



SANDWELL ACADEMY



Academy Reward and Praise Policy Inc. House System

July 2025

Document Details

Policy Title:	Academy Reward and Praise Policy, inc. House System
Policy Reference:	Sandwell Academy / 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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Other relevant SA polices:	Behaviour Regulation and Relationships Policy
Adopted by the Governing Board on:	N/A – responsibility devolved to Head
Date for Review:	July 2026

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
2.4	July 2025	

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1. Vision

At Sandwell Academy, we are committed to cultivating a culture where every member of our community can thrive by embodying our core values: **brave**, **kind**, and **proud**. These values are the foundation of *The Sandwell Academy 'SA' Way* and guide every aspect of Academy life.

We believe that by consistently celebrating success and promoting positive behaviours, we foster a school environment that not only motivates students but also encourages them to take ownership of their growth. Praise and rewards are central to this culture—used not just as recognition, but as tools to reinforce the behaviours, attitudes, and character we value.

Celebrating student achievement is embedded in our daily practice. We want our students to be proud of what they accomplish, whether through academic progress, personal development, or contributions to the wider school community.

Our House System plays a central role in building this culture. It fosters a strong sense of belonging and collective responsibility, encouraging students to contribute positively to something greater than themselves. We take pride in the way our students represent their Houses and the Academy with commitment and enthusiasm.



Figure 1. Sandwell Academy's Three Core Values

Students are regularly praised and rewarded for demonstrating our core values (Figure 1), not only through their daily conduct but also through broader aspects of school life. This includes:

- Excellent attendance and punctuality
- Participation in House and sporting competitions
- Representing the Academy at local, regional, or national events
- Acts of kindness, courage, and leadership

By embedding these values in all we do, we aim to develop self-motivated, confident, and compassionate individuals—students who will carry the spirit of *The SA Way* with them both inside and beyond the Academy.

2. Recognising and Rewarding Academy Values

At Sandwell Academy, we believe that recognising and celebrating positive behaviour is key to fostering a respectful, motivated, and inclusive learning environment. We use a range of strategies to acknowledge students who consistently demonstrate our core Academy values.

Daily Recognition

We use a range of daily strategies to recognise and reinforce positive behaviour that aligns with our core values:

- **Verbal Praise**

Staff actively use the language of the SA Way to positively reinforce behaviours as they occur, making explicit links to the value being demonstrated.

- **'Praise' House Points**

Issued via Class Charts and clearly labelled with the specific value shown (e.g., *Praise, Bravery, Kindness*). These are visible to parents/carers and to students through Class Charts, encouraging further positive dialogue at home. Praise points also contribute to a students' House totals.



- **Core Value Stickers**

Awarded for clear demonstrations of bravery, kindness, or pride. Students collect these stickers in the back of their student planner. At the end of each term, Personal Tutors total the stickers, and all students who have received one or more are entered into a prize draw to win vouchers—with each sticker counting as one entry. This encourages students to consistently model the Academy's values in all areas of school life.

Celebratory Communications

We actively communicate and celebrate students' successes as a way to reinforce the core values and ensure that both students and their families feel recognised and proud of their achievements.

- **Praise Postcards**

Praise Postcards are awarded for excellence in demonstrating one of our core values. Each postcard acts as both a personal form of recognition and a means of sharing success with parents/carers. Postcards are accompanied by **5 House Points**, and students may take their postcard to Student Reception to redeem an instant **prize** of their choice.

- **Learner of the Week**

Each department selects a **Learner of the Week** to recognise sustained effort, progress, or achievement in a specific subject. The selected student will be praised within their subject area and awarded **10 House Points**.

- **Whole-School Star Student**

Each week, one student will be selected across the school recognising their outstanding demonstration of bravery, kindness, or pride. This student will:

- Receive praise from a member of **Senior Management**
- Be featured on the **weekly Academy broadcast**
- Be awarded **20 House Points**

Core Value Awards

Throughout their time at the Academy, students will work towards awards in each of the three core values. These awards reflect a sustained and meaningful demonstration of a value over time.

Each award includes:

- A **Core Value Badge** presented in a year assembly
- A personalised **letter of commendation**
- Recognition on Academy displays and internal communication

Achieving all three Core Value Awards is considered a significant milestone and reflects a student’s exceptional contribution to Academy life. By the time they leave Sandwell Academy, we hope every student will have earned recognition for at least one value—if not all three—and that they carry these values with them into their next chapter.

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

Beyond the Classroom

Recognition extends to wider Academy life. Students are praised and rewarded for:

- Participating in House, sport, and enrichment competitions
- Representing the Academy at external/public events
- Taking on leadership roles, including mentoring, student voice, and open evenings
- Supporting peers, staff or the wider community through acts of kindness or service

Levels of Recognition

At Sandwell Academy, alongside class room teacher recognition we recognise students through three key levels of high-profile praise:

Head of Year Recognition

Heads of Year play a vital role in celebrating students who exemplify the Academy's values. Throughout each term, they recognise student efforts and achievements through positive phone calls or messages home, weekly praise postcards (10 House Points), and public acknowledgement during year group assemblies. Additionally, once per term, selected students are invited to a special Head of Year lunch as a reward for their outstanding progress or behaviour. Parents are informed of this honour through a letter, and these students receive further recognition with praise postcards and House Points, reinforcing the school's commitment to celebrating success.

Senior Leader Recognition

Senior leaders play an active role in recognising and reinforcing the Academy's core values through daily visibility and engagement with students. Whether during lesson visits, personal tutor time, or in shared spaces around the school, they seek out students demonstrating positive behaviour, effort, and character. Recognition may be immediate, such as verbal praise or the presentation of a core value sticker or praise postcard, or more personal, such as targeted follow-up during tutor time. This approach ensures that recognition is consistent, meaningful, and visible across all aspects of school life.

Headteacher Recommendation

The Headteacher Recommendation is a prestigious award given to students who demonstrate exceptional qualities, achievements, or significant improvement. Heads of Year nominate students based on criteria such as academic excellence or progress, leadership, positive contribution to the school community, exemplary behaviour aligned with the school values, and resilience in overcoming challenges. Selected students meet formally with the Headteacher, who then writes a letter of recognition to their parents/carers. Each recipient is also awarded **20 House Points**.

3. Celebration Events

Hot Chocolate Friday

Hot Chocolate Friday is a fun and motivating way to recognise students' achievements and positive behaviour in a relaxed, celebratory environment. Students can be nominated by teachers, personal tutors, or other staff members for consistently demonstrating good behaviour, making academic improvements or achievements, upholding the Academy values, showing acts of kindness or helpfulness, or meeting personal or school-wide goals.

This event takes place on the final Friday of each half term during Personal Tutor time and is promoted through the Academy Broadcast and tutor sessions. Hot Chocolate Friday offers students a chance to be celebrated in a supportive setting, reinforcing positive choices and encouraging continued effort.

Celebration Assembly (End of Term)

At the end of each term, students are invited to a Celebration Assembly that recognises their achievements, promotes the Academy values, and strengthens our school community. This event highlights student success across a range of areas including academic excellence, personal growth, sporting achievements, extracurricular participation, and positive contributions to school life.

The assembly balances formal recognition with engaging elements such as awards presentations, student-led performances and presentations, guest speakers, and video highlights of the term. It is structured around the Academy's core values with each segment celebrating students who consistently demonstrate these values.

Additionally, three Head of Year awards — Bravery in Action, Kindness Ambassador, and Pride in Progress — are presented, with nominations invited from both teachers and students, providing further opportunity to acknowledge outstanding character and effort.

Celebration Events (End of Term)

At the end of each term, students who consistently demonstrate the Academy's core values, and who rank within the top 20% of core value sticker earners in their year group, will be invited to a special celebration event. These events provide a fun and rewarding way to recognise sustained positive behaviour and engagement.

- **Autumn Term:** Christmas film screening in the theatre
- **Spring Term:** Inflatable obstacle course
- **Summer Term:** Celebrations tailored to each year group

These celebrations encourage students to maintain high standards and foster a strong sense of community and achievement.

Whole School Achievement Evening

The Academy's Summer Achievement Evening is a highlight of the school calendar, dedicated to recognising and celebrating outstanding student achievement. Attended by Governors, invited guests, staff, parents/carers, and students, the event showcases the very best of Academy life.

This prestigious evening features video highlights of student accomplishments, live performances, and the presentation of subject and special awards. Students are nominated by their teachers, with final award decisions made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team. The Achievement Evening offers a formal and inspiring opportunity to honour those who have excelled academically, personally, and within the school community.

4. Academy House System

At Sandwell Academy, each Personal Tutor group is assigned to a House named after a local role model. The House System is designed to promote a sense of belonging, leadership, and community spirit.



Students earn House Points through positive behaviour, academic effort, participation in competitions, and engagement in school life. Points can also be lost for negative behaviour. Each week, House achievements are shared in the Academy Broadcast to encourage friendly competition.

Each PT has a House Captain who supports participation and helps lead activities. House Captains are expected to model strong leadership and are supported to develop their skills throughout the year. Houses compete in curriculum competitions, sports events, and charitable fundraising, with students earning extra points for participation and success.

As students accumulate house points, they become eligible for recognition through a tiered badge system. Each year, students can earn one badge based on reaching a set threshold. Those who consistently exceed the threshold across multiple years have the opportunity to collect all available badges. These badges are formally awarded during termly House Assemblies, celebrating sustained effort and contribution to the school community.

		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 House Points	
	Gold star	Second year of 150 House Points	

At the end of the year, the overall winning House receives the House Shield, and eligible students from the winning House can attend a rewards trip to Alton Towers. High-performing students not in the winning House may also be invited. The House System plays a key role in reinforcing Academy values and building school spirit.

5. Attendance and Punctuality

Student attendance and punctuality are monitored weekly. Each half term, PT group attendance is reviewed and House Points are awarded based on overall performance.

Students who maintain 100% attendance are added to the Academy's 100% Club and receive their 100% badge from October onwards, checked each half term. At the end of the year, these students are recognised in a Headteacher-led celebration assembly and receive a certificate. Those with full-year attendance are invited on a reward trip, while students with no more than half a day missed are awarded a certificate.



6. Monitoring arrangements

This Rewards and Praise Policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher and full governing board at least annually, or more frequently, if needed, to address findings from the regular monitoring of the behaviour log. At each review, the policy will be approved by the Headteacher.

7. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies:

- Behaviour Regulation and Relationships Policy