



**THE  
HARBOUR  
SCHOOL**

# Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Behaviour Regulation Policy

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## Abbreviations:

**PCC** – Portsmouth City Council

**SEND** – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

**EP** – Education Psychologist

**SEMH** – Social, Emotional and Mental Health



Part of The Delta Education Trust

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## Section 1: Introduction

We understand that the pupils within our school community present a range of behaviours that might affect their progress, wellbeing and the safety of themselves and others. For a number of our pupils, challenging behaviour can be a barrier to learning and to their success beyond their time at The Harbour School. We also know that pupils present behaviours that are worthy of praise, celebration and positive reinforcement. We know that behaviours are:

- learned
- as a result of interaction with the environment
- a communicative function of unmet needs
- connected to neuro-diverse presentations and needs

Our Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Behaviour Regulation Policy is embedded in everyday practice that takes a relational approach to support behaviour change and is underpinned by our philosophy that, 'Behind every challenging behaviour is an unsolved problem or skill that has not yet been learned (or both)' (Ross Greene). Our task, therefore, is to teach pupils the skills to be able to solve their own problems and get their own needs met in a positive way.

The Harbour School has a holistic approach to education, valuing all learning in and out of the classroom. We are trauma-informed and attachment-aware which means we focus on building positive relationships between children and staff, and children with their peers. We understand that traditional behaviour management approaches are often not the best way to support and therefore look at individual / bespoke ways to support children in developing better behaviour regulation. We use the Working With Others (WWO) principles and restorative practices to support children in forming and maintaining positive working and social relationships.

## Section 2: Policy Statement

This policy is based on the application of the principles developed in the work of Dan Hughes and the P(L)ACE approach.

The adults in school support children to develop their own self-awareness, emotional intelligence and resilience. Over time, and with practice, a child will gain strong tools to better understand and regulate their emotions. Key to this approach is a deep respect for the child's own experiences and their inner life. When an adult engages in this work, they provide a supported space within which children hone and develop their own thinking skills. Children are supported in reflecting upon, understanding and then managing their emotions more skilfully, with the adults using skills which are core to the P(L)ACE approach;

**P(L)ACE: PLAYFULNESS, (LOVE), ACCEPTANCE, CURIOSITY, EMPATHY**  
(See Appendix 1)

The policy has included input from: members of staff, representatives from the governing body, parents and carers, pupils and colleagues from within Portsmouth City Council and Delta Education Trust.

## Section 3: Policy Scope

This policy is for all staff, pupils, parents and carers, governors, visitors and partner agencies working within the school and provides guidelines and procedures as to how our school supports and responds to behaviour.

## Section 4: Policy Aims and Objectives

The Harbour School is committed to the emotional mental health and well-being of its pupils, staff 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 Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Behaviour Regulation Policy is to bring us all together to adhere to some basic key principles and practices that reflect our school ethos.

The policy promotes:

- a caring, orderly community in which effective learning can take place and where there is mutual respect
- a consistent approach to supporting behaviour regulation
- acknowledgement that the needs of the individual can be understood
- the development of strategies to promote positive change in behaviour
- children developing a sense of worth, identity, belonging and achievement
- a safe environment for all
- the development of social and emotional skills
- self-regulation, acceptance and responsibility for own actions and the making of positive choices
- the development of the ability to listen to others; cooperate and to appreciate other ways of thinking and behaving
- the promotion of developing self-esteem and preserving the dignity of all
- the use of correct procedures for de-escalation, physical intervention and managing high-risk situations
- the use of pro-active, reflective, collaborative and, where necessary, reactive strategies to support regulation
- the use of restorative approaches to repair relationships after any incident of conflict, significant or otherwise.

These aims will be achieved through a policy that is based on rights, responsibilities and respect. The policy also promotes the use of positive feedback and reinforcement, role-modelling and co-regulation to support the development of self-regulation and the capacity to make positive choices.

The Harbour School has clear systems and structures to support staff in knowing their pupils well. We have an approach to learning that builds security through recognising strengths in learning and celebrates success leading to good classroom relationships.

Our systems and structures make a large and complex school personal, providing the structure and support for good learning, and for independence and character building.

Our ethos builds and maintains relationships by recognising every child, building self-esteem and self-awareness and supporting resolution through restorative approaches.

Our curriculum allows each individual to follow a pathway of learning that builds on their interests and strengths and supports their academic aspiration.

Our approach to learning supports recognition and inclusion for all within the local, national and international community.

Our work with the community builds sustainability in relationships and connects our pupils with relevant learning opportunities across the city and beyond.

## Section 5: Policy Links

The Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Behaviour Regulation Policy links to the following other policies:

- PSHE Education Policy
- Reducing peer-on-peer abuse (includes Anti-bullying, E-safety policy and Cyber-bullying)
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- De-escalation and physical intervention policy.

## Section 6: Roles and Responsibilities

Emphasis is placed on the understanding that it is not the role or responsibility of a few key staff for dealing with behaviour in the school; it is a shared responsibility between all staff, governors and parents. The Harbour School expects all staff and parents to endeavour to be good role models. We recognise, as adults, we are one of the most significant influences on the way that children develop their attitudes for life.

Specific roles and responsibilities in supporting our ethos and approach, are outlined below.

### The role of the Local Governing Board:

- Holding the Headteacher and Leadership to account
- Monitoring the implementation of policy

- Ratifying policy
- Auditing data and measuring progress
- Checking on the Health and Safety of the School
- Setting targets
- Making sure staff are supported and that well being of staff is held in high regard
- Modelling expected behaviours and approaches
- Being committed
- Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing

### **The role of the Headteacher and Leadership team:**

- Leading the way - how we talk about and share information around behaviour support
- Providing training, CPD for staff
- Ensuring the approach is consistent across the school
- Demonstrating commitment
- Providing a clear strategy of where we are going and why
- Setting targets and key performance indicators as part of the School Development Plan
- Understanding what presenting behaviours may mean for the pupil
- Reducing exclusions and reinforcing inclusion and belonging
- Supporting and facilitating change through supervision, regular opportunities for reviewing practice.
- Enabling staff to feel confident and empowered in a safe and supported environment
- Promoting staff confidence, competence
- Being accountable to the governing body
- Modelling expected behaviours with staff, families, pupils

### **The role of teachers and support staff:**

- Ensuring pupils feel safe and secure in order to make progress
- Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating pupil progress
- Building relationships with pupils, families and professionals
- Connecting with others as a team around the pupil
- Using professional learning opportunities
- Being prepared for the learning day
- Making every moment count – play and learn alongside pupils
- Ensuring they know the pupils, how will pupils learn best and how will we meet their needs
- Providing meaningful learning with which pupils can engage
- Being ready to respond to crisis in a relational way
- Preparing for time with pupils and to support the emotional regulation with each pupil
- Being curious about the child
- Having a growth mind set to be passionate and enthusiastic
- Learning, practising, implementing and reviewing practice
- Communicating in a relational way with parents/carers sharing successes and working in a collaborative way to support each pupil

## **The role of parents/carers:**

- Communicating with us, feeling safe and listened to by staff
- Building trusting relationships with the school
- Working together with us
- Understanding that we all want the best for their child

## **The role of others:**

- Working in collaboration to improve outcomes for pupils
- Offering challenge and support

## **Section 7: The role of PCC / Delta Education Trust**

Throughout the year the school will commission and use training and support delivered from both PCC and Delta Education Trust.

The Harbour School will self-evaluate alongside the attached educational psychologists using the Attachment Aware Self-Evaluation Form. The school's link EP and colleagues from within Delta Education Trust will be available to support the development and implementation of the Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Behaviour Regulation Policy.

## **Section 8: Approach**

The Harbour School promotes taking a non-judgemental, curious and holistic stance when trying to make sense of behaviour; ensuring opportunities for reparation, especially following the most significant incidents where we recognise the potential for relationships to be impacted. We take a whole school approach to achieving authentic inclusion and learning. When responding to the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of a child, it is not the responsibility of a few staff in school; it is everyone's responsibility.

Key premises of our approach are:

### **Understanding behaviour**

- Behaviour is a form of communication. The change in terminology in the 2014 Code of Practice of Special Educational Needs (SEN) helps to promote a shift towards viewing behaviour as a communication of an emotional need (whether conscious or unconscious), within a particular context, and responding accordingly.

- Behaviour must always be viewed systemically and within the context of important relationships (i.e. a relational communication pattern rather than an internal problem).
- Taking a non-judgmental, curious and empathic attitude towards behaviour. We encourage all adults to respond in a way that focuses on the feelings, emotions and needs that might drive certain behaviour, rather than the behaviour itself. Children who are viewed/described as having ‘behavioural difficulties’ need to be regarded as vulnerable rather than troublesome, and we all have a duty to explore this vulnerability and provide the support the need to thrive.
- Not all behaviours are a matter of ‘choice’ and not all factors linked to the behaviour of children are within their control. Therefore, the language of choice (e.g. ‘good choice/bad choice’) is not always helpful.
- Maintaining clear boundaries and expectations around behaviour. Changing how we respond to behaviour does not mean having no expectations, routines or structure. In order to help children feel safe, their educational environment needs to be high in both nurture and structure. Children need predictable routines, expectations and responses to behaviour. These must be in place and modelled appropriately, within the context of a safe and caring school environment.

## Putting relationships first

- This requires a school ethos that promotes strong relationships between staff, children and their parents/carers. It also relies on creating a positive school culture and climate that fosters connection, inclusion, respect and value for all members of the school community.
- Encouraging parental engagement and involvement is absolutely crucial when addressing and planning support for a child’s SEMH needs
- “The parent-child connection is the most powerful mental health intervention known to mankind” (Bessel van der Kolk)

## Responses and Reinforcements

- At all times staff will be aware of and actively seek opportunities to provide clear, positive feedback and reinforcement
- Natural rewards and consequences that can follow certain behaviours should be made explicit, without the need to enforce ‘sanctions’ that can shame and ostracise children from their peers, school community and family, leading to potentially more negative behaviour.
- Being ‘fair’ is not about everyone getting the same (equality) but about everyone getting what they need (equity)
- Thinking of a child as behaving badly disposes you to think of punishment. Thinking of a child as struggling to handle something difficult encourages you to help them through their distress
- Staff adopt a restorative approach to managing conflict which helps pupils understand the impact of their behaviour on others. This approach endeavours to create a more respectful climate, a relational approach, honesty and a greater understanding of others’ feelings. It promotes accountability and seeks to repair harm created from the conflict / challenge

- Fixed Term Exclusion (FTE) - Pupils who attend The Harbour School are especially vulnerable to the impact of exclusion. On the rarest of occasions a FTE may be used when deemed in the child's best interest. This will only occur after consultation with parents / carers, other involved professionals and when all other options have been considered.
- Permanent exclusion - The Harbour School will avoid permanently excluding pupils as far as possible. The school will take into account the statutory duty in relation to pupils with SEN and disability when considering an exclusion. This includes having regard to the SEND Code of Practice.
- The Harbour School's approach has its roots in attachment awareness and can be applied to everyday interactions with children summarised by the acronym P(L)ACE (as developed by Dan Hughes). See appendix 1
- Integrating Emotion Coaching into everyday practice when working with children to support the development of positive behaviour, resilience and community well-being. See appendix 2
- The Harbour School adopts a flexible response to behaviours which challenge to avoid escalating behaviours resulting in crisis for the pupil.
- The Harbour School recognises the adverse consequences of using Fixed Term Exclusions and these will only be used in the rarest of occasions and with the authorisation of the headteacher.
- The Education Act 1996 allows school staff to use reasonable force to physically control or restrain students. It also allows other people to do so, provided they have been authorised by the Headteacher. Within The Harbour School, physical intervention will only be considered when **all** other possible strategies have been exhausted. All trained staff will have authorisation to use physical intervention in line with this policy.

## Section 9: How the school supports staff well-being and reflection

The Harbour school promotes the idea that the SEMH needs of all should be at the heart of the school.

Research suggests that when schools place a strong emphasis upon the emotional health and well-being of all members of the school community, and this ethos is driven by the school's senior leadership team and is evident in practice, this leads to better outcomes for all (Banerjee, R., Weare, K., & Farr, W. (2014).

Emotional support for staff is provided through daily briefings / debriefs, open door procedure with support through the school / provision leadership structure, supervision (in house and from the EP service), staff assistance support / help lines and in accountability and welfare meetings. Staff are supported in managing stress and secondary trauma. Restorative approaches also support staff in a manner which promotes accountability and seeks to repair any harm / damage to a relationship should conflict or challenge arise (with other staff, pupils, parents/carers).

The policy is further supported by training so that staff understand and are able to implement the policy. All school staff are offered:

- PACE/PLACE training delivered by The Sigma Teaching School
- Attachment Aware training delivered by Louise Bomber / Touch-Base
- Attachment Aware training delivered by the link Educational Psychologist
- Emotion Coaching delivered by the link Educational Psychologist
- Team-Teach training delivered by The Solent Academy Trust

## Section 10: Practice and policy review process

The Harbour School's Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Behaviour Regulation Policy will be under a continuous review and will be amended when opportunities arise to generate new ways to articulate our approach. There will be a formal annual process of review with contributions from key stakeholders.

To inform the School Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and Development Plan (SDP) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used including:

- Behaviour / Incident reports
- Incidences of bullying
- Incident reports for racial abuse and other hate offences
- Violent Incidents reports
- Development of social and emotional skills
- Use of Fixed Term Exclusions
- Use of Physical Interventions
- Use of Reduced Timetables
- Pupil and parent views
- Success of Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for every pupil
- Reintegration to mainstream education where appropriate

All reviews of this policy 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.

## Appendix 1

### PACE/PLACE

**PLAYFULNESS** is about creating an atmosphere of lightness and interest when you communicate. An open, ready, calm, relaxed and engaged attitude.

**ACCEPTANCE** is about actively communicating to the child that you accept the wishes, feelings, thoughts, urges, motives and perceptions that are underneath the outward behaviour. Unconditionally accepting a child makes them feel secure, safe and loved.

**CURIOSITY** is wondering about the meaning behind the behaviour for the child. Curiosity lets the child know that the adults understand. Without judgement, children become aware of their inner life.

**EMPATHY** is the adult demonstrating that he or she knows how difficult an experience is for the child. The adult is telling the child that she will not have to deal with the distress alone. Empathy gives a sense of compassion for the child and their feelings.

More recently, the acronym PLACE has been used, to include a fifth element:

**LOVE** which is about creating loving relationships - all children need love.

More information can be found at: [ddpnetwork.org/about-ddp/meant-pace](http://ddpnetwork.org/about-ddp/meant-pace)

## Appendix 2

### What Emotion Coaching means in practice (how co-regulation works)

Step 1: Recognising, empathising, soothing to calm ('I understand how you feel, you're not alone')

Step 2: Validating the feelings and labelling ('This is what is happening, this is what you're feeling')

Step 3 (if needed): Setting limits on behaviour ('We can't always get we want')

Step 4: Problem-solving with the child/young person ('We can sort this out')