

# Newmains Primary School

## Relationships and Behaviour Policy

### 2025



Over the last 12 months, our pupils, our team at Newmains and our families have been on a journey. A journey where we looked at who we are as a school and asked questions about how we should treat each other and how we should expect to be treated.

This Policy will help everyone understand who we are, why we do things the way we do, and how we should be doing them.

Our Pupils were a core part of this process and will remain so going forward. Our pupils want to be treated with kindness and fairness and this is woven into what we do.

Everything we do at Newmains starts with our Vision, Values and Aims; they underpin everything we do - our Values are how we behave. When we role model relationships, we do so, using our values and when we help our children when they are not getting on, or are not treating each other well, we use our values to explain this.

## **Vision**

***We are an ambitious school, where everyone works well together, and feels part of the Newmains Team***

## **Values**

**We are Caring** – You are all welcome at Newmains. We are an inclusive school that values the diversity and uniqueness of our pupils and community. We are a nurturing school, and we value caring relationships. We work in partnership with parents and carers to help provide a caring and welcoming environment.

**We are Kind** – We act with kindness towards each other, we value each other, and we respect each other. We are honest and we will always try to make amends for unkind behaviour. We speak to others in a kind way and we support each other to show kindness to the wider world we are part of.

**We are Fair** – Everyone gets the help they need at Newmains. We believe that everyone should get equal opportunities and recognise that some may need extra support in order to get this. We champion Children's Rights at Newmains and we will always address unfair treatment, language and actions.

**We strive for Success** – We recognise that success means different things for different people. We measure success in terms of effort, hard work, commitment and in building relationships. We will support you to achieve your success. We help develop resilience and are ambitious for our pupils. We encourage and support leadership at all levels in the school.

## **Aims**

**By 'Working Together' we mean the school staff, pupils, parents and carers and the wider community**

- We aim to work together and support one another as we strive for success
- We aim to work together to create a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing community
- We aim to work together to be kind, respectful and fair
- We aim to listen to our pupils and value their contribution to who we are as a school

Through our values, we influence children's learning, behaviour, relationships and the choices they make. We will nurture and forgive each other; we will help our children manage relationships and behaviour in a way that reflects our values. We are a Team at Newmains.

We care about what is happening to others and recognise our role as global citizens. The care, love and concern we show for each other extends to our families, our community and the wider world.

## **Our Approach to Relationships and Behaviour at Newmains Primary School**

We have a range of approaches and we seek to use the most appropriate one for each situation. We put the needs of our children first and will always see them as individuals that are part of a family and a community.

***Relationships come first; the building of trusted, predictable and consistent relationships between adults and children is what we aim to achieve.***

We implement the principles of nurture, encourage the use of restorative and trauma-informed practice and ensure a values-based approach in all that we do. All approaches blend into a broad and child-centred approach that values relationships, respect and learning.

## **Our Approach to Behaviour and Relationships**

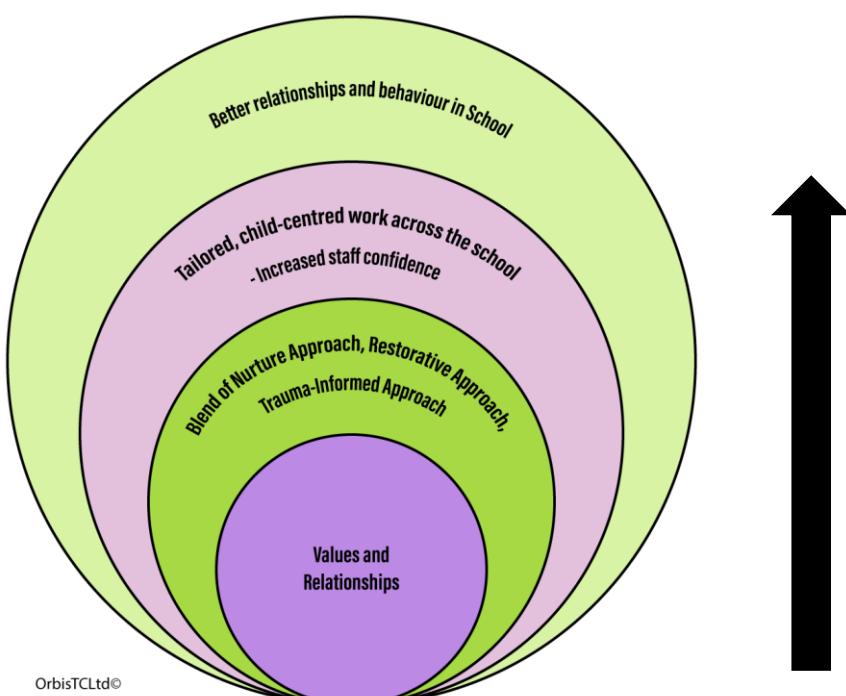
The approach we use to promote good relationships and behaviour here is illustrated below. The key to doing things well is to understand that all of our behaviour, responses to each other and the decision we make are filtered through our values.

We believe that relationships are the key to helping children thrive and learn

We get to know our children and then we are able to know what approaches may work for them based on their needs and strengths

We chose the right approach from our 'Toolbox' – it could be a nurturing approach is required or a restorative one. We may choose approaches rooted in trauma theory, attachment and child development. We use and the Optimal Behaviour in Schools Approach (ORBIS) as well here at Newmains.

The key is choosing the right approach for each child based on their needs and our intervention is framed by the relationship we have with that child. ***We believe that whatever approach we choose, will only be successful if it takes part within a caring and strong relationship.***



This is a summary of the many approaches we use at Newmains. Our values underpin how we use them, and our Team is empowered to judge when and how to use them.

### **Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA)**

A nurturing approach has been promoted as key to supporting mental health and wellbeing and attainment in Scottish schools. It is also recognised as a way of supporting the needs of children and young people who have experienced ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and trauma (Education Scotland, 2017).

The Aims of RNRA are:

- To promote an understanding of attachment theory and of the importance of nurturing relationships in helping all children and young people to learn and develop socially and emotionally
- To promote an understanding of the key principles of nurturing practice and support schools to embed these at a whole school level
- To support practices which will improve wellbeing and promote resilience for children and young people
- To introduce an approach to implementation which is evidence-based and therefore has the best chance of delivering a sustainable approach for establishments and children and young people

RNRA emphasises that relationships are at the heart of nurturing approaches and provides an implementation process for establishments to develop nurturing relationships across schools, Early Learning and Childcare Centres (ELCCs) and communities (REPS, 2020).

We aim to ensure that our school is a place in which children feel welcomed, nurtured and secure. We want our children and their families to feel that their needs are understood and met. To do this, we support staff to continually develop nurturing approaches so that they can meet the needs of all children.

A nurturing approach recognises that positive relationships are central to both learning and wellbeing. All staff fully understand the principles of nurture and use this understanding to ensure that Children feel safe and respected and can grow and learn.

## **Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach**

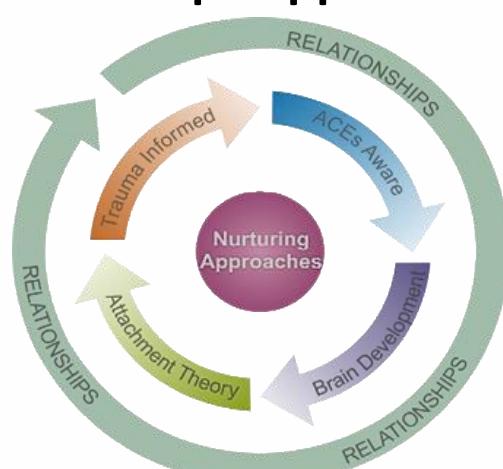
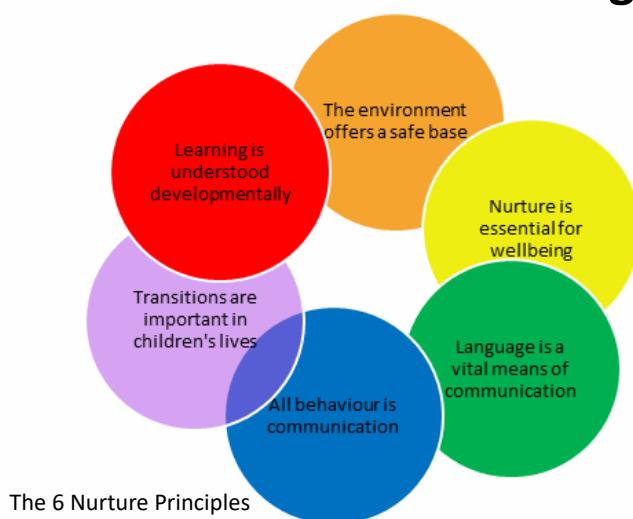


Image: Education Scotland, 2018

## **Restorative Approach**

Restorative approaches can change the emotional atmosphere in a school and lead to more positive relationships between children and between children and staff. Our policies and procedures enable us to develop an ethos where the possibility of conflict and harm is reduced and ensures a focus on the importance of restoring good relationships.

**The focus on repairing relationships reflects the values of Newmains; it does not mean actions are consequence free, but we seek to model and teach children the skills to manage relationships.**

A restorative approach may include having a 'restorative conversation.' These conversations may happen during the school day and all staff, (teachers, ELCCOs, support staff, clerical, dinner ladies, janitor and cleaners) will use restorative language and questions to allow our children and young people to understand the impact of their behaviours.

The 5 questions we use are:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- Who do you think has been affected by your actions and in what way?
- What do you need to do now to make it better?

More serious incidents may require practitioners to hold a formal meeting and involve parents or families where appropriate. The above questions will also be used during these meetings.

Restorative practices work well as part of a blended approach and should be used appropriately. There may be occasions where, for example some bullying, or prejudice-based behaviour should not see the children involved sit together to discuss what happened. We will be mindful of the dynamics of situations and balance the risk where someone may be fearful, worried or anxious about the impact of a face-to-face discussion.

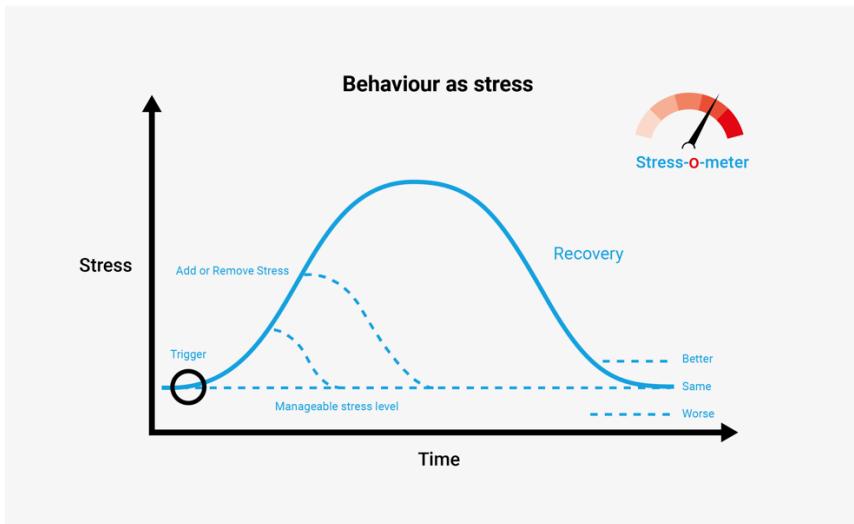
## **Optimal Behaviour and Relationships in Schools (ORBIS) Approach. (Trauma-Informed)**

The impact of trauma, stress, attachment and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) is being increasingly better understood and assimilated into approaches to managing behaviour.

Experiences such as neglect, abuse, poverty, loss and violence can result in children developing coping strategies to manage the difficult feelings this can lead to. These coping strategies can be challenging, difficult to manage, harmful to themselves and others as well as distressing to deal with.

Our aim when dealing with this distressing behaviour is to help children and young people learn new ways to respond to difficult feelings, to help learn new coping mechanisms for their difficult feelings.

Our approach to dealing with challenging and distressing behaviour is based on reframing our understanding of behaviour. We see behaviour as an indicator of stress. We recognise that when behaviour is escalating and a child is becoming distressed and anxious, their stress levels are increasing. **Our approach is to reduce their stress levels and then deal effectively with behaviour.**



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Some of our children will have experienced traumatic events in their lives (current and/or historical) and will have developed ways to deal with the feelings these have caused.

Such experiences can lead to children being hyper-sensitive and reactive. They may struggle in groups or changes in routine. Changes can trigger an increase in stress levels.

Some of this trauma will impact on a child for a very long time and our focus needs to be on helping them learn ways to cope with trauma.

When we focus on reducing stress, we are teaching new coping mechanisms for difficult feelings. We still deal with their behaviour and the impact it has had; we reduce stress levels first then deal with that.

### Responding to distressed behaviour

Children and young people will operate with a manageable level of stress, where they can cope with the routine and with others. For stress levels to increase, something will 'trigger' this. E.g., a change in routine, being told 'no', a threat, a mistake. These triggers will lead to a feeling, and in response to this feeling, stress levels begin to increase.

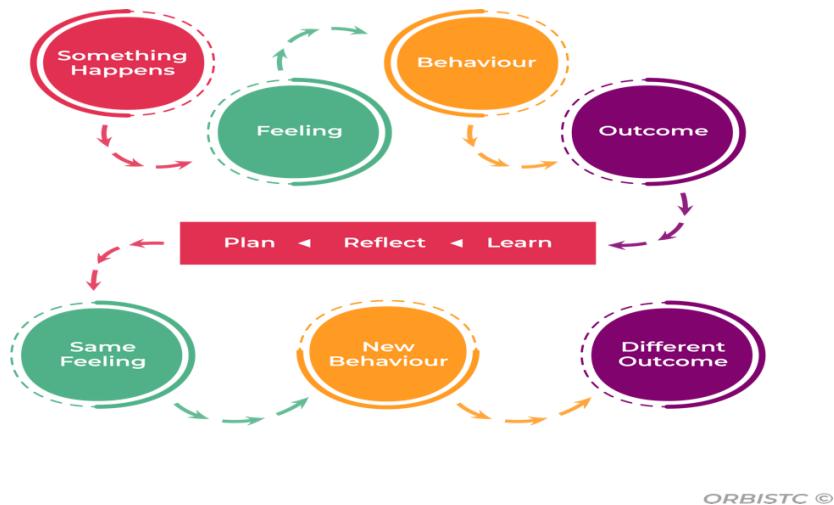
There will be some signs that suggest stress is increasing. E.g., physical changes such as, change in face colour, clenched fists, and teeth, agitation, breathing changes and so on.

When something has triggered an increase in stress, and a child's behaviour begins to show signs of changing or escalating, we can do one of two things: we can engage with this person and seek to reduce stress, or we can do things that can add stress. Our goal is always to reduce stress and then deal with what has happened.

### Connect Feelings to Behaviour

Being trauma informed means that '*I understand that children affected by Trauma, abuse, neglect and things like domestic violence, have developed poor coping mechanisms for really difficult feelings.*

*'My job, my role is to help them develop healthier coping mechanisms and responses to difficult feelings. These feelings will stay with them'. (B Donnelly 2019)*



## Natural Consequences

We have an approach here that seeks to teach our children about natural consequences. Our aim is to link behaviour to actions. This does not mean behaviour is consequence free as some consequences can be very serious.

The goal is to help children learn that their behaviour has an impact on themselves, others, and their environments. E.g., if we break something, we do not have it to use; if we make a mess, we can help clean it; if we hurt someone's feelings, we make amends. If someone is aggressive or hurts someone outside, they may have to come inside as a result.

This approach helps children understand the impact of kindness on others.

## Children's Rights

Our role is to promote and protect Children's Rights. Our children have the right to be safe, to be listened to and have a say in what happens in their life. Positive relationships across the school are supported by attitudes and actions that respect the rights of others. Our staff are trained in understanding Children's Rights and they are a part of our values. Every year we raise awareness of the UNCRC through classroom and whole school approaches.

We link this to relationships, behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and anti-bullying and equality and diversity.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2028

**January 2025**