

Kings Meadow School

Relationships and Behaviour Policy



Kings Meadow School
Believe and Achieve

Connect – Reflect – Grow

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Item	Contents	Page
1	Aims	2
2	Context & Introduction	3-4
3	Relationships	4
4	Rationale	4-5
5	Attachment Aware	5-6
6	Trauma Informed	6
7	The Curriculum & Play	6
8	Non-Negotiables	7
9	Language of Interaction (Including Behaviour Support Plans)	7
9.1	Speaking to the Omnipotent Self	8
10	General Guidance to managing challenging behaviours (PACE)	8-11
11	Class Team	12
11.1	General Staff Team	12
12	Environment	13
13	Anticipate and Prevent Strategies	14
14	When things become difficult, what helps?	14
15	Regulate, Relate, Reason (RRR)	15-16
16	When things become difficult, what doesn't help?	16
17	Sanctions: Enforcing boundaries and Expectations	16-17
18	Differentiated Discipline (includes Table)	17-19
18.1	Sanctions at Kings Meadow – Examples of good practice	19
18.2	Consequences at Kings Meadow School	20
19	Rewards: acknowledgments and recognitions for effort and achievement	20-21
20	Data – Recording and capturing behaviour and attitudes	21
21	Bullying, discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour	22-23
22	Fixed-term suspensions	23
23	Permanent Exclusions	23
24	Links with other policies	23
References		24
Appendix 1	Attachment aware checklist	25
Appendix 2	The Restorative 6	26

1. Aims

The purpose of this document is to provide a guide and structure regarding how we at Kings Meadow intend to approach and manage the plethora of behaviours seen within our primary SEMH setting. It's designed to reflect the patchwork of theory and practice that underpins how we aim to interact and communicate with our students. Nothing can fully capture the myriad of intricate twists and subtle cues contained within individual encounters. All our staff are encouraged to hone their craft, building knowledge and expertise as they navigate the complexities of Kings Meadow life. Therefore, this policy also serves as a foundation for professional growth and exploration. It demands its holder to acknowledge the necessity of resilience, playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy. Working at Kings Meadow can be incredibly rewarding because it is effortful, requiring tremendous courage and introspection.

We seek to ensure that:

- All students can learn to build positive, trusting relationships with adults.
- All our pupils have their individual needs met, starting with their emotional needs.
- Learning takes place in an environment that is unconditionally welcoming and positive.

2. Context & Introduction

Kings Meadow School is a primary special school academy for pupils aged 5 – 11 years. It is part of the Creating Tomorrow Multi-Academy Trust. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan that identifies severe and complex social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties according to the SEN Code of Practice 2014. It is recognised that many of the pupils are also likely to have other associated complex needs and that they frequently experience high levels of stress that impacts adversely on their daily functioning. Some of our students will have experienced multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACE's), which can include an array of abuse and trauma. Therefore, it is essential that we adopt an approach that fits the unique needs of the individual as best we can. Acknowledging that there are varying degrees of understanding and modes of communication. This requires a flexible approach that is differentiated to the individual.

We hold the view that children at Kings Meadow will communicate their thoughts, feelings and emotions through their behaviour. This can be the result of a trauma, a survival mechanism that requires our acceptance and respect. Therefore, we have a responsibility to try to understand what they are conveying, despite the challenges this may present. This must be met with a collective compassion, seeking to understanding despite the difficulties faced. Our relational approach is a cornerstone of building understanding. This provides space to buffer emotional affect, absorbing it and metabolising it (making it more acceptable to the individual). That which can be conveyed by a student might leave others with difficult feelings. It is important to look beyond these feelings and try to connect with the underlying reasons the child may be behaving in a particular way. This behaviour is often the result of coping strategies developed over time. Understanding this principle is the first step to creating a ¹holding and containing environment for our students.

At Kings Meadow, we believe children will grow and adapt their behaviour based on the following principles:

- Students receive consistent messages from all staff (this applies to parents/carers)
- Expectations are clear and achievable.
- Students feel valued and cared for.
- Students receive regular positive feedback and reassurance from staff.
- Students experience success, no matter how small it may seem.

¹ The concepts of holding and containing evoke the image of a mother caring for a child. It is through the relationship with our students that they feel held and safe. The holding may mean emotionally holding the child's anxiety, alarm, confusion, distress, and pain which can be managed safely by the adult. In such a holding environment, the adult is consistently there as an attuned, solid, reliable, trustworthy presence.

- Students feel safe and understood

The combination of relationships, structure, routine, clear boundaries and opportunities for thinking together promotes the development of positive, healthy, safe ways of relating to others.

3. Relationships

Relationships matter, it is within these ties that recovery, healing, trust and a sense of security can occur (Perry, 2017). Our behaviour/relationship curriculum must seek to create opportunities for staff to form positive relationships with students, form bonds and create circumstances in which students can interact with professionals who care about their development.

When a child joins Kings Meadow school, they are entering upon a unique educational journey. It is far more complex and nuanced than the simple parsing of a curriculum. It encompasses a unique relational journey that leads to 'transformation' and growth over time (Ogden, 2015). We believe that all staff and students are programmed to seek connections. Therefore, we endeavour to connect and respond to this function as best we can. We seek to take a non-punitive and *therapeutic* approach, despite the fact that most of our staff are not formally trained in this domain. We achieve this by endorsing the concept that every interaction with another has the potential to be either healing or damaging - we actively choose and pursue the former.

The aim of this policy is to encourage and promote five key areas of emotional competence that have been linked to the successful emotional development of children by a range of practitioners and authors (e.g. CASEL 2017; Goleman 1996; SEAL 2005).

1. Emotional self-awareness
2. Emotional self-management (self-regulation)
3. Social Awareness (Empathy)
4. Relationship Management
5. Responsible decision-making

4. Rationale

As a specialist setting, we do not operate in the same way that a mainstream school may do in terms of managing behaviour. Many of our children have attended other schools unsuccessfully and have histories full of rejection and exclusion so to simply try to replicate the same approaches but in smaller classes would not be appropriate. Our staff have a range of specialist knowledge and skills that equip them to do the best job they can to meet the individual needs of our children and families.

Traditional models of behaviour management may be fear-based, relying on external control and often administer punishment in response to non-compliance. Our children are very familiar with being 'told off' and this rarely leads to behavioural change in the longer term. As we are working with children who already often feel unsafe and fearful, reliance on fear-based discipline can trigger physical stress responses that hamper a child's ability to self-regulate and be ready to engage in learning.

We believe that you cannot teach a child to behave better by making them feel worse or fearful of adults that they are asked to trust. What we advocate and practice is an 'us with them' approach – a relational approach. This is essential for our pupils as their developmental vulnerabilities and complex SEN (special educational needs) make it harder for them to feel safe and secure at school and to form trusting relationships with adults and peers.

When children feel better, they behave better. Punishment may be able to get children back into the boundaries and change their behaviour temporarily, but there will be no lasting or fundamental change and, crucially, the relationship is likely to suffer as a result.

Whenever possible, we seek to facilitate relational proximity (being with, being alongside) rather than relational withdrawal (separating physically and/or emotionally) to ensure that no child feels like an outsider. It is important to

us to create and maintain for each child a sense of belonging to our school. This concept also applies itself to the notion of co-regulation when a child is distressed.

All behaviour is a way of communicating. If we are to facilitate lasting, positive change in the way that a child can function, both now and in the future, our professional focus needs to be on what lies behind the outward behaviour displayed by our pupils. Our student's behaviour can be challenging, but they are also not fixed. Given the right kind of support within a nurturing, positive and predictable environment, our children can and do make significant and lasting progress both emotionally and academically. It is our mission as a school to help our children to become effective communicators and to rely much less on their behaviours to express their fears, needs and wants. The profile of each of our children is different. Some have one or more medical diagnoses, whilst others have no diagnosis at all. All have complex needs and behaviours that fit under the overarching SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) umbrella.

Many also have significant sensory, communication and learning difficulties. What is common for all children who attend Kings Meadow is that they have severe difficulties managing their emotions and subsequent behavioural responses safely. They operate at a continual high level of stress, living in fear, reactivity and often with a profound sense of failure. Some live every moment of every day in survival mode, and this is how they enter our classrooms, distressed and unable to access academic learning or play alongside other children.

The presence of significant stress makes the absorption of new academic material more challenging and puts our children in a difficult place to handle rules and authority. At these times, the children are overwhelmed, unable to focus and are emotionally on edge. They respond to the world as a place of constant danger. At Kings Meadow, we use the terms *regulated* and *dysregulated* with each other as professionals and with children and families to describe their experience of stress and subsequent presenting behaviour.

Regulated: being calm, focused, or relaxed. Maintaining stress within your window of tolerance.

Dysregulated: being in distress or emotionally heightened. Maintaining stress outside of your window of tolerance.

The 'window of tolerance' is a term used to describe the zone of arousal in which a person can function most effectively. When people are within this zone, they are typically able to readily receive, process, and integrate information and otherwise respond to the demands of everyday life without much difficulty. When people are not within this zone, when they are outside of it, the reverse is true.

We seek to build strong, safe, respectful, and accepting connections with children and within this context we take time to listen actively, to validate stress levels and to seek the causes of behaviour. As a result, children show more appropriate behaviours consistent with more settled nervous systems and are more motivated, due to the influence the adult has over the child, not the control that we traditionally have thought is needed to make it happen.

5. Attachment Aware

Attachment is the lasting psychological connectedness between human beings, it is a strong emotional bond. When a child experiences consistent nurture and responsiveness from an attachment figure, they develop a sense of security that provides them with a safe base to then explore the world. Attachment theory describes how our early relationships create our expectation of how love should be, and we develop self-protective and adaptive attachment strategies according to these relational experiences.

Our attachment strategies are most often categorised as either secure or insecure. Secure attachment suggests that a child will feel secure, understood and be calm enough to experience optimal development of their nervous system. They will present as resilient, confident, and independent with a high self-esteem. The child will feel safe and as a result be eager to learn, have a healthy self-awareness, be able to trust and show empathy. Conversely, insecure attachment results in a child feeling less secure, less understanding and calm, which can lead to their mental, emotional, and physical development being inhibited, so that difficulties in learning and forming relationships are experienced.

We learn how to be in relationships through the experiences we have in them, whether these experiences are healthy or unhealthy, functional, or dysfunctional, secure, or insecure. Not all our children know how to have a healthy secure relationship because not all of them have had this experience. Because of this, some of our children are described as having ‘attachment issues’. At Kings Meadow, we believe that attachment is not the problem. Danger or threat (or perceived danger or threat) is the problem and attachment is the solution. An integral part of our curriculum is therefore to address the danger and threat through safe, healthy, and secure relationships and environment. Only then can we expect children to surrender their survival behaviours that have proved so problematic to the child and professionals in the past. We know from Attachment Theory that healthy relationships are an essential ingredient in the typical development of the brain. In other words, relationships drive brain development. If relationships drive the brain and the brain drives behaviour it therefore follows logically that calm, caring and confident adults can provide trusting relationships that are the key supportive and protective factor in ensuring that children can overcome their regulatory challenges and achieve academically.

6. Trauma Informed

Trauma is prevalent in everyday life. A knowledge of our children’s histories is vital for building strong relationships with them because only once we understand their histories are we able to view their behaviours within the correct context. Not all traumas can be avoided and there is not a child who emerges from childhood unscathed. However, whether the trauma is going to have a lasting effect on the child depends on how well the fundamental needs of physical safety, emotional connection, and predictability are met for the child. When children are given environments of support, love, and attention and when needs are met, the impact of traumatic experiences is minimised, and in many cases, avoided. Trauma is not what may happen to an individual, it is what happens inside as a result of a trauma. It is a wound that may invariably leave a scar which never fully heals.

Our vision, values and culture, the essence of what we do, are informed by understanding. Relationships are at the heart of our culture and our vision is to ensure that our practice is embedded in attachment aware and trauma responsive principles. We have a clear set of values (connection, communication, resilience, independence & reflection) – that support us with our vision and culture and form a key part of our approach to rewards and consequences.

7. The Curriculum & Play

“It is only by being creative that the individual unlocks his potential and discovers his own unique and autonomous self (Winnicott, 1971)”.

Through play a child develops their cognitive, social, emotional and physical capacities. It is within play, that children are required to regulate their own behaviour, making it a significant factor in their development of self-regulation Karpov (2005). Therefore, we believe that it is essential that we welcome, facilitate and encourage play at Kings Meadow. Maintaining this when planning and thinking about Teaching and learning is a key tool for managing behaviour and achieving our aims.

We seek to use the personal attributes found within staff, combining qualities such as an empathy alongside expertise from various fields to create a curriculum that taps into the interests of our pupils. Pupils engage better when they enjoy the learning, so we focus on subjects/areas and activities, including play, that individuals already like. When learning is fun and rewarding, behaviour challenges are less likely because pupils can stay focused. We aim to capture pupil’s attention with exciting experiences and keep them engaged. We tailor the content to challenge appropriately and celebrate successes to encourage pupils further.

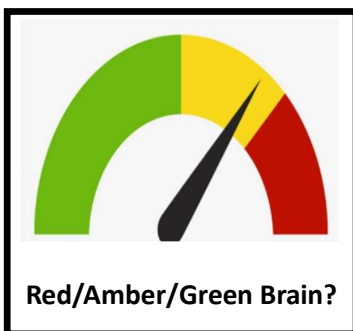
Play is the first of five fundamental pedagogical drivers at Kings Meadow. This means that we regularly monitor and discuss its use within every classroom.

8. Non-Negotiables

Kings Meadow School has adopted 6 non-negotiable rules which we seek to adhere to in every decision, plan or fleeting encounter with our students. These are fundamental to our approach:

1. **Welcome children's presence**, irrespective of what may have occurred in the past. Convey the message that you are happy and content to have them in your presence.
2. **Honour children's developmental needs**. This should be reflected in students ever changing EHCP. If this is achieved, then learning and curiosity will follow.
3. **Respect and honour the unconscious**. Many of our own behaviours, reactions and thoughts are driven by the unconscious. For example, a behaviour may be the result of internal conflict, desire or needs that are not clear, rational or conscious. Accepting this concept is the cornerstone of meeting the child where they are at, not where we expect to be.
4. **Leave your ego at the door**. Dedicate yourself to reflection and noticing what might be different next time. Certain students may trigger emotions that influence your decision making. As a member of Kings Meadow staff, you must acknowledge this and recognise that you may need support. We facilitate this by having daily team reflections and support staff forums.
5. **Avoid using negative/judgemental language**. For example, '*making good*' or '*putting right*'. Over time this can be internalised by students, leading them to think of themselves as good or bad. This discounts developmental factors or lived experiences. We must seek to understand the nuance of behaviours, not doing so prevents us from seeing behaviour as communication.
6. **No forced apologies**. Our aim is to encourage genuine reflection and personal growth.

9. Language of interaction



Red, Amber, Green Brain. When a child *seems* to be in what we call 'red brain,' we must think carefully about our response. We have simplified the brain so we can make quick decisions and keep people safe. We, of course, know terms like brain stem, limbic region and neo-cortex far more accurately describe what is going on inside a young person's brain when they become dysregulated; however, simplicity is important during a time of escalating crisis. What this definition does is avoid using a system based on choices when a child is unable to think (i.e. make choices). To do so would be unfair at best, cruel at worst. When a pupil *seems* to be in red brain, we work with them to regulate them (3 R's and co-regulation). The language of 3 states

also lends itself to pupils personalised behaviour support plans (BSP). All students at Kings Meadow have a BSP. This acts as a means to deliver a flexible, dynamic approach to behaviour, rooted in individual needs. They include the following:

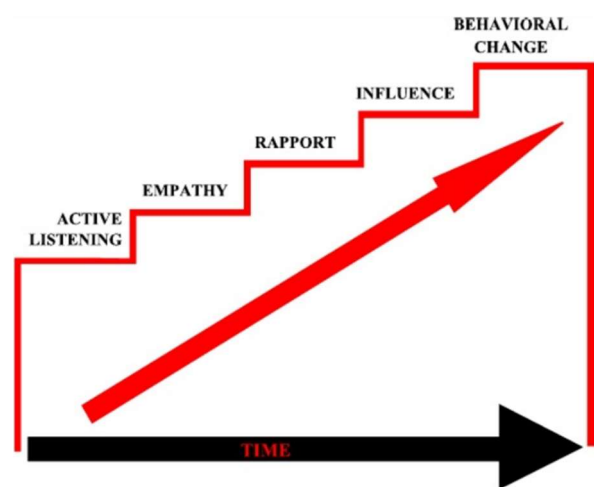
- *When I am regulated (Green brain) I am...I like to...*
- *When I am wobbly (Amber brain) I can...Adults can help me by...*
- *When I am dysregulated (Red Brain) I am... Adults can help me by...*
- Short Risk Assessments
- Contextual information

We endeavour to ensure that all permanent staff are trained in Team Teach strategies to manage challenging behaviour. At the end of every day class teams de-brief, allowing space and time to explore emerging themes, children's individual plans, triggers, de-escalation techniques, stages of crisis etc. We also hold periodic Team Teach 'Practice' sessions with a focus on and restrictive physical intervention.

9.1 Speaking to the Omnipotent (all-powerful) Self

David McKee's picture book *Not Now, Bernard* (1980) depicts the story of a boy who, in the absence of a safe and secure base to return to, becomes the victim of his fictions and makes a beast of himself. The overarching theme is that of a child not being seen by his care givers, confirming the notion that with loss and not being seen, survival mechanisms are learned and become a crucial means of survival for a child. Behaviours may at times appear monstrous (like Bernard), buried deep beneath the aggressive façade, the exiled, love-seeking part of the self is still alive, yearning for what it has been deprived of tenderness and environmental stability (Tarasand, 2016).

"Sometimes, to survive is to be invisible; an alternative to invisibility is to assume a disguise" (Smith, 2007). We must therefore seek to appeal to the hyper-vigilant omnipotent self which has been created as a means of survival. This omnipotent self is keeping the wounded, vulnerable counterpart hidden and captive. Adopting a punitive, reactive and authoritative response is therefore likely to cause more harm than good. In short, we need a position akin to a hostage negotiator. Working hard to befriend the hostage-taking, omnipotent self. Creating rapport and a sense of trust with him. This approach is effortful, requiring patience, empathy and resilience.



The FBI Hostage Negotiation Team developed a five step Behaviour Change Stairway Model (Vecchi et al, 2005) to assist in negotiation with sometimes aggressive people. But these same techniques can be used in any number of more peaceful situations.

Behavioural Change Stairway Model:

1. Active Listening
2. Empathy
3. Rapport
4. Influence
5. Behavioural Change

Most critical step is Active Listening:

- ✓ Ask open-ended questions.
- ✓ Effective pauses (remain silent at the right times)
- ✓ Minimal encouragers (brief statements like *yes* and *okay* that let them know you are listening)
- ✓ Mirroring (repeat the last word or two they say)
- ✓ Paraphrasing (repeat what they said in your own words)
- ✓ Emotional labelling (give their feelings a name)

10. General Guidance to managing challenging behaviours (PACE)

PACE stands for playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy. It aims to enable staff to engage with children and young people who experienced a range of adverse childhood situations and trauma. Developed by Daniel Hughes, it focuses on children with attachment difficulties. The principles of PACE aim to support the development of rapport and trust in order for the adults working with children and young people to be able to develop secure, positive relationships with them. The adults most likely to form these bonds are those working closely with them such as teaching assistants, mentors, key adults etc.

Playfulness

A light-hearted, relaxed and playful attitude. This helps the child feel connected within their relationship and enables the child to experience fun and love.

Acceptance

Accepting the child for who they are and not what they achieve is very important. It is important to make the child aware that it is their behaviour that is unacceptable not them as a person. The child needs to feel liked and accepted for who they really are.

Curiosity

Figuring out what is going on, understanding the meaning behind the behaviour. Wonder about and with the child. Make best guesses about the inner experience of the child.

Empathy

One of the most important aspects of the PACE approach. To understand a child's needs, you have to be able to 'step into their shoes'. Empathy allows an individual to feel their feelings and know that their feelings have been heard and are valid. You may not agree with their feelings and opinions, but by actively listening you are supporting them to not suppress their feelings, which is crucial to positive mental health. Think about your relationships in your own life. Do you open up to people who are harsh and do not listen to you? Or people who listen, are accepting of you, and value you as a person?

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.

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.

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.

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?

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?

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, making eye contact across the room to show you are still holding them in mind.

Refusal to engage

The child who won't speak to you at all e.g. 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 teacher/key person as you know they would be worried about them too.

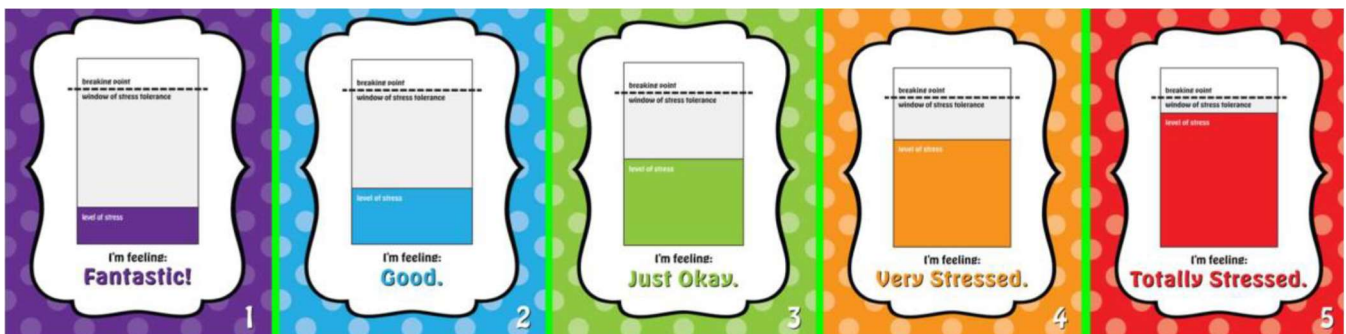
11. Class Teams

“Key to excellent provision...is having small, consistent teams of high-quality teachers/mentors who don’t change” (Dix, p147). Kings Meadow School is organised into six class families, each led by a teacher with a small team of teaching assistants. The number of teaching assistants assigned to each class family is dependent on the needs of the children in the group.

In order to increase our children’s sense of security and stability so that they are able to settle to learn, we work hard to build trusting relationships between each child and their class team of adults. Team members co-regulate with the children and support them over time to become more able to self-regulate effectively.

In addition to the class-based team, each child needs to know that their parents/carers are actively working in partnership with the class and wider school team.

Each class family also has a visual representation of the **window of stress tolerance in their classroom**. According to the needs, the age and stage of development of the children in each class family, children may have individual charts or one for the group. Staff can use this to support the teaching of self-regulation strategies by helping the children to recognise their own emotional state.



11.1 The Staff Team

Although students at Kings Meadow spend much of their time with their class families, there is a wider responsibility for all staff to maintain a relational approach with every single student. We ask a lot of our staff because we know that the time we spend with children today has the potential to have a profound effect on them for a lifetime. To be able to think, act and respond appropriately within a relationship-based culture takes conscious and sustained effort. We endeavour to provide all staff, regardless of their role, are provided with frequent training and support for their own well-being.

It is essential that the children see us working together as a team. We continually model positive social communication respect and care for each other smiling, laughing and sharing together. The children watch us and notice everything. They watch how we interact and notice how we relate to one another. Together our consistency of approach will increase their sense of feeling safe.

We make sure that we communicate with each other frequently, raising awareness of changing needs and agreed strategies. Many children use splitting as an emotional defence to give them a sense of control. This involves categorising people as good people who are unrealistically idealised and bad people who are unrealistically demonised. To discourage this, adults need to demonstrate that they will not allow themselves to be split in this way.

We aim to create an environment that feels psychologically safe for all where people feel free to ask questions and to engage in professional, solution-focused and reflective discussions and debate. As a staff team, we are all learners all of the time and we aim to demonstrate an openness to being supported and helped to continuously improve our practice.

12.Environment

Maintaining Presence within a holding environment

Our willingness to form and maintain a safe and secure holding environment is conveyed both implicitly and explicitly through tolerance, patience, unconditional acceptance and our ability to respond in non-judgmental and non-retaliatory ways (Langs, 1976).

We must acknowledge and be prepared for the fragments of emotional affect (distress) being directed and absorbed by us (staff). It is therefore important to focus on what is happening, within moment-to-moment processes, rather than on a child's history. Our ability to be present *in* the moment and focus on the here-and-now, rather than there-and-then, lessens the risk of damage occurring to the alliance (relationship). This includes what may have happened in previous encounters with a particular student (Taransaud, 2016).

Our willingness to hold for children what they cannot carry themselves and act as an empathic mirror, metabolising and turning their unwanted feelings into something that can be re-absorbed is the most caring, nurturing and thoughtful act a professional can perform. It is something we must pride ourselves on, examining and scrutinising our responses accordingly.

We aim to make the class family and whole school internal and external environments as comfortable and happy as they can be, helping students maintain a calm and alert state, so they can be ready to learn. This will also lead to a pleasant work environment and a safe place for staff and our wider community. When well-being is prioritised, environments can become intrinsically emotionally safe and calming. We therefore aim to establish an environment that offers a sense of order alongside warmth and positive energy that can be adapted to suit the needs of the individuals within that class. This helps us to provide a predictable and welcoming class family and work environment which will go some way to supporting the children to self-regulate and staff to do their best professional work.

This might include, for example:

- ✓ Calm colours
- ✓ Soft lighting (lava lamp, fairy lights) in some areas
- ✓ Flexible seating
- ✓ Soft furnishings (beanbags, pillows, rugs)
- ✓ Background sights such as scenes of nature and the elements
- ✓ Background sounds such as natural sounds, calming, appropriately
- ✓ Natural features/textures (plants etc)
- ✓ A calm corner/zen den (with sensory features)

Alongside these features that are generally determined by the needs of each class family, we work hard to ensure that all areas of the school are:

- ✓ Organised, neat and tidy, with allocated spaces for all resources and belongings.
- ✓ Clutter-free, safe and ready for immediate use.
- ✓ Promoting learning and a sense of pride in our school achievements.
- ✓ Consistently displaying the Window of Tolerance Charts, class and individual goals.
- ✓ Personalised with class-family or room-purpose specific display e.g. job charts, individual schedules.
- ✓ Clean and well maintained.
- ✓ Resourced well, according to need, for learning and self-regulation.
- ✓ Friendly and inclusive, where all members of the community are welcomed into by name.
- ✓ Promote a sense of belonging.

13. Anticipate and Preventative Strategies

We reduce the risk and incidence of dysregulation by being proactive in the use of preventative strategies. We are accepting of each pupil as an individual and respond to their own particular needs and interests. We offer an accepting environment which is adaptable but also hold strong boundaries and high expectations of our children. We focus on building positive and trusting relationships and act as additional attachment figures. All of our work is rooted in this relational approach and is one of our key preventative strategies.

We proactively teach our children the social and emotional skills and knowledge they need through our planned curriculum, as well as through the more responsive 'teachable moments' (see Differentiated Discipline'). PSHE provides a wide range of learning opportunities including, for example, a focus on building self-esteem, relationships, goal setting and emotional literacy. Circle Time is built into the daily timetable in each class and allows the children to explore themes and ideas through games, role-play and other activities.

Movement breaks, sensory diets and 'brain breaks' (sometimes known by the children as 'choose time') are all included in the structure of each day to reduce the frequency with which children may be pushed out of their 'Window of Tolerance' by stress. For many of our children, learning can be a very stressful experience, and we work hard to support them with achieving small steps of success which also reduces this stress and encourages a positive view of themselves as learners.

Get to know each child well: a strong relationship based on trust and respect is one of the most effective preventative measures. Know the content of their Plan (BSP), including their Risk Assessment and Positive Handling Plan.

Involve the children: in decisions about their BSP and about reasonable limits appropriate to each child's age and understanding.

Teach by example: model respect for the children and for each other in all our work.

Encourage age-appropriate behaviour: notice and respond when children are being helpful or constructive, friendly or just appropriate and co-operative.

Be consistent: all members of staff should endeavour to maintain consistent and fair limits around children's behaviour and find out about the limits the child is used to at home and elsewhere.

Be clear: children need to be aware of what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour and responsibilities. Problems often occur when expectations are unclear or unreasonable.

Work as a Team: make use of your team to avoid unnecessary conflict and engage in ways that help the child think and be regulated.

Positively reinforce behaviour whenever possible: remember you generally *"get more of what you talk about."* Promote positive behaviour through feedback, celebrations and rewards such as special activities, certificates etc. Genuine pride in and enjoyment alongside children when they achieve may be the best recognition.

14. When things become difficult, what helps?

We are aware that no single approach or technique is helpful in all situations for all children. We seek to pay attention to the child and do what helps them, within the here and now. Use strategies included in the child's Risk Assessment and Positive Handling Plan.

Over time, we work towards minimising and reducing the frequency and intensity of the stresses we have control over. Staff respond to the child as a person rather than react to their behaviour, moving from a traditional position of reacting and telling, to a more compassionate position of asking and responding. Staff try to interpret communications that the child might make through their behaviour and learn to 'read' their distress. By doing this and identifying triggers and calmers, we are more able to prevent it from happening in the future.

Each child's BSP contains information about their individual triggers, calmers and how the present when they are dysregulated. This plan also includes strategies for addressing these. This plan is a working document and is updated when staff learn new information about each child. When a child is dysregulated, we follow a four-stage process that allows us to de-escalate the situation, support the child to regulate and identify the teachable moment.

15. Regulate, Relate, Reason



We have adopted Bruce Perry's sequential model when we regulate our pupils. The order is simple: **Regulate, Relate, Reason**. This order is vital. Any attempt to reason with a pupil who is still in *red brain* is unhelpful since they *cannot* think at that time. Once regulated we try and relate: this builds connection between student and staff and is a non-judgemental part of the process – regardless of what has happened, we relate by listening and by ratifying the feelings (“that would make me angry...”).

The ‘reason’ part of this process comes later (sometimes much later – ‘strike while the iron is cold’) so a pupil is able to use the part of their brain that allows thought/reflection – a part that shuts down when angry.

Notice and be curious about the behaviour. Simply ignoring someone's communication won't calm things down. For example, leaving a room or space when dysregulated and allowing the student to self-regulate may not be the best option. Remaining calm, consistent and thoughtful – enforcing boundaries is crucial if students are to develop felt safety and trust you as a caring adult. For example, if a child attempts to destroy furniture or property, then they must be prevented from doing so. Otherwise, we send the message that it's A). ok to do act in that way or B). I can't hold and contain your emotional affect. This applies to damaging property or damaging their learning environment.

Notice and be curious about feelings and emotions. Show you are willing and able to think about what's happening for them. Give their mind space in your mind.

Recognise the child's feelings: it may be unreasonable for the child to kick, bite or scream but it is not unreasonable for them to feel cross or unhappy. Confirm the feeling with/for the child and help find acceptable ways to express the feelings. Many of our children struggle to label their feelings.

Try to avoid head-on conflict: try distraction or compromise - defuse the situation wherever you can and reduce the risk of escalation. Relaxed humour is helpful on occasions.

Use the opportunity for the child to find a better way: try to teach a more positive alternative to an unacceptable behaviour i.e. "let's do this" rather than "don't do that". Always aim to increase the child's own self-control, at least until they demonstrate that they have control.

Set clear, simple expectations they can achieve:

STOP or CHANGE the activity. Be clear and confident by giving clear examples, “*Now we are...., Next we will....*”

Keep language simple and clear, focus and repeat the desired outcome. What do you want the child to do?

Confidently problem-solve with the child: offer alternatives, make sure the child has a way out of the confrontation without losing face and make sure there are gains in getting out of the conflict.

Model PAUSING, REGULATING and THINKING. Do not rush into sanctions or decisions.

Say “*I am going to think with other adults about this.*”

Say “*We need to think about what has happened.*”

Make a distinction between the child and the behaviour: make it clear that you will go on caring for the child whatever he or she might do and recognise yourself that the behaviour is not really a personal affront to you.

If you have to use sanctions: make them immediate, fair and reasonable and try to ensure that the child understands why. If it does not make sense and means nothing to the child there is probably no point in doing it. Sanctions should support a child to learn to modify their behaviour and should not be used as a punishment.

Keep your own self-control: get help and do not be afraid to go away and hand over the situation to others if you feel you are either losing your own self-control or if it will simply make things better for the child:

- Remember that you have a professional duty to keep yourself safe, both physically and emotionally.
- Move confidently but calmly.
- Make simple clear statements to the child.
- Make sure your voice is quiet, firm and assured.
- It is often best to simply leave a situation; you do not need to have your say before you go away. 'Having your say' can prevent the next person being able to reach the child and help them regulate.

Reduce the threat of your presence: by sitting, kneeling or giving space for the child to move about. If you are challenging the child, it can help to avoid direct eye contact.

Stay with the child: and focus on being reassuring, offering comfort and security through being there with the child when distressed and out of control. This may mean keeping very close, using positive physical touch, seeking eye contact, speaking even if there is no reply etc. It may mean keeping a distance the child can tolerate and allowing the child plenty of space. It may mean sitting quietly a little way away and simply being in the same space or area as the child. Don't try to sort things out in the heat of the moment; leave that for later when the child is regulated. Together you can agree what needs to happen next to resolve the situation.

16. When things become difficult, what doesn't help?

X Don't take it personally or make it personal.

X Don't try to deal with situations if you feel out of your depth: ask for help or ideas or advice.

X Be very aware of your body language and positioning so that it will not be seen as threatening and so that the child may have safe ways out of the situation.

X During the incident is not the time to be putting in sanctions, this should wait until the situation is calm and all involved can effectively participate.

X Be very aware of language used in order to match the age and understanding of the child.

X Don't raise your voice as a routine response, nor give complicated garbled messages with a high-pitched voice.

X Don't try to sort things out by bombarding the child with statements and questions, loudly or harshly put.

X Don't use humour that belittles, shames or demeans the child or which they don't understand.

17. Sanctions: Enforcing boundaries and Expectations

When sanctioning and managing undesirable behaviour, we need to remain present. Responding to what happens, not what our perceptions tell us what happened. Our perceptions can be troublesome because they are interpretations, some of which may not be rooted in a trauma informed, attachment aware approach. We will often choose the worst interpretation or cling to past experiences. Instead, we must seek to respond to the present moment, not the past. The child needs to go through these difficult emotions, behaviours and feelings knowing that they will still be cared for and nurtured. They must be accepted for who they are, but with the utmost respect we must seek to teach them the consequences and repercussions for certain behaviours. This is the middle ground we must traverse within SEMH.

Therefore, agreed sanctions are routinely used by staff teams to promote appropriate behaviour and to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the adults caring for them and the wider

community. Sanctions aim to help children accept responsibility for their actions and to undertake reparative and restorative action. A sanction should hold open a space for thinking, feeling and making things better.

Staff teams regularly review the use of sanctions for individual children and for groups to ensure that they are helping them to learn and become more responsible. This typically takes place at the end of the day during de-brief.

The steps below are not intended to be a track that once you are on, there is a no going back or coming off. They are a guide that can be used to shape communication in a clear, concise and routine way. Managing behaviour can be a free-flowing, nuanced experience. If a sanction is not appropriate or effective, it should not be used.

18. Differentiated Discipline





The word 'discipline' comes from the Latin word 'disciplina' which means to receive instruction from someone or to learn. At Kings Meadow, discipline is, therefore, about teaching and training rather than punishment. As a school for children whose primary identified needs include severe difficulties with self-regulation, it is our job and core purpose to teach children how to manage their stress and cope more appropriately, not to punish them because they aren't able to do this without help. It would not make sense for a specialist SEMH school to use a traditional model of discipline that more often than not is based on adult wants rather than children's social and emotional needs and is very often one size fits all. Most of our children have experienced this already and it often did not go well, sometimes ending in suspensions from other settings or even permanent exclusion.


At Kings Meadow, we identify the 'teachable moments' that happen after a child has experienced dysregulation. These are the important opportunities for us to teach the child how to reflect on their actions and the impact of these, developing a sense of responsibility, and to explicitly teach them safer, more socially acceptable strategies for managing a similar situation in the future. These moments take place when the child is feeling regulated and safe again and this can often be some time after the incident, when the 'thinking part' of the brain has begun to work again.

We differentiate the discipline during these teachable moments, in the same way that we differentiate the teaching of academic knowledge and skills. This means that the emotional and social tasks and expectations that we have for each child are informed by their developmental stage, their particular needs and their regulatory state.

It is important to note however, that at Kings Meadow, safety always comes first. We address everything that needs addressing, including injury, because we do not believe in a society where human beings go around hurting each other. This is not a civilised society.

Wherever possible, and when safe to do so, we avoid external exclusion so that we can continue to proactively help each child to learn to regulate and take responsibility for their actions, under the close supervision of staff who care about them. Our ethos is to create inclusion and belonging, not exclusion and rejection. We want our children to enjoy and benefit from life in school. However, there are times when exclusion may be appropriate, in the interests of the safety of the wider school community. Please see our Exclusion Policy for further details about when we may consider this an appropriate consequence.

	Steps	Actions
1	Reminders 	<p>A reminder of 3 basic rules - Ready, Respectful, Safe (RRS) delivered privately wherever possible. These may need to be repeated and adjusted accordingly. These Reminders are verbs not nouns: we are <i>reminding</i> pupils what is acceptable and, in doing so, we are doing the work <i>with them</i> (reminders hold no consequence and work best in a sentence – “I’m reminding you that we keep our hands to ourselves... I’m reminding you that other children cannot hear me when you shout out...I’m reminding you that we follow instructions in class”).</p> <p>We are not ‘giving them’ a reminder like a consequence. It is a non-threatening, non-judgemental way to address behaviour.</p> <p>*Constantly lean on relationship and colleagues for support, what’s being communicated?</p>
2	Caution 	<p>A clear verbal caution delivered privately, wherever possible, making the student aware of their behaviour and clearly outlining the consequences if they continue. Refer to the fact that you have reminded the student, perhaps several times about their behaviour and that they need to “think about next steps”.</p> <p>Describe the scene – explain what is happening...” <i>I’m finding it difficult to speak whilst you are...</i>”</p>
3	Last chance 	<p>Continue to speak to the student privately, giving them space and time to correct behaviour. Offer a positive choice, redirecting away from undesirable behaviour. You may need to adapt, change your plan at this stage. For example, “I’m wondering if you are struggling to get started with Maths today, maybe we could try carrying on with some Art and go back to it later”?</p> <p><i>“How do we make this work...?”</i></p> <p><i>“I can see...Do you remember last week when you...?”</i></p>
4	Time out/in 	<p>Time out might be a short time outside the room, perhaps spending time in a safe space identified by the student. It could be outside, in the playground or in a staff members office having a drink. It is designed to be a few minutes away from the classroom or environment that may have contributed to their behaviour. It is time and space for them to calm, regulate and draw breathe.</p> <p>It is crucial that staff spend this time with student, it is time out of the classroom but time in with a regulated, safe adult. Someone the child can co-regulate with and withdraw support from. For a young person to regulate themselves, they need to have experienced a primary caregiver do it for them. This leads to co-regulation and then to self-regulation. For some of our pupils, this has not happened in their early years and, so, we must do it for them in order for them to develop into an adult that can self-regulate. This is known as “second chance learning” and can often be formal (via an agreed plan) or less formal and ‘in the moment’.</p> <p>Either way we have to assess whether a young person is in <i>red brain</i> (or is escalating towards this state) and take appropriate action. This co-regulation can take a number of forms: change location, playing a game, walking together, helping staff with something etc. The key to this is to try and bring the student into the ‘here and now’ via a safe/patterned activity that requires <i>no thinking</i>. Only when regulated do we talk about what may have happened (‘strike while the iron is cold’) since, only when regulated, can a student actually think and reflect (i.e. learn).</p>

5	Repair 	<p>Repair can take many forms. However, we must not use binary, judgemental language such as <i>“we now need to make good...”</i> Repair could be a quick chat with a member of staff, an informal interaction or gesture with a peer or it could be a formal discussion with an adult. However, these need to be when the child is ready. Sometimes, it’s necessary to strike when the iron is cold.</p> <p>It may be tempting to hurry or seek repair at all costs; however, this may be saying more about the adult and their needs. This is why a very basic acknowledgment of one’s own internal conflict and unconscious is important.</p>
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18.1 Sanctions at Kings Meadow – Examples of good practice

Staff will always consider behaviour as communication and seek to understand what is happening to the child(ren) in the context of their history and stage of development.

Sanctions should:

- ✓ fit the inappropriate behaviour.
- ✓ be seen to be fair in the eyes of children and discussed with them so that they know clearly what sanctions are and are not permitted.
- ✓ not be seen as revenge or getting even.
- ✓ be for a limited period where applicable.
- ✓ be used with thought/consideration.
- ✓ be tailored to the individual.
- ✓ be discussed with the staff team.
- ✓ be applied as soon after the event as possible.
- ✓ be reviewed periodically.

Staff members should aim to:

Clearly set out what a child needs to work on using words that focus on relationships:

“We need to keep you and others safe”.

Clearly set out the expectation that adults and children need to work on this together. Be clear that moving on from a limit or sanction depends on judgements:

“When other people can see you are safe/calm.”

Staff members should notice and respond to lower-level behaviours. It is not fair to sanction children because adults have been too slow to notice the children’s more moderate communications.

Staff members should avoid:

- X Words like “ban.”
- X Children “doing their time” etc.
- X A rigid time for a sanction to last.
- X A broad sanction (no use of electronics, no going in vehicles).

18.2 Consequences used at Kings Meadow School

Our ethos is to use what are often known as 'natural consequences' when we are teaching our children to be accountable for their actions. For example, if they damage a display, then they should help to repair it. Some other examples of consequences may include:

Helping adults to tidy up if they have made a mess;

Undertaking missed learning at another time. Adults will choose this alternative time with care and avoid using other important regulatory times such as eating lunch or other important curriculum opportunities such as PE;

Not being able to use certain equipment or resources because they have broken something;

Restore, Redraw, Repair conversation has occurred with the child (when they are ready). Adapted from Paul Dix (2017), staff use 6 restorative questions to help frame and guide their discussion with a child who has behaved in a negative way. However, they do not need to use all questions, they can be adapted and moulded to suit the needs of the child. See Appendix 2 for details.

19. Rewards: acknowledgments and recognitions for effort and achievement

We attempt to be endlessly positive with our children to help boost their self-esteem and change how they view themselves. We notice behaviours that might seem ordinary but that are significant to our children. We acknowledge our children's successes with warm words and gestures (specific to what we have seen, rather than generic). Rewards are linked to but not exclusively to the school values (connection, communication, resilience, independence & reflection). Rewards at Kings Meadow are broken down into three distinct categories:

1. Short-Term Rewards (immediate):

These are small gestures which are an immediate response. It's catching students in the act, noticing desired behaviour and then reinforcing it. For example:

- Stickers
- Verbal Acknowledgement
- Movement on a classroom chart (Rainbow Wall)
- Visit to SLT to have a cup of tea or an informal chat about what has been achieved or noticed

The aim of these short-term, immediate rewards is to create an environment brimming with success that is seen by adults. In turn, this reinforces positive behaviours and enhances a student's self-awareness and self-esteem. Suddenly they are aware that they can be successful, and they are reminded of this throughout a school day.

2. Medium-Term Rewards (delayed hours or a day):

Medium-term rewards are similar to their predecessor but differ in scope. There is a delayed gratification, and the 'noticing' of behaviours goes beyond school.

- Certificates to be taken home
- Post card home
- Phone call at the end of the day to parents or carers
- Small privileges such as extended free-time or activities

Home is incorporated into medium term rewards, communication between school and home is positive which is something students may not have experienced before. There may also be a secondary reward when the child is greeted by their parent or guardian.

Long-Term Rewards (Weeks delay with greater emphasis on choice/agency):

We also operate a School Values Reward System which allows the children to earn points when they show our school values. When a student receives a short-term or medium-term reward, they are given 1 achievement point. When a child accumulates a total of **20 achievement points**, they can be exchanged for experiences with staff (off site visit, such as a hot chocolate) and tangible rewards such as toys. They provide an opportunity for the children to exercise some control over the rewards system and teach them about managing both immediate and delayed rewards.

We also want to acknowledge the developmental needs of the individual; therefore the 20-point ceiling can vary depending upon discussions with the class team and SLT.

This system provides a predictable structure and routine in school but is also flexible. Each teacher will adapt it to be responsive to the developmental stages and needs of the children in their class.

20. Data – Recording and capturing behaviour and attitudes

Where a period of dysregulation has occurred, staff are instructed to use MyConcern (if behaviour is linked to a safeguarding issue) or Arbor to record and report. The staff member reporting the incident is required to write up factual information including what the pupil was doing prior, during and after the period of dysregulation. This may include the trigger for the behaviour if this is known and what actions have been taken.

Class teams will reflect on any behavioural incidents that have occurred that day. Depending on severity and the details of any incident, SLT/Pastoral team may be required to consider next steps and support.

When recording concerns staff should include where relevant:

- Antecedents (things that happened before the incident)
- Any identifiable trigger or indicators
- If this behaviour is unusual for the pupil
- If the pupil is trying to communicate something
- The strategies/motivators that were used

Contact with guardians:

- their response
- change or occurrences of significance at home
- behaviour at home
- Peers or staff that were hurt (no names added)
- Holds used if a physical intervention was necessary
- Future Support - what will be carried out differently or put in place to support the pupil based on what we learnt through this incident?
- If the Positive Behaviour Support Plan needs to be updated or implemented.

If a physical intervention has occurred, staff will ensure that a phone call home is made on the day of the intervention. A record of the PI needs to be completed and handed to the designated member of SLT as soon as possible (ideally on the same day of the incident).

If, after an incident, staff would like support, debrief or to talk through the situation they can talk to their class team or make this request to a member of the senior leadership team.

21. Bullying, discriminatory and prejudiced

What is bullying? Bullying is “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally” (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” July 2017).

There are many definitions of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour
- It is repeated often over a period of time
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- Physical - hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- Verbal - name-calling, insulting, racist remarks
- Indirect - spreading nasty stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups
- Cyber— bullying as above but involving telephones, facebook or other social media websites, and other electronic forms of communication
- Prejudice based/Discriminatory - when someone is treated unfairly or picked on because of certain characteristics that make them different from others. These characteristics can include things like their skin colour, religion, nationality, gender, sexuality, disability, or even the way they look or behave.

Why challenge bullying?

- There are several very important reasons for challenging bullying behaviours in schools:
- The safety and happiness of pupils
- Educational achievement is hampered
- Providing a model for helpful behaviour; if pupils observe bullying behaviour going unchallenged, other pupils may learn that bullying is a quick and effective way of getting what they want. Those pupils who are being bullied will feel let down by adults in authority
- No school can claim with confidence that bullying does not occur in their environment. We must respond positively and effectively to bullying.

Bullying is never acceptable. All staff should:

- Be aware of what constitutes bullying and help pupils to understand what we mean by bullying
- Listen to any pupil who feels they are being bullied
- Be aware of pupils who cannot speak for themselves and the interaction that occurs around them
- Think about times of the day, parts of the building etc. where bullying may occur
- Stop play fights, mock kicking, etc.
- Stop use of all forms of discriminatory language
- Deal with incidents of bullying promptly
- Record and report all instances of bullying
- Inform guardians via telephone or in face-to-face contact.

Pupils should be encouraged to:

- Include others in their games and groups
- Not laugh if someone is being bullied
- Tell staff if they see bullying
- Never join in with bullying.

It is appropriate to include bullying during curriculum work in the area of PSHE. If a pupil bullies we will:

Try to help them understand the effect their behaviour is having on another pupil

- Help them think of ways to make amends
- Give an appropriate sanction
- Support the pupil who is being bullied.

22. Fixed term exclusions (suspensions)

Kings Meadow strives to be as attachment aware and trauma informed as possible, it is therefore only in severe and extreme circumstances that we reserve the right to exclude (suspend) for a fixed period. We will always consider the fact that a suspension may be viewed by the child as a form of rejection, so much can be communicated with such an act. However, we must uphold certain boundaries when they are crossed and maintain the safety and wellbeing of all at Kings Meadow. We know that exclusions may not be the most effective way to support pupils with SEND, and we will always strive to adapt and personalise provision for all our pupils to ensure they can access education. However, resources are limited and in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to exclude a pupil for a fixed period, and this would always be considered very carefully. Exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- Incidents where the safety of the pupil, other pupils or staff is seriously compromised
- Incidents of knife crime or the deliberate use of weapons in school
- Incidents of sexual violence/child on child abuse
- Incidents of significant deliberate damage to property. Decisions to exclude pupils are made on an individual basis and should always be a reasonable and measured response taken by the Headteacher in consultation with the senior leadership team. Exclusions can also be managed internally, and a pupil may be removed from class for a fixed period of time.

23. Permanent Exclusions

Permanent exclusion is a last resort at Kings Meadow School and will only be considered after all other avenues of support and intervention have been explored. If necessary, it will be completed in line with the legal guidelines and best practices set by the Department for Education and detailed in the Creating Tomorrow Trust Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy.

24. Links with other policies

This policy links directly to additional statutory documents which belong to Kings Meadow School. These can be found on our school website via the following link:

<https://kingsmeadow.northants.sch.uk/about-us/school-policies>

They include the following:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Creating Tomorrow Anti-Bullying Policy Framework
- SEND Policy
- Equalities
- KMS Approach to the Use of Physical Force & Searching Students 2024
- Stand-alone Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

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Appendices 1: Attachment Aware checklist

Being Seen: This is more than just being seen visually – it is about perception and letting the child know that they are perceived deeply and empathetically that we ‘see’ inside the child’s mind and what lies beneath their behaviour. Siegel calls this ‘mindsight’.

- ✓ Welcome at the door/greetings in the car park by class team
- ✓ Noticing success and effort
- ✓ Noticing changes
- ✓ Photographs
- ✓ Work on the wall
- ✓ Smiling/eye contact
- ✓ Giving choices (when within window of tolerance)
- ✓ Student voice
- ✓ Using names (including nicknames agreed by child)
- ✓ Noticing body language
- ✓ Remembering and mentioning things about them (how their football team got on at the weekend)

Feeling safe: This is about helping children have a sense of safety, physically, mentally and emotionally.

- ✓ Providing safe space/haven within school (often decided by the child, not the adult)
- ✓ Seating plans or designated areas within the classroom
- ✓ Staff presence
- ✓ Positive staff-to-staff relationships (our choice of language and communication with each other is critical)
- ✓ Key adult/mentor
- ✓ Challenging inappropriate behaviour before it grows and escalates (low-level)
- ✓ Monitoring corridor behaviour and unstructured times
- ✓ Noticing changes in friendships
- ✓ Ensuring routines, structure and typicality are maintained
- ✓ Setting clear expectations and boundaries
- ✓ Parental engagement

Feeling soothed: Making sure we co-regulate children when they are dysregulated, helping them calm and manage difficult emotions.

- ✓ Staff model appropriate behaviour (not raising voices, being mindful of body language)
- ✓ Regular check-ins with key staff (Team effort – we must collaborate and shoulder emotional distress)
- ✓ Staff remain in control when child feels on edge or is ‘simmering’
- ✓ Talking calmly and quietly
- ✓ Maintaining a calm environment
- ✓ Listening (mirroring language *“I hate him”, “you hate him”*)
- ✓ Appropriate physical contact
- ✓ De-escalation techniques

Feeling secure: Providing a sense of feeling secure so that children develop an internalised sense of self and personalised wellbeing. In turn, this enables them to explore and learn about the world.

- ✓ Developing sense of belonging
- ✓ All students are part of the class (despite past presentation and behaviours)
- ✓ Consistency
- ✓ Calm tone of voice
- ✓ Clean slate every transition
- ✓ Supporting with friendship issues (taking the time to listen attentively regardless of context)
- ✓ Availability of staff

Appendices 2: The Restorative 6

1. What happened?

Listen carefully and dispassionately to the child's account of what happened, without interrupting or disagreeing. Avoid phrases like:

- X That's not true...
- X I disagree, you chose to do...
- X You decided to...

Instead, actively listen to the child. Maintaining eye contact, mirroring and paraphrasing what has been said. Regardless of if you agree with them or not, this is their space and time to share and communicate verbally.

2. What were you thinking at the time or what were you feeling at the time?

This reflection puts thoughts and feelings at centre stage. It supports the child in processing concepts such as past and present. It may also reveal a thought process or emotion that was felt at the time that may not have been obvious to you or the adults present. For example, a child might appear to 'lash out', but upon hearing their reflection you learn that they felt unsafe and were acting out of fight or flight.

3. What have you thought since?

It's important not to go searching or fishing for an apology. The child may still be upset and may still believe that they are right to act in certain way. Your agenda and role is to facilitate reflection, you cannot force a child to repent and seek forgiveness. This is not our aim. However, listen to their response and expand on key phrases or words they may use. For example, the child might cling on to a particular point, which is making it difficult for them to shift perspectives. Hold you non-judgmental, dispassionate stance and enquire with curiosity.

4. How did this make people feel?

The child might be genuinely unaware of the impact of their actions and behaviour. They may also have intended to cause distress and hurt in another. It's important that staff remain calm, unshockable and non-judgemental. This question is important because it encourages the child to look beyond themselves, and to perhaps consider another's perspective.

5. Who has been affected?

Students may at first find it difficult to notice or articulate others who may have been affected by their behaviour. There may be an element of shame or embarrassment. This is likely to be defended against by means of a display of indifference or aggression. The child may also state that they are the sole victim and that they are still not fully understood. In time, their reflective routine might develop, even to the point that their behaviour alters, and I tempered before a similar event happens again. This is how we are teaching students to use their conscience. From here you can expand and enquire about how others may have been affected, what the consequences were regarding another.

6. How might we do things differently in the future?

This is another tempting moment for the adult to search for an apology. Avoid phrases like "how can we put things right"? or "how can we make good". We are seeking to avoid creating an environment in which children perceive themselves as good or bad, right or wrong. Of course we want our students to understand consequences of their actions, develop and sense of fairness and tolerance. But the language we select and embed needs to be considered. Change is not going to occur immediately; it takes time for an individual to be prepared to show their vulnerabilities.