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Castle Vale Nursery School Trauma Informed Behaviour Policy

It is the aim of the Governing Body of Castle Vale Nursery School and Children's Centre to support the implementation of policies and procedures which support the vision of:

Making a difference. All of our children, all of the time.

We follow the policies and procedures from Birmingham City Council and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) which includes the government's prevent strategy.

Equal opportunities for all - 'An entitlement to learning must be an entitlement for all pupils'. Our school uses the Equality Act 2010: To treat everyone Equally and Fairly regardless of: Age, Disability, Gender, Gender Identity, Race and Nationality, Religion or belief, Pregnancy, Marriage, Sexual Orientation. Our children are treated as individuals with their own abilities, difficulties, attitudes, backgrounds and experiences.

We are a Silver RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL This policy is in accordance with the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Article 2 (non-discrimination), Article 3 (best interests of the child), Article 12 (respect for the views of the child), Article 13 (freedom of expression), Article 16 (right to privacy), Article 23 (children with a disability), Article 28 (right to education), Article 29 (goals of education), Article 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups), Article 31 (leisure, play and culture).

1. Vision and Values

We believe that all behaviour is a form of communication. Our school is committed to understanding the underlying causes of behaviour and responding with empathy, consistency, and care. We aim to create a safe, nurturing environment where all children feel valued, understood, and supported to thrive.

We recognise that in order to fully meet the needs of all children, it is a necessity that the school is attuned, attachment friendly and nurturing (Wall; 2018). It is integral that work is carried out to co-regulate behaviours, but also to provide the skills for children to identify their own need and to educate them and upskill them in order to self-regulate and allow for positive changes. Work is carried out with parents to understand their needs and difficulties, as well their experiences and to help and provide support for them so that any unmet needs away from the school can be achieved.

2. Aims

- To be a trauma informed and attachment aware school. Senior leaders have been accredited with a 'Diploma in Trauma and Mental Health informed Schools and Communities (Practitioner Status)' and are dedicated to promoting a whole-school

culture of safety, connection, and regulation. Research suggests that when schools place a strong emphasis upon the emotional health and well-being of all members of the school community, and this ethos is driven by the school's Senior Leadership Team (and is evident in practice), this leads to better outcomes for all (Banerjee, Weare, and Farr, 2014).

- To support children in developing self-awareness, emotional literacy, and resilience.
- To create a provision of a predictable and safe environment, explicitly founded on nurture and attachment principles that promotes security through consistent routines and clear boundaries.
- To reduce the use of punitive measures and increase relational, restorative responses.
- All children have access to an emotionally available adult
- To ensure all staff are trained in trauma-informed practices and supported in their roles.
- We aim to build on children's independence skills by offering autonomy and choice where appropriate to create an effective and positive learning environment.

3. Core Principles

Our approach is underpinned by the **Protect, Relate, Regulate, Reflect** model:

- **Protect:** Establish physical and emotional safety through clear boundaries and predictable routines.
- **Relate:** Build trusting, attuned relationships between staff and pupils.
- **Regulate:** Support children in managing their emotions through co-regulation and calming strategies.
- **Reflect:** Encourage reflective conversations to help children understand their feelings and behaviours.

4. Understanding Behaviour

We recognise that:

- All behaviour is communication and distressed behaviour can be due to:
 - an identified learning need or disability;
 - an unmet need resulting in frustration;
 - a perceived stressor which the child feels is too great to manage or the child is overwhelmed by expectations.
- Children may present distressed behaviours due to a variety of factors including
 - A response to a perceived injustice or threat
 - A feeling of being overwhelmed by an identified stressor
 - Task avoidance
 - Peer relationships/bullying
 - An additional support need
 - A developmental stage that is not in line with chronological age
 - Attachment issues and inability to regulate emotions
 - Difficult home circumstances that impact on feeling safe
 - Trauma including abuse, bereavement, feelings of abandonment
 - A disability that results in behaviours that are out of the child's control
- Traditional reward and punishment systems may not be effective for all children.
- Connection and consistency are key to helping children feel safe and supported.

- Children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour. This is a developmental task that requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the correct example.
- Children's window of tolerance can be reduced during or after an incident. Staff are well attuned and respond by temporarily reducing expectations.

5. Building Relationships

We recognise the importance of relationships and prioritise the development of positive and respectful relationships within the school community in order to create a school climate that fosters fairness, inclusion, connection and respect for all members of the school community. We also recognise that good quality relationships are vital for wellbeing, growth and health; especially when a child has experienced adversity or trauma.

Our school is invested in supporting the very best possible relational health between:

- Parent and child
- Child and child
- Child and school staff
- Parent and school staff
- School staff
- School staff and Senior Leads
- School staff and external agencies

At our school:

- Everyone is welcome
- Remaining calm is a priority
- Words are considered before speaking
- Children are given the choice to do the right thing
- Children and staff are listened to and feel heard
- Everyone is given a fresh start each day
- Restorative practices are embedded for all staff

Please refer to our relationship policy for further information.

6. Self-regulation and co-regulation

The ability to self-regulate plays a key role in supporting children's wellbeing throughout their lives. It impacts on their educational achievements and their physical, social, and emotional health. When children are self-regulated, they can manage their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours to help them make good choices, which will help them be successful in their relationships wherever they are.

To learn healthy self-regulation, children need to experience predictable, responsive, and supportive environments both at home and in school. Self-regulation helps children when they feel challenged or overwhelmed but children's ability to self-regulate will depend on their developmental stage, their early experiences of caregiving, their exposure to traumatic events and their access to supportive adults.



Some children can self-regulate well and have a range of strategies to manage their emotions and behaviours whilst others will seek regulation in ways which are functional for them but may be challenging in school. Some children may struggle to self-regulate most of the time, frequently becoming overwhelmed. Many of these children do not know what emotions they are experiencing and cannot differentiate between different emotional states. They also do not know how to adapt their emotional response to different situations and cannot regulate across social situations. These children need additional support to develop self-regulation through co-regulation.

We co-regulate by:

- Providing a warm, and responsive relationship by displaying care and affection
- Creating an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for all children to explore and learn at their level of development
- Being attuned to internal and environmental factors that can negatively impact individual children
- Provide consistent, predictable routines and expectations
- Teach and coach self-regulation skills through modelling, instruction, opportunities for practise, prompts for skill enactment in the moment, positive reinforcement
- Regular naming of emotions being experienced
- Recognise and respond to cues that signal needs and wants
- Provide caring support in times of stress
- Remaining calm and model how to calm down
- Use of strategies, tools, and calming techniques that support children's needs and interests
- Use of positive physical contact that is appropriate for children's age and developmental stage
- Provide enough space and a variety of materials
- Support children's choices and interests
- Plan for transitions
- Keep waiting times short and active

7. Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Conflict is a disagreement or an argument and usually happens when people have different opinions on things. Whilst we work on preventing conflict, we recognise it is a natural outcome of human interaction and happens because people have different personalities, values, expectations, attitudes, opinions or goals, and isn't always serious or negative. Whilst children are developing their personal, social and emotional development, they may experience conflict more often and they need support to resolve it in productive and healthy ways.

We will support children by:

1. Stay Calm and Observe

- Approach the situation calmly and without judgment.

- Ensure all children are safe and no one is hurt.
 - Observe what happened before intervening.
- 2. Acknowledge Feelings/Separate and Soothe**
 - We will recognise the feelings of those involved by using simple descriptive language e.g. "I can see that you're angry/upset".
 - Gently separate the children if needed.
 - Help them calm down using soothing words or breathing techniques.
 - Avoid assigning blame at this stage.
 - 3. Listen to Each Child**
 - Give each child a chance to explain what happened in their own words.
 - Use active listening: "I hear that you felt upset when..."
 - Validate their feelings: "It's okay to feel angry, but we need to use kind words."
 - 4. Identify the Problem Together**
 - Help the children understand what the conflict is about by using the detail they have given.
 - Restate the problem clarifying any issues by asking for more detail and reframing and hurtful language
 - Use simple language: "It sounds like you both wanted the same toy."
 - 5. Encourage Empathy**
 - Ask questions like: "How do you think that made your friend feel?"
 - Help them recognise others' emotions and perspectives.
 - 6. Find a Solution**
 - Guide the children to come up with fair solutions together and choose one together.
 - Offer suggestions if needed: "Can we take turns?" or "Can we find another toy?"
 - 7. Follow Up Support**
 - Support children to implement the solution and check with each of them, particularly those who have been very upset, that the problem has been resolved.

8. De-escalation

De-escalation reduces the intensity of a conflict. It involves:

- Using strategies that take the 'heat' out of the conflict at the earliest point
- Identifying risk and intervening in a calm and controlled manner
- Preventing a situation from getting worse
- Approached calmly (it is impossible to effectively de-escalate a situation if not calm)

Approaches to de-escalate

- Where possible, strategies are planned and tailored to the child's needs
- Staff communicate in a calm, non-judgemental and non-threatening manner and if possible, 'nip things in the bud'
- Staff provide distraction in the moment if this is helpful for the child
- Staff provide a movement break or activity that supports self-regulation
- Time with a trusted adult is this is helpful to the child
- Respect children's personal space at all times

- Staff are aware of their body language (e.g. non-threatening, culturally sensitive etc.), tone of voice and facial expressions.
- Staff are attuned to children's needs
- Staff actively listening and use non-verbal communication effectively
- Staff are curious not furious. They understand children's early warning signs, their stressors, their interests/motivators, ideas to distract or divert their attention, and effective calming activities and use these to effectively de-escalate.
- Staff use a 'no blame' and 'non-judgemental' approach and offer positive choices (being solution focused)
- Staff control what they can with themselves and how they respond. This is important so they are not unintentionally re-escalating children's behaviour. If they need to, they step back and:
 - Take a few breaths
 - Reframe thoughts
 - Or seek support from someone else and take time and space out.
- Staff control what they can in the environment
 - Remove any objects (or people) that increase the risk level
 - Use their knowledge of the child and what they need in the moment – e.g. physical space, or moving closer to offer comfort
 - Staff say very little – it's important to Relate and Regulate before Reflect.
- Staff use PACE modes of interaction
 - **P**layfulness
 - **A**cceptance
 - **C**uriosity
 - **E**mpathy
- Staff use restorative practices following conflict and de-escalation.
- If attempts to de-escalate or unsuccessful, staff have the legal right and power to use reasonable force in specific circumstances to prevent children:
 - Committing an offence
 - Injuring themselves or others
 - Damaging property
 - Disrupting food order and discipline in the classroom

Please refer to our 'Safe Touch Policy – The Supportive Use of Physical Intervention with Children' for more information.

9. Staff Responsibilities

All staff are expected to:

- Use trauma-informed language and de-escalation strategies.
- Model emotional regulation and respectful communication.
- Maintain high expectations with compassion and flexibility.
- Engage in regular training and reflective practice.

10. Staff Wellbeing

We acknowledge the emotional demands of working in a trauma-informed way. Staff are supported through:

- Supervision and peer support.



- Access to mental health resources.
- A culture of openness and mutual care.

11. Partnership working

Parents/carers are encouraged to bring their children to nursery regularly and to encourage good behaviour from the start. An ongoing dialogue between the key worker and parents /carers is maintained to support the child at nursery and at home. Parents are encouraged to approach staff with any problems or concerns.

When an incident does arise, sensitivity and confidentiality are essential when talking to parents of the children involved. Staff will need to decide when and what they should tell parents, as realistically they cannot feedback details of every incident. However, parents should be told about persistent problems, those with serious potential consequences or incidents in which their child has been injured or injured another child. Incidents should always be referred to the SENCO/Member of the Senior Leadership team.

Sometimes staff have to explain to parents that certain behaviours are not acceptable at nursery, although they may be tolerated elsewhere. It may also be necessary to stress to parents that a behaviour incident has been dealt with fully at nursery, in order to avoid either the child receiving further sanctions at home, or potential disagreements between parents.

12. Targeted intervention

If a child is presenting with more complex needs and requires additional support to appropriately manage their behaviour, the keyworker, in consultation with the SENCO/Executive Head teacher will adopt the Graduated Approach with Four Stages of action: Assess Plan Do Review. This may include, a behaviour support plan, specific behaviour targets, small group nurture activities or the involvement of other agencies, in consultation with parents/carers. At Castle Vale Nursery School, we work with a range of services including Educational Psychologists, the Communication and Autism Team, Speech and Language Therapists, Forward Steps and SENAR.

13. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually with input from staff, pupils, and families. Behaviour data will be analysed through a trauma-informed lens to inform practice and training needs.