

The Potteries School

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POLICY: Education support policy

COMPILED	IMPLEMENTED	COORDINATED	REVIEWED
13/01/2017	13/01/2017	Andy Joynson	18/08/2026

The Potteries School: Our culture, ethos and mission

The Potteries School is one of the key elements in an integrated, tripartite model of care, education and therapy for learners experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties (S.E.M.H.) and is based in Abermule, mid-Wales. All our learners are Looked After Children and present complex needs with regard to interpersonal, emotional and social issues.

The Potteries School provides a positive, supportive and child-centred educational environment for all its learners. Through a process of creating a safe learning space, building effective teacher-learner relationships and precision identification of individual learning need, the School supports learners to achieve and attain and prepare for the next steps on the educational ladder.

Many of the learners have a history of school exclusion or had limited access to learning prior to admission. Most have been unable to manage in a formal educational setting and often the risks their behaviours present has impacted on their ability to be educated alongside large peer groups.

The education offered at the Potteries School seeks to reengage learners in a creative and meaningful curriculum, assisting them to catch up on missed learning and an assessment programme that identifies their learning needs accurately. All learning is offered in an inclusive environment and delivered by education professionals with an understanding of the needs of the learners, working to build self-esteem and learning confidence, develop peer relationships and progress independent learning skills.

At the Potteries School we would like our learners to restart their educational experience with confidence and establish a pattern of learning so they can progress, attain and achieve.

Our aspirational aims are to ensure that every learner is able to:

- Experience bespoke learning in a safe and secure environment
- Access opportunities to compensate for missed school experiences
- Develop positive social interaction skills with their peers and adults

- Be supported in managing their behaviour to progress and achieve
- Establish patterns and routines of learning for their next step in education

The learners, teachers, therapists and education support staff believe that our school can and should provide:

- Sensitive but assertive care to prepare learners for school
- An integrated approach to care, therapy and education
- Excellent teaching and learning across the curriculum
- A framework that promotes reengagement and participation
- Strategies to assist learners with regulating their own behaviour
- Individual learning planning tailored to the needs of learners
- A learner-focussed approach to formative assessment
- Education activities that provide transferable skills
- Positive role-modelling to prepare learners for adult life

THE RIGHT WAY

The Potteries School: Behaviour management and assertive discipline

Risk assessments for learners are built prior to admission to the home. During the initial stabilising period (and based on information collected from previous placements and/or other involved agencies) these are developed as our knowledge of a young person in the placement increases. Individualised risk assessments for education are further informed by completion of a health and wellbeing matrix that focuses specifically on those behaviours which are presented as most in need of support. Areas such as non-compliance, collusional behaviours with other students and potential disruption of others learning will require learner-specific guidelines alongside generalised assessment.

The Right Way PRINCIPLE	THIS MEANS:	ORGANISATIONS WILL:
EMBEDDING	Putting Children's Rights (UNCRC) at the core of planning and the delivery of services for children and young people	○ Make links to Children's Rights (UNCRC) in their plans. ○ Agree on a structure of how they make sure children's rights are taken into account at all levels of decision making. ○ Make sure that leaders and staff have a good knowledge of children's rights (UNCRC), and help them understand how it can benefit their work.
Equality and NON-DISCRIMINATION	Ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to be the best they can be and that no child has to ensure poor life chances due to discrimination	○ Make sure staff have up-to-date knowledge of the Equality Act and receive training to increase their awareness of different groups of children and young people's needs. ○ Give information to children in a language or format appropriate for their age, culture, or ability. ○ Analyse data and consider which groups of children are not accessing your services, and why - can use our a children's rights impact assessment.
EMPOWERING children and young people	Giving children the knowledge and confidence to use their rights and hold organisations and individuals that affect their lives to account	○ Give children the information they need to influence decisions that affect them (e.g. simple language reports). ○ Involve children and young people by giving them the opportunities/ training/ information they need to influence decisions that affect them. ○ Build relationships with groups of young people to allow them to regularly give ideas and feedback. E.g. youth groups/forums.
PARTICIPATION	Listening to children and taking their views seriously (as guaranteed by Article 12 — UNCRC).	○ Develop clear targets to listen to children and young people from marginalised groups. ○ Involve children directly in the design, monitoring and evaluation of services they receive (this can include involving children in recruitment of staff). ○ Adopt Wales' National Participation Standards for Children and Young People, to make sure when children participate, their experience is a quality one.
ACCOUNTABILITY	Organisations and individuals should be accountable to children for the decisions and actions which affect their lives.	○ Publish an accessible annual update showing how they've worked towards making children's rights a reality. ○ Feedback regularly to children in a suitable format. ○ Provide children with accessible information on how to provide feedback about services or to how to make a complaints and hold staff to account.

Unwanted behaviour in the classroom occurs across a spectrum from low level, persistent disruption through to violent assault and self-harm. Often, not being proactive in challenging behaviour early enough leads to an escalation that becomes much more difficult to diffuse and manage. Structure, boundaries and expectations all seek to provide a clear definition of what is acceptable and should provide support staff with a framework from which to address the behaviour of learner. Knowledge of learner needs provides a key to the appropriate methods and tools to be applied to ameliorate inappropriate behaviour. In general, all education support staff should use practice that mirrors that of the care home, helps to diminish disruptive behaviour and that supports the learner in time of need. The pointers below are indicative of how assertive management tools should be utilised:

- Always challenge the **behaviour of** the learner and not the individual;
- Praise appropriate responses and choices when the learner needs support;
- Allow learners time to take responsibility for their actions;
- Give learners opportunities to explain their feelings and their behaviour;
- Intervene early but in a low-key manner to reduce learner arousal;
- Offer the learner alternative choices and different ways out;
- Diffuse and distract initially to allow for refocus on the task;
- Be clear, assertive and communicative in your expectations of learner;
- Compare and contrast previous behaviour to keep learner focus acute.

The Potteries School: Induction and the school programme

Young people placed at the Potteries have a maximum timeframe at the home of 26 weeks and the period of assessment is between 12 – 16 weeks. This entails that the education provision needs to be following a structure that involves engagement, experience and assessment at a relatively early stage of that process. The initial week of placement will involve no direct education experience for the learner. This time in the home will be used to stabilise behaviour, establish routines, outline boundaries and register the young person with the necessary services situated locally. During this period the Headteacher reviews the existing school documentation, liaises with the placing authority and gathers the necessary data to evaluate the historical experience of education. With this information, formulation of basic risk assessments, initial assessment programmes and essential strategies for supporting behavioural difficulties are modelled.

An **initial education interview** takes place at the onset of week two and is driven by the process of recording the **learner's** experience of their education. This provides a valuable qualitative addition to the education profiles provided by

previous schools and the placing authority. The induction process involves the introduction of learning routines, establishing boundaries around behaviour and the onset of qualitative, formative assessment of learning. This will be mediated by the ability of learners to cope with the very tangible difficulties they may experience in the classroom. The Headteacher will determine the length of initial school sessions, when to increase learner involvement and the level of support required to deliver effective education.

To promote effective communication and cooperation between the school and the staff support team, the Headteacher attends the morning handover to glean feedback on the behaviour of all learners, operational issues that have arisen the previous day outside of school and the suitability of learners to attend education. If, for whatever reason, the team leader feels that a young person is not ready for education then they will liaise with the Headteacher at the end of relevant sessions to enable a re-integration when suitable.

The school day begins at 9.15 a.m. and ends at 3.30 p.m. and all lessons are delivered or co-ordinated from the Education Room within The Potteries School. The timetable consists of a morning and an afternoon session and each session is comprised of three lessons lasting 45 minutes. There is a 15-minute break between lessons designed to ensure learners have time to relax, reflect and refocus for the next lesson. Protocols specific to the Potteries School to ensure that the education expectations are clear, the programme contents certain and the behavioral boundaries well defined are outlined below:

- Learners are expected to complete their morning routine cooperatively and on time in preparation to learn. If they do not, their programme **stops** until they can reengage. Andy will liaise with the team leader as to the best restart strategy;
- Learners are to be downstairs and starting their breakfast **before 9.00 a.m.** If not, they can have fruit and catch up on the sustenance during the first morning break;
- The school corridor is closed between **9.00 a.m.** and **3.30 p.m.** With the exception of breaks and lunchtime, **only the team leader** is permitted to visit the office area;
- Young people have an opportunity to **negotiate** their programme with Andy if they come and see him in the 'talking lounge' before **9.00 a.m.**;
- Support staff are to accompany a young person to the classroom at the start of the lesson and be **waiting outside** the classroom five minutes before the lesson ends;

- Uniform is not worn at the school but a neat and tidy appearance is expected. Prompting about personal hygiene is welcome. Drinks are allowed but on the side;
- Young people are **not** to be brought to school unless they are **ready to learn**. The school is not a space for them to act out their behaviours, it is a place of learning. The call on whether a learner is ready for learning **lies with the support staff**;
- If learners arrive **10 minutes** late for a classroom session the learning reboots at the start of the next lesson. If learners fail to start a **half-day activity** ten minutes into the session (9.25) then education stops for them. If a learner fails to start a **full-day activity** ten minutes into the second lesson (10.25) then the programme stops;
- If a learner has experienced a difficult morning, it is necessary for Andy and his staff to meet with them **before** the afternoon activity to determine if they are ready for learning and to carry out a dynamic risk assessment as to suitability for the activity;
- All points sheets are to be completed **immediately following** the education activity so Andy can process the scores and evaluate the learning objectives. Good behaviour is supported by a points system that leads to termly rewards. Points are either **earned or not earned** and unlike the house, points cannot be 'earned back';
- All monies for activities must be accounted for with a **relevant receipt**. Activity money is not to be spent on food, fuel or anything other than the designated activity;
- The Sky lounge is not to be used during school time; likewise, football outside of breaktime only disturbs learners in the classroom so is not welcome;
- No medication is to be administered outside the First Aid room after 9.00 a.m. If a learner is late or the required time missed, support staff will get the necessary medication and this will be administered in the **foyer** so as not to disturb classroom learners;
- Games console privileges are suspended for the evening if a young person refuse to engages with the education programme **at any point** during the school day;
- When LAC meetings are convened, it is not a '**no expectation**' day. Support staff are expected to assist learners to record their hopes and wishes, help them reflect on what the meeting might hold for them or simply support them with their feelings. Once the meeting is complete and the young person has behaved appropriately, then house privileges apply as normal.

It is imperative that the support staff assigned to each learner familiarise themselves with recognising singular patterns of behaviour and the necessary responsive strategies to support their learner. To inform this process, it is

fundamental that staff use their professional experience to recognise what the communication is behind a presented behaviour, what mechanisms are the engine this behaviour and select the appropriate, bespoke strategies to support the learner. The reflective practice guidelines below outline this process of behaviour recognition and the required preparation needed to support a learner when they have difficulty in regulating or feel overwhelmed by their emotions:

Recognising behaviour triggers that inhibit learning

- Inappropriate behaviour the previous evening or early morning;
- Forthcoming appointments and their implications (LAC reviews etc.);
- Repetitive patterns of negative behaviour in the same context;
- Unusual, random or unexplained actions;
- Recognised low-level behaviours that are a precursor to further actions;
- An inability to focus, follow direction or concentrate;
- Refusal to follow routine or militant non-compliance.

Supporting learner needs in education

- Read the educational chronology and background in the learner file;
- Attend an education induction session with the Headteacher;
- Be familiar with timetables, break times and activity schedules;
- Reflect on feedback from the morning handover regarding learners;
- Encourage punctuality, clean attire and the importance of attendance;
- Show interest in the learner's curriculum and progress;
- Be willing to read and complete homework with learners if requested.

The academic curriculum is delivered solely by the Headteacher and focuses on the assessment of core subjects: English, Maths, Science and P.S.E. In addition, Information and Communication Technology will be studied both in a cross-curricular context and as a discrete subject. Following initial baseline assessment, the learners will follow a programme of study adapted to their learning needs and suitable for their move following transition. The activities element of the curriculum will be delivered across three areas to promote achievement and to work towards accreditation for learners:

- **Sport and Recreation:** learners have access to local sport and leisure facilities to undertake a structured physical and outdoor education;
- **Life and Independence Skills :** challenge-based activities to work towards AQA Unit Awards. The modules can be transferrable to other education settings for accreditation;
- **Educational Visits:** offsite trips to museums or other places of interest to compliment classroom work and as discrete learning experiences.

With the classroom lessons generally delivered on a one-to-one basis, **the staff are expected to support learners on educational activities.** This includes following the learning objectives presented on the points reward sheets, managing learner behaviour and observing the protocols around timings, budgeting and appropriate behaviour in vehicles.

As part of the Quality Assurance Framework produced by the current Head of Education, the Headteacher will observe one activity session for each support staff member per year to highlight areas for improvement, increase confidence in staff delivery and satisfy recommendations from the inspectorate to improve learner outcomes.

In addition to the above, the school is now able to offer a weekly Outdoor Education experience with Dave McSorley. The expectations for staff are included in the 'Definition and Statement of Professional Responsibilities' document read by all staff prior to participation.

The Potteries School: Expectations and supporting learnin

A system of points reward is linked to the learning expectations and the expectations are outlined in the graphic below. The process of behaviour management at the school is entirely **expectation-based**. As a headteacher, I set the bar for behaviour to be realistic but also expect learners to make substantive effort to manage their feeling and behaviour to make progress from their baseline level.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

- Arrive for your lessons on time
- Show respect and tolerance towards others
- Make some effort to learn
- Do the work set
- Stay in class

You can earn 10 points for each lesson if you work hard to keep to the five expectations...



The expectations for the Potteries School:

- State clearly the behaviour that is acceptable and appropriate during the education programme;
- Serve to act as an incentive to engage in learning where historically focus and concentration have been difficult;
- Promote behaviour that allows learners to meet learning objectives and make progress across the curriculum;
- Provide a **certainty** mechanism which is often absent from previous provisions whereby action and consequence are linked clearly;
- Are fair, equality-driven and learner-centred.

In the core inspection undertaken by Estyn in 2017 and the subsequent annual monitoring visits, the cooperation between the school and home staff to achieve outcomes for learners is highlighted as **the** major strength of the provision:

'The headteacher and the residential care staff work together effectively to provide purposeful learning opportunities across the curriculum. They have a thorough understanding of pupils' emotional needs, their strengths and personal interests. The positive working relationship between staff and pupils and the consistent approach to managing behaviour impacts positively on pupils' attendance, motivation and wellbeing. Residential care staff play an important role in supporting pupils to re-engage with their education and in delivering the broad range of off-site vocational and recreational lessons.'

A strong feature of the school is the highly effective teamwork between the residential care staff and the headteacher. There is a useful programme of staff meetings to ensure that communication about pupils' learning, behaviour and care is effective. The headteacher provides valuable training for the residential care team to include education targets in a wide range of community-based activities. This ensures that these activities have a clear educational purpose and measurable learning outcomes. Staff value highly this training and the opportunity it provides to develop their knowledge and skills. As a result, these well-planned and skilfully delivered learning activities extend learning beyond the classroom and make a positive contribution to pupils' outcomes.'

The positive working together noted by the inspectorate is an example of an **integrated model** the school continues to promote as a congruent working practice. The key tenets of the model are:

- Shared underpinning values with regard to safeguarding children effectively;
- Ensuring a child-centred perspective is the engine for all practice;
- Employing a consistent set of boundaries and structure across the provision;
- Working towards a common set of targets to help learners achieve and attain;
- A framework of formal discussion and reporting on shared outcomes.

Examples of direct integrated working that show how learners are aided by support staff to achieve their individual education include:

- The headteacher attends all morning handovers to glean important information about each learner from the day before to inform and plan the forthcoming programme for learners;
- The monitoring of Individual Learning Targets (I.L.T.) is carried out by shift leaders during the evening debrief with the educational support team;

- The points reward system is based on expectations across the whole curriculum and all education support staff operate this to measure learner progress and attainment;
- The assertive discipline model of behaviour management is enacted in both the home and school settings;
- Positive role-modelling by all education support staff assists learners maintaining appropriate behaviour and regulating their emotional responses.

Currently the team leaders have the responsibility to:

- Assist with setting the Individual Learning Target and monitor the process daily at debrief to ensure accurate award of success criteria;
- Negotiate the best assignment of staff to learners at the onset of the day to match transferable skills to the learner activity;
- Ensure class and activity points sheets are completed on time, accurately and consistent with the format expected;
- Encourage positive role-modelling with staff and learners alike with regard to the education programme and the benefits of learning across the curriculum.

The Potteries School: Supporting learners in school – a summary

Staff supporting learners in school are expected to:

- Role-model appropriate behaviour to encourage learners to follow the education programme and attend lessons promptly with a willingness to learn;
- Assist learners with the process of reengagement by working proactively and with appropriate behavioural management skills to promote attendance;
- Apply the principles of assertive discipline with regard to behaviour management across the programme to maintain certainty and consistency;
- Exercise professional judgement as to the suitability of a learner's readiness to engage in the education programme;
- Manage learners when they are unable to cope or need time to settle outside the classroom;
- Provide support when learners struggle to regulate their behaviour on educational activities;
- Follow the protocols surrounding accompanying learners to lessons, lateness, timeouts, making up missed lessons and leaving times on educational activities;
- Deliver the educational activity programme when requested by the Headteacher ensuring the points reward sheets are completed accurately, behaviour is managed within the accepted assertive discipline model and timings and budgets are adhered to;

- Be contemporary and knowledgeable with regard to the learner's timetable, the timings of the school day and the content of their curriculum. Endeavour to work with a learner to help them progress and achieve.

During the education programme it is imperative that **all staff supporting learners at the Potteries School ensure they assist in producing a positive experience of education and are child-centred in their practice.**

*Use Xbox/go offsite in a vehicle/go offsite for a walk/play outside or use the TV lounge if no learners are in the classroom...

REVIEW

This policy and procedures will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to ensure continued compliance with The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, the Independent School Standards (Wales) 2024 and relevant guidance issued by the DfE and Welsh Government.

This document will be next reviewed on 17/08/2027.

