Hill House School Policy

Hill House School Behaviour, Support and Nurture Policy

Outlined in this policy are the approaches and systems offered at Hill House school to support our students. Hill House School is a 52-week co-educational residential school specializing in the care, education and therapy of up to 30 young people between the ages of 11 and 19, described as autistic and who have a range of associated needs.

Hill House has 28 residential placements and can offer the flexibility of a day placement for up to 2 local students.

Our students will typically have severe learning difficulties and may display behaviours that challenge. Our students would normally have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Their abilities, both academically and communicatively, will vary and may span a wide range. Often students will have had a difficult time in education before coming to Hill House. They may have been segregated from some activities and from other young people and often excluded from school altogether.

Hill House understands behaviour to be functional and believes that the main factors behind behaviour that challenges are:

- Difficulties relating to the world which can cause anxieties and confusion
- Difficulties communicating with the world to express need
- Previous experience in which behaviours that challenge have been reinforced by adults and so have become learned

Staff teams from the education department, care department and nurture network – (clinical team and nurture support team) work closely together. We offer a holistic approach where learning takes place across the whole school site and throughout the entirety of the day, both in normal school hours and beyond school hours in the home.

All our students benefit from a highly individualised programme to meet their needs, offering flexibility and choice. Personalised learning programmes are linked to their IEPs. At Hill House we have an ambitious and meaningful curriculum which enables students to explore, learn, develop and generalise knowledge and skills in 5 key areas; Communication; Self - regulation; Resilience; Increasing independence and Discovery.

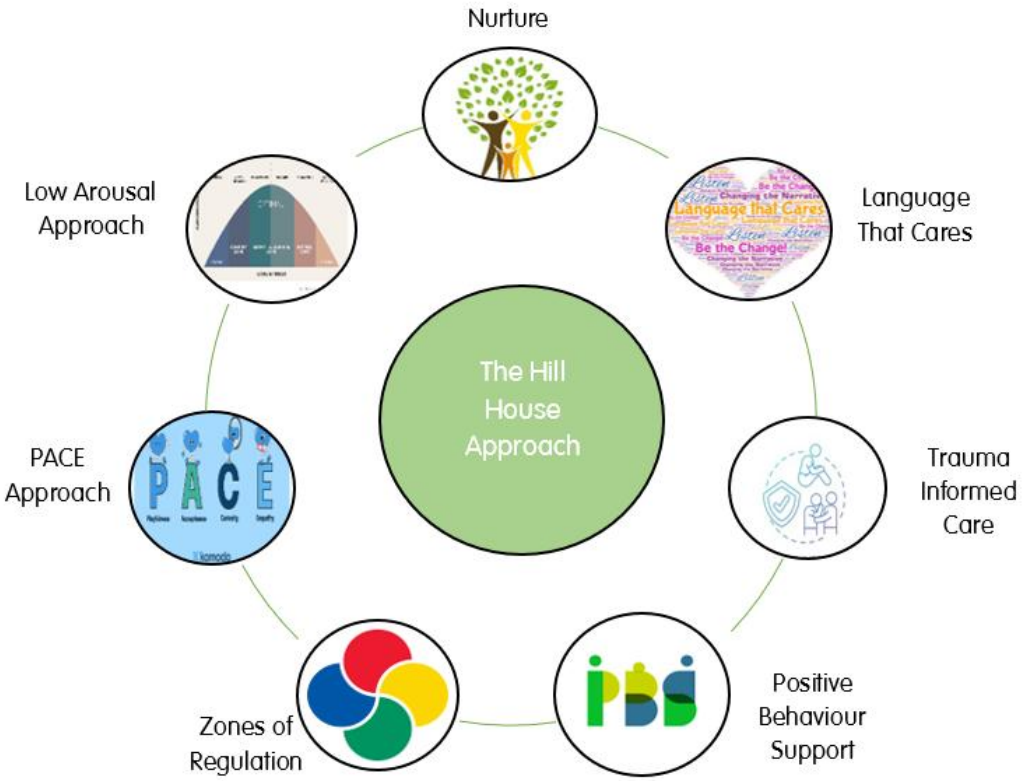
Hill House uses a bespoke approach, taking principles from different autism and psychological theories to create a way of working that is tailored to each student. These concepts are shown below in the diagram and are explained in more detail in the following paragraphs. These approaches inform the Behaviour Support Plans, strategies that are offered to our students to help them regulate and the language we use to describe these.

The Nurture Network

The Nurture Network is comprised of the following:

- Clinical Psychology
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Nurture Team
- Music Therapy
- Psychiatry
- Wellbeing

These teams work together to ensure a holistic view of the child is maintained at all times in line with the Hill House Approach.



Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation is both a framework for thinking and a treatment approach that is based on evidence in the fields of autism and ADHD. It ties in social thinking, visual supports and is ultimately a self-management approach. The Zones of Regulation is used to teach self-regulation by categorising all the different ways we feel and states of alertness we experience, into four coloured zones.

The Zones of Regulation is about optimising success by assisting the student to be in the right zone for the activity they want to do. For example, the Green Zone is ideal for during the school day as it is when a student is happy, focused and ready to learn. Understanding the Yellow Zone is very important as using the correct proactive strategies or prompting the student to use their 'clever actions' can prevent escalation into the Red Zone.

The Zones of Regulation help the student to develop emotional awareness and emotional literacy. This gives them the ability to recognise, understand, handle and express emotions in a more expected manner.

The 5 main aspects of emotional development that we are seeking to promote are:

1. Knowing emotions – a student recognises a feeling as it happens
2. Managing emotions – a student has ways of reassuring themselves when they feel anxious or upset.
3. Self-motivation – a student is in charge of their emotions, rather than controlled by them.
4. Empathy – a student is aware of what another person is feeling.
5. Handling relationships – a student is able to build relationships with others.

By developing these skills, we are helping our students to develop their resiliency, self-management of their feelings, sensory regulation and independence.

Trauma Informed Care

We recognise that all our students have experienced a major disruption to the pattern of family life and their experience of care by the very nature of the fact that they have come to live with us at Hill House. We can understand distress, confusion, fear, despair and troubling behaviour within the context of each individual social and relationship story. This recognises emotional distress and behaviours as threat responses to past experiences so they are adaptative survival strategies. Symptoms are attempts to make sense of the difficult experiences the person has had. We believe that by adopting the principles of Trauma Informed Care we not only provide a context whereby our students can settle and feel secure but, that we can also address the traumatic template formed by prior disruptions.

The main principles of Trauma Informed Care that we use at Hill House are:

- **Safety and Stability** – all members of staff to work together to ensure physical and emotional safety

- **Culture of Openness and Trustworthiness** – provide task clarity, consistency and interpersonal boundaries
- **Collaboration** – include our students in the decision-making process about their day. Freedom within limits.
- **Empowerment** – all staff at Hill House to foster a culture that allows students to feel validated and capable
- **Respect** – all staff to remain respectful and uphold professional boundaries
- **Cultural Humility and Equity** – actively moving past stereotypes and biases, offering inclusivity.

Low Arousal Approach

Sensory regulation is the ability to identify and manage how we feel. Not being able to process the message about how you feel until it is too big, or the message is not clear, or you don't know what it means, or you don't process it at all will lead to overwhelm which will be accompanied by signs in the form of behaviour. It is therefore important to consider provocations within the environment and unrealistic or ill-timed expectations may be the cause of many behaviours of concern. The person displaying them is showing that they are overwhelmed.

At Hill House School we aim to make appropriate accommodations to the environment as it impacts on each individual to reduce sensory overwhelm. Prior to this we carefully assess each student to fully understand their sensory processing and needs.

As far as is possible we aim to provide a low arousal environment which also offers an opportunity for fun, interest, learning and development.

Low Arousal Environments

In effect a low arousal environment is calm and organised. The sensory differences of each student are taken into account and this is part of the consideration and decision making from a time prior to admission until the point where that student is due to leave us and we handover this information to potential future placements to ensure the best fit. Activities are structured in such a way that takes account of the sensory requirements of each individual. Stress reduction is incorporated into the thinking behind each student's behavioural support plan. Opportunities to spend time quietly or in a quiet space are identified for all students and within each home and class. Individual space is personalised and based on an understanding of the individuals processing and arousal.

The low arousal approach used at Hill House School is a non-aversive approach to crisis management which focuses on stress reduction and has at its core an understanding of trauma. This evidence-based approach encompasses training for staff with an emphasis on demand reduction and de-escalation. This in turn increases staff confidence and reduces the likelihood of injury.

Self-regulation and co-regulation

At Hill House School we understand that reducing arousal and stress within staff teams in turn helps the students they work with to self-regulate. Effectively the staff must be regulated, calm and composed. Their behaviour matters as then co-regulation is possible with the student tuning in to the composure modelled by staff. Many of our students can struggle to feel safe and secure and will require a small number of people to be there for them and assist them in moments of distress by being a point of safety.

Nurture

A Nurturing Approach is central to how we promote emotional stability, connection and a sense of being valued. We also believe that it is a key approach to supporting behaviour, wellbeing, attainment and achievement in schools. A whole school nurturing approach can support children to reach their full potential and improve outcomes. Recognising that children have different experiences in their lives enables the appropriate support to be put in place to allow them to grow and develop. Hill House School offers Nurture, Extra Nurture and Super Nurture, depending on the individual child's needs. All levels of the nurture approaches are based on the 6 principles of nurture.

The 6 principles of nurture:

- Children's learning is understood developmentally
- The classroom offers a safe base
- The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
- Language is a vital means of communication
- All behaviour is communication
- The importance of transitions in children's lives

Whole School Nurture

Every student naturally receives a Nurturing Approach throughout their experience at Hill House School in response to the student's individual needs to support their growth and development. The Whole School Nurture framework includes input from an experienced multi-disciplinary team. This will be overseen by a Clinical Psychologist and developed with the Nurture Team. The onsite Therapy team will advise on communication and sensory needs. The student's staff team will have a good understanding of the Zones of Regulation, PACE approach, Trauma Informed Care approach, Language that Cares and Low Arousal Approach.

As part of Whole School Nurture at Hill House, every student has access to Holiday Club during the school holidays. This allows for students to access something regularly that is familiar to them whilst they don't have their usual routine of the school day. Holiday Club consists of arts and crafts, sensory activities, mindfulness, games and a reading corner. The variety of activities on offer ensure that there will be something that appeals to everyone and provides the opportunity for a young person to try new things. The Nurture Team and Assistant Psychologist lead the sessions to role model the importance of play to the whole staffing team as well as providing the students with opportunities for intensive interaction and one to one time.

Hill House have also undertaken 'Project Home'. We understand that it is vital to maintain a fresh and welcoming feel to each home. Replacement of items such as torn or broken furniture must be prioritised – whilst our students can be hard on furniture, it is vital that items are replaced and that we ourselves maintain a standard of décor and furnishings that we would expect in our own homes, notwithstanding the needs of our children and young people. Whilst communal spaces in the homes may need to fit a variety of needs in terms of décor, it is also fundamental to reflect the choices and interests of the children and young people where appropriate. We strive to offer each young person the opportunity to input on their bedroom decorations and furnishings, tailoring this room to meet their preferences on arrival and to continue to support them to make their own choices about what they would like in their room throughout their time here. This can involve going out to the shops, providing the opportunity to shop online with staff support or choosing from pictures presented to them. All of this is to ensure that Hill House feels like home.

PACE Approach

The PACE approach is essentially a therapeutic parenting approach developed in the USA. PACE stands for Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy which are natural attributes found in healthy parent-child interactions and can be verbal and non-verbal. The use of these four elements combined with an attempt to recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication rather than an attempt to disrupt or harm. This in turn allows staff to develop deeper and stronger relationships with the children we care for. This approach provides a nurturing experience that is needed for emotional growth and development by providing a safe base for the child. PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make the student feel safe.

Language That Cares

Language That Cares is adopted from an initiative led by TACT (The Adolescent and Children's Trust) that aims to change the language of the care system. Language is a powerful tool for communication but sometimes the way that it is used in social care creates stigma and barriers for understanding. Language is power, and we want children and young people to feel empowered in their care experience. Language That Cares was created by children and young people sharing the language that they would like to be used with them or when they are spoken about. Hill House have created a Language That Cares Glossary which details the words that we would like to change and positive suggestions for their replacements. All staff have access to this when writing documents and receive training and updates on current preferred terminology. Language That Cares is also used by staff when speaking to or about any of our students such as in meetings or reviews.

Positive Behaviour Support

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is a person-centred framework for providing long term support to people with a learning disability, and/or autism, including those with mental health conditions, who have behaviours that challenge. It is a blend of person-centred values and behavioural science and uses evidence to inform decision making.

A key principle of PBS is that behaviours always happen for a reason and may be the person's only way of communicating an unmet need. PBS aims to understand the reason for the behaviour so we can better meet people's needs, enhance their quality of life and reduce the likelihood that the behaviour will happen.

A PBS framework:

- Considers the person and their life circumstances as a whole including physical health and emotional needs such as the impact of any traumatic or adverse life events (see Trauma Informed Care) and mental illness
- Reduces the likelihood of behaviours that challenge occurring by creating physical and social environments that are supportive and capable of meeting people's needs.
- Is proactive and preventative and aims to teach people new skills to replace behaviours that challenge and other ways of communicating their needs, wishes and feelings. This in turn will enhance the opportunities people have for independent, interesting and meaningful lives.
- Is likely to involve input from different professionals and include multiple evidence-based approaches. These may include trauma informed care, autism specific approaches, active support and other appropriate interventions that support physical health, mental health and wellbeing.

Behaviour Support Plans

A Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) is a written document that covers the principles of Positive Behaviour Support and is tailored to each student. Initially this document is written based on information provided by previous placements, schools and the student's family. There is a description of the student in each of the zones to help staff to recognise when to use the different strategies described. It also covers the risk behaviours to be expected, any triggers for these behaviours and strategies for before, during and after an incident. They are live documents meaning they can be reviewed whenever is required but are routinely reviewed every 3 months. New information that is gathered about the student whilst they are at Hill House will be added throughout their time here and outdated information will be removed.

The layout of the BSP is based on the information provided to all staff when they receive their CPI Safety Intervention training. This improves staff understanding of the document and improves consistency between Hill House and the CPI Safety Intervention approach. The BSP is divided into five sections of collaborative, supportive, directive, safety interventions and therapeutic rapport. Each of these sections details the current preventative and reactive strategies that can be used depending on the intensity of the behaviour.

The plan details preventative strategies that should be used throughout the day to prevent the presence of challenging behaviour and avoid the triggers. All staff at Hill House will be using these strategies throughout their time working with a student to provide consistency throughout the day and offer the young person the best chance of being in the appropriate zone for the activity they are undertaking at the time.

Reactive strategies are then used as challenging behaviour begins in an attempt to de-escalate the situation. These strategies are specifically designed to help the student return to a state of calm alertness (Green Zone) and may also suggest specific activities or items that a student will benefit from to help stop the behaviours progressing any further. These may be different to what is listed in the preventative strategies.

This document also includes the physical interventions (CPI SI) that Hill House School uses as a last resort to support students when necessary (see Safety Interventions section below for more detail).

The therapeutic rapport stage includes ways to prevent immediate recurrence of behaviours. This section focuses on helping students to access a reflection so they can think about how they were feeling and what clever actions they can choose. It also offers suggestions to staff on how to rebuild rapport with the student after going through a difficult moment.

Safety Interventions

In our school we fully comply with the CPI Safety Intervention approach. This approach deals with the principles and practice of support given to the individuals in our care by staff in Cambian locations. The policy outlines the legal requirements and the practical procedures that Cambian Education undertakes to ensure the safety of the individuals in our care, staff, directors, and visitors to our locations. Cambian recognises that within its Locations there are a number of individuals for whom physical and/or restrictive intervention may form part of a range of strategies required to meet their needs and to ensure the safety of others. As is required by the law we do not have a 'no touch' policy.

Staff will only intervene physically to restrain students to prevent them injuring themselves or others, damaging property or committing a criminal offence. Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of the **Designated Safeguarding Lead – Louisa Burden, Deputy Safeguarding Leads – Kate Landells, Kirsty Marsden or Greg Jagger immediately** and recorded in the student's appropriate file. The student's parents/carers/guardians are informed on the same day. Records are kept of when physical intervention is used and parents are informed. Guidance is given to all members of staff on the circumstances in which 'physical intervention' is allowable. See 'Physical intervention policy' for more information.

Restraint must only be used for the purpose of:

Preventing injury to any person, including the student being restrained
Preventing serious damage to the property of any person including the student being restrained
Restraint must only be used for these purposes when there is no alternative available.

It is detailed in policy that Cambian define a Restrictive Intervention as follows:

Definition: Restrictive Intervention is any method which restricts the individual's liberty for example by environmental means, physical means, including mechanical means, holding and physical restraint.

However, it is recognised that as part of a positive behaviour ethos we aim to use a 'Supportive' approach to all intervention first and then only use a restrictive intervention in emergency situations, where we may be left with no other option

Definition: Supportive intervention is any method or skill which guides and supports an individual without restriction, it may be verbal and/or physical and is part of a behaviour support plan to encourage learning and self-management. This may include a LOW or MEDIUM Safety intervention skill, both of which can be applied with limited restrictions but gives the student a level of comfort and security to enable them to be re directed

All incidents of restrictive physical intervention will be entered into the Restraint Log and also entered into the Behaviour Watch database to enable analysis of trends and patterns of behaviour that will assist the multi-disciplinary team working with the individuals in our care. As of 1 April 2026 Parents and Social Workers will be informed in writing within 24hrs of any RPI.

Monitoring up to 72hrs (24hr blocks) as appropriate is put in place after any physical intervention. An immediate health check should always take place.

For many of the individuals in our care, the complexity of their needs means that the fact the level of intervention has stayed constant and not increased is in itself positive.

Nevertheless, it is important to ensure that the use of physical or restrictive intervention never becomes routine.

It is our aim to be fully transparent in all of our recording and to make it clear in our recording that when offering a dysregulated student, a level of physical support to reassure and calm but not restrict, that this in itself does not constitute a restraint. However, we recognise that there is a very thin line between supportive and restrictive intervention and as such we recognise the need to ensure that we remain accurate and factual in our recording. This requires vigilant overview from senior staff and regular training to all staff members. This is achieved by the following processes:

Process

1. Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) should detail clear strategies for proactive, active, reactive and relapse prevention. In each of the sections of the plan we will define whether a supportive or restrictive intervention is required
2. Information from Incident Manager, Report and Debrief / Reflection will always confirm the nature of the intervention.
3. Where possible, a manager will oversee any high-level physical intervention.
4. Senior Management Team to assess and sign off all incident reports within 24 hours.
5. Training and guidance in reporting and recording is given to staff.

Post Incident

- Each student has individualised reflection that they can access as and when appropriate
- Strategies form which is part of the incident report
- The student is encouraged, where appropriate to reflect on their behaviour.
- The aim of a 'reflection' is to support the student in aiming for a positive outcome, for example learning a new coping strategy.
- A reflection is completed with staff whenever requested or when an incident has involved an emergency action for safety, this is kept with the incident report.
- It is imperative that 'visual conversation' techniques are used to assist the student to process the information if this is required to support understanding.

Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Principal.

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Next Review: September 2027