Leigh St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Supporting Social and Emotional Development Policy

Updated: September 2025

Review: September 2027

Headteacher: Mrs S Watson

Named personnel with designated responsibility:

Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding and Behaviour Management: Mrs S Watson

Deputy Designated Senior for Safeguarding and Behaviour Management: Mrs C Wilkinson

Nominated Governor for Safeguarding: Mrs Deborah Catchatoor

Chair of Governors: Mr Ashley Turner

Our School Mission Statement

INSPIRE To be the best that I can be

BELIEVE To believe I can make a difference for good in this world

ACHIEVE To know I have the roots to grow and the wings to fly

At Leigh St Mary's Church of England Primary School, we promote a life-long love of learning. Through enriching, exciting learning opportunities and a creative curriculum, children are given the foundations to

flourish. Our Christian values are at the heart of our school and provide us with a culture of happiness, respect and trust.

We aim to promote a sense of belonging within a warm, nurturing environment where children feel safe and valued. We celebrate cultural diversity and believe that every child should have the opportunity to be the best that they can be.

Through our encouragement of good manners, kindness and friendship we aim to ensure our children display the values of good citizenship. We hope to instill in our children an 'I can' attitude and to provide our children with the tools to succeed in an ever changing world.

Rationale

This policy has been developed and adopted for Leigh St Mary's following guidance form the Virtual School's team and in response to training on Early Childhood Trauma, Attachment Theory and supporting Looked After Pupils within schools by Dr Jennifer Nock. The guidance in the policy should provide an alternative pathway to support behaviours of particular pupils who have attachment difficulties and display regular 'crisis behaviours' and for whom the school's Behaviour Policy is not appropriate to support their needs.

At Leigh St Mary's, all school staff use a consistent attachment-based approach where relationships are central. All staff act as secondary care givers and recognise that children communicate their needs via their behaviour. Every adult in our school is encouraged to look beyond behaviour and to be curious about children's needs. We recognise that children need support to keep emotionally regulated and cope in everyday social situations and in more challenging interactions.

In our school, all children are offered compassion and co-operative learning with a caring adult, supportive adult. No child is ever intentionally shamed and all children are regarded with respect and adults believe in their innate goodness and desire to play and learn.

For all behaviour every child and adult will receive, calmness, connection, curiosity and co-operation to enable compassionate learning and the building of empathy and esteem for themselves and others

Key understanding that is shared by all staff (the foundation stones of supporting S and E Development)

Basic physiological and emotional needs (Maslow's Hierarchy) must be met before a child feels safe enough to relax, play and learn.	Particularly vulnerable children (e.g. SEN/LAC) may not behave in line with chronological age and observed behaviour indicates the child's developmental stage.	If children have no other option, they will quickly move into flight/flight/freeze or flop mode, and this is the only option available to them in this moment.	Adult communication with children is key to raising self esteem
Prosocial behaviour and emotional regulation need to be explicitly taught across school	All staff need to consistently demonstrate that they care and can be trusted.	Children are best supported through strong staff & parent connections.	ALL children are vulnerable and a distinction is made between 'vulnerable' and 'particularly vulnerable'.
All staff need to be well regulated as raised voices, angry faces and body language create fear and stress.	Strategies and skills to manage behaviour take time and effort to learn – small successes need to be celebrated.	Acknowledging and taking responsibility for actions can only be done when we are calm state, whatever our age.	Children may not be able to read social cues or deal with strong emotions without adult support.
Our relationships with children involve an unequal distribution of power and responsibility, and therefore, the adult is responsible for connection, attunement, boundaries and navigation.	When a pupil has maladaptive ('challenging') reactions, the cause of the problem does not lie with the pupil, but is a product of the interaction between the adult and child.	Regardless of causal factors, the adult's responsibility is to create an optimal learning environment for each and every child.	Building a threat-free, safe environment where adults are in charge and takes full responsibility, children are is free from the burden of having to keep themselves physically and emotionally safe.

1. Social and Emotional Teaching that is reinforced by all staff

- We all belonging to a school community and share space
- Everyone has rights that need to be respected
- Staff can be trusted to support when we need help
- There are a range of emotions that also physically affect our body
- Strategies can be learned to control our emotional responses and behaviour
- Personal differences and experiences may affect our responses to emotions
- Looking after our wellbeing is key for positive physical and mental health
- Our actions have outcomes

2. Key desired behaviours that all staff promote and encourage

- We move around school calmly and quietly.
- We share our space happily and respectfully.
- We need to put things right when we are calm.

3. Understanding Behaviour

Directed Time for staff reflection upon social and emotional development is given a high priority, and there is a common understanding of the importance of interpreting, rather than reacting to behaviours. Key questions are *'What has happened to this child?*'; '*What feeling is the child behaving?*'; *'What is the purpose and meaning of the behavior for this child*'; '*What does this child need from me in this moment… and in the future?*'

Understanding Behaviour – A checklist for professional reflection

- Children are supported in their emotional and social growth by a relevant curriculum and learning environment that is modified in response to professional reflection on observed behaviours.
- Are there any events in the child's history that may be impacting upon his/her current responses to adults, peers, learning, the environment?
- Is the child ready to learn or is s/he distracted by unmet physiological or emotional needs?
- What are the precursors to any distressed behaviours?
- Is the curriculum sensitive to the child's learning needs?
- Does the learning environment match the child's learning needs?
- Are learning activities and experiences sensitive to the child's backstory?
- Does the child have a particular vulnerability (SEN/PPG/Attendance/CP/LAC/CPC)?
- What is the child's viewpoint? (Put self in child's shoes)
- What is the parent's viewpoint? (Put self in parent's shoes)
- Have basic needs been met- developmentally & historically?

4. Strategies to be used across school by all staff

- Sensory snacks and movement
- Physiological needs checked and responded to
- Awareness of and appropriate response to emotional states
- Awareness of and appropriate responses to signs of low level stress
- Knowledge and understanding of the child's back story
- Positivity, consistency and calmness
- Strategies and resources to support executive function, e.g. visual timetables; visual timers

- Visual reminders of expected behaviours
- Working alongside parents
- Acknowledging positive behaviours and emotional control, particularly small successes with particularly vulnerable children.
- Relevant and frequent teaching of PSHE skills to build resilience and emotional literacy

5. Motivators

Rewarding positive behaviour is effective only when children understand when and why they are being given it and that all staff apply this consistently, e.g. '*This week I am looking for everyone using please and thank you'*, or *'Can all staff on the yard support Ben to develop his skills in following 2 step instructions as this is his class target.'*

Motivators should be relational in nature, and three-dimensional if possible (not screen-based, but interactive and physical/sensory). e.g. playing a game with an adult; having tea and cake with an adult; helping an adult to do a task; choosing a peer to play/do a chosen activity with; working with a Champion or Buddy.

Examples of motivators

- Relational activities, as above
- Verbal acknowledgement of good behaviour
- Special mention in school
- Positive messages communicated to parents e.g. postcard; text message, email
- Individual reinforcement such as a visit another member of staff to celebrate
- Rewards to celebrate emotional and social achievement
- Responsibilities around the school e.g. helping younger children in school
- Class trip to the cinema (Request from class staff to be made to SLT)
- Spontaneous trip to local park following a successful morning (Request from class staff as above)
- Subtler forms of praise for pupils who find overt praise difficult to accept
- Recognising and celebrating achievements whilst in and out of school.

6. Responses/Natural Outcomes

Although actions do have consequences, children are not always acting out of choice, they are sometimes engaging in survival behaviours that are mediated by unconscious processes. Therefore, caution should be used with the word 'choice'.

A 'Connection before Correction' approach is used, so the priority is always on repairing the relationship and establishing emotional safety. Using any sanction is effective only if children are clear about why it has been given and that it is given after they have a chance to reflect on their behaviour when they are in a calm state.

Behavioural responses should not be presented visually or referred to again after they have been applied.

Outcomes should only be applied when the pupil is regulated and able to reflect upon their behaviour.

Outcomes never involve taking away a previously earned privilege or any intervention time.

Staff avoid any action which lead to shaming or humiliation of a pupil. Approaches such as 'Good to be Green', Traffic Lights, Cloud and Sunshine, Smiley/Frowny faces, Report Cards are detrimental to children's self-esteem and wellbeing, and can result in increased survival behaviour. Only the adult who is involved in the event should comment.

The developmental age and specific needs of the pupil will be considered when deciding appropriate outcomes, as will the child's physical and emotional state at the time. A 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate and this should be kept in mind when deciding upon an appropriate natural outcome, as outlined below.

A supportive conversation takes place as soon as possible, focusing first on the child's own feelings (physical and emotional). Then, and only if the child is developmentally mature enough, move to discuss how the other child/person may have felt.

Outcomes of behavior are responsive to the needs of the child rather than punishing or isolating, e.g. a child who repeatedly experiences difficulties on the playground does not play out with other children but does an alternative PLEASURABLE activity with an adult.

Natural outcomes include *making up time for lost learning* and *reflection time*, where the lens is upon the child's own bodily and emotional state and *reparation time*, where the person that has been affected by the child's action is the focus, and actions are taken to repair the relationship. This can be in the form of verbal, written, picture, or an action, e.g. build her a Lego model, offer her a drink or snack, make her a card. In all of these, the child should be supported by a regulated and supportive adult.

If the context is repeatedly problematic, e.g. assembly, playtime, child works with adult to ensure subsequent participation can be successful, e.g. having reduced time / supervision / or not taking part in the activity. As above, the child is given alternative, PLEASURABLE activity, supported by adult. This is a protective strategy rather than a punitive one, and this should be clearly communicated to the child.

Children are never forced to say sorry.

Before, during and after a pupil completes lost learning or reflection or reparation, it is important to repair and restore the staff-pupil relationship if this is necessary. Staff should praise his or her behaviour at the first opportunity to shift attention in a positive way.

7. Next steps when behaviours are frequently at crisis level

When all the above strategies are not supporting a child the Headteacher will involve the support of the SENDCo and external agency support. A strategy plan will be created to enable the child to learn well and interact in socially appropriate ways. This may take the form on an IBP, PSP or Early Help. This may lead to evidence gathering for an EHCP as it is likely that intense adult care will be needed at this level of support. All staff will have greater awareness of a child's specific vulnerability and strategies to employ. This may involve accessing alternative provision in school or a reduced timetable.

Continuous survival/crisis:

It is expected that teachers and pupils begin each lesson afresh with optimism and encouragement for success. If a pupil continues to experience difficulties regulating their behaviours, then there are a variety of options that may be taken:

- *Solution circles request made by class staff. (The creative problem solving tool will help staff to plan, do and review.)*

- *The pupil will attend a behaviour management meeting with the class teacher where a target for their behaviour will be set. The class teacher will work collaboratively with the pupil to identify any reasons, concerns or difficulties which may be leading the pupil to make inappropriate behaviour choices.*
- *If after an agreed time there is no change in the pupil's behaviour, the pupil will attend a behaviour meeting with the Headteacher. At this time the Class Teacher will inform the pupil's parent/carer of the situation and share the pupil's behaviour target with them.*
- *If the pupil continues to show frequent survival/crisis behaviours the class teacher will arrange a meeting with their parent/carer to discuss their child's behaviour. The Headteacher will support staff during this process.*
- *It may be decided that it is in the pupil's best interests to give them some supported time away from their class e.g. The Glade.*

Extreme Behaviours

School operates a red and amber card system whereby immediate support can be requested should a child's behaviour suddenly have an extreme negative impact on class learning and safety.

Leigh St Mary's has a Positive Handling Policy in place that may be implemented should crisis behaviours result in an unsafe environment for the child, other learners and staff.

All use of Positive Handling procedures should be logged via CPOMS, recorded in the school's Bound and Numbered log Book and should be discussed with the child's parents as soon as possible following an incident.