Wormholt Park School
Autumn 2026

Level 2

Behaviour Policy

Article 19
You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for behaviour management at Wormholt Park School.

Aims

Wormholt Park School aims to ensure the good behaviour of all pupils through a combination of high-levels of both nurture and structure. Our Rights Respecting ethos enables us to build a nurturing, caring ethos which permeates our school environment. We aim to create a structured and safe environment using strong routines, consistently high expectations and high aspirations for all our children.

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Every pupil understands they have the right to feel safe, valued and respected, and learn free from the disruption of others
- All pupils, staff and visitors are free from any form of discrimination
- Staff and volunteers always set an excellent example to pupils
- Rewards, sanctions and reasonable force are used consistently by staff, in line with the behaviour policy
- The behaviour policy is understood by pupils, parents and staff
- The school has a positive, supportive ethos that supports personal as well as academic development for all children
- We all recognise that all behaviour is communication, the expression of a need or a way to overcome discomfort.
- We are an inclusive school and recognise the specific needs of varying groups of children including those with SEND and those who have experienced trauma.
- Children should not be intentionally shamed or humiliated
- Pupils are helped to take responsibility for their actions

1. Definitions

Inappropriate behaviour is defined as:

Disruption in lessons, in corridors between lessons, and at break and lunchtimes
Failure to engage with learning
Poor attitude
Ignoring adult instructions
Hurting others
Insulting others
Swearing

Serious inappropriate misbehaviour is defined as:

Repeated breaches of the school rules
Any form of bullying

Vandalism
Theft
Fighting
Smoking/vaping
Running away from adults
Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory behaviour (including based on faith/religion) and or assault
Aggressive language
Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)
Possession of any prohibited items. These are:
Knives or weapons; Alcohol; Illegal drugs; Stolen items; Tobacco and cigarette papers; Fireworks; Pornographic images; Any article a staff member reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil).

2. Bullying

*Bullying is unacceptable behaviour used by an individual or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. In other words, '**unacceptable behaviour which occurs lots of times, on purpose**.'*

Bullying is, therefore:
Deliberately hurtful
Repeated, often over a period of time
Difficult to defend against
Details of our school's approach to preventing and addressing bullying are set out in our anti-bullying policy.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board
The governing board is responsible for reviewing and approving the written statement of behaviour principles (appendix 1).
The governing board will also review this behaviour policy in conjunction with the Head teacher and monitor the policy's effectiveness, holding the head teacher to account for its implementation.

The Head Teacher
The Head teacher is responsible for reviewing this behaviour policy in conjunction with the governing board, giving due consideration to the school's statement of behaviour principles (appendix 1). The Head teacher will also approve this policy.

The Head teacher will ensure that the school environment encourages positive behaviour and that staff deal effectively with poor behaviour, and will monitor how staff implement this policy to ensure behaviour is dealt with consistently.

Staff
Staff are responsible for:

- Creating a safe and calm environment for all children
- Establishing consistent expectations and routines
- Developing warm and positive relationships with children
- Understanding needs expressed through children's behaviours
- Modelling positive behaviour
- Understanding the school's approach to behaviour and implementing the behaviour policy consistently
- Always giving a fresh start to children as required
- Providing a personalised approach to the specific behavioural needs of pupils
- Recording behaviour incidents (recorded on CPOMS)
- The senior leadership team will support staff in responding to behaviour incidents.

Parents
Parents are expected to:

- Support their child/ren in engaging positively with the school ethos and behaviour expectations
- Maintain good communication with school so that there is a shared understanding of children's needs
- Inform the school of any changes in circumstances that may affect their child's behaviour
- Discuss any concerns about their child's wellbeing with the class teacher promptly

4. Whole school behavioural expectations

We have high expectations for all our children. Staff model these expectations and take the time to discuss with children what this looks like in practice. Our school rules and Rights Respecting Charters are displayed in every classroom and regularly referred to. Our expectations for all children are the same, but we recognise that the level of support some children require to meet these expectations can vary. Just as we would differentiate the learning for children using scaffolds, resources and adult allocation, we make similar modifications for children who are struggling with their behaviour.

5. School Rules

There are four school rules, which link directly to children's rights.
These rules need to be understood and agreed by all.

At our school, everybody:

1. ***Has the right to feel happy, safe and secure at all times***
2. ***Has the right to learn and play without disruption from others***
3. ***Has the right to know that bullying is unacceptable and will be dealt with***
4. ***Has the right to be listened to and treated fairly***

Class Rules/Charter

At the start of every academic year all children draw up an agreed a set of rules/charter for their class. These charters support our Gold Rights Respecting award and consider the whole school community. Pupils share their class charters in a whole school assembly which are then displayed in their classrooms.

6. Positive Behaviour Management

Good rapport and warm, consistent relationships between staff and pupils are the bedrock of effective behaviour management. Staff make an effort to get to know individual children and let them know that they are valued.
We support all children to behave by:

- Investing in developing strong relationships with pupils
- Sharing and reinforcing expectations frequently.
- Narrating the positive - staff describe the ways in which most children are meeting their expectations in order to support the compliance of all pupils
- Having clear routines and structures (for example making use of visual timetables and daily reminders)
- Regular use of specific feedback and praise
- Regular use of class and school reward systems
- Ensuring that learning is engaging and appropriately differentiated
- Promoting positive attitudes towards learning and making mistakes (growth mindset)
- Developing the Emotional Literacy of all children through daily routines and PSHE lessons
- Helping children to feel emotionally and physically ready for learning by incorporating calming moments, sensory breaks and opportunities for mindfulness in the school day.
- Responding to the changing needs of individual children
- As with discipline, staff are mindful of the individual needs of children when making use of public praise and rewards. For a few children with specific needs, praise can be better shared quietly.

7. Whole school rewards and consequences

Rewards

A range of strategies are used to promote and reward positive behaviour and behaviour for learning.
Whole class rewards include Dojo points and marble jars.
These are used to work towards a shared goal.
Individual rewards are used as appropriate. They would normally be used to support a child with a particular difficulty and in most cases are a temporary measure.
Individual reward systems are not comparative or public.

- Teacher gives praise either written or verbal
- Teacher gives public praise
- Good sample of work sent home
- Child is given sticker/star
- Child is given special responsibilities
- Teacher tells parent – verbal/phone/text
- Child shows work to another class
- Child shows work to SLT
- End of half term certificate from Head
- Special work boards
- Achievements shared and celebrated in whole school Monday or Friday assemblies

What do we do if a child is showing inappropriate behaviour?

When a child's behaviour does not meet our high expectations, teachers will first reaffirm their expectations with the child, and then support the child to meet these expectations where necessary. Teachers are encouraged to maintain an attitude of curiosity to the behaviour of all children and to be solution-focused wherever possible. Where the behaviour occurs during direct teaching, the priority will be to maintain the flow of the lesson and engagement of all pupils. If a child needs to be moved, their teacher will always check-in with them afterwards to discuss potential reasons for their behaviour and decide next steps.
***Please see appendices below for each school's behaviour stages when dealing with inappropriate behaviour**
NB in cases of sudden or serious inappropriate behaviour (please see definitions above), the priority is the safety of all children, meaning that the usual behaviour stages would not necessarily apply.

Serious inappropriate behaviour
See above for behaviours considered to be serious.
In all cases where the behaviour is a significant cause for concern a member of the leadership team will be involved and the parents of all affected children will be contacted. Appropriate support and/or reparation and consequences must be planned for and agreed. This process should be logged on CPOMS. This allows a record of the incident to be made. If there is a record of a child having engaged in seriously inappropriate behaviour on multiple occasions, a member of leadership would work with the class teacher and parents to decide whether an Individual Behaviour Plan would be appropriate. The Head teacher

may also impose a fixed-term exclusion, to be decided upon based upon the seriousness of the incident(ces) and at their discretion.

Unsafe or dangerous behaviour

Should a situation arise within the school setting where a child's behaviour becomes unsafe to themselves or others it may be necessary for the teacher to call for support from a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Where a child is obviously struggling to manage their emotions, the member of SLT would support the class teacher. The aim is to calm down the child and resolve the situation, allowing all students to continue with the lesson. Where the member of senior staff considers there to be a risk that inappropriate behaviour may continue, they may remain in the lesson to assist in settling the class. If there is a risk that the behaviour may result in any children being unsafe then the child will be removed if this can be done safely. If this is not possible, then the other children will leave the classroom/playground/hall etc. whilst a member of staff remains with the child who is struggling with their behaviour. Where a child has caused a significant breach of health and safety, they will be automatically removed from the class safely by a member of staff using positive handling guidelines. Any incidents of positive handling must be recorded on CPOMS as a Positive Handling Incident and parents/carers will be contacted.
Please see the Positive Handling policy.

Supporting children affected by the behaviour of others

All children deserve to feel safe in school - this is a core value of our Rights Respecting ethos. If a child has been hurt, physically or emotionally, by the inappropriate or serious behaviour of another child, then staff are expected to take proactive steps to comfort and protect the child from further harm. When supporting the child, staff should keep in mind the following process:

- If a witness, calmly challenge what has been said/ stop the harmful behaviour immediately. Tell the child/children that this is against our school expectations and explain why
- If being told about an incident, listen carefully to information from all children involved to assess what has happened.
- Facilitate an apology or reparation and decide on a consequence for the child(ren) who has/have caused harm
- Offer practical and or emotional support to the child(ren) affected and add this to the CPOMS record of the incident
- Communicate with parents what has happened and what action is being taken to prevent a recurrence of the incident
- Keep lines of communication open with all involved
- Link any CPOMS records of incidents to all children involved or affected so that clear tracking can take place
- We take incidences of physical aggression and violence very seriously. Children who have intentionally hurt others may need to be separated from their peers either temporarily or on a planned basis to protect other children whilst an action plan is made to prevent a recurrence of such behaviour. Children can also face fixed-term exclusions as a consequence for violent behaviour. Please see also Serious Behaviour and Unsafe behaviour, above.

Consequences
Consequences are not in isolation and should be paired with supportive strategies.
Consequences should be proportionate and as closely linked as possible to the behaviours – the consequence should support learning to do better.
Children should be given the opportunity to reflect on their actions and the impact this may have had on others. Below are examples for some situations that may occur in school and the types of response that are appropriate:

Time for reflection

Reflection area - this area is offered to children as a place and time to reflect on their own actions or behaviour. Children may incorporate this as a personal strategy and may take themselves to the designated quiet area of the classroom when they feel unable to cope, or when directed by their teacher. This strategy is encouraged by staff as a positive method to promote behaviour management. The naming of this strategy may vary according to Key Stage. The interpretation of this time will be explained to children at the start of every school year.

For more detail on consequences during lesson time, please see appendices below.
In the playground, consequences might include:

- The child is asked to come to sit to calm down. Chat to problem-solve before rejoining game/play
- The child is removed from situation and redirected elsewhere
- It is agreed that the child cannot re-join a game because of their behaviour
- Additional support or shorter playtimes might be put in place until the issue is resolved if there is a repeated problem.

Regarding consequences for serious inappropriate behaviour, please see above and exclusions, below.
Teachers will use their knowledge of the child when deciding on appropriate consequences which are in keeping with the school ethos.

Exclusions
Consequences for one-off incidences of serious behaviour can include an exclusion, at the discretion of the Head teacher. Exclusions might be internal or external fixed-term dependent on the severity of the behaviour and shared knowledge of the child's needs and understanding of the situation. Where a child is repeatedly breaching the school rules, which impacts upon the learning and/or wellbeing of themselves or others, an exclusion might also be decided upon as a necessary step. Exclusions should be followed up with a reintroduction to school meeting with the child, teacher and a member of SLT. The focus of this meeting is on working together to try to avoid repetition of disruptive, unsafe or dangerous behaviours. Supportive strategies should be put in place and a clear plan should be agreed upon to help the child improve their behaviour. Plans and next steps should be shared and agreed with parents.

Off-site behaviour
Consequences may be applied where a pupil has shown inappropriate behaviour off-site when representing the school, such as on a school trip.

Off-site curriculum trips or regular visits
If a pupil has previously demonstrated unsafe or inappropriate behaviour on an off-site trip or is considered within school to be a child who places themselves or others at risk or is a child who cannot/will not follow instructions, then a decision will be made regarding whether this child should be allowed to take part in off-site activities. This includes off –site residential trips such as PGL. The school's decision will be final.
Children are expected to follow and model the school rules when off-site and will be supported to do so in line with the behaviour policy.
Children will also be supported to ensure that they follow a venue's rules.
Where a child is considered either at risk to themselves or to others when on the trip – at ANY stage - they are accompanied back to school with an adult and a decision is made by the Head Teacher regarding future trips premised upon whether or not this child will be safe or endanger other children on future trips. The school's decision will be final.

Off-site residential trips
Where a child is considered either at risk to themselves or to others, they will need to leave the residential site and return home. Parent/carers will be contacted and will be expected to collect their child from the venue. The child will remain supervised by a member of staff until he/she is collected. The school's decision will be final.

Positive Handling
(See positive handling policy for more detail)
In some circumstances, staff may use reasonable force to positively handle a pupil to prevent them:
Causing disorder
Hurting themselves or others
Damaging property

Incidents of positive handling must:
Always be used as a last resort
Be applied using the minimum amount of force and for the minimum amount of time possible
Be used in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned
Never be used as a form of punishment
Be recorded and reported to parents

Confiscation
Any prohibited items (listed in section 3) found in pupils' possession will be confiscated.
These items will not be returned to pupils.
We will also confiscate any item which are causing disruption to pupils. These items will be returned to pupils after discussion with senior leaders and parents, if appropriate.

8. Pupil support

The school recognises its legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent pupils with a protected characteristic from being at a disadvantage.
Our approach to challenging behaviour may be differentiated to cater to the needs of the pupil, based on the understanding that all behaviour is communication. Pupils who might require a modified approach include: children with Special Educational Needs; children who have experienced trauma; children who are looked-after or recently adopted, and children who are experiencing difficulties at home. Staff are trained annually in the specific needs of children who have trauma and attachment issues by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. These children can often exhibit more challenging behaviours because of their experiences and, as a trauma-sensitive school, we know how important it is to create tailored behaviour support plans for these children in partnership with their parents/carers.
The school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENDCO) will also evaluate pupils who exhibit challenging behaviours to determine whether they have any underlying needs that are not currently being met.

Supporting Children to manage their Emotions
We know that children are sometimes overwhelmed by their emotions and can behave in ways that are particularly challenging. We realise that in these circumstances, the child needs close support to calm down and feel safe. Wherever possible, the child should be supported by an adult with whom they have a close and trusting relationship.
The following process should be considered in these circumstances:
Regulate - help the child to calm down through movement, breathing, taking to a safe space etc.
Relate - connect with the child to let them know that they are understood and they are safe.
Reason - when the child is calm, consider together what went wrong and how this situation could be avoided again in future. Discuss possible reparations together (i.e. tidying any mess, writing a letter of apology to somebody who was hurt). Be aware that the child might need a significant amount of time before they are ready to engage in rational conversation about their behaviour.

Staff will consider the **PACE Model** (see Appendix 3) in their interactions with children.

We recognise that some children, particularly those who have experienced trauma, cannot control their behaviour when their survival response has been triggered. We also understand that our youngest children can be impulsive and are still learning about how their behaviour can impact others. We would therefore be sensitive to such factors when deciding next steps with them.
For children who regularly struggle to regulate their behaviour, the SENDCO would support the class teacher to develop an Individual Behaviour Plan focusing on supportive, proactive strategies aiming to reduce the incidences of emotional dysregulation resulting in challenging behaviour.

Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP)
An IBP (see appendices) will be created for a child who is having difficulty managing their behaviour. This will be drawn up with the class teacher in conjunction with the SENDco and shared with parents/carers and the child. The IBP will outline individualised provision and

support including rewards for wanted behaviour appropriate to that child. Where an IBP has been drawn up, support from an outside agency may be appropriate. We will work with parents to create the plan and review it on a regular basis.
Where necessary, support and advice will also be sought from specialist teachers, behaviour support units, an educational psychologist, medical practitioners and/or others, to identify or support specific needs. When acute needs are identified in a pupil, we will liaise with external agencies and plan detailed support programmes for that child. We will work with parents to create the plan and review it on a regular basis.

9. Pupil transition

To ensure a smooth transition to the next year, pupils have at least one meet your new teacher session with their new teacher(s). In addition, staff members hold transition meetings where detailed information is passed on to ensure children are well supported a soon as they move into their new class.
To ensure behaviour is continually monitored and the right support is in place, information related to pupil behaviour issues may be transferred to relevant staff at the start of the term or year. Information on behaviour issues may also be shared with new settings for those pupils transferring to other schools.

10. Training

Our staff are provided with training on managing behaviour. The SENDCO and external professionals (such as Educational Psychologists) lead training sessions on supporting children with additional needs and sensory difficulties. Behaviour management will also form part of continuing professional development.

11. Monitoring arrangements

This behaviour policy will be reviewed every two years.
The written statement of behaviour principles (appendix 1) will be reviewed and approved by the governing board every two years.

Appendix 1 – Written Statement of behaviour Principles

Aims of the Behaviour Management Policy
Statement of Behaviour Principles

● Every pupil understands they have the right to feel safe, valued and respected, and learn free from the disruption of others

● All pupils, staff and visitors are free from any form of discrimination

● Staff and volunteers always set an excellent example to pupils

● Rewards, sanctions and reasonable force are used consistently by staff, in line with the behaviour policy

● The behaviour policy is understood by pupils, parents and staff

● Pupils are helped to take responsibility for their actions

● The school has a positive, supportive ethos that supports personal as well as academic development for all children

Appendix 2 – Behaviour stages

Before commencing on the stages of behaviour, staff should have already used positive whole-class management strategies, including:

Whole Class						
Ensure children enter the classroom ready to learn	Setting clear expectations at the beginning of every session	Where possible ensure the children are engaged in an activity on entry to the classroom	Giving clear, simple instructions	Carefully managing transitions	Using established and predictable routines	An organised classroom and access to necessary resources
Pre-empting triggers such as timetable or routine changes		Narrating the positive		Whole class rewards		Explicit linking to rules and RR ethos
Responding to Unwanted behaviour						
Making use of movement or mindfulness breaks, if appropriate		Positive group correction		Anonymous individual correction		Nonverbal intervention

Where a child still struggles to follow the rules in class, the following stages should be followed over the course of one day:

All reminders are preferably delivered privately. If public, keep it short and to the point.

Incident 1	Reminder 1 Sam, this is your first reminder to put your pencil down and look at me.	Reminder 2 Sam, this is your second reminder to show good listening. Is everything OK?	Consequence 1 (Private) Sam, you have had two reminders and you are still struggling to listen. I'm going to move you to the reflection area to help you to focus. Give the child a set time for this reflection. (Move to C2 if C1 is not effective)	<u>Teacher Led Reflection</u> Quick private check-in at the end of session to reset expectations. I had to move you because you were not listening. Is everything OK? What do you need to do to get back on track next session?
Incident 2	Reminder 1	Reminder 2	Consequence 2 (Private)	<u>Partner Teacher Led Reflection</u>

	Sam, I expect you to keep your hands to yourself at the table.	Sam, this is your second reminder to not touch other people's work. Do you need help?	Sam, as you are still distracting others after two reminders, I am going to send you to work in the next door's class for the rest of this lesson. (Move to C3 if C2 is not effective)	Child completes reflection and next steps in partner teacher's classroom. They use the reflection prompts before going to play and then returning to class.
Incident 3	Reminder 1 Sam, please listen to others when then are talking.	Reminder 2 Sam, this is your second reminder not to shout over other people.	Consequence 2 (Private) Sam, you are still shouting over other people, even though you've been offered help. You will now go to speak to our Key Stage Phase Leader, and I will have to speak to your parents at the end of the day.	<u>Phase Lead Reflection</u> Child completes reflection and next steps in Phase leader's classroom. They use the reflection prompts before going to play and then returning to class. Class teacher should report to parents at the end of the day.
Incident 4	Reminder 1 Sam, please use respectful language to your friends	Reminder 2 Sam, this is your second reminder to be respectful of others.	Consequence 2 (Private) Sam, unfortunately you've really struggled today, even though you've been offered help. You have been disrespectful to others twice. You will now go to speak to the AHT/DHT and we will have to speak to your parents at the end of the day.	<u>AHT/ DHT Reflection</u> Child spends some time speaking to a member of SLT. They decide if a further consequence is necessary. Class teacher to record on cpoms. AHT/DHT to add any additional info to the record. Class teacher should report to parents at the end of the day, unless AHT/DHT say otherwise.

For children who have been identified as struggling with behaviour because of SEND or trauma, instead of going straight to a consequence, they might have an additional step of a movement break, targeted adult support or a sensory support to help them refocus. These breaks should be no more than 5 minutes in length.

Appendix 3

Using PACE in School

This information is help you to have effective, empowering interactions with children who have experienced trauma and who, as a result, do not respond to you in the same way as other children you teach.

Children who have had a difficult start to life have often learned that the world is not a safe place and that people in it cannot be trusted to help them to stay safe. Without safety and security children cannot settle to learn and explore. Many also do not think that they deserve care and attention, and many feel deeply ashamed much of the time. These feelings and assumptions about the world underpin all the interactions they have with you and their peers.

Working with children who do not feel safe at school is demanding and asks a lot of you as a professional. We hope that this leaflet will give you some more information about why you are successful when you are successful, why things sometimes go wrong, and some ideas for helping hard-to-reach children be settled and able to learn in your class.

Understanding how feelings direct actions

When we do not feel safe, the body prepares itself to respond to danger. If the danger seems very great, the nervous system is activated in such a way that we have a very high tolerance for pain, and often become very still. In this 'freeze' state, which is the state of greatest stress, children sometimes appear to 'zone out', show confusing behaviours such as laughing inappropriately as though they cannot stop, or even appear to fall asleep. Sometimes this is called "dissociation".

When we perceive threat that is not at the highest level the body prepares itself for defence. Sometimes we call this "fight or flight". It is likely that you have seen this response on many occasions. Children who have experienced trauma escalate into this state very quickly. It may look as though there was no trigger, or that the apparent trigger was very small.

Many children who have experienced trauma are vulnerable to experiencing 'fight, fright or flight' reactions in everyday situations which would not normally make children feel afraid. This reaction is not conscious, is completely involuntary and out of their control. For children to be ready to learn, however, they need to be in the calm, open and engaged state described in the graphic above. Only in this state can they engage with you and others to think about what has happened and how you can understand it together.

When a child is challenging or threatening to you, when you feel deskilled or frustrated by the child, your own defences are likely to kick in. At this point it is very difficult for you to be in a calm, open and engaged state too. Many teachers are more likely at this point to revert to more traditional behaviour management styles which, unfortunately, do not work with children who have experienced trauma. Very often this is the point at which communication breaks down between you and the child and the situation escalates.

What does work?

The experience of safety seems to have a profound effect on pupils Louise Bomber, 2013

PACE is an approach developed by Dr Dan Hughes, an American psychologist who works with traumatised children. PACE stands for Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy. These principles help to promote the experience of safety in your interactions with young people. Children

need to feel that you have connected with the emotional part of their brain before they can engage the thoughtful, articulate, problem solving areas.

Connect and redirect*: When a child is upset, connect first emotionally, right-brain to right-brain. Then, once the child is more in control and receptive, bring in the left-brain lessons and discipline.*

The Whole Brain Child, **Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson**

Once a child feels that you have connected with their level of emotion, they can stop showing you. Children show you how they feel through their behaviour, often in ways that are very unhelpful to you and to themselves.

Playfulness

The purpose of playfulness is to enjoy being together in an unconditional way. This gives the message that the relationship is stronger than things that go wrong. Using a playful and light-hearted tone, as if you were telling a story, shows your interest and curiosity. Playfulness reduces the shame a child might feel when something has gone wrong; difficult messages or serious conversations can be easier to have if the tone is light. It does not mean you do not take the emotions or the incident seriously. It is also helpful to maintain a playful tone if you need to deliver a short reminder about behaviour in the classroom.

Acceptance

Unconditional acceptance is fundamental to a child's sense of safety because it shows that you have connected with their feelings without judgement, and without seeking to reassure their feelings away. This can be hard to do as it means you and the child sitting with some strong emotions, together. This is painful and uncomfortable, but also very powerful. If a child expresses distressing emotions about themselves or others (e.g. "nobody loves me", "I'm stupid", "I'm bad", "you hate me") it is hard not to challenge them as being wrong, but it is important to accept those feelings and acknowledge them using curiosity and empathy.

Accepting the child or young person's feelings and emotions does not mean accepting unwanted behaviour and it does not mean agreeing with the child's viewpoint, but for true acceptance to take place, it is important that the child also knows you can see them beyond their behaviour. When a child is very challenging, daily, this can be hard to do. Try to build in times with colleagues in which you can reflect on the child beyond their behaviour as well as expressing your own feelings about the challenges.

Curiosity

It's important to be curious about the child's thoughts, feelings, wishes and intentions: they may still be learning that other people can think about them in this way or that they can be held in mind by an adult without judgement and accusation at all. Curiosity is also important for discipline to be effective: connect with the emotion before you engage in discussion. Showing the child that you are interested in what is going on for them and willing to do something about it is a very powerful experience. Don't feel afraid to share your curiosity with the child by wondering, not telling them. Try to avoid asking "Why?". Instead, you might ask:

"Is it ok if I share my idea of what is going on for you? I might be wrong but these are my ideas."

or

"What do you think was going on?", "What do you think that was about?" or "I wonder what…?"

Try to be curious in a quiet, accepting tone that conveys a simple desire to understand the child: this is not the same as agreeing with their perception of the event, but shows your interest in understanding it and accepting the feelings that were involved.

Empathy

When you show empathy, you are showing the child that their feelings are important to you, and that you are alongside them in their difficulty. You are showing that you can cope with the hard times with them and you are trying hard to understand how it feels. Understanding and expressing your own feelings about the child's experience can often be more effective than reassurance. For example, if a child says "You don't care", you can respond by saying "That must be hard for you. I feel sad that you experience me as not caring"

Acceptance and empathy are your Emotional A&E. They are at the heart of the child starting to feel safe at school, which reduces conflict, stress and withdrawal.

Practical Examples

There are some scenarios of situations that frequently occur in schools. These PACE-informed scripts show how to have conversations with young people which connect with their feelings, thoughts and intentions. We hope you will find that connecting with children in this way de-escalates situations more quickly and increases trust between you and the child.

Angry and Negative Statements

When children make negative statements about themselves or you, for example:

You're angry and you don't want me in your classroom

It is tempting at this point to reply with a practical response, which may or may not be true:

I'm not angry and of course I want you to be here.

The PACE alternative would go something like this:

I can see that it feels like I am really cross with you, that is a really difficult feeling to have. I wonder if that is really scary and that you feel you would be better off outside the classroom. Although it doesn't feel like it, I do really want you in my classroom.

If this is too much to say to a child who is at that moment very distressed, use the Emotional A&E response:

It is really hard to feel that I am cross with you, that is such a scary feeling.

When a child runs away

This is a difficult and frightening situation for all concerned: some situations in school are highly emotional and feel unsafe for everyone. It is important that adults make sure they manage their own

strong emotions with support from others. These feelings are important to acknowledge, but it is not for the child to take responsibility for the adults' feelings. It is essential to acknowledge that when a child has run away, within school or out of school, you will probably have some strong feelings such as being scared, cross, resentful, and maybe terrified about the consequences. Arrange to talk to a trusted colleague about this so that your own emotional needs are met.

When working with the child, start with connection by acknowledging and accepting the feeling: the child felt so overwhelmed that running away felt like the best option. It may well not have been the best option from where you were standing, but it was for them. Be curious around what they were feeling at the time and about where else the child can go when they have these feelings that are so hard to manage. You want to enable a discussion about finding somewhere that feels safer to both of you. This can feel very difficult and feel like you're putting the child in control, but the aim is to do this collaboratively.

Most of your PACE skill will be used after the child has come back as you reflect on what happened together.

PACEing the situation as it happens:

It may be that, in the short term, you accept where the child feels safe and you follow them gently and at a distance to that place and sit down somewhere near to them and announce that:

I have just come to be with you, because I can see things are really hard for you right now, and I am here for you when you are ready.

If they move further away from you, this is not a sign that they are disrespecting you but they are just continuing to show you that they feel afraid. You could respond

I can see it is hard to be close to me, I will be here when you are ready.

Reflecting with PACE on how it could be different next time:

It's really nice to be sitting here with you now.
You might want to have a playful tone of voice here, because whilst you're talking about somethings very serious it is easier for a child to hear if you are playful or light-hearted in tone.

I was really worried about how you were feeling when you wanted to run away. Those feelings must have been really big. I wonder if you thought you were going to be told off about what happened at break/ you thought the work looked too hard/ you weren't sure what to do and you didn't know how to ask/ you felt a bit scared and you didn't know why]? *I can see that was really difficult, because it made you feel like you had to run away.*

I am wondering if we can think together about somewhere else you can go to when you feel like that. You might need somewhere to run to but I'd like it to be somewhere that I know you are safe. I have noticed that you like [think about your school and the places this child likes and what is possible for you, it should be a safe space where they can have 'time in' with someone they trust and find supportive. This doesn't need to be a formal space in school]. *When you have really big feelings it is hard to be alone, and it can be helpful to have someone with you, even if they are not saying anything.*

The emotional A&E statement:

You must have been so scared and so you ran away. I was really worried about you too, it is so nice to have you back.

Refusal to Engage

The child who won't speak to you at all eg head on the desk or at the top of the climbing frame telling you to go away

> *I wonder if you are feeling [really angry/ really scared/really overwhelmed/ really sad]*
>
> or
>
> *I don't know if you are feeling really sad or angry or scared and maybe you don't know either, but I can see it is really difficult. I am worried about you and I don't want you to feel alone with these feelings. I will just stay here if that is alright?"*

If the child tells you it's not ok to stay with them the aim would still be to demonstrate your presence with them. So, you might move further away from them or continue to teach the lesson whilst continuing to let them know that you are holding them in mind. If the child isn't able to recover over the course of the lesson it would be helpful to reconnect with them briefly at the end, reiterating that you feel worried about how they feel. You might want to let them know that you will share your worries with their form tutor/ teacher/ head of year/ key person as you know they would be worried about them too.

Refusal to work and or defiance

Many children who do not feel safe at school seek to control what happens around them in an attempt to feel safer. Often this also involves defiance or refusal to work. As their teacher you may well feel deskilled, embarrassed, worried about losing face in front of the other children, angry that your lesson is being disrupted, and worried about the learning of other children so these situations easily become very highly charged. Avoiding the battle, maintaining presence, and managing your own emotions whilst helping the child with theirs, is no mean feat! The goal of this conversation is to deescalate the situation and avoid a head to head, allowing the child to continue or let you know that they can't, and for you to connect with that emotional experience. That connection may help to get them working, or it may help to avoid escalation. We have put together alternative approaches, depending on the needs of the child. Each shows a cycle of steps you could work through.

For the child whose attachment needs make it hard for them to settle and work independently:

1. Acceptance and empathy**:** Go to the child and say something like:

> *I can see this feels too difficult to start right now, and it just feels too much*

2. Give the child a moment to digest that you have understood they are struggling with an emotional experience, and demonstrate your presence, that you will be holding them in mind while you get everyone else going on the task:

> *I'm going to get everyone else started, and then I am going to come back to you*

3. Return with PACE, using playfulness to acknowledge the big feelings:

> *How are those big feelings now, do you think we can get going on this together?*

or an older child

> *So, we need to find a way together for this to feel possible. Because I am worried about you and I am interested in your learning.*

4. Maintain a level of presence, for example taking turns, letting the child know that you will do one together, and then leave them to do task independently and you will continue to return to check in with them. This can be subtle across classroom and/or revisiting them.

If they are not ready to engage you could go back to step 1. If you have circled this a couple of times it is important to acknowledge that maybe they are in too difficult a place to engage in learning today and that's ok and you will follow the plan you have in school for this child.

For a child who is overwhelmed with things related to outside of the classroom:

1. Acceptance and empathy**:** Go to the child and say something like:

> *I can see this feels too difficult to start right now, and it just feels too much*

2. Give the child a moment to digest that you have understood they are struggling with an emotional experience, and demonstrate your presence, that you will be holding them in mind while you get everyone else going on the task:

> *I'm going to get everyone else started, and then I am going to come back to you*

3. Return with PACE, using playfulness to acknowledge the big feelings:

> *How are those big feelings now, do you think they're going to let us get any work done?*

or an older child

> *I'm wondering if it still feels like there's absolutely no chance we're going to get any work done today?*

4. Use curiosity to find out:

> What I would like to try is that we'll look again together at what you need to do so that you feel really confident. I will start you off and then I will check back in with you, how does that feel to you?

If they are not ready to engage you could go back to step 1. If you have circled this a couple of times it is important to acknowledge that maybe they are in too difficult a place to engage in learning today and that's ok and you will follow the plan you have in school for this child.

If you do manage to help the child to settle to the task, you will need to maintain a high level of adult presence throughout the lesson, checking in regularly, putting a hand on their shoulder as you go past, and making eye contact across the room to show you are still holding them in mind.

F**urther Information**
If you would like to learn more about this approach, these are useful books to read:

Creating Loving Attachments: Parenting with PACE to Nurture Confidence and Security in the Troubled Child by Kim S. Golding and Daniel A. Hughes

The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Proven Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind by Dr Tina Payne Bryson and Dr Daniel Siegel