

# LOW FARM THERAPY CENTRE APPROACH TO BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

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***This Policy should be read alongside:***

- **Touch and Physical Handling policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**

At Low Farm Therapy Centre (hereafter known as the Centre) it is expected that parents will generally remain onsite during individual therapy sessions, and that therefore any 'behaviour' would be supported jointly by the Clinician and Parents. However, for our group sessions parents are less likely to remain onsite, and therefore this Policy provides some guidance to staff in this context. The general principles apply across the work of the Centre.

## *Approach*

The Centre takes as its premise that children do the best that they can, given the situation that they are in, and their current skill level for dealing with this. With this in mind it seeks to create an environment that best supports the children by providing a visually explicit structure, and highly motivating and engaging activities which reflect the children's sensory preferences and learning styles. The activities are designed specifically to support the children in learning to relate to others.

The Centre environment is constantly monitored and adapted in order to best support each individual child's needs. This would include looking at the child's physical, social, sensory, emotional and cognitive vulnerabilities, and adapting the demands and expectations within the environment to best meet these. Staff interactions would also be reviewed as part of this, with the focus being on developing trusting relationships in which the children feel safe, supported and understood. This then forms the basis for helping the children to develop their skills in all the areas identified.

## *Recording and Monitoring*

At the Centre 'behaviour' is considered in the context of the above. The assessment and therapy programme for each child identifies support strategies, including any potential stressors for each child. Scaffolds are identified in order to support the child to nudge just outside their comfort zone, extending their learning but at a manageable level which does not cause anxiety or panic. Within this framework 'behaviour' is carefully considered in terms of the function that it serving for the child, and appropriate replacement behaviours are then identified and taught. However the Centre recognises that, despite proactive strategies being in place, at times events may occur that cause the children anxiety and distress. At these times staff show understanding and provide support using the calming strategies identified as helpful for the individual child.

The children's targets in all areas are recorded on reports and in their therapy notes. The targets on the notes are reviewed following each session, and moved on as needed. In the group context, each child is discussed by the team on an at least weekly basis, as well as with the parents/carers.

### *Individual Risk Assessments and Behaviour Plans*

Staff should report any concerns regarding a child's behaviour to the Head of Centre immediately, in order for these to be addressed. Should a child display any behaviour which puts themselves or others at risk, an Individual Risk Assessment must be completed, with ways of reducing/eliminating the risk identified. An Individual Plan should also be put in place, identifying proactive strategies for managing and responding to the 'behaviour'. If necessary, Team Teach strategies will be utilised. These must be shared with, and signed by, the parents/carers. The Head of Centre will lead on this, and the Director of Operations should also be informed.