

# Fair Ways Education Engagement Policy

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**Contributors;**

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## Fair Ways Vision, Mission and Values (2024)

### Our vision

To build a community that changes lives, makes a difference to society and leaves a legacy greater than ourselves and our contributions.

### Our mission

To grow a compassionate, resilient, and trauma-informed community, that embraces learning, so that we improve the lives and outcomes of individuals.

### Our values

Our values form the heart of the work we do, defined by Fair Ways people, for Fair Ways people. These are the values by which we operate, by which we are governed, and to which we are held accountable.

We therefore expect every individual within Fair Ways to *play their part*:

| <b>P</b> ROFESSIONAL   | <b>A</b> CCEPTING   | <b>R</b> EFLECTIVE   | <b>T</b> RANSPARENT   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We do what we say we will.</li> <li>· We approach challenges with optimism and enthusiasm.</li> <li>· We don't judge, we notice.</li> <li>· We put the needs of the service before our own personal gains.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We don't give up on people.</li> <li>· We value all individuals and are willing to challenge them.</li> <li>· We embrace each other's differences as much as our similarities.</li> <li>· We accept responsibility for our actions.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We give feedback, we invite feedback, we listen to feedback.</li> <li>· We look inward before we look outward.</li> <li>· We learn as much from our mistakes as from our successes.</li> <li>· We listen to each other, learn from each other and grow together.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We are always willing to explain why.</li> <li>· We have the courage to be open and honest.</li> <li>· We earn trust through our transparency.</li> <li>· We live by our values even when no-one is watching.</li> </ul> |

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Due to the nature of the young people that attend our Fair Ways Education Provision, it is sometimes necessary to implement a timetable that, at face value, seems to have minimal academic subjects included. There is, however, a solid premise to why we choose to do this.
- 1.2 Young people often arrive to Fair Ways Education following what can often be prolonged periods without education, whether this has been permanent exclusion or only attending for 1 hour a day 3 times a week due to their complex behaviours. The majority of young people have previously failed in a range of schools and education provisions, which have been unable to cater to their very individual needs and learning styles. Often young people enter our school thinking this will be just another school, where they will be listened to but not heard, talked at rather than spoken to.
- 1.3 The majority of young people are Looked after Children and have a number of social care upsets week to week or month to month. The young people can have periods throughout the academic year where they are settled and engaging and then there can be short or long periods where issues have arisen outside of school, such as a break down in family contact or high risk behaviours out in the community, which may cause young people to dis-engage and present concerning behaviours in school. During these times it may be that, through dynamic risk assessment, school individual timetables need to be adjusted or an intervention plan implemented to meet their needs with more activity based offsite learning. The objective will always be to minimise stress, arousal levels, and high risk behaviours and promote positive engagement for all young people until they are ready to engage more positively on the main school site.
- 1.4 At Fair Ways, we see each young person as an individual who needs a distinct approach and strategy in an attempt to re-engage them with education and learning. Fair Ways School prides itself on working to make the curriculum match the young person, rather than expecting the young person to fit the curriculum. Young people who have only attended previous school provisions for 1 hour a day will not only find a full academic timetable too stressful and demanding, causing them to dis-engage, but it will not meet their social, emotional and behavioural development needs.
- 1.5 To enable this we sometimes find we need to opt out of a 'normal' timetable and use a range of tasks focusing purely on engaging or re-engaging the young person in a positive fashion. It can be frightening and a bit daunting for our young people to be asked what they enjoy doing or what they are interested in; most schools prior to us will have told them what lessons they will attend with little opportunity for them

to pursue an interest. Young people struggle to engage in any timetable until they begin to build positive relationships with staff and begin to view learning in a more positive light.

- 1.6 Fair Ways Education focuses offsite activities around developing young people's self-awareness, social skills, empathy, managing feelings and motivation. Fair Ways has an objective in order to support young people's engagement, enabling them to manage their feelings and emotions. Offsite activities will be based around providing motivation, guiding young people to participate in activities they enjoy building self-esteem and self-confidence promoting positive relationships with staff. Offsite teaching tutors will encourage young people to work towards goals, guiding them to be more persistent, resilient and optimistic. Offsite activities allow tutors to deliver 1:1 pastoral work away from the main school and stress of other young people. This is valuable time in supporting young people to know themselves and explore their understanding of how they think and feel, especially after incidents both in school and outside of school. This time also allows for mentor support from trusting adults (teaching tutors) role modelling positive behaviour out in the community and providing support on positive social skills. During time offsite tutors constantly guide and have strategies for young people on how to solve problems and conflicts with other young people or adults in school.
- 1.8 To this end, the following are just some of the subjects that can be timetabled to support positive re-engagement with education.

## **2 Outdoor and Adventure Education**

### **2.1 Fishing**

The calm, gentle nature of this activity gives young people a chance to relax and talk to staff. The therapeutic element of sitting and doing very little allows young people to engage positively and begin to build trust. There are AQA unit awards that can be gained, which evidence their engagement and enjoyment.

### **2.2 Cycling**

This activity allows young people to engage in an outdoor activity using up energy and dampening arousal levels, which can support young people in re-gaining concentration, for example, offsite in the morning biking and in school engaging in lessons in the afternoon. Learning objectives can support the young people's ability to prepare for biking, appropriate dress code, health and safety aspects, basic maintenance and riding different terrains. There are AQA unit awards that can be gained, which evidence their engagement and enjoyment.

## 2.2 **Skate Parks**

Whether the young person is riding a BMX, a scooter or a skateboard, these can be an excellent opportunity for them to burn off some physical angst and adrenaline, helping to reduce their levels of anxiety. Young People often enjoy taking risks and will look for opportunities to test their own limits; physical exercise is an excellent opportunity for this. AQA Unit Awards can also be covered as evidence of time spent engaging in tasks.

## 2.3 **Bushcraft**

Bushcraft is an incredible educational and engagement tool. By taking young people out of their comfort zone and into nature, young people will ordinarily be more open to building relationships with staff. The flexible, yet structured, nature of bushcraft promotes the young people to be trusting of staff and give kinaesthetic feedback to learners through their improved skills in relation to shelter building, controlled fire lighting, cooking and whittling. There is a vast curriculum based around bushcraft which can result in young people achieving AQA Unit Awards for their efforts.

## 3 **Pastoral Work**

- 3.1 It is standard practice for all young people to have Pastoral time on their timetable. The emotional benefits of allowing young people to offload in a safe, non-threatening environment speak for themselves. Timetabled with a non-teaching member of staff who has counselling qualifications, these sessions can be as structured or relaxed as needed to allow young people to offload or to just take some time out, all depending on what issues are taking place outside of school. Some young people choose to go offsite for a walk in the woods or use this time to play games while chatting with staff – sitting alongside a member of staff is less threatening than facing them. Other young people request going out for a drive, again sitting next to staff is less confrontational and gives them the opportunity to talk.

## 4 **Sensory Room**

- 4.1 GLADE school has its own sensory room which can be used by all those within Fair Ways Education. This is an excellent resource which allows young people the chance to stop and relax. Some young people benefit from visits from our Occupational Therapist, which are held in the sensory room, using a range of resources to meet their complex and varied needs.

## **5 The Hub**

- 5.1 Fair Ways has access to The Fair Ways Hub. This offers young people a safe space to engage in music or play pool or just chill out in a space away from the school. This offers young people the chance to explore their emotions and experiences in a safe environment with qualified staff who can engage with them at an appropriate level.

## **6 Flexibility**

- 6.1 Ultimately, to engage with our young people we need to be flexible and adaptable. We need to find a solution when presented with a problem and this often requires us to think outside of every box possible. There are occasions when timetables are changed at very short notice to try and give our young people every possible chance to make a positive choice and engage. Sometimes we encourage young people to work separately so that they can then do an activity together. Combined with the weekly points system, young people are able to keep working towards an end of week activity which can be a group event if engagement and work has been positive.
- 6.2 Changes to timetables are born out of necessity, they are often made after a period of disengagement and always focus on the needs of the young person. It is always the aim for any changes to be temporary, with young people returning to more academic lessons as soon as they are ready. Behaviour and engagement is monitored daily for all young people with Clear Care being used to record instances of both positive and negative learning and engagement. This allows staff to evaluate the effectiveness of any intervention and adjust it accordingly.
- 6.3 Offsite school contact sheets are completed on occasions to evidence their engagement and learning taking place.

## **7 Play**

- 7.1 Play is a key way for children and young people to learn and develop and something that cannot often see being used as a strategy across Fair Ways Education. Play can help to build self-worth by giving young people a sense of their own abilities and to feel good about themselves.
- 7.2 Play is fun for young people and they can become absorbed in what they are doing, which can support with their self-regulation and enable them to more engaged in the classroom.

- 7.3 Play is used across Fair Ways Education to help develop language skills, emotions, creativity and social skills. Play helps to nurture imagination and give a child a sense of adventure. It is used to help young people learn essential skills such as problem solving, working with others, sharing and much more.

## **8 Associated Documentation & Legislation**

None