

Relationships and Praise Policy

Background

VLC seeks to provide the opportunity of education to young people who struggle to access full time mainstream education. VLC aims to change the lives of young people through a therapeutic approach to education.

Traditional educational behaviour policies are all about rewards and sanctions. We, at VLC believe that this does not always work for students who struggle with mainstream education. Imposing the will of the adult is far less effective than striving together to work understand the underlying needs behind negative behaviours. Reward systems often favour some students over others and, as such have the potential to increase feelings of shame.

At VLC, we encourage students to be actively involved in creating a bespoke plan to maintain the highest standards of behaviour. Students are encouraged to understand that that unsafe and unhelpful behaviour is often displayed when the “flight, flight or freeze” part of the brain is activated. Once this happens, logical thought is more difficult. We believe that it is far better if students work to become aware of the way they feel prior to this, when their chosen strategies are likely to have more impact. Students are encouraged to consider the impact of actions on themselves and those around them as a motivator for early identification of trigger thoughts. Students work alongside staff to create a bespoke behaviour management plan in their Individual Learning Plan, which is reviewed every half term. In addition to this, we have some clear non-negotiables. We do not accept any behaviour which is offensive or causes distress to others, be it verbal, non-verbal or physical.

Aims

- VLC will be an educational environment that is fair and based on mutual respect between staff and student.
- The atmosphere at VLC will be a calm, safe environment and conducive to excellent learning.
- VLC will encourage and promote self-reflection.
- VLC will help students with self-regulation.
- VLC will aid students to develop strategies to help during their time at VLC which will also help in their daily lives.
- VLC will enable students to reflect on the impact of unsafe behaviours on themselves and those around them.
- VLC will act to prevent bullying.
- VLC will be a place that students want to attend. Attendance for students will be excellent.
- VLC will help students find strategies to improve attendance where attendance is not excellent.

Deciding to be part of VLC

The calm atmosphere at VLC is only possible where there is mutual respect and good relationships. As such, during the induction period, all students must choose that they want to

be part of VLC and follow our expectations. We never reject any student based on past behaviour, but we do ask that students decide to follow our expectations to maintain a calm environment.

Our basic expectations are as follows. Agreeing to these is a requirement for students seeking to attend VLC:

- Arrive on time, attend each day you are due at VLC and never leave site, unless with a member of staff or by confirmed prior arrangement, until 2.30;
- Attend each day that I am due at VLC;
- Stay in your learning place during learning time and allow others to work;
- Try my hardest to focus on all of my learning;
- No smoking or vapes;
- No energy drinks;
- Keep your behaviour safe, both physically and emotionally, for yourself and others around you;
- Be kind;
- Hand in your phone and all electronic devices;
- If you want food and drink during learning time, staff will get it for you;
- No foul or abusive language.

*VLC Student Behaviour Contract, which is signed on the first day can be found in Appendix 1

Stages of Praise and Behaviour Management

At VLC, we do not following traditional educational logic. We do not enforce rules by saying *if (this) then (that)*

Example:

IF you do not finish your work, THEN you can not have your break time

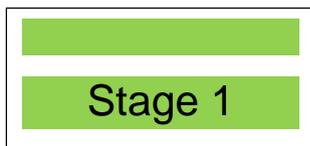
IF you do all of your homework, THEN we will have chips at lunch

1. Research shows that students with insecure attachment, previous trauma and ASD do not react in the same way to consequences.
For a variety of reasons, they have often learned how to numb themselves out so that they don't feel the consequences. They may even act like they don't care. They're tough (on the outside) and can take whatever you dish out.
The truth is often very different. We at VLC, believe that students do, in fact, care but often are not able to show that level of vulnerability to show this in an appropriate way.
2. Rewards are often not motivating to them.
Sometimes our students, sadly, don't think they deserve the rewards. Or, they don't believe that you will actually follow through with providing them. Or, they have zero confidence in their own ability to do whatever it is that you are asking so that they can earn the reward.

Often, students have also found school rewards systems shaming.

And it's easier to not try at all then it is to try and fail.

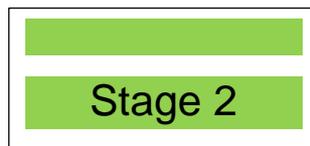
Stages of Praise



Every member of staff at VLC will find every opportunity to praise good and excellent behaviour.

We will positively reinforce hard work, kindness and appropriate behaviour for learning

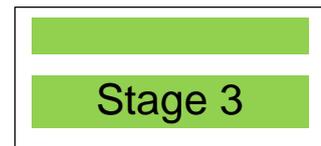
This praise may be verbal, written in books, written on half termly reports, recorded on CLM, via phone calls to parents.



Centre leaders are responsible for reporting great behaviour to parents on a weekly basis.

They should liaise with staff to identify small improvements over time and celebrate them.

Centre Leaders are responsible for verbal and written feedback to parents and commissioners and behaviour records on CLM.



Superb behaviour and progress in self-regulation will be recognised by phone calls and letters home to parents and commissioners from the Principal or Deputy Principal

Stages of Behaviour Management



Regulate

Empathise:

Clarify the student concerns.

Instead of acting to impose our will or reprimand, staff at VLC will act to help students reflect on the reasons for their behaviour. What is causing concern or discomfort?

Can students begin to recognise their own signs that they may enter flight, flight, freeze mode?

Can students remember their own agreed strategies in their ILP?

Relate

Share:

Staff will share their concern.

This will be with students.

Often this will also be with parents/carers and commissioners as well.

Solutions to problems are usually found when everyone works together.

Parents are contacted by phone and commissioners via incident reports, green forms, emails and phone calls.

Other professionals working with the students (such as social workers are also informed to help find a solution)

Reason-Reflect

Collaborate:

When everyone works together to understand the concerns of both the student and the staff at VLC, bespoke solutions can be agreed upon.

Once a solution is found, the ILP will be updated and regularly reflected upon during 1:1 teaching sessions.