



**MUNTHAM HOUSE SCHOOL**

# **BOUNDARIES AND CONTAINMENT POLICY**

## **Boundaries and Containment Policy**

### **Context**

Muntham House School is a non-maintained residential special school providing education and care for boys aged 5 – 18 with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Our pupils have a range of needs ranging from Autistic Spectrum Condition, ADHD, Social Communication Difficulties, Speech and Language, Mild Learning Disabilities, Attachment Difficulties and Trauma.

These difficulties can often mask anxiety and fear based on school and expectations concerning behaviour and conduct.

At Muntham House School, we see positive and negative behaviour as a communication of need, and when an appropriate response is offered, positive outcomes follow.

We strive to validate the feelings and needs of the pupil and model and teach how to communicate these acceptably because we all feel anger, disappointment, anxiety, confusion and excitement.

### **Mission Statement**

Muntham House School is a safe, caring and happy community. We strive to effect positive change to equip our pupils with the academic, social, emotional and moral skills to be positive members of society. Resilience and personal well-being are at the core of everything we do, along with high academic expectations.

Muntham House School is a safe, caring and positive environment dedicated to supporting pupils' individual needs, seeking effective change to send our pupils forward into society.'

### **Values**

Safe – Muntham House is a safe community where staff and pupils are expected to adhere to a code of conduct that keeps us all safe. This is based on mutual respect and understanding and working with each other to make positive choices.

Caring - All the adults at MHS consistently strive to demonstrate unconditional positive regard. The six principles of Nurture are embedded in our curriculum and practice. We strive to meet the needs communicated through the child's behaviour and make them feel heard and valued.

Happy – We celebrate success and achievement and ensure everyone is aware of their talents, which are nurtured and encouraged. Praise is celebrated regularly.

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is at the heart of everything at Muntham House School. Transparency and collaboration between the school, families, other professionals and external agencies ensure our community is safe.

Muntham House School is a safe, caring, happy and positive community dedicated to supporting the individual special needs of children and young people. We work to improve learning and social behaviour effectively so that our pupils can make the right choices in the wider community and move forward with society.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the physical and emotional welfare of every pupil both inside and outside the school premises. We implement a whole-school preventative approach to managing safeguarding concerns, ensuring that the wellbeing of pupils is at the forefront of all action taken.

This policy sets out a clear and consistent framework for delivering this promise, in line with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance. However, safeguarding is a human response based on clear, safe, transparent relationships that seek mutuality and sustainability. Safety is a right. For clarity, our approach is based on a profound understanding of our pupils and the social contexts they experience— If it doesn't seem right, it probably isn't. Report it, record it.

Our community's safety is confirmed by:

- Creating a culture of safer recruitment by adopting procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might pose a risk to pupils.
- Teaching pupils how to keep safe and recognise unacceptable behaviour.
- Identifying and making provisions for any pupil subject to abuse.
- Ensuring that members of the Governors and Trustees, the Principal and staff members understand their responsibilities under safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, are alert to the signs of child abuse and know to refer concerns to the DSL.
- Ensuring that the Principal and any new staff members and volunteers are only appointed when all the appropriate checks have been satisfactorily completed.

### **Rules and Boundaries provide structure across the school**

Healthy, consistent, valued boundaries are the cornerstone of providing safety and an environment where children can flourish.

- Carefully planned and meaningful relational rules modelled by the adults promote healthy relationships and development.
- Boundaries and containment are crucial to ensure successful and safe therapeutic interventions.
- Children and adults crave containment and the feeling of safety provided by consistent, fair, measured cause and effect, non-punitive consequences.
- Challenging behaviour can only evolve into healthy communicative behaviour when it is consistently and sensitively challenged by adults who can provide both physical and emotional containment. Where the focus is on really hearing what the child needs and responding.
- Inappropriate, dangerous, non-inclusive conduct **MUST** be challenged and named, and healthy alternatives taught; this involves the adults "being in charge" and actively creating a culture of curiosity, acceptance and diversity.

### **What are Boundaries?**

Within a residential school setting this is about clearly defining and agreeing, as a community, what is acceptable with regards to:

- Emotional (we show them in healthy, not destructive ways)
- Relational (no imbalance of power)
- Behaviour and conduct (manners, respect, responsibility)
- Professional (policy and procedure)
- Respect the environment (where I can and can't go)

## Boundaries and Containment Policy

Boundaries are put in place to keep our community safe; they demand effort and commitment from all of us. These are regularly revisited during INSET training and with the students during assemblies, tutor times and the student council.

The boundaries do not change and are not open to interpretation (we all do the same).

We follow the PRRR model from Trauma-informed schools:

- Protect – safety cues, every child, line ups, and assemblies are noticed.
- Relate – Emotionally available adults (EAAs).
- Regulate – PACE, attachment awareness, sensory needs.
- Reflect – Restorative practice, EAA.

### What is Containment?

Containment is about providing an environment staffed with professionally trained, empathic adults who can:

- Relate and form transparent relationships.
- Know, understand and follow school routines and policies designed to provide stability, predictability and safety cues throughout the 24-hour curriculum.
- Understand and have a working knowledge of Autism, Trauma and Attachment, SALT
- Strive to demonstrate fairness
- Able to sensitively contain 'big feelings' using their relationships, the environment, a collegial approach and, as a last resort, safe holding.
- Communicate with all stakeholders and ensure a congruent team around the child approach.
- Ensure any safeguarding concerns are reported and managed appropriately with the guidance of the safeguarding team.
- Children who exhibit dangerous and extreme behaviour are actively looking for safe, sensitive and emotionally strong adults to co-regulate them so they can stop and feel the safety and security of a healthy, safe relationship and in turn modify their behaviour

### Containing Dangerous Behaviour

At times of significant dysregulation, some of our students may display very challenging behaviours directed towards the staff or their peers (transference). These may be Autism, Trauma, attachment or communication-driven.

These may include but are not limited to:

- Hitting, kicking, pinching, scratching, biting.
- Spitting.
- Throwing objects.
- Destroying.
- Stripping off clothing.
- Self-injurious behaviours.
- Putting themselves at risk (mental health crisis).

The adults must take charge and provide:

Sensitive and safe containment is the key to managing the above with clear and prescriptive guidance from specialists (therapy/external agencies) to ensure consistency and avoid

triggering language and situations.

When used sensitively within a trusting and attuned relationship, safe holding will provide the safety, security and containment needed to help the child soothe, calm and regulate themselves. All staff in contact with the children are trained regularly.

### **Pupil Expectations**

All students must demonstrate a desire to engage in school and the Muntham House community. High expectations about behaviour and conduct are taught, modelled, and then adhered to enable the students to realise their potential and keep our community safe.

The School rules are:

- Be kind.
- Make good choices.
- Be in class or activities.
- Complete classwork/homework.

### **Staff Expectations**

#### **Providing Good Attachments / Emotionally Available Adults**

The adults who **CHOOSE** to want to work within this community **MUST** be able to:

- Have feelings/empathy/respect as well as intellect.
- Show integrity.
- Be a role model and enrich the lives of others.
- Is polite and gentle even when faced with extreme stress and adversity.
- Has a firm but not rigid moral compass and principles.
- Wants to know why.
- Is social and has a good sense of humour.
- Can be a self-reflective and critical practitioner.
- Can show unconditional regard and care even when being the target of transference/behaviour.

Staff at Muntham House should strive to foster transparent and nurturing relationships with the pupils, making them emotionally available to work alongside the children in our care. The routines and boundaries of the school are designed to make the pupils feel safe and secure so a mutual level of trust can develop to enable re-engagement in learning academically, emotionally and socially. Gentle challenges are offered to build resilience and confidence.

### **Effective Communication**

#### **Eliminating the Unknown**

- The child's (education, trauma, SEN) history needs to be understood and communicated so needs can be prioritised to ensure progress and attainment.
- Tutor and Key Worker relationships are key to providing containment and safety cues, ensuring good, healthy boundaries for each child
- Communication must be open, transparent and daily.
- Tutors and Key Workers **MUST** work together to engage parents and carers positively, so there is a feeling that the child is 'held in mind', and all parties are invested and talking.
- Safeguarding concerns should be shared with Key Adults (EAA) to ensure emotional support can be in place.

## **Physical and Emotional Containment**

This can only happen when the adults are invested in the community values and strive to maintain safe boundaries with safety cues. These are fair, measured, and designed to promote personal and emotional growth. Unconditional positive regard even when challenging behaviour (it's the behaviour that needs to change the pupil is great)

## **Learning Consequences**

### **Reflective / Reparative / Restorative**

All behaviour is communication, whether conscious or subconscious.

Suppose you are taking a behaviour away because it is challenging, inappropriate, stressful, or dangerous (attachment, Autistic, Trauma). In that case, you **MUST** teach an alternative that has the same result and meets the underlying need.

Having said the above, pupils still need firm and consistent boundaries of conduct and challenges when they challenge these. Adults must be the adults, and pupils need the direction of the adults to stay safe and develop (cause and effect); this is normal parenting and a vital part of development.

### **Reflective Consequences**

- Time away from the group / Activity.
- Name what has gone wrong and its effect on them and others.
- Model ways it can be repaired.

### **Restorative Consequences**

- Making it better.
- Support and enable the pupil to say Sorry (but mean sorry, and do sorry)
- Supporting them through feeling bad and modelling how they can make it better so they feel better.
- Taking responsibility for their actions, words and behaviour.

### **Reparative Consequence**

- Community payback.
- Fixing something they have broken.
- Replacing something they have damaged/broken.
- Tidying any deliberate mess they may have caused.

## **Physical Management (RPI)**

MHS recognises that, at times, the pupils may become dysregulated to the degree that it becomes unsafe for the individual or the community. At these times, it may be appropriate to physically contain and hold the individual to protect a dangerous situation.

- Always a last resort.

## Boundaries and Containment Policy

- Minimum amount of time.
- Sensitively deployed with a sound rationale (trauma, autism).
- Dignity and safeguarding maintained.
- Not for compliance.
- De brief always offered.
- Maintain relationships.
- Record and inform parents/carers.
- Reflective and Restorative work.

**Last reviewed:** September 2024

**Next review due:** September 2025