



Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Emotional Regulation Policy for Withington Primary School

Reviewed August 2026

School vision statement

Philosophy at Withington Primary:

At Withington Primary School, we recognise that understanding our emotions is a key aspect of understanding and managing behaviour. Through Emotion Coaching and being attachment aware, both children and adults are able to both manage their behaviour and to create an environment that is conducive to learning. We understand that part of our role, in partnership with home, is to help pupils to understand how to act with consideration, kindness and respect to others. Underpinning this policy is the belief that everyone can learn to self-manage/self-regulate their own emotions and behaviour. Through this we encourage reflective thinking and do not accept prejudice in any form. Ultimately, we wish to give our children confidence about their capacity to think for themselves and to make sense of their own lives and experiences, hopefully beyond school and into the “real” world”.

In this policy we will discuss the following:

- Statement, Objectives & Rationale, this covers our approach to positive relationships and emotional regulation at Withington Primary.
- Provision & Routines, this explains our school environment and the routines which underpin our daily life.
- Graduation approach, Natural consequences and Reflection, this explains the steps used to help children regulate their emotions and access their learning.
- How we record and promote behaviours.
- Roles and responsibilities
- Safeguarding

Policy Statement

This policy is based on Guidance provided by Herefordshire Local Authority and has included input from: members of staff, representatives from the governing body, parents and carers and children at Withington Primary school.

This policy is developed to ensure guidance for staff to promote positive behaviour in school. The procedures and guidance in this document provide a consistent approach across the school and enables students, parents and staff to understand our approaches to the management of behaviour in school. It is also recognised that for some pupils, variance on these procedures may be necessary to meet any specific social, emotional, learning or other needs which require a personalised approach; guidance for this appears in the appendix and approaches can be discussed with the Inclusion leader or member of SLT.

Policy Objectives

Our school is committed to the emotional mental health and well-being of its staff, children and parents/carers. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of school life, and to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that supports the social, emotional and mental health of the whole school community.

It is acknowledged that members of the school community may have very different parenting experiences and views on behaviour. However, the aim of our Policy is to bring us all together to adhere to some basic key principles and practices that reflect our school ethos.

Withington Primary School treats all children with unconditional respect and has high expectations for both adults' and children's learning and social behaviours. Our school is calm and purposeful. It prides itself on excellent relationships and a high level of care. We understand that positive behaviour can be taught and needs to be modelled. We understand that negative behaviour can signal a need for support which we will provide without diluting our expectations.

- To provide guidance to staff, parents and carers, governors, and other stakeholders on how to support our children to manage and regulate their feelings, communicate their words and feel safe so they are ready to learn.
- To provide a holistic, whole-person, inclusive model for our understanding of behavioural needs.
- To underpin our beliefs with evidence-based practice and current research
- To maintain a caring, orderly community in which effective learning can take place and where there is mutual respect between members
- To help children develop a sense of worth, identity and achievement
- To help all children to become self-disciplined, able to accept responsibility for their own actions and make positive choices
- To develop in all children the ability to listen to others; cooperate and to appreciate other ways of thinking and behaving.

Rationale

At Withington Primary school, we believe that developing relationships, responding and calming and repairing and restoring, as well as guidance on working on relationships in the classroom and alongside this a graduated response is what makes a difference to our pupils' behaviour. It is imperative we offer our children the security and relationships needed to meet their individual wellbeing and mental health needs and guide them along their journey in becoming independent, resilient, life-long learners. We do this by:

- Incorporating a holistic, whole-person approach to ensure we are reflecting and planning for the needs of all our children, some with complex layer needs.
- We consider that behaviours, which challenge always happen for a reason and may, in that moment, be the only way a child can communicate.
- We know that children are happy when their needs are understood and met and when expectations are clear. This allows them to behave well and access opportunities and learning that school provides in their most well-regulated state possible.
- Children should be recognised for their efforts to manage themselves and their behaviour.

- Children can learn to improve how they communicate their feelings and words. Learning new behaviours is a task, just like learning to read and write.
- Children need a personalised approach to support them to manage their feelings and communicate their words respectfully.
- Continued CPD for all adults within school to learn strategies to support all children to manage their feelings and communicate their words respectfully.
- Aim to work collaboratively with our children, their parents/caregivers and other professionals may need to develop strategies as part of a positive behaviour support plan (see- Stage 2 – Graduated Response) to support them to manage their feelings and communicate their words in a positive manner.

Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- Behaviour and discipline in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff, 2016
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2024
- Mental health and behaviour in schools 2018
- Searching, screening and confiscation at school 2018
- Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2023
- The Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions, July 2026
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools, April 2026
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school It is also based on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, August 2017

In addition, this policy is based on:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils
- Sections 88 to 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which requires schools to regulate pupils' behaviour and publish a behaviour policy and written statement of behaviour principles, and give schools the authority to confiscate pupils' property
- DfE guidance explaining that maintained schools must publish their behaviour policy online

The quality of our provision

At Withington, we encourage staff to reflect on what may be the underlying issues that drive or trigger behaviours in children, and to think about ways of responding to behaviour that challenge in a non judgemental and supportive way.

We have communication systems in place and readily available when a child is demonstrating challenging behaviour. In this heightened moment, this is their “voice” and should be accessible at all times, but especially during times of dysregulation or distress when it is often difficult to make use of other communication methods.

We personalise learning to ensure that we meet each child at his/her individual point of development in order that optimal learning takes place. We use the ‘parent on our shoulder’ principle in our response to supporting children to be able to regulate their feelings and communicate how they are feeling using words. This principle is guided by the belief that adults at Withington Primary respond to behaviour in a way that would be deemed appropriate if their parents were watching.

We actively teach our children behaviour for learning in order for them to manage their feelings and communicate their words in a positive manner. Where necessary, we seek support from wider professional networks to problem-solve and develop our understanding of behaviour that challenges and also to ensure a personalised approach has been undertaken.

We are ready to learn.

We look and listen to the speaker.

We sit sensibly.

We are kind in our words and actions

We find ways to show kindness to children and adults, we treat them with dignity and respect.

We are respectful to each other and the school

We keep learning environments well organised and we show respect to all

We walk quietly and sensibly around the school

We move around the school in a sensible manner

We will have a positive day

We are well prepared, punctual and attentive and invest in relationships so we can have fun together

We consider what might be behind the behaviour; why the child is behaving in this way. There will always be a reason, the behaviour is a symptom of something that we need to identify, understand and correctly support. We keep our word and if, for some reason, we are unable to honour a commitment to a child, we communicate clearly and honestly why this has happened.

We apologise if we make a mistake – we are modelling this for children, and this will support us to build trust and respect.

We name and manage our own emotional reactions to a child’s reactions/ behaviours, i.e. we demonstrate emotionally intelligent reactions/behaviours at all times. We seek help if we are finding it difficult to manage our feelings about a child. We are always respectful to children; we do not talk about them over

their heads or in front of other children. We consider the quality of our relationships with parents and carers as being vital. It is important to reflect and plan with parents to ensure consistency in approaches between home and school. We support one another in managing our own emotions and know that regulating our own emotions is hard work.

Routines

Our consistent whole school routines support our children to understand expectations, manage anxieties, and mentally and physically prepare themselves for their day. This allows them to engage more fully with learning, manage their feelings and communicate in a positive manner. Behaviour for learning routines are explicitly taught – we do not assume our pupils know them. We teach routines for all activities. The more consistency there is over routines, the easier it is for our children. Routines support children with their emotional development and behaviour for learning. We continuously reflect on how we support children to adapt to changes to routines and how we prepare them for changes, as this is an important life skill. Changes to routines are practised to allow our children to learn that changes can be managed in a positive way.

Natural Consequences

We do not believe in sanctions or punishment. We do not punish children. However, it is important to understand that children may require additional time to catch up on work or require additional intervention to reflect on any inappropriate reactions displayed when aiming to manage and communicate their feelings -. We use natural consequences to help educate the children about their behaviour. This is often best carried out immediately but when necessary, these conversations may happen sometime after an event, when the child is better regulated and able to reflect upon their behaviour/reaction allowing them to participate fully in the process. The consequence needs to be a natural consequence, to support the learner's understanding of both positive and negative consequences. We take a consistent approach when supporting children to manage their feelings and communicate their words in a positive manner in school. We are committed to following this policy and use the Graduated Response stages below charts to support it.

Graduated response stage 1

Step 1 Emotion coaching	Staff will follow the 4 steps of emotion coaching to identify the emotion behind the behaviour This can then lead to RESTORE
Step 2 Reflection spot	If this is needed for the child to regulate their emotions. This can then lead straight to RESTORE
Step 3 Time IN	Short time IN with another adult. A time to calm, breathe and reflect. This can then lead to RESTORE.
Step 4 Escalation	If a child's behaviour is persistent/ continuous/ extreme a member of the senior leadership team should be called to support and enforce the natural consequence and the next steps.
Step 5 RESTORE	This needs a discussion at break time. If step 4 is reached then maybe a more formal meeting is needed. Natural consequence is completed and further restoration if needed.
Parents/Carers	If step 4 is reached on more than 2 occasions in one, week parents and carers must be informed so the child can see that home and school come together to support. A emotional support plan may be needed at this stage.

Reasonable Force Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance	In some circumstances, staff may use reasonable force to restrain a pupil to prevent them: ➤ Causing disorder ➤ Hurting themselves or others ➤ Damaging property Incidents of physical restraint must: ➤ Always be used as a last resort ➤ Be applied using the minimum amount of force and for the minimum amount of time possible ➤ Be used in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned ➤ Never be used as a form of punishment ➤ Be recorded and reported to parents Staff are regularly Team Teach trained. Team Teach is award-winning 'positive handling' training which helps staff support children with challenging behaviour, emotional and behavioural difficulties or social, emotional and mental health issues. The approach is based on a risk reduction approach, involving de escalation strategies, diversion and as a last resort physical intervention. All staff are familiar with DFE guidance <i>'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools'</i>. April 2026
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Graduate response stage 2

Emotional support plan	
Step 1 Emotional support	In discussion with the SENCO and SLT an emotional support plan needs to be in place and reviewed regularly.
	Escalation requires a review of the emotional support plan and strategies that have been used with parents, SENCO and SLT

Graduated response stage 3

Early Help, SEND or SIS	
EARLY HELP If a child's needs are broad and not mainly around educational needs (or needs are unclear) then the school will use the Early Help in order to support the child and their family. The purpose of the Early Help Assessment is to gather a holistic view of a child's needs that require a coordinated short term plan of action to address them. Parents are fully involved in this process and reviews take place regularly. This process is monitored by the safeguarding team.	
SEND SUPPORT Pupils are considered to have SEND if the following applies: The pupil's progress • is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline • fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress • fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers • widens the attainment gap .If the above criteria applies, the SENDCo, In partnership with parents, school staff and other outside agencies will put in place a Learning Support Plan or My Support Plan in order to work towards specific outcomes. This process is monitored by the SEND team. Additional interventions are put in place and other professional requested as and when they are needed.	
SIS SUPPORT Pupils will be referred to the Local authority SIT team in partnership with the parents, school staff to help support them and us.	
If despite the above support being put in place alongside advice from SIT the behaviours continue to persist a Pastoral support Plan needs to be put into place.	

We avoid using consequences that involve taking away a previously earned privilege or any intervention time.

We always avoid speech which could lead to shaming or humiliation of the child. We understand that such approaches are detrimental to the child's self esteem and wellbeing and can escalate situations/incidents.

We recognise that a 'one size fits all' approach to natural consequences is not appropriate for our children. We consider developmental age and any additional or specific needs of the child when deciding appropriate natural consequences.

We use a plan, do and review approach to ensure children will not be given natural consequences that impede their future learning. This is monitored closely when we are discussing incidents with children, we deal with it in a non-judgemental way. For positive communication we use restorative questions.

When discussing behaviours/reactions we make reference to the health and safety and the impact the situation may have had on all involved and in the vicinity. Our scripted restoration approach is as follows:

- Start by recognising their feelings and showing some empathy (if necessary and relevant)
- What happened?
- How did it make feel?
- How do you feel?
- How can we fix this?
- What would you do next time/differently? We use scripts to aid our consistency as we respond to crisis moments; as we hold restorative conversations

When we involve colleagues, we have three possibilities:

1. Time IN: Child sent to colleague, but not to discuss how they managed their feelings and communicated their words, rather simply to supervise the child until the teacher has time to speak to them.

2. United front: Support requested from colleagues to stand alongside in response so that the child sees the united front.

3. Escalation: SLT involvement due to persistent/continuous/extreme behaviour. SLT now enforces natural consequences and next steps, along with teachers/staff.

Reflection

We strongly believe that it's important for our children to clearly link a specific behaviour with its consequence. We do this using restorative language. There may be times when a child requires additional reflection time.

During this time we guide and support the child to help promote children's awareness of behaviours. After a child completes reflection time, we aim to repair and restore the staff child relationship and any other harm caused to others.

We praise his or her behaviours at the first opportunity to reduce the attention away from any management of feeling and communication in a non-positive manner. We reassure the child that the management of feelings and communication in a non-positive manner has been dealt with and that we will

all move on and start afresh. We constantly review what has happened and identify if there was anything that could have been done differently to support the child to manage.

The Nest

The Nest is a special place designed to support the learning, emotional well-being and mental health of children in our school. It is a calm and quiet area that offers a safe space for pupils who have disengaged from their learning or find themselves in a crisis situation.

School staff are on hand to support pupils to reflect on their behaviour and decide on necessary next steps to ensure they are ready to learn.

Children are able to think in a quiet space about their actions; consider how it has affected themselves and others, and the consequences of those choices. Individual targeted support is given to those children who are identified as requiring further nurture, behaviour or support with their learning through sessions with RAEBO / WEST. Following an incident, before pupils return to class, self-reflection is encouraged using the 'Zones of Regulation' to rebuild and repair learner relationships to ensure that a positive attitude to learning is restored. These zones are located throughout school in order for children to access at any point as they transition around school.

Reparation

Reparation means repairing relationships, or 'making good' in some way. We believe that our children should always be given the opportunity to repair, and that they want to do this. We do not believe in the concept of punishment, because it focuses the learner's mind on punishment, rather than what she/he did. This frequently leads to children feeling angry about the punishment, rather than thinking about the impact of their behaviour on others and learning from the incident. Where developmentally appropriate, we support children to take responsibility for what they have done and to repair it with the other person(s) involved/affected. Even children with complex difficulties can be supported to repair; this will look different for each learner. We don't make assumptions about what children feel. We understand that unresolved difficulties can make children very anxious and this can cause behaviours to escalate or become habitual.

Descriptive Praise

We make every effort to tell children what it is exactly that we like about what they are doing; reinforcing the behaviours we want to promote, e.g. "I like how you used your communication book to tell me how you are feeling." "I like that you asked for a break when you needed it." "I noticed you were being a good friend by helping Sam." "Thank you for coming back to your work so quickly."

We give positive feedback and personal recognition. This raises their self esteem and leads to management of feelings and communication in a positive manner. The use of descriptive praise is a feature of Withington language.

Descriptive praise supports emotional development and behaviour for learning. We continuously identify the strengths of the child - we identify these with the child where possible and build on it. Children and Significant Number of Incidents We ensure that adults and children begin each lesson afresh with optimism and encouragement for success.

There will be times when children may display signs/symptoms or react differently to a situation which is deemed as their 'norm'. For some children it may be a 'one off' bad time/day however, for others it may be a sign they are struggling to manage their feelings and communicate in a positive manner. We believe communication with parents/carers is vital, with support from SLT. Contact home to discuss displayed behaviours/reactions and ways to move forward.

There may be times when it is in the best interests of a child that they have supported time away from their class. This will be explained to the child and their parents/carers by class teacher/member of SLT. Graduated Response – Stage 2. Critical Incidents In cases of absconding, assault, bullying including cyberbullying, damage to property, racism and homophobia, we believe it is imperative to ascertain reason and level of understanding of the child.

The incident will be recorded on the class behaviour log and the safeguarding team and/or SLT will inform parents/ carers. We ensure that reflection occurs. The incidents and next steps will be discussed with a member of SLT, and parents/carers updated. Formal procedures may need to be undertaken in accordance with the guidance set out by the Local Authority.

Recording Incidents

At Withington, we record incidents on a class behaviour log. This helps us to highlight areas of concern and is monitored at half termly pupil progress meetings.

Safeguarding Duties at Withington Primary, all staff are responsible for considering whether any changes in behaviour gives cause to suspect whether a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. If such suspicions exist, we follow the school's safeguarding procedures. We will also consider whether continuing disruptive reactions might be the result of unmet educational or other needs. At this point, we will consider whether support systems are needed to be put in place and whether liaising with external agencies is necessary or appropriate, whilst referring to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Promoting positive behaviours

- Whole School and Class Assemblies: These cover areas such as 'Caring for Others', 'Anti – bullying week', 'How to be a good friend', 'Who to go to if you need help'. There is a plan for the year with themes for each week which will include specific issues relevant to our school and community including: Racism; Homophobia; Gender based language; Tolerance and respect; Disability awareness.
- PSHE- children have 30-60mins of lessons each week which include strategies to deal with different situations and ways to help regulate emotions through the zones of regulation and body scanning. This is taught by the class teacher.
- Whole School days/weeks: Specific focus weeks are used to bring certain aspect a higher profile; these include: Children's Mental health Week; Anti Bullying Week; and Manners Week
- School Curriculum including RE and a thread through themes
- High focus on teachers developing positive relationships with children
- Clear and consistent routines in classrooms, around the school and in the wider community
- High expectations from staff about conduct in class and around the school
- Clear pathways when there is a cause for concern and positive reinforcement for good responses.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is not just the role or responsibility of a few key staff for dealing with behaviour in the school; it is a shared responsibility.

Responsibilities

All staff

- All members of staff are responsible for supporting the needs of children across the school. Where a child is seen to be having difficulties they should be treated with respect and understanding.
- Shouting and shaming should never be used and is not tolerated at Withington School.
- Staff will always endeavour to have private discussions with pupils in order to help support any needs that are arising.
- Staff use the Key principles outlined in this policy to support the needs of all our pupils.

Specific Roles

Teachers – Wave 1

- Ensure parents are contacted when:
- A child is having Wave 2 needs
- There has been a 'one off' issue significant incident

Where possible the teacher should do this to have the ongoing dialogue. On some occasions a member of SLT or a Learning mentor will liaise with parents for significant one off incidences.

For wave 2 needs, a discussion should be had with the parent(s) as to the best way to keep a dialogue going.

Family support worker – Wave 2

- Provide specific support for children experiencing any difficulties, whether this is an ongoing need or a short term difficult a child may be having.
- Provide support in class and at break and lunchtimes
- Provide 1:1 or group work to support emotional health needs and mindfulness

Head of learning (Inclusion and Safeguarding) – Wave 3

- Lead the ethos of this policy
- Ensures the policy is implemented effectively
- Ensures effective training for staff, ensuring new staff receive relevant CPD and refresher training is implemented.
- Oversees the specific needs of pupils across the school
- Provides support to staff, pupils and parents as necessary
- Links with outside agencies to offer additional services
- Ensures that all tracking and reporting of incidents and additional needs are up to date

Head of schools and Executive headteacher – Wave 3

- Lead the ethos of this policy
- Is the only person authorised to exclude a child

Parents

- Inform the school of any concerns (Class teacher, Learning mentor, Head of Learning, Head of schools)
- Have an open dialogue with the school
- Support the school when needing to get further support
- Setting down these general guidelines on policy and of reviewing the effectiveness of this
- Duty to consider parents' representations about an exclusion

The role of Herefordshire Council

Attachment training provides an understanding of early child development and the importance of nurture on the developing brain. It focuses on how to support teachers and key adults in understanding challenging behaviours and provides strategies to support children to regulate and manage their emotions more effectively. The training offers advice on establishing a key attachment relationship. It also provides staff with strategies to support children to regulate and manage their emotions more effectively. It uses the principles of Emotion Coaching and attachment theory.

All Herefordshire maintained schools are encouraged to self-evaluate alongside their EP using the Attachment Audit. Herefordshire Virtual school is able to give advice and guidance on children in care.

Training

As a core commitment to our relational approach to behaviour, staff are trained attachment aware and trauma-informed practice. Our staff are provided with training on supporting pupil behaviour as part of their induction process. Some members of staff, including our pastoral team, have specific training for positive handling. Behaviour support also forms part of continuing professional development.

How the school supports staff well-being and reflection

The link between emotions and learning is evident. We provide emotional support for staff to help manage stress and secondary trauma, and to reduce the likelihood of staff burnout.

Practice and policy review process

School Review: This will be continuous (and at least annually) process of review of our school's Relational Policy. It will involve an ongoing cycle that involves applying Attachment Aware principles into practice and policy development, disseminating through frequent training, reviewing effectiveness/identifying weaknesses and/or lack of clarity, problem-solving to further develop practice.

Safeguarding

The school recognises that changes in behaviour may be an indicator that a pupil is in need of help or protection. We will consider whether a pupil's misbehaviour may be linked to them suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm. Where this may be the case, we will follow our safeguarding policy, and consider whether pastoral support, an early help intervention or a referral to children's social care is appropriate. Where there is suspected child on child abuse please read Withington Primary's safeguarding Policy 2025.

Malicious allegations

Where a pupil makes an allegation against a member of staff and that allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether to discipline the pupil in accordance with this policy.

Where a pupil makes an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment against another pupil and that allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether to discipline the pupil in accordance with this policy.

In all cases where an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the school (in collaboration with the local authority designated officer (LADO), where relevant) will consider whether the pupil who made the allegation needs help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help. If so, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate. The school will also consider the pastoral needs of staff and pupils accused of misconduct. All incidents will be recorded.

Confiscation, searches, screening

Searching, screening and confiscation is conducted in line with the DfE's latest guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

Confiscation In the first instance, pupils will always be asked to hand over or remove any "prohibited items" from their own belongings and give to a member of staff. However, staff may search pupils' bags, drawers or lockers if they believe they contain prohibited items, including:

- Knives, weapons or sharp implements that may cause injury (to themselves or others)
- Alcohol/drugs/tobacco items
- Items believed to be stolen items
- Fireworks
- Inappropriate or sexualised images

A pupil's possessions can be searched for any item if the pupil agrees to the search. If the pupil does not agree to the search, staff can still carry out a search for prohibited items (listed above).

This will always be carried out by an authorised member of staff and another staff member. If there is a serious risk of harm if the search is not conducted immediately, or it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff, the search may be carried out by a single authorised member of staff, however this will be a last resort.

All searches for prohibited items, including incidents where no items were found, will be recorded in the school's safeguarding system – My Concern.

Informing parents

Parents will always be informed of any search for a prohibited item. A member of staff will tell the parents as soon as is reasonably practicable:

- What happened
- What was found, if anything
- What has been confiscated, if anything
- What action the school has taken, including any sanctions that have been applied to their pupil

Support after a search

Irrespective of whether any items are found as the result of any search, the school will consider whether the pupil may be suffering or likely to suffer harm and whether any specific support is needed (due to the reasons for the search, the search itself, or the outcome of the search). If this is the case, staff will follow the school's safeguarding policy and speak to the DSL. The DSL will consider if pastoral support, an early help intervention or a referral to children's social care is appropriate.

Mobile phones

Children are not permitted to use mobile phones while within the school grounds. Children who walk home on their own are able to bring mobile phones to school but these should be given directly to the office or the class teacher who will return them at the end of the day. Phones will be signed in and out each day.