Eagle House School (Sutton)
Rewards and Consequences Policy

1. BACKGROUND

Eagle House School (Sutton) is an independent day school, which provides an appropriate education for secondary-aged pupils who hold a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health & Care plan for an autism spectrum disorder and associated social and communication difficulties. This will include children and young people with moderate or severe learning difficulties. This policy is also applicable to Eagle House 6th Form (Strawberry Lodge) which is registered as part of the main school in Sutton.

Eagle House School (Sutton) aspires to high standards in all areas of education for its pupils, and as such strives to address government initiatives to improve behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning within school, whilst considering issues that arise for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Due to the nature of the pupils who attend EHS, some of them may present with difficult and often challenging behaviour. Staff understand that such behaviour is a form of communication and arises from a lack of social understanding, a lack of awareness of behavioural expectations, problems with seeking or accepting help from others and heightened levels of stress and anxiety which lead to fight/flight/freeze responses. Pupils may also have developed patterns of behaviour that, in the past, have successfully led to having their needs met in the short term but in doing so have resulted in behaviour that may be unacceptable or inappropriate in a school setting e.g. being physically aggressive, arguing or shutting down. Many pupils are not spontaneously motivated to develop socially acceptable behaviour as they are often unaware of social rules.

The staff team are fully aware that challenging behaviour is unacceptable whatever its cause, but understand that for Eagle House School pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders, empathy and explicit teaching of socially acceptable behaviours, good learning strategies and communication skills are needed to build self esteem, appropriate behaviour, learning and a sense of community.

2. REWARDS

Eagle House School places high priority on acknowledging, recording, rewarding and celebrating achievements, however small. Achievements are valued and shared with staff, peers and families/carers.

In order for a reward system to be effective it must be meaningful to a pupil. It is necessary for a pupil to have the cognitive and emotional development required to understand delayed rewards. The rate of rewards each pupil requires will be based on each pupil's individual needs. Some pupils need frequent immediate rewards; others are more able to self-manage their behaviour and access rewards less frequently. It is important that the Eagle House School approach is sufficiently adaptable to ensure that every pupil experiences rewards that are meaningful and that recognise their developmental levels and cognitive understanding.

To be effective a reward system needs to be:

- Explicit and understandable

- Concrete/tangible

- Paired with positive praise, language and gestures

- Consistently applied

- Highly motivating and meaningful for pupils

- Supported by parents/carers and staff

It is not possible in a school such as Eagle House School to use a "one size fits all" approach. The reward system needs to be flexible and highly differentiated to the individual needs of pupils to ensure it results in successful learners who have high levels of self esteem.

3. LOGICAL and NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

Eagle House School uses logical and natural consequences that address the function of the behaviour within a non-punitive framework. For example if a pupil throws equipment on the floor, the logical and natural consequence is that they will help to tidy it up.

Where pupils have an appropriate level of cognitive ability, logical and natural consequences enable staff to support them to 'make the right decision' and 'do the right thing' by explaining to them the natural and logical consequences of a choice they may have to make: If you choose to do X then Y will happen but if you choose to do A then B will happen. E.g. "If you throw the water on the floor then you will have to help clear it up, if you pour yourself a glass of water then you can have the drink you want" however we always have to be mindful of what is reinforcing the behaviour so that we are not inadvertently reinforcing the inappropriate behaviour.

The advantages of logical and natural consequences are that they:

- Provide powerful opportunities to teach alternative behaviours

- Leave the pupil with a feeling of control

- Provide choices within firm limits

- Are tied to the time and place of the incident

- Are similar to what would happen to an adult in a comparable situation

- Are never used in a punitive way

- Teach pupils to take responsibility for their choices

- Teach that when an action occurs, a consequence follows

Natural consequences are not used to teach pupils appropriate alternative behaviour; they are part of the process of supporting pupils to learn appropriate social behaviours and to make amends for any inappropriate behaviour.

The use of logical and natural consequences must address the function of the behaviour, be appropriate and fully understood by the pupils, taking into account their developmental levels and cognitive abilities.

There also needs to be a system in place that will reward pupils making appropriate choices, so that the motivation to engage in appropriate behaviours is higher than the motivation to engage

in inappropriate behaviours.

This requires very careful and skilful intervention from the class team and Curriculum Access Team.

Through functional behaviour assessment the conditions under which certain behaviour occurs and does not occur are systematically assessed to gain a better understanding of them and to identify ways to shift the focus to teaching socially appropriate replacement skills. This in turn increases the opportunities for pupils to access rewards and learn. In some cases challenging behaviour may be ignored in a planned way, as the team involved know that for that particular child, this is the most appropriate consequence and that any interaction may reinforce the unwanted behaviour and trigger a repetition. Good inter-staff communication is essential to make this strategy effective e.g. in the event of a member of staff coming across a situation where a colleague is involved in managing challenging behaviour, they should ask if their colleague requires help in order to ensure behaviour management strategies are not unwittingly compromised.

Physical intervention is used only when challenging behaviour threatens the safety of the pupil, peers, or staff and to prevent serious damage to equipment and is never used as a punishment.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF REWARD SYSTEMS

A foundation strategy throughout the school is the use of general and focused praise and readiness to celebrate every success as and when it happens. Class teams supported by the CA Team consider each pupil and work through and agree answers to the following questions:

- What objective is to be targeted?

- How will the desirable behaviour or learning objective be explicitly taught?

- What reward would be meaningful?

- How often and in what circumstances the reward will be given?

- How will this strategy be shared with the team, the pupil, the parents/carers and the wider school community?

- When and how will the strategy be reviewed?

It is essential that rewards are meaningful and motivating for the individual pupil. Reward systems need to be reviewed periodically where it is identified by the team that the pupil is not engaging with the programme, and in such circumstances the team need to devise a new scheme.

It is important that toys, activities and other elements that form part of a sensory regulation programme are not used as a reward as they are essential to the pupil and as such need to be accessed according to the recommendations of the Occupational Therapist rather than earned.

Rewards currently used include:

- Small toys or objects used as immediate reinforcers

- Particular favourite items

- Stickers and stamps

- Preferred activities e.g. computer time

- Ticks on a chart

- Certificates

- Offsite activity for larger rewards e.g. Karting

However, it is important to be aware of the following factors when using rewards with pupils who have Autism Spectrum Disorders:

- Reinforcer dependency e.g. responses occur if the reward is present, not through understanding of the situation

- Obsessional interest in rewards

- Rewards may lose their motivational power and efficacy quite quickly

- Hypersensitivity to stickers/stamps

- Reward consumes the pupil's attention to the exclusion of anything else

- Rigid and inflexible application of rules of reward system

- Dependence on the routine of getting a reward without understanding what must be done to achieve one.

Pupil absences are often a cause for concern. In special schools such as Eagle House School, parents/carers are usually highly motivated to both place their children within the school and ensure attendance. In those few cases where a pupil is persistently absent this frequently signals a problem at home or a specific anxiety the pupil has about attending school e.g. a change in routine. Such matters are dealt with through sensitive involvement with the families or carers. However, good attendance should be and is celebrated, especially if this signals the successful overcoming of difficult issues. At Eagle House School (Sutton) certificates may be used to reward good attendance.

5. STRATEGY FOR DESIGN AND USE OF CERTIFICATES

Certificates that are to be meaningful and easily understood by pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders need to:

- Be visually appealing

- Be adapted to reduce the risk of overstimulation from complex visual input, making it easy for the pupil to understand what is being celebrated

- Identify the skill being celebrated explicitly and clearly for instance by using photographs

- Support literacy development at all levels through the explicit labelling of the skill being celebrated, supported by writing with symbols where appropriate

- Be linked to SMSC and the school curriculum, to ensure consistency in the approach of the school

- Be linked to the celebration of individual pupil's progress in the areas that are particularly challenging for them such as communication, social skills and flexibility of thinking

- Be valued by the pupils, staff and parents/carers

Copies are made of the certificates and kept in the pupil's records but the original is given to the child to take home and share with their families or carers.

6. STAR/PUPIL OF THE WEEK AND END OF YEAR AWARDS ASSEMBLY

Each class will select a pupil to receive the 'Star of the Week 'or "Pupil of the Week" award in order to promote an awareness and recognition of positive behaviours in themselves and others. A Star/Pupil of the Week slip is completed describing why the award has been given. At the end of the school year the achievements of all pupils are celebrated in an awards assembly. All pupils receive a medal for a specified achievement and some also receive a small trophy to mark a particularly outstanding achievement.

7. POLICY REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Head of Education supported by the other members of the school's Senior Leadership Team to monitor this policy. It should be reviewed periodically or when new legislation is published. The Head of Education reports on Eagle House School (Sutton) matters to the CEO/Directors.

8. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTATION

- ❖ Behaviour Policy

- ❖ Physical Interventions and Challenging Behaviour Policy

- ❖ Curriculum Policy

- ❖ Attendance Policy

- ❖ Anti-Bullying Policy

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