

Dedham Therapy Farm CIC

Procedure for Managing Behaviour using therapeutic thinking

Review – September 2025

Introduction

Dedham Therapy Farm takes a therapeutic approach to managing behaviour and relies on a collaborative approach between its staff, families, Farm Assistants and other services they work with to ensure a supportive and understanding environment to manage the various behaviours that we may experience and mitigate risks that are involved when managing behaviour.

Dedham Therapy Farm uses “Therapeutic Thinking” to approach behaviour. Therapeutic Thinking within Essex is owned by the Essex Special Schools Education Trust (ESSET). Training and practice within other services is the responsibility of the employer and management.

Dedham Therapy Farm strives to provide pro social experiences that in turn create opportunity to experience pro social feelings.

It is possible that Farm Assistants may present with difficult and dangerous behaviour. At Dedham Therapy Farm,

Difficult behaviour is defined as - Behaviour that is anti-social, but not dangerous.

Dangerous behaviour is defined as - Behaviour which will imminently result in injury to self or others, damage to property or behaviour that would be considered criminal if the person was the age of criminal responsibility, such as racist abuse.

Behaviours that we may experience and the process to support Farm Assistants displaying this behaviour.

Absconding – purposefully (walking or running at a pace to create distance between Farm Assistant and staff member while exiting the setting.)

- Raise the alarm (walkie talkie), phone as back up if required. Sharing location with office.
- Follow the Farm Assistant at safe distance.
- Staff in office to support by calling the police and informing family. Sending of available staff to support where possible.
- Use of therapeutic thinking to verbally de-escalate.
- If verbal de-escalation not successful and is safe to do so use therapeutic thinking training to guide Farm Assistant to a safe location or back to farm office.
- Continue to keep the young person in sight where possible and keep office informed of location.

Refusal to engage

- Use therapeutic approach to identify reasons Farm Assistant is refusing to engage.
- Make reasonable adjustments to encourage engagement.

- Assess behaviour displaying identifying of it is difficult or dangerous.
- Seeking support from colleagues if behaviours is dangerous or unmanageable.
- If Farm Assistant continues to refuse to engage arrange for session to end early and for Farm Assistant to be collected
- Information gather at an appropriate time afterward to ascertain reasons for disengagement and to make plans for future input.
- Attempt use of visuals during session to provide other communication opportunities.

Threatening staff, peers, self or animals

- Use of therapeutic approach to understand what may have triggered the behaviour.
- Make reasonable adjustments to encourage engagement.
- Assess behaviour displaying identifying of it is difficult or dangerous.
- Seeking support from colleagues if behaviours is dangerous or unmanageable.
- If Farm Assistant continues to be threatening arrange for session to end early and for Farm Assistant to be collected
- Information gather at an appropriate time afterward to ascertain reasons for disengagement and to make plans for future input.
- Update individual risk assessment.

Verbal aggression

- Use of therapeutic approach to understand what may have triggered the behaviour.
- Make reasonable adjustments to encourage engagement.
- Assess behaviour displaying identifying of it is difficult or dangerous.
- Seeking support from colleagues if behaviours is dangerous or unmanageable.
- If Farm Assistant continues to show verbal aggression arrange for session to end early and for Farm Assistant to be collected
- Information gather at an appropriate time afterward to ascertain reasons for disengagement and to make plans for future input.
- Update individual risk assessment.

Inappropriate use of equipment

- Use of therapeutic approach to encourage the young person to put down the equipment and to understand what may have triggered the behaviour.
- Assess behaviour displaying identifying of it is difficult or dangerous.
- Make sure other Farm Assistants and animals at a safe distance and animals are suitably contained.
- Make suggestions on other tasks or activities they could do that is a safe alternative to the dangerous or difficult behaviour.
- Seeking support from colleagues if behaviours is dangerous or unmanageable.
- If Farm Assistant continues to show inappropriate use of equipment that is dangerous, raise the alarm using walkie talkie or phone if required and seek support from office and police and arrange for session to end early and for Farm Assistant to be collected. Use of guiding away techniques can be used to avoid injury to self or others.

- Information gather at an appropriate time afterward to ascertain reasons for disengagement and to make plans for future input.
- Update individual risk assessment.

Refusal to wear appropriate clothing/footwear/PPE

- Use therapeutic thinking to ascertain reason behind refusal to wear appropriate clothing or footwear.
- Helping the young person understand why appropriate footwear is required eg muddy terrain or injury.
- If Farm Assistant still refuses to wear appropriate continue to attempt to complete activities with Farm Assistant as long as it is safe to do so.
- If safe to continue and Farm Assistant shows they are unable to engage in activity due to inappropriate clothing/footwear/ppe or is impacting on others in their group engaging in the activity then re offer use of appropriate/clothing/footwear/PPE. If Farm Assistant chooses to not accept offer and cannot engage or impacts on others. Staff to inform office to contact home/family/transport and organise collection early or make use of staff available either attending with Farm Assistant or farm staff to sit with Farm Assistant at a suitable location on the farm until they either change their mind or are collected.
- If unsafe to continue session make Farm Assistant aware that session will need to end as planned activity cannot be completed safely follow steps to end session.

Teasing or belittling others or animals

- Use of therapeutic approach to understand what may have triggered the behaviour.
- Discuss with Farm Assistant pro social behaviours and share how their behaviour may be impacting on others.
- Assess behaviour displaying identifying if it is difficult or dangerous.
- If Farm Assistant continues behaviour anti-social behaviour bring concern Lead OT for review of level of support and suitability of session
- Information gather at an appropriate time afterward to ascertain reasons for disengagement and to make plans for future input.
- Update individual risk assessment.

Inappropriate language or comments

- Use of therapeutic approach to understand what may have triggered the behaviour.
- Discuss with Farm Assistant pro social behaviours and share how their behaviour may be impacting on others.
- Assess behaviour displaying identifying if it is difficult or dangerous.
- If Farm Assistant continues behaviour anti-social behaviour bring concern Lead OT for review of level of support and suitability of session
- Information gather at an appropriate time afterward to ascertain reasons for disengagement and to make plans for future input.
- Update individual risk assessment.

The below must be adhered to;

- Complete a risk assessment, referral and initial assessment to be completed with each Farm Assistant to ascertain the likelihood of anti-social behaviour.
- Plan sessions that are tailored to meet the interest and needs of individuals accessing the service. Farm Assistants must consent to engaging in intervention at Dedham Therapy Farm CIC. This reduces the likelihood of anti-social behaviour.
- **When staff are assessing behaviour, they must label the behaviour in accordance with the definitions of difficult and dangerous behaviour at the start of this policy.**
- When recording behaviour staff must ensure it is an accurate description of events using appropriately descriptive words.