



# RELATIONSHIP POLICY

Symington Primary School

Updated August 2025

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# Symington Primary School

## Positive Relationships Policy

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### Rationale

*"The Scottish approach to behaviour in schools has evolved significantly from the punitive policies of the past to a focus on building relationships to promote positive behaviour. This shift in focus to relationship-based and trauma informed approaches has been embedded systematically into the curriculum and education related policies and guidance including those that promote attendance and participation, and those that reduce barriers to learning and exclusion."*

*"Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in Educational Settings."*

*Education Scotland*

At Symington Primary, we promote positive behaviour and respectful relationships within our school community. We strive to encourage our learners to do the best they can in all areas of the curriculum. We want all children to take pride in themselves and be the best version of themselves. Children come to school from a variety of backgrounds, and this is always taken into consideration when supporting individual needs of learners.

Our relationships policy is a tool used to promote positive relationships with peers and adults with a common purpose of supporting everyone learn in a nurturing, empathetic and respectful environment. Consistency and clear, calm adult behaviour underpins this.

### Aims

Our aims are to raise expectations of all and to instil in all children a sense of pride in their behaviour. We strive to provide meaningful and positive relationships that our children can mirror and learn from.

### Objectives

The main principles of our positive behaviour policy are to:

- Ensure a consistent approach across the school and early years centre
- Set high but achievable standards
- Ensure our school community has a positive ethos and atmosphere for all.

*"Developing good relationships and positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and wider community is essential for creating the right environment for effective learning and teaching. Where people feel included, respected, safe and secure and when their*

achievements and contributions are valued and celebrated, they are more likely to develop self-confidence, self-reliance and positive views about themselves. This applies equally to all learners, parents and staff in the learning community."

Developing a positive whole school ethos and culture: relationships, learning and behaviour.

Education Scotland June 2018

### How we achieve this:

#### Our Vision

To be proud to be part of the Pride, inspire our learning and work together to become the best we can be.

#### Our Values

Positive Rights Respecting Inclusive Determined to Succeed Excellent

#### Positive Relationships Policy Statement

"The starting point for learning is a positive ethos with a climate of respect and trust upon shared values across the school community, including parents, whether for young people in school or those not in school."

*Curriculum for Excellence; Building the Curriculum 3 (2008)*

Symington Primary School is committed to providing a safe, supportive, secure and nurturing environment for all people in its establishment which promotes inclusion and achievement at all levels. Every child has the right to work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from victimisation. Staff will maintain a focus on the positive behaviour shown by all children, and will highlight, and therefore encourage, behaviour as a form of communication ahead of any inappropriate actions from a minority. We recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication, and that inappropriate and distressed behaviours are a sign that there may be deeper issues that need addressed. Because of this, we endeavour to provide a supportive and inclusive environment for all.

#### Nurture

Staff at Symington Primary recognise that some children struggle to cope with the fast-paced life of today's society resulting in them becoming overwhelmed with demands and this can have a negative impact on behaviour or the child's mental wellbeing. We foster nurturing approaches across our school community to ensure children are given time and opportunity to promote wellbeing and mental health.

Some approaches may include:

- PATHS - Promoting Positive Thinking Strategies

- Do-Be Mindful techniques
- Emotionworks
- Health and Wellbeing activities including focus weeks

## Building Relationships

At Symington Primary, we firmly believe that strong relationships, built on mutual respect and trust, are central to positive behaviour. This includes relationships between both adults and children as well as amongst peer groups. There are several approaches that we take to foster these relationships such as:

- Buddies
- Playground Pals
- Pupil Leadership Groups
- Team Time
- School House system

## The Role of the Staff

Staff have a responsibility to model high standards of behaviour when interacting with children, parents and each other within our school community.

### Staff will:

- Uphold our rights respecting ethos and class charters
- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- Emphasise the importance of being values as an individual
- Promote honesty, courtesy and kindness through leading by example
- Provide caring and effective learning environments and spaces
- Encourage relationships based on respect and understanding the needs of others
- Ensure fair treatment of all
- Provide guidance on improving standards of academic and behavioural performance
- Respond positively to efforts made by children when they are genuinely trying to adapt their behaviour
- Start each day with a clean slate
- Teach routines which will foster good habits for the future.

Each class has an agreed charter linked directly to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. (UNCRC) Each charter is co-created with learners and display the expectations for pupils' behaviour in relation to their rights as rights holders and include the role of the duty bearers. Charters are related to our school vision and values and are guided by the Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) principles.

There is a playground charter which is co-created with the Depute Head Teacher and the children at Team Time. The charter is displayed in the foyer and children are awarded for following the charter in the playground by support staff.

### The Six Symington Standards

These are our core standards which we actively encourage every child to respect within our school community:

- BE GENTLE so that no one gets hurt
- BE KIND and helpful so people's feelings are not hurt
- BE HONEST and always tell the truth
- TAKE CARE of property and belongings so that they are not damaged
- LISTEN to others without interrupting
- BE RESPECTFUL to other pupils, staff and visitors.

In addition to the Symington Standards, the following will also apply:

- Everyone should walk quietly and sensibly to avoid accidents
- Items which could cause harm or offence should be left at home
- Children should stay within the school grounds unless parental permission has been given or accompanied by an adult
- The carpark is out of bounds due to the number of cars, taxis and buses at certain times of the day
- Mobile phones should be switched off and stored in school bags (or class teacher's alternative practice) as soon as child enters school grounds - this includes the playground and morning club.

### Incentives

Our **house points system** is linked to our vision and values with points awarded in the form of house-coloured tokens. Each child is allocated a house from the following:

BREWLANDS      DANKEITH      ROSEMOUNT      TOWNEND

House points can be awarded by any member of staff for a variety of reasons such as:

- Displaying our vision and values
- Displaying positive behaviour
- Displaying manners and kindness
- Trying to achieve and work hard
- Showing determination and resilience
- Respecting the UNCRC and the rights of others
- Going above and beyond expectations
- Showing leadership, respect and team work at Team Times

House points are counted by house captains/vice captains each Friday and displayed for all to see on the house points display in the hall.

Over the course of a year, there are additional opportunities for children to achieve house points in a variety of inter-house events. Examples of inter-house events include:

- Dragons' Den
- Deal or No Deal
- Special awareness weeks such as Fairtrade, Mental Wellbeing, World of Work etc

At the end of Term 1 (December) and Term 4 (June), the winning house receives a house party to celebrate their achievements together.

### Head Teacher Awards

Children can gain head teacher awards throughout the year consisting of a shiny gold sticker and an entry in the Head Teacher's Proud Book. The Head Teacher's book contains a page for every child within the school which grows with them as they transition through the classes. Entries in the book can be given for in school achievements and wider achievements from home or beyond resulting in a record of personal achievements throughout each child's time at Symington Primary. Certificates, awards and trophies are awarded at different stages within the Head Teacher's book as follows:

Number of Entries	Award
4	Bronze certificate
+4	Silver certificate
+4	Gold certificate
+8	Diamond certificate
+10	Platinum certificate
+15	Shield
+5	Bronze medal
+10	Silver medal
+10	Gold medal
+20	Personal trophy

Head Teacher certificates and trophies are awarded at monthly whole school assemblies where achievements are shared and celebrated.

### In Class

Class teachers are encouraged to promote and celebrate positive behaviour within their own classrooms. Class incentives or approaches are very much dependant on the mix of children in the classes and the teachers' knowledge of each individual pupil.

All staff are encouraged to use the Positive Paws for children to take home each week. These are awarded to children who display the vision and values of the school.

Some examples of in-class rewards may be:

- Pupil of the week
- Table points
- Secret pupil
- Stickers
- Postcards
- Certificates
- Fun 31 on a Friday
- Personal choice awards - sitting beside a friend for a day, sitting on the star cushion, homework pass etc.

*"If you consistently reward minimum standards the children will strive for minimum standards. If you reward children for going over and above, then there is no limit to their excellent behaviour."*

Paul Dix (2017)

### In the Playground

Support staff equally encourage and celebrate positive behaviour in the playground. Staff can reward behaviours such as:

- Following the playground charter
- Displaying respect and kindness towards others
- Showing leadership
- Supporting younger children or those in need
- Quality lining up at the bell

Staff distribute house points and award Class of the Week. The Class of the Week receive an additional 10 minutes play on a day of their choosing. The class receive a certificate which is displayed in the corridor for all to see.

### Restorative Practice

This approach aims to improve behaviour and relationships in our school community by moving away from a blame and retribution model of dealing with unacceptable behaviour towards one which is based on social responsibility and self-awareness. At Symington Primary, our approach towards dealing with unacceptable, inappropriate behaviours or conflict is based upon the "4 R's" -

- Respect
- Reflect
- Repair
- Reconnect

All staff are encouraged to use this restorative approach to repair relationships so people can get on together.

### **How does it work?**

At Symington Primary we strive to meet the needs of our children within our learning community. The staff team think about their own behaviour and how this impacts on the behaviour of the children.

There is a meeting between the people involved in the incident and an adult to mediate. In the first instance, this should be the class teacher or playground supervisor. Everyone involved is given the opportunity to tell their story, say how they are feeling and be listened to. Everyone gets the chance to talk about how their actions affected the others. The people involved make suggestions to resolve the incident and come to an agreement on how to fix things, thus the relationship has been repaired and apologies made.

*"When people talk about behaviour, they obsessively search for the instant solution. Some peddle magic dust or behaviour systems that glisten yet quickly fade. Others relentlessly scream for a bigger stick to beat the students down with. Both extremes harbour an irresistible idea that there is a short cut to changing behaviour. The truth is there is no alternative to the hard work: building relationships with those who would rather not, resetting expectations with those who trample them, being relentlessly positive and sustaining a poker face when confronted with challenging behaviour."*

*When Adults Change, Everything Changes - Paul Dix*

### **What to do for certain behaviours/circumstances?**

Tiered sanctions allow teachers and support staff to remind children of positive behaviour expectations and give the opportunity for the children to take responsibility for the choices they make and move forward.

For many the children, the first step is enough to encourage them to make the best choice. However, at times this will need to be followed by other steps:

#### **Step 1: Verbal reminder (1<sup>st</sup> warning)**

Reminder of the school values. Repeat reminders and make slight adjustments if needed.

#### **Step 2: (2<sup>nd</sup> Warning)**

This a final discussion by offered to the child to engage and offer a positive change. Refer to previous good behaviour.

#### **Step 3 (Reflection)**

Child goes to a quiet, safe space to reflect on behaviours, how they feel, how it affected others and to make the necessary changes before continuing. This could be in the classroom or in a safe space outside the room. This may be a reflection table, quiet spot or calm corner.

#### Step 4 (Repair)

This should be a quick chat to clarify the actions taken. Either positive praise for calming down and collecting their thoughts to resolve the situation, or in a more extreme case, explaining that parents, HT or DHT will need to be informed if the situation has not been resolved by this point.

#### Escalation to HT or DHT

If the above steps are unsuccessful and the behaviour escalates then the class teacher should seek assistance from the HT or DHT. This can be a visit from HT or DHT to class or for them to remove child from class situation.

#### Parent/Carer Contact

For some incidents, parents may need to be contacted:

- to make them aware of their child's actions
- to inform them that the incident has been dealt with
- to reinforce that certain behaviours are not acceptable in our school environment

#### Timeline

Incidents should be dealt with in a timely manner. As part of our policy of starting a fresh each day.

Every child has the right to play (RRS article 31) therefore no child should be kept in at break or lunch time unless the challenging behaviour incident occurred in the playground.

#### In the Playground

Our support staff are fully included in the development of this policy and will enact and apply the vision and values in their day-to-day roles. Any low-level behaviours in the playground should be dealt with by following the stepped approach with the class teacher being informed. Incidents of an unacceptable nature will be escalated to the HT or DHT.

#### **Anti-Bullying Position Statement**

*"Bullying is both behaviour and impact: the impact is on the person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of agency. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships: it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened or isolated. This behaviour happens face to face and online."*

## Respect Me 2018

At Symington Primary we believe our children have the right to work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from victimisation, harassment and fear therefore we are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure all our children feel safe and happy within our school community. This statement is directly linked to the GIRFEC agenda which sets out how agencies and professionals work together to promote the welfare and rights of the children ensuring that they are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. It is also directly linked to the UNCRC where bullying behaviour goes against many of the rights articles and may prevent children from enjoying their rights and developing their full potential in later life.

### What is Bullying?

Bullying can come in a number of forms when an incident occurs in isolation, leaving a child worried, unhappy and/or frightened such as:

- name calling, insults, threats
- ignoring, isolating or spreading rumours
- pushing, hitting, tripping, kicking
- taking and damaging personal property
- intimidation, extortion
- targeting someone because of who they are or perceived to be
- online bullying: sending abusive messages, photographs or emails.

### Strategies to Prevent Bullying Behaviour

- The whole school community is aware of the anti-bullying policy within the relationships policy. This is shared with parents and carers
- Victims of bullying will be treated in a supportive manner
- Appropriate action, sanctions and support will be given for the perpetrators of bullying
- The school community is committed to investigating and combating bullying behaviour
- Positive relationships policy reflects the school values and rewards/sanctions link directly to these values both in classroom and playground
- Monthly focus at whole school assembly with a special awareness week each November
- Health and Wellbeing curriculum in classes to raise awareness of what bullying behaviour is and to ensure children know what to do if they feel bullied or witness an incident
- Planned anti-bullying activities and events such as Show Racism the Red Card, Internet Safety and the annual Anti-Bullying Week
- Opportunities for children to produce anti-bullying posters, drama activities etc at Team Time

- Nurturing approaches embedded to support children so they feel they can approach any member of staff, demonstrate school values and build resilience
- Our commitment to embed UNCRC and to sustain Rights Respecting School's Gold award.

### **Responding to Bullying Incidents**

At Symington Primary when a person claims to have experienced bullying behaviour, each incident is treated swiftly and consistently following our school's relationships policy. How the person who has experienced bullying behaviour perceives their situation, is important and is taken seriously to avoid long term damage to the person's feelings of self-esteem, self-worth and values. Impartiality is respected, with the knowledge of the incident limited to those directly involved and with any necessary actions to follow.

The HT or DHT is informed at the earliest opportunity with the incident recorded appropriately within SEEMIS systems. Parents are informed, and if appropriate, as are outside agencies. Sanctions are in place for any child who displays bullying behaviour and explanation given on where their actions may lead to.

Should parents exercise their right to take further actions, then they will be directed to the South Ayrshire "Listening to You" complaints procedures.

### **Online Bullying**

At Symington Primary, we will inform parents when an online bullying incident is reported as these are most likely to take place after school. Likewise, we encourage parents to inform us of any such incidents which may impact their child's school day.

The steps parents, or the school in consultation with the parents, may consider taking are:

- Ensure appropriate parental settings on home computers, gaming technology, mobile phones and social media
- Look through message history
- Taking a screenshot of any bullying messages
- Involve perpetrator's parents
- Involve other agencies
- Support child who is experiencing online bullying and/or child displaying the bullying behaviour
- Explain the serious consequences and impact if child is displaying bullying behaviour

Respect Me is Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service that offer training for staff and parents:

[www.respectme.org.uk/elearning](http://www.respectme.org.uk/elearning)