



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 relationships and their impact on behaviour and wellbeing. 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. This approach is beneficial for all children, particularly those that have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE’s), e.g. loss of family members, domestic violence, neglect, pandemics, and including vulnerable children facing disadvantage.

‘The children who need love the most, will always ask for it, in the most unloving ways.’

(Jane Evans)

Impact of Covid

Covid has been an ACE for all children. We believe this approach will support the recovery from the pandemic and support the closing of gaps in learning and development that are identified.

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.
- It emphasises 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 social, emotion and mental health 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. When a child is out of their window of tolerance, a child is not always able to make a positive choice and as a result a child will appear emotionally dysregulated.

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 foundation, 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.
- Our environment enables safe spaces to be accessed throughout all provision for children 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.

Strategies to be used:

- Clear routines in place.
- Clear positive rules/boundaries in place creating a positive learning environment.
- Distraction is a key strategy to support the child when they start to show signs that they are becoming emotionally dysregulated.
- The importance of key worker relationship needs to be acknowledged and where appropriate use the keyworker to support the child who is becoming dysregulated or has become dysregulated.
- If a child does become emotionally dysregulated get down to the child's level and confirm the child's stress, "I can see your feeling angry and I think that's because....."
- Maintain close proximity and offer physical touch (if appropriate support to individual child).
- Follow where appropriate the child's individual window of tolerance plan, that will outline personalised support strategies.
- Support regulation by remaining close to the child in a safe place, providing personalised comfort, ensuring basic needs are met, e.g. if tired, hungry; meet this need first.
- Once a child is regulated, this is where you can talk to the child and reflect on what has just happened.
- Window of tolerance 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
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy – see recording and reporting procedures for any behaviour concerns. Also refer to section 21 – child-on-child abuse including sexualised behaviour.
- Equalities