

# Reach Support Services

## Positive Engagement Policy

### **1. Policy Statement**

Reach Support Services is committed to fostering a culture of positive, respectful, and compassionate engagement with all individuals we support. We believe that every interaction is an opportunity to build trust, promote wellbeing, and support personal growth. Our approach to engagement is non-judgmental, trauma-informed, and focused on de-escalation and empowerment.

### **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to: promote safe and supportive relationships between staff and service users. Provide clear guidance on positive engagement techniques. Reduce incidents of distress, disengagement, or challenging behaviour. Promote dignity, choice, and respect in all interactions.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to: all staff, volunteers, and agency workers. All service users receiving care or support from Reach Support Services. All settings where services are delivered (including supported living, outreach, schools and office space).

### **4. Key Principles of Positive Engagement**

#### **4.1 Person-Centred Approach**

Tailor engagement strategies to the individual's communication style, background, needs, and preferences. Promote service user autonomy, involvement, and informed choice in decision-making.

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### **4.2 Respect and Empathy**

Treat every individual with dignity and compassion. Understand and acknowledge emotional needs, triggers, and past experiences.

### **4.3 Clear Communication**

Use simple, respectful, and non-confrontational language. Be mindful of tone, body language, and personal space. Use active listening to demonstrate understanding and build rapport.

### **4.4 Relationship Building**

Invest time in building trust and positive connections. Celebrate strengths and achievements, however small. Use consistency and reliability to create a sense of safety.

## **5. Proactive Strategies**

### **5.1 Engagement Planning**

Develop Positive Behaviour Support Plans (PBS) for individuals who need additional structure. Involve the individual and relevant professionals in planning and reviewing strategies.

### **5.2 Positive Reinforcement**

Recognise and reward positive behaviour, engagement, and effort. Use praise, meaningful activity, and choice to reinforce progress.

### **5.3 Preventing Escalation**

Recognise early signs of distress or disengagement. Use de-escalation techniques such as a calming voice, distractions or offering space. Use these techniques to avoid power struggles and maintain emotional control.

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### **6. Responding to Challenging Behaviour**

Always follow approved support plans and risk assessments. Use only approved de-escalation or intervention techniques where absolutely necessary. Physical intervention is a last resort and must only be used when: there is an immediate risk of harm. It is proportionate and in line with training and policy implemented within the organisation or environment you are working in. Any incident must be recorded and reported immediately using internal procedures.

### **7. Staff Training and Support**

All staff receive training in: positive behaviour support (PBS); Trauma-informed care; de-escalation; conflict resolution. Staff are encouraged to reflect on incidents in a blame-free environment to improve future responses. Emotional support and debriefing are available following challenging interactions.

### **8. Safeguarding and Rights**

Positive engagement must never involve punishment, humiliation, threats, or neglect. Service users have the right to: be treated with respect; express their feelings safely; Be involved in decisions that affect them.

### **9. Monitoring and Review**

Incident reports and support plans will be regularly reviewed to improve strategies and outcomes. This policy will be reviewed annually or after a significant incident or change in legislation.

Last reviewed: May 2025

Next review due: May 2026

Approved by: Jamie Tugby

Signature: