Cothill Policy Documents

ISSR 9 Behaviour Policy

Discipline, Rewards, Sanctions, Exclusions & Use of Restraint

NMS for Boarding: 15.1

Date: September 2026
Next review: September 2027

See Trust Handbook Disciplinary and Exclusions Policy
Also see Staff Handbook regarding table manners, assessments, rewards & discipline. See also Policies on Anti-Bullying and Specific Items.
The advice contained within the document *Behaviour in schools* (July 2013, updated Feb 2024) was consulted in the creation of this policy.

Overview

We foster each child's self-esteem and feeling of worth, encouraging the development of self-discipline, tolerance and respect for others, helping to prepare children to become responsible members of society. Children are encouraged to extend this responsible attitude to their work and to their behaviour inside and outside the school.

Co-Education

As the school became co-educational in 2025, it was important to ensure that this policy was fair and acceptable for both boys and girls. The Senior Leadership Team continues to be responsible for ensuring this and other school policies meet the needs of all pupils.

Aims:

- To promote a caring and supportive school ethos that values and fosters the contributions of all.
- To develop self-esteem as a means of fostering self-discipline.
- To promote understanding of and respect for others' viewpoints.
- To ensure that pupils all complete their assigned work.
- To have a consistency of approach by all adults working in the school.
- To promote the children's respect for their own, and other people's property and the environment.
- To foster positive values including honesty, trust, fairness, courtesy, tolerance and compassion.
- To promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout their school life.
- To help children develop a clear and acceptable view of what is right and wrong.
- To promote firm action against all forms of bullying.
- To handle misbehaviour quickly using a range of strategies, dealing with the children in a consistently fair, firm and caring way.

Guidance: Copies of the 'Golden Rules' are pinned up in every form room. 'Our Foundations' is a pupil contract signed by each pupil on joining the Cothill Community.

Positive values will be reinforced throughout the curriculum and through church services, assemblies, during Form and 'Family' time and during PSHE lessons.

Self-esteem will be fostered through valuing each child, encouraging classroom success and developing relationships based on mutual respect.

Children learn by example. Adults should present a consistent approach to children, one that is firm but calm, making clear expectations and avoiding conflict.
Good behaviour is to be rewarded positively and celebrated.
Children should be listened to. They should be encouraged to reflect upon their actions and possible alternatives.
Bullying and harassment of any kind are unacceptable. All adults in school must be alert to signs of bullying and harassment and act promptly and firmly against them. Children must be made aware that any such incident that causes distress will always be followed up by Staff.
All Staff are responsible for the conduct of children anywhere on the school premises (and while supervising them out of school).
All matters of discipline should in the first instance be dealt with by the member of Staff on the scene. If necessary, children should be sent to GHSM or a senior member of Staff. Action taken must be fair and just and will be appropriate for the misbehaviour.

Behaviour guidelines for pupils

These are outlined in our 'Our Foundations' Pupil Contract, which is signed by every Cothill pupil on arriving at school. It outlines the behaviour expectations that we, as a school community, have.

COTHILL
Family, Foundations, Future

Cothill Foundations

The Foundations of our school are a common set of expectations for all pupils. Though we number many and come from different backgrounds, we are united by these principles. As a member of the Cothill Family you are required to uphold these standards.

Golden Rules: Be Kind, Be Busy, Be Responsible

I will **be kind** by:

- Respecting other people
- Exhibiting excellent manners
- Showing gratitude
- Always being willing to help

I will **be busy** by:

- Making the most of every opportunity
- Always giving of my best
- Learning from my mistakes

I will **be responsible** by:

- Being organised and punctual
- Respecting mine and others' belongings
- Looking after the environment

By signing this, you agree to uphold these foundations and become an ambassador for Cothill.

Name of pupil: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____

This policy acknowledges the school's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, in respect of safeguarding and in respect of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and the 9 Protected Characteristics. This Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour:

direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably than they treat – or would treat – other people. This is the most obvious example of discrimination. For example if we refused to make a person a prefect on the grounds of their ethnicity.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done.

Rewards

It is our policy to, wherever possible, reward good behaviour rather than merely focussing on poor behaviour. 'Praise over punishment.' The Rewards Cascade highlights the ways in which good behaviour is rewarded.

Cothill House Rewards Cascade

This list is not exhaustive, and each case will be addressed on an individual basis. Where necessary, rewards can be escalated or reduced.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	Supportive and helpful Smartly dressed Calm and settled behaviour Good organisation Politeness Good manners Any positive behaviour	Repetition of Level 1 Act of kindness towards peers or staff Significant display of respect Overcoming adversity Consistent, positive behaviour Going 'above and beyond' in helping	Repetition of Level 2 Consistent displays of excellent positive behaviour Leadership	Repetition of Level 3 Consistently setting an excellent example for others to follow Excellent Leadership Connecting with other members of the school community, across all year groups
Reward	Verbal praise from teacher Good mark/s Positive Weekly comment Cracking Cothillian	Verbal praise from teacher Good marks Nomination for Cothillian of the Week Extra grub Pupil Witan nomination	Good marks Nomination for Cothillian of the Week Contact with parents Commendation from Head/Deputy Being used as a Tour Guide	Headmaster commendation (recorded on Weeklies) Cothillian of the Week Contact with parents Captain or Prefect position Head Boy

Academic progress and effort is recorded in Weekly Reports (Weeklies) and, on these sheets, as well as comments upon a pupil's progress, staff offer an effort score and can award *Merits* and *Distinctions* which count towards a pupil's individual Points total and their House Points total. Art projects completed over the course of a term can be awarded a *Show* by the Head in the last week of the term.

Each day, a pupil might hope to earn *Good Marks* (which also contribute towards House and individual Point totals). Good Marks are given by staff for good work, good behaviour, helpfulness, etc. The mechanics of how this system works is recorded in the Staff Handbook.

As a pupil amasses Points, so they earn their *V Badges*.

Green/Orange V-Badge - pupils earn the right to attend the end-of-term V-Badge trip.

Red V-Badge - Children are flagged each exeat cycle and provided with support to achieve higher levels. Red V-Badge children are required to 'appeal' in order to attend the end of term V-Badge trip.

Top 20 V-Badge - in addition to the V-Badge rewards, the Top 20 pupils with the highest points earned are publicly recognised in the end-of-term Final Mark reading and Prize Giving with a gift voucher.

The House which amasses the overall most Points in a term are rewarded with a small increase in their 'grub allowance' from the tuck shop the following term. Their house is also awarded the Cothill Jug.

Each term, prizes are awarded for achievement *and* progress in academic work in every class. Further prizes and cups are awarded each term for academic, artistic, sporting and musical achievements.

In each week, a pupil may also be rewarded with a 'Cracking Cothillian' award which is read out in assembly by the Head, or by being a nominee or winner of the 'Cothillian of the Week' trophy. These awards are nominated by members of the staff common room or by the recommendation of other pupils. Pupils can also nominate their peers for acts of kindness, with the overall winner being awarded the 'Culture of Kindness Award' in assembly.

A pupil who excels in any particular discipline (sporting, creative arts, drama, music etc) can be awarded their Colours or Half Colours by the Head.

Pupils who have truly excelled in winning a national award or a senior school scholarship can be recognised by a Head's Prize at the Final Mark Reading and Prize Giving.

Sanctions

It is our policy to, wherever possible, reward good behaviour rather than merely focusing on poor behaviour. 'Praise over punishment.' The Sanctions Cascade outlines how poor behaviour should be dealt with.

See also Policies on Safeguarding, Restrictive Interventions, Use of Reasonable Force and Physical Contact Policy & Specific Items & Searching Pupils.

All Cothill pupils are expected to be courteous and well-behaved. However, they will sometimes get it wrong and will need support in learning from this.

All Staff must adhere to the guidelines below, and ensure that:

No unacceptable, excessive or idiosyncratic punishments are given.
They do not lose their temper in such a way as to lose control of their actions or words. Assistance from a senior member of staff must be sought if such a situation arises, or, it is felt, is about to arise.
Staff should stick to the sanctions cascade. If in doubt, they should speak to a senior member of staff.
Pupils are never hit, ridiculed or humiliated. *Corporal punishment is illegal.*
Great care is taken with 'group punishments' to ensure that the innocent do not suffer.
All punishments are fair.

- The decision to punish a pupil must only be made by a member of the school staff or a member of staff authorised by the Head.
- The decision to punish the pupil and the punishment itself must be made on the school premises or while the pupil is under the charge of the member of staff.
- It must not breach any other legislation (for example in respect of disability, special educational needs, race and other equalities and human rights) and it must be reasonable in all the circumstances. Pupils should not be punished by removing necessities such as healthy food, or sleep.

Discipline

Insist upon high standards from the pupils.
Do not touch a pupil, even if sorely provoked. Avoid touching pupils in fun or in jest. It is recognised that in some situations, particularly with children who are homesick, some physical contact (contingent touch) may, however, occur, especially to comfort or reassure. Ensure that this does not occur when alone with a child.
Avoid putting a pupil outside your classroom door. If you must, do not leave them for more than a few minutes.
Ensure that time is spent talking and explaining your actions to a pupil.
Do not send pupils to the Head's study unless you have discussed the situation with the Head or a senior member of Staff previously.
Be fair, and make sure that 'the punishment fits the crime'.

If a pupil - or situation - is clearly becoming unmanageable, refer to the Head or a Senior member of Staff. Staff can use the classroomcollect@cothill.org.uk email address to indicate that a child's behaviour has become truly unmanageable. This email is sent to senior members of staff who will help the situation.

Staff must be aware:
That when they are on duty, they must supervise, not watch.
Of the danger of being alone with children.
Of having 'favourites' among the pupils, and of making inappropriate 'attachments'.
Of the difference in size and strength between adults and children.
That there is safety in distance and numbers.

All Staff are encouraged to seek assistance with disciplinary matters if they feel unable to cope with individual pupils or situations. Regular Staff meetings are often used to discuss such matters.

The Sanctions Cascade

Cothill House Sanctions Cascade

This list is not exhaustive, and each case will be addressed on an individual basis. Where necessary, sanctions can be escalated or reduced.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	Disruptive behaviour Ignoring staff Not following instructions Incorrect dress or equipment Loud, inappropriate behaviour Untidiness or not looking after belongings	**Repetition of Level 1** Silly or annoying physical contact Illegal grub Inappropriate language Unkindness towards peers Lack of respect for personal boundaries	**Repetition of Level 2** Abusive language or swearing Dishonesty Misuse of mobile electronic device Rudeness to staff Physical violence Theft	**Repetition of Level 3** Serious acts of physical violence Racism Discrimination Bullying Vandalism/arson Serious theft Substance abuse
Sanction	Bish	Bad Mark (accompanied by a small loss of time)	Bad Mark Restorative Task Apology Letter CCS with Deputy Head Parent informed Report card Meeting with the Head/Deputy	Headmaster intervention Pastoral Support Plan Internal suspension External suspension Permanent exclusion

Level 1 - Bish

Minor instances of poor behaviour, both in and out of the classroom will be dealt with by the member of staff involved. This will involve reminding the pupil of the required behaviour and the consequences of repeated poor behaviour. A 'bish' is recorded in the Bishes section of iSAMS and given for one of four reasons: lateness, incorrect equipment, chatter, or disobedience. Whenever a Bish is given, the member of staff should inform the pupil of its awarding and the reason for it. The Deputy Head Pastoral will monitor pupils' behaviour record and award a Bad Mark if 3 Bishes are received by a pupil in one week.

Level 2 - Bad Mark

If these minor instances of poor behaviour persist, or if the behaviour already meets this threshold, then the member of staff may issue the pupil with a Bad Mark. A Bad Mark is awarded for more serious offences or for occasions when previous reminders and bishes have not had the desired effect. As with a bish, the teacher awarding the Bad Mark should clearly explain what the Bad Mark is awarded for and how the poor behaviour can be rectified. They should also inform the pupil that they need to attend a break loss period the next day at 11.05am.

The School Secretary compiles the list of which pupils have been given Bad Marks, which can be found on the staffroom display. Pupils should ensure they have visited the bathroom and have taken their drink and snack before the break loss session commences at 11.05am. The senior member of duty staff will supervise these breakloss sessions. Pupils will sit in silence and complete a self-reflective worksheet. This includes identifying a follow up action or 'next steps' in response to the poor behaviour. Sheets should be returned to form teachers who can check and sign to confirm the child has completed this action. Sheets should then be passed on to the Deputy Head Pastoral.

A pupil who does not attend their break loss session without a very good reason, will be required to attend the next available session. If they do not turn up again then they should be referred to the Deputy Head Pastoral.

Bad Marks will be monitored by the Deputy Head Pastoral, who receives an auto-generated email alerting them to pupil's bad marks.

Care must be taken when using sanctions with younger pupils, new pupils and pupils who have additional needs. Staff must use their professional judgement over the issuing of Bad Marks; sensitivity, circumspection and compassion must be employed.

Level 3 - Various Sanctions, see cascade

Repeated poor behaviour - or an unsavoury incident - will result in the sanctions being escalated to Level 3.

If a pupil accumulates 3 Bad Marks in a week, they will have a Cothill Community Service (CCS) during the next appropriate break, supervised by the Deputy Head Pastoral or another senior member of staff.

An apology letter or other restorative task may be awarded. See below:-

The task given should be appropriate to the transgression and should not demean or ridicule the pupil in any way. It should be given with clear instructions, with a start and finish time or objective, and should be carried out at an appropriate time in the day ie. the pupil should not be adversely affected from missing his or her regular lessons or activities. Examples of restorative tasks include: -

- *Collecting books at the end of the lesson, packing stationery away*
- *Ensuring all of the desks and chairs are neatly arranged in the room*
- *Picking up litter around the school*
- *Helping as an extra table warden in the Dining Room*
- *Helping to collect laundry bags in the House*
- *Any other job that might need to be fulfilled*

When a child receives 3 Bad Marks or more in a week, the form tutor should send a short email to inform parents. The email is intended to ensure good communication between parents and the school.

If a pupil accumulates more than 3 Bad Marks in a week, they will have a meeting with the Head or Deputy Head Pastoral and the form tutor in which the behaviour will be discussed and an appropriate sanction given. This may be at Level 4, at the Head's discretion. Either the Head and/or the form tutor will inform parents by telephone or email.

If a pupil seems to be regularly receiving Bad Marks, they may be placed on a Report Card where behaviour is monitored from session to session by subject teachers.

Level 4 - Head's sanctions

Continued bad behaviour will result in the parents of a pupil being notified by the Head or Deputy Head and will be dealt with using the sanctions laid out in the sanctions cascade. Any meeting with the pupil or parents should also involve the pupil's form tutor.

Behaviour at this level may result in a suspension, or a final warning that the pupil risks suspension.

If a pupil is provided with another chance to prove themselves, but there is not sufficient improvement in the pupil's behaviour, the Head may suspend the pupil, either internally or externally, from the school for a period of time.

If, on return to school after a suspension, the unacceptable behaviours are still evident, then parents will once again be asked to the school for a meeting with the Head where it is possible that the pupil may be asked to leave the school permanently. Depending upon time and circumstances, this may be in consultation with the form tutor, SLT and the CEO of the RSG, if deemed necessary.

Permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort and as a consequence of the most extreme example of unsatisfactory behaviour by a pupil. While the education and best interests of individual pupils are of huge importance, the welfare, safety and happiness of the whole school community is paramount and takes precedence. Any pupil who is excluded will be offered support.

A parent may appeal against an exclusion to the Council, and in that case, the formal Complaints Procedure will be followed.

Physical violence or extreme intimidation towards anyone in the school community, by anyone in the school community, will always be treated seriously and will be dealt with by a senior member of staff and/or the Head. Physical aggression/intimidation or threats by children against other children (peer on peer abuse) could be elevated straight to Level 4 (depending on the circumstances) by the Head and treated as a possible safeguarding issue. In this case, other local agencies will be contacted.

Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force

'All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. To prevent or stop a pupil from:
1. causing injury to themselves or others
2. committing a criminal offence
3. damaging property
4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise'

Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)

It is hoped that staff at Cothill will only have to physically restrain pupils on very rare occasions. In a school, force is used for two main purposes: to control pupils or to restrain them. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

Further guidance on restrictive interventions can be found in the school's policy.

Parents will be informed about serious incidents involving the use of force. Staff who restrain a child must report it using the pastoral logging system on CPOMS. This will allow the incident to be followed up, support provided and a Positive Handling Plan for a pupil to be put in place if necessary.

Complaints about the use of force will be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.

Behaviour in the Boarding Houses

As a school that offers full, weekly and flexi-boarding, it is important to have a clear policy on what is expected from pupils in terms of their behaviour in boarding. In order to maintain a sense of boarding being 'a home away from home' we believe it is necessary to have separate policies. This is so that a pupil does not feel a sense of school behaviour adversely affecting them and 'following' them to their boarding house. The boarding rewards and sanctions are largely administered by Houseparents, Assistant Houseparents and Matrons. They are overseen by the Deputy Head Pastoral or Head, if required.

The boarding behaviour policy is very closely aligned to that of the rest of the school, but has some key differences in terms of terminology. These are listed below:-

A Good mark is called a tick
A Bad Mark is called a cross
Boarding Rewards Cascade
Boarding Sanctions Cascade
As a school that offers boarding to both girls and boys, the below policies are important to create a safe and secure environment for both genders to reside. Outside of regular school hours (8.00am to 7.30pm) boys and girls are housed in separate boarding wings. The boys are housed in either Fen Side or Bowlers, whilst the girls are housed in Garden Side. These three areas are secured by key-coded entry doors and are only opened by staff at the necessary times in the evening and in the morning. The boys sick bay and girls sick bay areas are also secured by key-coded entry doors and are supervised by the school nurse and matrons.

- Boys are not allowed entry to Garden Side
- Girls are not allowed entry to Fen Side or Bowlers
- The above rules apply to the sick bays, WC, and changing facilities throughout the school site. These are clearly signposted.

Swimming Pool - access to the swimming pool is through the boys changing rooms and into the co-educational 'sauna' room. To enable girls to safely access the swimming pool they will be escorted by a female member of staff through the boys changing area. This will only be done once all boys are changed and the 'coast is clear'. On exiting the pool, the girls will go through the empty boys changing room to their changing area, again escorted by a female member of staff. It is important that staff remain vigilant in these areas and ensure that privacy and safeguarding is maintained at all times.

Common Rooms - As part of our commitment to a co-educational school environment, there may be occasions in which boys and girls may wish to socialise together in either the boys or girls boarding common room areas. This is acceptable but can only be done so with the express permission of the Houseparent or Assistant Houseparent on duty. The opposite gender shall be escorted into the common room area and supervised at all times.

ASP - Sept 2026