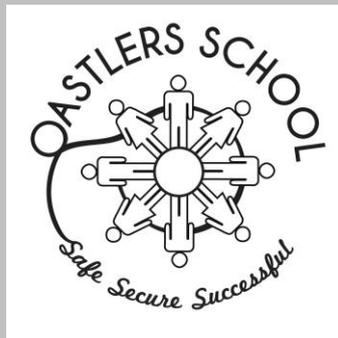


# Relationships Policy



## Oastlers Policy

<b>Approved by Governing Body On</b>	<b>November 2021</b>
<b>To be Reviewed On</b>	<b>November 2022</b>
<b>Signed on Behalf of the Governing Body</b>	<b>Sue Mawson</b>



## **Introduction:**

Oastlers School is an accredited Nurture UK school. It is also a school that is Trauma Informed. Our Trauma Informed approach is central to everything we do here at Oastlers

Our school is a specialist setting providing support for children and young people who have social, emotional and mental health disturbance. We understand that some children experience mental health difficulties, in terms of challenging behaviour that affects learning, and we understand they need support to aid their recovery.

Early adverse childhood experiences and loss can also lead to residual difficulties. Our aim is to help children and young people move into positive emotional and relational health, which in turn has a positive impact on behaviour and learning. Rooted in this is a school that at its heart is Trauma Informed providing a safe environment for children and young people to flourish and achieve their personal and academic potential.

We are a fully inclusive school that is constantly seeking out the most influential and up to date research that underpins our Trauma Informed practice to aid emotional healing and wellbeing. We are committed to this because we know that this empathic approach works, and that continued mental health problems negatively impact on social, psychological and physical health. The school offers a number of therapeutic approaches to sit alongside quality first teaching to address the needs of the whole child.

We work closely with a number of support agencies and, importantly, with our families to achieve shared goals to provide your child with what we hope will be a happy, safe and successful learning journey.

This policy is underpinned by the **'Six Principles Of Nurture'**:

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe space
3. The importance of nurture for the development of well-being
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

Lucas, S., Insley, K. and Buckland G. (2006) *Nurture Group Principles and Curriculum Guidelines Helping Children to Achieve*, The Nurture Group Network

## **Aims of the policy:**

- ✓ To promote positive attitudes to learning and life including honesty, tolerance, justice, courtesy and respect for others, regardless of their religious belief, race, culture, gender, sexuality, ability and family background.
- ✓ To promote a nurturing culture that supports learners to develop respect and self-worth
- ✓ To promote an understanding that behaviour is a learner's own responsibility

- ✓ To promote an understanding that the responses to behaviours towards others is a collective responsibility
- ✓ To promote respect for the school environment
- ✓ To promote the ability for self-reflection and take part in restorative justice practises to repair incidents when they have impacted on others
- ✓ To ensure the school has a clear and consistent understanding of behaviour
- ✓ To establish responses that support learners who find it difficult to manage their emotional responses positively
- ✓ To create a safe, secure and successful learning environment for all learners

### **Approaches to the policy:**

The classroom is the most fundamental space in the school where expectations of this policy will be explained to all learners.

Positive relationships at Oastlers are praised in a variety of ways. Praise can take the form of a smile, stamps for younger learners, points that are collected over time for end of term trips and visits, nominations for acts of kindness certificates, weekly achievement certificates, letters home, individual awards, verbal approval from staff, a gentle reassuring touch and other more individual reassurances that ensure learners understand that the way in which they have communicated, is positive.

Staff at school will be looking for every opportunity to praise positive relationships. Particularly thoughtful or responsible behaviour will be pointed out and praised for its own merit. There will be plentiful opportunities to seek out opportunities for praise such as when a learner has complimented another, supported another, been helpful in class, done a voluntary activity or a random act of kindness. Staff will take into account those learners who behave consistently well and those who do so more intermittently.

When rewards and praise are used consistently and effectively, they are a very powerful tool to maintain a positive learning environment. Oastlers school is committed to the belief that:

*'What you pay attention to, you get more of'*

Children have a need to develop friendships and companionship and learn how to foster mutually satisfactory relationships with others. They also need to develop a spiritual awareness, an interest in the wider world, in nature, in faith and a sense of awe and wonder. To be able to fulfil this they need to have plenty of food, sleep and exercise so that they are physically and emotionally well enough to embrace the world around them. They also need to develop intellectually and inspire new ideas, thoughts and mental stimulation. Children are naturally creative, they enjoy doing things, making things and expressing themselves and all this is to be encouraged through being loved and showing love, empathy, understanding and laughter.

It is the aim of the policy to provide such an environment at Oastlers School so that our learners can flourish.

### **Break and lunchtime clubs:**

Supporting learners to behave in the manner in which makes everyone feel safe extends to break and lunchtimes – those ‘unstructured times’. At Oastlers, breaks and lunchtime clubs are offered to all our learners with the expectation that everyone will opt into a club of choice. Again, the emphasis will be to reward learners who make positive choices and behave in a responsible way. If learners do not make a choice of club they wish to attend, they will be allocated a club. This is to ensure that activities are supported by staff who model enjoyment and take part in games and activities in a fun way. It is a well-known scientific fact that the production of serotonin and oxytocin (the feel happy, good mood enhancing chemicals) that occur when anyone is having a nice time or taking part in pleasurable activities helps to regulate an otherwise dysregulated mood. Clubs and social activities at Oastlers are an important part of the offer for managing emotional dysregulation.

### **The language we use to communicate:**

Staff at Oastlers are careful in the way in which they talk to learners and are encouraged to use phrases that are reassuring. It is well known that we communicate via verbal and non-verbal methods. Staff are aware that gestures, eye contact, tone of voice, the way they stand as well as the words they use can be filtered and interpreted both positively and negatively by the listener. A mismatch between social communications may lead to anxiety, confusion or distrust in children so staff will endeavour to try and ensure that learners do not feel criticised even at times when guidance is required to reaffirm boundaries when we are trying to help learners regain composure when they are becoming anxious or even at the point of emotional crisis.

### **Workbreaks:**

At times, when the emotional climate in the classroom is such that learners are over excited, restless or distracted, staff will use their initiative to introduce a ‘workbreak activity’ that can successfully change the pace of the lesson, increase concentration, break up negative spirals, change the emotional temperature, reduce adrenaline charged atmospheres or fill time when the lesson is ended or whilst waiting for others to join the group. These are positive, unexpected, activities that successfully bring about a calm, positive learning environment with little or no conflict. Activities may include quizzes, games or discussions that are entirely different to the planned lesson content.

### **Transition around school and between lessons:**

These are times when learners move around the school, between lessons which can be the source of challenge if not managed efficiently. Staff at Oastlers are required to be present during transition to prevent low levels of behaviour occurring. Staff will be present at ‘stations’ during these critical times. At KS3 learners are classroom based enjoying a

primary model so movement is somewhat reduced to provide time for our younger learners to become familiar with school, and its routines. Our approach means that children who find change difficult are provided with time to adjust, thus developing much needed confidence introducing movement about the building gently, over time.

### **Supportive Exits:**

The school operates a system that allows learners the opportunity to leave a lesson for a time limit of no more than five minutes in order for individuals to calm. Learners will be accompanied by support staff to talk the difficulty through before returning to class.

### **The Oastlers Step Board:**

In each classroom there is a clearly displayed board that outlines the expectations and consequences of behaviours called the 'Step Board'. The system works on the principle that all learners enter the lesson placed in the golden zone where maximum points are awarded for behaviour with points lost only when responses falls below expectations:

- Golden Board – 5 points
- Warning – 4 points
- Reminder – 3 points
- Final reminder – 2 points
- Exit – 1 point

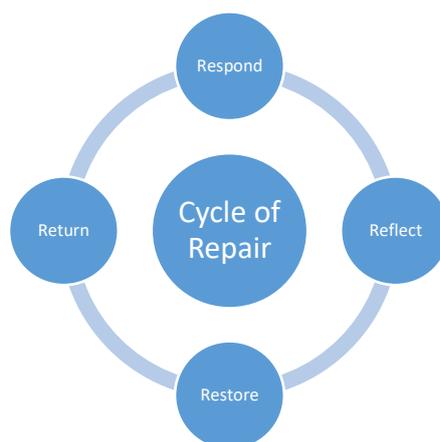
There are 10 points per lesson available (five for work and five for behaviour) which ultimately affects the available rewards.

The system assumes all learners start each lesson anew and can access the full amount of points available for that lesson. For each misdemeanour, points will be lost. In the case of repeated below desired behaviours 'steps' will be incurred that can ultimately lead to exits from class, detentions or referral to the school Reflection Room so that learners can consider more fully the consequences of what has occurred and how things could have been different.

### **Oastlers Help Call:**

When a situation becomes unsafe or affects the health and safety of all others in the classroom, teachers will summon help from our designated support team who will manage the crisis thus allowing the lesson to continue with little or no disruption. The guiding principle behind this is to maintain the dignity of the learner at all costs so that the situation is recoverable.

Removal from class is deemed serious and learners will then enter into the Oastlers '**Cycle of Repair**' strategy.



Children need to be helped to understand they have a choice about how they behave. The Cycle of Repair is designed to support that realisation and guide learners into recovery.

The strategy works thus:

- **Respond** – the behaviour team will respond to the help call and may remove a learner if the situation is deemed necessary.
- **Reflect** – learners will be guided to the school's Reflection Room to think in a quiet space about their actions, how it has affected self and others and the consequences of the incident.
- **Restore** – following a period of reflection in Reflection Room learners will then move into the school's Sanctuary to complete further reflective work, including Restorative Justice with the school's counsellor.
- **Repair** – once a learner has made a full, positive recovery and reflection is complete, the incident is then repaired and a learner will return to class.

**Safety Intervention:**

Please see our Care & Safety Intervention Policy.

**Being safe online:**

Please see our E-safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

**Adult self-awareness:**

Staff are role models for all our learners therefore, it is important staff follow some simple rules:

- Model how to use your voice and stay calm. Shouting is only permitted when someone is in danger. Use other methods to attract attention such as clapping, raise your hand or use music to gain attention. If you shout then expect learners to raise their voice. If you are not calm then your learners will not be calm.
- Model how to cope in difficult or challenging situations. Modelling means staying calm and maintaining control of the situation. Model how to diffuse situations drawing attention away from the challenging learner or those making poor choices.
- NEVER discuss incidents with another adult in the presence of the learner or other learners. Ensure that the discussion or reflection about an incident takes place in a dignified manner.
- Agree with the class what your expectations are from the outset. It is accepted that learners are more likely to stick to classroom agreements if they have had a say in developing them.



**Self reflection:**

The most effective teachers are those who self-reflect. Ask yourself the question – ‘could I have managed the situation any differently?’ Did I say or do anything that provoked the response? Was I confrontational? Did I confuse the situation? Was my reaction responsible for the outcome?

*‘Working with children can be one of the most demanding jobs and to enjoy it we need to think about our own emotional health and mental well-being. Thinking about your own also shows the children how much you value theirs’* The Teaching Puzzle – Your Guide to Social and Emotional Learning, 2017.

Policies that must be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Relationships at Work Policy
- Care & Safety Intervention Policy
- Safe Touch Policy
- Safeguarding and Code of Conduct Policy
- E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy