



# Langley Mill Church of England Infant School and Nursery



## ATTACHMENT AWARE BEHAVIOUR REGULATION POLICY

This policy has been impact assessed in the light of all other school policies and the Equality Act 2010.

Written / Reviewed by	Date	Approved by GB	Minute Number	Next Review Date
Karen Scrivens	November 2009			September 2010
Karen Scrivens	August 2010			September 2011
Karen Scrivens	September 2011			September 2012
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All staff	January 2013	26/06/2013	GB/2013/45	September 2013
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All staff	September 16	30/11/2016	GB/2016/80.1	September 17
Karen Scrivens	September 17	29/11/2017	GB/2017/85	September 18
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**Langley Mill Church of England (Controlled) Infant School and Nursery**  
**Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy**

*'Too often we forget that discipline really means to teach, not to punish.  
A disciple is a student, not a recipient of behavioural consequences.'*  
*Dr. Dan J. Siegel*

## 1) Vision statement

Langley Mill Infant School and Nursery has a holistic approach to education, valuing all learning in and out of the classroom. We are an Attachment aware school which means we focus on building positive relationships between children and staff and children with their peers.

Underpinning the behaviour regulation policy is the belief that everyone can learn to self-regulate their own emotions and behaviour. Through this we encourage reflective thinking and do not accept prejudice in any form. Ultimately, we wish to give our children confidence about their capacity to think for themselves and to make sense of their own lives and experiences, hopefully beyond school and into the "real" world".

## 2) Policy Statement

This policy is based on Guidance provided by Derbyshire Local Authority, Derbyshire Virtual School, Derbyshire Educational Psychology Service and Brighton and Hove City Council. It has included input from staff, representatives from the governing body, parents and carers and pupils.

## 3) Policy Scope

This policy is for all staff, pupils, parents and carers, governors, visitors and partner agencies working within the school. It provides guidelines and procedures as to how our school supports and responds to behaviour.

## 4) Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) guidance for headteachers and school staff of maintained schools, outlines the statutory duty to develop a behaviour policy. This DfE guidance is largely based on a behaviourist approach.

***"Headteachers, proprietors and governing bodies must ensure they have a strong behaviour policy to support staff in managing behaviour, including the use of rewards and sanctions"***

***(DfE, Behaviour and discipline in schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff (Published July 2013; last updated January 2016)***

Although behaviourist approaches can work for the majority of children, 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 children who have experienced trauma and loss, including vulnerable groups such as children in care (CiC), children at the edge of the care system, and children previously in care (PiC), behaviourist approaches often serve to re-traumatise them and do not teach them how to express their emotions in a more appropriate manner.

## **5) Purpose**

The purpose of 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.

The policy has been developed in line with Attachment Aware principles and to ensure that it translates into whole school practice.

## **6) Aims and objectives**

Our school is committed to the emotional mental health and well-being of its staff, pupils, parents/carers. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of school life, and to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that supports the social, emotional and mental health of the whole school community. Therefore, the aim of our Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy is to bring us all together to adhere to some basic key principles and practices that reflect our school ethos.

The policy aims to develop a consistent, whole school approach to including children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs within the changing context of Local Authority provision. It recognises, and aims to take account of, the huge challenges we face in managing to include pupils with complex SEMH needs, and meet targets around attainment and governmental scrutiny, particularly within the current climate of funding pressures. It also acknowledges the responsibility for looking after the well-being of all members of the school community, particularly teaching staff, who are often under immense strain as a result of increased demands. Supporting children in schools who present with complex SEMH needs, including challenging behaviour, is not an easy task.

A key intended outcome of this guidance is also to minimise school exclusions, through implementation of Attachment Aware Approaches. The evidence base on school exclusion states that whilst excluding children with SEMH can relieve pressure on the school, it rarely leads to better outcomes for the child.

## **7) Policy Links**

This Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy links to the following other policies we hold in school:

- PSHE Education Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy (including our Bucket Filling Fill-osophy)
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- School Policy for Positive Behaviour Support (Including Physical Intervention)
- Online Safety Policy including Cyber-bullying
- De-escalation Policy

## **8) Roles and Responsibilities**

Maintaining good behaviour is the responsibility of **all** staff, governors and parents. We expect our staff and parents to be a good role model for our children as we develop their attitudes for all aspects of life.

## 9) Philosophy and Approach

The policy promotes certain approaches that are consistent with the Attachment Aware Approach e.g. taking a non-judgemental, curious and holistic stance when trying to make sense of behaviour; ensuring opportunities for reparation, especially following exclusions. It also warns against certain practices that can be emotionally harmful (e.g. public shaming - both verbal and non-verbal - including the use of sad faces against names on classroom boards).

## 10) Key Premises of our Approach

- **Being ‘fair’ is not about everyone getting the same (equality) but about everyone getting what they need (equity).**

- **Behaviour is a form of communication.**

The change in terminology in the 2014 Code of Practice of Special Educational Needs (SEN) - which replaces the Behaviour and Social Difficulties (BESD) with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties – helps to promote a shift towards viewing behaviour as a communication of an emotional need (whether conscious or unconscious), and responding accordingly.

- **Taking a non-judgmental, curious and empathic attitude towards behaviour.**

We encourage all adults in schools to respond in a way that focuses on the feelings and emotions that might drive certain behaviour, rather than the behaviour itself. Children with behavioural difficulties need to be regarded as vulnerable rather than troublesome, and we all have a duty to explore this vulnerability and provide appropriate support.

*“Thinking of a child as behaving badly disposes you to think of punishment.  
Thinking of a child as struggling to handle something difficult encourages you to help  
them through their distress”*

*(from Colebourne Primary School’s Behaviour Policy)*

- **Putting relationships first.**

This requires a school ethos that promotes strong relationships between staff, children and their parents/carers. It also relies on creating a positive school culture and climate that fosters connection, inclusion, respect and value for all members of the school community.

- **Maintaining clear boundaries and expectations around behaviour.**

Changing how we respond to behaviour does not mean having no expectations, routines or structure. In order to help children feel safe, their educational environment needs to be high in both nurture and structure. Children need predictable routines, expectations and responses to behaviour. These must be in place and modelled appropriately, within the context of a safe and caring school environment. Natural rewards and consequences that can follow certain behaviours should be made explicit.

In our school, we use a Bucket Filling Fill-Osophy to share our expectations and responses to behaviour. We use a range of bucket filling literature and activities to show the children that buckets are filled when they say or do positive things to one another e.g. if they are helpful and kind.

We have generated lots of words that show good bucket filling behaviours which the staff and children have talked about and agreed together. These positive behaviours are displayed in the main foyer and every classroom and other communal areas of school. All staff should continually communicate these positive behaviours to the children and to help them understand their meaning and the reasons for them.

Each week, class teachers choose a child in the class who has filled someone's bucket by doing/saying something kind (linked to Anti-bullying). The child then receives a plastic bucket to keep in class the following week and a bucket filler certificate and sweet treat to take home during Friday's Celebration Collective Worship.

Bucket Filling Bonanza time has been included in each class' weekly timetable to celebrate all of the good bucket filling behaviours that have been seen by the children during the week. Bucket Filing Bonanza activities are organised by individual teachers with the help and input of the children.

We encourage the children not to be 'bucket dippers', as this empties their own bucket and buckets of others (metaphorical) e.g. leaving someone out at playtime. We use bucket dipping consequences as an opportunity to develop the children's understanding of their feelings and behaviours. When using bucket dipping consequences we apply emotion coaching responses and are careful not to shame and ostracise children from their peers and school community, leading to potentially more negative behaviour

- **Not all behaviours are a matter of 'choice'** and not all factors linked to the behaviour of children are within their control. Therefore the language of choice (e.g. 'good choice/bad choice') is not always helpful.
- **Behaviour must always be viewed systemically and within the context of important relationships** (i.e. a relational communication pattern rather than an internal problem).
- **Encouraging parental engagement and involvement is absolutely crucial when addressing and planning support for children's SEMH needs.**

***"The parent-child connection is the most powerful mental health intervention known to mankind"***  
***(Bessel van der Kolk)***

## **11) Attachment Aware and Emotion Coaching**

- We apply Attachment Aware Approaches (**Appendix 1**), 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-communication**
- We also recognise that there is a strong link between emotions and learning and that understanding our emotions is a key aspect of understanding and managing behaviour. Therefore, we use Emotion Coaching, (**Appendix 2**)
- We believe that through being Attachment Aware and using Emotion Coaching, both children and adults are able to both manage their behaviour and to create an environment that is conducive to learning.

## 12) How the school supports staff well-being and reflection

We also recognise the importance of providing emotional support for staff in order to help manage stress and secondary trauma, and to reduce the likelihood of staff burnout. To this end, staff have been given a number of strategies to aid their own self-care i.e. training on mental health and well-being, unhelpful thinking strategies to avoid, displays promoting staff mental health and well-being, 'open door policy' of SLT, HT modelling, regular solution circles/staff discussions. There is also a specific coaching programme in place, led by the Pastoral Manager, where staff are assisted with children with unmet attachment needs or who have experienced trauma.

## 13) Responses to extreme behaviour difficulties

### Additional strategies

Although we try to achieve our expectations of each other in a positive way, there will be times when certain behaviours will require specific consequences for example Pastoral Manager input, direct liaison with parents, reporting to the LA, referral to appropriate outside agency, creation of individual behaviour plan/ multiple element plan, application for additional funding). This is so that our school community functions effectively, happily and safely. Behaviours that require direct consequences are:

- Bullying (see anti-bullying policy for definitions)
- Verbal attacks on adults or children, including those of a homophobic or racist nature
- Use of foul or abusive language
- Physical attacks on children or adults
- Dangerous behaviour
- Abuse of property

### Exclusion

If a child is presenting a danger to pupils, staff or property then a member of senior staff needs to be alerted which may result in **fixed-term and/or permanent exclusions**.

- Only the Headteacher has the power to exclude a child from school.
- The Headteacher may exclude a pupil for one or more fixed periods, for up to 45 days in any one school year.
- The Headteacher may also exclude a pupil permanently.
- It is also possible for the Headteacher to convert fixed-term exclusion into a permanent exclusion, if the circumstances warrant this.
- If the Headteacher excludes a child, s/he informs the parents/carers immediately, giving reasons for the exclusion. At the same time, the Headteacher makes it clear to the parents/carers that they can appeal against the decision to the governing body. The school informs the parents/carers how to make any such appeal.
- The Headteacher informs the Local Authority (LA) and the governing body about any permanent exclusion, and about any fixed-term exclusions beyond five days in any one term.
- The governing body itself cannot either exclude a child or extend the exclusion period made by the Headteacher. The governing body has a discipline committee whose role is set out in strict guidelines whenever a child is excluded from school.

## **Physical intervention and restraint**

In extreme circumstances, a child may need to be physically restrained. This would only be when the child is in danger of hurting him/herself or endangering other pupils and staff. Governors and staff have agreed that physical restraint will only be used where safety is compromised. A record will be kept of all violent incidents and incidents that have involved physical intervention. See Physical Intervention Policy.

## **14) Recording and reporting**

- Staff maintain individual behaviour logs (i.e. ABC charts) which are kept in individual pupil files
- Anti-bullying/prejudice related incidents are recorded separately and kept in a file in the HT's office
- Any physical restraints and exclusions are documented according school policy.
- Play/lunchtime incidents are recorded in a separate file maintained by the Pastoral Manager.
- Behaviours linked to welfare concerns are reported on My Concern.
- All referrals and applications are kept in individual pupil SEND and/or safeguarding files.
- The Pastoral Manager maintains a file of the staff coaching programme.

There are all monitored by the Headteacher, SENDCO and governors.

## **Practice and policy review process**

There is a continuous (and at least annual) process of review of this Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy. This is carried out in an ongoing cycle that involves applying Attachment Aware principles into practice and policy development and review, disseminating through frequent training, reviewing effectiveness/identifying weaknesses and/or lack of clarity and problem-solving to further develop practice.

The governors are responsible for the formal ratification of the policy before it is applied to school life. Governors will be expected to monitor the standards of behaviour throughout the academic year.

Behaviour logs are kept in individual pupil files alongside anti-bullying/prejudice logs, positive handling (restraint) records and exclusion records. There are all monitored by the Headteacher, SENDCO and governors.

# APPENDIX 1

## Attachment Aware Approaches

### Attachment Principles

- Attachment Theory is increasingly being recognised as one of the key theories within child development that explains why some children and young people do better in school and life than others.
- Attachment is central to our well-being and affects us all.

This guidance endorses the principle that **attachment is everybody's business**. We are all shaped by our early relationships and our behaviour is influenced by our attachment experiences.

***'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)***

### Secure Base

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).

***'The concept of a secure base is essential to our understanding of relationship formation and children's development. It links attachment and exploration and provides the basis of a secure attachment.'***  
***(Schofield and Beek, 2014)***

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.



## APPENDIX 2

### Emotion Coaching

Emotion Coaching is inextricably linked to the Attachment Aware framework. Emotion Coaching was originally a parenting strategy (John Gottman, 1997) which has been developed by Dr Janet Rose and Louise Gilbert and applied in the school environment.

They took Gottman's five steps of Emotion Coaching and developed a school friendly program that uses three core steps to help engender emotional resilience, empathy and problem-solving skills within children and young people (Rose et al 2015). This is focused at the **whole school level**. Emotion Coaching is based on the latest research from physiology and neuroscience and provides a structure to aid emotional behavioural regulation.

#### **The following principles are central to Emotion Coaching:**

- All emotions are natural and normal, and not always a matter of choice.
- Behaviour is a communication.
- Emotional 'first aid' (calming, soothing) is needed first: 'Connect before re-direct' (Siegel, 2013), 'Rapport before reason' (Riley, 2009).
- 'Emotion coaching builds a power base that is an emotional bond – this creates a safe haven, a place of trust, a place of respect, a place of acceptance, a sense of self. This in turn leads to children and young people giving back respect and acceptance of boundaries' (Rose and Gus, 2017).
- Children cannot successfully self-regulate their emotions unless they have experienced and internalised co-regulation (i.e. an adult tuning in/empathising with their emotional state and thus 'containing' - sharing, supporting and carrying – their emotional state). This also involves explicit teaching and modelling.

#### **Emotion Coaching: The Evidence Base**

Research on Emotion Coaching as a whole school approach suggests that it can improve the child's ability to regulate their feelings and has a positive effect upon teacher-pupil relationships.

***'Emotion coaching can contribute to the promotion of sustainable, holistic improvement in wellbeing for pupils, school staff, and families' (Gus et al 2017).***

Furthermore, it can lead to better outcomes (including academically) due to improved emotional well-being, awareness and literacy of pupils, staff and parents/carers.

# The Three Step Approach

## STEPS

Step 1 - The adult recognises (names), empathises with and validates the **feelings** of the child.

Step 2 - The adult empathically sets **limits** on the behaviour of the child.

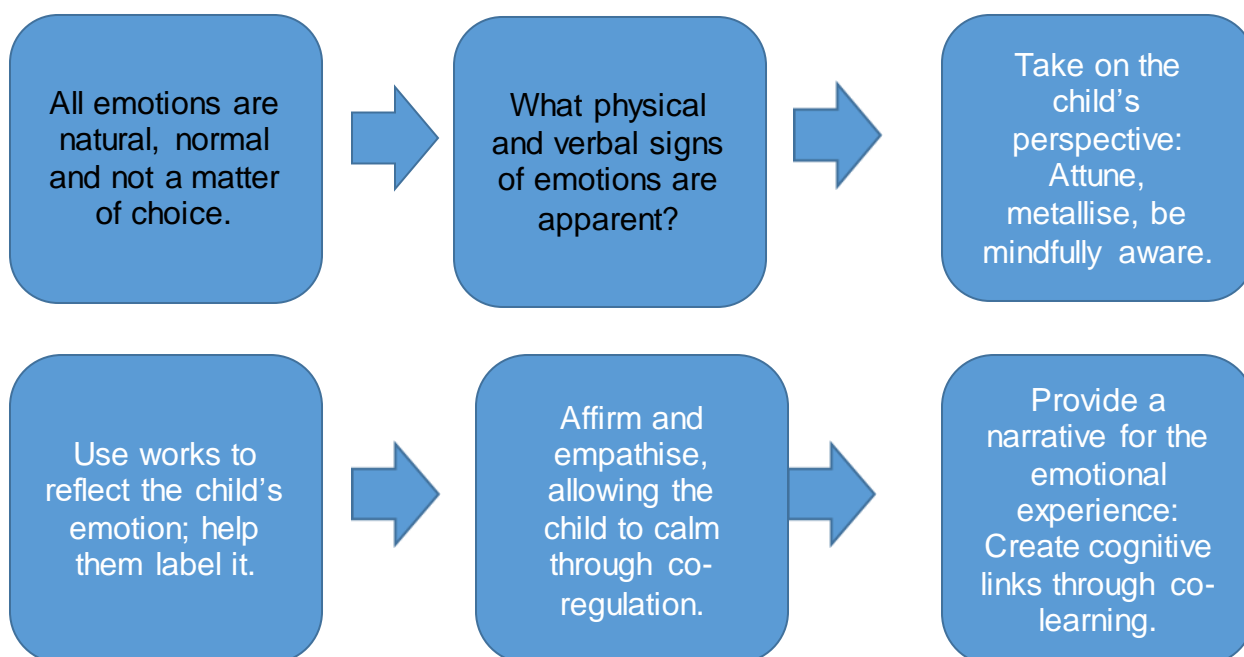
Step 3 - The adult **problem-solves** with the child to consider alternative ways of dealing with feelings.

**Emotion coaching enables children to manage their own behaviour through helping them to:**

- Understand the different emotions they experience.
- Understand why they occur.
- Learn how to handle them.

# STEPS IN DETAIL

## STEP 1: Empathise, validate and label



## STEP 2: Set Limits

Co-regulation comes first. The adult's relaxation places boundaries around the child's energy – emotional mirroring allows the child to relax and share the adult's state...

...then teaching/co-learning can occur

- State boundary limits of acceptable behaviour.
- Make it clear that some behaviours cannot be accepted.

## Step 3: Problem-solve with the child

<b>EXPLORE</b>	What are the feelings that gave rise to the behaviour? We manage our feelings by making choices about how we respond.
<b>SCAFFOLD</b>	Discuss other potential ways of responding when we feel strong emotions. What suggestions does the child have about how they may respond differently and have more positive outcomes?
<b>EMPOWER</b>	The child should believe that they can overcome difficulties and manage their own feelings and behaviour. But they don't need to do this on their own.

# ADULT APPROACHES

## Disapproving Style

- Adult perception that negative emotions are weak and show lack of control; the child needs to 'toughen up.'
- Adult lacks empathy and instead, is critical and/or intolerant.
- Adult believes that negative emotions are used to manipulate.
- Adult uses punishment or discipline to get rid of emotions.
- Adult is motivated by the need to control and regain power.
- Adult notices the behaviour but not the emotion driving it.

## Dismissing Style

- Adult wants the child to feel better but is uncomfortable with negative emotions.
- Adult sees negative emotions as 'toxic' and to be 'got over' quickly.
- Adult believes paying attention to emotions makes them worse.
- Adult reduces or minimises the emotional experience: "You'll be fine. It's not a big deal."
- Adult is motivated by the need to resolve/make things better: "I'll buy you a new one."
- Adult uses logic or distraction to get rid of the emotion: "Have a biscuit."

Disapproving and dismissing styles may seem to work, but the actual message is, "what you are feeling is not right, your assessment of the situation is wrong, you must not feel this way."

### **This can lead to:**

- Suppression of natural emotions, less (or no) self-regulation, reliance on distraction to get rid of emotion.
- The child learning not to trust their own feelings, which affects their capacity to make any decisions.
- The child not having opportunities to self-regulate or problem-solve.
- The child not being given opportunities to experience emotions and deal with them effectively, so they grow unprepared for life's challenges.
- More negative feelings are generated – resentment, guilt, shame, anger.