

ST MARK'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL



RELATIONSHIPS FOR LEARNING POLICY

Created by the staff, pupils and families of St. Mark's Primary School.

Abstract

At St. Mark's Primary School we are committed to ensuring that all children feel valued, welcome and included. We recognise that positive relationships are central to the wellbeing of all pupils, staff and wider school community and positive relationships at the forefront of everything we do. Through improving relationships, we are confident that positive outcomes around inclusion, engagement, attainment and wider achievement will occur.

Our policy has been created with the views of staff, learners and parent/carers included.

At St. Mark's, our vision is to inspire success, as a community of faith and love, where high-quality relationships lead to high quality learning.

(Our Vision)

Revised May 2025

Purpose

This policy is based on the City of Edinburgh Council policy and procedure.

Throughout the process of implementation, the views of staff, parents and pupils within our learning community have been included.

In Edinburgh every child or young person, irrespective of identity, background or ability is part of a resilient and positive learning community where they feel - we belong, we contribute, we learn, we are supported and we help others.

Every child should feel secure, nurtured, valued, included and supported within our learning community. Our aim is that every child is present, participating, achieving, and supported.

This policy and procedure should help to establish and maintain positive relationships and mutual respect resulting in a positive learning community and a supportive and restorative ethos.

Scope

All staff in our learning community are covered by this policy and procedure. It encompasses:

- Whole school approaches
- Clear expectations
- Building skills
- Additional Support Needs
- Responding to (Di)stressed Behaviour
- Our Staged Approach to Positive Behaviour
- Professional Development

Definitions

Family: Describes those considered to be related to the child by birth, affinity, choice or close personal ties and who can be contributors to the wider care and wellbeing of the child.

Parent/s: Describes any person who has parental responsibilities and any person who has custody of a child, including foster carers and a parent who shares custody of a child.

Children's rights: are protected by the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Children and Young People Act 2014. There is a shared understanding that these

rights are unalienable entitlements which cannot be taken from children. These rights are not dependent on the child accepting certain responsibilities or on them feeling or behaving in a certain way. Children's rights will not be withdrawn as a consequence of behaviour.

Logical Consequence: This is a consequence which is directly linked to the behaviour or choice. For example, if a child has refused to complete work (appropriately set) they may have to work for part of break. A logical consequence is meaningful and links cause and effect, it is not a punishment.

Natural Consequence: This is a consequence that is a natural result of a behaviour or choice for example if a toy is broken it can't be played with.

Policy Content

Every child and young person has the right to a high quality education. Positive relationships are fundamental to enable effective teaching and learning to take place. We have adopted the following key principles to create a caring, supportive, learning environment:

- an ethos that values positive, restorative and respectful relationships and promotes shared values
- an inclusive and safe learning environment which supports children and develops their skills and resilience enabling them to become responsible for their own behaviour
- recognising that all behaviour is communication and that understanding what is being communicated and the underlying needs is crucial for assessing and meeting children's needs and finding solutions. Make it clear that it is the way that they are communicating that is problematic and not them as a person.
- 'Challenging behaviour' often meets a need for the young person. For them it is a solution – a means to an end - and not a problem. Under stress, the young person's survival response may dominate their actions.

Implementation

Whole School Approach

Good organisation, lesson planning and preparation will help to create the right learning environment. Flexibility, choice and, where appropriate, differentiation will also help to support individual needs and promote positive relationships and behaviour.

However, even in these conditions, some children and young people will present with behaviour that challenges or is difficult to interpret. The school uses approaches and

strategies which are designed to help prevent and de-escalate difficult situations and identify and support individual support needs.

We understand that everyone learns best when they feel good about themselves. Punishments can make children feel bad about themselves. This can hinder their ability to engage in their learning, including their behaviour. Positive approaches to support behaviour focus on relationships, skills building, restoration and, when appropriate, logical, or natural consequences appropriate to the child, rather than the implementation of punishments.

To achieve this positive ethos all staff are committed to:

- Relationships -Developing positive relationships and being positive role models
- Rights Respecting - Respecting and protecting the rights of all children
- Resilience building – Through our Building Resilience programme - identifying strengths and developing skills
- Restorative - Acting restoratively to prevent difficulties and repair relationships when difficulties do arise.

Clear Expectations

We have **3 rules** which everyone in our learning community knows:

READY to listen and learn	RESPECTFUL of everyone and everything	RESPONSIBLE and safe
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Our School Values:

Safe
Trusting
Motivated
Achieving
Resilient
Kind
Supportive



These form the basis of all our conversations in relation to the high expectations we have here at St. Mark's. It is helpful if parents can also discuss these rules and values with their children if there has been an incident in school. The purpose of these conversations is to find solutions and develop skills that will prevent problems in the future.

Our rules and values are displayed throughout our building, shared with parents and discussed regularly.

Each teacher will establish a class charter with their class at the start of each term. These can be revised termly. They should be positive, focused, few in number and in a child friendly language to promote positive relationships in the classroom environment. These link in with the United Nations Rights of the Child.

Praise postcards can be posted in the 'praise post-box' for children who go over and above and for demonstrating our school values. These will be delivered by the Head Teacher.

Our Vision:

At St. Mark's, our vision is to inspire success, as a community of faith and love, where high-quality relationships lead to high quality learning.

Our Aims:

- To deliver a high quality teaching and learning experience for our pupils that promotes high expectations for all.
- To ensure that everyone feels safe, welcome, included, looked after, and encouraged to live a life of faith.
- To promote a love of learning for all pupils and equip them with the tools to take ownership of their own learning and develop skills for life.
- To create a welcoming atmosphere in school where children, staff, parents and visitors feel valued.
- To develop and maintain partnerships in order to strengthen curriculum links and promote an awareness of the local community and wider world.

Building Skills for Relationships

The school uses lessons and activities that contribute to positive relationships and behaviour and support children to build the skills they need to develop positive relationships, resilience, be rights respecting and act restoratively. This includes:

- Building Resilience Programme
- CIRCLE / Up, Up and Away resource
- Rights Respecting Schools
- Wellbeing Indicators

Additional Support Needs

We provide support that meets children's needs and identifies additional support needs as early as possible to prevent further difficulties developing later. The needs of most children can be met in class, however for a small number of children additional supports are put in place. This is co-ordinated with parents through a child planning

meeting and may involve partner services like our Educational Psychologist or Additional Support for Learning Service link. The school uses the following targeted supports:

- Support for Learning Interventions
- Trusted adult for all pupils
- Nurture spaces
- Sensory spaces

Responding to (Di)stressed Behaviour

The school recognises that supporting children and young people with their behaviour requires:

- acknowledgement that all behaviour is communication
- understanding how a child's needs and setting might impact on behaviour
- identifying any known 'triggers' and early warning signs
- considering the environment, body language and speech in this process
- intervening early if warning signs are detected to prevent a situation from escalating

We explore and establish "what's happened" with children. To do this we listen to their response whether that is given verbally or expressed non-verbally and act appropriately. Once the reason and purpose for the child's behaviour is known we explore how we can develop appropriate support or adaptations to address the issue by promoting well-being, offering coping strategies and agreeing constructive solutions.

Our Staged Approach to Positive Behaviour Positive Relationships and Encouragement

All staff focus on positive relationships by looking for opportunities to encourage learner skills, recognise effort and build on strengths. Positive relationships form a foundation that minimises difficulties occurring.

This includes:

- Positive communication home through **Praise Postcards** or **Positive Phone Calls** home.
- Time to share success with a key adult
- Sharing achievements with peers at assembly and through our wider achievement wall

When a difficulty does occur we have a clear and consistent staged approach that all learners know and can predict:

- **Reminders** of rule/ expectation with short instruction and or non-verbal cues.

- A time set to discuss and **reflect** on the behaviour and **repair** it through restorative approaches. This could be with class staff member or SLT depending on the situation.

When a challenging situation develops our main objective is to reduce the level of arousal or distress. The school uses De-escalation Techniques found in **Appendix 2** of the Council's Relationships, Learning and Behaviour procedures. All physical intervention to prevent harm is strictly in accordance with the **City of Edinburgh Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Procedure**. If a child has been supported through physical intervention from an adult to prevent harm, parents will always be informed and this will be recorded in pastoral notes.

Red Heart

If a class teacher feels that they need the immediate support of an adult, they will send their 'Red Heart' to the office. Office staff will call for a member of the Senior Leadership Team or a Pupil Support Assistant if the SLT are not available.

Professional Development

We support all staff to develop their skills to support relationships learning and behaviour, this includes but is not limited to:

- Use of the CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom resource / Early Years Up, Up and Away resource (online training available)
- Understanding and implementing Edinburgh's Getting it Right for Every Child approach (online training available)
- Implementing strategies outlined in the CEC procedure Relationships, Learning and Behaviour
- Promoting Positive Relationships for learning and behaviour (online training available)
- City of Edinburgh Council Nurture Training
- City of Edinburgh Council Autism Training

Roles And Responsibilities

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy. In particular, the headteacher ensures that the concerns of pupils are elicited, listened to, and appropriately addressed and that the provisions of 'Getting it Right for Every Child' are taken into account when working in partnership with children, families, and other professionals on issues of communication and behaviour.

To do this, pupils are asked to complete a 'My views for My Team' sheet with a trusted adult.

The leadership team also support staff to implement this policy by developing the 4 R's (Relationships, Rights Respecting, Resilience Building, Restorative) through on-going professional learning and development, and appropriate levels of support and challenge. They also lead self-evaluation activities to ensure practice continues to be effective.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed. All staff encourage positive relationships and act as role models within our learning community.

Parents and families are regarded by the school as key partners who are asked to work in partnership with the school. Parents are expected to assist in maintaining positive relationships and support restorative approaches and high expectations for positive behaviour. Parents are invited to raise with the school any issues arising from the operation of the policy.

Learners participate in supporting this procedure and contribute to our positive school ethos. All learners know our school values / rules. Learners are supported to ensure that incidents of disruption, violence, bullying and any form of harassment are reported. The implementation of this procedure allows learners to understand the cause and effect of their behaviour.

Equalities And Rights

All staff implementing these procedures have responsibilities under **The Equality Act 2010**. Having due regard for advancing equality includes:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Addressing and preventing discrimination arising from disability
- Making reasonable adjustments in relation to the implications of a learner's additional support needs or disability and the impact this may have on their relationships and behaviour.
- Paying due regard to cultural factors that are relevant in ensuring that the school's ethos is inclusive.
- Implementing the local authority framework for preventing and responding to bullying.

Concerns, Complaints, and Compliments

Any concerns, complaints, and compliments in relation to this policy can initially be referred to the SLT through the school office.

While we will always aim to frontline resolve any complaints, if it is felt that a satisfactory outcome has not been possible families can then escalate this through the **City of Edinburgh Council Complaints procedure**.

Record Keeping

The school records any incidents of behaviour requiring significant support. Details will include an interpretation of events by different parties (including the child), possible factors of settings, triggers, reasonable adjustments in place, an evaluation of how the incident was managed and 'lessons learned' to help prevent or better deal with a similar incident arising again.

Incidents that have resulted in physical harm or physical intervention being used to prevent harm are recorded on the council health and safety database (SHE portal).

The Senior Leadership Team reviews these records of incidents on a regular basis.

Self-Evaluation and Review

The behaviour policy will be shared with every family.

The views of staff, pupils and parents will be gathered through Forms.

The policy will then be reviewed in 2025.

Related Documents

Scottish Government

- Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act (2000)
- Included, Engaged, Involved 2 (2017)
- Guidance on the Presumption to Provide Education in a Mainstream Setting (2019)
- Developing a Positive Whole School Ethos and Culture: relationships, learning and behaviour (2018)
- Additional Support for Learning Act (2004) - amended 2009
- Parental Involvement Act 2006
- The Equality Act 2010

- UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
- Children and Young People Act 2014

City of Edinburgh Council

- Edinburgh Learns Framework: Inclusion (2019)
- Included, Engaged, Involved in Edinburgh Policy (2018)
- Relationships, Learning, Behaviour Procedure (2019)
- Managing and Reducing Risk Procedure (2019)
- Preventing and Responding to Bullying in Children and Young People (2019)
- City of Edinburgh Council Equalities and Rights Framework (www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/9516/equality_diversity_and_rights_framework_2017-21)

School

Dix, P. (2017) *When the Adults Change Everything Changes*, Independent Thinking Press, Wales

CEC CIRCLE / Up, Up and Away Documents

Appendix 1 (see next page)

We endeavour to manage behaviour in a positive way, maintaining the ethos of the school and in a culture of mutual respect.

Positive Relationships Flow-Chart at St. Mark's:

READY to listen and learn	RESPECTFUL of everyone and everything	RESPONSIBLE and safe
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Agreed Steps for when positive relationships break down:



Check In and Remind

- Remind the child of the instruction given and the behaviour you are looking for and ask if they need any support.
- Quietly remind the child again of the behaviour you are expecting (in line with the rules/values) and that you want them to follow the instruction given.



Warning and Consequence

- Calmly tell the child you are now giving them a warning.
- Support the child in helping them to make a positive choice.
- Sit beside the child to explain that they will now be issued with a classroom/playground consequence.



Repair

- Short, restorative conversation using restorative questions and agreed consequences.

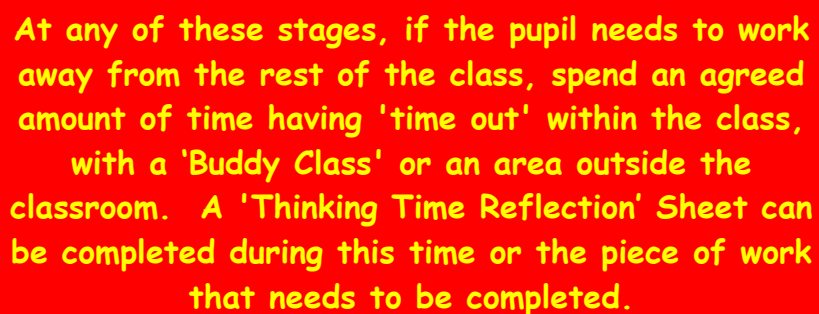
Micro-Scripts to be used during this flowchart:

Warning – “I’ve spoken to you twice now about....I am now needing to see....”

Consequence – “I’ve noticed that you are having difficulty....I have spoken to you 3 times now so I will speak to you at break time about this”. Refer to previous good behaviour then say “Thank you for listening”. Then walk away and do not respond to any secondary behaviour. Write it down discreetly then deal with it later.



Time-Out



At any of these stages, if the pupil needs to work away from the rest of the class, spend an agreed amount of time having 'time out' within the class, with a 'Buddy Class' or an area outside the classroom. A 'Thinking Time Reflection' Sheet can be completed during this time or the piece of work that needs to be completed.

Appendix 2

The 4W Sheet – Thinking Time & Reflection

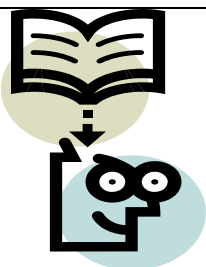
To be used as restorative exercise in class or when a pupil is on thinking time.



What did I do?



**What rule was broken?
What rights were affected?**



What is my side of the story?



What can I do to make things better?

Appendix 3

A Restorative Approach at St. Mark's

1. Ensure the meeting takes place in a place/format where the pupil feels comfortable. This may be during a task, walking alongside each other or in a comfortable space.
2. Ensure the meeting and time is valued. Resist interruptions and make sure the conversation is seen as important, valued and is used for a quality discussion.
3. Be aware of your behaviour and response in reaction to the situation. Try not to use judgemental language or take too many notes as this may cause a defensive or uncomfortable approach from the pupil.
4. 4. End your meeting on a positive note. Look to the future and try and plan next steps of how to resolve the situation in the future

#spreadingthemarkssparkle

#sprinklingkindnessatstmarks

#themarksway

Immediate Consequences :

Low Level Behaviour

Thinking time in an agreed place

Act of Kindness

Sent to back of the line

Class consequence

Medium Level Behaviour

Chat with family

Restorative conversation

Walk & Talk during break time

Thinking time in an agreed place

Act of Kindness

High Level Behaviour

SLT Support

Meeting with family

Solution Circle

Zones of Regulation

Restorative Meeting

Appendix 4

De-escalation Techniques

Physical

- Think about your position in the room – make sure you are closest to the door. But do not stand across the doorway to block someone's exit.
- Respect personal space by keeping your distance (up to 4x more than normal) and turn your body so that you are presenting at an angle to the other person.
- Be aware of your body language – try to present with a relaxed and non-threatening stance with your hands open and visible.
- Stand on the same side as their dominant hand (reducing the likelihood that they will try to grab or hit out)
- Make only intermittent eye contact – more than this is threatening
- Adopt a 'slow motion' mode to offset the natural tendency to match the other person's behaviour – i.e., talk slowly, walk slowly, move your hands slowly.
- Lower your voice and try to retain a warm and empathic tone
- Make sure your facial expression is congruent with what you say
- Remain calm
- Make use of familiar objects, sign language, emotion talks symbols, places of refuge and visual timetables as appropriate
- Where possible separate them from the others / or remove the audience
- Get everyone to sit down – sitting helps you to calm down

Communication

- Calm tone of voice - self-monitor pitch, pace, and volume of voice
- Use simple short clear language and give extra time for the child to process
- Listen
- Use the young person's name
- Remember that all behaviour is communication
- Take into consideration preferred communication and communication needs e.g. use of visuals and signing
- Ensure the dignity of all concerned. Try to offer the child a legitimate way out of the situation for example offering a controlled choice.

- Ask onlookers to ignore an escalating situation; in some circumstances requesting they leave the scene.
- Cue others to what to do 'Continue working on X I'll just be a moment or two'
- Ask 'What's happened'
- Give them a way out/offer 'time out' – “Would you like to take a break?”
- Respond empathically - recognise the emotions and feelings that the child has by naming them.
- It can be useful to acknowledge distress or wonder aloud e.g. 'I can see you are really upset. I wonder if you are feeling frustrated?'
- Tell them that it's ok to have these feelings.
- Separate the behaviour from the person
- Tell them that you want to hear what they have to say – “Help me to understand what you're saying to me”
- Reflect back to them – “Can I just check? I think what you're saying to me is that you are unhappy about.... Have I got that right?”
- Encourage them to reflect on the situation when calm, consider the impact on others and how to resolve the situation
- Model and support problem-solving skills “What would help right now?” (This might only be possible once they have started to calm down)
- Offer praise where you can – “Well done! You're doing really well to control yourself. Keep on taking deep breaths.”
- Soothing reassuring words can help the child to feel calmer

Personal attributes that will help

- Always show warmth and positive regard for children and young people
- Try to be consistent and predictable
- Be calm and reassuring, model respectful interactions
- Know your limits - don't make promises you can't keep and get help if you need it.

Feelings

Issues affecting the child / young person:

Come and See.....

Relationships at St. Mark's:

**Deliberate
Botheredness**

**High Expectations
for all.**

**Scripted
Responses**

**Celebrating Wider
Achievements**

**Restorative
Conversations**

**Routines and
Structures**

**Praise in Public (PIP)
Reprimand in
Private(RIP)**

Praise Post Cards

**Visible Consistencies:
Meet and Greet
Wonderful Walking
Wonderful Manners**

**Ready
Respectful
Responsible**