

Children's wellbeing is at the heart of Getting it Right for Every Child. This means focusing on the wellbeing of every child to ensure they are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

A positive school ethos and culture is essential to developing good relationships and positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and wider community.

The Scottish Government tell us:

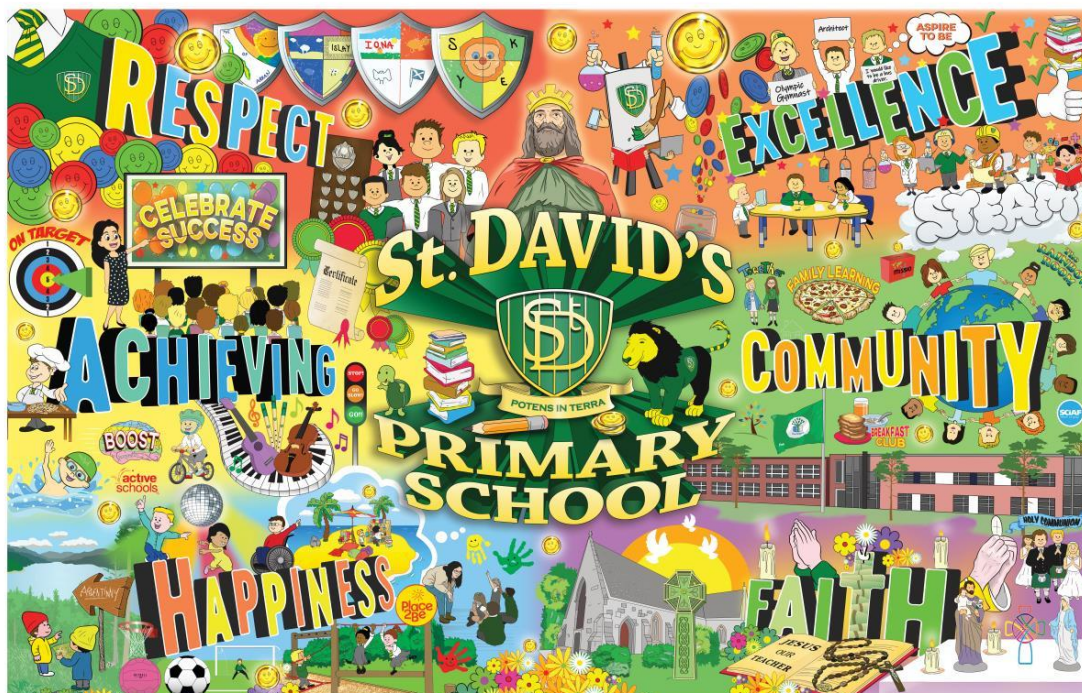
'A culture where Children and young people feel included, respected, safe and secure and where their achievements and contributions are valued and celebrated is essential to the development of good relationships. In order to create this environment for effective learning and teaching, there should be a shared understanding of wellbeing underpinned by Children's rights and a focus on positive relationships across the whole school community'.

How do we do this at St David's

St David's PS is an ambitious learning community, which is inclusive of all of our partners, primarily pupils, parents and staff. Our child-centred approach ensures that each child aspires to success, plays an active part in their own learning and that their views are sought and valued. Excellence is the standard we aim for in everything we undertake.

To achieve this, all who identify with our school community have a part to play in contributing to our overall success. St David's is committed to raising expectations, attainment and achievement by delivering a curriculum that is creative, challenges pupils and develops transferable skills. In so doing, we instil confidence, motivation and enthusiasm for lifelong learning whilst fostering the Gospel Values of the Catholic Church.

Everything we do at St David's starts with our Values; 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 treating each other well, we use our values to explain this.



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

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.

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.

Participation

As part of our commitment to Children's Rights, we ensure that our children have a voice at St David's.

As we developed this policy, we spoke to our pupils, they told us that they wanted a school where people are kind, where people are not hitting each other and that it is not okay to hit someone because they did it first. This advice was difficult for some children, but they all feel that they have the right to come to school and be safe, hitting will always be wrong and will always be addressed at St David's. Pupils want to be treated fairly and it is very important that they feel listened to. They also said that school should also be fun

Our Approach to Relationships and Behaviour

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.

At St David's, 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

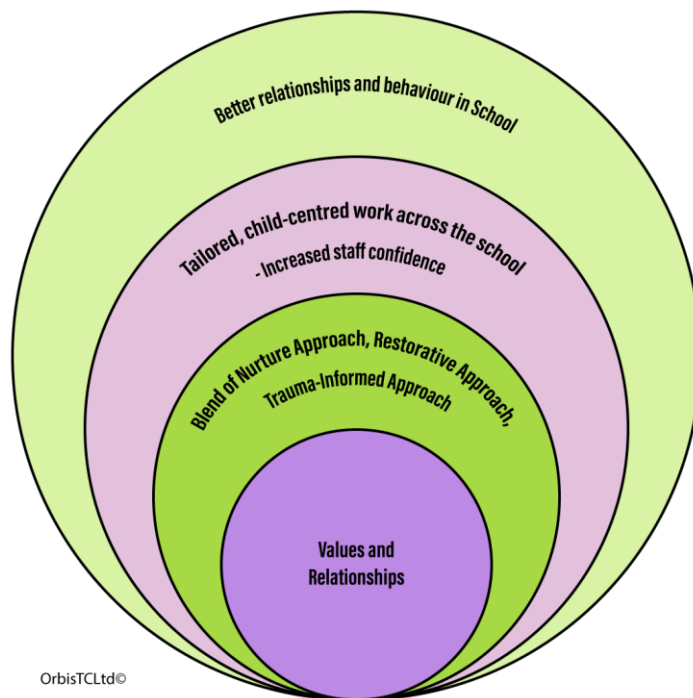
The approach we use when dealing with bullying, discrimination and prejudice is illustrated below and is how we will achieve better relationships and behaviour. The key to doing things well is to understand that all of our interactions and decisions are filtered through our values.

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 at St David's.

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 withing a caring and strong relationship.



This is a summary of the many approaches we use at St David's

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).



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.

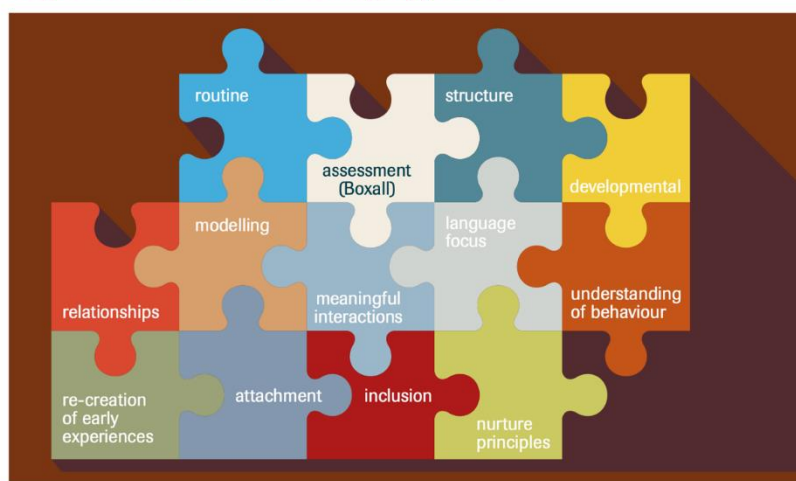
A nurturing approach recognises that positive relationships are central to both learning and wellbeing. All staff fully understand the principles of nurture and use this understanding to ensure that Children feel safe and respected and can grow and learn.

A key aspect of a nurturing approach is an understanding of attachment theory and how early experiences can have a significant impact on development.

There are 6 Principles to a Nurturing Approach

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**

Key Elements of a nurturing approach



A strong Family Learning Programme is available to families at all stages throughout the school. This has resulted in stronger home-school links which is improving outcomes for learners. Families receive high-quality universal and targeted support that enables them to access learning activities which meet their needs.

PATHS at St David’s

We have a consistent approach to how we respond to incidents in our school and across the campus. Staff are trained in de-escalation and restorative techniques to diffuse and deal with incidents. We empower our pupils to engage in these discussions through the development of emotional literacy through our whole school Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) programme.

The PATHS® Programme for Schools (UK Version) is a programme for educators and counsellors designed to facilitate the development of self-control, emotional awareness and interpersonal problem-solving skills. The programme consists of a variety of lessons, and additional materials and charts.

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 St David's; 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.

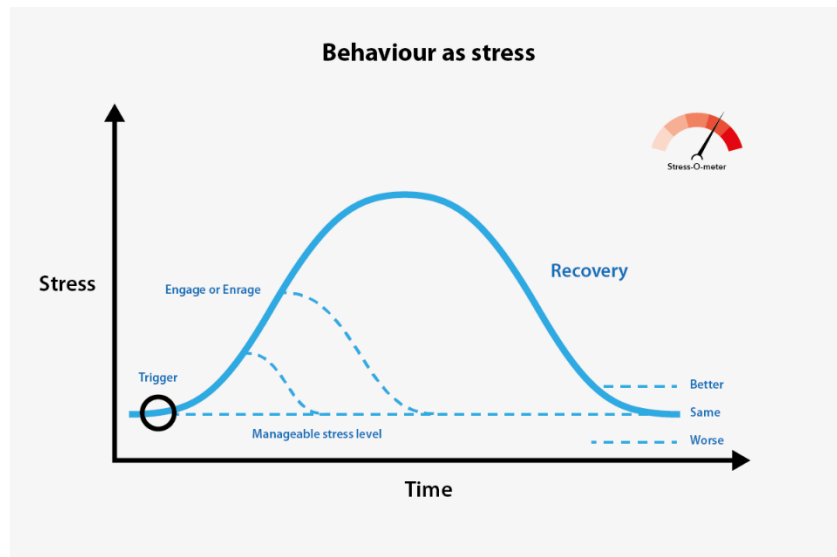
Trauma-Informed Approach

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.**



(Orbis 2019)

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.

Natural Consequences

We have an approach at St David's 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.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2023

June 2021