

Morley Meadow Primary School

Relationship Policy



Ready, Respectful, Safe

This policy and our practice have been hugely inspired and influenced by the book 'When the Adults Change, Everything Changes' by Paul Dix (2017) and the work by 'Trauma Informed Schools'. We want our school to be a 'mentally healthy place'.

"Damaged children need people, not punishment"

Paul Dix, 'When the adults change, everything changes' (2017)

"Ready, Respectful, Safe"



Introduction and why the change:

"It might be comforting to think that we reach a certain age and suddenly know how to behave. The reality is that there is no such age" (Dix, 2017)

Strong relationships between staff and pupils are vital. At Morley Meadow Primary School, we believe that the most important aspect in children feeling valued, safe and secure is the sense of connection and trust with a member (or more than one member) of staff. Staff must be fair and consistent with children (taking into account individual needs). Children need to understand that the staff member is in control at all times, enabling pupils to feel safe. Equally, staff must be approachable, kind and be there to help and discipline (to teach and not punish) and children must understand and believe this. If a member of staff is having difficulties with an individual or group of children, they are expected to seek support in order to make a positive change.

"Children who struggle to contain their anger often carry the invisible shrapnel of traumatic lives. Their deep mistrust of adults is well founded and their hyper vigilance is driven by real experience of abusive behaviour...Anger is fuelled by unrealistic expectations, but they are real expectations to the child. Adults who manage the behaviour of angry children brilliantly understand that the first principle is to manage their own response so it is predictable, consistent and empathetic...angry children follow people first, then follow rules" (Dix, 2017)

Aims:

At Morley Meadow, we strive to:

- Have an inclusive, relational and kind school.
- Provide a safe, happy, friendly and respectful environment which encourages each individual to achieve their own potential through a desire for excellence
- Support children with their feelings and behaviour through providing children with strategies to manage their own feelings and behaviour.
- Maintain a calm and purposeful working atmosphere.
- Ensure that all children and adults have a sense of belonging, feeling safe, secure and valued
- Provide a clear, fair and consistent approach to behaviour.
- Foster, nurture and value strong and healthy relationships.
- Ensure that our children are intrinsically motivated to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do.

Trauma Informed:

At Morley Meadow Primary School, we recognise that most children self-regulate their behaviour and behave very well every day, and never need reminding about how to behave safely. We want to encourage these children and understand the children who may find it difficult to behave safely at all times, and support them in managing their behaviour more safely. Ultimately, we recognise that...

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“Burying children in punishment builds a deep resentment. For the child it often creates a permanent breach of trust” (Dix, 2017)

Trauma and attachment difficulties create gaps in empathy that can take a lifetime to heal. Connections are distorted and therefore cognitive gaps appear and the process of nurturing is incomplete. We know that punishment will never cure trauma and attachment. Children who have experienced trauma find forming positive relationships with adults difficult. Many children become hyper vigilant, react disproportionately and feel a need to protect themselves. The amygdala acts as a personal safety valve but those who have experienced trauma have theirs set to maximum sensitivity. Using punishment as a cure for attachment and trauma difficulties is rather like treating a broken bone with a big hammer. At times, it feels barbaric: children who are screaming with the pain of terrible loss being given isolation instead of love.

“If your default response to behaviour is empathetic, kind and keen to understand what is being communicated, you will never go far wrong” (Dix, 2017)

Everyday routines and expectations:

We expect every adult in our school community to:

- Meet and greet each child in their care
- Use the consistent language of ‘ready, respectful, safe’
- Model positive behaviours and build relationships
- Be calm when using stepped boundaries
- Follow up every time; retain ownership and engage in reflective dialogue with children
- Never ignore or walk past children who are not behaving safely (stop, notice, remind, move on)
- Ensure that all children are placed on the Recognition Board

...so that children are ‘ready, respectful and safe’

Adults display consistent, calm adult behaviour – All adults address poor behaviour in a calm manner. Poor behaviour is never ignored; rather it is dealt with without emotion, using a stepped process.

Adults will give attention to best conduct – All adults will look out for, and recognise, those children who go over and above expectations. This may be using the recognition board, sending messages home or awarding Star of the Week certificates.

Adults will insist upon routines – All adults will put into place relentless routines that are consistent across the school e.g. meet and greet, magnet eyes, team stop and 123 for transition and movement around the school (‘The Morley Way’).

1 – Stand up

2 – Move

3 – Show you’re ready to ... (sit down, leave the classroom etc)

Recognition Strategies

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At Morley Meadow Primary school, the following positive strategies will be used by all adults in the school. They are designed to ensure 'first attention goes to best conduct' and to create clear, simple routines and expectations that make children feel valued members of our learning community and are motivated to always try their best.

"The foundation of every school must be excellent behaviour. We should be keeping the focus on a visible culture of impeccable conduct, and making the consistency palpable, audible and highly visible." Paul Dix

All adults will be looking out for children who show Morley Meadow Primary School's values and who go above and beyond. Some ways that children will be recognised for doing so are:

- Recognition Board
- Postcards Home
- Celebration Assembly
- Hot chocolate Friday
- Headteacher Awards
- Sporting Achievement Awards

Recognition Board

A Recognition Board will be used to encourage social or learning behaviours. For example, "One voice" or "Kind words" may be written on the board. Adults or pupils in the class can nominate names for the board and the emphasis is on children working together as a team to get everyone's name on the board.

"This is not intended to shower praise on the individual, it is a collaborative strategy – we are one team, focused on one learning behaviour and moving in one direction." Paul Dix

There is no material prize for class completion. Each class chooses a celebration when all names are on the board, e.g. teacher tells a joke, special celebration dance or song. There is no time limit to how long it will take for pupils to complete the recognition board, but teacher's should be conscious that children need to know how long it should take to get onto the recognition board.

Names of pupils not yet on the recognition board should not be displayed (this will have a negative impact on pupils and can also become a visible badge of honour for some pupils)

Boundaries for safe behaviour:

We understand that a common and consistent use of language around behaviour is essential in creating clear boundaries for learning how to behave. When behaviour is displayed that falls below our expectations, we will follow a stepped process. All staff retain ownership for these processes and SLT may be called to offer support, but not to complete the process for staff.

Step 1: Reminder A reminder of the 3 simple rules: ready, respectful, safe

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Step 2: Caution A clear caution, making the pupil aware of their behaviour and clear communication of the consequences if they continue. *"I am expecting kind hands at all times. When children don't use kind hands, they need to sit separately so that everyone is safe."*

You could try some of these phrases:

Next time, try ...

I noticed that ... I wonder if ...

Thank you for ...

I understand ... (that you are angry/upset)

I need you to ... (come with me so that we can resolve this properly)

I hear you ... (it's not easy but I know that you can do that brilliantly)

Step 3: Last Chance A final opportunity to engage. A 30 second scripted conversation should be used at this point (see appendix 2).

Step 4: Reflection time A few minutes for the child to calm down, breathe and compose themselves. This may be in a different space. *"I can see that you are still finding this hard. Would it help you to have some time in the nature nest/your safe space/away from the classroom?"*

Step 5: Repair A restorative conversation; this may be informal or a more formal discussion, depending on the needs of the child (see appendix 3). We do not expect children to say sorry but encourage them to consider how they could 'repair' the situation. Children may need to spend some time completing the missed work or thinking about how they could behave next time. This time should be dependent on the age of the child and should never take away their whole break or lunch time. They still need the time to release their energies outside of the classroom.

"Adults who manage the behaviour of angry children brilliantly understand that the first principle is to manage their own response so that it is predictable, consistent and empathetic" (Dix, 2017)

Restorative Approach vs Punishment:

Our approach to behaviour management is restorative and relationship focused, with connection taking precedence over correction. At Morley Meadow Primary School, we believe that nurturing and restorative practices are key to building positive relationships. Restorative conversations aim to help children understand how their behaviour affects others, teach children what safe behaviour looks like, and to give them the tools they can use to avoid a similar incident happening in the future.

Restorative approaches are based on four key features:

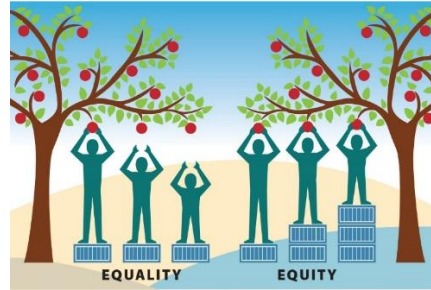
- **RESPECT** – for everyone by listening to other opinions and learning to value them
- **RESPONSIBILITY** – taking responsibility for your own actions
- **REPAIR** – developing the skills within our school community so that its individual members have the necessary skills to identify solutions that repair harm and ensure behaviours are not repeated
- **RE-INTEGRATION** – working through a structured, supportive process that aims to solve the problem and allows young people to remain in mainstream education

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At Morley Meadow, we recognise that 'all behaviour is communication', and ask ourselves what is this behaviour trying to communicate? We realise that this can be different for all children and may look different in some individual cases.

Being 'fair' is not about everyone getting the same (equality) but about everyone getting what they need (equity).



Consequences:

At Morley Meadow Primary, we always encourage positive behaviour. Our behaviour management approach is based upon building strong relationships between adults and children.

"Quality relationships provide the necessary vehicles for adaption and recovery... every relationship has the power to confirm or challenge everything that has gone before" (Dan Hughes and Louise Bomber - Settling to Learn, 2013)

The use of positive reinforcement strategies will always be our default approach. However, if a child is not responding to these strategies, there needs to be clear, consistent consequences chosen by the adult dealing with a specific incident. For children with behaviour as an additional need, examples of these will be detailed in their Relational Support Plan (Appendix 4).

Consequences implemented will give children the chance to reflect on their behaviour or, in more serious circumstances, parental phone calls home or a parental meeting. They are designed to encourage the child to make good choices and understand that their actions have consequences. For example, not completing work in class, due to choices made regarding behaviour that is not reflective of our school values, results in lost learning time which then needs to be paid back.

- Reflection Time – a reflective time where the child and the class teacher privately discuss their actions and how it has impacted on others. This will be at the start of playtime or lunchtime. The purpose of this is to enable the adult to remind the child of our school values and to encourage positive behaviour in future.
- Pay it Back time – is an appropriate action linked to incident and value which has not been shown. For example, if a child has not completed class work due to failure to respond to positive strategies, work may be sent home. Another example would be if there has been vandalism in the playground, we may ask the child or children involved to help repair the damage.
- Parental involvement – we feel it is important for parents to be aware of repeated and/or more serious incidents. We will communicate this through a phone call, or an informal or formal meeting.

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Managing behaviour engagement with learning is always our primary aim at Morley Meadow Primary. For the vast majority of our learners, a gentle reminder is all that is needed. Although there are some occasions when it is necessary for a child to leave their classroom for a short period of time, steps should always be gone through with care and consideration, taking individual needs into account where necessary. Praise the behaviour you want to see. All learners must be given 'take up time' in between steps. It is not possible to leap or accelerate steps for repeated low-level disruption. Staff will deal with behaviour without delegating. Staff will use the 'Stepped Boundaries' for dealing with poor conduct. It is the aim that learners should be kept at steps 1 and 2 for as long as possible. In more serious cases, Westcountry School's Trust exclusion policy may need to be implemented.

Impact:

We expect the impact of this policy to be evident in the relationships between adults and children. The language of ready, respectful, safe should be used naturally and understood throughout the school environment and wider community. As a result of building positive relationships, our school should be a calm, safe environment with a culture of exceptionally good behaviour.

***“Why crush behaviours with punishment when you can grow them with love?
Visible consistency with visible kindness allows exceptional behaviour to
flourish” (Dix, 2017)***

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Appendix 1 – Relationships Blueprint



Morley Meadow Primary

Ask Aspire Achieve

Our Relationships Blueprint



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Appendix 2

30 second script examples:

- I noticed you are...(having trouble getting started/struggling to get going/wandering around the classroom)

It was the rule about... (lining up/staying on task/being unkind to others) that you broke.

You have chosen to... (move to the back/catch up with your work at lunchtime).

Do you remember last week when you... (got star of the week/completed all of your learning/were kind to your friend)?

That is who I need to see today...

Thank you for listening. (Then give the child some 'calm down' time)

- I would like you to understand that every choice has a consequence.

If you choose to do the work that would be fantastic, and this will happen...

If you choose not to do the work, then this will happen...

I will leave you to make your decision.

- Do you remember yesterday when you helped me to tidy up?

That is the person I need to see today; that is the person you can be all the time.

- Your behaviour right now is disruptive.

I believe you can turn this around and be a success.

- I know you will ... (help to clear the mess off the floor)



Appendix 3

Restorative Questions. Five questions are enough. Choose up to five from the options below. (Dix, 2017:128)

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. What have you thought since?
4. How did this make people feel?
5. Who has been affected?
6. How have they been affected?
7. What should we do to put things right?
8. How can we do things differently in the future?

With younger pupils, 1-3 questions may be more appropriate. If pupils find it difficult to answer these questions, you could consider using:

- 'Ok, imagine if there were... (people affected/a way of putting it right/things you could do differently). What would they be?
- 1-10 scales: 'On a scale of 1-10, how angry were you?'
- Offer a postponement and some support if they are not ready to speak: 'I can see that you aren't quite ready to talk. Do you need a minute or two/to meet with me tomorrow/answer the questions with someone else?'



Appendix 4 – Relational Support Plan template

State of Regulation	Potential Displayed Behaviour	Agreed Response for Regulation
Calm Safe / Socially engaged		
Mild stress Alert / Aroused / Agitated		
Dysregulated Mobilised / Immobilised		
Crisis Unsafe		

