



SANDWELL ACADEMY



Academy Reward and Praise Policy, Inc. House System

November 2024

Policy Title:	Academy Reward and Praise Policy, inc. House System
Policy Reference:	SA / Student
Description:	This document sets out how the Academy recognises and rewards student achievements as part of an ethos and culture that promotes the motivation of students as a pivotal concept.
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Change Record		
Version	Date	Description
2.1	July 2023	Updated thresholds for Reward Point System
2.2	April 2024	Complete re-design of Rewards Policy
2.3	September 2024	Update of whole policy, including introduction of further forms of praise and update of house system

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1. Introduction

At Sandwell Academy, we strive to create a culture in which all our community can thrive, demonstrating the ability to be brave, kind, and proud. In establishing this culture, we celebrate the successes of our students, and actively promote behaviours which are fitting with our core values. Positive behaviours are reinforced, and it is our aim to ensure that a **culture of praise** and clear **system of rewards** lead pupils to becoming self-motivated members of our school community.

We strongly believe that **successes should be celebrated and shared**, and that our students should be proud of what they achieve during their time at the Academy. As such, regular praise and the highlighting of success are consistent elements of our daily practices.

An integral feature of our school culture is our **house system**, specifically designed to foster a sense of community and collective responsibility; we want all students to contribute positively to a greater cause, taking pride in their membership as a student of the Academy.



Figure 1. Sandwell Academy's Three Core Values

Figure 1 outlines the core values which underpin all that we do as an Academy, and students will be praised and rewarded for demonstrating these throughout their time with us. This extends beyond just day-to-day conduct to include other aspects of Academy life, such as strong attendance, representing the Academy at local or national events, and participation in sporting or house competitions. In doing so, we wish to instil these values within our students so that they are intrinsically motivated to make positive contributions both within the Academy and in their day-to-day lives.

2. Praise Points

For students to successfully act in a way which is **fitting with our core values** ([Appendix A](#)), we are explicit about labelling examples of bravery, kindness, and pride. Our values are reinforced at the start of each academic year, and at regular intervals throughout each term. This is supplemented through our Welfare Curriculum and other aspects of the wider curriculum.

When students demonstrate one of our values, they will receive **verbal praise** and a ‘**praise**’ house point, which will be logged by the relevant member of staff on Bromcom. Praise points are one form of *House Point*, and therefore acting in accordance with our values is both a personal and collective success. Praise points become visible to parents on the My Child at School (MCAS) app. The log will clearly label which value has been demonstrated (e.g., ‘Praise – Bravery’), allowing parents/carers to have further conversations with their child about the positive behaviour that they have demonstrated. Praise points are also visible to students on the Student Portal app.

Throughout their time at the Academy, students will work towards **awards in each of the three core values**. These awards will indicate that a student has consistently demonstrated one of the values, and winning awards in all three reflects an incredible achievement. Students will receive the appropriate reward in the form of core value badge, along with a letter written by a senior member of staff, commending the student’s success. By the end of their time with us, we hope that all students will have earned awards for their bravery, kindness and/or pride, and that they embody these values as they move on to their next ventures.

Awards will be issued at the following intervals:

Award Type	Core Value		
	Bravery	Kindness	Pride
Bronze – Letter from HoY	100	100	150
Silver – Letter from Deputy Head with responsibility for rewards	170	170	250
Gold – Letter from Head	250	250	400

3. Other Forms of Praise

At Sandwell Academy, we ensure that we recognise when a student makes a concerted effort to demonstrate our values, praising them for doing so. Praise is both a positive verbal acknowledgement of an achievement, coupled with the reward of *House Points* or other positive experiences. Figure 2 depicts the ways in which praise is given for students’ achievements.

Characteristic	Praise	Staff
Positive behaviour fitting with our values	Verbal praise and ‘praise’ positive (+1)	All staff
Excellence in academic work or conduct, tied to values	Verbal praise and postcard home (+5)	All staff
Consistent classwork of excellent standard	Learner of the Week (+10)	Department Leads (from recommendation)
Continued excellence or improvement	PT Star Student and phone-call home (+10)	Personal Tutors
Significant achievement	Whole-school Star Student on broadcast/website (+20)	SMT (from recommendation)



Figure 2. Mechanisms for praising student success.

3.1 Core Value Stickers

Throughout each term, members of staff will award **core value stickers** to students. These stickers can be awarded in the following ways:

- Coupled with a positive praise point in a lesson
- For good conduct around the Academy
- For demonstrating good manners/kindness
- For participation or success in sporting or House events/competitions
- For other acts fitting with our values

Students collect these stickers in the back of their student planner. Shortly before the end of each term, each student's value stickers will be tallied by the Personal Tutor. All students who have received core value stickers are entered into a prize draw to win vouchers (with each sticker representing one entry). To this end, the more acts of bravery, kindness and pride demonstrated, the higher the likelihood of the student receiving a prize.

3.2 Praise Postcards

Postcards are awarded for excellence in demonstrating one of our core values, and can be awarded for the following reasons:

- Excellence in academic work
- Contribution to the Academy
- Demonstrating excellent behaviour/improvement in conduct
- Representing the Academy in local or national events
- Other achievements deemed to have demonstrated excellence in bravery, kindness and/or pride

Postcards act as both a personal form of praise for the student, and a way of celebrating a student's success with their parents/carers. Each postcard awarded will be coupled with **5 House Points**. Students can take their praise postcards to Student reception and use this to redeem an instant prize of their choice.

3.3 Learner of the Week

Each department will decide upon a 'learner of the week' each week, which is a recognition of the sustained effort or achievement of a student in that subject. This student will be praised for their achievements and will be awarded **10 House Points**.

3.4 PT/ Whole-School Star Student

Star Student is the recognition of a student for outstanding achievements in demonstrating one of our core values. Each week, each **Personal Tutor (PTs)** will decide upon a Star Student in their tutor group. The student will be praised by their Personal Tutor and their peers, they will receive a celebratory phone-call home by their Personal Tutor, their name will appear on the Academy website, and they will be awarded **10 House Points**.

Each week, one student in the Academy will be selected as the **Whole School Star Student** in recognition of their exceptional effort in demonstrating one of our core values. They will receive praise from a member of Senior Management, feature on our weekly broadcast and receive **20 House Points**.

3.5 Head of Year Recognition

Across each term Heads of Year will reward students' efforts, progress or good behaviour as follows:

- **Positive phone call/message home**
Heads of year can make a positive call or send a message home to students' parents/carers, sharing how they have met the Academy values.

- **Praise Postcard** – each week, one student who has consistently demonstrated bravery, kindness, or pride in their work or behaviour will receive a postcard from their Head of Year. The Head of Year will award the praise postcard to the recipient on a Friday, during their celebration tutor session. A student who receives Head of Year praise for bravery, kindness or pride will receive *10 House Points*.
- **Recognition in Assembly** – during year group assemblies, Heads of Year can publicly praise selected students who have upheld the Academy values.
- **Head of Year Lunch** – once per term, a few selected students will be invited to have lunch with their Head of Year as a reward for their achievements that week. A letter will be sent home to parents informing them of the reasons for selection. Each student who is invited to a Head of Year lunch will receive a Head of Year praise postcard for bravery, kindness or pride and receive *10 House Points*.

3.6 Senior Leader Recognition

Within Lessons

Senior leaders will actively look for students who demonstrate our core values—*Be Brave, Be Kind, Be Proud*—during routine **learning walks and lesson visits**. This approach allows senior leaders to observe and recognise positive behaviours directly in the classroom, adding an immediate and meaningful layer of reinforcement.

- **Nominations:** During each learning walk or lesson visit, senior leaders will note any students displaying exemplary behaviour. Teachers can also flag students during these visits who have shown significant effort or character in line with our values.
- **Recognition:** Recognised students will receive direct acknowledgment from senior leaders, either in the classroom or later in the day, with the presentation of a praise postcard.

During Personal Tutor Time

Personal tutor time is a great opportunity for senior leaders to connect with students in a more individualised setting. Tutors can identify students within their groups who regularly embody the school's values, which senior leaders can then review and acknowledge.

- **Nominations:** Tutors can submit names of students weekly or monthly, noting specific actions or improvements tied to the school's values.
- **Recognition:** Senior leaders can personally meet with these students during tutor time or send them a praise postcard, further personalizing the recognition.

Around the Academy

Senior Leaders will actively recognise students who exemplify the core values, not only during lesson and PT time, but also in key areas around the Academy such as on corridors, in the restaurant, on the hard play, during transitions and during Session 3.

- **Recognition:** on-the-spot recognition when Senior Leaders observe students demonstrating positive behaviours. This may include verbal praise, presentation of a core value stickers or a presentation of a praise postcard.

3.7 Headteacher Recommendation

A student can receive a Headteacher recommendation. This award is given to students who have shown exceptional qualities, achievements, or improvements. Heads of Year will put forward the name of individuals, to the Headteacher, who meet the following criteria:

- Academic excellence or improvement
- Leadership qualities or positive influence on peers
- Contribution to the school community (e.g., clubs, events, charity work)
- Exemplary behaviour in line with the school's values (bravery, kindness, pride)
- Overcoming challenges or showing resilience

Once a student is chosen, they will meet the Headteacher formally to discuss the reason for their recommendation. Following the meeting the Headteacher will write a formal letter to the parents/carers of the student. Each student will also receive *20 House Points*.

4. Celebration Events

Hot Chocolate Friday

Hot chocolate Friday is a fun and motivating way to recognise students' achievements and positive behaviour.

Students will be nominated for a spot at Hot Chocolate Friday for:

- Consistently good behaviour
- Academic improvements or achievements
- Consistently meeting the Academy values
- Acts of kindness or helpfulness
- Meeting personal or school-wide goals

Teachers, Personal Tutors, or staff can nominate students. Students can also make peer nominations, encouraging a community-driven culture.

Hot Chocolate Friday will take place on the final Friday of each half term, during Personal Tutor time. The event will be promoted through the Academy Broadcast and through Personal Tutor sessions.

Celebration Events

At the end of each term, students will have the opportunity to attend a celebration assembly which will recognise their achievements, promote the Academy values, and strengthen the school community.

The event will celebrate students' accomplishments in various areas such as:

- Academic excellence
- Personal growth and improvement
- Sporting achievements
- Participation in extracurricular activities (e.g., music, drama, art)
- Positive behaviour and contributions to school life (e.g., leadership roles or helping peers)

The event will be formal yet engaging, with a balance of structured recognition and fun elements including an awards ceremony, student-led presentations, student performances, guest speaker(s), photo/video highlights of the term and certificates and prizes.

To align each celebration assembly with the Academy values, the assembly will be delivered in three segments – Brave, Kind and Proud. In each segment students who have consistently demonstrated the values will be celebrated and awards will be presented.

There will be also be three Head of Year awards titled "Bravery in Action," "Kindness Ambassador," and "Pride in Progress". Teachers and students will be asked to nominate students for awards in each category.

Additionally, there will be the opportunity for students to be invited to an end of term celebration event. To qualify students must:

- consistently demonstrate our core values of bravery, kindness, and pride
- be in the top 20% of core value sticker earners in the year group

5. Achievement Evening Presentation

The Academy holds a summer Achievement Evening where student achievement is recognised and celebrated.

The Achievement Evening is a special date in the Academy calendar and involves attendance by Governors, invited guests, staff, parents and students. The Achievement Evening is a spectacular event with video footage of students' achievements and live performances on the stage.

Students are nominated for subject awards and special awards by the teaching staff at the Academy and the final decisions are made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Senior Management Team.

6. Academy House System

6.1 The Houses

At Sandwell Academy each Personal Tutor group (PT) is attributed a house. Each house is named after a local role model. These are:

- Archer
- Astle
- Cadbury
- Fraser
- Hadley
- Regis
- Tolkien
- Walters
- Carroll (Sixth Form Only)

6.2 General conduct

Each student's behaviour score contributes towards each House's total number of *House Points*. Each positive *House Point* is added to the total; conversely, negative points are taken away.

6.3 House Captains

Each PT at the Academy will have a House Captain. House Captains will play an important role in the House system by representing the students in their PT. The House Captain role is an excellent leadership opportunity and students that take up the role will display leadership qualities. The House Captains will meet with the House System Co-coordinator and work cooperatively to plan and develop House activities and to support participation in House competitions and events.

House captains must:

- Have a good behaviour record with an overall positive balance and no significant behavioural incidents or concerns
- comfortable gathering information from students within the PT
- organised and confident feeding back their findings with staff
- confident and articulate sharing House information with the PT
- able to contribute to the development of innovative ideas by brainstorming with others
- Have an understanding of and commitment to the House System

**If a student is not yet all of these things but is open to learning new skills, they are also encouraged to apply*

Appointment to House Captain is for one school year. Should a House Captain's conduct, behaviour record or academic progress become a cause for concern or should other circumstances call into question a student's suitability for the role of House Captain, the position may be withdrawn with immediate effect.

6.4 House quizzes/competitions

To further reinforce the community-aspects of Personal Tutor groups, a weekly quiz is completed allowing students the opportunity to work together to gain *House Points*. These quizzes often align with current events (e.g., World Book Day, Christmas, Anti-bullying week). Over the course of the year each department submits a quiz, allowing students to showcase their subject knowledge. Each week, every member of the top scoring PT is given a "House Competition" *House Point*. Furthermore, each curriculum area is allocated a month in the academic year to host their curriculum competition across all key stages. The department plans and delivers their House competition within lessons and/or in Session 3s and "House Competition" *House Points* are awarded.

6.5 House Assemblies

One assembly each term is a House assembly, which is led by the House Leaders and supported by house captains and their SMT link. The assembly focuses on achievements and celebrating success within the House, in addition to promoting upcoming House events. Subject teachers and PTs nominate students for achievements either in or outside of school. Students who do not get a single negative in the previous half-term are awarded House Leader Postcards worth 10 *House Points*.

6.6 Badges

House Points are awarded for a range of positive behaviours and students are rewarded with badges at certain thresholds for having accumulated these. Students can earn one badge each year. If a student consistently earns above the threshold, they will have collected all the available badges. Badges are awarded during House Assemblies.

		Year 7-11	
		Badge Type	Threshold
	Bronze	First year of 200 positives	
	Silver	Second year of 200 positives	
	Gold	Third year of 200 positives	
	Platinum	Fourth year of 200 positives	
	Diamond	Fifth year of 200 positives	

		Year 12-13	
		Badge Type	Threshold
	Black star	First year of 150 <i>House Points</i>	
	Gold star	Second year of 150 <i>House Points</i>	

6.7 Broadcast

Each week there is a House segment on the Broadcast, which features a review and preview of house events, top house-point-earners, and the overall running total of the House points each week. The aim is to foster healthy competition for students and serves as a reminder that individual successes contribute to a wider social purpose.

6.8 Sports Day / Sandwell Run

The Sandwell Run and Sports day are held annually and are organised by the PE department. They are major whole school events that involve all students and staff. Students are awarded *House Points* for participation and success within these competitions.

6.9 Fundraising/Charities

Each House is linked to a chosen charity. House charities are regularly promoted through House assemblies. The House Coordinator will facilitate representatives from each charity, to be present in the first house assembly, to launch the charity with the students. Throughout the academic year each house will have a calendar month allocated to fundraise for their charity. During this month, House Captains will organise events with the support of the House Coordinator to raise funds towards their charity pot. At the end of each academic year House Captains will visit their chosen charity to donate the total raised funds.

6.11 Rewards trip

Based on the results of the annual House Competition, there is an extra-curricular rewards trip to Alton Towers in the autumn term. In order to qualify for the visit, students must:

- Be in the winning House for their year group
- Have an attendance above 96%
- Have no more than 25 negatives across the Academic year

For students who were not in the winning house for their year group, the top 10 performing students (highest House point's total) from each year group are also invited to attend. There will also be special nominations/considerations from staff at the Academy.

6.12 The Winning House

At the end of the year, the overall winning house is presented with the House Shield and this is commemorated on the plaque in the theatre.

7. Attendance and Punctuality

Every week the attendance and punctuality of each student is monitored. Students can receive an automatically weekly positive point for both 100% punctuality and 100% attendance. Each punctuality and attendance positive point contribute towards the House point total.

In addition to the individual weekly attendance, each PT's attendance is monitored and *House Points* are awarded to each PT based on the attendance figures that have been calculated each module.

100% student attendance is celebrated each year with student's attendance acknowledge through the rewarding of an attendance pin badge, if a student maintains 100% attendance for the year, they are invited to attend a celebration assembly in July with the Headteacher and the attendance team. In this assembly students are rewarded with a certificate documenting their fantastic achievement. Students are also invited to attend a celebration trip. Students who only miss half a day are awarded a certificate.

8. Aspirational Awards

At the end of the Academic year, students who have excelled in subject areas and extra-curricular activities will be nominated for outstanding contribution badges. As with other rewards these contributions will be recognised at bronze, silver, gold, and platinum level.

Students can be nominated for each category through the following areas:

Outstanding contribution	Possible contributions which will be recognised
Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding commitment and skill in one or more sports • Active involvement in Sports Day and the Sandwell Run • Representing the Academy in several sporting fixtures • Being the captain of a sporting team • Successful involvement in a sport beyond Sandwell Academy • Coaching and refereeing
Performing Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding academic achievement in Performing Arts • Attendance at music school • Excellence in dance, drama or playing a musical instrument • Performances in assemblies or school events • Performing in the Academy show
STEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding academic achievement in Science, Maths and Design Technology • Positive contributions to the session 3 programme • Representing the Academy in STEM events and contributions • CREST Awards • Application to the Arkwright Scholarship programme
The Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active contribution to the academy Eco committee • Contributions to the environment outside of the Academy
The Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charity work and fundraising • Voluntary work • Duke of Edinburgh • Cadets

9. Appendices

Appendix A: Examples of Values-Led Behaviours

<i>Being brave</i>	<i>Being kind</i>	<i>Being proud</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for help • Overcoming challenges and persevering during times of adversity (e.g. exam period) • Trying a difficult or challenging task in a lesson • Improvements in attendance for persistent absentees • Advocating or standing up for Academy values in a positive way • Sharing personal feelings or experiences • Reporting concerns about oneself or peers despite potential consequences • Demonstrating independent thoughts rather than being led astray by the masses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively restoring challenging relationships • Supporting or helping others • Being polite • Demonstrating good manners, such as holding doors open etc. • Sharing resources with others • Checking in on struggling peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking pride in work • Positively representing the school • Taking pride in appearance and organisation • Showing a passion or drive to improve (e.g. in terms of behaviour or academic performance) • Stepping outside of comfort zone to demonstrate a new skill or talent • Having correct equipment for school • Completing homework to a high standard