. **Aftercare & followup:** checkin call; reintegration planning meeting within 48 hours; any therapeutic input required.

7. **Contact details & consent statements:**
    - Parent/carer: _____
    - Commissioning LA/school contact: _____
    - Medical/emergency info: _____
    - Consent to share information for safeguarding: Yes / No
    - Consent for transport arrangements above: Yes / No

8. **Signatures:** Parent/Carer _____ CYP (where appropriate) _____ Meadow Pathways _____ Date _____

Appendix B – Risk Assessment & Behaviour Support Plan (template)

- **Context & need:** diagnosis/SEND, communication profile, sensory profile, trauma history.
- **Known triggers & early signs:** _____
- **Protective factors & interests:** _____
- **Risk scenarios:** harm to self/others, property damage, absconding, online risk.
- **Likelihood/impact matrix** and current controls.
- **Planned prevention & deescalation:** staff approaches, environment, resources.
- **Agreed scripts & signals:** e.g., first/then, choice of two, time in.
- **Physical intervention plan:** *only if essential*, named trained staff, medical considerations.
- **Emergency procedures:** when to call parents/police/ambulance.
- **Review dates & responsibilities.**

Appendix C – Reset & Reparation Plan Template (post incident)

- **Summary of incident (factual):** _____
- **Impact on CYP and others:** _____
- **Repair & reparation actions:** _____
- **Adjustments to plan/timetable/location:** _____
- **Therapeutic supports:** _____
- **Parent/carer views & CYP voice:** _____
- **Success criteria & review date.**

Appendix D – Searching, Screening & Confiscation QuickGuide

- **Before:** consider proportionality, safeguarding purpose, SEND needs, trauma history, samesex member of staff and witness where practicable; no intimate searches; record rationale.

- **During:** respect privacy and dignity; stop if risk increases; call police where appropriate.

- **After:** record items found/retained; inform parent/carer (same day where prohibited item found); update risk assessment; consider safeguarding referral if concerns arise.

Appendix E – Incident Record (minimum content)

- Date/time/location; staff present; activity; antecedents; behaviour; risk level; strategies used; whether force used (type/duration/justification/injuries/first aid); items searched/confiscated; parent/carer notified; CYP voice; next steps; manager/DSL review.