



Attachment and Trauma Responsive Behaviour Policy (Draft)

Connection v Disconnection Policy

Our Mission

'Love of learning, love of one another, love of life itself and love of God'.

We at St Mary's believe that everyone has the right to have their dignity respected their worth valued and to become fully human, fully alive. These rights are rooted in the belief that we are created in the image and likeness of God. Our hope, it that all who come into contact with our school will be inspired to grow spiritually, act justly, think critically, work co-operatively as life-long learners, confident in the knowledge of God's love for them.

We commit ourselves as a Catholic school to:

- Treat all people with justice, respect, and equality as children of God.
- To encourage a spirit of community and cooperation based on Gospel Values, embracing forgiveness and reconciliation in all our relationships.

As an attachment and trauma responsive school, our approach to behaviour management is based on helping everyone to be and feel safe, building relationships, understanding individual needs and supporting the development of regulation skills so everyone can "Be the best that they can be". The policy applies to all adults and children in our school, and we ask parents, carers, our community, and other adults involved to support it. At the heart of our community are the people and the relationships they build. To make our community work we expect everyone to treat each other with respect, kindness, and compassion. We know that meeting these expectations can be challenging. To help, we build a culture in which people can talk about how they feel, ask for help, learn from mistakes, put things right and get the support they need to manage their mental health, wellbeing, feelings and behaviours, so that they become confident, self-regulating adults and positive members of their community, who show tolerance, respect and support for others.

Self-regulation means an individual child is able to develop and regulate their emotions, thoughts and behaviour to enable them to act in positive ways. At St. Mary's all adults support children with their emotional understanding and by modelling and using co-regulation skills strategies each day, as self-regulation grows out of co-regulation. Over time and with consistent practice, the process shifts from co-regulation between adult and child to the child's self-regulation. Developing self-regulation, like many elements of development and learning, is not something children do by themselves. It is a process that grows out of attuned and trusted relationships.

The school has a number of rules/expectations, but the primary aim of the behaviour policy is not a system to enforce rules. It is a means of promoting good relationships, so that people can work together with the common purpose of helping everyone to learn. This policy supports the school community in aiming to allow everyone to work collaboratively in an effective and considerate way. The school expects every member of the school community to behave in a considerate way towards others. We treat all children fairly and apply this behaviour strategy /policy in a consistent way. All adults must provide therapeutic talk to reflect feelings as opposed to behaviour. This policy aims to help children to grow in a safe and secure environment, and to become positive, responsible and increasingly independent members of the school community. The school rewards good behaviour, as it believes that this will

develop an ethos of kindness and co-operation. This policy is designed to promote good behaviour, rather than merely deter anti-social behaviour.

Every child deserves to be inspired, have a positive mind-set, recognise failure is just a stepping stone to success and to believe they can do anything they set their minds to. At St Mary's we aim to develop the self-awareness, self-belief and emotional intelligence of every child, regardless of their background or circumstances, to give them the tools needed to flourish in life.

Policy Aims

- To provide a framework that is trauma-informed and inclusive, ensuring that it is appropriate for all children at our school
- To create a therapeutic ethos in school whereby every member of staff responds to children's behaviour and emotions with insight and understanding based on neuroscience and trauma-informed techniques
- To create a nurturing, loving environment where children are not punished for having big feelings but instead are guided through them
- To develop self-aware, empathetic and reflective thinkers whereby children are learning from their difficult feelings and behaviour and developing their emotional intelligence
- To support children through their difficult feelings and behaviour with the intention of teaching and guiding them through how to manage the same feelings/ situation differently next time
- To respond to children with connection and understanding rather than disconnection and rejection with the awareness that this will help create an opportunity to learn and for behaviours to change
- For all children to feel safe in our care, especially when they are overwhelmed with their feelings
- To develop positive mental health and wellbeing through this approach

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each staff member to respond and guide the children when dealing with a difficult behaviour or feeling. We ensure all staff have access to the appropriate therapeutic training and will respond with connection and not disconnection to an incident. This will ensure children feel safe in the care of our adults and reduce the feeling of rejection. This approach considers the complexities that arise with attachment disorder and childhood trauma as well as child development, helping to maintain trust between our children and staff. We expect that the member of staff who is involved with the child(ren) when the behaviour is occurring to be the person to follow through our behaviour policy to further create a feeling of security and trust with the children.

Procedure

Our behaviour policy is based on scientific childhood-trauma, neuroscience and child development theory as well as the therapeutic teaching approach. It takes into account all of our children and their circumstances and is particularly sensitive to the needs of our more vulnerable children whom we recognise are more likely to struggle with their behaviour. This procedure aims to help children calm down, self-regulate and reflect on their feelings which in turn will then help them to manage their behaviour. We recognise that all behaviour is a result of a difficult feeling.

Rules/Expectations

- All rules are communicated regularly to children and displayed in classrooms
- Rules are communicated through connective language and are aimed to build a relationship culture with the classroom/school
- Rules are framed positively to maintain connection and are known to the children as our Behaviour Promises

Ready - We will show each other that we are ready to learn

Safe - We will walk quietly and safely around the school being considerate of others

Respect - We will use kind words, listen carefully and respond in an encouraging, positive and fair way.
We will treat each other as we would like to be treated

- We refrain from using the buzz words ‘no’, ‘don’t’, and ‘can’t’ because we are aware that these words can often shut down a child causing them to respond with defence and can result in their rational brain being unable to learn from the support given.
- We give children the autonomy when possible to make ‘good/positive choices’ about their own behaviour so that they take account of their actions and are answerable for them.



Rewards

- Rewards are given in real-time in most situations, we avoid using rewards as a bargaining tool for behaviour. Instead, we offer real-time rewards such as stickers or team-points when we see good work/behaviour and verbalise positive acknowledgements e.g. “You have worked really well on that.”
- We acknowledge positive behaviour and working hard with reflection rather than reward to reinforce reflective thinkers who want to achieve for themselves and not for a reward. “Sam, you worked on that, even though it was a challenge for you at first.”
- We use appreciative comments with the children which are specific to the child and creates a feeling of respect and value. “Alex, thank you for sitting calmly today”
- We acknowledge positive changes to behaviour, emotional intelligence skills and empathy with our SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) Superstar Certificate. This acknowledges when children have worked hard to use self- regulation skills taught in their PATHS lessons and as a response to therapeutic teaching support from the staff after behavioural incidents.

Connection and regulation procedure

Step 1	Therapeutic response given NAME FEELING BEHAVIOUR ENCOURAGE	Respond therapeutically with connection, empathy and insight into the brain. This will help shift a child’s overwhelmed reptilian brain into rational brain which will help them think and reflect.
Step 2	Offer a BOUNDARY (either a limitation or a responsibility) Offer an educational chat (If ready to hear this)	Create opportunities to take responsibility for their actions and learn through setting boundaries.
Step 3	Calm time Or Thinking time (OR both)	Re-define ‘punishment’ and create the opportunity to self-regulate and reflect instead.
Step 4	Ongoing	Create trust, reliability and security through consistency.

Step One: Therapeutic Response Given

Staff will respond to a child's difficult feeling or behaviour incident calmly using a therapeutic response. They will follow the above steps and help the child to understand how they are feeling. This will help the child feel understood, noticed and heard. We acknowledge that although the child may have made a mistake or done something wrong, we are aware that there was a trigger to make this happen and that is often an overwhelming feeling. We need to help the children to recognise and understand this before we focus on the behaviour incident.

Step Two: Boundary

In response to difficult behaviour, we will put a boundary in place. This will either be in the form of a responsibility, whereby we ask the child to make amends for what they have done by picking up what they have broken and fixing it for example or helping put things right. We are aware that sometimes a child will need some calm time or thinking time (Step three) before they can fulfil the responsibility, we have asked them to do.

Step Three: Calm Time

We are aware that when children display difficult behaviour, they are often also experiencing overwhelming feelings. At St Mary's, we want to teach the children how to calm down and manage their big emotions. We may ask the children to have some calm time to help them to do this. Children will be able to listen to calming music, do some quiet reading or construction to help them learn to self-regulate and manage their emotions. We acknowledge that children need to feel calm enough before they can learn how to change their behaviour and react differently next time.

In the event of a child who is extremely overwhelmed, kicking, hurting others and very angry, we will help the child to calm down through using therapeutic thinking time. This replaces the conventional time out. Thinking time is where one of our members of staff will take the child out to a therapeutic 'safe' space. They will stay with the child throughout this process to help them regulate their emotions. This is not a punishment whereby we reject the child and send them away, instead we sit with them and help them to manage the very overwhelming feelings. When the child is ready to engage we will do so. This is not a confrontational method and will respect that the child is already angry. When the child has calmed down, they will be offered some further calm-time before asking them to make amends for their behaviour through a limitation or responsibility (as mentioned above).

Step Four: Consistency

This approach will be followed by every member of staff in school and appropriate training will be given. Children at St Mary's deserve to feel safe and secure, especially when they find a situation or feeling hard for them in school. We aim to ensure our approach is consistent to communicate that we are here to support them both academically and emotionally. This is part of their PHSE/ RSE development and will help them to develop positive wellbeing and mental health.

Internal calm space (Exclusion process)

In some cases of exceptionally difficult behaviour, we will provide internal calm-time space for our children. This will provide them with an opportunity to self-regulate and reflect on their emotions within the school but away from the rest of their class. This is not a form of rejection but rather an acknowledgement that they are struggling more than usual and need more help to calm down. Our Calm Space will give them opportunities to reflect on their behaviour and focus on their wellbeing for a period of time which will be decided by the class or Head Teacher.

Each child will have the opportunity to have a fresh start after each lesson. Only positive behaviour will be celebrated in the class – **praise loudly and discipline quietly.**