Relationships & Restorative Behaviour Policy - Including Positive Handling (Alternative Provision)

Date of last review:	Sept 2026	**Review period:**	3 years
Date of next review:	Sept 2029	**Owner:**	The Managing Director
Version:	V2.0	**Approval:**	The Directors

Introduction

Childhood Matters Consulting Ltd includes an educational 'Alternative Provision' for children and young people with special educational needs associated with their Social, Emotional, Mental Health and Wellbeing. Our students have a range of needs, but primarily we work with children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties or autism spectrum disorders and many of our students have Education, Health and Care Plans.

Working with children with SEMH needs requires us to have a complex approach to supporting relationships and positive behaviour, which recognises the individual needs of every student.

Childhood Matters Consulting Ltd AP approaches behaviour support and management with a relational and restorative approach, establishing mutual respect and placing an emphasis on the consequences being that students take ownership and responsibility for their behaviour and work restoratively to put things right.

The boundaries by which the AP operates are designed to ensure safe and secure environments, respect for people and property, the effective and smooth running of sessions and clear expectations modelled in relation to appropriate behaviours, time keeping and attendance.

Our Aims and Vision for Positive Relationships and Behaviour – Empathy, Kindness, Mutual Respect.

Our aim is to create an ethos of belonging, where students are enabled to make progress with growing confidence and purpose and where relationships between staff and students, between our staff community and between the students themselves are based on empathy, kindness and mutual respect.

The vision is that all children and young people we work with:

- irrespective of their special needs and diversity, are of equal value, and will be encouraged to develop to their full potential. All students are unique and will be respected for the contribution that they make.
- where applicable, will be provided with an educational provision or assessment of strengths and needs of the highest level, consistently delivered so that they are empowered to learn and/or develop in a positive and creative environment
- will be supported by staff who are ready and who strive to understand their needs, who are well qualified, and have respect for their strengths, needs and diversity
- will be supported with an approach based on a foundation of sound pedagogical and therapeutic practice, supplemented by a willingness to adopt responsive and flexible approaches and evidence-based research
- will be supported within a safe community which demonstrates a positive ethos and a culture of mutual respect
- will be supported by a specialist approach designed specifically to meet their strengths and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Our Restorative Approach to Behaviour – Empathy, Kindness, Mutual Respect.

Our behaviour expectations are based on three key principles: Empathy, kindness and mutual respect. This means explaining and modelling expectations clearly to children and young people, being fair and consistent, listening to each other and addressing and supporting any difficulties as they arise. Any consequences to distressed or inappropriate behaviours will be in line with our restorative approach and will be tailored towards support and education for long term growth and development. Intrinsic motivation within all aspects of development will be key.

All children and young people are supported to behave in a way which is respectful of other people and the environment. Care, courtesy, and consideration are underpinning elements of empathy, kindness and mutual respect and in order to develop these areas, restorative consequences will be in place to support the children and young people we work with so that they have a greater understanding of this and are able to apply these within context when regulated.

A consistent approach to establishing and modelling empathy, kindness and mutual respect should be adopted by all staff and associates in order to ensure:

- A safe, caring, and therapeutic culture
- An effective teaching and learning/mentoring or assessment session
- A commitment by everyone to taking the time to listen to one another
- A reduction in bullying and other interpersonal conflicts
- An awareness of the importance of connectedness to children and young people
- The need to belong and feel valued by peers and significant adults
- An emphasis on responses to inappropriate behaviour that seek to reconnect, and not further disconnect children and young people
- Successful attendance
- A confidence in the staff and associate team to understand and address challenging situations
- A belief in the ability of children and young people to take responsibility for their choices, and more people giving them opportunities to do so

- Recognition for all children and young people for their positive contributions
- Encouragement of positive behaviours and self-respect in all
- Promotion of self-discipline and self-regulation among all, whereby they are given opportunities to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Within the AP, behaviour is carefully monitored, supported and reflected upon and we will contact parents/carers/schools at an early stage if we feel a student's actions are outside the normal range of expected behaviours or are a cause for concern. Working collaboratively with families, schools, and commissioners is of the utmost importance.

The organisation has an Equality Policy and we will always challenge discriminatory attitudes, behaviour and language (and report where appropriate) and we will actively promote acceptance of diversity and strive at all times to be inclusive.

We believe that:

- Children and young people who feel that they are undervalued and unable to achieve are more likely to express their feelings through inappropriate behaviour
- Children and young people who feel a sense of belonging and that they are liked and cared for show less negative or distressed behaviours
- Children and young people who are given opportunities to succeed and have their efforts recognised tend to behave appropriately
- When children and young people are treated inconsistently, they become confused and are often unable to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Children and young people who are treated in a consistently positive way are more likely to behave in a positive manner
- If the ethos is positive and there is a culture of mutual respect, this will lead to children and young people behaving appropriately and achieving more successfully
- Restorative approaches as a consequence to unwanted behaviours, support positive future behaviours.

Our Restorative Approach

The five key themes underpinning our restorative approach to behaviour support are:

Theme 1: Everyone has a unique and individual perspective

Theme 2: Our thoughts influence our feelings and feelings influence our behaviour

Theme 3: Our behaviour can have a negative impact on others and cause harm; this harm needs to be repaired (repairing the harm is the consequence)

Theme 4: In the event of harm, everyone involved will have needs which must be met to move on

Theme 5: Those involved in conflict are the best placed to take responsibility and ownership for problem solving (taking responsibility and ownership is the consequence)

All staff and associates will be expected to positively promote the restorative approaches based on the above restorative principles; these encourage the promotion of mutual respect, the development of good relationships and the need to take responsibility for one's own behaviour.



Outcomes are decided by following the processes set out below:

Restorative Approaches are inspired by the philosophy and practices of Restorative Justice, which puts repairing harm done to relationships and people as the consequence, over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment.

Key values create an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability and taking responsibility, commitment to relationships, impartiality, being non-judgmental, collaboration, empowerment and emotional articulacy.

Key skills include active learning, facilitating dialogue and problem-solving, listening to, expressing emotion, and empowering others to take ownership of problems.

Restorative processes and practices include interventions when harm has happened, including:

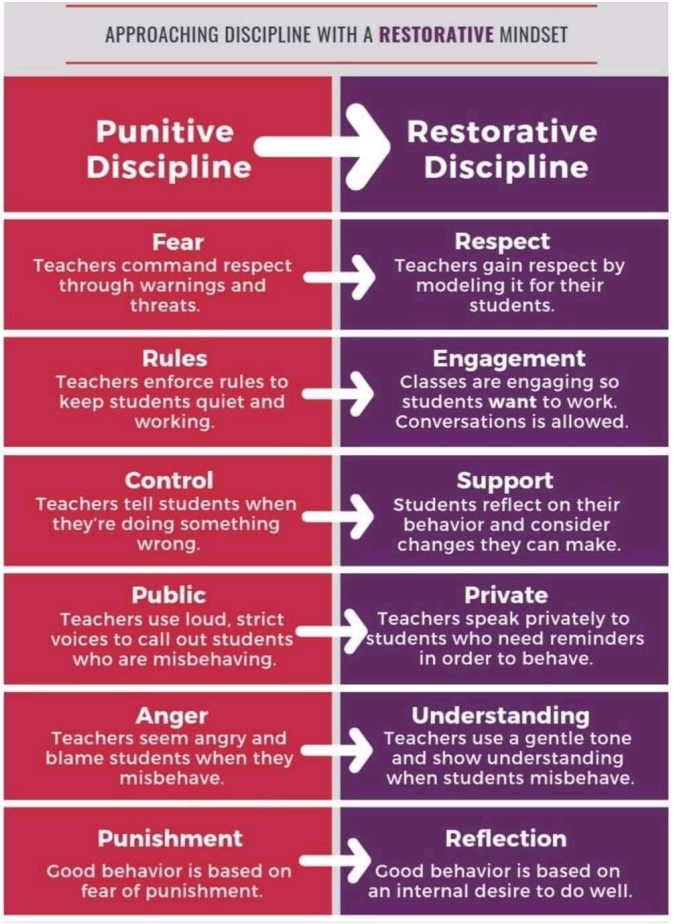
1) Restorative enquiry
2) Restorative discussion

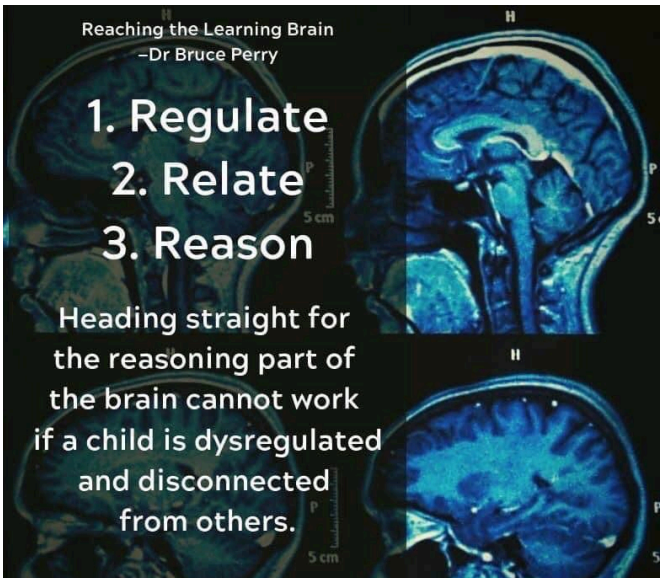
There are also processes and practices that we use to help to prevent harm and conflict occurring, and which build a sense of belonging, safety and social responsibility.

Consequences to unwanted distressed or challenging behaviours:

Restorative enquiry
This is the starting point for all restorative processes involving active non-judgemental listening. The process can be used to help them reflect on a situation and find ways forward for themselves.

Restorative discussion
This is used in a challenging situation, often between a more and less powerful person. Skills include expressing and listening for feelings and needs and understanding why each person has acted the way they have.





Our Therapeutic Approach

Our therapeutic approach is central to supporting the whole school community by informing our day-to-day practice, allowing for more individualised approaches and provision for students, providing support in response to distressed behaviour and pro-social support interventions which promote mutual respect, protective behaviours and a wide range of other social emotional skills.

The Managing Director, as a former Thrive Practitioner and SEMH expert trainer and consultant, is the strategic lead for the AP's therapeutic approach, with the day to day running of aspects of the provision being managed by the Operations Coordinator.

Strategies for reinforcing positive behaviours

Staff are well prepared and ready for sessions. Appropriate content is suitably prepared, including individualised and bespoke activities and extension ideas for all students. All session materials and equipment (where appropriate) are available and ready for use.

Alongside planning and preparation in advance of sessions, teachers and mentors work to the following principles:

- Building and modelling positive relationships with students encourages engagement in sessions

- Regular reflection, formative assessment and feedback values the contribution of the child/young person and allows for appropriate outcome setting and ensures the progress of students

Strategies for supporting students with distressed or challenging behaviour

- A whole organisation therapeutic approach to support regulation
- Modelling and reminding students of expected behaviours
- Using restorative enquiry as a clear consequence
- Using language to describe the unwanted behaviour which separates this from the child/young person – see the behaviour separately to the student concerned and remain professionally curious and emotionally literate when responding and supporting at all times
- Positively recognising and praising students when they are behaving positively
- Giving options and choice (when regulated)
- Validate the emotion behind the behaviour and assist the regulation by giving time before attempting to correct the behaviour
- Relocate the student if appropriate to enable support

Racial harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Childhood Matters Consulting Ltd and any incident of this nature will result in the Director(s) being informed immediately and parents/carers/commissioners being informed.

Meeting the individual needs of students with distressed or challenging behavioural needs

All students who need a greater level of support will have Regulation Profiles/Positive Behaviour Support Plans and Individual Risk Assessments with specific adult led strategies identified and these should be referred to by staff/associates working with them.

It is the responsibility of all staff/associates to ensure that they read the current paperwork for each student they work with. Staff/associates should be actively engaged in monitoring and making amendments to plans where required.

Positive Handling

Childhood Matters Consulting Ltd are fully aware of all legislation, DFE advice and consultation around the use of reasonable force and restraint and our company are clear on the following:

Positive handling and physical intervention should only be considered when a child or young person is behaving in a way in which they could harm themselves or others and even then, as a last resort when all other relational and de-escalation strategies have been tried.

The Legal Framework:

(i) The Best Interest Principle

The first line of the first paragraph of the Children Act 1989 in the UK states that the welfare of the child shall be the paramount consideration. Paramount in this context means that it is the first thing people should think about and it should take precedence over every other consideration.

(ii) Duty of Care

The term "duty of care" is an important legal term. Anyone who is lawfully authorised to work with children, has a duty of care. "Negligence" involves a breach of that duty and has three main elements:

- Firstly, there must be a duty of care
- Secondly there must be a breach of that duty of care
- Thirdly there must be some ensuing damage or injury related to that breach

(iii) Reasonable and Proportionate

Common law hangs on the word "reasonable" in the context of physical interventions, yet it changes meaning according to the circumstances of each case. The degree of force used should be the minimum to achieve the desired result.

(iv) Absolutely Necessary

The United Kingdom adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and incorporated European human rights legislation into the legal framework. If a member of staff or associate takes any action which could be seen as restricting the child's human rights, for it to be legal it must be "absolutely necessary". There are times when those with a duty of care believe that they must take action to protect the interests of the child. If they fail to take action and, as a result, negligently allow a child to come to harm, they could be liable for any damage which ensues. When people are honest in their attempts to do the right thing, they are said to be acting in "good faith". Staff and associates who act in good faith, in the best interests of those for whom they have a duty of care, will be supported.

(v) Lawful Defences

There are times when staff and associates do need to take action and failing to take action could itself lead to a charge of negligence. The clearest lawful justification is that the actions of staff are reasonable, proportionate, necessary and in the best interests of the young person. Under Human Rights legislation they should be "absolutely necessary".

Ultimately, the decision whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff or associate staff member but the following guidelines are essential to follow.

In the first instance, where a child or young person's behaviour could present a significant risk of injury to themselves or others, an individual Risk Assessment will be in place for the student, together with a positive behaviour support or regulation profile which identifies risks, needs and positive support strategies clearly.

Positive handling, restraint or reasonable force should never be used as a punishment and it is unlawful to do so.

Please also read:

DfE advice template (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Call for evidence: use of reasonable force and restrictive practices in schools (education.gov.uk)

Behaviour Monitoring

The AP keeps records of behaviours, and we monitor and record a wide range of behaviours that inform us about our students and their specific SEND. This information informs our therapeutic practice and how we deploy staff to support our students. All staff remain professionally curious at all times and are aware that behaviours are a form of communication of something that is causing distress. Information recorded is used to share observations and concerns with other professionals and to track both positive and negative trends of behaviours and abilities to communicate and process environments, situations and contexts.

Reporting on behaviours should be written by the member of staff who has observed the behaviours. Staff will be required to record: the antecedent; the behaviours/actions; the resolution and any specific 1:1 support that followed the expressed behaviours. This process informs our practice, allows us to reflect on behaviours as communication tools and in relation to student profiles of need and situation and reflect on how we as professionals can work to support all our students.

All occasions where positive handling or restrictive intervention have been used must be reported and recorded immediately to the DSL/DDSL who will retain these records and forward information in line with legislation.