

# Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Policy



*Together, we will Grow, Learn and Succeed*

Updated August 2025

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## 1. **Purpose**

This policy and procedure is based on City of Edinburgh Council policy and procedure and the views of staff, parents and pupils within our learning community.

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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>.

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.

## 2. **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

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<sup>1</sup> Included, Engaged, Involved in Edinburgh Policy and Edinburgh Learns Inclusion Framework

<sup>2</sup> Guidance on the Presumption to Provide Education in a Mainstream Setting (2019)

### 3. 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 Children's rights will not be withdrawn as a consequence of behaviour.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.

### 4. POLICY CONTENT

Every child and young person have 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.

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## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

### Whole School Approach

Good organisation, lesson planning and preparation will help to create the right learning environment.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> Positive approaches to support behaviour focusses 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 identifying strengths and developing skills.

**Restorative** - Acting restoratively to prevent difficulties and repair relationships when difficulties do arise.

We want to engage directly with parents to foster and develop our positive ethos. To work together to maintain and support shared learning community values and excellent home/school communication. We want to work together to address, prevent and resolve any difficulties should they arise and to build on our strengths together.

<sup>3</sup> CEC CIRCLE / Up, Up and Away resources include tools for Inclusive Learning environments.

<sup>4</sup> Education Scotland – [Parentzone Restorative Approaches](#)

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## Clear Expectations<sup>5</sup>

We have a small number of easily remembered expectations which everyone in our learning community knows. These are summarised in four short phrases.

1. Be ready
2. Be respectful
3. Be safe

(UNCRC articles: 2, 3, 12, 13, 19, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31)

These form the basis of all our conversations in relation to behavioural expectations. It is helpful if parents can also discuss these expectations 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 values are summarised in posters that is displayed throughout our building, shared with parents, and discussed regularly.



## Building Skills for Relationships

We use a variety of 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:

- Our Gather Round Assembly programme
- Building Resilience Programme
- Rights Respecting Schools
- CIRCLE / Up, Up and Away resource

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## **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 an individual child's plan will outline additional supports that should be 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. We use many targeted supports including:

Nurturing school approaches

Nurture Groups

Sfl Interventions

One Trusted Adult: a named person identified by all children to offer support when required

Skills Groups including social skills, engagement and participation, self-esteem

## **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.

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## **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. We promote positive relationships and behaviour through:

- Public recognition e.g. I admire the way you... Thank you for...
- Recognition board for 'Over and Above' behaviour
- Positive postcards, certificates and stickers
- Class team point and House points
- Positive visit to any member of staff inc SLT
- Positive phone call home or LJ Post to parents/carers
- Stenhouse Star Award, Head Teacher Award
- Values padlet recognition at gather round assemblies
- Trust and responsibilities

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

- Step 1: Verbal positive behaviour direction
- Step 2: Verbal reminders/warnings linked to values
- Step 3: Thinking Time (inside or out with the classroom)
- Step 4: Restore and Repair conversation (supported by SLT when required)
- Step 5: Conversation with pupil and parent/carers to discuss interventions e.g. alternative arrangements for break and lunch, positive behaviour chart, alternative seating in classroom (supported by SLT when required).

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.

### **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.
- Implementing strategies outlined in the CEC procedure Relationships, Learning and Behaviour
- Promoting Positive Relationships for learning and behaviour
- City of Edinburgh Council Nurture Training
- City of Edinburgh Council Autism Training

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## **6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The **headteacher** 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.

**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.

## **7. 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.

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## **8. RECORD KEEPING**

### **Reflection, evaluation and de-briefing strategies**

The school records any incidents of behaviour requiring significant support on the school database called SEEMIS. 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 the SHE portal on a weekly basis.

## **9. SELF EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be placed on the school website and will be reviewed every three years.

Next review date – Aug 2028

## **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](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/9516/equality_diversity_and_rights_framework_2017-21)

## **Appendix Two: 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 eg. 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.

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- 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.

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## **Feelings**

Issues affecting the child / young person:

- All behaviour is a form of communication. The young person has something to communicate to you. Let them know that you want to listen to what they have to say and value them as an individual and their viewpoint. 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.

## **Issues affecting you:**

- In response to a potential threat your defence/survival system may also have been activated – your brain will be sending signals to you to fight, flight or freeze.
- The use of de-escalation techniques is therefore counter-intuitive. It goes against our natural instinct in a threatening situation.
- You must try to appear to be calm and in control of yourself and try to engage the 'thinking' part of your brain.

## **What's not helpful?**

### **Physical**

Avoid

- Adopting a threatening stance or standing across the doorway to block someone's exit
- Invading the young person's space (unless you are moving towards them to restrain them)
- Compromising your own safety

### **Communication**

Avoid

- Shouting, threatening, preaching, arguing etc.
- Pointing or shaking your finger
- Continuing to discuss the 'issue' or to ask 'why did you do that'?
- Trying to 'win' or have the last word
- Interrupting e.g. "No, you listen to what I'm saying for a change..."

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- Saying anything that might connect the young person to strong feelings of guilt or shame.

This is not the time.

- Dealing with issues publicly where possible

## **Feelings**

### **Avoid**

- Telling them you know how they feel
- Dismissing their feelings
- Taking it personally. Even when comments or insults are directed at you, they are not really about you. Try not to respond to them and concentrate on calming the situation down

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