



# Newmains Primary School



## Relationship Policy



***“Newmains Primary School C.A.R.E.S”***



The aim of the policy is to maintain a school climate that is based upon positive relationships between adults and young people, where the children can learn the necessary skills to help them succeed in relationships with their peers, adults, and wider community.

### **NHS Scotland**

#### **The Scottish Psychological Trauma and Adversity Training Plan**

“Trauma is everybody’s business. Most people are likely to know or work with someone who has experienced trauma and adversity in their lives.

When the work we do also brings us into contact with people who are affected by trauma, there is an added responsibility to recognise this, adjust how we work to take account of the impact of trauma, and respond in a way which supports recovery, does no harm and recognises the needs that people have.

Trauma-informed organisations are those that integrate the principles of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment into all aspects of their work and commit to ensuring that physical environments, staff behaviour and organisational policies and procedures reflect trauma-informed principles and values.

Safe and supportive relationships are known to be key in fostering resilience and in enabling recovery following adversity and trauma. For this reason, it is important that workers recognise the potential for each contact they have with people affected by trauma to afford safety, enhance resilience and promote recovery.”

### **Our Relationship Policy includes information on:**

- (1) Relationships
- (2) Core values
- (3) Nurturing Approach
- (4) Attachment, Anxiety and Stress
- (5) Rights Respecting Schools – Rights based approach
- (6) Dealing with conflict/Restorative Practice
- (7) Solihull Approach
- (8) Community Voice

### **(1) Relationships**

We define relationships as how people behave towards each other. Building positive relationships is essential; when children feel connected to their teachers, it motivates and reinforces their want to attend school and learn.

We build positive relationships amongst the school community in several ways:

- Staff know the children on an individual basis and spend time getting to know them and their needs.
- Almost all staff have received training in the Solihull Approach.
- We show and encourage compassion; everyone has different needs.
- We show and encourage empathy.



- An awareness of how our actions impact on other people.
- Each class has a Class Charter designed to promote positive behaviours and ethos.
- An acceptance that children will make mistakes and display behaviour we might not like. However, just as we help the children learn from mistakes in numeracy or literacy, we need to help them learn from their mistakes in their behaviour.
- We actively promote our school values – Newmains C.A.R.E.S

## (2) Core Values

Newmains Primary School core values were refreshed at the end of 2021. We consulted pupils, parents/carers, staff, and visitors to the school to create a short list of potential values. These were shared with everyone as a final vote. The new values and new logo were shared with pupils and the community in January 2022. Through Health and Wellbeing lessons, weekly online assemblies, and encouragement by all staff, we are embedding the new values in the school.

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### Newmains C.A.R.E.S

- Community
- Achieve
- Respect
- Everyone
- Safe

## (3) Nurturing Approach

A nurturing approach offers children a range of opportunities to engage with missing early nurturing experiences. This helps them develop necessary social and emotional skills that help them relate with their peers and engage in their learning. These skills help build their resilience. Resilience is a vital skill to learn as it gives children the capacity to confidently deal with the trials and tribulations of everyday life. Skills for learning and life.



### The Six Principles of Nurture

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

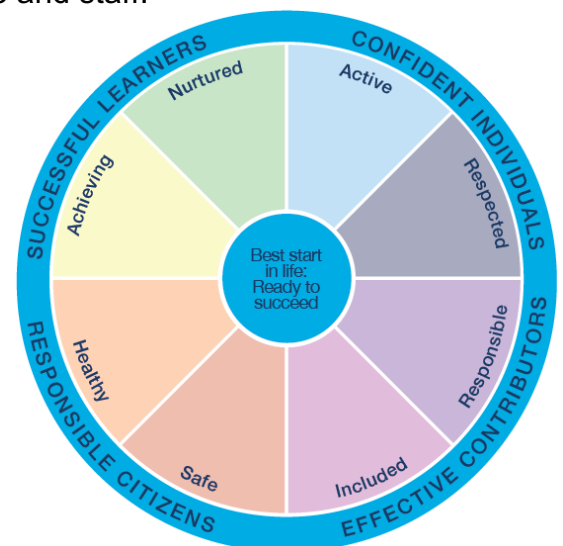
Ref: Lucas,S., Insley,K. and Buckland,G. (2006) *Nurture Group Principles and Curriculum Guidelines Helping Children to Achieve*, The Nurture Group Network.

### Newmains Primary nurturing approach looks like:

- Seeing the child, not the behaviour.
- Emphasis on positive relationships between young people and staff.
- Meet and greet every day.
- Daily emotional check-ins.
- Calm corners in every classroom.
- Restorative rights-based approach to resolve conflict.
- Classroom routines.
- Use of Solihull Approach.
- GIRFEC and Wellbeing indicators.
- Emotion Works taught at each stage.
- Zones of Regulation
- \*Regulation Station for senior pupils
- \*Nurture Room
- After school clubs.

\* The infant department has two spaces just outside the classrooms which pupils can access when they need space and time to regulate. These areas have LEGO, colouring in materials, fidget toys, etc as part of the regulation toolkit.

\*The Nurture Room has regular visitors but is also used by a variety of pupils as a safe space they can drop-in when feeling overwhelmed.



### (4) Attachment, Anxiety and Stress

Understanding attachment is key to understanding the dysregulated behaviours. Securely attached children tend to manage their emotions and feel safe in different environments; insecurely attached children see themselves as unworthy, have negative expectations of themselves and can feel unsafe. This leads to an increase in anxiety which we see as school avoidance, distressed behaviour, conflict with peers and emotional dysregulation (Bender et al, 2015 (1)).

Emotional dysregulation is linked to childhood anxiety. Children develop their emotional regulation abilities via their caregivers. Securely attached children develop strategies to cope with big emotions and are confident that their caregiver will give them the support they need. Insecurely



attached children have not had the same opportunities to learn how to regulate their emotions or feel secure that their caregiver will respond consistently to their needs.

Anxiety can be the root cause of poor attendance; this is referred to as anxiety-based school avoidance. Parents and school staff can help with this in following ways:

**(1) Intervene early – look for warning signs:**

- Changes in attendance and late comings.
- Child is less engaged in school.
- They talk about feeling anxious.
- Their parent may tell you they have seen a change in their child.
- A previously well-behaved child changes their behaviour.

**(2) Make everyone aware of the anxious child and how this anxiety manifests:**

- Everyone looks for the warning signs.
- Everyone is aware that the child is perhaps anxious or worried.
- Action must be taken - consistent, nurturing and agreed.

**(3) Create a predictable and consistent environment:**

- What does this child need?
- What could we change/adapt?
- Could we be more flexible?
- What can they control when they are at school, so they feel safe?

**(4) Welcome the child to the school:**

- When they arrive, they need to know we are delighted to see them at school.
- They will have spent the previous night and morning worrying about arriving. What can we do to make it good?
- A consistent approach – same person dropping them off, same person greeting them.
- “Soft landing” – the transition from home to school needs a soft landing.
- Not necessary for them to go straight to class. A soft landing can involve going to another room with a nurturing person who engages them in some fun and distracting activities.
- Ask them what they would like to do when they arrive at the school.

**(5) Enabling readiness to learn: Share it! Shelf it! Shout it!**

- Share it – ask them to tell you what is worrying them by talking or journaling. Catch it and name it!
- Shelf it – ***“You’ve got a lot of worries going on right now and these worries are real to you and valid. But for now, we are going to get ready for class, shelf these worries and worry about them later!”*** Essentially making an appointment to worry about them later!! When a worried child knows they’ll get time later, they can focus on their lessons better. **MUST FOLLOW THROUGH WITH MEETING THEM LATER!**
- Shout it – get anxieties/anger out. Lots of energy needing released so jumping jacks, squeezing and tensing exercises, stamping on the spot, drawing their feelings, having a worry monster to squeeze/jump on, etc à ask them what they need to do!

**(6) Build in regular resets:**

- Allow them to take moment throughout the day to deal with worries.
- Be proactive, timetable reset activities throughout the day (3 to 4 times) to maintain calmness and don’t need to take long (a 2-minute mindful activity like breathing, 2-minute breath of fresh air or walk around corridor, whatever works for them – ask them!
- Follow this up to establish if it is working.

**(7) Help them to learn the build up to their worries and develop a signal they can give you to say they are starting to feel overwhelmed:**

- Verbal prompt.



- Visual.
- Sign language (One for nervous is good) à
- Empowering them to signal to you helps them stay in control.
- Them knowing that someone else knows they are starting to feel overwhelmed might be enough for them to cope at that time.

To achieve this, you need to:

- help the child understand the body sensations they are feeling as they begin to start worrying.
- tell them that once they start feeling like this, to make the signal.
- Agree a response to their and tell everyone who may work with this child about this signal response – vital for continuity!

#### **(8) Consider how to manage breaktimes:**

- These are sometimes the most challenging part of the day as they are unstructured, noisy, unpredictable.
- Need breaktimes to be restorative to allow for a reset for learning afterwards.
- Create a structure/routine – could spend breaks in a place or doing their reset activity (see 7).

#### **(9) Parents - Develop a Monday Morning Plan:**

- Make a plan with the child and their family.
- A good Monday Morning Plan will impact positively on the rest of the week as they will see that the worrying, they did the night before and that morning was unnecessary. Whereas, if Monday morning goes badly, it reinforces the worrying and cycle of anxiety.
- Plan with the family as they may need a Sunday Night plan as the child's worry will start then.

#### **(11) Wrap up!:**

- Note and celebrate when things go well this way the child can see their progress.
- Let parents know the good news too!

#### **What to do if a child refuses to come to school:**

- Nominated person (ASNA/SLT if available) to be available to meet any pupil refusing to come into building
- Nominated person spends a short period of time verbally encouraging the pupil into the building using techniques described above
- If it seems like the pupil will not come in, a plan is made for the next time; plan that they come into school for a short period of time only then go home (this can be pre-arranged with parent in consultation mentioned above)
- If this is successful, ASNA will discuss with the pupil to extend school day slowly.

This is a gradual process and can't be rushed. Even if the pupil appears fine in school for the shorter periods, we must adhere to what has been agreed. This is vital in establishing a trusting relationship.

#### **Stress**

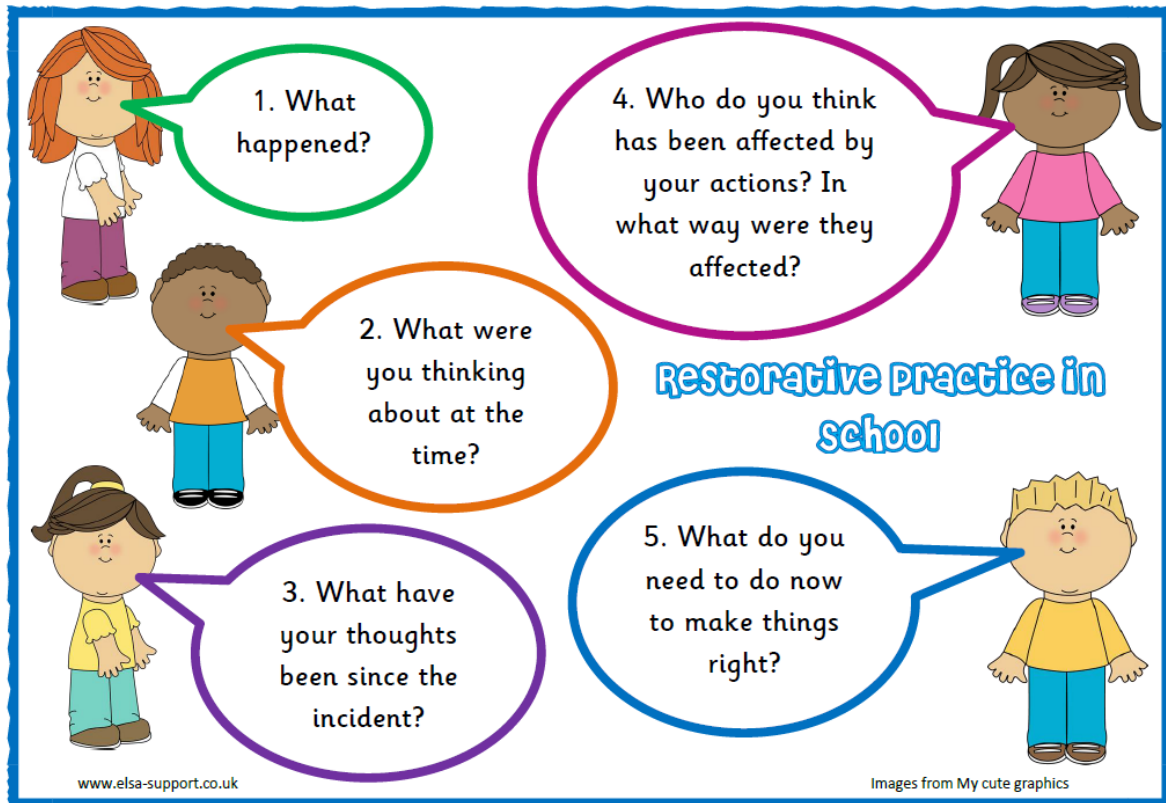
Stress is normal and often how we manage to get everything we need doing to be done. However, abnormal amounts of stress are harmful. When a situation is seen as stressful, the brain communicates with the hypothalamus to release chemicals that start a series of reactions – increased blood flow to the muscles which makes the heart and respiratory system need to work harder (beating heart, shallow breathing) and the digestive system slows down (sore stomach) and increased cortisol levels to maintain alertness (impaired thinking ability and attention). **(2)** Schools can be stressful places for some children. A good place to start in helping children deal with stress, is to try and identify the actual stressors in their lives – environment, social and physical, relationships, expectations.



Meeting a distressed child with a calm demeanour is essential. How you deal with their distress will help them cope better in the future.

Tips for dealing with distressed behaviour:

- Pause – don't react on your first emotions
- Accept that the child is in distress and needs time to calm down. Saying, "I can see that you are feeling upset at the moment, take some time to yourself and we can talk about this later."
- Give time and space – **this is not the soft approach**; there is literally no point in talking about it at this moment as the current heightened state, means that they will not hear what you are saying.
- After some time and they are feeling better, explore what happened using restorative questions:



(1) <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2014.933510>

(2) [file:///Users/marniehamilton/Downloads/MindtheMind\\_PublishedVersion.pdf](file:///Users/marniehamilton/Downloads/MindtheMind_PublishedVersion.pdf)

## (5) Rights Respecting Schools – Rights based approach

In Newmains Primary, we are a Rights Respecting School.

In our school, pupils understand that rights are something everyone has. No one has the power to give them or take them away. There are no conditions attached to them.

When we teach our pupils about rights, they learn that not only do they have rights themselves, but everyone else has them too.

When enjoying their rights, pupils have a duty to make sure they do so in a way that doesn't deny other people theirs.



A rights-based approach encourages responsible behaviours and restorative conflict resolution.

**We try and avoid punishments as a way of dealing with conflict. Teaching pupils how to avoid making the same mistakes again by talking to an adult, once everyone is calm, is by far the better option. This is often misinterpreted as not dealing with conflict, but research and experience informs us that is the most beneficial way.**

All adults in Newmains Primary model rights respecting behaviour and use rights respecting language to reinforce our school values and relationship policy.

## **(6) Dealing with conflict/Restorative Practice**

**Conflict is unavoidable within schools as children increase the frequency of their social interactions within a diverse group. Add to this, immature social skills and we have conflict.**

**It is important to teach children peaceful ways to deal with conflict and learn how to manage themselves with increasing success for future interactions. The key word in this is 'learning'; we want the pupils at our school to learn how to interact and maintain friendships.**

**We achieve this through restorative practise:**

### **What happened?**

Each person involved in the dispute is given time to explain their view of the events, uninterrupted.

### **What were you feeling?**

It is important to find out what they were feeling at the time as this can often explain their behaviour. Help them make the connection between how they were feeling and how they behaved.

### **Who was affected?**

Give the child the opportunity to explore how their heightened emotions led to others being harmed, physically or verbally.

### **What needs to happen now?**

Once those involved understand what has happened and perhaps the harm they have caused, they now can put it right.

### **Plan for the next time**

Reflecting on previous times they have coped well, plan strategies they can use in future.

### **Shake on it**


Forcing an apology is often a pointless exercise. Ensuring learning has occurred is more likely to impact on future behaviour. Children like to shake hands and move on; this is a good way to end the restorative practice.





The adults in the school do not always see what happened; the restorative approach takes this into account. Not forcing an apology is also related to this. But, ultimately, learning from mistakes is our key aim. Below is the reflection sheet we use following conflict between pupils:

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### Restorative Questions and Newmains CARES Values


(1) From your perspective, what happened?

(2) What were you feeling at the time?

(3) Who has been affected by what happened and how?

(4) What about this has been the hardest for you?

(5) What could be done now to make things as right as possible?



### (7) Solihull Approach



Almost all Newmains Primary School staff has received training in the Solihull Approach and use this knowledge to support their interactions.



The Solihull Approach is a UK programme, developed with the population of the UK and with research carried out on the UK population.

The Solihull Approach aims to increase the health and well-being of our school community by improving staff's skills and understanding on children's emotions and behaviour.

Underpinning the Solihull Approach:

- All behaviour is communication.
- Understanding brain development and the importance of interactions.
- Containment – helping others cope with their problems.
- The Dance of Reciprocity - the importance of good communication and understanding the need for repair when communication has been ruptured.
- Behaviour for learning – culmination of learning leads to better understanding of behaviour and consequently, better at helping our young people manage theirs.

**Before reacting to a child's behaviour, The Solihull Approach teaches us to pause and consider these three key questions:**

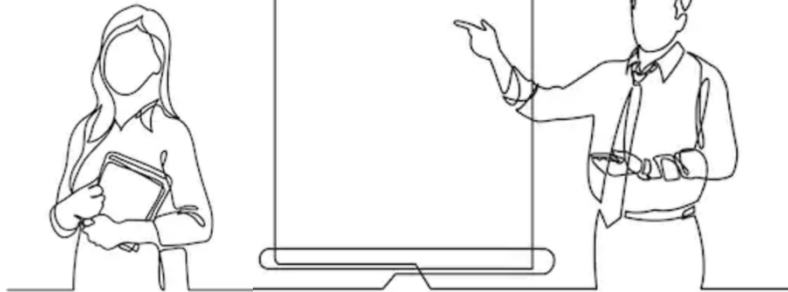
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- What is the developmental age and stage of the child? → Not all children's emotional maturity matches their chronological age.
- 
- What changes have taken place for them or their environment recently? → Change is unsettling and often not the child's fault.
- 
- How well can your child communicate their needs? → Children's emotional literacy varies and often anger is masking the real emotion such as sadness or disappointment.
- 



## (8) Community Voice

Children's voice- we surveyed the pupils, asking them to rate the important qualities that a teacher needs to form positive relationships. The responses rated highest are summarised:

My teacher respects me.



My teacher gives everyone what they need to be the best they can be.

My teacher should be friendly.

My teacher is approachable, and I can easily ask her/him for help.

Some of my classmates need extra support from the teacher. This is OK.

My teacher should help me with my emotions.

My teacher should encourage me to do my best.



## Additional Comments







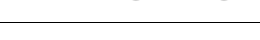
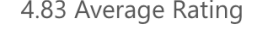

My teacher should be “*understanding, helpful and supportive of things going on at home.*”

“*I want my teacher to understand how people feel and their emotions.*”

## Parent/carer’s voice

The parents and carers of Newmains Primary School were asked to rate statements connected to the Relationship Policy.

These statements support the key points in the new Relationship Policy demonstrating an agreement amongst the school community.

Relationships are central to positive behaviour – I believe in promoting Positive Behaviour and support a Relationships Policy.	 4.83 Average Rating
I have a high expectation of my child’s behaviour.	 4.66 Average Rating
I will ensure that school staff are aware of any additional needs or personal circumstances which may result in my child displaying behaviours which are not typical of them.	 4.76 Average Rating
I will attend meetings with the Head Teacher or other staff to discuss my child’s behaviour.	 4.85 Average Rating
I agree that speaking with people in a calm manner is the best way to be heard and understood.	 4.76 Average Rating
I will work with the school and help them support my child’s positive behaviour.	 4.66 Average Rating
Listening to both sides in a conflict situation is important.	 4.83 Average Rating
Keeping calm when a child is angry or upset is important.	 4.88 Average Rating
Spending quality time with my child helps them to be ready to achieve their best in school.	 4.83 Average Rating



Parents who completed the survey were also given the opportunity to add any additional comments. Below are the key points summarized:

- *“There is no such thing as a bad child.”*
- *“Positive relationships are paramount throughout a child’s life.”*
- *“Anyone who works with children should be trauma informed.”*
- *“Communication is key.”*
- *“Class[rooms should] look bonded, close knit and a wee community within a wider community.”*
- *“Always listen....even when the topic appears trivial because what is important to a child is not always understood or deemed important to the adult. Active listening goes a long way to understanding.”*
- *“Behaviour is communication [and] recognising unmet needs and/or skills to be learned.’*
- *“Do away with shaming behaviours.”*
- *“Positive reframing of language and requests made.”*
- *“Addressing children’s emotional vocabulary/literacy.”*

**These statements link with the new Relationship Policy and reflect the good practice within Newmains Primary School surrounding positive relationships, Solihull Approach and Trauma training.**

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Updated January 2022

