



ST SERF'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

OUR APPROACH TO:

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS



"Developing good relationships in the classroom, playground and wider community is essential for creating the right environment for effective learning and teaching."

*BETTER RELATIONSHIPS, BETTER
LEARNING, BETTER BEHAVIOUR
- SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT 2013*

"Positive student relationships are fundamental to success. When students feel supported, they're more likely to engage in learning and have better academic outcomes. Plus when students have positive interactions with teachers, they have fewer behavioural problems."

*TRYNIA KAUFMAN, MS
UNDERSTOOD.ORG*

RATIONALE

At St Serf's Primary School, we understand that strong, effective relationships are essential for maintaining a positive ethos and establishing the best environment for excellent learning and teaching. We recognise that children and adults have the right to work in a safe, nurturing and respectful setting. Relationships lie at the heart of the learning process and are fundamental to improving outcomes for all our young people.

The rationale behind this approach is that positive behaviour should be rewarded and negative behaviours should be discouraged and changed for the better through the fair and consistent approaches detailed herein.

"St Serf's Approach to Building and Sustaining Positive Relationships" has been created following a time of significant change and challenge for our pupils, families and staff. Staff collated their various approaches to positive relationships and these were evaluated to produce an agreed list of consistent approaches to be used across the whole school. Groups of pupils throughout the school also gave their views on positive relationships which have been taken into account.

AIMS

The aims of our Positive Relationships guidelines are:

- To create a culture of exceptionally good behaviour – for learning, for community, for life;
- To ensure that all learners, staff and visitors in our school are treated fairly and shown respect at all times;
- To help learners take control of their behaviour and be responsible for the consequences of it;
- To build a community of kindness, care, good humour and empathy for others.
- To promote community cohesion through positive relationships;
- To ensure that excellent behaviour is a minimum expectation for all.

OUR VISION AND VALUES

"*St Serf's Approach to Building and Sustaining Positive Relationships*" is underpinned by our school vision and values.

Our vision is to nurture and inspire every pupil in St Serf's Primary School and ELC to be happy, healthy and achieving now and in the future. We will work in harmony with pupils, families, outside agencies and the wider community to ensure that we will always be the best that we can be.

Our values are:



RESPECT



COMPASSION



AMBITION



HONESTY



RESILIENCE

HOUSE SYSTEM

St Serf's Primary School pupils have recently set up a new House system which will be used to drive many improvements in the school - including positive relationships.

House points can be earned for demonstrating our school values. These points will be awarded consistently across the school. Staff who supervise in the playground will also be able to award house points for the same reason.

House events will also help to bring pupils and staff from across the school together and help develop a sense of community, teamwork and belonging, as well as healthy and respectful competition.

PUPIL VOICE

Pupils from across the school were given the opportunity to share their views on the qualities they most valued in school staff and how they feel positive relationships can be sustained.

"I like it when I am given three warnings and a chance to change my behaviour. Sometimes I can't fix myself straight away and I need time."

"When there has been a problem, I like it when my teacher talks to me about it away from everyone else."

"I think it's nice when teachers treat us as people rather than pupils. They listen to us and consider how we are feeling."

"The best teachers are encouraging, compassionate and give good advice."

"The adults in the school can be fun and make learning enjoyable."

"My favourite teachers have always been fair. They are firm when they need to be and can be lots of fun too. They are always respectful"

Other common themes that arose from the pupil consultation included:

- Pupils appreciated when they are personally welcomed into the building each morning by their teacher and acknowledged in the corridors by all staff.
- Pupils prefer and respond better to a calm but firm voice when staff are dealing with incidents.
- Pupils enjoy working with staff who share a good sense of humour but also know when to be serious.
- Pupils value a fresh start each day.
- Pupils enjoy times when they can have more relaxed conversations with staff - e.g over lunch, outdoor play etc.

VISIBLE CONSISTENCIES

As a result of the consultation with staff and pupils, we agree to demonstrate the following three visible consistencies:

- Establish a welcoming and inclusive environment. This will include personally greeting each pupil as they arrive in class every morning and acknowledging each other as we pass in the corridor.
- Model respectful conduct and conversation with all staff, pupils and visitors to the school.
- Consistent use of positive, nurturing language to establish expectations, encourage a growth mindset, promote good behaviour and engage in restorative conversations.

ADDITIONAL APPROACHES

Our consistent, whole-school approach is centred around the promotion and recognition of our values and three visible consistencies. In addition to this, the following approaches to positive relationships will also be evident throughout the school.

- Creation of a class charter at the start of each school year;
- Acknowledging pupils' achievements both in and out of school;
- Clear, consistent expectations of pupils in terms of their learning and behaviour;
- Demonstration of respect and encouragement to build pupil self-esteem and resilience;
- Use of Circle Time to discuss important issues in a safe, respectful space, building trust and empathy.
- Pupil Leadership Groups - creating further opportunities for pupil voice (e.g. Junior Leadership Team, Travel Team, Rights Respecting Schools etc.).
- Staff to speak with pupils using a calm, consistent manner.
- Opportunities for free play, allowing for informal, friendly conversation as well as the development of positive respectful social skills.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

The ultimate goal of our approach to positive relationships is that pupils will make consistently good choices regarding their conduct in school. However, there is a need for clear consequences and strategies for dealing with escalating situations in class and the playground.

Class teachers will take responsibility for investigating classroom incidents and support staff will investigate playground incidents. While playground incidents should be reported to class teachers for their information, they should not distract from learning time in class where possible.

The following steps should be followed in sequence unless there is a serious issue arising.

- **FIRST WARNING:** Pupil is given a verbal warning and a clear, positively-worded instruction regarding their expected behaviour.
- **REFLECTION & REGULATION:** If, after a few minutes the pupil has not followed the instruction, the staff member should speak with the pupil (away from other learners) to discover the root of the problem and see what can be done to solve it. This may require the pupil to have some quiet reflection time or engage in a regulation activity. This should be for an agreed amount of time after which the expectation is that the pupil follows the original instruction.
- **FINAL WARNING / PARENT CONTACT:** If the pupil continues to refuse to follow the instruction then they should be made aware that their parents will be contacted (either via Class Dojo or a phone call).
- **REFER TO SLT:** If all the above steps have been followed with no success then a call should be made to a member of the SLT.

RESTORATIVE CONVERSATIONS

Pupils must be given time to consider their actions and the potential consequences before the staff member moves on to the next step of the process.

After the incident, preferably on the same day, the pupil and staff member should engage in a restorative conversation to help rebuild any breakdown in their relationship, draw a line under the problem and move on.

These conversations should:

- be conducted away from other learners and distractions;
- have a solution rather than blame focus;
- be empathetic and calm.

Every child is entitled to a fresh start every day.

THE ROLE OF SLT:

The Senior Leadership Team will build and sustain positive relationships in the same way as other staff members. However, in rare situations when a member of staff has worked through the steps outlined earlier when dealing with an escalating incident, a member of the SLT can be called upon to support.

Depending on the situation, the role of the SLT may include:

- stepping in to lead the learning in class to allow the teacher to engage in a restorative conversation with the pupil elsewhere;
- speak with the pupil to help resolve the situation;
- give the pupil additional time and space to regulate to allow a restorative conversation to take place;

It is important that our approach to positive relationships is not in any way punitive. The focus should be on rebuilding relationships rather than on punishments and consequences.

ANTI-BULLYING

We recognise that bullying impacts on wellbeing and in order to thrive and achieve their full potential, our learners need learning environments which are safe, nurturing, respectful and free from fear, abuse and discrimination.

“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person’s capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of ‘agency’. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online”.

(Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People. 2017)

Bullying behaviour can include:

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened.
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked.
- Having belongings taken or damaged.
- Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you.
- Receiving abusive messages on social media or electronic communication.
- Behaviour which causes people to feel like they are not in control of themselves.
- Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be.

We believe it is important for children to discuss how they feel and help them develop resilience to manage their relationships. We know that children will fall out and disagree with each other as they form and build relationships. This is a normal part of growing up and most children have the ability to bounce back from this type of behaviour.

In the event of an allegation of bullying, either from a child or a parent, it is our responsibility to record accurately any incidents of bullying behaviour. This helps us to identify recurring patterns/situations in order to enable early intervention.

We use SEEMIS recording systems to record information on:

- Who reported or witnessed the incident
- The children and young people involved as well as staff or other adults
- Where and when bullying has taken place
- The type of bullying experienced e.g. name calling, rumours, threats etc
- Any underlying prejudice, including details of any protected characteristics
- Consideration of personal or additional support needs and well-being concerns
- Whether parents were informed (if the child or young person has been consulted and involved in the decision) and if parents are involved in any resolution action
- Actions taken including resolution at an individual or establishment level

We all take bullying extremely seriously in our school and we adopt a zero tolerance approach to these types of behaviours. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and should never be seen as a typical part of growing up. We will work together with our children and families to ensure that they are at the centre of our thinking, planning and actions. We listen to our children and families and involve them in decisions that affect their lives. We will support our children and families to become empowered to make decisions for themselves.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This current version of "*The St Serf's Approach to Positive Relationships*" was completed in June 2021.

It is due for review in June 2022.