

Headteacher's Report to Parent Council

7th October 2025

Parent Council have raised a number of questions with me about classroom behaviour policy:

1. Policy and its implementation

Our Relationships and Behaviour (RB) Policy and Anti Bullying (AB) Policies were developed through consultation with staff, parents and pupils in session 2021-22. Key policies like this are due for review every 3 years. The review started but did not conclude in session 2024-25.

Both policies and a summary are publicly available on the school website. I shared the summary again with all parents last week as this is an area on this year's school improvement plan and I want to gather parents' views on the current policy as a baseline measure for this work. It is essential that parental voice feed into any policy review and so I am hopeful that I will get a good response to the survey sent last week.

Key themes of existing policy:

School Values

This should underpin our RB and AB approaches but at present there are too many and they are somewhat unwieldy. Some of the current 'values' are actually skills (like curiosity). There is value in all the words in our school values but our next step is to focus in on the things that underpin RB and AB. This term we have had a very clear focus on respect which from our point of view has felt helpful.

Nurturing Approaches

All behaviour is communication – there are no bad children, just poor choices or poor reactions. We value all children even if we do not like their behaviour in the moment. Children are made to feel safe and secure by firm boundaries and high expectations.

Restoration and natural consequences rather than Punitive approaches

Children come to school to learn. We all need to make mistakes to learn and so one of the aims of a RB policy is to create an ethos in which children feel able to acknowledge mistakes and learn from them. This applies to everything – in maths we want children to be challenged to the point that they don't get everything right. It also needs to apply to friendships and behaviour. Children are not born with a moral compass and able to regulate their emotions, this is taught to them throughout their developing years. All nursery and primary aged children are still developing in that regard. If we punish them for mistakes in behaviour we confuse them. For example if a 6 year old child gets overwhelmed at 2.45 on a Friday and throws a rubber across the room, keeping them in at playtime on Monday will not mean anything to them and it will make them feel angry and resentful. Which is likely in turn to lead to more negative outbursts.

Natural Consequences are different from punishment – they are the consequences which come from a situation. For example – if a child is acting dangerously or not following instructions in the playground, they might need to come inside because their behaviour is impacting on other people and they can't be trusted in that context. In most cases, applying the natural consequence as soon as possible is key so that the child links the two. As children get older, this is not as important e.g. if a P7

pupil behaves inappropriately in some way on a Monday, the natural consequence of not being allowed to go to Thursday Café – where children represent the school in the community – would be appropriate.

Restoration – some negative behaviour in schools centres around children's relationships with each other. The most effective way to deal with this is to rebuild relationships. Where incidents happen, it is important that all children feel heard and that all children have a chance to express how they were feeling and what they thinking when the incident occurred. It is important that they consider what the other person was thinking and feeling so that they can develop their skills of empathy and so that they can feel positive about each other moving forward. It is important that they acknowledge any part they played in an incident so that they can learn from it.

Natural Consequences and restoration are not public matters – other children do not see them happening. This is important for the dignity of all children.

Staff Roles

Collective Responsibility – all staff have collective responsibility to follow policy and manage behaviour. The role of the headteacher is to ensure that all staff know policy and work in line with it – this happens each year at the August in-service days and as part of staff induction. And to ensure that appropriate staffing level are in place. The whole school community at Balmerino value our Pupil Support Assistance support. We are in a fortunate position with the amount of support we have – 50 hours at the start of the year which I have been able to increase to 55. This is a far higher ratio that most schools have – it is achieved by using Pupil Equity Funding to fund additional hours and because being part of a joint headship gives more flexibility in terms of funding.

Two Way Communication with Parents

We always communicate with parents if their child has been hurt or upset at school or if their child has hurt or upset someone or if their behaviour has been out of the normal.

We do not routinely communicate with all parents about behaviour in school. For example if a child gets overwhelmed in class and shouts at another pupil upsetting them, we would be in contact with the parents of those two pupils. If another pupil nearby was visibly upset, we would look after that pupil and contact their parents. We do not communicate with all parents in the class. It may be that there is a child who goes home and tells parents about the incident and who is upset at home having not been upset in school. In this circumstance we rely on parents coming to us to let us know so that we can explain what happened and work together to reassure the child.

It is vital that parents come to us with concerns about friendships, behaviour or their child's happiness at an early stage so that we can help.

Bullying

Bullying happens within relationships and is very complex. We rely on pupils and parents coming to us with concerns at an early stage – e.g. if your child is being called names by another child this might not be known to staff. When parents don't come to us at an early stage, we are dealing with the matter once it has become a major issue rather than addressing it at an early point and stopping it escalating. Equally, if we have early concerns we will come to you. Bullying incidents need support for all involved. We don't talk about 'bullies' we talk about children displaying bullying behaviour. Often a child who is displaying bullying behaviour will have also experienced it in the past or is still experiencing it.

2. Measuring and sharing success

All significant incidents or communication with parents are recorded:

- Complaints and concerns grid
- Individual Pupil chronologies
- Individual Parent logs
- Seemis Bullying and Equalities Module

This record keeping allow us to note and address patterns.

We also make use of individual observation tools both for pupils about whose behaviour we are concerned and those whose happiness is of concern. This also helps us note and address patterns.

We regularly seek pupil and parent voice on the life and work of the school:

- Surveys
- Learning Partnership
- Focus groups – pupil sampling/Parent Council/chance for individual feedback by approach to headteacher

Classroom observations happen regularly.

Feedback from these is always shared with parents along with any plans to address matters raised. The feedback is publicly available on the Stakeholder feedback section of the school website.

Three year reviews of policy ensure it continue to reflect the current context.

I would be pleased to discuss the other areas within the School Improvement plan but no specific questions have been raised ahead of the meeting today.

I encourage all parents to complete the survey I sent home on Friday, it will remain open until the end of the day on 31st October.