

Hermitage Park Primary  
School:

**Better Relationships,  
Better Learning, Better  
Behaviour Policy &  
Procedures**



*Reviewed August 2023*

## Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour Policy & Procedures

### 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.

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.

A pupil and parent/carer overview of this policy, can be found on our school website [www.hermitagepark.edin.sch.uk](http://www.hermitagepark.edin.sch.uk).

### 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

### 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

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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 Children's rights will not be withdrawn as a consequence of behaviour.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 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.
- encouraging a sensitive response to behaviour that takes into account context and individual needs.
- promoting early intervention and support.
- providing a safe environment free from disruption, violence, bullying and any form of harassment for staff and pupils.
- encouraging a positive relationship with parents and carers to develop a shared approach, involving them in the development, implementation and ongoing evaluation of the school's policy and associated procedures.
- a commitment to self-evaluation and quality improvement involving all stakeholders.

### 5. 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 focusses on relationships, skills building, restoration and when appropriate logical or

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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.

### Clear Expectations

We have a small number of easily remembered rules which everyone in our learning community knows. These are summarised in three words:

1. **Ready**
2. **Respectful**
3. **Safe**

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

### 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
- Rights Respecting Schools
- CIRCLE / Up, Up and Away resource
- Cooperative Working Programme
- Restorative approaches/practices work
- Lessons focussed on the protected characteristics, diversity and inclusion
- Anti-Bullying lessons
- Sustainability focusses and lessons

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### Additional Support Needs

We provide support that meets children's needs and identifies **additional support needs** as early as possible in order 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. The school uses the following targeted supports:

- Key workers: a named person for specific children
- Link workers: e.g. home-school link workers, family support, pupil support officer
- Staff being available at critical times e.g. transitions, break times
- Nurture Groups
- Social Skills Groups
- Lunchtime CALM club
- Seasons for Growth Groups

### 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:

- We model 'good choices' and regularly use praise to 'catch them being good'. Staff use the 'language of choice', which encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour, through which we aim to build each pupil's self-esteem.
- *Positive communication home through postcards or calls*
- *Time to share success with a key adult*
- *Sharing achievements with peers*
- *Supporting peers with a skill mastered*
- *Pupil Achievement Awards*
- *House events*

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- *Prefect/leadership roles*
- *Wider achievement display board*

### **When a Difficulty Does Occur**

We have a **clear and consistent staged approach** that all learners know and can predict:

1. Reminder of rule and clear short instruction re: expectation (our agreed restorative discussion script should be used). This discussion should take place quietly and where necessary outside the classroom.
2. Reminder of rule and short break from class activity to regain focus through restorative discussion with adult (check in).
3. Final reminder, supervised time working out with classroom in 'Buddy Class'. Thinking time is used to help defuse a situation and gives a pupil time to reflect and think about making positive choices. Pupils are expected to complete our 'Thinking Time Reflective Questions Sheet' before returning to class (this is differentiated to reflect the needs of the learner). Teachers keep a record of Thinking Time Reflections to monitor use of this sanction and any further supports that need to be in place. Communication of time out of class is communicated to parent by class teacher.

*See Appendix 3 - Flow Chart*

### **Restorative Actions**

On occasions the Senior Leadership Team will agree with the pupil, staff member and where appropriate parent/carer that the pupil needs a further sanction in order to reflect upon the impact of their behaviour and take action to make amendments. Any sanction agreed should be proportionate and take account of the nature of the incident and the individual needs of the pupil. For example, it may be necessary for the pupil to spend their playtime writing a letter of apology to someone harmed or spend time learning about the impact of discrimination.

### **Red Card System**

A red card is used in the case of unsafe behaviour. The red card is sent to the office and a promoted member of staff will attend immediately.

Note: it may be appropriate in exceptional circumstances to remove the rest of the class while the teacher waits for assistance.

### **De-escalation Techniques**

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 1 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 / Early Years Up, Up and Away resource

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- Understanding and implementing Edinburgh's Getting it Right for Every Child approach
- 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

This training programme is regularly reviewed and professional development needs and opportunities are discussed and identified with all staff through annual Professional Development Review meetings.

### 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. To do this they meet regularly with pupil leadership groups, parents/carers and other professionals to gather views and seek solutions to any concerns/issues raised.

**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 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

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- 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.

We recognise that there may be times when parents feel that we have not dealt well with an incident/issue and we ask that any complaints should be brought to the Head Teacher's attention. Parents can do this through contacting the school office by email, letter, phone or by making an appointment.

If early resolution at this stage is not achieved, then the matter should be referred to the Advice and Complaints Service at [https://orb.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/200313/policies\\_and\\_procedures/71/education\\_advice\\_helpline\\_and\\_complaints](https://orb.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/200313/policies_and_procedures/71/education_advice_helpline_and_complaints).

We are also pleased to receive feedback from parents when things have gone well.

### 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 Management Team reviews these records of incidents on a regular basis. Please find below a list of all Records, including completed forms that may be generated or amended by this procedure.*

- Pastoral Notes Reports (SEEMIS)
- Bullying and Equalities Reports (SEEMIS)
- Records of any Reflection Sheets completed by individual pupils
- SHE portal reports

### 9. SELF EVALUATION AND REVIEW

We communicate our policy and procedures to the learning community on the school website and through regular newsletters. *We have worked with pupils and parents/carers to produce user-friendly versions of our Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour Policy.*

We evaluate this policy using the following measures:

- Examining staff, parents and pupils views from surveys or focus groups
- Reviewing data generated by records of incidents



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- Rates of attendance, exclusions and attainment and achievement of pupils in protected groups e.g. care experienced, young carers
- From the comments received in our comments box.
- The number of complaints and compliments that we receive from parents.
- The policy and procedures will be reviewed every 4 years and staff will undertake an annual refresher in our procedures.

### **10. 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 One : 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 talk 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.
- 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)

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- 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:

- 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...”
- 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

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- 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.

## **Appendix Two – Supporting Pupils and Staff during and Following the Need for Physical Intervention, physical harm or Pupil Isolation from Peers to prevent harm**

<b>Immediate Support to Pupil</b>	
Follow strategies and procedures specific to the child or general principles of the establishment about staying with them or allowing them space	
Move the pupil to a calm environment or remove the danger/hazard, where possible and safe to do so	
Help them to calm down using agreed strategies; calming words or, where considered appropriate, touch	
See, ask and check whether the child is hurt; needs first aid or any other practical help e.g. offering a drink; seek medical help immediately if required	
Reassure through actions and what is said that the child knows staff still care for them and want to continue to help	
Decide who should work with the child and the amount of discussion/reflection reasonable to undertake; be aware the child may need time to fully regulate (even after they appear calm)	
Decide whether the child needs time away from the rest of the group or if the group needs time away from them	
Ensure agreed, local processes are followed by relevant staff to inform parents or carers of any incident that has involved their child; what happened and what the next steps will be.	
<b>Following Immediate Supports</b>	
Seek the view of the child at a developmentally appropriate level (consider the use of Emotion Talks, Talking Mats, Wellbeing Web, Solution Focussed Conversation)	
The head teacher should ensure investigation of the incident where appropriate to establish the facts and circumstances	
Investigate the likely cause of the incident e.g. was the child or young person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affected by the environment, routine, behaviour of others or other circumstances</li> <li>• Under stress</li> <li>• Frustrated by the inability to express feelings or to complete task</li> <li>• Angry with another child, staff or him/herself</li> <li>• Acting in self defence</li> <li>• Affected by family or personal circumstances</li> <li>• Missing support or adjustments</li> <li>• Bullied or provoked</li> </ul>	
Communicate what has happened to the parents of the child at the earliest opportunity on the day it has occurred	
If appropriate review Child's Plan and / or Risk Management Plan	
Engage those involved in restorative approaches where appropriate	
<b>Wider Pupil Supports</b>	
Be aware of others who were in the room or immediate areas and how they felt / what they heard or saw – they may need explanations and calming	
Look after the needs of the other children or young people and work to get the group back together; provide appropriate explanations and reassurance	

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Where appropriate, get back to planned activities but be open to the possibility of change. Try to honour commitment to other children so that an individual child's needs do not continue to take priority over all others

Stay in tune with the mood of the group listening closely to what is being said and be sensitive to how the incident may have affected them

Ensure agreed, timely, local processes are followed by relevant staff to inform parents or carers of any incident that has involved their child; what happened and what the next steps will be.

If appropriate review Child's Plan and / or Risk Management / Safety Plan for individuals who have been most affected

Engage those involved in restorative approaches where appropriate

Relevant staff should conduct an internal review of the incident itself to consider investigation findings and identify the need for revised strategies including measures to reinforce positive behaviour, prevent or reduce the risk and level of intervention required to manage unavoidable risk in the future

### **Support to Staff**

Inform the head teacher about the nature of any physical intervention (including seclusion) used to keep child or others safe

Make sure no staff are physically hurt/need medical attention; take appropriate steps to help them deal with the current situation; check how they are feeling

Ensure the incident has been recorded and reported in line with council procedures (SHE portal, pastoral notes and where appropriate critical incident form)

Arrange a debriefing meeting - the head teacher should ensure that emotional support and practical information/guidance is offered automatically without an individual having to ask; they should be assured they will receive sympathetic and sensitive treatment and can express anxiety without fear of criticism

Reassure staff of appropriate risk management and safety planning. Take care to avoid immediate comment on measures that will be taken

Consider the impact on the relationship between staff and the child and give them the time, space, support and contact they need; to restore good relationships over time

Engage those involved in restorative approaches where appropriate

Examples of further staff support may include:

- Arrange for staff to talk about the incident individually / in a group, with a member of staff who understands the likely impact; offer access to the Council's counselling service if required
- Appropriate time to ensure that wellbeing issues were assessed and any actions put in place to support staff
- Support to Staff
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- Ensure the incident has been recorded and reported in line with council procedures (SHE portal, pastoral notes and where appropriate critical incident form)
- Arrange a debriefing meeting - the head teacher should ensure that emotional support and practical information/guidance is offered automatically without an individual having to ask; they should be assured they

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Headteachers can seek support and advice from Psychological Services

Appendix Three – Procedure for Managing Incidents – Flow Chart

