



## Relationships & Well-Being Policy

**We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy was last reviewed on: 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

### Rationale

Switch Midlands aims to provide outstanding support for children and young people, enabling everyone to realise their potential, with high self-esteem and respect for others in their communities, home and school.

We have three guiding principles that we ask the young people and staff to observe whilst working with Switch Midlands, on which all our work is based:

**Believe in POSITIVITY Provide CONSISTENCY Show UNDERSTANDING**

As an independent organisation that prides itself on supporting children and young people, it is vital that these guiding principles are met. If at any point these principles are not valued, then we will seek to understand why and how we can support the individual going forward.

### Values Driven

At Switch Midlands we recognise the vulnerability of the children and young people we work with and that every referral has a need for security with a stable and reassuring approach. Our Behaviour & Wellbeing policy helps us to create a caring, stimulating and secure organisation in which staff and young people can develop and achieve safely.

One of the organisation's chief values is to nurture young people's self-confidence, combined with sensitivity and respect towards others, through an understanding of rights and responsibilities. We recognise that Switch Midlands cannot do this in isolation, but it can be central in making a difference to the lives of those that we work with. Therefore, we expect all members of Switch Midlands staff, and children and young people, to recognise the importance of positive shared values about behaviour and well-being.

In our experience it is important to consider all aspects of each child or young person's behaviour, rather than just labelling it as 'challenging,' 'problem,' or

difficult'. As professionals working in a supportive environment, we always endeavour to understand behaviours in the wider context of the individual, their situation and their response to their environment at school, at home or in the community.

We teach appropriate social skills and coping strategies to help the young people understand and accept boundaries of reasonable behaviour. We work towards understanding the underlying causal factors, in order to respond positively, consistently and effectively. We will provide structures and strategies to empower the individual to manage their own behaviour, promote independence, enhance communication, socialisation and raise self-esteem.

We believe that it is more effective to teach an alternative, appropriate response for children and young people, rather than try using aversive techniques i.e. sanctions/punishments. Positive procedures are constructive in that they teach alternative responses and build self-management. Punishment is not used as a means of managing a child or young person's behaviour at Switch Midlands.

**In order to help support young people to the best possible level all our staff will ensure that they:**

- Develop **POSITIVE** relationships that are respectful.
- Provide a safe, nurturing and **CONSISTENT** approach with appropriate boundaries and support.
- Work to **UNDERSTAND** each individual and their situations.

### **Key principles of our Relationships & Wellbeing Policy**

- To raise children and young people's self esteem
- To promote/develop empathy and respect for self and others
- To develop in children and young people a sense of self-discipline and an acceptance of responsibility for their own actions
- To encourage children and young people to value learning
- To acknowledge that the maintaining of good behaviour at Switch Midlands is a shared responsibility
- To ensure that positive behaviour is always recognised
- To work with a positive and proactive approach to behaviour
- To ensure that Switch Midlands approach to behaviour and well-being is fully understood by children, young people, parents, carers and staff
- To ensure effective mechanisms are in place for the monitoring and evaluating of behaviour and wellbeing
- To ensure the rights and responsibilities of all members of Switch Midlands are upheld and valued

## Safe Space

Safe Space is defined as a positive procedure whereby a child or young person is given the opportunity to leave a situation, which she/he is finding over stimulating and/or stressful. The emphasis must be on helping the child or young person to recognise she/he needs to leave the situation and to communicate that need in an appropriate way. Time out should be used as an opportunity to teach the young person self-control and to manage his/her own behaviour. Safe Space should not be used as a punishment.

However, there may be occasions when a member of the staff team feels that it is in the best interests of the whole group for the student to leave the situation for a short while. The use of a Safe Space, such as a Calm Room or outdoor grounds, should be used when all other proactive strategies have been tried, but were unsuccessful in deescalating a situation.

## Prohibited Items

To ensure the safety of all at Switch Midlands, there are a number of items that are prohibited from being brought into sessions/workshops. These are:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- vaping paraphernalia
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used:
  - to commit an offence, or
  - to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil).

## Support for parents/carers

Switch Midlands is proactive in working with parents/carers to liaise over agreed strategies in supporting children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing. This could be through telephone contact or face-to-face meetings. The aim is to always work collaboratively with parents and act as an advocate for both the young person and their family.

## Cessation of support

Each of the children and young people we work with has their own journey and personal reasons for participating in Switch Midlands. We have to ensure that everyone is kept safe, emotionally secure and feels comfortable in attending

each session. Therefore, we are able to terminate, with immediate effect, any support we believe is detrimental to the development of the individual or others. We are under no obligation to provide support as we are an independent service, and whilst we only use disciplinary action as a final resort following attempted restorative interventions, it is important to understand that it is a course of action we can take where absolutely necessary and in the interests of safety.