

Behaviour and Suspension Policy

At Equip we endeavour to create a culture that safeguards the rights of all learners to be educated free from disruption, bullying, discrimination and any form of harassment.

Aim

Our behaviour policy is designed to create a positive, safe and welcoming learning and training environment where effective teaching and learning can take place. We want to create a positive learning culture by developing respect, responsibility and encouraging good behaviour through a clear structure that is consistently applied in order to:

- Enable learners to reach their potential
- Promote good behaviour choices which will lead to safe and secure relationships that enable everyone to work effectively together.

Roles and responsibilities

All members of staff, learners and volunteers have a responsibility to recognise and report acts of unacceptable behaviour.

Staff – Staff have a responsibility to ensure that the learning environment is appropriate to the needs of all learners and to enforce health and safety procedures during all activities. They also have a responsibility to challenge behaviour which is unacceptable and is likely to disrupt or degrade the learning experience of others. They will, for example, challenge racist behaviour and stereotyping which contravenes Equip's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Parents / carers – Parents and carers will take responsibility for the behaviour of their child both inside and outside of Equip. Parents/carers are encouraged to work in partnership with Equip in maintaining high standards of behaviour.

Learners - Learners are expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and are encouraged to report any instances of disruption, violence, bullying and harassment.

Behaviour expectations

- Be punctual and maintain good attendance in all lessons and remain for the duration of the lesson
- Whilst at Equip or on Equip activities, you must not be in possession of any alcohol, drugs, weapons or anything that might endanger another person/or yourself.
- All mobile phones and media equipment must be turned off and handed in to staff
- Share responsibility for creating a positive and orderly learning environment
- Show respect to other learners, staff, volunteers and visitors and refrain from harassment or bullying on any grounds including race, culture, gender, sexuality, ability, individual needs, disability, postcode and religion
- Do not intimidate, threaten or be violent towards others
- Make appropriate choices about behaviour and learning and accept the consequences for inappropriate choices
- Refrain from anti-social activities such as shouting, swearing, spitting and other unruly, abusive and offensive behaviour
- Dangerous, violent or aggressive behaviour, illegal activity or any act that is potentially harmful to Equip, other learners or visitors or brings Equip into disrepute will not be tolerated and will lead to disciplinary action and a review of your continued suitability for the project
- Refrain from any activities that might affect your ability to participate fully and safely in class
- Attempt all class work and practical work
- Follow the requests of staff members
- Eating is not allowed during lessons
- Respect Equip premises and property and the property of other learners
- Follow our Health and Safety regulations and related codes of practice to ensure the safety of yourself and others
- Follow Covid-19 behaviour Policy

It is expected that if staff challenge behaviour they find unacceptable, students will respond appropriately and the exhibited behaviour will improve. In the unlikely event that an individual or group of individuals continues to display unacceptable behaviour Equip has identified a number of sanctions available to staff with a view to correcting the unacceptable behaviour.

Why is it important to respond to unacceptable behaviour?

At Equip, we support learners to develop their personal and social skills as well as their academic skills. In order for this to be effective, learners must be able to concentrate on their study programmes without disruption caused by the unacceptable behaviour of their peers. All learners must identify and practice acceptable standards of behaviour in order to take their place in the wider community and achieve economic independence.

All staff with the support of the Behaviour Manager will actively investigate allegations of unacceptable behaviour and take action in line with our Policy. It is normal practice for the parents of all learners involved in inappropriate behaviour to be kept informed and encouraged to participate in finding solutions to behavioural problems.

Restorative intervention

Our restorative intervention process is centred on reducing and resolving conflict. It is a crucial element of our ethos and promotes truthfulness, taking responsibility and creating accountability. Where conflict or poor behaviour has impacted upon others a keyworker will engage the learner(s) in a restorative intervention either individually or jointly (if parties agree) if another learner is involved.

Promoting positive behaviour

- Respect should be shown in the classroom environment at all times
- Ensure that the teaching provides appropriate pace, challenge and is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners
- Learning objectives and expectations should be made clear at the beginning of every lesson
- Rewards and praise should be used as often as possible
- Staff must speak to each individual in a positive manner every lesson
- Remember, good behaviour is taught and modelled
- Never deal with a learner when you are angry
- Always make clear you are addressing the behaviour of the learner, not the learner him/herself
- When the going is tough, take a step back and keep things in perspective
- Always challenge inappropriate behaviour

A consistent approach by staff is essential and the Behaviour Manager is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this.

Managing behaviour

Equip has a range of rewards to praise good behaviour and clear sanctions to deal with for inappropriate behaviour. All sanctions and rewards will be recorded on CLM/CPOMS which should be monitored by referral agency and Equip Staff.

Day to day behaviour management is the responsibility of **Trevor Chulan** and includes ensuring consistency in the implementation of rewards and sanctions.

Rewarding good behaviour

Equip believes that all learners can achieve and that any acts, efforts and achievements that contribute positively to life at Equip should be recognised and celebrated. Rewards must be earned and not given to appease or cajole a learner. Rewards include:

- Verbal praise
- Positive monitoring comments
- Vouchers given each half term for good behaviour based on a points system. Please note: points can be deducted for poor behaviour.

Managing inappropriate behaviour - Sanctions

Equip has a range of procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour. Each case of inappropriate behaviour will be treated on its own merits taking full account of the circumstances and any mitigation.

Sanctions are used to help the learner change their behaviour and will include a discussion about what happened, why and the impact of this.

Stepped approach to behaviour

- 1 Verbal reminder/warning
- 2 Removal from class for 1-2-1 reflection time with a return to class
- 3 Break/lunch time detention
- 4 After school detention
- 5 Isolation for the rest of the day
- 6 Phone call home to discuss behaviour
- 7 Sent home and parent/carer asked to come in for a meeting

For persistent instances of disruption and unacceptable behaviour or for incidents which involve actual damage, violence or more serious behaviour the following disciplinary steps may be taken:

- Written warning
- Being placed in isolation to await investigation
- Restorative justice
- Minor fixed term suspension (1 to 3 days)
- Major fixed term suspension (4 or 5 days)
- Permanent exclusion

All sanctions can be used individually dependent on the incident.

In the event of a fixed term exclusion for a serious incident or continued persistent poor behaviour the referring agency is required to support the sanction and attend a re-integration and post-exclusion meeting along with parents/carers to reflect on learner's behaviour and agree behaviour targets.

Detention

Equip uses detention as a last resort. Typically we will try to deal with the behaviour by talking to the learner about their behaviour, the impact on others and help them to take responsibility. Detentions may be given during lunchtime, break times and after school for up to 1 hour.

Punctuality

Punctuality is very important and good habits will help in adult life. Lateness amounts to lost learning in each school year:

- 5 minutes late each day = 3 days lost
- 15 minutes late each day = 9 days lost
- 30 minutes late each day = 18 days lost

If a learner is late the following will apply:

- In the first instance, we will talk to the learner to determine the reason for the lateness and whether this can be resolved
- If the lateness continues, a letter will be sent to their parent/carer and in some cases we may ask for a meeting to determine what support can be offered to address the issue
- If the issue is not resolved we will contact the referring school's Education Welfare Office (EWO)

Suspension Policy

Equip is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all learners and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn and achieve.

The decision to exclude a student will be taken by a senior manager under the following circumstances:

- In response to a serious breach of our Behaviour policy
- If allowing the learner to remain at Equip would seriously harm the education or welfare of other learners at Equip.

Suspension will be used when there is an immediate threat to the safety of others at Equip or the learner concerned. Before deciding whether to exclude a learner either permanently or for a fixed period the senior manager will ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out, considering all the evidence available.

Suspension, whether fixed term or permanent may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct and are infringements of our Behaviour Policy:

- Verbal abuse to Staff and others
- Verbal abuse to student
- Physical abuse to/attack on Staff
- Physical abuse to/attack on student
- Indecent behaviour
- Damage to property
- Misuse of illegal drugs or other substances including supplying
- Theft
- Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- Sexual abuse or assault
- Carrying an offensive weapon
- Arson
- Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which Equip sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the learner's behaviour.

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other situations where a senior manager makes the judgment that suspension is an appropriate sanction.

Suspension procedure

- Most suspensions are of a fixed term nature and are of short duration (usually between one and three days).
- Following suspension parents/carers are contacted immediately where possible. A letter will be sent by post giving details of the suspension and the date the suspension ends.
- A 'return to School' meeting will be held following the expiry of the fixed term suspension and this will involve the learner, parent/carers, a senior manager and other staff where appropriate.
- It is Equip practice to monitor behaviour and work of the learner very closely for the period following suspension. This may mean the use of a report or close support by staff.
- If the fixed term suspension is greater than five days or an accumulation of suspensions exceed five days, a Pastoral Support Plan may be drawn up. This needs to be agreed with the School, student, parents/carers and any agencies involved.
- During the course of a fixed term suspension where the learner is to be at home, parents/carers are advised that the learner is not allowed on Equip premises, and that daytime supervision is their responsibility, as parents/carers.

Permanent exclusion

The decision to exclude a learner permanently is a very serious one. There are two main types of situation in which permanent exclusion may be considered.

The first is a final, formal step in a concerted process for dealing with disciplinary issues following the use of a wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success. It is an acknowledgement that all available strategies have been exhausted and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent and defiant misbehaviour e.g. repeated bullying (which could include racist or homophobic bullying) or repeated possession and or use of an illegal drug on school premises. The second is where there are exceptional circumstances and it is not appropriate to implement other strategies and where it could be appropriate to permanently exclude a learner for a first or 'one off' offence.

These might include:

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
- Sexual abuse or assault
- Supplying an illegal drug
- Carrying an offensive weapon*
- Arson

Equip will consider police involvement for any of the above offences.

* Offensive weapons are defined in the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 as “any article made or adapted for causing injury to the person; or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him.”

These instances are not exhaustive but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour seriously affects the discipline and well being of everyone at Equip.

Exercise of discretion

In reaching a decision, the senior manager will always look at each case on its own merits. Therefore, a tariff system, fixing a standard penalty for a particular action, is both unfair and inappropriate.

In considering whether permanent exclusion is the most appropriate sanction, the senior manager will consider the gravity of the incident, or series of incidents, and whether it constitutes a serious breach of Equip’s Behaviour policy and the effect that the learner remaining at Equip would have on the education and welfare of other learners and staff.

Behaviour outside Equip

Learner behaviour outside Equip on Equip “business” for example educational visits and journeys, or a work experience placement is subject to Equip’s Behaviour policy. Inappropriate behaviour in these circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place at Equip. If learner behaviour in the immediate vicinity of Equip or on a journey to and from Equip is inappropriate and meets Equip’s criteria for exclusion then the senior manager may decide to exclude.

Drug related exclusions

In making a decision on whether or not to exclude for a drug-related offence the senior manager will have regard to the Equip’s policy on drugs.

Appeal

Learners can appeal against the decision to exclude them from Equip. The appeal should be made to the referring school/agency, which can make the appeal to Equip on behalf of the learner. The appeal will be considered by a Senior Manager at Equip and a final decision will be made within 7 days. This decision will be final.

Policy updated: September 2024