

SPARK ACADEMY

BEHAVIOUR POLICY

1. Purpose and Ethos

At Spark Academy, effective behaviour management and the promotion of positive engagement are central to our one-to-one tuition model. Our goal is to create a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

All tutors at Spark Academy are fully qualified, experienced teachers who bring expertise in managing behaviour, including working with:

- Children with complex needs
- Pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) challenges
- Young people who have struggled to engage in mainstream educational settings

Our approach is rooted in respect, empathy, and relationship-based practice, recognising that positive relationships are the foundation for positive behaviour.

2. Building Positive Relationships

We believe that strong, trusting relationships between tutor and student are the foundation of successful behaviour management.

Research shows that "the single most common factor for children who develop resilience is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult" (Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child, 2015).

Tutors at Spark Academy prioritise:

- Creating a calm, safe and predictable environment
- Ensuring students feel listened to, respected, and valued
- Building trust and emotional security, especially for students who have experienced exclusion, trauma or instability

When a child feels emotionally secure and understood, their capacity to engage positively with learning significantly increases.

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3. Positive Behaviour Strategies

Our tutors use evidence-based, proactive strategies to promote positive behaviour and sustained engagement.

Key Strategies Include:

- Clear Expectations and Boundaries:
Each session begins with clearly defined expectations. Consistency and predictability support student confidence and focus.
- Positive Reinforcement:
Praise and recognition for effort, participation, and progress encourage intrinsic motivation and reinforce desirable behaviours.
- Visual Supports and Routines:
Use of visual schedules, task breakdowns, and structured routines are particularly effective for students with autism or anxiety.
- Choice and Control:
Providing opportunities for students to make choices within learning builds autonomy and engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000, Self-Determination Theory).
- Emotional Coaching:
Tutors help students recognise and manage emotions, supporting development of emotional regulation skills (Gottman's Emotional Coaching Model).
- Calm, Low-Arousal Responses:
A non-confrontational, de-escalation-focused approach maintains safety and dignity during moments of distress.

4. Trauma-Informed Practice

Many of our learners have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as loss, neglect, abuse, or instability, which can impact behaviour and engagement. Our tutors therefore view behaviour through a lens of empathy and understanding, rather than control or punishment.

Behaviour is assessed holistically, considering:

- Emotional triggers and sensitivities
- Sensory processing needs
- Communication challenges (including non-verbal)
 - Attachment and relational patterns
 - Previous experiences of exclusion or trauma

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Trauma-Informed Strategies Used:

- Creating Emotional and Physical Safety: Predictable routines, calm tone, and consistency.
- Maintaining Relational Safety: Building stable, nurturing, and trusting relationships over time.
- Non-Confrontational Redirection: Gently guiding students back to focus without escalation.
- Co-Regulation: Modelling calm and supporting emotional regulation.
- Interpreting Behaviour as Communication: Understanding the why behind behaviours, not labelling them as defiance.

5. Positive Outcomes

Our relational, trauma-informed approach consistently leads to positive outcomes for the young people we support, including:

- Improved engagement with learning, even for pupils previously disengaged
- Increased emotional regulation and resilience
- Enhanced confidence, self-esteem, and participation
- Development of coping and self-management strategies
- Strengthened trust in adults and authority figures
- Improved communication and social interaction skills
- Successful re-engagement with long-term education placements when appropriate

6. Risk Assessments

Where a student displays behaviours that may present a risk to themselves, others, or the tutor — including but not limited to physical aggression, verbal aggression, threatening behaviour, or persistent refusal to follow instructions — Spark Academy Tutoring reserves the right to implement an individual Risk Assessment.

The purpose of the Risk Assessment is to identify potential risks, outline appropriate control measures, and ensure that appropriate supervision arrangements are in place. This may include requiring a parent, carer, or guardian to be present for the duration of tutoring sessions (online or face-to-face).

If behaviour escalates to physical aggression, threatening behaviour, or otherwise presents an immediate risk to the student, tutor or others, the tutor will prioritise safety and end the session where it is safe and appropriate to do so, in accordance with Spark Academy Tutoring's No Contact Policy and relevant risk assessment..

Risk Assessments will be reviewed regularly and adjusted where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all involved.

Where behaviour gives rise to a safeguarding concern, tutors must follow Spark Academy Tutoring's Safeguarding Policy and report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Summary

Spark Academy's Behaviour Policy is grounded in empathy, consistency, and evidence-based practice. We believe that every child, given the right support and relationship, can succeed in education.

Our tutors model respect, patience, and positivity, ensuring that all students feel safe, capable, and valued — the foundation of lifelong learning and wellbeing.

Policy Approved By: Becky Kowalski, Director & Designated Safeguarding Lead

Last Reviewed: August 2026

Next Review Date: August 2027