

3: BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT, CARE & WELFARE POLICIES

- INTRODUCTION

Reviewed: KF – Nov 2021-Jan 2022 (Annual)

Ratified by Trustees: January 2022

Full Review date: Autumn Term 2022

EDI Check – SSET does not currently identify any EDI impact of this policy; should new information come to light, this will be considered at the next review.

1. Aims

The Behaviour Support, Care & Welfare Policies describe the core values of The Sheiling Ringwood in looking after the students in its care and supporting behaviour. The Sheiling Ringwood aims to provide a comfortable, safe and pleasant environment where students can live in small, family-type groups and thrive in their learning. The Principal and Senior Management Team are responsible for ensuring good practice within The Sheiling Ringwood, including the keeping of appropriate records.

It is the responsibility of each staff member involved with the students in The Sheiling Ringwood to:-

- Promote each student's positive self-image and dignity.
- Enable each student to develop as fully as possible.
- Encourage each student's communication skills.
- Promote good behaviour, self-discipline and respect.
- Provide a safe and secure environment.
- Be aware of safeguarding procedures within The Sheiling Ringwood and take action where necessary.
- Develop supportive contacts with parents and carers.
- Ensure that they follow all the Sheiling policies at all times as relevant to their role.

2. Principles

Guiding Principles of Good Practice with Students

The Sheiling Ringwood aims to create a sense of order and regularity in daily life for its students with clear daily routines. Management of house life and school/college life is focused on the attempt to provide security and a sense of belonging and meaning to all students.

It is expected that students will gain confidence and control of their lives by anticipating what comes next. Therefore, the rhythms of the day, week, month and year and all special events such as birthdays, festivals and personal achievements receive special recognition.

Within this routine there are opportunities to be with others and spend time alone. There are times to be active and fully socially engaged and times to collect one's thoughts and have a quiet moment. The rhythms are person-centred and are devised with special consideration to what is manageable. Staff are expected to be pro-active and it is believed that, through this, students develop, achieve and gain confidence.

When caring for students, and especially the younger children, The Sheiling Ringwood acknowledges the need for positive relationships and appropriate personal attachments in order to create a sense of wellbeing and security. Students are never moved between houses and classes without care and consideration given to their personal attachments and the allocation of staff members is carefully planned to meet each student's needs.

The minimum expectation of our vocational workers is to stay for one year. These student and staff arrangements will also be balanced with the need, particularly with adolescents, to support young people towards gaining independence. The balance between dependency needs and independence learning is sometimes a delicate one, but is fundamental to the achievement of a sense of wellbeing and security. Staff Meetings/Internal Reviews seek to plan for the student's individual needs.

Principles for Supporting Behaviour that Challenges

The Sheiling Ringwood caters for students with a wide variety of behaviours of concern which at times can involve risk behaviour directed towards self, others or the environment around them. The behaviour presentations encountered are generally associated with severe or profound learning difficulties; in some circumstances, they may stem from mental health issues. The specific behaviours presented by these students require a different response of understanding, care and interaction.

Care and support of behaviour are essential aspects of a student's welfare to ensure an environment of safety, security and wellbeing; they are inter-dependent. This means that all practice in support of students includes an element of supervision and promotion of positive behaviour support through providing clear, meaningful boundaries and an experience of security.

A student's behaviour always has a function and serves to meet a need and may thus indicate something of what they are feeling and/or thinking. For many of our students, it may, at times, be their only way of communicating. An empathetic member of staff will try to identify the underlying needs rather than simply focusing on behaviour and, at the same time, will be aware of the need to promote independence, teach self-management and provide safety for the student or others in the immediate surroundings. In the first instance, a positive, encouraging attitude should always be adopted which recognises the student's needs in their entirety.

Although the reasons for disruptive behaviour or behaviours of concern are not always obvious to the observer, they are real for the person displaying them. It is crucial that staff continually assess the situation and take appropriate action to meet the individual's needs, teaching self-management skills for the future and making changes so that behaviours of concern can be minimised. Should a behaviour occur that is triggered by unforeseen circumstances, staff must act in the best interests of the student so that it can be resolved and the student is supported and able to calm.

Emphasis should be placed on understanding students' needs, early intervention to resolve issues and by appropriate interaction with the student, defusing or de-escalating the situation to avoid physical intervention and without confrontation.

It is essential that all members of staff develop supportive attitudes and qualities in their practice. They should have an empathic approach and respect for each student. The students should always be approached as a uniquely important person with whom the member of staff wishes to foster the student's own process of self-development. They should enable the students through focussing on their individual needs and abilities, while developing empathy for their situation and experience.

Staff should adopt a professional approach to support that is free from personal bias or value judgements by maintaining a personal stance of self-awareness, self-control and inner equilibrium. Staff should adopt The Sheiling Approach and Positive Behaviour Support strategies at all times as per their training and the organisation's ethos. (See Behaviour Support Policy and strategies)

Principles in Safeguarding Students and Staff

All staff at The Sheiling Ringwood have responsibility for safeguarding the students in our care, ensuring that they are alert to any possibility of abuse or maltreatment and report any concerns. Respect for each student by all individuals and an ethos that fosters empathy and awareness of the impact of all actions and interactions, is central to a supportive environment where positive behaviour is actively encouraged and undesired behaviours are addressed.

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children/young people from deliberate harm. It relates to aspects of school and college life including support of behaviours of concern and in particular with the regard to the use of reasonable force to ensure the safety of a student or others and prevent harm. (Safeguarding Definition–Ofsted Inspecting Safeguarding Guidance July 2016; also see Behaviour Support Policy for guidance re the use of Physical Intervention).

A culture where all staff understand the benefits of monitoring and open reporting is paramount and where staff and students are supported throughout any processes required to address alleged misconduct. (See Safeguarding Policy).

Principles of Ensuring a Conducive Physical Environment

A conducive physical environment is essential to ensure the wellbeing of all who share it and we recognise its importance in supporting behaviour. The students at the Sheiling gain comfort and a sense of security from our specialised and spacious facilities and grounds and an understanding of the benefit this has on our students is fostered amongst all staff who are encouraged to consider the importance of the environment throughout the day - designing and maintaining it accordingly.

The responsibility for the upkeep of the estate and all buildings is that of the Facilities Team. The Facilities Manager is accountable to the Principal via the Head of Finance & Premises. The provision of a stimulating, homely, safe and clean environment that is fit for purpose, as well as furnishings, gardening, general upkeep and minor maintenance is given to the house coordinators, teachers, therapists or a suitably responsible person in a particular building.

The Sheiling Property Strategy and Statement of Development Intentions gives a remit to plan for development and budgets are maintained for this purpose and adjusted annually in liaison with the Head of Finance. Major alterations are included in The Sheiling Ringwood's long-term planning for future implementation.

All staff are encouraged to expect a good standard of living environment for the students. Bedrooms are important living areas where students do not just sleep but are also used for play/leisure and peaceful or personal time away from the group. The Sheiling Ringwood encourages the personalisation of bedrooms with the provision of posters, photographs and shelves for books and personal effects as appropriate, although it is acknowledged that for some students a minimal environment may be preferable.

Each student will have suitable furniture of either a fitted or free-standing nature for their own clothing which will be adequate for the purpose and repaired promptly if damaged. Students will be encouraged and supported in keeping their rooms tidy as part of life skills development. They are encouraged to respect the privacy and personal property of each other including learning to knock before entering.

Bathrooms and toilets are designed and arranged to resemble those of any domestic household. They are private spaces and it is The Sheiling Ringwood's policy that all staff are made aware of issues of privacy when undertaking personal care tasks with students.

Living areas are also designed and arranged as in a home environment. They will be inviting, warm and comfortable places to relax for the students, staff, vocational workers and visitors alike. Television is not a feature of The Sheiling Ringwood living areas as we have found it to be unhelpful in creating a relaxed, sociable atmosphere.

The kitchen is the focal point for each house community and we acknowledge the importance and benefits of a healthy diet as fundamental. All food preparation, cooking and cleaning up takes place in kitchens as appropriate and should involve the whole house community. Likewise, mealtimes are shared, communal events. The presentation and serving of food is important and handled with care and reverence.

A grace is spoken or sung before every meal and supports students to understand the rhythm of the day. The Sheiling Ringwood provides home-cooked foods which are often organic in nature and promotes a healthy diet. Additives are kept to a minimum and students grow some of their own vegetables in the Sheiling Garden. The Sheiling Ringwood supports research into food allergies and will work with specialists in supplying specific dietary needs.

The classroom environment and learning environment including art, craft and outdoor estate is specifically designed to meet the needs of our students, both as groups and individually, offering both stimulating and low key environmental opportunities. The buildings are spacious and give opportunity for students to partake within whole school/college, large and small group and individual activities in particular, in recognition of the fact that, at times, our students need quiet time and space and can be challenged by numbers of people. Students are encouraged to learn to manage their own need for quiet time and time away, however, it is Sheiling policy that this is done positively and not as a sanction or seclusion.

Students are encouraged to respect the environment and teaching and encouraging them to develop and maintain it is a key part of The Sheiling Approach, in particular as the practical and functional nature of such activities is highly supportive of meeting their needs, positive behaviour and wellbeing.

3. Implementation

Specific Policies

The implementation of The Sheiling Ringwood's Behaviour Support, Care & Welfare policies gives the appropriate level of detail to enable staff and to safeguard the students. These are outlined in separate policies relating to Behaviour Support, Care and Welfare.