

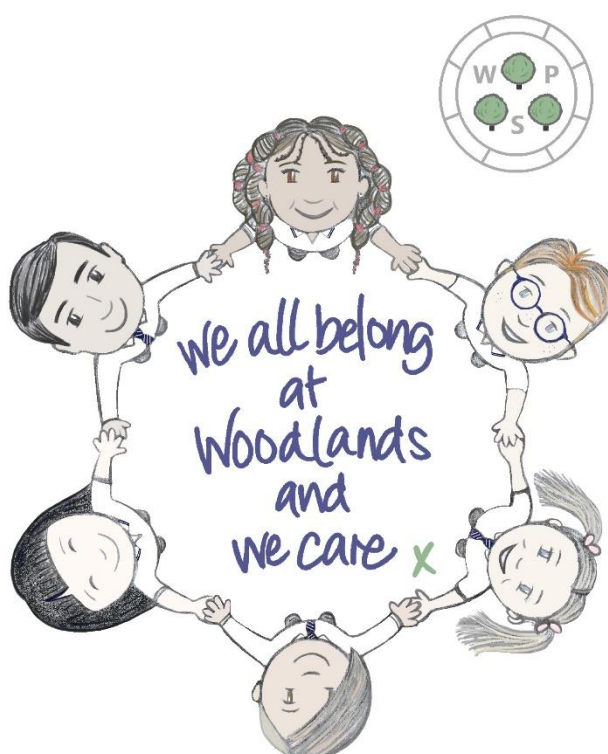


Woodlands Primary School



Relationships & Communication Policy

2024-25



Kind ♥ Committed ♥ Inclusive

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1. Introduction

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 Woodlands Primary?

We are an ambitious learning community, which is inclusive of pupils, parents/carers, staff and school partners. Our child-centred approach ensures that each child gets the tools they need to succeed, play an active part in their own learning and have their views sought and valued. Partnership with families is central to this approach. Our families have told us how much they value this and how important it is to creating the right environment.

To achieve this, everyone in our school community has a part to play in contributing to our overall success. We are committed to raising expectations, attainment, and achievement by delivering a curriculum that is creative, challenges pupils and develops transferable life skills. In doing so, we instil confidence, motivation, and enthusiasm for lifelong learning.

2. Our Vision

Our Vision, Promise and Values underpin everything we do.

We all belong at Woodlands and we care 

'We all belong at Woodlands and we care' is our vision for everyone at Woodlands Primary School. Our aim is to be a school connected to its community where relationships are nurtured, people feel happy and like they belong.

Our Promise

We will welcome you as part of our community at Woodlands, we will listen to you and help you, and we will work together to maximise everyone's wellbeing, learning and development.

Our Values

At Woodlands, we have high expectations for *all* pupils. We expect children to aim to be 'Wonderful Woodies' by demonstrating our school values:

Kind  *Committed*  *Inclusive*

Our values underpin everything we do and all decisions we make, always with the child at the centre. They are how we treat each other and communicate with one another. We expect pupils, staff, families and school partners to display our values through all interactions. This begins with, and is modelled by, all adults in school.

Through our values, we influence children's learning, behaviour, relationships and the choices they make. We promise to nurture one other and help children manage relationships and behaviour in a way that reflects our values. We will also use our values to support conversations we have with children when resolving conflict.

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

3. Positive Communication

We aim to ensure communication between school and home is positive and mutually respectful. Class teachers know children best and spend the majority of the day with them. If you have a concern or a complaint, please email woodlandsenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk, phone the school office on **0300 300 0196** or send a message on Seesaw to request a call back from your child's class teacher in the first instance.

(Please note that Seesaw should primarily be used as a platform to share your child's learning journey and share important information. It is not always the best platform to discuss concerns and sometimes, it is best we speak to you either over the phone or face-to-face so we can effectively resolve issues together.)

If you feel your issue has not been resolved by the class teacher, you can request a call from a member of our senior leadership team. Mrs Mackenzie is the contact for P1-4 pupils and Miss Crawford P5-7.

Please be mindful teachers and SLT probably won't be able to respond within the school day and there are often meetings after school. Whilst we will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible- this may not always be the same day. **Renfrewshire Council's policy to respond to communication requests is within 5 working days.** If you would like to request a meeting with your child's class teacher or a member of the senior leadership team, please contact the school office. Senior leadership team members aren't always available before or after school so meetings should be requested in advance. We will accommodate these requests as promptly as possible.

Our families have told us that they value good communication, this is a priority for our parents and carers. We have listened to this feedback and will endeavour to ensure we communicate promptly and keep parents and carers updated. Our staff understand how important this is for parents, carers and families.

We would also kindly request that complaints are not aired on social media platforms which can further escalate situations. We would prefer if you brought any issues to the school directly so we can work as a team to find solutions together. We appreciate your understanding on this matter.

4. Children's Rights

Our commitment to promoting Children's Rights underpins our Vision, Promise and Values. This means that our pupils have, in line with the UNCRC, the right to not be discriminated against, the

right to have decisions taken in their best interest, the right to be kept safe from harm and the right to be listened to and their opinions considered.

Child's Voice

As part of our commitment to Children's Rights, we ensure that our children have a voice. As we developed this policy, we spoke to our pupils and they told us they wanted a school where people are kind, don't hit each other and that it is not okay to hit someone because they did it first. Pupils want to be treated fairly and it is very important that they feel listened to. Pupils know they have the right to be safe in school and that they must respect the right of others to be safe.

Parent Voice

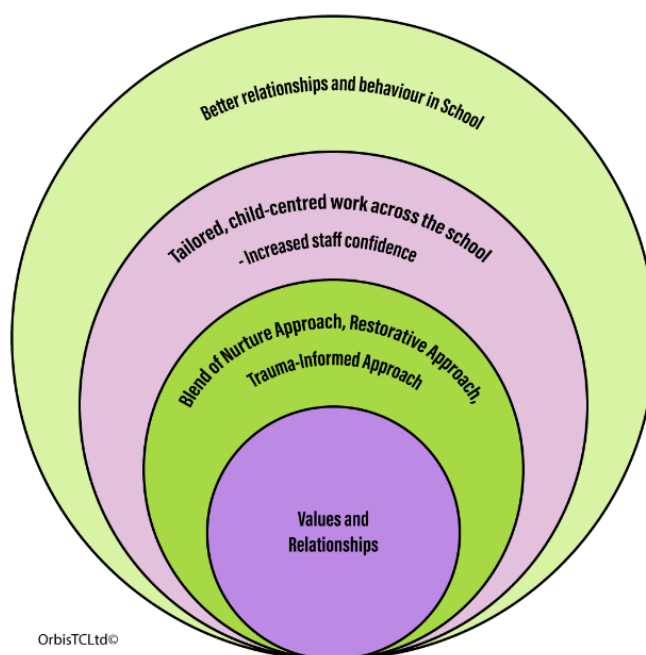
Our families have told us that they want their children to be safe and to be able to learn. We have engaged with parents, carers and families while developing this policy and their voice is reflected throughout the policy. We support parents and carers with individual targeted support when required and this is valued by those who have accessed it. We also gather feedback and share information through regular drop-in sessions and opportunities for families to learn about how we talk about behaviour and relationships at Woodlands. We do this with school staff and external partners, such as Orbis and Place2Be.

5. Our Approach to Behaviour and Relationships

At Woodlands Primary, we put the needs of our children first and see them as individuals that are part of a community.

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

The approach we use when dealing with bullying, discrimination and prejudice is illustrated below:



We ensure all interactions and decision making are filtered through our values and we know that relationships are key to helping children thrive and learn.

We use a range of approaches to support behaviour, used flexibly depending on the situation. This includes nurturing, restorative and trauma-informed practices to support emotional regulation and readiness for learning. All staff have received training in these approaches. Tailored, child-centred support across the school is prioritised for children with additional support needs. We find out what approaches work for our children based on their needs. Every intervention is tailored to *that* child in *that* specific situation. All of this is how we will achieve better relationships and behaviour in school.

Some of these methods are part of our overall approach to look at behaviour through values and some are interventions that will be used only with some pupils who require a more specialised planned response.

We are an inclusive school and recognise that our pupils and families represent a diverse community, and we consider everything that impacts a child's experience, from additional support needs to cultural and trauma-related experiences. We aim to tailor our response around what that child and their family needs.

We choose the right approach from our toolbox- it could be a nurturing approach is required or a restorative one. The key is choosing the right approach for each child based on their needs. Each intervention is framed by the relationship we have with that child. Whatever approach we choose, it will be more successful if it takes part within a caring and strong relationship. Our families have told us that they welcome this approach at Woodlands and that they wish to see this applied consistently.

6. Values-Based Approach (ORBIS)

All behaviour and relationships are framed within our values. When responding to behaviour and helping support relationships that are strained, we ask people to reflect on whether they are being kind or not, are they being committed to trying to fix things, and are they being inclusive and recognising everyone's differences and rights.

We recognise and reward behaviour that reflects our values. We are explicit about what our values mean and how behaviour can reflect them. Our pupils and families were involved in developing these values and agree that this is how we should treat each other at Woodlands.

We are kind – we act and communicate with kindness; we show empathy and compassion for one other. We care about what matters to you, and respect and understand differences in opinion. We will aim to solve any problems together and always consider how our behaviour and actions can affect others. We are approachable and we will listen, we will do our very best to help you.

We are committed – we are ambitious in what we set out to achieve and we value effort at Woodlands. We are committed to working together as a team to improve outcomes and attainment for all children. We are resilient- we never give up and are committed to building the skills that help us achieve, build positive relationships and manage our behaviour. We are committed to prioritising the wellbeing of everyone in our learning community.

We are inclusive – *everyone* is welcome at Woodlands, and *everyone* matters. We aim to build strong and protective relationships that help us all feel cared for and that we belong here. We are understanding and tolerant of others' differences. We celebrate diversity and know our school is part of a wider community and wider world that we all care about. We understand the importance of equity, fairness and reducing barriers to ensure everyone is provided with the tools they need to succeed.

The values give us a guide for restorative conversations with individuals and whole classes about how we have behaved, how we have treated each other and a framework for how to proceed.

The Language of Woodlands



The Language of Woodlands is a common language that all adults in school use to promote and reinforce positive choices. It means that language used is predictable and there are no conflicting messages. 'Wonderful Woodies' is a term you will hear when children are demonstrating our school values. We will say things like -

Kind-

'In this school, we show kindness to one another.' 'The way you acted there was not kind, that's not okay here'. 'When you hit that person, it wasn't kind and doesn't make people feel safe.'

Committed-

'I want you to show commitment and try your best, even if the work is hard.' 'We are committed to helping you when you find things hard'. 'I am so proud of your effort; your commitment is so important'.

Included-

'The way you helped him out there was kind and made him feel included'. 'When you called that person names, it did not make them feel included, that is not okay at Woodlands'.

7. Classroom Plan: Universal Approach

The classroom plan creates a consistent approach to responding to behaviour across the school. All adults follow the plan and children are familiar with it so they know what to expect. The plan is focussed on positive reinforcement, repair when things go wrong and has a restorative ending.

We call this a universal approach as it is designed for the majority of pupils. Some pupils have additional needs and will require more planned and specialist interventions. It gives children several chances to positively reengage, reminding them of expectations in a supportive way and ensuring emotional regulation is prioritised in the process, thus meeting both the 'care and push' aspects of a nurturing approach (further detailed on page 8).

We use our trauma-informed approach when dealing with children who are not regulated. We go into more detail about this in the Trauma-Informed Approach section.

	Steps	Actions
1	Reminder	Use a non-verbal strategy initially (proximity, visuals, hand signals, remove distractions) or deliver a whole-class reminder. If this is not effective, use a start, as opposed to stop, request of the desired behaviour, delivered privately, if possible, e.g. 'I would love to see you focussing on your work to get it finished on time.'
2	Two Options	If the verbal reminder is not effective, provide the pupil with two clear options. Use the phrase, 'You can either make a positive choice or you will owe me 2 minutes of your time.' Frame this within the values, e.g. 'We need to see you showing our value of committed just now.'
3	Two minutes owed or nurturing language script	If the pupil still does not engage, say, 'You now owe me two minutes of your time.' (A nurturing language script may be more appropriate at this step if the child is dysregulated.) The 2 minutes can be used flexibly as a check in, for a short restorative chat or to reinforce school values, e.g. 'You are not yourself today...' 'I'm wondering if you're feeling tired?' 'In this school, we show kindness to one another. I know you can be respectful and that's what I need to see today.'
4	Regulate (optional)	Use this step if the child is distressed/dysregulated. They may be able to regulate themselves or require 'time in' with an adult (co-regulation). Identified safe space can be used, a 'nurturing nook' within the classroom or a movement/brain break supported by an adult where possible. These should be planned and built into deconstructed timetables for children who require these regularly.
5	Restorative conversation (optional)	A restorative conversation is usually only needed where there has been a break down in relationship, during which a discussion can occur about a related, appropriate consequence for the child's actions. For example, tidy a mess that has been made or apologise for hurting someone's feelings.
6	Support step (optional)	Where safety is compromised (flight risk/violence), jump straight to the support step to gain support from another adult in school where required. Use 'zone 3' as the radio code, firstly to request for a member of support staff or member of SLT if needed who can supervise the class whilst class teacher provides the necessary support for the child.

8. Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA)

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.



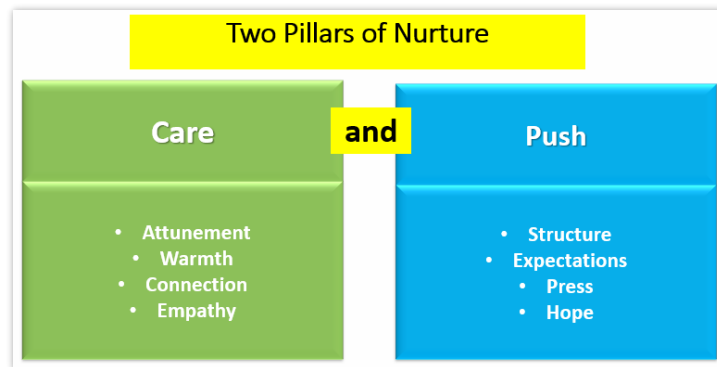
5. All behaviour is communication.
6. The importance of transition in children's lives.

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

RNRA is an evidence-based approach that emphasises that, 'Relationships are at the heart of nurturing approaches and provide an implementation process for establishments to develop nurturing relationships across schools.' (REPS, 2020). RNRA is an approach which aims to improve relationships, wellbeing and promote resilience.

We commit to continually develop and embed nurturing approaches at Woodlands, so it is a place where children feel welcomed, nurtured and secure. We aim to ensure that our children and their families' needs are both understood and met.

There are two pillars of nurture which go hand in hand. It is essential that as well as building trusting relationships, that there are high expectations and clear boundaries for all children.



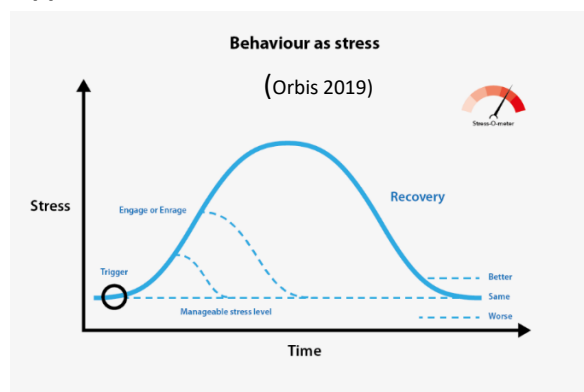
9. Trauma-Informed Approach

The impact of trauma, stress, attachment, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is being increasingly better understood and included into approaches to managing behaviour. A key aspect of a nurturing approach is to understand that early childhood experiences can have a significant impact on a child's development and wellbeing.

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

We aim to deal with this distressing behaviour by helping children learn new ways to deal with difficult feelings. We aim to reframe behaviour and see it as an indicator of stress.

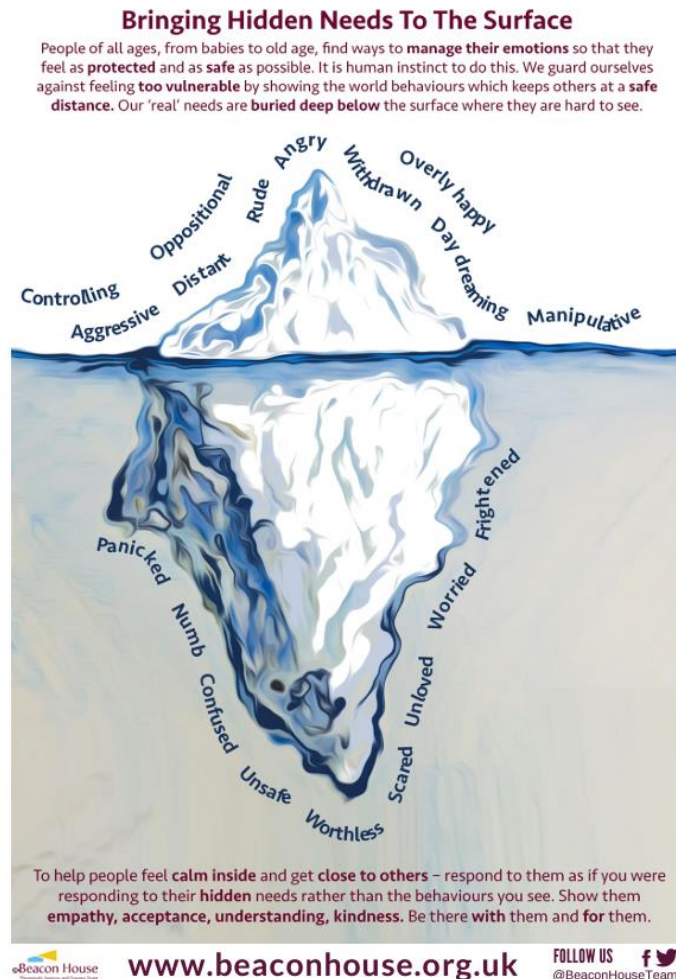
We see behaviour as an indicator of stress and recognise that when behaviour is escalating, stress levels are increasing. **Our approach is to reduce stress levels and then deal effectively with behaviour.**



Some of our children will have experienced traumatic events in their lives (current and/or historical). Such experiences can lead to children being hyper-sensitive and reactive. 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.

10. Hidden Needs

We seek to identify hidden needs and respond to these accordingly. All behaviour is communication and what we see on the surface is often a response to fear or hurt on the inside.



Responding to Distressed Behaviour

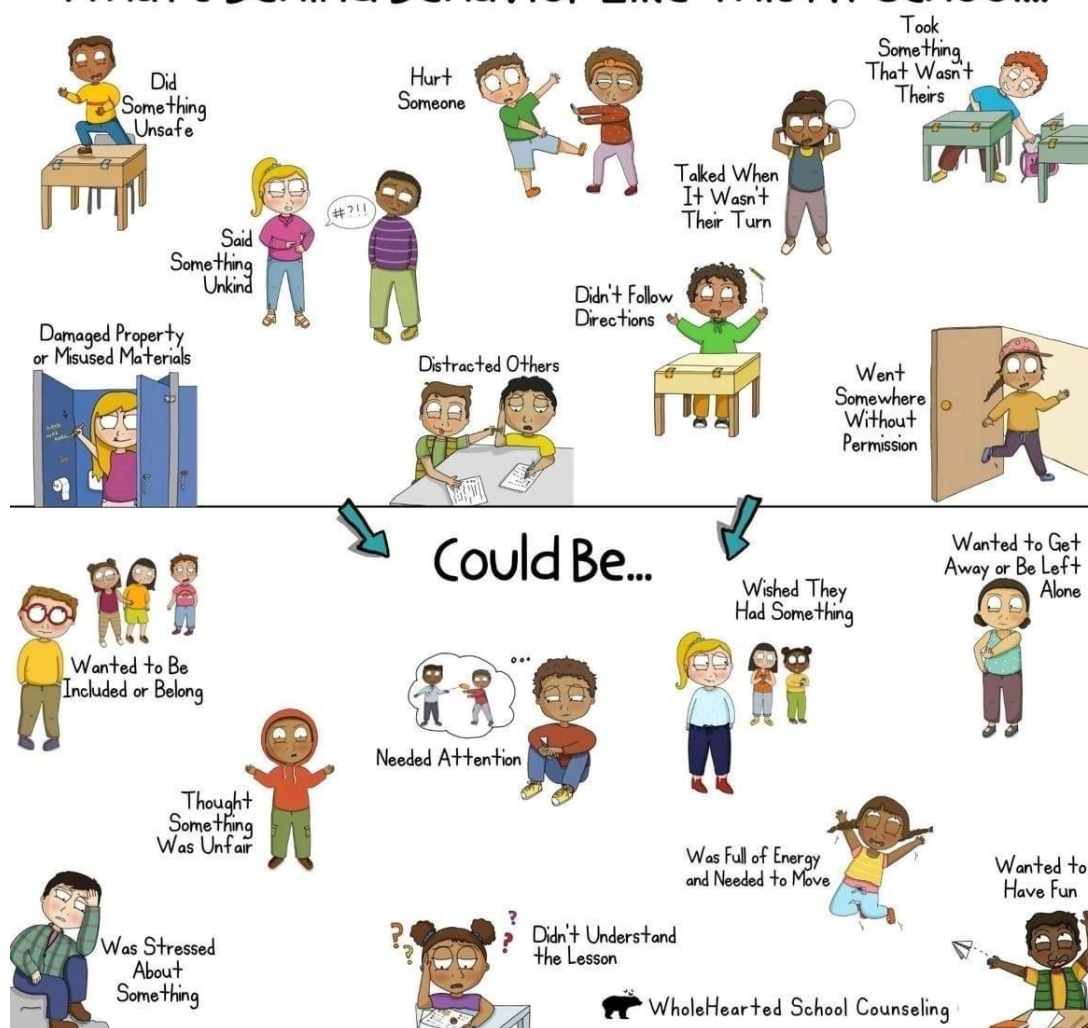
Most children and young people can operate well with a manageable level of stress, where they can cope with changes to routine and peer disagreements. For some, certain triggers can increase stress levels, e.g. unexpected change to routine, being told 'no', a perceived threat, making a mistake or a dispute with a peer.

When something has triggered an increase in stress, and a child's behaviour begins to show signs of changing or escalating, we will employ de-escalation and/or co-regulation techniques. We will always seek to reduce stress and in doing so, are modelling and teaching the children new coping mechanisms to deal with difficult or uncomfortable feelings. Once children are regulated and calm, we can then deal with the impact of behaviour. Sometimes, this may need to be the next day. We

will work alongside parents and carers when we have challenges such as this and work to develop a consistent approach between home and school- this is important to our parents, carers and families.

All pupils participate in Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) programme. The programme aims to empower all children to develop fundamental social and emotional skills which will enable them to make positive choices throughout life. <https://www.pathseducation.co.uk/>

What's Behind Behavior Like This At School...



11. NVR Strategies

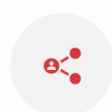
New Authority (NVR) is an approach to resisting problematic behaviour through vigilant care and de-escalation strategies. It focusses on building relationships between the adult and child, raising adult presence and, in turn, authority and influence. All school staff have received training in NVR.

Through an NVR approach, we aim to '**connect before we correct**', focussing on natural consequences instead of punishments/exclusion, correct in private where possible and convey the message that emotions are ok but certain behaviours are not.

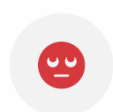
De-escalation strategies all adults use include:

Rule of one	'Autopilot' statements	Use humour
'Start' rather than 'stop' requests	Offer a way out	Be curious- 'I wonder if...' rather than, 'Why are you?'
Connection before correction	Quiet tone	Non-threatening body language

Relational gestures



'small acts of botheredness' (Paul Dix) drip feed the connection that will allow change to happen



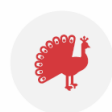
Smile, meet and greet, notice small things – the child feels held in mind



Collective approach – so no one has to be 100% as an individual



Small responsibilities



Appreciation messages/ mentions rather than merit/house points



Collective or individual rituals rather than concrete rewards

We also use **relational gestures** to help children feel seen, heard and cared for. These gestures can also help children feel important, included and improve their self-esteem.

12. Restorative Approach

A restorative approach develops an ethos where relationships are prioritised, trust and security are built, and conflict and harm are ultimately reduced.

The focus on repairing relationships reflects our school values; it does not mean actions are consequence free, but we seek to model and teach children the life skills needed to manage relationships. Every time we engage in repair, we model and teach children how to put things right following conflict.

With a restorative approach, instead of viewing a conflict situation as there being a victim and perpetrator, there is a focus on where the breakdown in communication has happened, repairing harm and finding a way forward. Restorative conversations should be empowering for everyone involved and allow them to fully understand the impact of harm towards others due to words/actions.

We use two sets of questions, one for the person who has harmed and one for the person who has been harmed- it is important they have a voice in the process to feel a sense of agency. The questions are open-ended and can be tailored to the situation and the child's developmental stage:

Restorative Questions 1. What happened? 2. What were you feeling/thinking at the time? 3. How did this make other people feel? 4. Who has been affected and how? 5. What should we do to put things right? 6. If this happened again, how could you do things differently?	Restorative Questions (for those harmed) 1. What did you think when this was happening? 2. How has this left you feeling? 3. What has been the hardest thing for you? 4. What do you think would make things right?	Simplified version: Restorative Questions 1. What happened? 2. Who has been affected and how? 3. What needs to happen now?
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More serious incidents may require a formal meeting with parents or carers. We will be mindful that there may be occasions where people don't feel comfortable sitting together to discuss what happened, for example bullying, or prejudice-based behaviour. We will ask if all parties feel comfortable beforehand to have a discussion.

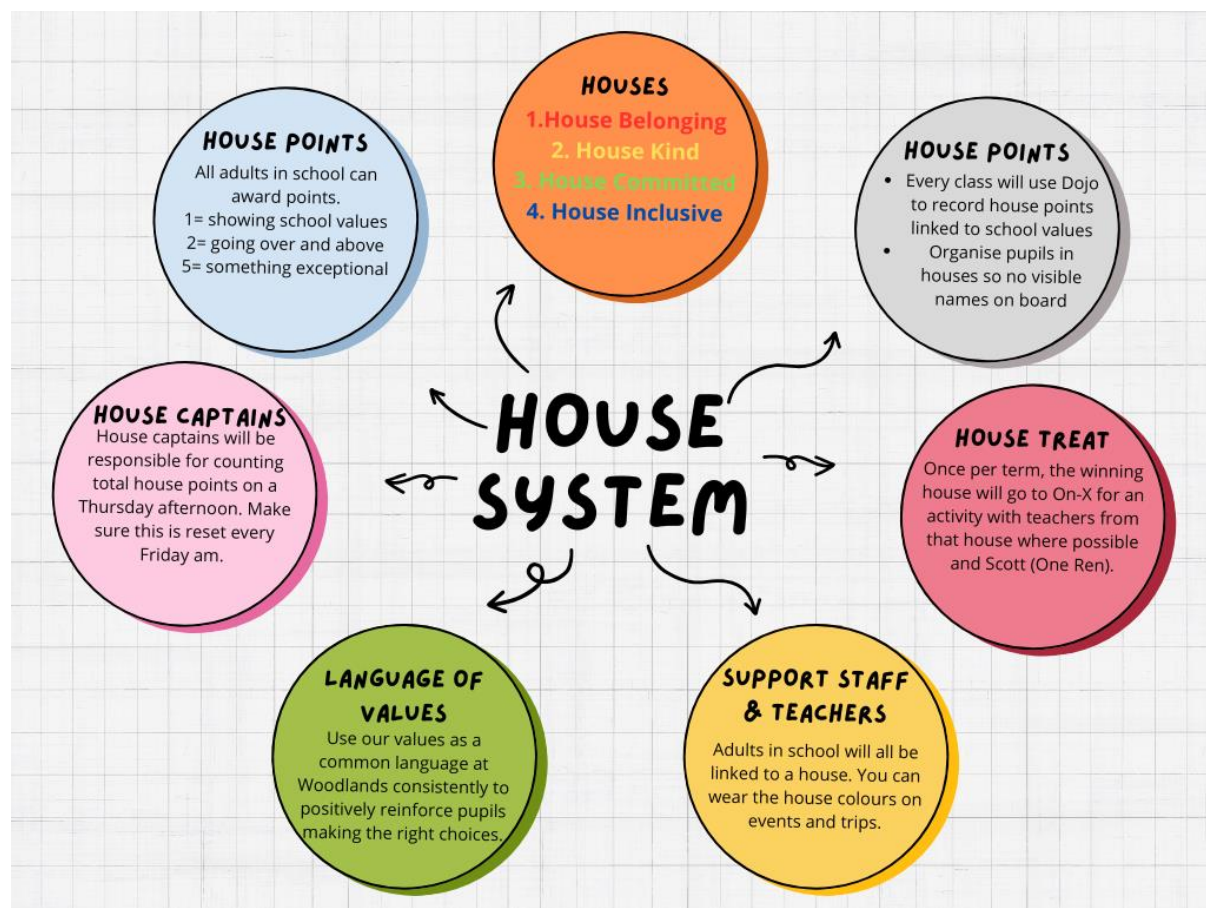
Natural Consequences

Children will likely find themselves in conflict situations throughout their lives. It is important we teach children the valuable life skills needed to resolve conflict. A big part of this is natural consequences to certain actions. We help children learn that their behaviour has an impact on themselves, others, and their environments.

When we do wrong, we must work to repair things and find a way to move forward. E.g. if we break something, we are no longer able to use it; 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 to ensure safety. This approach helps children understand empathy and the impact of kindness on others. We use our values to frame these conversations to make the connection between behaviour and consequences.

13. House System, Positive Recognition & Responses to Behaviour

We will always aim to focus on the positives, employing strengths-based practice by building on a child's talents and interests, and explore how we can remove or reduce barriers for children with additional support needs and/or communication differences. Our parents and carers told us this is important to them, and we will share a child's success with their families.



Positive Recognition:

- House system: points & house rewards (detailed above)
- Values certificates awarded at assembly
- Positive feedback and encouragement (oral and written)
- Wider achievements shared on Seesaw, at assembly and 'Proud Posts' on Facebook.
- 'Wonderful Woodies' Afternoon Tea with DHT- monthly themes (peer vote)
- 'Proud Post' note or 'Proud Call' home (teachers, support staff, dinner ladies, etc can do this)

Appropriate responses and consequences for behaviour:

- Values-based reflective conversations
- Restorative conversations
- Parents or carers contacted to discuss solutions and/or create a safety plan.
- Movement/brain/sensory breaks regularly scheduled.
- 'Time in'- a supported time from an adult in a calm space either inside the classroom or in an alternative learning space.
- Adapted or supported playtimes/lessons.
- '2 minutes owed' (a time used as a check in, to reinforce values and/or to make a plan).

14. CIRCLE Framework- Inclusive Learning and Collaborative Working



It is the responsibility of all staff to consider their role when supporting a learner who finds participation and engagement difficult. All teachers use the **CIRCLE Framework** to audit their classroom environment, ensuring it is inclusive for all.

For children with social and emotional needs which mean there are barriers to learning, **CIRCLE Participatory Scales** are used by all teachers to identify specific areas affecting pupils' participation in the classroom. The information from completing these scales is then used to create targets on pupil support plans, plan interventions and measure progress.

Skills, Supports & Strategies section of the resource splits strategies into three main areas:

- Modifications to the learning environment
- Establishing structures and routines
- Approaches to enhancing motivation

The four main areas to consider ensuring true, effective inclusion are:

- the environment (physical and social)
- structures and routines
- motivation
- skills

