

Connection and Regulation Policy

St George's School



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Connection and Regulation Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Positive Behaviour Support Policy and our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies.

Every child/ young person deserves to be inspired, have a positive mindset, recognise failure is just a stepping stone to success and to believe they can do anything they set their minds to. At St George's School we aim to develop the self-awareness, self-belief and emotional intelligence of every child & young person, regardless of their background or circumstances, to give them the tools needed to flourish in life.

Policy Aims

- To provide a framework that is trauma-informed and inclusive, ensuring that it is appropriate for all children/ young people at St George's School
- To create a therapeutic ethos in school whereby every member of staff responds to children/ young people's behaviour and emotions with insight and understanding based on neuroscience and trauma-informed techniques
- To create a nurturing environment where children/ young people are not punished for having big feelings but instead are guided through them
- To develop self-aware, empathetic and reflective thinkers whereby children/ young people are learning from their difficult feelings and behaviour and developing their emotional intelligence
- To support children/ young people through their difficult feelings and behaviour with the intention of teaching and guiding them through how to manage the same feelings/ situation differently next time
- To respond to children/ young people with connection and understanding rather than disconnection and rejection with the awareness that this will help create an opportunity to learn and for behaviours to change
- For all children/ young people to feel safe in our care, especially when they are overwhelmed with their feelings
- To develop positive mental health and wellbeing through this approach

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each staff member to respond and guide the children/ young people when dealing with a difficult behaviour or feeling. Ensuring all staff have the appropriate therapeutic training and will respond with connection and not disconnection to an incident. This will ensure children/ young people feel safe in the care of our adults and reduce the feeling of rejection. This approach considers the complexities that arise with attachment disorder and childhood trauma as well as child development, helping to maintain trust between our children/ young people and staff. We expect that the member of staff who is involved with the child(ren)/ young person when the behaviour is occurring to be the person to follow through our connection and regulation policy to further create a feeling of security and trust with the children.

Procedure

Our connection and regulation policy is based on scientific childhood-trauma, neuroscience and child development theory as well as the therapeutic teaching approach. It takes into account all of our children/ young people and their circumstances and is particularly sensitive to the needs of our more vulnerable children/ young people whom we recognise are more likely to struggle with their behaviour. This procedure aims to help children/ young people calm down, self-regulate and reflect on their feelings which in turn will then help them to manage their behaviour. We recognise that all behaviour is a result of a difficult feeling and is a form of communication.

Rules

- All rules are communicated regularly to children/ young people and displayed in classrooms
- Rules are communicated through connective language and are aimed to build a relationship culture within the classroom/school
- Rules are framed positively to maintain connection such as “We look after each other”, “We respect each other”, “We listen to each other”, “We keep each other safe”
- We refrain from using the buzz words ‘no’, ‘don’t’, ‘can’t and ‘stop’ because we are aware that these words can often shut down a child/ young person causing them to respond with defence and can result in their rational brain being unable to learn from the support given

Rewards

- Rewards are given in real-time in most situations, we avoid using rewards as a bargaining tool for behaviour. Instead, we offer real-time rewards such as stickers on books when we see good work/ good behaviour and verbal positive acknowledgements “You have worked really hard on that.”
- We acknowledge positive behaviour and working hard with reflection rather than reward to reinforce reflective thinkers who want to achieve for themselves and not for a reward.
“Abdul you worked on that, even though it was a challenge for you at first.”
- We use appreciative comments with the children which are specific to the child/ young person and creates a feeling of respect and value. “Adam thank you for sitting calmly today”
- We acknowledge positive changes to behaviour, emotional intelligence skills and empathy. This acknowledges when children/ young people have worked hard to use self-regulation skills taught in their PHSE lessons and as a response to therapeutic teaching support from the staff after behavioural incidents

Connection and regulation procedure

Step 1	Therapeutic response given NAME FEELING BEHAVIOUR ENCOURAGE	Respond therapeutically with connection, empathy and insight into the brain. This will help shift a child/ young person's overwhelmed reptilian brain into rational brain which will help them think and reflect.
Step 2	Offer a BOUNDARY (either a limitation or a responsibility) Offer a TEACH statement (If ready to hear this)	Create opportunities to take responsibility for their actions and learn through setting boundaries.
Step 3	Calm time Or Thinking time (OR both)	Re-define 'punishment' and create the opportunity to self-regulate and reflect instead.
Step 4	Ongoing	Create trust, reliability and security through consistency.

Step One: Therapeutic Response Given

Staff will respond to a child/ young person's difficult feeling or behaviour incident calmly using a therapeutic response. They will follow the above steps and help the child / young person to understand how they are feeling. This will help the child/ young person feel understood, noticed and heard. We acknowledge that although the child/ young person may have made a mistake or done something wrong, we are aware that there was a trigger to make this happen and that is often an overwhelming feeling. We need to help the children/ young people to recognise and understand this before we focus on the behaviour incident.

Step Two: Boundary

In response to difficult behaviour, we will put a boundary in place. This will either be in the form of a responsibility, whereby we ask the child/ young person to make amends for what they have done by picking up what they have broken and fixing it for example or helping put things right. Or a limitation will be put in place, where something they were going to get is taken away. Such as iPad time or football. We are aware that sometimes a child / young person will need some calm time or thinking time (Step three) before they can fulfil the responsibility, we have asked them to do.

Step Three: Calm Time

We are aware that when children/ young people display difficult behaviour, they are often

also experiencing overwhelming feelings. At St George's School we want to teach the children/ young people how to calm down and manage their big emotions. We may ask the children/ young people to have some calm time to help them to do this. Children / young people will be able to listen to calming music, do some quiet reading or construction to help them learn to self-regulate and manage their emotions. We acknowledge that children/ young people need to feel calm enough before they can learn how to change their behaviour and react differently next time.

In the event of a child/ young person who is extremely overwhelmed, kicking, hurting others and very angry, we will help the child / young person to calm down through using therapeutic thinking time. This replaces the conventional time out. Thinking time is where one of our members of staff will sit with the child/ young person and calmly count to 20. They stay with the child/ young person throughout this process to help them regulate their emotions. This is not a punishment whereby we reject the child/ young person and send them away, instead we sit with them and help them to manage the very overwhelming feelings. Children/ young people will be expected to sit with the member of staff until they have finished counting to 20 without fighting or moving away. This is not a confrontational method and will respect that the child/ young person is already angry. When the child/ young person has calmed down, they will be offered some further calm-time before asking them to make amends for their behaviour through a limitation or responsibility (as mentioned above).

Step Four: Consistency

This approach will be followed by every member of staff in school and appropriate training will be given, Teaching Positive Connections training. Children/ young people at St George's School deserve to feel safe and secure, especially when they find a situation or feeling hard for them in school. We aim to ensure our approach is consistent to communicate that we are here to support them both academically and emotionally. This is part of their PHSE development and will help them to develop positive wellbeing and mental health.

Internal calm space

In some cases of exceptionally difficult behaviour, we will provide internal calm-time space for our children/ young people. This will provide them with an opportunity to self-regulate and reflect on their emotions within the school but away from the rest of their class. This is not a form of rejection but rather an acknowledgement that they are struggling more than usual and need more help to calm down. Our Calm Space will give them opportunities to reflect on their behaviour and focus on their wellbeing for a period of time which will be decided by the Head Teacher.