



# Larwood Academy Trust

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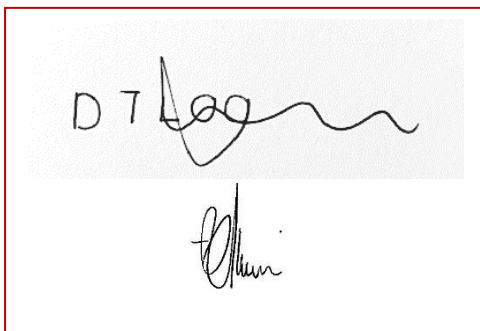
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# BEHAVIOUR POLICY



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## **LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

### **CONTENTS**

1. Background
2. Rationale
3. Promoting Positive Behaviour
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. Larwood Academy Trust Aims
6. Specific Support - Working With Individual / Small Groups
7. Reasoning Behind Offering Counselling Services For Pupils
8. Disability - SEN
9. Supervision
10. Daily Routine
11. Exclusions
12. Absconding
13. Bullying Or Racist Incidents
14. Searching, Screening and Confiscating
15. Procedures and Behaviour Support
16. Reasonable Force and Positive Physical Contact
17. RPI (Restrictive Physical Intervention)
18. Staff Training
19. Links With Home - Support For Parents And Carers
20. Complaints Procedures
21. Links with Other Polices

### 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This Policy is a statement of good practice and has been developed as a result of discussion and consultation between Senior Leadership Teams, Staff, Trustees, parents and pupils.
- 1.2 **The policy takes into account the requirements of local, national and statutory guidance – documents including:**
- “Use of Reasonable Force” – advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies (DFE - 2013) – relates to education and inspectors Act 2006.
  - Model Restrictive Physical Interaction Policy for Schools (Hertfordshire 2010, 2016)
  - Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention 2019
  - Advice, guidance and recommendations from OFSTED – School Inspection Reports
  - Education Act 1996
  - School Standards and Framework Act 1998
  - Education Act 2002, 2011
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Behaviour in Schools-Updated 2023 (advice-DFE)
  - Keeping children safe in education 2023
  - Searching, screening and confiscation advise for schools (DFE 2023)
  - Suspension and permanent exclusion (DFE guidance 2023)
  - Preventing and tackling bullying 2017

### 2. RATIONALE

Our Trust vision and approach to the leadership and the management of our pupils is underpinned by a philosophy that is guided by our pupils, parents, and staff. It is challenged and supported by our Board of Trustees. We also ensure that we are compliant with the various groups that we work with (for example, Hertfordshire County Council and Ofsted) therefore:

#### OUR PUPILS WILL:

- Be encouraged in a variety of ways to engage in all activities to promote their progress, improve their behaviour, and make the necessary changes to engage in their own education.
- Experience consistent boundaries and expectations with staff trained in Hertfordshire Steps. We expect them to make changes!
- Value themselves and others and be able to set themselves realistic goals, and targets. We believe that our pupils can improve, and we aim to help them believe this as well!
- Develop a sense of pride in themselves, their work and being part of a team. They know that we enjoy working with them and hope they enjoy working with us!
- Go achieve all they set out to achieve and become life-long learners

#### OUR STAFF:

## **LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

- Are encouraging, empathetic, well trained and love working with our pupils and will go the 'extra mile' to help pupils make the changes they need to make and appreciate that they are preparing pupils for jobs that don't even exist right now!
- Promote the values of respect, responsibility, honesty, hard work, equality, and appreciation of differences and provide pupils with the opportunity to express themselves in a safe, productive, and reassuring manner and will promote educational development in the widest sense including intellect, creativity, and physical development
- Promote the role of the family-whatever shape or form that may take and provide a well-resourced, safe, and welcoming environment for everybody
- Use Hertfordshire Steps as a behaviour management process to enable our pupils to become able to self-regulate more often and with independence
- Model the behaviour that we expect from pupils so that they can undertake the future roles that they would like and make a meaningful contribution to their communities and society and liaise with parents, and other professionals to promote the very best outcomes for all our pupils

### **OUR VALUES**

**Our Trust ethos encourages a range of values, to support our vision and purpose and includes:**

Honesty, equality, resilience, empathy, determination, democratic processes, taking responsibility, respect property and others, respect for the law and British values and tolerance. We expect to these values in our day-to-day interactions, such as assemblies, class discussions, play times, lunchtimes and via our curriculum provision.

### **THE TRUSTEES AND STAFF BELIEVE THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY SHOULD:**

- Show respect for one another,
- Avoid confrontation by approaching conflict and challenging behaviour constructively,
- Work together to enhance everyone's self-esteem,
- Provide a structured and ordered environment where pupils will feel safe.

### **PUPIL ARE EXPECTED TO:**

- Be in the right place at the right time and ready to learn.
- Respect other people's feelings and avoid confrontation.
- Keep hands, feet, and hurtful remarks to themselves.
- Respect belongings, school property and school buildings.
- Be safe when moving around school.

**3. AS A TRUST IT IS OUR AIM TO PROMOTE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR IN OUR PUPILS SO AS TO:**

- Establish a stable and safe social and learning environment
- develop the self-discipline of our pupils, encouraging them to be responsible for their own behaviour and actions and show appropriate respect for the school environment and its resources
- Involve pupils in discussing their behaviour and enable them to reflect, repair and restore (RRR)
- Some pupils may have experienced rejection previously. Handling by staff is sensitive to this and will therefore differentiate between negative attitudes towards pupils and their behaviour.
- Staff aim to look beyond behaviour to meet the emotional, social, and behavioural needs. All staff will be trained in Hertfordshire STEPS (STEP On and STEP UP)
- During consultation with parents, they informed about school decisions and policies on behaviour and discipline.
- Staff are encouraged to use words of praise and encouragement, show positive body language, use smiles and positive touch and act as role models.
- Staff to use planned ignoring for some behaviour, but to act upon behaviour that is dangerous, damaging, disruptive and unsafe and as such will take action to de-escalate, discourage, prevent and stop this if necessary. This will be achieved through the use of appropriate behaviour management strategies, and the fundamental principles of **STEPS**:
  - **Continuous focus on de-escalation (including the script)**
  - **Disempowering behaviour**
  - **Positive Phrasing**
  - **Limited choice**

**REWARDS**

**FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR WE WILL OFFER YOU:**

Across the Trust, we recognise positive behaviour through praise, affirmation, and modelling. Positive behaviour is never taken for granted but is actively taught and reinforced. A range of rewards are consistently applied throughout the school and could include, praise, engaging activities, positive communication/ feedback to parents/ carers, privileges, and responsibilities. Staff, pupils, and parents are clear on what behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable and the positive or negative consequences that will follow. Both schools have their own specific reward systems that are age appropriate.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR WILL BE:**

Reminders of rules and expectations, warning of consequences, detentions (playtimes/ after school) Internal exclusion. In some exceptional circumstances, and when all other measures

4

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## **LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

have been unsuccessful, it may be necessary to exclude a pupil from school. This process will be carried out in line with the HCC Exclusion Guidelines.

### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **4.1. Trustees**

The Board of Trustees and Executive Headteacher will ensure that there is a Behaviour Policy in place and review its content and implementation annually.

#### **4.2. Headteacher / Head of Schools**

The Headteachers/Head of Schools will oversee the implementation of the Behaviour Policy, evaluate its success periodically with staff, and report to Trustees termly on behaviour and well-being.

#### **4.3. Deputy Headteachers**

The Deputy Headteachers are responsible for continuously monitoring behaviour by scrutinising incident forms, violent incidents, bullying etc. and evaluating the impact/ effectiveness of interventions

#### **4.4. Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**

**Members of the Senior Leadership Teams will Ensure that:**

- The Behaviour Policy is updated and shared with staff.
- Staff are supported in implementing strategies to support pupils.
- Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) are in place for pupils needing extra support
- Progression booklets are in place for pupils needing extra support
- The BSPs are regularly monitored and evaluated.
- Training is offered and up to date for all staff. This is completed via annual refresher training alongside termly updates.

#### **4.5. Whole School Staff**

All staff across the academy will work together to implement the Behaviour Policy, using a consistent approach and acting as positive role models. This policy has been put together in consultation with all school staff and parents who have all had the opportunity to share ideas, strategies, and best practice.

### **5. LARWOOD TRUST AIMS**

**BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING:** As a Trust we believe that pupils need to learn positive behaviours and take an active role in being responsible for how they behaviour and their actions. Every available opportunity is made to teach, model, and promote positive behaviour, raise confidence and self-esteem, and develop personal, emotional, and social skills.

## LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY

**PREVENTION:** Preventative planning and intervention at an organisational, classroom and individual level can help alleviate situations by allowing pupils to remain composed, maintain their self-esteem and continue their activities in a positive way. Opportunities are intentionally planned and delivered through both the formal and informal school curriculum.

**POSITIVE ROLE MODELLING:** Building positive relationships with staff and pupils. Modelling good and rewarding behaviour.

**PSHE and ASSEMBLIES:** Whole school termly topics that address social and emotional wellbeing. Whole school assembly occurs at least once a week where staff and students share weekly achievements and pupils are rewarded for their achievements

**STRUCTURE AND ROUTINES:** Whole school/class and individual routines are clear and consistent to promote and improve positive attitudes to learning. This is achieved through imaginative planning that takes into account engagement, different learning styles and visual support strategies. Class and some individual timetables may be used to support pupils

**DINNER TIMES AND PLAYTIMES:** Structures are put in place to promote and develop calm dinner and playtimes. Staff are strategically deployed and timetabled to ensure engaging activities.

**MUSIC AND THE PERFORMING ARTS:** Planned curriculum opportunities are in place to raise self-esteem. Across the Trust we have a range of staff available to lead on singing, music, and the performing arts.

**PE CURRICULUM:** Specialist PE teachers deliver inclusive PE and School Sport sessions across the Trust. Emphasis is placed on developing confidence, core skills, partner work, team games/building. These happen through intra and inter school opportunities, links with local mainstream and other special schools, opportunities for team competitions, festivals, and celebrations.

### **6. SPECIFIC SUPPORT: WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS/SMALL GROUPS OF PUPILS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS**

We recognise that some pupils require extra support/differentiated opportunities in order for their specific needs to be met.

**MANAGING TRANSITION:** Many of our pupils find transition times difficult i.e., arriving at/leaving school, lunchtimes/moving between lessons, lunch times. Support is put in place using adult support upon arrival and after lessons, playtimes, lunch times and departure. These strategies help pupils to cope with these transitional times more successfully during the school day and transferring to our schools, secondary schools and further education.

## LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY

**VISUAL SUPPORT:** Positive behaviour reminders such as behaviour escalation charts are displayed in classroom including up and coming trips and events, criteria for achieving rewards, classroom rules and general information.

**SENSORY SUPPORT:** Many of our pupils that have sensory needs, which can sometimes result in them being unsettled or displaying challenging behaviour. It is important for staff to work together to recognise the difference between sensory issues and challenging behaviour. Sensory needs should form part of their BSP.

**PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS:** Specialist provision in Protective Behaviours is planned and delivered to ensure pupils know how to keep themselves safe and seek support if needed. Targeted support is provided for individual or small groups of pupils to support understanding and the recognition of their feelings and the feelings of others.

**BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLANS:** These are produced in consultation with the form tutors'/ class teacher, teaching assistants and pupils if appropriate and are updated at regular intervals. Behaviour support plans for new pupils are completed in the first six weeks from when they start school. They are all recorded and updated on Behaviour Watch.

**EXTERNAL AGENCY INTERVENTION:** We make use of a variety of external agencies to assist our students with specialised needs such as speech and language, counselling, motor skills etc. difficulties. Such students are withdrawn from their classrooms and offered 1:1 support by specialists. Agencies include educational psychologists, the newly formed Butterfly room, speech and language therapist and local police force.

**INTENAL INTERVENTION:** There are a variety of therapies, such as; Pastoral support, Interventions and Adaptive meaningful opportunities (AMO), The Hive, Space Hub, 1-1 Interventions for all pupils across the trust.

### 7. REASONING BEHIND OFFERING A COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR PUPILS

- To enhance pupils' development of self-esteem, growth of independence and progress as learners,
- To change and modify pupils' behaviour through the encouragement of positive responses, attitudes, and appropriate consequences,
- To challenge behaviour that is self-defeating, destructive, or dangerous,
- To set clear and understandable limits and boundaries,
- To establish and maintain a secure environment with predictable events, timings, and consistency of relationships,
- For pupils to understand the consequences and experience the benefits of their own behaviour and to gain appropriate self-control over such behaviour,
- To develop and maintain an educational environment in which a diverse range of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties feel safe from abuse, harassment, and bullying,

7

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## LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY

- Teach children more effective ways to manage their emotions and behaviours in order to prepare them for a successful rewarding future where they can become responsible members of society.
- The Butterfly room, based at Larwood, offer services to pupils across the Trust as well as our Mental Health Support Team that works across the Trust

### 8. DISABILITY – SEN

This policy acknowledges the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for children within disabilities and SEN. This includes pupils who have an Educational Health Care Plan for social, emotional, and mental health reasons. It also includes pupils who have other formally recognised or suspected needs such as autism (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiance disorder, Tourette's and other needs not mentioned here.

### 9. SUPERVISION

Pupils are supervised at all times. The staff team will decide upon the appropriate level of supervision by taking account of the type of activity, the age of the pupils and their location. On occasions, if pupils are in need of taking some time away from class / situation or they are becoming increasingly agitated by the presence of the adult or a peer, the class team in the corridors outside or in a safe allocated area may remotely supervise them

### 10. DAILY ROUTINE

Schools will maintain a framework of timed events in order to provide a secure structure for every day. This information will be shared through timetables and notification of current and upcoming events.

### 11. EXCLUSIONS and SUSPENSIONS

**As always, this is the last resort and other avenues are explored before this type of sanction is used.**

Each school has their own designated room/ area that is used for the purpose of internal supervision and is devised in such a way that students can work their way out of this environment after a set period. The impact is positive, and pupils complete the same work as they would in class. Use of exclusion is always in line with current county guidelines and legal requirements. Pupils may be excluded for fixed term temporary periods or permanently at the discretion of the Head Teacher / Head of Schools in consultation with the Executive Headteacher and take into consideration individual circumstances. Following any suspension, reintegration meeting must be held with parents, students and a member of senior leadership team to ensure the targets are set, interventions agreed and reasonable adaptations are made to ensure the best outcome for students and staff.

## LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Malicious or false allegations against staff are taken very seriously and could lead to potential or permanent exclusion depending on the circumstances of the case. If this is a sanction that might be applied, the Trust will consider specifying this offence along with the other possible offences which might lead to a suspension or a permanent exclusion.

This government supports headteachers in using suspension and permanent exclusion as a sanction when warranted as part of creating a calm, safe, and supportive environment in which pupils can learn and thrive. To achieve this, suspension and permanent exclusion are sometimes a necessary part of a functioning system, where it is accepted that not all pupil behaviour can be amended or remedied by pastoral processes, or consequences within the school.

### **The headteacher's/head of School's powers to use exclusion**

Only the headteacher of a school can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year), or permanently excluded.

A pupil's behaviour outside school can be considered grounds for a suspension or permanent exclusion. Any decision of a headteacher, including suspension or permanent exclusion, must be made in line with the principles of administrative law, i.e., that it is: lawful (with respect to the legislation relating directly to suspensions and permanent exclusions and a school's wider legal duties); reasonable; fair; and proportionate.

When establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or permanent exclusion decision the headteacher must apply the civil standard of proof, i.e., 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt.' This means that the headteacher should accept that something happened if it is more likely that it happened than that it did not happen. The headteacher must take account of their legal duty of care when sending a pupil home following an exclusion.

Headteachers should also take the pupil's views into account, considering these in light of their age and understanding, before deciding to exclude, unless it would not be appropriate to do so. They should inform the pupil about how their views have been factored into any decision made. Where relevant, the pupil should be given support to express their view, including through advocates such as parents or, if the pupil has one, a social worker. Whilst an exclusion may still be an appropriate sanction, the headteacher should also take account of any contributing factors identified after an incident of misbehaviour has occurred

### **Suspension**

A suspension, where a pupil is temporarily removed from the school, is an essential behaviour management tool that should be set out within a school's behaviour policy. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods **up to 14 times** (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year). A suspension does not have to be for a continuous period.

A suspension may be used to provide a clear signal of what is unacceptable behaviour as part of the school's behaviour policy and show a pupil that their current behaviour is putting them at risk of permanent exclusion. Where suspensions are becoming a regular occurrence for a

## LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY

pupil, headteachers and schools should consider whether suspension alone is an effective sanction for the pupil and whether additional strategies need to be put in place to address behaviour.

It is important that during a suspension, pupils still receive their education. Headteachers should take steps to ensure that work is set and marked for pupils during the first five school days of a suspension. This can include utilising any online pathways.

The school's legal duties to pupils with disabilities or special educational needs remain in force, for

example, to make reasonable adjustments in how they support disabled pupils during this period. Any time a pupil is sent home due to disciplinary reasons and asked to log on or utilise online pathways should always be recorded as a suspension.

A suspension can also be for parts of the school day. For example, if a pupil's behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive, they may be suspended from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period. The legal requirements relating to the suspension, such as the headteacher's duty to notify parents, apply in all cases. Lunchtime suspensions are counted as half a school day in determining whether a governing board meeting is triggered.

The law does not allow for extending a suspension or 'converting' a suspension into a permanent exclusion. In exceptional cases, usually where further evidence has come to light, a further suspension may be issued to begin immediately after the first period ends; or a permanent exclusion may be issued to begin immediately after the end of the suspension.

### **Permanent exclusions**

A permanent exclusion is when a pupil is no longer allowed to attend a school (unless the pupil is reinstated). The decision to exclude a pupil permanently should only be taken:

- in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and
- where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others such as staff or pupils in the school.

For any permanent exclusion, headteachers should take reasonable steps to ensure that work is set and marked for pupils during the first five school days where the pupil will not be attending alternative provision. Any appropriate referrals to support services or notifying key workers (such as a pupil's social worker) should also be considered.

### **Cancelling exclusions**

The headteacher may cancel any exclusion that has already begun, but this should only be done where it has not yet been reviewed by the governing board. Where an exclusion is cancelled, then:

- Parents, the governing board, and the LA should be notified without delay and, if relevant, the social worker and VSH;
- Parents should be offered the opportunity to meet with the headteacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the exclusion being cancelled.
- Schools should report to the governing board once per term on the number of exclusions which have been cancelled. This should include the circumstances and reasons for the cancellation enabling governing boards to have appropriate oversight and the pupil should be allowed back into school.

### **Off-rolling and unlawful exclusions**

Telling or forcing a pupil to leave school, or not allowing them to attend school, is a suspension (if temporary) or permanent exclusion (if permanent). Whenever a pupil is made to leave school, or forbidden from attending school, on disciplinary grounds, this must be done in accordance with the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012

Suspending a pupil for a short period of time, such as half a day, is permissible, however, the formal suspension process must be followed. Each disciplinary suspension and permanent exclusion must be confirmed to the parents in writing with notice of the reasons for the suspension or permanent exclusion.

Any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods, must be formally recorded. It would also be unlawful to exclude a pupil simply because they have SEN or a disability that the school feels it is unable to meet, or for a reason such as: academic attainment/ability; or the failure of a pupil to meet specific conditions before they are reinstated, such as to attend a reintegration meeting.

If any of these unlawful exclusions are carried out and lead to the deletion of a pupil's name from the register, this is known as 'off-rolling'. An informal or unofficial exclusion, such as sending a pupil home 'to cool off', is unlawful when it does not follow the formal school exclusion process and regardless of whether it occurs with the agreement of parents.

A further example of off-rolling would be exercising undue influence over a parent to remove their child from the school under the threat of a permanent exclusion and encouraging them to choose Elective Home Education or to find another school place.

If a parent feels pressured into electively home educating their child or that the suspension or permanent exclusion procedures have not been followed, they can follow the school's complaints procedure with the governing board

Pupils may be permanently excluded for the following reasons:

- Violent and/or aggressive or unsafe behaviour toward self or others.
- Prolonged period of inappropriate behaviour or abuse related to disability
- Persistent and prolonged refusal to follow school rules.
- A sudden and unexpected one-off incident which is out of character for the pupil, but which the school is unable to accept.
- A gradual deterioration in behaviour, which has become unacceptable either because of the location of the incident or the frequency.
- Drug and solvent abuse or arson
- Physical assault against a pupil or adult
- Persistent bullying or racist abuse or abuse against sexual orientation or gender reassignment

**Pupils may be excluded for the following reasons:**

## LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY

- Controlled and deliberate violence or throwing missiles with intent to injure.
- Leaving the school site or removal from agreed supervised areas
- Bringing dangerous or illegal objects to school.
- Significant damage.
- Potentially dangerous activities i.e., climbing onto the roof.
- Interference with fire alarms, equipment, or phones.

### PROCEDURES:

- Work is sent home/ assigned online, to be completed by pupils who have been excluded. Parents often take other action to ensure being at home is not enjoyable.
- Parents are expected to bring pupils back to school after a period of exclusion.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to explain their conduct and can be involved in deciding consequences when appropriate. A decision will be made by a member of SLT to decide if the pupils is ready for reintegration
- When pupils are isolated from a group they will be supervised by an allocated adult.
- Pupils will not be forced to eat consequently, nor will they be deprived of food. Pupils will not be deprived of visits from parents, relatives, social workers, or other professionals.
- Pupils will not be deprived of telephone calls or medical attention. The use of inappropriate clothing will not be used as a consequence, but shoes maybe removed if the child is likely to kick and hurt others.
- Deliberate damage of equipment or the school building will result in the pupil being asked to consider how repair or replacement might be arranged and, if safe to do so, assisting with repair. Contribution from “pocket money” may be sought. Ultimately, the responsibility will remain with the pupil’s parents or guardians.

### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

It is understood that many families will have previous experience of their son/daughter being excluded from school. This may have been a stressful and difficult situation. The Trust does not see temporary exclusion as an indication that placement at the school is in danger. It is a tool to reinforce boundaries set at school and offers a period for cooling off. Pupils are required to return to school with their parents and will be expected to face the issues, which may have caused the problems, and to make right damage to property or relationships, and undertake to ensure behaviour is not repeated.

### 12. ABSCONDING

Absconding relates to three defined events:

#### REMOVAL FROM SUPERVISION INSIDE THE BUILDING OR DURING PE LESSONS (ON-SITE)

If a child absconds from supervision but remains inside the building, or in view during a PE

lesson, then a member of the class team, preferably the Classroom Assistant, should closely monitor/ track the individual.

**REMOVAL FROM SUPERVISION, ON- SITE BUT OUTSIDE:** Any member of staff who notices this happening should track the child, keeping a safe distance and use the radio to inform a member of the SLT. It will be the responsibility of the support team to then take over tracking the child so the other member of staff can return to their duties.

**ABSCONDING (OFF-SITE):** Absconding refers to when a child has taken themselves off the school premises, or if a child is unaccounted for and their location is unknown. At this point, a member of the SLT must be informed immediately. If necessary, the Head or Deputy will contact the local Police station and the pupil's parents or guardians.

### 13. BULLYING OR RACIST INCIDENTS

Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, we can help to create safe, disciplined environments where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Bullying or racist incidents must be logged on the individual child's record log as an incident. Bullying and racism is taken extremely seriously and will be dealt with in a firm manner.

### 14. SEARCHING, SCREENING and CONFISCATING

In line with DFE advice (2023) pupils can be searched with or without consent.

#### SEARCHING

School staff can search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees. Headteachers and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item. Prohibited items are: knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, 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). Headteachers and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school rules, which has been identified in the rules as an item, which may be searched for.

The headteacher should ensure that a sufficient number of staff are appropriately trained in how to lawfully and safely search a pupil who is not co-operating, so that these trained staff can support and advise other members of staff if this situation arises. However, it is vital that all staff understand their rights and the rights of the pupil who is being searched.

The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should be informed of any searching incidents where the member of staff had reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil was in possession of a prohibited item as listed in paragraph

## LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY

The staff member should also involve the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) without delay if they

believe that a search has revealed a safeguarding risk.

If the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) finds evidence that any child is at risk of harm, they should make a referral to children's social care services immediately (as set out in part 1 of Keeping children safe in education). The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should then consider the circumstances of the pupil who has been searched to assess the incident against potential wider safeguarding concerns.

### SEARCHING WITH CONSENT

#### SCHOOLS' COMMON LAW POWERS TO SEARCH:

School staff can search pupils with their consent for any item.

Also note:

- Schools are not required to have formal written consent from the pupil for this sort of search – it is enough for the teacher to ask the pupil to turn out his or her pockets or if the teacher can look in the pupil's bag or locker and for the pupil to agree.
- Schools should make clear in their school behaviour policy and in communications to parents and pupils what items are banned.
- If a member of staff suspects a pupil has a banned item in his/her possession, they can instruct the pupil to turn out his or her pockets or bag and if the pupil refuses, the teacher can apply an appropriate punishment as set out in the school's behaviour policy.
- A pupil refusing to co-operate with such a search raises the same kind of issues as where a pupil refuses to stay in a detention or refuses to stop any other unacceptable behaviour when instructed by a member of staff – in such circumstances, schools can apply an appropriate disciplinary penalty.
- The list of prohibited items is:
  - knives and weapons;
  - alcohol;
  - illegal drugs;
  - stolen items;
  - 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 property of; any person (including the pupil).
  - an article specified in regulations including tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks; and pornographic images.
- Being in possession of a prohibited item – especially knives, weapons, illegal drugs or stolen items – may mean that the pupil is involved, or at risk of being involved, in anti social or criminal behaviour including gang involvement, and in some cases may be involved in child criminal exploitation. A search may play a vital role in identifying pupils who may benefit from early help or a referral to the local authority children's



social care services. See [Keeping children safe in education 2023](#) and working together to safeguard children.

### DURING THE SEARCH

#### EXTENT OF THE SEARCH – CLOTHES, POSSESSIONS, DESKS AND LOCKERS. WHAT THE LAW SAYS:

An appropriate location for the search should be found. Where possible, this should be away from other pupils. The search must only take place on the school premises or where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, for example on a school trip.

#### Who

The law states the member of staff conducting the search must be of the same sex as the pupil being searched. There must be another member of staff present as a witness to the search.

There is a limited exception to this rule. This is that a member of staff can search a pupil of the opposite sex and/or without a witness present only:

- if the member of staff carrying out the search reasonably believes there is risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency; and
- in the time available, it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out by a member of staff who is same sex as the pupil or it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff.

When a member of staff conducts a search without a witness they should immediately report this to another member of staff, and ensure a record of the search is kept.

- The person conducting the search may not require the pupil to remove any clothing other than outer clothing.
- ‘Outer clothing’ means clothing that is not worn next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear, but ‘outer clothing’ includes hats; shoes; boots; gloves and scarves.
- ‘Possessions’ means any goods over which the pupil has or appears to have control – this includes desks, lockers and bags.
- A pupil’s possessions can only be searched in the presence of the pupil and another member of staff, except where there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not conducted immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff.

#### Strip searching

A strip search is a search involving the removal of more than outer clothing. Strip searches on school premises can only be carried out by police officers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) Code A and in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) Code C.

While the decision to undertake the strip search itself and its conduct are police matters, school

staff retain a duty of care to the pupil(s) involved and should advocate for pupil wellbeing at all times.



## **LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

Before calling police into school, staff should assess and balance the risk of a potential strip search on the pupil's mental and physical wellbeing and the risk of not recovering the suspected item. Staff should consider whether introducing the potential for a strip search through police involvement is absolutely necessary, and should always

Staff members should be sensitive to whether such outer clothing is worn for religious reasons when conducting a search.

Searches may entail different levels of invasiveness and exposure. A search under PACE Code A that

involves removing more than outer clothing but does not expose intimate parts of the body would not

require the presence of an appropriate adult. However, from a pupil wellbeing perspective, schools may

wish to involve an appropriate adult as a matter of course during all searches conducted by police.

Ensure that other appropriate, less invasive approaches have been exhausted. Once the police are on school premises, the decision on whether to conduct a strip search lies solely with them, and the role of the school is to advocate for the safety and wellbeing of the pupil(s) involved.

Unless there is an immediate risk of harm and where reasonably possible, staff should inform a parent of the pupil suspected of concealing an item in advance of the search, even if the parent is not acting as the appropriate adult. Parents should always be informed by a staff member once a strip search has taken place. Schools should keep records of strip searches that have been conducted on school premises and monitor them for any trends that emerge.

### **SCREENING**

At present time we do not operate a screening process across the Trust, however reserve the right to do so in the future if the Executive Headteacher thought it would enhance the safeguarding of pupils and staff.

### **CONFISCATING**

School staff can seize any prohibited item found as a result of a search. They can also seize any item; they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline. In serious cases, police may be involved.

## **15. PROCEDURES FOR BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT, RECORDING, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW.**

**If a pupil is consistently displaying behaviour that is of a concern to staff, the following process can be implemented in order to support their behaviour:**

**STEPS TOOLKIT:** Useful as a tool to analyse a pupils' behaviour and discuss the reasons or experiences that are causing the behaviour.

## **LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

**BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN:** This is put in place to support identified behaviour(s) of concern with agreed strategies/rewards/sanctions as appropriate. This is shared with all staff working with the pupils, the pupils' parents and (if appropriate) the pupil themselves.

**INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENT:** If behaviour is deemed a 'risk', then an individual risk assessment may be completed and attached to the behaviour support plan. Refer to STEPS policy

### **RECORDING OF INCIDENTS**

All incidents, contact logs, first aid, points and time out should be recorded on Behaviour Watch (BW) in order to identify, monitor, track and provide evidence of pupil behaviour/injury etc. All staff are made aware through induction and training of the correct procedure for the reporting and recording of incidents.

**SEE APPENDICES FOR RECORDING OF INCIDENTS**

## **16. REASONABLE FORCE and POSITIVE PHYSICAL CONTACT**

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. Positive Physical Contact – Herts Steps: to be read in conjunction with Hertfordshire Model Policy for Physical Intervention. Across the Trust, we recognise the importance of positive physical contact for some of our pupils. Staff and adults should, however, always be aware of sensitivities of any form of physical contact with children/pupils and ensure that they are never in a situation where they are alone with a pupil. However, contact between children and adults might be appropriate for a variety of reasons, including:

### **EXAMPLES OF WHERE TOUCHING A PUPIL MIGHT BE PROPER OR NECESSARY:**

- A supportive hug or a handshake (not during Covid-19 pandemic) when a pupil is being congratulated or praised.
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument or support during swimming lessons for support in the water – holding/supporting a pupil when entering the pool, and to maintain a safe body position. These techniques may involve splashing water at pupils or holding to support them above the water.
- To give first aid or appropriate calming/reassuring/comforting contact with a child that upset or injured.
- Guiding a pupil/child away from a situation or location or supporting a pupil in PE/Drama activities or using hand/arm support during a lesson

**Please refer to the staff safety guidelines related to Covid operating procedures**

**Any physical contact must be managed in order to make sure that it is appropriate and leaves neither party vulnerable. Factors to consider might include:**

- Knowledge of the child, e.g., history/background
- Age (and age difference) – of child and adult

## LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY

- Context – Where? When? Why?
- Relationship between staff member and child
- Gender

**Planned physical intervention can be viewed as positive, because it is committed to keeping children and adults safe in a variety of settings. On some occasions, there may be a need to physically intervene/support pupils in order to keep them safe or where there is a clear risk.**

- Committing any offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil);
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself); or
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

All school teaching staff, teaching assistants are trained in the use of **Herts Steps On** (as advised and supported by Herts County Council). Staff have an initial one-day training course that covers behaviour management and supportive guiding techniques. Where there is an identified need, further physical intervention training is available through **Herts Step On and Step Up**. All trained staff are required to attend an annual refresher. Across the Trust, we have 5 members of staff trained to deliver Herts Steps training, The following are extracts from the Department for Education publication ‘Use of Reasonable Force’ – Advice for Head teachers, staff and Governing Bodies. It best describes the powers of school staff, what is reasonable, what schools can and cannot do, staff training, complaints and other physical contact with pupils.

### **ABOUT THIS GUIDANCE**

This is non-statutory advice from the Department for Education.

It is intended to provide clarification on the use of force to help school staff feel more confident about using this power when they feel it is necessary and to make clear the responsibilities of head teachers and governing bodies in respect of this power. This advice replaces “The use of force to control and restrain pupils – Guidance for schools in England”.

### **WHAT LEGISLATION DOES THIS GUIDANCE RELATE TO?**

Education and Inspections Act 2006. Use of reasonable force 2013

### **WHO IS THIS ADVICE FOR?**

This advice is aimed at Governing Bodies, Head teachers and school staff in all schools.

### **KEY POINTS:**

School staff have a legal power to use force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other action. Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.

Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power.

### WHAT IS REASONABLE FORCE?

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils. Force is usually used to either control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be physically restrained to prevent violence or injury.

**'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.**

As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases, it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

### WHO CAN USE REASONABLE FORCE?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This power applies to those staff trained in Hertfordshire STEPS at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Head teacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school-organised visit.

### WHEN CAN REASONABLE FORCE BE USED?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

### SCHOOLS CAN USE REASONABLE FORCE TO:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do or prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground;
- Self-defence. When a member of staff is at risk of serious harm
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- We DO NOT use force as a punishment as it is unlawful to use force as a punishment.

### **COMMUNICATING THE SCHOOL'S APPROACH TO THE USE OF FORCE**

Every Trust/ school is required by law to have a behaviour policy and to make this policy known to staff, parents, and pupils. The governing body should notify the Head teacher that it expects the school behaviour policy to include the power to use reasonable force.

There is no legal requirement to have a policy on the use of force, but it is good practice to set out, in the behaviour policy, the circumstances in which force might be used. For example, it could say that teachers will physically separate pupils found fighting or that if a pupil refuses to leave a room when instructed to do so they will be physically removed.

Any policy on the use of reasonable force should acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with Special Educational Needs.

Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a student. Schools should not have a 'no contact' policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a pupil causing harm. By taking steps to ensure that staff, pupils, and parents are clear about when force might be used, the school will reduce the likelihood of complaints being made when force has been used properly.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF A PUPIL COMPLAINS WHEN FORCE IS USED ON THEM?**

All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily, and appropriately investigated. Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action. When a complaint is made, the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.

Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Schools should refer to the "Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff" guidance where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher. This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought. Schools must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate. If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school should ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support. The board of Trustees should always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against the teacher. As employers, Trusts/ schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that schools provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident

### **17. RPI (RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION)**

If the child's behaviour begins to escalate to the point where the supervising adult/s need to use a physically restrictive intervention then you must inform a member of SLT, as soon as practical. If assistance is required in the RPI, you can do one of the following things:

## LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY

- Send another child
- Use the radio if one is available

If assistance is required the person in attendance will evaluate the situation and establish what steps have been taken so far, at this point the adult supervising the pupil will need to explain what strategies have been utilised and the nature of the initial incident, please refer to Incident criteria breakdown, this will trigger an incident and an incident form will need to be completed as well as the Use of Physical Restraint book. The attending adult will not routinely take over the restraint but will decide the next steps to be taken. A risk assessment needs to be complete within 24hrs

**Please note: If you are in an isolated area, do not carry out a physical restraint unless you have no other option, feel confident and it is the last resort.**

**PLEASE REFER TO OUR PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY**

### 18. STAFF TRAINING

#### SUPPORT AND TRAINING FOR ALL STAFF

STEPS refresher training and physical intervention skills are updated annually. However, additional support and training updates are delivered termly or can be offered as and when necessary to support staff in dealing with challenging pupils. This can be delivered either in-house or outside of school, for example: sharing best practice, staff meetings, observing other teachers/staff or attending a course of specific behaviours. Trainers attend the annual refresher provided by the local authority. Individual supervision is given and sought by staff from school-based trainers. Since 2016, Hertfordshire STEPS have been delivering annual supervision for trainers.

### 19. LINKS WITH HOME: SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

**We have Family Support Workers who work closely with staff and outside agencies to help understand children's needs as well as those of parents and carers. The aims of the Family Support Workers are:**

- to engage and build good working relationships with parents, children, staff and other agencies and work holistically and effectively with parents in ways that will help improve their children's well-being.
- to provide relevant information about the appropriate support services available for parents to improve their skills and plan, deliver and offer parenting support courses for groups and one-to-one support
- to provide visual resources to use at home to promote and support positive behaviour.

#### TELLING PARENTS

It is compulsory within our Trust to speak to parents about serious incidents involving the use of force and to consider how best to record such serious incidents. It is up to schools to decide whether it is appropriate to report the use of force to parents. Parents/ carers are informed

## LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY

on the day if their child was involved in a physical restraint. In deciding what a serious incident is, teachers should use their professional judgement and consider the following:

- the pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
- the degree of force used
- the effect on the pupil or member of staff
- the child's age.

### **SOME PUPILS MAY REQUIRE INTIMATE CARE FOR THEIR COMFORT AND DIGNITY**

Intimate care is defined as any care which involves washing, touching, or carrying out a procedure (such as cleaning up a pupil after they have soiled themselves) to intimate personal areas. In most cases, such care will involve cleaning for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care.

The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and requires staff to be respectful of the child's needs. The child's dignity will always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice, and control. No child will be supported in a way that causes unnecessary distress or pain.

Across the Trust we are committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of pupils will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. Our advice for intimate care aims to provide guidance and reassurance to staff. It safeguards the rights and well-being of pupils and assures parents/ carers that all staff are knowledgeable about intimate care. Staff who provide intimate care are taught to be aware of best practice, and the need to comply this and other guidance/policies including:

- Child Protection
- Health and Safety
- Health care plans, risk assessments and medical details.

Staff will have regard to confidentiality of this information. Sensitive information about a child will only be shared with those who need to know.

Within the staff team some individuals will have responsibility for effective organization of hygiene resources in designated areas. Staff always wear protective gloves and aprons during intimate care routines and will clean areas after use. (If the cleaning were to be lengthy, they would contact a member of the site team for assistance) Parents/ carers provide a child's intimate care hygienic materials. Apparatus may need to be provided for pupils who need special arrangements following assessment from a physiotherapist/ occupational therapist as required. Staff will be responsive to any apprehensions, discomfort or disapproval shown by a pupil. Photographs, symbols, and words will be used as a communication tool with pupils who require this additional support.

Staff will work in partnership with parents to ensure consistency of approach. The needs and wishes of children and parents will be taken into account wherever possible within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation. Provision may be amended in the



## LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – BEHAVIOUR POLICY

light of individual needs, but we promote each person's right to equality of opportunity in all aspects of school life, including the provision of intimate care.

Staff will be supported and encouraged to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual pupils. The child will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy possible, given their age and abilities. Matters concerning intimate care will not be recorded in the home/ school communication diary as it is not a confidential document. Communication relating to personal care will be made through a sealed letter, personal contact or a telephone call between a staff member and parent/carer.

There will be a high awareness of child protection issues where intimate care is provided. The Trust follows the procedures set out by the Hertfordshire County Council and, take account of guidance issued by the DfES 'Safeguarding Children in Education.' All staff are trained in Child Protection awareness, and this training is regularly updated. If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation, (for example marks, bruises, soreness) she/he will immediately report concerns to the designated person for child protection:

Larwood – Mrs B Osobu – Acting Head of School

If not available:

Miss S Brooks – Family Support Worker,  
Mr J Scales – Assistant Head Teacher  
Or Mr P van der Merwe – Executive Headteacher  
Molly Heritage – LASER & Family Support Worker  
Jenny Bryant - LASER & Family Support Worker

Brandles -Ms. Natalie Wilsher – Deputy Headteacher

If not available:

Ms. Natalie Springham – Assistant Pastoral Lead

## 20. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:

### PARENTS/CARERS: CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION

As a Trust we are committed to ensuring that our pupils feel safe and happy at school. If you are concerned about an incident involving your child or another child please contact the school as outlined below:

1. Class Teacher/ Form Tutor: All class staff are trained in the first instance to give priority to pupil/parent concerns and to record and pass on appropriate information, if needed to senior staff/parents.
2. If you wish to take matters further then you may wish to contact a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team:



**Larwood School:**  
**Mr P Van der Merwe: Executive Headteacher**  
**Brandles School:**  
**Mr Paul Smith: Headteacher**

If the matter is still not dealt with to your satisfaction, then the Trust's Executive Headteacher: **Mr P Van der Merwe** or the Chair of the Board of Trustees, **Mr Dan Login**, can be contacted through the school office. The Trust's complaint procedures are available as a hard copy or via the school's website.

If the situation remains unresolved, having gone through the school's normal procedures, parents/carers may wish to contact the Hertfordshire school complaints team or a relevant independent agency such as Hertfordshire's Mediation or Advocacy Services.

## **21. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This behaviour policy is linked to the:

Anti-Bullying Policy

SEN Policy

Child Protection Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Exclusions Policy