Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy

Statement of Principles

'Bowlby described how a secure base is provided through a relationship with one or more sensitive and responsive attachment figures who meet the child's needs and to whom the child can turn as a safe haven, when upset or anxious' (Bowlby, 1988)

We believe in an holistic approach to education, with relationships being the key building block to all elements of learning. Therefore, this policy focus' on the importance of the key relationship and its impact on behaviour. Attachment is central to our well-being and affects us all. With this knowledge, we apply Attachment Aware Approaches in our everyday practice, with a particular focus on the central principles of empathy, connection, attunement, trust and co-regulation. This includes careful consideration and awareness raising of both verbal and non-verbal communication. The purpose of developing this Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy is to promote a move away from traditional behaviour management approaches, which place a huge emphasis on rewards and punishments linked to behaviour, towards a more humanist, relational and universal approach, which is inclusive for all, and can benefit the whole school community. Although behaviourist approaches can work for the majority of children and young people, they are not successful with all. This is especially true for those who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – traumatic life experiences that occur before the age of 18. For CYP who have experienced trauma and loss, including vulnerable groups such as children in care, children at the edge of the care system, and children previously in care, behaviourist approaches often serve to re-traumatise them and do not teach them how to express their emotions in a more appropriate manner.

Our Aims

- We are an Attachment aware school which means we focus on building positive relationships between children and staff and children with their peers.
- All pupils need to feel safe and secure before their minds are free to learn.
- Attachment is everybody's business. We are all shaped by our early relationships and our behaviour is influenced by our attachment experiences.
- We all need a secure base in life. School is an important secure base for all children, but for some, it may be the only secure base that they have experienced and therefore is hugely important.

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- It emphasis' that relationships and a sense of belonging are key to good mental health for all, but are essential for children who have experienced multiple relational losses and trauma.
- Encouraging parental engagement and involvement is absolutely crucial when addressing and planning support for children's SEMH needs.
- All children will be supported through their key relationships to develop a sense of worth, identity and achievement.
- We have a key role in providing our pupils with the skills required to participate safely, effectively and responsibly in an increasingly complex world.
- Our children's experiences and behaviour in school cannot be disassociated from all other aspects of their lives, including their families and community.
- We need to work in partnership with parents/carers, education services, social work, health, voluntary agencies and others.
- There is a link between high quality learning and teaching and reducing negative behaviours where there is an appropriate balance of challenge and support.
- It is important to remember that not all behaviour is simply a matter of choice. Making a 'positive choice' usually requires being in a calm or 'thoughtful' frame of mind to do so. 'Bad choices' (i.e. often meaning 'inappropriate behaviours') are usually the result of feeling very emotionally dysregulated – i.e. a sign of 'flipping your lid'.

Our Approach

Our approach is based on the latest neuroscience approach by Bruce Perry which is:
- The Neurosequential Model (See appendix 1)
- The 3 R's (see appendix 2)

And:
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.
- The Secure Base Model

Key principles of our approach:
- Our approach takes attachment theory as its fo9undation, so there is a focus on early experience, relationships and developmental needs, which are central to well-being, teaching and learning.
- Outcomes of behaviour are responsive to the needs of the child rather than punishing or isolating, and natural outcomes are used rather than consequences or sanctions.
- Responses are never shaming or humiliating. Time in rather than Time out is used to support children in regulating.
- High boundaries are maintained rooted in high warmth, structure, consistency and reliability.
- The environment is child-led rather than task-led, so relationships, proximity, attunement and caring are always prioritised over routines and paperwork.
- The curriculum and activities are sensitive to children whose life experiences may contain chaos and trauma.
- Attuned adults facilitate learning and development through a focus on 'being' rather than 'doing', for example through open-ended, purposeful play experiences.
- Boundaried 'safe spaces'/dens are available in both the indoor and outdoor environment for children to manage overload and dysregulation.
- Provision is made for those children who may need to experience Islands of Intimacy alone with the key person because they do not yet feel safe enough to 'share' adult attention with other children.
- We recognise behaviour is a form of communication and at no time should a child be identified by their behaviour. We support a shift towards viewing behaviour as a communication of an emotional need and respond accordingly.

- Everyday must be a fresh start and that all children are heard dispassionately and equally, and that no child is treated in light of previous choices made.
- We work with parents to identify any previous experiences that may be impacting the child and/or family.

In summary, we nurture and support children to reach their potential, focussing on early experiences, relationships and developmental needs, these being essential to overall well-being and outcomes.

'All of us, from the cradle to the grave, are happiest when life is organised as a series of excursions, long or short, from the secure base provided by our attachment figures.'

(Bowlby, 1988)

Strategies to be used:

- Clear routines in place.
- Clear positive rules/boundaries in place creating a positive learning environment.
- Planned ignoring to deal with minor incidents, e.g. whining, making faces, using a silly voice, making rude noises. If these minor problems are ignored, children learn that they no longer get a reaction when they behave this way. Adults to stay calm, take breaths and keep body language calm.
- Distraction may also be used at this stage alongside ignoring the behaviour. "Oh ………., look at that spaghetti in the black tray, shall we go and explore it together?" Or "………., I could do with your good chopping skills to help me prepare the snack, come on let's go and sort it together." This would work if the child was still predominately regulated and only beginning to show signs that they were struggling.
- Give clear, calm instructions:
    - Get down to the child's level.
    - Maintain eye contact.
    - Voice to be low.
    - Keep language simple.
    - Use the child's name to gain their attention.
    - Use a calm voice and say exactly what you want the child to do, "Jack, stop hitting your friend. Keep your hands to yourself."
    - Wait 5 seconds and stay close to the child.
    - If the child responds, praise, "Well done Jack, you have kept your hands to yourself."
    - If they do not respond, use a positive logical consequence, for example, "Jack, come on, lets go over here and have a cuddle. I could see that you were finding it difficult to keep your hands to yourself, and I think this might be because you wanted the train. Let's go and have a think about this." OR "Jack, come on, let's have some time together, I can see you are struggling. Let's go and get the snack table ready."
    - Give the child time to calm and re-regulate with the security of an adult.
    - Then take them back to the activity, "Jack, come on, lets go back to the black tray and let's explore the spaghetti."
    - If the behaviour continues "Oh Jack, I can see your still struggling with keeping your hands to yourself, let's go and play in another area/get some fresh air" (aiming to place the child in a more comfortable place to meet their current need).

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- - If this still does not work, move the child to a safe area, stay close to the child and reassure them you are there for them. Use the Attachment Aware/Emotion Coaching Principles (add in appendix):
    - Example 1:You could say to reassure:
      - "I understand you are feeling angry, you're not alone." **(Recognising, empathising, soothing to calm)**
      - "I think you are feeling angry because you are tired, and I think you need a rest." (**Validating the feelings and labelling**)
      - "We can sort this." **(Problem-solving with the child/young person)**
      - "Let's have a cuddle and calm down."
    - Example 2:
      - "I understand you are feeling angry, you are not alone". **(Recognising, empathising, soothing to calm)**
      - "I think you are feeling frustrated and you want some attention." **(Validating the feelings and labelling)**
      - "You can't kick people for attention, as it hurts and upsets other people." **(Setting limits on behaviour – if needed)**
      - "I suggest we sit together, or I suggest we go into the nurture room/or go for a walk outside and go and see the chickens." I think this may calm you down and make you feel better. **(Problem-solving with the child/young person)**
  - Once calm, you would provide the child with the teaching opportunity regarding the situation. Provide time to listen to them and time to teach them correct social acceptances.
- FAGUS will be used as a tool to identify the emotional needs of the child and the stage of development for any child who is displaying behaviours that are not typical.
- Behaviour regulation plans will be used from information gained to identify personalised target/actions.

Multi agency working
As a Nursery School we would use the above approach and where necessary also seek support from outside agencies to gain specialist advise and input.

Links with other policies
- SEND
- Safeguarding
- Equalities