



Grateley House School Student Off-site Safety Policy

 	Policy Review Date	September 2023
	Date of Next Review	September 2024
	Who Reviewed the Policy	Eva Pereira
	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Jean North (DSL)
	Designated Safeguarding Leads in DSL team	Eva Pereira -Principal and DDSL George Fox -Head of Education and DDSL Joshua Hands – Head of Care and DSL

1. Legislation and best practice guidance

This policy has been written in collaboration with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Education (Independent School standards)
- Regulations 2014 Children Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Ratified 1991)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- National Minimum Standards (RSS) 2015
- Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- Health and Social Care Act 2008,
- Equality Act 2010
- Care Standards Act 2000
- DE&S/DoH Guidance for Restrictive Physical Interventions. How to provide safe services for people with Learning Disabilities and Autistic Spectrum Disorder 2002
- DoH Guidance on Permissible Forms of Control in Children’s Residential Care 1993
- DfE Use of Reasonable Force. Advice for Head Teachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013
- BILD Code of Practice for the use and reduction of restrictive physical interventions (third edition) 2010

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff working at Grateley House School and to all students and their families at Grateley House School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the Cambian Positive Behaviour policy for Grateley House School. The monitoring and review of off-site behaviours is the responsibility of the Principal in collaboration with the site’s senior management team.

Grateley House School aims to reduce restrictive practices and improve the quality of a child’s/young person’s life and that of the people around them, and to ensure that all children and young people who may have some difficulties with social understanding, social communication, flexibility of thinking and/or sensory issues and also other behaviours of concern are safeguarded at all times. All staff are expected to promote the social, physical and emotional well-being of all of the children and young people at Grateley House School and we aim for every individual to feel valued and respected, and to be treated fairly. Effective behaviour support to keep children and young people safe when they are off-site is essential for their safeguarding.

Our positive behaviour policy is intended to support and encourage best practice and reduce the need for physical intervention to be used; however, unsafe, high risk behaviour off-site can necessitate the need for physical intervention to ensure the safety and welfare of a young person

3. Policy Aims

The overall aim of the policy is to provide guidance to all stakeholders on how the school aims to maintain the safety of our children and young people, the staff working with them and others in the community by ensuring that students do not leave the school site without proper authorisation and due care.

The policy provides details of rules and procedures to be followed in relation to:

- any student who takes themselves off site without permission;
- students who have been granted off-site status;
- Students who in accordance with their IRA/BSP require to regulate off-site.

4. Context of Autism and Complex Behaviours

Students at GHS are diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). This diagnosis can mean that some students do not possess good road safety skills despite being educated on this. As a result, the surrounding roads pose a danger should any student leave the site unauthorised and without the necessary precautions being taken.

Having autism can also sometimes mean enduring a series of traumatic events, starting from a young age. For some, those events may add up to severe and persistent post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Given various difficulties, and the communication challenges children often experience, their PTSD can be particularly difficult to recognise and resolve.

A behaviour might be difficult to understand, especially for children and young people with autism, or where a child with autism also experienced trauma, but all are critical in the development of the behaviour support strategies.

Some of the children and young people may display behaviour of concern as a response to a complex pattern of needs, their learning difficulty or because of associated conditions. Those problems might be compounded by their additional difficulties including mental health, social deprivation or complex medical conditions.

A child or young person may present some specific and at times additional behaviours which may be a result of trauma. Trauma occurs when a child experiences an intense event that threatens or causes harm to his or her emotional and physical well-being. Some events are more likely to be traumatic than others and children can have very different responses to the same event. When a child/young person experiences trauma, it can affect their daily lives and their ability to get along with others.

Abuse, sexual assault, violence, natural disasters and wartime combat are all common causes of PTSD in the general population.

Among children with autism, though, less extreme, experiences e.g. fire alarms, the loss of a family pet, having to live without the family e.g. in a residential home / residential school, daily expectations including having to follow an education program/timetable or even a stranger's offhand comment can also be destabilising.

Children and young people with autism can also be traumatised by others' behaviour toward them.

All staff working with our children and young people must always be willing to look past disability if they are to provide a truly holistic approach to behaviour support.

Owing to their complex needs, children and young people sometimes behave in ways that others can find challenging or don't fully understand. On some occasions, this behaviour may be dangerous and can potentially result in harm to the person displaying the behaviour, to peers, staff or the public.

On other occasions the behaviour may constitute partial or even complete withdrawal, ongoing sadness and lack of engagement in education or other activities within the home or outside the provision.

This focus of this policy is to provide guidance for staff to be able to effectively support a child/young person when they are displaying unsafe behaviour by taking themselves off-site without permission.

Our approach to behaviour support for a student/young person who is taking themselves off-site is based upon the overriding principle that all behaviour is a form of communication. Improving communication may be helpful in reducing or at times even stopping behaviour of concern. However safeguarding concerns remain paramount and thus a robust response is required for dangerous off-site behaviour.

5. Students who take themselves off-site without staff authorisation

Grateley House School is not classed as a secure site and the narrow roads surrounding the school can be dangerous for pedestrians. Railway stations are dangerous areas. Grateley station is in close proximity to the school and some autistic students will not possess good safety skills when visiting the station. It is thus important that no student goes to the station without authorisation and due care for their safety.

In order to safeguard our children and young people all students are required to adhere to the rule of not going off-site without staff authorisation and all students and their parents are required to sign the off-site safety behavior contract provided in Annex A.

Should a student breach the contract included with this policy by taking themselves off-site without proper authorisation the following tiered response will be actioned:

- (i) In the first instance of leaving site without authorisation – parents/carers will be informed and a meeting held between student, key worker and tutor will follow. The student may lose privileges or have a sanction imposed.
- (ii) Following a second occurrence of leaving site without due authorisation – parent /carers will be informed and a meeting with the student, keyworker, the tutor and a senior teacher or house manager will be held. Students may be subject to tougher sanctions.
- (iii) If the behaviour persists, parents/carers will be invited into school for a meeting with a Senior Leader, the tutor and the keyworker. The student is also expected to attend the meeting. It will be made clear to both the student and their family that repeated dangerous and high-risk behaviour off-site could put the student's placement at risk.

Although a tiered response is preferred, it may be necessary, depending on circumstances, for the response to go straight to the meeting stage. In each tier a site wide debrief will be conducted with a student if they leave site without authorisation in order to ascertain the motivating factors, trends and patterns of behaviour.

Grateley House School believes in a positive behaviour approach to student behaviour. It is however essential that the school is confident that they are able to maintain the safety of the student at all times. Should the school not be able to provide this due to a student regularly putting themselves and others at risk by taking themselves off-site without staff authorisation, then the school may seek to find a placement which is better able to cater for the profile of the student.

6. Students who have been granted off-site status

Grateley House School aims to build independence in students and equip them for life after school. In this light, students in post-sixteen education are awarded off-site status. This allows the students to increase their independence by going off site without staff accompaniment.

In order to prepare the student for this, the following procedure is followed:

- The student receives road safety training and communication awareness;

- Staff ensure that the student is aware of contingency measures to follow should they feel at risk when off-site;
- The student will be taken off site with a member of staff;
- Following this the student will go off-site and be shadowed by a member of staff. (Both of these will be repeated 5 times allowing the student's confidence to increase;
- The student will then go off-site on their own with clear instructions in relation to timings and when they need to contact the school. Both their contact number and the school numbers will be exchanged and checked;
- Staff will check that students are aware of the location of the police or how to contact them should they feel threatened at any time. Immediate contact should also be made with the school;
- Once a student is confident with going out independently in one area skills are transferred to other areas.

7. Students who require to go off-site to regulate

Grateley House School accepts that some students will require to be allowed off-site in order to self-regulate. This allowance will be included in their individual risk assessment and their behaviour support plan (IRA/BSP).

The procedure for a student going off site to regulate is as follows:

- The strategy must be agreed and be written into their IRA/BSP;
- Students must wear a high viz jacket when they leave the school site;
- Students must be accompanied by a member of staff and be 'eyes on' at all times.

The policy is due for review annually.

ANNEX A**GRATELEY HOUSE SCHOOL STUDENT OFF-SITE SAFETY POLICY CONTRACT**

Name of parent/carer:

Name of student:

Year Group:

This is to certify that I/we understand and accept that Grateley House School is not a secure site. In that light I/we agree to abide by the terms of the Grateley House School Student Off-site Safety Policy.

We agree to support Grateley House School in ensuring that our son/daughter does not engage in dangerous off-site behavior. We accept that an escalated response will be initiated in line with the policy should our child leave the school site without permission, and that should their behaviour compromise their safety and the safety of other young people and staff, their placement could be at risk.

Signed by parent:

Date:

Signed by student:

Date: