



# Behaviour Policy and Incident Log

## 1. Purpose

This Behaviour Policy outlines how Equilore promotes positive behaviour, emotional regulation, safety, and wellbeing within our equine-assisted therapy, counselling, and alternative provision services.

As a mental-health charity working with vulnerable children, young people, and adults, our approach is trauma-informed and focused on wellbeing, connection, and co-regulation.

Our goal is to provide a safe, consistent, nurturing environment where individuals can develop confidence, emotional resilience, and positive coping strategies.

We recognise that many people we support have experienced trauma, loss, exclusion, anxiety, or difficulties regulating emotions. Behaviour is not viewed as “good” or “bad” but as a communication of need.

## 2. Understanding Behaviour in Alternative Provision

Equilore works with young people whose behaviour may be influenced by trauma or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), mental-health conditions, neurodiversity (e.g., ADHD, autism), attachment difficulties, low self-esteem and communication difficulties. As in our work with the horses we have a strong understanding that behaviour **is not personal but communication**. Dysregulation is a **stress response**, not defiance. Young people need **co-regulation**, not punishment and safety and relationships are the foundation for change.

## 3. Behaviour Expectations at Equilore

Expectations are simple, clearly explained and consistent. All participants are expected to treat horses, staff, volunteers, peers and animals with respect. To follow safety instructions from staff and act safely around animals and equipment. Use kind hands, kind words, inside voices and calm bodies where possible.

Non-negotiables for safety:

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Last updated: October 2025

Next review: October 2026



- No harming, teasing, chasing, screaming at, or frightening horses
- No physical aggression towards people or animals
- No throwing objects or damaging property
- No entering horse areas without permission
- No running behind horses or entering stables alone
- Always keep the gates closed.

These boundaries protect both people and animals and ensure emotional and physical safety.

## 4. Supporting Positive Behaviour

Equilore does **not** use traditional sanctions. Instead, we use therapeutic and Trauma-Informed Strategies such as co-regulation, emotion coaching, calm, predictable responses, modelling self-regulation. We offer choices and control and stick to predictable routines.

There is always 1:1 support available. The option to spend time with a trusted adult. We work outdoors in calm spaces and have sensory tools to aid (such as wobble boards, fidgets toys) regulation. Before entering the field with the horses, we ensure our clients are grounded and in a calm frame of mind. We do this through movement based regulation and breathing and grounding techniques. In case of dysregulation, we remove the child from the area with the horses.

Our sessions are entirely focussed on building secure, trusting relationships, with the horses as well as staff. Staff are consistent and work through positive reinforcement. If things escalate we work to have restorative conversations.

### Individual Support Plans

Many young people have personalised plans that identify triggers. All staff are training in spotting early signs of distress in horses as well as people. Prior to commencement of work with the horses we discuss preferred regulation strategies with the young person. From the referrer we will obtain risk and safety considerations and assess communication needs.

## 5. Response to Challenging Behaviour

In case of unacceptable or high risk behaviours such as aggression, absconding, dangerous behaviour around the horses or with equipment, we will pause or relocate the session to

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ensure safety. The focus remains on restoring safety, not punishment. Our procedure follows these steps (1) Ensure immediate safety with the aim to restore calm through maintaining supportive adult presence. (2) Co-regulation where the supervising adults maintains a calm soft tone, slow body language and offering choices. We aim to validate feelings whilst maintaining boundaries. (3) Restoring safety and connection through a calm conversation once the child is regulated in which we explore what happened, how it felt and what may we do differently to better support in the future.

## 6. Physical Intervention

Physical intervention is used **only as a last resort** and in line with reasonable force guidance, trauma-informed principles and safeguarding and mental-health best practice. Intervention is permitted only to prevent harm to the individual or others and serious damage to property.

## 7. Recording and Communication

Equilore keeps clear records in their sessions notes of any behaviour incidents. Records are factual, non-judgmental, and kept in line with Equilore's Data Protection Policy and Data Retention Schedule. We record what strategies worked well and which did not. Safeguarding concerns are logged and where applicable information may be shared with parents/ carers, schools, referring or multi agency teams, as appropriate and in the best interests of the young person.



# Incident Log

## Confidential Record

To be completed by staff immediately following any incident of challenging behaviour.

### 1. Participant Information

- Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_
- Session Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Session Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- Staff Present: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Description of Incident

- Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_
- Type of Activity (e.g., grooming, riding, groundwork):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Description of Behaviour:  
(Include what happened before, during, and after the behaviour)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Antecedents (What Happened Before the Incident)

(Identify possible triggers or contributing factors)

- ☐ Transition / change in activity



- ☐ Sensory overload / environment
- ☐ Peer interaction conflict
- ☐ Instruction or limit set
- ☐ Emotional trigger / distress
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Behaviour Type

(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Verbal aggression / threats
- ☐ Physical aggression toward others
- ☐ Damage to property
- ☐ Unsafe behaviour around horses
- ☐ Non-compliance / refusal
- ☐ Self-harm / emotional dysregulation
- ☐ Inappropriate language or behaviour
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. Immediate Action Taken

- ☐ Verbal de-escalation
- ☐ Time-out / reflection period
- ☐ Removed from activity for safety
- ☐ Calming or grounding exercise
- ☐ Contacted guardian / parent
- ☐ Involved Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- ☐ Medical attention required
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the action(s) taken:

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#### 6. Outcome / Resolution

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- **Was the participant able to calm and re-engage?** ☐ Yes ☐ No
- **Any injury or damage?** ☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, provide details below)
- **Follow-up required?** ☐ Behaviour support plan ☐ Parent/guardian meeting ☐ Referral ☐ Other

## 7. Staff Reflection

(What worked well? What could be improved next time?)

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## 8. Notifications

- **Reported to DSL:** ☐ Yes ☐ No
- **Reported by (Name):** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Date/Time Reported:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **DSL Comments / Actions:**

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## 9. Signatures

- **Reporting Staff Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **DSL / Manager Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. Review Section (for ongoing monitoring)

Review Date	Behaviour Plan Updated	Notes / Outcomes	Staff Initials
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**Confidentiality Statement:**

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