St Nicholas' Primary

Positive Relationship Policy
(March 2021)

St Nicholas' Primary School

Introduction

St Nicholas' Primary's Positive Relationship Policy(PRP) is based on the core principle that *all learners* should be included and engaged in their learning community. We believe that at the heart of a successful and achieving learning community is a safe and nurturing ethos and a culture based on positive and mutually respectful relationships.

Our Positive Relationship Policy reflects the spirit of the Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland and the unique Aims and Mission Statement of our school.

St Nicholas' Positive Relationship Policy describes how we celebrate achievement and attainment. We believe having a focus on social and emotional wellbeing and creating an inclusive and nurturing ethos, will have a positive impact on relationships across the school and the wider community.

Rationale

Developing good relationships and positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and wider community is essential for creating the right environment for effective learning and teaching. Where children and young people feel included, respected, safe and secure and when their achievements and contributions are valued and celebrated, they are more likely o develop self-confidence, resilience and positive views about themselves.
(Better relationship better learning better behaviour 2012)

Reflecting on the above research and the vision described in the Charter for Catholic Schools, we in St Nicholas' Primary believe that it is fundamentally important to promote a positive and caring environment, in which our pupils develop self-esteem, self-worth and have respect and considerations for their peers and adults in the school. This is demonstrated each day in our school by our our Vision, Values and Aims

Our Shared Vision and Values

Our vision for St Nicholas' Primary is to inspire a community of faith and learning where there is mutual respect, enabling all members of the community to be happy and have the opportunity to reach their full god- given potential.

Our values are deeply held attitudes and commitments which form the foundation out of how our community chooses to live. At St Nicholas' Primary we have three core values:
> - **To be respectful and to be respected**
> - **To achieve our God given potential**
> - **To be happy**

Our Aims

We aim to:
- Provide a happy, nurturing and welcoming environment where everyone is treated with respect.

- Provide a rich and varied curricular experience which develops and enhances each child's potential for learning, enabling them to become creative and independent individuals, nurturing their physical, emotional, academic, spiritual and social development;

- Encourage excellence, so all children strive to attain the highest possible levels of achievement in a challenging and motivating environment;

- Employ a range of teaching strategies which take cognisance of different learning styles, talents and skills, suited to the individual needs of all children;

- Through genuine partnership, develop and promote leadership skills in staff, pupils, and the whole school community in order to provide the highest quality education.

School/ Class Rules
In St. Nicholas' Primary our three core values are central to the school and class rules. We consistently promote and reinforce these values in everything we do and say on a daily basis. At the beginning of each session, staff and pupils look at our 3 values and design class rules that reflect theses.

When devising these rules staff ensure that they are:

- ➢ Clear and understandable
- ➢ Positive in nature and provide opportunities for reward
- ➢ Clearly reflective the desired ethos of our school
- ➢ Fair and acceptable
- ➢ Kept to a minimum
- ➢ Achievable by almost all pupils
- ➢ Visible throughout school/ class
- ➢ Continually emphasised and reinforced, by positive comments.

Praise and Reward

In St. Nicholas', all staff place great emphasis on promoting our school values. There is an expectation that these values are achievable by all. This is fundamental to our school ethos and emphasises that we value the whole child. **Our praise and reward system reflects this, as we praise and reward behaviour that is above and beyond, what is expected from all**

In classrooms:
- ➢ Teacher pupil relationship are key and based on ethos of positivity and mutual respect.
- ➢ Learners feel valued and like they belong.
- ➢ Teachers model *fairness, unconditional respect, compassion, praise, empathy, listening and encouragement*. As these are the behaviours that we would want to child to have and demonstrate throughout their lives.
- ➢ We have established meet and greets and staff take time to check with children on a daily basis.
- ➢ Recognition boards to recognise and celebrate those who consistently demonstrate our core values by going above and beyond what is expected.
- ➢ There is constant reinforcement and positive praise of the classroom rules in conjunctions with the three core values, with first attention given to those doing the right thing.
- ➢ Children receive positive praise notes to share with their family, demonstrating that they have consistently went above and beyond what was expected.
- ➢ Our wall displays celebrate the work of **all** learners.
- ➢ In Primary 7, The Spirit of St Nicholas Award is presented to a child who has been a role model by demonstrating the vision and values of our school throughout their time in St Nicholas' P. S

Through our whole school assemblies:
- ➢ We teach and celebrate the importance of living by the Gospel values.
- ➢ We have established pupil voice pathways in the Pupil Council and the Junior Management Team.
- ➢ Wider pupil views are gathered at assemblies to ensure that all views are considered.

- ➢ We celebrate demonstrating our skills as Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Effective contributors and Responsible Citizen.
- ➢ We celebrate out of school achievement that add to our skills for learning, life and work.
- ➢ We celebrate children who consistently demonstrate our values by inviting these children to T with Mrs G throughout the session.

In addition to all of the above we endeavour to celebrate and communicate our children's efforts and achievements throughout the school with our many wall displays, and by using our twitter account and newsletters to share achievement with the wider community.

Misbehaviour

A minority of pupils find accessing the routine and expectations of a learning and social environment more difficult and can sometimes display behaviour we would not normally accept. This can be for a number of reasons, including additional learning or support needs or adverse childhood experiences. In St Nicholas' Primary, we ensure that Learning and Teaching is planned to meet the needs of all of our pupils in the context of a well designed, classroom layout. An appropriate balance of challenge and support, combined with shared high expectations, ensures that instances of indiscipline are kept to a minimum. Our policy is based on relationships, where possible, staff will deal with incidents at classroom level. SMT are available to provide support and guidance if required.

In these circumstance, staff should follow these steps:

- ➢ Give a reminder of the values/rules within the class (delivered privately if possible). This is to ensure that the situation does not escalate, becoming a situation where it disrupts learning for all. try to manage the situation without emotion

- ➢ A clear verbal caution delivered privately, making the learner aware of their behaviour and clearly outlining the consequences if the behaviour continues.

- ➢ Speak to the learner privately giving them the final opportunity to engage, offering a positive choice. This can be done at a natural break i.e. just before break so that learners have time to reflect on their behaviour.

- ➢ Where required, some learners benefit from a short time out of the class. This give the child a few minutes to calm down, breathe and possible see the situation from a different perspective.

- ➢ Where required restorative conversations can be helpful to support the continuation of positive relationships between class teacher and children. SMT can provide support if required. (Appendix 1)

- ➢ Where required, some learners may be asked to complete a reflection sheet to support restorative conversations with the teachers. (Appendix 3)

- SMT will liaise with support staff in relation to incidents within the social setting of the playground if required.

- At St Nicholas' P. S, we believe that the positive relationships with our learners should be replicated in our relationships with their parents so that these developed and sustained relationships have a positive impact of children's learning and well-being. With this in mind, in addition to praise slips, staff will make every effort to ensure that parents are fully aware of any issues that may be causing a disruption to their child's learning. This maybe in person, through a note or a telephone call.

Appendix 1: Brief guide to *Restorative Practices*

Restorative Approaches in Schools in the UK (Source: University of Cambridge)

What are Restorative Approaches? The 'unique selling point' of a restorative approach is that it offers schools an alternative way of thinking about addressing discipline and behavioural issues and offers a consistent framework for responding to these issues. However, as this pamphlet will show on pages 2 & 3, the approach is much more than a 'behaviour management tool'. In isolation, used as such, it will not be very effective.

 The table below compares different ways of thinking and responding in authoritarian and restorative models of discipline.

Authoritarian Approaches	Restorative Approaches
The focus is on: Rule-breaking Blame or guilt Adversarial processes Punishment to deter Impersonal processes	The focus is on: Harm done to individuals Responsibility and problem-solving Dialogue and negotiation Repair, apology and reparation Interpersonal processes
and, as a result; The needs of those affected are often ignored The unmet needs behind the behaviour are ignored Accountability = being punished	and, as a result; The needs of those affected are addressed The unmet needs behind the behaviour are addressed Accountability = putting things right

Schools that work restoratively find that relationships are stronger and learning is more effective, and so there is less need to resort to sanctions and punishments to try to 'manage' behaviour. There is a shift from one model of discipline to the other, at a pace appropriate to the school.

What is a restorative response to harm or conflict?

Those affected are invited to share:

1. What has happened?

2. What the impact has been on those involved: i.e. who has been affected and in what ways they have been affected?

3. What needs to happen to put things right or to make things better in the future?

This framework is based on sound learning theory regarding how people relate to each other and how best to meet the different needs that can arise from conflict or harm.

To facilitate such a process requires the ability to:

• establish a respectful rapport with people;

• listen and respond calmly, empathically and without interruption or judgment to all sides of an issue;

• inspire a sense of safety and trust;

• encourage people to express their thoughts, feelings and needs appropriately;

• appreciate the impact of people's thoughts, feelings, beliefs and unmet needs on their behaviours;

• encourage those involved in the problem to find their own solutions.

This learning framework can be used in a wide range of contexts:

• A framework for debriefing or reflecting on an experience
• A one way conversation, with one person listening and asking questions and the other talking;

• A two-way conversation, with both people taking turns to ask and answer questions;

• A small meeting when one impartial person - a facilitator - poses questions to two people who have had a difficulty, or where harm has been done, and who want to repair their relationship;

• A larger, facilitated meeting involving children, parents/carers, colleagues or others who have an important role to play (sometimes called a 'Restorative Conference');

• A facilitated circle involving part or all of a class, a staff team or a group of residents.

What is being restored? This depends on the context and on the needs of those involved. What is being restored is often something between the people involved such as:

• Effective communication;

• Relationship, and even friendship;

• Empathy and understanding for the other's perspective;

• Respect;

• Understanding the impact of one's own behaviour on others;

• Reparation for material loss or damage.

However, something may also be restored within an individual – for example:

• A sense of security;

• Self-confidence;

• Self-respect;

• Dignity.

Overall, the process often results in the restoration of someone's sense of belonging to a community (e.g. class, school, peer group or family).

What are the key elements of Restorative Approaches?

Restorative Approaches are value–based and needs–led. They can be seen as part of a broader ethos or culture that identifies strong, mutually respectful relationships and a cohesive community as the foundations on which good teaching and learning can flourish. In such a community young people are given a lot of responsibility for decision-making on issues that affect their lives, their learning and their experience of school.

Restorative Approaches build upon the basic principles and values of humanistic psychology: Genuineness - honesty, openness, sincerity; Positive regard for all individuals - valuing the person for who they are; Empathic understanding – being able to understand another's experience; Individual responsibility and shared accountability; Self-actualisation - the human capacity for positive growth; Optimistic perspectives on personal development - that people can learn and can change for the better.

Such principles and values not only underpin the more formal Restorative Approaches described above, but they can also be practised in our informal, day-to-day interaction with others. Adults who do this 'model' effective ways of building and maintaining emotionally healthy relationships, and promote helpful, pro-social attitudes. In doing so, these adults may well be providing a positive 'social learning context' not readily available to some young people in other areas of their lives.

The whole school community shares the responsibility to build, maintain and repair relationships are the more visible parts of Restorative Approaches. To be effective these processes need to be underpinned by sound knowledge, skills and shared values. Schools that consciously focus the bulk of their effort on building and maintaining relationships will find that fewer things will go wrong and so there will be fewer occasions when relationships need to be repaired.

Why are Restorative Approaches helpful?

Staff, children and parents/carers who work restoratively report that this way of working leads to:

- A more respectful climate;
- A shift away from sanction-based responses that aim to 'manage' behaviour, toward a more relational approach;
- Better relationships amongst children and staff;
- People being more honest and willing to accept responsibility;
- People feeling more supported when things go wrong;
- A calmer, quieter and more productive learning environment.

Why use restorative approaches? (Source: Education Scotland)

Many people may believe that children and young people who bully others must be punished for their behaviour. This type of response can be ineffective, dangerous, breed resentment and make situations worse as a child or young person can be resentful of punishment rather than reflective of their actions. Children and young people require the opportunity to hear about and face up to the harm and distress they have caused others.

Restorative approaches are built on values which separate the person from the behaviour. They promote accountability and seek to repair any harm caused in a situation.

Research - Restorative Practices in Three Scottish Councils - shows that restorative approaches help schools create peaceful learning environments for children to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Exclusions from school can only be carried out when an incident meets the legislative criteria. All schools have a responsibility to protect those being bullied but also to educate all pupils including those who bully or those with behavioural problems.

What are restorative approaches?

Schools may use restorative approaches as part of a planned response to relationship and/or discipline difficulties. This is a more effective response than traditional punishments. Restorative approaches can change the emotional atmosphere in a school and lead to more positive relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff.

A restorative approach may include having a 'restorative conversation'. These conversations may happen during the school day and practitioners will use restorative language and questions to allow children and young people to understand the impact of their behaviours.

More serious incidents may require practitioners to hold a formal meeting and involve parents or families where appropriate. Examples of questions used in a formal meeting include:

- What happened?
- What were your thoughts at the time?
- What have been your thoughts since?
- Who has been affected by what happened?
- How have they been affected?
- What do you need to happen now?

Appropriate training is available for adults to support the restorative approach. This will include developing listening skills, empathy, use of language including body language and understanding situations from another person's point of view.

Through the help of trained practitioners who facilitate the process in a carefully scripted approach, pupils accept responsibility for their actions, recognise the harm and upset caused and are supported to find restorative responses to harmful actions. Developing positive, supportive relationships is key and these can be developed through activities such as circle time and peer support.

As part of the restorative approach, schools will decide on an appropriate timescale to review incidents, check that issues have been resolved and that children and young people are happy and progressing well.

What is peer mediation?

Many incidents in schools are low level and do not necessarily require the intervention of an adult. Peer mediation is a process where children and young people are offered the opportunity to act as peer mediators. The peer mediator takes responsibility for supporting younger children in the school to find a solution to their issue. Children or young people who volunteer to become a peer mediator will receive appropriate training and support. They will learn invaluable skills and contribute to more positive relationships between pupils.

How can I help?

If your child's school is using restorative approaches you can support them by:

- talking to your child about how their school manages pupils' behaviour
- understanding that children learn developmentally, including how they behave and how their behaviour affects others
- understanding that everyone learns best when they feel good about themselves. Punishments, whether right or wrong, can make children feel bad about themselves. This can hinder their ability to engage in their learning, including about their behaviour
- encouraging your child to see things from other people's points of view
- encouraging your child to be a good friend
- supporting your child to be a peer mediator
- learning more about children's rights, including their right to human dignity, regardless of their behaviour
- learning more about shame and the impact of shame on children's readiness to learn.

Although appropriate action will be taken by practitioners, it is important that parents work with their child's school to help resolve situations in the best interests of their child or young person.

Appendix 2: Behavioural environment checklist

Classroom management

In the classroom is there evidence that:

Teacher arrives at the lesson before the pupils

Teacher's voice is clear

Instructions are clear

Good behaviour is noticed and acknowledged

Small achievements recognised

A pupil's good behaviour is named and reflected back

The teacher acts as a role model for desired behaviours

Materials and equipment are prepared

Pupils bring the correct equipment

Lessons are well prepared

Classroom organisation

In the classroom there is evidence that:

Equipment is easily accessible

Furniture is arranged to best effect

Appropriate ambient temperature

Sufficient ventilation

Lighting sufficient

No glare

Materials well labelled and located

Ease of movement around the room

Appropriate storage of children's belongings

Pupils are grouped appropriately

Room organisation meets differing curriculum demands

Whiteboard easily seen

Furniture suitable

Classroom looks like a good work environment

Sufficient space

Quiet external environment

Playground organisation

In the playground there is evidence of:

Short break time rules understood by pupils

Short break time rules adopted by all staff

Lunchtime rules understood by pupils

Lunchtime rules adopted by all staff

Break time rewards/sanctions system clear

Behaviour policy adopted by ancillary staff

Corridors and social areas (including playgrounds) well designed and monitored

Problem site areas identified and overcome

Suitable activities and equipment available for break times

An effective system for resolution of conflict exists

Pupil Reflection Sheet – Finding a way forward

Pupil Name:	
Reflection requested by: (Insert staff name)	
Reason for Pupil Reflection:	
Location (if appropriate)	Class, corridor, playground, other (please state)

What happened?
What were your thoughts at the time?
Who has been affected by what happened?   How have they been affected?

What do you think you might be able to do to help sort things out?
How could you have done things differently?
Pupil Signature
Parent Signature