


Behaviour and Relationships Policy
Halstow - Covid-19 Appendix
May 2020

THE
C  **MPASS**
PARTNERSHIP OF SCHOOLS

This appendix to our Behaviour and Relationship Policy has been developed in light of adaptations to schooling as a result of Covid-19. Whilst some of the procedures have changed, our overriding principles that underpin our approaches to behaviour remain consistent and are rooted within our school values.

Equity, Respect, Honesty, Kindness, Confidence, Equality, Responsibility, Courage, Trust, Resilience, Freedom, Determination

Behaviour non-negotiables

Children play a key role in ensuring our school environment is as safe as it possibly can be. The following are behaviour non-negotiables which must be adhered to by all children:

- follow the new routines for arrival and departure to school
- follow school instructions on hygiene, such as handwashing and sanitising
- follow instructions on who I can socialise with at school
- move around the school according to instructions
- follow expectations about sneezing, coughing, tissues and disposal ('catch it, bin it, kill it') and avoiding touching your mouth, nose and eyes with hands
- tell an adult if I am feeling unwell
- not share any of my own equipment or other items including drinking bottles
- follow the expectations for play times, playing only in my designated area
- use only the toilets allocated to my bubble, ensuring I do not enter the toilet if another child is there and that I wash my hands correctly after using the toilet
- not cough or spit at or towards any other person
- follow the expectations for online learning

Supporting a positive return

Reconnect

Returning together may be strange for some children, especially with new social distancing rules to follow. As such, it's important to give them time to re-connect as a class or new group. Engage in a reconnection activities similar to what you may have done at the beginning of the academic year.

Re-establish expectations

Ensure clear boundaries and structure are in place consistently to help develop a sense of calm. When we are aware that a child has been through a traumatic experience, it is easy to compensate and lower our expectations. This is a time when structure and boundaries are most important. Recreate or adapt old class expectations, this is a useful way to reinforce changes to how we should behave in relation to social distancing.

Adapting

Give your children and yourself time to adapt. Remembering and slotting into old routines and understanding new takes time and patience even under normal circumstances; with social-distancing restrictions, it may take even longer. If this means being patient and giving children more time or understanding, they may not be quite at the level they were when you last saw them, then it's worth embracing that and doing whatever it takes to help them process everything. It will be important to consider how you adapt your timetable to ensure a successful transition back into full time learning

Make time to talk

If a pupil suddenly mentions their sick grandparent, or worries about their relatives, make time to talk about it – remember that some of them may not have had the opportunity to have such conversations at home. All children will have different family circumstances so space and time to talk could be vital. *See appendix 1 and 2 for further advice and ideas*

Embed Wellbeing Activities

After an extensive period at home children will have had a range of both positive and negative experiences. It is important that we plan and embed activities to support children's mental health and well-being. *See appendix 3 and 4 for advice and ideas*

Find ways to laugh

Laughter is so important for releasing tension and building a sense of connection so make jokes or break the ice by reminding them of something funny that happened last term.

Dealing with behaviour that does not meet our expectations

De-escalation

Use de-escalation techniques to prevent and diffuse situations before they arise. These may be more limited than before due to restrictions of movement. *See appendix 6 for ideas*

Restorative Approaches

Continue to use restorative approach to support conflict resolution. It is important to consider the when and where these may take place in order to ensure social distancing and privacy of those involved

Extreme Behaviour

Low level Responses

- Warning about poor behaviour
- Loss of play time
- Time out in class – if social distancing allows. If a child is asked to sit in a different space than their own, this must be cleaned after use.

High Level response

Actions may have to be taken immediately if it is a very serious matter where the safety of children, adults or property are at risk.

- The Bubble's named member of SLT will escort the child to a secure place, ensuring they are able to socially distance.

Depending on the level of behaviour, a risk assessment may need to be undertaken to ascertain what actions may need to be taken to ensure the child is safe in school. If the risks involved cannot be managed than we will have no option but to inform the parent that the child is not deemed to be safe on site

Any child who commits serious or persistent breach of the new COVID-19 protection rules may be sanctioned by the headteacher using the full range of sanctions available, dependent on the seriousness of the breach, up to and including in extreme cases permanent exclusion.

Use of Physical Restraint

Any physical intervention used by staff should be in accordance with the idea of 'reasonable force', and only be used as a last resort once all other strategies have been exhausted. If a child has or is considered to require positive handling, an individual risk assessment will be developed, identifying how and where the intervention takes place, considering the use of PPE and additional health and safety measures.

Children with SEND

Children with SEND that present with challenging behavior or struggle to understand new expectations, will have an individual risk assessment undertaken to identify if and how they are able to remain safe in school.

Remote Learning

We expect our children to treat each other with the care and respect remotely as they would if they would in person.

In order to support this we:

- Regularly use our online learning forums to reinforce expectations for e-safety
- Ensure staff report concerns to a DSL
- Send home help and advice for parents
- Ensure a senior leader follows up any reports of poor behavior online

In some cases, DSL's may consider a referral to children's services if a child is deemed to be at significant risk of harm.

Summary

Our ultimate aim is that every member of our school community feels: safe, happy and valued both within and outside of school. We encourage everyone to take responsibility for their actions, especially with the additional measures we have to take during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Related Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Exclusions Policy

Appendix 1- Tips to talk to children about difficult things

Key characteristics of situations that create worry and anxiety are a heightened sense of uncertainty, potential threat, and responsibility, and a reduced sense of control so it is easy to see why our current circumstances are fueling anxiety.

In conversations with children it is important to help them to:

- Recognise that it is understandable to feel worried or anxious
- Develop an accurate and realistic understanding of the situation
- Recognise simple, practical things that they can do, but also to be clear about the limits of their responsibility

Here are some steps that may be helpful:

- Be curious and acknowledge their fears and worries
- Start with 'open questions'. These are questions that can't be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no' (e.g. "What makes you feel that way?"; "What have you heard about the virus?", "What are your worries about this"?). Older children may have picked up information online or through friends, so do explore what sorts of things they have been hearing. This will all help you to understand any fears and worries that they have.
- Acknowledge how their thoughts must be making them feel. Try not to minimise or dismiss worries (e.g. "It will be fine!", "Don't be silly"), as this can lead to young people feeling that their concerns are not being taken seriously which may make them reluctant to talk about rather than feel able to come back and share thoughts or ask questions in the future (however silly they may seem).
- It is also hard to control what thoughts pop into our heads, so rather than saying "Don't think about it", encourage them to notice the thought but try not to engage in it (e.g., "There's the annoying worry thought again, what can you think about instead?")
- Help them to feel understood and that their worries are normal. Acknowledge that it is an anxiety-provoking time for everyone and that it is normal to feel worried. For example, if a child is worried about their grandparents you might say "I can see that you are worried about your Grandma and Grandpa, I am a bit worried about them too" and then follow with points 3, 4 & 5.
- Recognise that things will be different for a while and that this might mean they feel disappointed as things they are looking forward to or enjoy doing are cancelled. This disappointment is understandable and ok.
- Gently correct any misunderstandings that they may have. After noting their worries and showing that you understand, you can gently share facts to correct any misunderstandings (e.g. a child may think that because the virus is in their town everyone is going to die, you can respond by saying "I can see you're scared that someone down the road has the virus, and it isn't very nice knowing someone who lives near us is ill, but that doesn't mean that we're going to die and, in fact, most people who get it just get a fever and a cough"). Keep the conversation fact-based where you can (e.g., that most people get mild symptoms and recover within a few weeks; that pets are not affected).
- Draw on information from recommended, reliable sources that are appropriate to your child's age group and research the news together (see links below). If you don't know or can't find the answer, then it is fine to say that you don't know. There is a lot of uncertainty at the moment and it is impossible to answer some of the questions that young people will ask. Rather than trying to remove all the uncertainty for them and find answers to all of their questions, it can be helpful to

explain that there are things we don't know and that it is ok to not know. You can then reassure children by explaining that the adults around them will take care of them and that scientists and doctors are working hard to find out how best to help.

Appendix 2 - Talking to children about Coronavirus

1. It is good to talk: children will have heard about Coronavirus and likely noticed changes around them (such as people wearing face masks). It is important they feel comfortable talking to you about Coronavirus as you will be the best source of information and reassurance for them. It's also likely they will talk to their friends or other children, which can involve imagination and misinformation.
2. Be truthful but remember your child's age: it is better for children to take an honest and accurate approach – give them factual information, but adjust the amount and detail to fit their age. For example, you might say 'we don't yet have a vaccination for Coronavirus, but doctors are working very hard on it' or, 'a lot of people might get sick, but normally it is like a cold or flu and they get better'. Younger children might understand a cartoon or picture better. We also recommend that adults watch news programmes and then filter this information to their child in a developmentally appropriate way.
3. Allow children to ask questions: it is natural that children will have questions, and likely worries, about Coronavirus. Giving them the space to ask these questions and have answers is a good way to alleviate anxiety. Again, try to be honest in your responses – it is ok to say you don't know. At the moment, there are questions we don't have answers to about Coronavirus – you can explain this to your child and add in information about what people are doing to try to answer these questions. Maybe your child has an idea too – let them tell you or draw them.
4. Try to manage your own worries: uncertainty can make all of us feel anxious or worried. Identify other adults you can talk to about your own worries and questions. What things usually help to make you feel a bit calmer? If you are at home, music, breathing and relaxation techniques, distraction (such as watching something funny), and time with family members or pets can all help. Talk to your children when you feel calm – it will reassure them.
5. Give practical guidance: remind children of the most important things they can do to stay healthy – washing their hands and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' advice for coughs and sneezes. Help your child practice and increase their motivation for keeping going (maybe thinking of a song they want to sing while washing their hands).

Appendix 3 - Ideas for well-being activities

- Breathing exercises that can help individuals or the whole class relax. It's important to do these regularly so children are familiar with them in times of need.
- Regular Brain Breaks in between lessons, or during them, as needed. These could be simple yoga stretches or a burst of star jumps; as well as the guided dances and relaxation activities on www.GoNoodle.com.

- Make time for 'What Went Well' moments. Fostering positive emotion helps to rewire our brains away from negative thoughts. This is particularly important at a time when pupils could have been over-exposed to the news or dealing with difficult family situations such as bereavement or job losses.
- Teach children to name and label their feelings. As psychologist [Suzy Reading](#) states "...people who could label their feelings using rich vocabulary were found to be 40% less verbally and physically aggressive than those who had a tough time working out how they felt."
- Allow pupils time to choose independent Healthy Minds activities – reading, mindfulness colouring, relaxing music, drawing etc. This can be whole class for a short period of time and be up to individuals to identify when they need it.

Appendix 4 - Do's and Don'ts of class and group emotional health teaching

Activities that focus on emotions can increase our sense of awareness of our thoughts and feelings, so it is important to remind children of the support systems that are available, in and out of school, if they need to speak about something.

- Always establish ground rules around respectful listening and confidentiality, prior to delivering the activity. It is useful to think about how to support children who may not wish to participate in the activity. Should any concerns arise during the activity about a pupil's safety or wellbeing, please ensure that you follow safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Encourage the child to share as much as feels OK. We never force a child to take part in an activity, close their eyes or speak about an activity if it does not feel emotionally safe to do so.
- Make sure that there is enough time allocated to completing the activity and a space for discussion around this, in case the child would like to speak about what came up for them.
- Model speaking about your emotions in a positive way. This can help you keep the process fun and will also help you to put yourself in the child's place and feel compassion for them.
- Help children to begin to name and recognise their emotions, both within the activities and around it. Think about when the activities are delivered and how this fits with the rest of the school, curriculum and wider processing of mental health and emotions.
- Be aware of more vulnerable children in your class who may need to be observed more closely during the activities.
- The tone and pace of your voice is important - a calm and soft manner will make a difference to how children engage in conversations.
- Remind children that there is no "wrong" or "right" way to feel and that some of the activities may take time and practice. It is not about getting the activities right, but about immersing themselves into the experience.

Don'ts

- Activities should be framed in a positive and destigmatising way to help normalise that we all have mental health and emotions. The activities should not be used as a reaction or consequence of an incident
- You don't need to continue the activity if the child/children is/are agitated, disengaged or not responding calmly. It's normal that different children will like different activities.
- Do not force a child to take part in the activity if this causes them too much anxiety – we do not want to do more emotional harm than good. They may have their defences in place for a reason! You may encourage them to observe rather than take part or take part “as much as is possible” for them.

Appendix 5 - De-escalation techniques

- Stay calm
- Use humour
- Lower your voice
- Give a choice
- Walk away and allow space
- Try to distract
- Avoid an audience
- Validate thoughts and feelings
- Let them talk without interrupting
- Offer a solution
- Clarify expectations
- Acknowledge their feelings
- Encourage them to use a copying strategy
- Encourage them to take a walk
- Ignore the behaviour
- Encourage them to take time to think
- Do not discuss consequences of actions or insist on exploring an incident until an appropriate time when the situation is calm