



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

Item: 8

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 12 November 2025.

Promoting Positive Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Policy.

Report by Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

1. Overview

- 1.1. Collective evidence from the Behaviour in Scottish Schools Survey 2023 showed the standards of relationships and behaviour in Scottish schools are not what they should be. While most children are well behaved most or all of the time, the evidence demonstrated that there is increased disruption in classrooms and increases in physical and verbal aggression.
- 1.2. The Relationships and Behaviour in Schools: National Action Plan (2024 to 2027) was created by The Scottish Advisory Group on Behaviour and Relationships in Schools and published in August 2024. It draws together the actions to be taken between 2024 and 2027 in response to the evidence from the Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research 2023.
- 1.3. The Action Plan requires all local authorities and all schools to have a relationships and behaviour policy in place to inform practice in educational settings.
- 1.4. Orkney's Promoting Positive Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, has been developed to provide a consistent approach across Orkney's learning communities. The information in the policy will support schools and educational establishments to develop their own policies and implement an empathic, nurturing, relational approach to teaching and learning.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
 - i. Approve the Promoting Positive Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Orkney's Relationship Policy

- 3.1. The introductory section of the policy reflects that the Scottish approach to behaviour in schools has evolved significantly from the punitive discipline policies of the past to a focus on building relationships to promote positive behaviour. The reasons for this being:
- Behaviourist (punishment and rewards) systems are evidenced as lacking effectiveness if used as the only approach to classroom management.
 - Sanctions and rewards approaches can discriminate against children with additional support needs.
- 3.2. The Policy is based on the **principles** of
- Inclusion.
 - Children's Rights.
 - Equity and Equality.
 - Wellbeing of All.
- 3.3. Key **Concepts** in embedding relational practice as described in the policy are:
- Nurture.
 - Responding to trauma.
 - Understanding and responding to distressed behaviour.
 - Importance of School Climate (authoritative vs authoritarian).
- 3.4. The policy outlines a systems approach to applying principles and practice across the following levels
- Whole School or Setting Level.
 - Classroom (curriculum and pedagogy).
 - Parental and community engagement.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. The draft policy was distributed to Education Managers, Schools and Parent Councils as part of a consultation process
- 4.2. It was suggested that the policy was not finalised until it could be aligned with new guidance on consequences which was published in June 2025.
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fostering-positive-inclusive-safe-school-environment-guidance/>

- 4.3. The policy references the new guidance above, and its recommendations align with the recommendations in the guidance

5. Next Steps

- 5.1. If adopted by Council, the policy will be formally launched through events such as Head Teachers meetings and in-service events from December 2025.
- 5.2. Schools will be asked to audit their training needs to ensure confidence in developing their approaches recommended in the policy. Identified training and development needs will be met by Educational Psychology. It is anticipated that the policy will be fully implemented in all educational establishments by June 2026.

For Further Information please contact:

Cathy Lyner, Principal Educational Psychologist: cathy.lyner@orkney.gov.uk

Implications of Report

1. **Financial** – There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
2. **Legal** – Approval of the policy assists the Council to comply with its obligations under the relevant legislative frameworks and associated Scottish Government guidance.
3. **Corporate Governance** – Not applicable.
4. **Human Resources** – Not applicable.
5. **Equalities** – An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 2.
6. **Island Communities Impact** – An Island Communities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - ☐ Growing our economy.
 - ☒ Strengthening our Communities.
 - ☐ Developing our Infrastructure.
 - ☐ Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - ☐ Cost of Living.
 - ☐ Sustainable Development.

- ☒ Local Equality.
- ☐ Improving Population Health.

- 9. Environmental and Climate Risk** – Not applicable.
- 10. Risk** – Not applicable.
- 11. Procurement** – Not applicable.
- 12. Health and Safety** – Not applicable.
- 13. Property and Assets** – Not applicable.
- 14. Information Technology** – Not applicable.
- 15. Cost of Living** – Not applicable.

List of Background Papers

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/promoting-positive-relationships-and-behaviour-in-educational-settings/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fostering-positive-inclusive-safe-school-environment-guidance/documents/>.

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/improving-relationships-and-behaviour/relationships-and-behaviour-national-policy-guidance/>

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/improving-relationships-and-behaviour/promoting-positive-relationships-and-behaviour-in-educational-settings/>

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/improving-relationships-and-behaviour/relationships-and-behaviour-developing-a-school-policy/>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Promoting Positive Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Policy.

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 3: Island Communities Impact Assessment.



Orkney Islands Council
Education, Communities and
Housing

Promoting Positive
Relationships, Learning
and Behaviour Policy

Version Control

Document Reference.	Revision.	Issue Date.	Reason for Issue.	Reviewer.	Sign.
ELH033	00.	Date	New Policy.	Service Manager (Support for Learning and Inclusion)	

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Introduction

National frameworks supporting education and children's services are consistent in their promotion of positive relationships being central to the wellbeing of learners, the creation of inclusive practices and the embedding of effective learning environments linked to higher achievement.

National guidance from Education Scotland requires all local authorities and all schools to have a relationships and behaviour policy in place to inform practice in educational settings. This policy has been developed to provide a consistent approach across Orkney's learning communities. The information in the policy will support schools and early years settings to develop their own policies and implement an empathic, nurturing, relational approach. Orkney's policy seeks to emphasise the following as pivotal to embedding relational practice

- The values we have are reflected in the relationships we have, are demonstrated in our interactions with others and influence the way we consider and behave towards each other. Adults in a learning community play an important role in modelling positive, respectful relationships for learners.
- A school's culture, ethos and values are fundamental to promoting positive relationships and behaviour and in creating an environment for effective learning and teaching.
- Early intervention and prevention are key elements in ensuring we get it right for all children and young people within a culture that prioritises positive relationships, wellbeing, positive behaviour and planned preventative approaches.
- To ensure the necessary values, culture and practices are fully embedded there needs to be a shared understanding of wellbeing, inclusion, equality and equity, underpinned by children's rights as defined in the UNCRC, across all those who belong to the learning community.

Rationale

Changes in Scottish Education

The Scottish approach to behaviour in schools has evolved significantly from the punitive discipline policies of the past to a focus on building relationships to promote positive behaviour.

Previously a behaviourist approach was adopted which centred around managing behaviour through rewards, sanctions and punishment, rewarding good behaviour and punishing bad. This approach is evidenced as limited because it takes no account of the complexities of individual human experiences, needs and perceptions. In addition, behaviourist approaches can discriminate against some children and young people with additional support needs and/or those who have experienced trauma and adversity.

Our current thinking in education and across children's services has been more widely shaped by an understanding of child psychology, an ecological view of child development, and systems theories of motivation and learning

We now have a greater awareness of:

- the impact of the behaviour of adults on that of children and young people.
- the impact of early development and experiences on children and young people, including that of trauma and adversity.
- the impact of poverty.
- neurodiversity and individual difference.

From the research that exists, we know that positive relationships and behaviour are at the core of effective learning and teaching and the development of the wellbeing of the whole child.

Improving Learning Outcomes

Discussion of positive relationships often focusses on behaviour, but there is evidence that warm and supportive relationships with teachers can improve children's and young people's academic outcomes, especially for those who struggle with learning (Eisenhower, Baker & Blacher, 2007). More recent Scottish based research indicates that schools, where attainment is higher than expected for their catchment area, demonstrate positive relationships throughout the school community.

Nurturing, establishing and maintaining positive relationships is a necessary part of efforts to raise attainment and neglecting this aspect of school life can be a key cause for limited returns from other educational interventions and reforms, no matter how well evidenced or costly. Strong, reciprocal relationships, with high expectations and clear and consistent boundaries, matter most in terms of pupils' achievements and self-belief.

Increasing Emotional Wellbeing

There is also strong evidence that positive relationships foster emotional wellbeing and good mental health. A recently published longitudinal study of over 8000 students in 84 UK Secondary schools evidenced that

"Better student-rated school climate, at the student and school level was associated with lower risk of depression, fewer social-emotional-behavioural difficulties and higher wellbeing [in young people]"Hinze, et.al, (2023)

This new research demonstrates that positive relationships as an integral part of developing school climate are essential to not only promote wellbeing but also protect against the onset of mental health problems developing in young people.

Positive relationships are therefore essential for young people's mental health at school and are integral to any [whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing](#).

Relationships are the Responsibility of All

[The General Teaching Council Scotland Professional Standards](#) were refreshed and revised in 2021 and include a section called 'Being a teacher in Scotland' which highlights the professional values of:

- social justice - Building and fostering positive relationships in the learning community which are respectful of individuals.
- trust and respect and integrity - Understanding health and wellbeing and the importance of positive and purposeful relationships to provide and ensure a safe and secure environment for all learners and colleagues within a caring and compassionate ethos.

The Curriculum for Excellence views health and wellbeing as the responsibility of all. Teaching and learning are expected to develop 4 key capacities; successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. These capacities at their core involve children and young people acquiring and utilising positive relationships.

Steps have been made towards developing an empathic, nurturing culture and ethos across Orkney's schools, and early years settings. This policy will further support progress and consistency in providing a whole establishment, whole systems approach to relationship-based learning by describing the practical application of:

- inclusive, rights-based approaches.
- concepts of empathy.
- relational practice.
- theory of motivational school 'climates' which balance high expectations and structure on one hand, and warmth and support on the other - "authoritative" climate.

Guiding Principles

Wellbeing

It is essential that the whole school community has a shared understanding of wellbeing and the dignity and worth of every individual. This promotes a culture and ethos of positive relationships.

Children's Rights

Promoting positive relationships and behaviour is underpinned by a rights-based approach. Getting it Right for Every Child and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires every practitioner to familiarise themselves with and in their day-to-day practice take account of the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which has been incorporated into Scots Law (2024). UNCRC highlights the importance of respecting the rights of all learners and their entitlement to be included in decisions regarding their learning experiences and to have all aspects of the wellbeing developed and supported.

Inclusion

Inclusion is everyone's responsibility. Inclusion happens when educational settings create environments that meet the diverse needs of all learners, through personalised learning and support that takes account of individual needs, choices, and circumstances. Understanding, respecting and embracing difference across our schools and in our communities helps create a more socially just society for everyone.

An inclusive and positive ethos which is embedded across the whole school community enables positive relationships to thrive. Inclusion entails children and young people being present, participating, achieving, and being supported. Inclusion is a right and entitlement within the Curriculum for Excellence and the presumption of mainstream.

Equality and Equity

Education settings that promote equality treat individuals fairly, value and celebrate diversity and challenge all forms of discrimination. Equity in education ensures that each child and young person is given the right support, at the right time, in the right place to achieve their full potential.

National Policy Context

The legislative landscape emphasizes the importance of wellbeing and relationships in shaping positive outcomes for children and young people. This is evident in national reviews requiring educational establishments and local authorities to review their current practice, policies and guidance around relationships and behaviour, for example:

- The Independent Care Review (Feb 2020).
- The ASfL Implementation Review (June 2020).

The importance placed on relationships and behaviour is founded on appreciation that approaches need to be developed from an understanding of children's needs and children's rights as documented in for example:

- Education Scotland Act (2016).
- Getting it Right for Every Child (Scottish Government 2022).
- Incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law (January 2024).

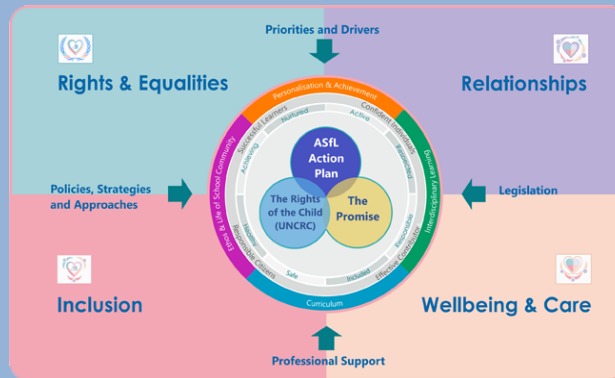
Some common principles are interwoven across Scottish Education legislation and guidance. For example: Developing a positive whole school ethos and culture: relationships, learning and behaviour (Scottish Government 2018) [Developing-Positive-Whole-School-Ethos-Culture-Relationships-Learning-Behaviour](#) and more recently guidance on promoting positive relationships and behaviour in educational settings (October 2023) [Promoting-Positive-Relationships-and-Behaviour-in-Educational-Settings](#) states that:

- all local authorities should have a relationships and behaviour policy in place to inform practice in educational settings.
- All schools should have a relationships and behaviour policy.
- All schools have a programme for providing professional learning to support the implementation of the policy.

The full landscape of guidance and recommendations is at the national level relating to relationships and behaviour is complex, but the diagram below illustrates the main themes which have informed Orkney's policy. (The full list of references the policy has drawn from is listed in **Appendix 1**).

Children's rights and entitlements are fundamental to Scotland's approach to social justice and social inclusion.

Inclusion happens when the learning environment supports everyone. Individual needs are met through appropriate pedagogy, curriculum and personalised support.



Positive Relationships are underpinned by a culture and ethos where everyone feels safe, respected and valued.

Wellbeing is fostered through caring supportive and purposeful environments where the understanding and skills for good mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing are taught.

Applying Legislation and Principles to Practice

What are Positive Relationships

This is an intuitive concept that covers the many ways different individuals and groups relate to each other. As such, a single definition is not easy to provide, but general features of positive relationships are listed below and at their core is **empathy** “connecting to the emotions that underpin (another person’s) experience” Dr Brene Brown:

- Communicating respect and positive regard for others.
- Taking others’ perspectives into account as valid and meaningful.
- Adapting to individual needs as they present themselves.
- Engaging in positive and attuned interactions.
- Accepting conflict and disagreement as inevitable and acting to resolve this consensually.
- Being aware of, valuing and responding to the other’s emotional state.
- Awareness of one’s own needs in interaction and how these may be positively or negatively impacting on the relationship.
- Understanding the unique balance of support and challenge that every individual needs to grow and develop – both children and adults.

Education Scotland Informed Level Training in Relationship Based approaches Informs us that positive relationships are the basis of relational approaches and practitioners who are committed to relational approaches will generally:

- show unconditional positive regard to learners (accepting and supporting them exactly as they are without evaluating or judging them).
- understand and respond to behaviour in a respectful, child friendly and holistic way, considering the individual in the context of their family, community and culture.
- proactively develop responses to support learners’ wellbeing and learners who may be at risk of disengaging or of being excluded.
- actively listen, with purpose, to children and young people.
- focus on inclusion, wellbeing, and addressing barriers to learning rather than punitive processes.
- help children and young people to be aware of and understand the impact of their actions and behaviours.
- It should be noted that positive relationships do not imply total harmony or everyone being happy all the time. They are seen in how we respond and help in times of greatest difficulty as well as when things are going well.

Relational Approaches Key Concepts

Nurture

Nurturing practices are rooted in attachment theory. At the core of nurturing approaches are the creation of feelings of safety and trust in the context of secure relationships. A relationship with at least one caring adult can be the main factor in improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people, including those who have experienced adversity (Gambone, Klem, & Connell 2002). Nurturing practices aim to provide children and young people with attachment figures with whom they develop safe and secure relationships. With these in place, children and young people can achieve and maintain effective cognitive functioning and successfully engage in learning.

A nurturing approach values everyone across the whole school community. Positive and attuned relationships are central to a nurturing approach. They form the foundation for effective teaching and learning, and the development of wellbeing. Children and young people's life experiences are taken into consideration as well as their strengths and interests.

Nurturing Approaches can also be used as a targeted intervention, but they are particularly effective when used as a whole establishment approach which creates a nurturing and inclusive community.

A Nurturing Approach is based on 6 Nurturing Principles:

- Children's learning is understood developmentally.
- The environment offers a safe base.
- The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing.
- Language is a vital means of communication.
- All behaviour is communication.
- Transitions are important in children and young people's lives.
- Engagement in learning can take place.

Nurture has a growing evidence base with over sixty-two academic studies carried out over the past twenty years (The Nurture Group Network, 2015).

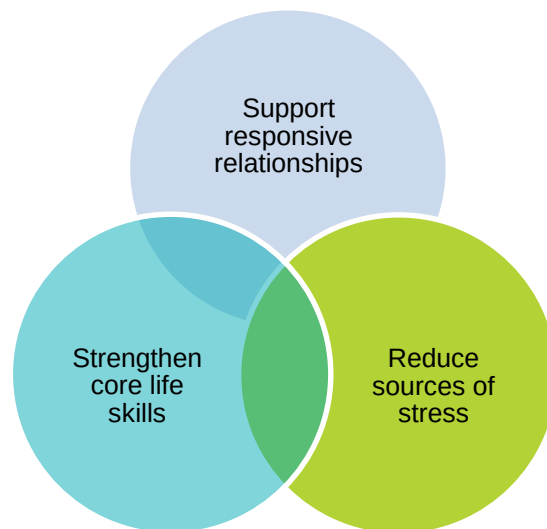
Trauma Informed Practice

Trauma informed practice recognises the prevalence of trauma, including childhood trauma, and takes account of its impact on emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. Keeping the possibility of trauma, and the sensitivities and vulnerabilities of children and adults who may have experienced trauma, in mind when planning approaches is the first step towards trauma informed practice.

Understanding how stress can affect an individual is important. Knowing this will make us less likely to fuel other people's stress levels. Trauma informed practice means paying attention to how we engage with other people, as well as to what we

do, thinking about what may have happened to someone, rather than judging what is wrong with them.

We should not underestimate the capacity of positive interactions, even routine interactions, to be therapeutic and validating. Positive experiences of relationships are central to healing trauma, as illustrated below by the Centre for the Developing Child, Harvard University's illustration of the key elements to recovering from trauma and developing future resilience.



Understanding Behaviour as a Window into Emotions

Behaviour is the visible part. If we see distressed or distressing behaviour, we need to be curious about the underlying emotions and Needs. Think of the iceberg image



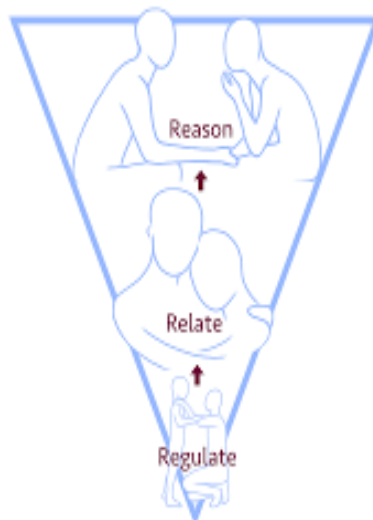
Looking beneath the surface to perceive emotions and hidden needs enables us to implement the following actions.

- See behaviour as communicating a mismatch between a child/young person's current needs and the environment or situation.
- Use a "mind-minded" stance to interpret that communication in terms of feelings, skill levels, or developmental state. It can be useful to use the Getting it Right Wellbeing Indicators to consider how, and whether, a child/young person may be communicating a gap in their need for perceived safety, activity, nurture, responsibility and respect, achievement or inclusion.
- Respond in partnership with the child or young person, to adapt the situation or environment both to reduce the need for the present behaviour and the likelihood of a re-occurrence.

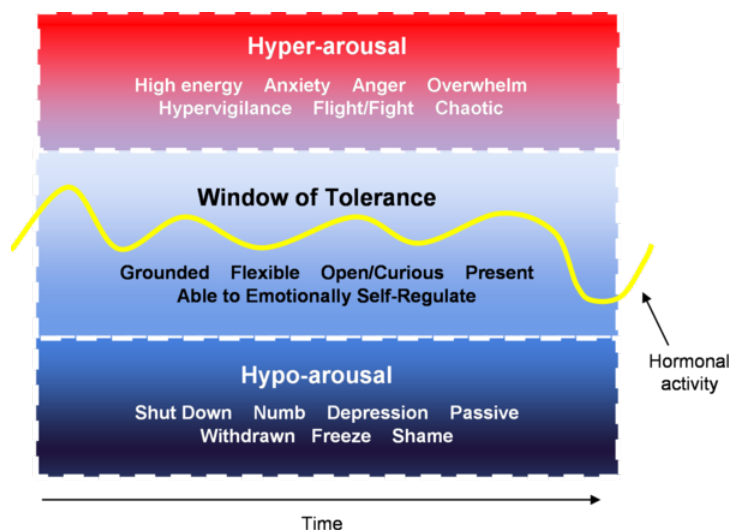
Learners who repeatedly "break the rules" because they have no alternative strategies to have their needs met can quickly find themselves in a negative cycle of punitive measures. Some of our more vulnerable learners, such as those who are neurodivergent, or who have experienced adversity or trauma can therefore be disproportionately and negatively affected by punitive approaches.

It is therefore important to these young people that we are able to implement the actions described above. Understanding the Neuro-sequential model and the Window of Tolerance enables us to achieve these actions in order to help children to regulate their emotional states and engage in learning.

Neuro-sequential Model – draws on a neurodevelopmentally-informed, biologically respectful perspective on human development and functioning to help educators understand behaviour and performance. Dr Bruce Perry's model tells us we need to intervene in a sequence starting with regulating the child and soothing the child's stress response. This is followed by relating and responding to the child through an attuned relationship. Only within the context of a child being regulated and connected should we begin to reason and explore with them their behaviour or responses, using their thinking brains



Window of Tolerance – developed by Dan Siegel, see illustration below, can help us understand the impact of our emotional states and our flight or fight response on our behaviour and actions. Children who have suffered trauma and adversity have a narrow window of tolerance meaning they are more likely to be operating within the fight or flight response or shut down response. PACE, a way of thinking, communicating and responding developed by Dan Hughes (see **Appendix 4**) can help keep a child within their window of tolerance.

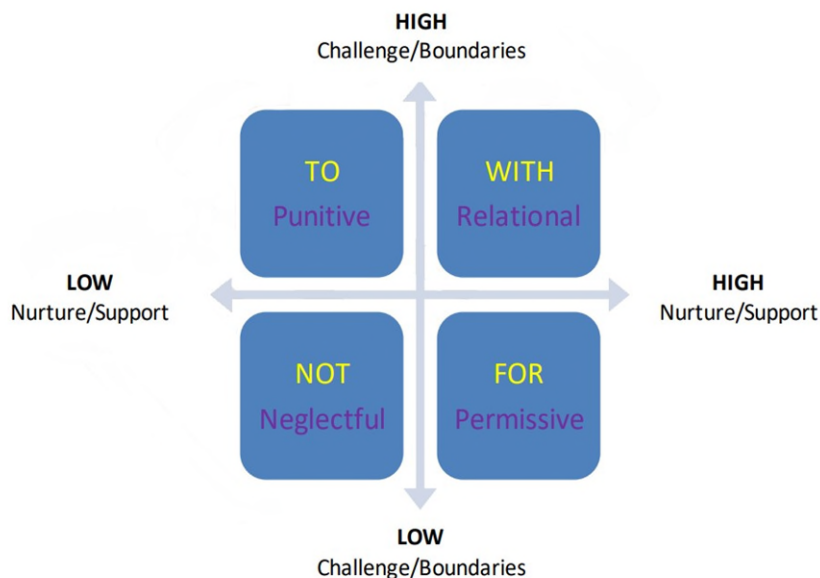


Importance of School Climate

Authoritative Climates

Changing how we respond to behaviour does not mean having no expectations, routines or structures. In order to help children and young people and staff feel safe, the environment needs to be high in both nurture and support and in structure and expectations. This is described as an authoritative style of discipline and has been shown to be effective in supporting positive outcomes. Predictable routines, expectations and responses to behaviour are part of this approach and should be modelled appropriately. Natural and logical rewards and consequences that follow certain behaviours are seen as being more impactful and should be made explicit, without the need to enforce punishments that have the potential to shame and alienate children and young people

Below is an illustration of the model, currently promoted by Education Scotland, referred to as the **Social Capital Window** (Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel). The model enables teachers to reflect on classroom climate and the influence of values, expectations and levels of support. This model is similar to the model of classroom climate promoted in **Emotion Coaching**. Both models support an authoritative as opposed to an authoritarian classroom and whole school climate.



Research into an authoritative school climate indicates that a balance between high expectations and structure on one hand and warmth and support on the other encourages engagement in learning, improves attainment and leads to less bullying in educational settings. Ideally school establishments should be in the restorative, top right window most of the time, providing high levels of nurture and support with high expectations and boundaries.

School climates which foster a sense of belonging

There is now a wealth of research on the importance of connectedness in schools and on the specific qualities of in-school relationships that promote effective education (Roffey 2012) *“when learners feel that they are part of their learning community, they are more likely to engage in positive ways in learning and in the life of the community.”* [adapted from The Power of Relationships in Schools | Psychology Today].

It is important that school climates are inclusive and foster a sense of belonging for all, in which all learners feel welcomed and connected.

“Belonging is about saying we belong together, we’re all the same, there’s a thread that connects us all and yet at the same time it’s saying I see you for your unique individual qualities and I don’t just value and respect that, I love that and will nurture that” Brene Brown.

Restorative Approaches

Being restorative can be proactive (relationship building) or responsive (relationship repairing) and can be used at every level from everyday informal interactions to more formal restorative meetings. (See **Appendix 4**) Restorative approaches articulate with, and compliment all other relational approaches, and influence the emotional atmosphere in a learning community. A restorative approach recognises that people are the experts of their own solutions and if implemented effectively will promote accountability and maximise personal responsibility. A restorative approach provides a framework of values, thinking and language that is helpful when something needs to be repaired or restored. In different contexts this could be:

- effective communication.
- relationships or friendships.
- empathy and understanding for another person’s perspective.
- trust and respect (this could mean a sense of security, self-confidence, self-respect, or dignity).
- understanding the impact of our own behaviour on others.
- repairing or replacing damaged materials or resources.

Orkney’s Relational Approaches

Our Approach

The term relational approach refers to a vast range of ‘ways of being and behaving’. Unsurprisingly relationships form the basis of all relational approaches.

Relational practices are central and at the heart of the tools, resources and approaches used to inform culture and ethos and promote positive relationships and behaviour in Orkney’s Schools.

The diagram below illustrates how Orkney's relational practices draw from the key concepts described in the last section to ensure approaches and interventions have an evidence base rooted in the **interconnections** between empathy and compassion, nurture, building self-regulation and resilience and strengths based, trauma sensitive, neuro-affirming approaches

(see **Appendix 4** for descriptors of key approaches and interventions within the diagram below)

Orkney's Relational Approaches



The Practical Application of Policy: A Systems Approach

Whole School or Setting Level

The journey towards system change involves everyone having a shared understanding of why change is required, what needs to change, and how this will be achieved. Collective change requires a strategic approach that is multifaceted and persistent over a long period of time.

Adopting relational approaches at a whole school/setting level takes time: time for staff to develop a shared understanding of the underpinning principles, time to learn, practice and refine the skills and strategies to support the approach, time to become confident and consistent in their use.

Key features of a whole systems relationship approach are outlined below:

- It is created in partnership with the wider school community with clear expectations about everyone's role within this.
- It is clearly documented in a policy.
- It requires consistency of practice to support the development of positive relationships.
- Approaches are agreed upon and implemented consistently across the whole school.

Staff behaviour is crucial in promoting positive relationships and behaviour:

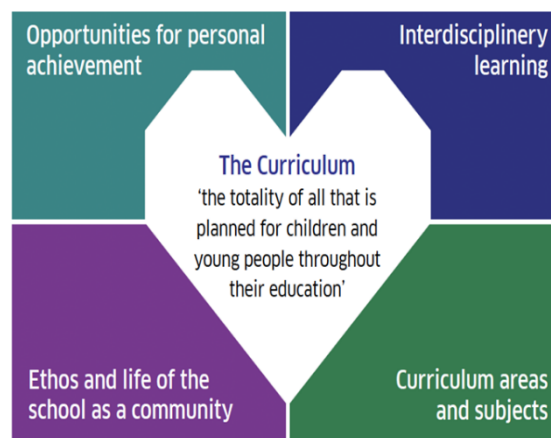
- Staff model positive relationships and behaviour in their daily practice.
- Staff are flexible and responsive to children and young people's needs.
- Staff are reflective about how their behaviour can influence children's responses.

Classroom Level

Working with children who have a high level of need is the responsibility of all adults in school/early years setting.

Practices that support the development of a nurturing classroom:

- Curriculum



- o Relationship-based approaches are threaded through all areas of the curriculum and as part of the wider school system.
- o Formal and informal interactions during the school day nurture positive relationships and behaviour.
- Pedagogy
 - o Relationship building is promoted and supported in the classroom.
 - o Universal support is provided via a high-quality learning environment, underpinned by positive, nurturing, and respectful relationships between staff and young people.
 - o Quality teaching is vital in order to support children to regulate, develop pro-social skills and take responsibility for their actions.
- Pupil Support
 - o Adults in the classroom have a range of relational approaches to draw on in order to manage needs.
 - o Support for Learning Assistants have received Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training – see Appendix 4, and are used effectively
 - o Management of low-level disruption through relational approaches and good quality inclusive teaching, leads to a calm and supportive environment where all children are able to learn.
- Parent/Carer Engagement and Involvement
 - o Parents/carers are actively encouraged to participate in life of school/early years setting.
 - o Open and effective communication between staff and parents/carers.
- Other Supports, for example:
 - o Assemblies.
 - o Parent Councils.
 - o Family-Community Supports.
 - o Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs)- see Appendix 4

Staged Intervention

Staged assessment and intervention processes are well embedded across all schools in the Orkney in line with all Local Authorities in Scotland. These processes ensure that children get the right support at the right time in the right place. The majority of children and young people's additional needs will be best met through universal approaches with some differentiated support provided alongside their classmates; however, a minority might require a more targeted approach.

Targeted approaches

Through ongoing assessment and intervention, it will be identified that some children and young people will need support that is additional to, or different from, the support provided for their peers. These children may need specific targeted support to develop their ability to regulate and engage in the social behaviours that build positive relationships and cohesive communities. Children may need to be taught specific skills for example, emotional regulation, turn taking, understanding of social expectations, and acceptance of social boundaries.

Working with parents, children / young people and partner services through the Getting It Right Child planning process can help identify and find solutions to difficulties before situations escalate. Comprehensive assessment informed by information gathered using the [national practice model](#) and robust planning are particularly important. This may include pupil behaviour support plans and risk assessments.

Effective collaborative working should facilitate appropriate and proportionate sharing of information about a child's situation and new factors in their lives which have the potential to trigger behaviour change or escalation. The Getting It Right Child Planning process should result in a clear shared understanding of appropriate strategies and supports and provide a mechanism for reviewing and evaluating them over time.

Ensuring Positive Relationships underpin effective Classroom Practice

Relationships and Effective Teaching and Learning

An inclusive learning environment is the starting point for positive relationships and behaviour. When we work together to effectively identify and support underlying needs and provide learning experiences that are individualised and appropriately differentiated, positive behaviour is promoted.

Relational teaching is essentially another way of describing personalisation and differentiation, both of which are known to be effective ways to improve learning for all. *“It goes further, however, by taking into account the pupil's internal worlds as well as assessment outcomes. This is required at two distinct levels – emotions and learning, and cognition and knowledge”* Promoting Positive Relationships Framework and Guidance 2021 Highland Council.

Emotions and Learning

- Understanding that learning can be a stressful experience and adjusting accordingly, differentiating and checking the use of language and vocabulary continually.
 - o Seeing motivational issues as a communication about confidence or relevance.
 - o Taking into account wider issues in a pupil's life and adapting levels of demand.
 - o Setting subject content within the context of the 4 Capacities and choosing approaches that build confidence and resilience.

Cognition and knowledge

- Finding out and taking into account each pupil's understanding and vocabulary level and knowledge of a topic.
- Adjusting pace and delivery so that all pupils can be meaningfully engaged and make progress
- Choosing programs and methods that support differentiation according to need.
- Being aware of the potential to overload the pupil's capacities and adjusting ahead of difficulties.
- Spending time teaching pupils meta-cognitive skills, such as managing their learning, etc.

Relationships and Effective Behaviour Management

Instead of zero tolerance, let us try tolerance and compassion. Instead of no excuses, let us try to understand the context and show empathy. But let us be clear we never compromise on our expectations, rigour and standards (Whitaker, The Kindness Principle, 2021).

Positive relationships are key to both preventing inappropriate behaviour from pupils to addressing it when it arises (O'Connor, Dearing & Collins, 2011). Positive relationships do not mean an absence of conflict or difficulty, nor do they mean that behaviour is not addressed in our schools. Relationship based practices are often mis-perceived as the 'soft option' that allows disrespectful or irresponsible behaviour to go unchecked. If implemented properly however, they involve equal measures of challenge and support and create boundaries based on shared expectations or values which are proactive, preventative and positive.

Taking a relational approach to promoting positive behaviour involves:

- creating a school culture and ethos where children and young people feel included, respected, safe and secure.
- the establishment of **shared values** across the learning community upon which behaviour is discussed, modelled and used as the basis of support and intervention.
- having **clear, shared expectations** for behaviour that are communicated thoroughly and woven into the everyday life of the school.
- taking **individual needs** and capacity into consideration when responding to poor or harmful behaviour instead of a more traditional one size fits all fixed punitive responses.
- a focus on **empathetic responsiveness** and promote teaching and learning of social and emotional skills with a focus on self-regulation and resilience and promoting independence as a learner.
- **Relational consistency** across the school setting; where children and young people experience the adults as consistently modelling and values such as kindness, compassion and care.

Responding when behaviour “falls below expectations”

There are times for a complexity of reasons when a child's or young person does not respond to the relational approaches and positive strategies in the learning environment and their distressed behaviour continues or escalates. The policy for each setting should be clear about the principles of how situations in which behaviour falls below expectations will be resolved rather than focusing on fixed responses (sanctions).

When consequences need to be applied, they should be logical, related to the situation, have a focus on learning, and should take into consideration the needs and capacity of those involved. This will mean responses may vary for different individuals because their needs are different, for example a younger child or a child with additional support needs may not have the skills, understanding or ability to behave as an older or more able child might. The approach, however, remains consistent – focusing on repairing the harm caused, preventing it happening again, and returning to and refocusing on learning as quickly as possible.

In practical terms when adults need to apply consequences the aim is for them to be:

- **Related** to the behaviour.
- **Respectful** in the way they are communicated and enforced.
- **Reasonable**, proportionate, and developmentally appropriate.

(Appendix 2 outlines Operational Guidelines for schools in promoting effective teaching and learning and behaviour management)

In June 2025 the Scottish government published “**Fostering a positive, inclusive and safe school environment, Guidance**” [Fostering-Positive-Inclusive-Safe-School-Environment-Guidance.](#)

The document outlines the use of **consequences** in schools

Key points from this publication are

- “Setting boundaries for children and young people, and ensuring they understand them, is fundamental to healthy child development. They provide structure and security, helping children and young people to navigate social interactions and build essential skills for life,”
- “While consequences are often thought of as the actions or interventions taken in response to behaviour that falls below expectations, they can also be a response that reinforces positive behaviour and the meeting or exceeding of shared expectations.”
- Consequences “can also help maintain a safe, supportive and happier learning environment for all. Conversely, inconsistent or punitive approaches can lead to disengagement, exacerbating inequalities, and can negatively impact wellbeing.”
- “Constructive, logical, predictable and developmentally appropriate responses and interventions can help children to feel safe, to understand the impact of their actions, and to learn how to respond differently. The goal is therefore not just to uphold values and expectations, but to promote responsibility, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills.”

In the spirit of this recent Guidance **consequences** are to be seen as **supports**. It is emphasised that it is important to identify underlying needs contributing to maladaptive behaviour and create potential risk mitigations in order to:

- promote a child’s or young person’s wellbeing – including their social skills, executive function and emotional regulation
- ensure support is in place for children and young people which fosters long-term change and keeps themselves and others safe

Implementation of Policy

Implementing this policy effectively in Orkney will require:

- Initial awareness raising of authority policy.
- A review of current policy and practice, at authority and establishment level, including readiness within current systems.
- Identification of ongoing professional learning need.
- Identification of improvement and self-evaluation activity.
- Implementation and review.

Education Scotland highlight **self-evaluation** as a method to achieve these aims.

Self-Evaluation

Establishments need to be prepared to carry out extensive self-evaluation of established systems to determine their suitability within a relational approach, as outlined in this policy.

The practice of self-evaluation is well established throughout education settings, supported by existing frameworks:

- How Good is Our School? 4 (HGIOS 4) (Education Scotland, 2015)
- How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC) (Education Scotland, 2016)

Both HGIOS 4 and HGIOELC emphasise the importance of positive relationships as features of highly effective practice in learning, across different quality indicators, for example:

- The learning environment is built on positive nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high quality outcomes (QI 2.3).
- Children tell us that they have been able to build up positive relationships with consistent adults who they trust enough to talk to when they need help (QI 2.1).
- Relationships across the school community are positive and supportive, founded on a climate of mutual respect within a strong sense of community, shared values, and high expectations (QI 3.1).

Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach: A Framework to Support Self-Evaluation (Education Scotland, 2016) provides self-evaluation measures guided by the nurture principles. Tools included within this document support the implementation of relationship-based approaches at the whole school and systems level.

These self-evaluation frameworks will enable schools to align their systems to the relationship-based approaches outlined in this policy.

It is hoped that schools will find the information in this document useful when developing their own policy and practice to promote positive relationships and behaviour.

Appendix 3 gives guidance on constructing A Relationships and Behaviour Policy for schools. Further information and resources to support implementation of a school policy and ensure effectiveness of relational approaches can be found in **Appendix 1** (References).

Appendix 1

References

Legislation

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, (amended 2016)

Education (Scotland) Act 2016

[Education \(Scotland\) Act 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/10/contents)

UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/10/contents)

Scottish Government Policy and Guidance

Scottish Government (2018) Developing a Positive whole-school ethos and culture: Relationships, Learning and Behaviour

[Developing a positive whole-school ethos and culture – Relationships, Learning and Behaviour \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/education/developing-a-positive-whole-school-ethos-and-culture-relationships-learning-and-behaviour)

Scottish Government (2022) *Getting it Right for Every Child*

[Getting it right for every child: Policy Statement - 2022](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/education/getting-it-right-for-every-child-policy-statement-2022)

Scottish Government (February 2020) *The Independent Care Review (The Promise)*

[Independent Care Review – The root and branch review of Scotland's care system.](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/education/independent-care-review-the-root-and-branch-review-of-scotland-s-care-system)

Scottish Government (June 2020) *Support for Learning all our Children and All their potential*

[Support for Learning: All our Children and all their Potential \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/education/support-for-learning-all-our-children-and-all-their-potential)

Education Scotland Guidance

Education Scotland (2015) *How Good is our School?*

[How good is our school? \(4th edition\) \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/Topics/quality/how-good-is-our-school-4th-edition)

Education Scotland (2015) *How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare?*

[How good is our early learning and childcare? \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/Topics/quality/how-good-is-our-early-learning-and-childcare)

Education Scotland (2017) *Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach*

[Applying nurture as a whole school approach | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

Education Scotland (2017) *Using implementation science to support the implementation of interventions in real world contexts*

[Using implementation science to support the implementation of interventions in real world contexts | Resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Education Scotland (October 2023) *Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in Educational Settings*

[Promoting positive relationships and behaviour in educational settings | Improving relationships and behaviour | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

Fostering a Positive, Inclusive and Safe School Environment guidance”.
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fostering-positive-inclusive-safe-school-environment-guidance/>

[Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3: A Relationships and Rights-Based Approach to Physical Intervention In Schools](#)

Other References and Resources

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/risk-assessment-guidance-violent-aggressive-dangerous-behaviour-local-authorities-educational-settings>

[Included, Engaged, Involved 2 \(2017\).](#)

[Guidance on the Presumption to Provide Education in a Mainstream Setting \(2019\)](#)

Independent Care Review – The Promise <https://www.carereview.scot/>

[CIRCLE resource to support Inclusive Learning and Collaborative Working \(Secondary\) | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/review-additional-support-learning-implementation/>

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/pupil-attainment/>

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/national-improvement-framework/>

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/nurture-and-trauma-informed-approaches-a-summary-of-supports-and-resources/>

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/the-compassionate-and-connected-classroom/>
(also links to Compassionate Connected Communities)

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/restorative-approaches-to-support-positive-relationships-and-behaviour/>

[Promoting Positive Relationships – Highland Council Psychological Service](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Utjs2UuCxGc> The Kindness Principal Dave Whittaker

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1CzUO9yEtc>

Appendix 2

Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour

Operational Guidance for Schools

National Policy Guidance:

[Developing a positive whole school ethos and culture: relationships, learning and behaviour](#)

[Included, engaged and involved part 1: promoting and managing school attendance](#)

[Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions](#)

This guidance has been developed to promote consistent application of our Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour Guidance.

The strategies and interventions listed here are not exhaustive but are a small selection of things that can be pre-planned and practiced with different learners and different classes.

It is expected that schools will seek to establish the most appropriate operational guidance for their setting and that this will form part of and align clearly with their own Relationships and Behaviour Policy. This document can be used to guide and facilitate this process.

Planned Approaches to promote learner engagement and positive behaviour

These approaches should be part of regular planning, preparation, and practice. Managing the learning environment is the most effective and non-intrusive universal way to promote engagement in learning and positive behaviour.

Use of CIRCLE or a similar framework for assessing the needs of a whole class will help to plan effective universal support.

Approaches include:

- Expectations are co-created with learners, they are visible, and are regularly referred to.
- Classrooms routines are clear and well established.
- Classroom learning spaces are tidy and free from clutter and displays are organised and do not cause overstimulation.
- Resources are easily accessible and labelled.
- Learning is well planned as part of a series of connected lessons.
- Learning Intentions/Success Criteria are ready to be displayed, revisited, and used to summarise learning.

- Lessons are effectively differentiated
- A range of activities and resources are used to engage all learners
- Resources are organised and accessible to learners
- Seating arrangements and plans are organised to ensure the most effective learning environment possible depending on the needs of the learners and the learning activities
- All transitions of activity, people/grouping, and/or seating/location are supported. For example, entrance and exit from class are consistent and calm - learners are welcomed at the door and calmly leave class after a positive exit activity or plenary.

Classroom strategies to promote learner engagement and positive behaviour

These strategies are not intended to be sequential as what works most effectively will be determined by the needs of different classes and individual learners. However, it should be noted that some strategies are less disruptive to others and have a lower risk of non-compliance than others. For example, distracting a learner away from an undesirable behaviour, such as persistent talking, carries little risk of non-compliance and isn't distracting for the rest of the class. Asking a learner to move seats however may be disruptive to others and carries the risk of refusal to comply.

Low risk and least intrusive strategies should always be tried first. The decision to use a particular strategy should always be determined by how well you know the learner and their individual needs. The composition and needs of the class may also influence the strategies used.

Approaches include:

- Connect before you correct - quietly asking the pupil if everything is ok – be aware of the audience and the impact it could have on the learner.
- Use proximity - this can act as reassurance for the learner (you've 'noticed' them) and also act as a prompt back to task.
- Use non-verbal communication effectively (a smile, eye contact, visual prompts towards the clock or towards their work/the board etc.)
- Distraction and re-direction (away from 'behaviour' and towards the 'learning task') Appropriate use of humour – when used well it can disarm and de-escalate.
- Verbal prompt – 'what should you be doing?'
- Provide hurdle help with a task if necessary with the learning task to get them back on track.
- Quiet private warning.
- Time and space – it may be necessary, to give the learner time to regulate their emotions. This may also mean you need to physically move away from them as well or allow them to move to a quieter location in the class for a period of time.

- Create an opportunity to speak to the learner, listen to them, and potentially remind them of class expectations (if possible, give them time to respond/change their behaviour).
- Remind the learner of the positive consequences of maintaining class/school expectations.
- Remind the learner of times/activities that they've done well.
- Calmly remind learners that harmful behaviour will not be ignored as this is not kind or respectful to the learner or to others.
- Calmly moving the learner to another seat.
- Have a restorative conversation (if possible at the time or later) with the learner(s).
- Always respect a learners dignity (this may be difficult if they are being disrespectful however remember we must always model the behaviour we want to see). For example, lateness is addressed privately in a way that minimises disruption (no public questioning which may lead to the learner feeling ashamed).
- Seek assistance from (specific to each setting).
- Record a concern.
- Apply a consequence.

Caveats

Always use caution when talking about negative consequences to ensure these are not received as threats. While a consequence should usually be applied as close to the time of the behaviour as possible, this needs to be carefully judged and it may be that the child or adult require time to come down from the heightened emotion of the incident before a consequence is considered. Never leave a learner unsupervised if they are very distressed. If possible and necessary, ask someone else to seek assistance for you.

Formal Interventions to recognise positive and address negative behaviour

Consequences follow on naturally from behaviour. Consequences can be positive or negative.

Recognition of Effort, Innovation, and Positive Behaviour

Positive feedback specifically related to behaviour is an example of a natural consequence that supports the development of intrinsic motivation, which means we carry out a behaviour for our own satisfaction, rather than for a consequence or perceived reward.

There is also a place for more tangible rewards. Merits can be awarded for many reasons, including demonstrating our school values through being helpful, being polite, working hard, completing homework, completing work to a high standard, consistent and improved effort. There is no limit to the number of merits that can be issued to a class.

Reporting concerns and consequences

Concerns may include lack of engagement in learning, wellbeing issues, behaviour that does not meet class expectations, and failing to follow instructions. Concerns should be recorded in order to prompt and inform future support for learners. At times it may be necessary to inform parents/carers of our concerns and work with them to coordinate support for their child.

Although the responses to concerns may differ depending on the different needs of those involved the approach taken by all staff should be consistent and should always seek to maintain the relationship with the pupil and prevent shame or loss of dignity.

Learners should feel that:

- we care about them.
- we are concerned about them, their learning, and their behaviour.
- we want them in class/school so that we know they are safe, and they have the best opportunity to achieve.
- we are also concerned about the impact of their behaviour on their class and how this might impact on their relationship with others in the class.

Consequences – sequential application of a hierarchy of responses

The principle of 'connection before correction' should always be prioritised however when the interventions listed above have not been effective then a more formal approach to consequences is required. Consequences should always be applied within a relational approach which allows positive and trusting relationships with the learner to be maintained.

The intention behind applying a consequence should always be to help a learner understand the impact their behaviour has on their own and others learning. Consequences therefore should be linked to the behaviour and therefore natural and logical. The learner should know the reason for the consequence and should potentially be involved in deciding what the consequence is.

Consequences related to undesirable behaviour should be used as learning opportunities; learning a better way to behave that will benefit themselves and others.

Some examples of natural consequences may include:

- being asked to finish uncompleted classwork during a social time or as homework (though if this is happening regularly staff need to examine why and what else can be done).
- creating a mess may mean that a learner needs to use their social time to clean up
- refusal to comply with a consequence may mean that a parent/carers is contacted and asked to support the learner to understand the reason behind the

consequence and the importance of meeting the school expectations agreed by everyone – all of which can be directly related to positive consequences for the learner

Learners should also know that if the concerning behaviour continues further consequences may be applied.

Before moving through the sequence of consequences the learner should be given time to reflect and the opportunity to stop the unwanted behaviour and make more positive choices.

Any attempt by the learner to reach the desired behaviour should also be acknowledged and praised even if it is not yet fully realised.

Staff and pupils benefit when the hierarchy of application of consequences is followed consistently across the school. More significant consequences (level 4-5) should be recorded as concerns.

For example:

Level 1: Directive statement and an opportunity to reflect - a formal behaviour check delivered verbally with a focus on re-directing the learner back to class tasks.

Level 2: Relocate the young person within the class to minimise disruption to other learners and give the learner involved the opportunity to get back on task.

Level 3: Isolated conversation between the learner and the teacher – this may have to be outside of the classroom if the conversation cannot be isolated within the class. It may be useful to ask what support the learner thinks they need in order to re-engage with learning. However, the seriousness of persistent behaviour that disrupts learning should be made clear and that compliance with instructions is now needed to avoid further consequences.

Level 4: Referral to a PTC Faculty Lead (or equivalent in primary settings) – if available the notified manager, or an appropriate nominated person, may intervene and use their judgement to resolve the situation.

Level 5: Referral to a senior leader (SLT, year group lead)
Instances where a young person exhibits behaviour that is extreme and cannot be isolated or contained close to their learning location should be referred directly to SLT.

Extreme behaviour may include verbally or physically violent, dangerous or intimidating behaviour.

Please note referrals of this nature may require a more complex and considered response. This may take time. Referrers need to trust that senior leaders will respond to the situation appropriately, based on the needs of everyone involved, and will feedback to the referrer at the earliest opportunity. Please remember that timescales for this may vary depending on circumstances/context.

Formal interventions at Level 4-5

- Good neighbour in another class or period of time with a different teacher or class
- Formal Restorative discussion*
- Use of interval or lunch to complete class tasks/learning
- Referrals to an appropriate PT/SLT for immediate or follow up support
- Behaviour check-ins or monitoring by PT
- Follow up may include parent/carers communication or meeting to seek and plan support
- Planned targeted support (please note it may be necessary to exclude the learner while this support is arranged)
- Exclusion ** - all are formally recorded, are a last option, and are for the shortest period of time.

* The readiness of the learner to participate in a restorative conversation is key therefore the conversation may need to take place at interval, lunch, or at another agreed time. The conversation may be between a member of staff and the learner (s), it may be supported by another member of staff, or it could be between the referred to PT/SLT and the learner. In some situations, time and opportunity may prevent the member of staff involved in the situation being part of the restorative conversation. This situation is not ideal. If this does happen then the member of staff should be informed as soon as possible of the outcome of the conversation. It may also be necessary to arrange a follow up conversation at a later stage to repair the relationships between the member of staff and the learner.

Restorative Practice is a recommended way to resolve conflict between pupils and manage pupil behaviour than traditional methods such as punitive discipline, rewards and consequences. However, staff should be mindful that reasonable adjustments may have to be made if choosing to use this method with children and young people who have communication difficulties such as autism or cognitive complex needs.

This is because restorative practice is only successful if the pupil can fully understand the dialogue and reflect on the incident with analysis. For example, autistic learners may not be able to imagine and consider the perspectives and emotional responses of others and may not be able to generate ideas for resolution. So, for some autistic learners, Restorative Approaches being used for conflict resolution, may not be appropriate. As always as with any approach it should be appropriately planned to meet individual needs.

** Exclusions are never used as punishment but as time for risks to be assessed, relationships to be restored, and appropriate supports for everyone involved to be put in place.

Monitoring of Concerns and Consequences

Regular monitoring of reported concerns and consequences will allow for early intervention and support. Interventions may be planned at multiple levels concurrently to provide a learner with wraparound support. Use of the least intrusive universal supports will be used all of the time with targeted supports used as required and for as long as required. For example, universal supports may be planned in advance with class teachers such as visual timetables and written task instruction cards for learners with attention difficulties and poor working memory which regularly leads to off task and disruptive behaviour. Alongside this a learner may be asked to attend regular check-ins with their pastoral support lead to closely monitor their progress and address any ongoing issues quickly before they escalate.

Summary

We are invested in supporting the best possible relationship-based practice. We cannot do this without the support of staff, partners, parents, and pupils.

Any operational guidance should always be administered in line with the values, expectations, and agreements contained within the Schools Relationships and Behaviour Policy which has been developed by the learning community collective and apply to everyone.

Appendix 3

Constructing a Relationships and Behaviour Policy

How policy is developed and constructed by everyone in the learning community will determine its impact and value.

It should be created and implemented alongside learners, parents/carers and staff. Implementation and evaluation of the policy will be a collaborative process which takes time and effort, the development or refresh of any policy should be factored in to any school improvement plan and in to parental/professional learning programmes.

Some key points:

- The policy is for the entire learning community and should be accessible to everyone.
- It should be easy to read and remember.
- It should be easy to refer to in everyday discussions with learners, parents and carers.
- It should be re-producible in a poster type format.

The policy should contain:

Purpose of the policy and the underpinning values. Expectations should apply to everyone all of the time and visibly consistent, for more information on visible consistencies see the work of Paul Dix. Expectations should be created and agreed by everyone in a learning community. Expectations should be clearly aligned with principles for example 'we walk in the corridors to keep ourselves safe'.

1. Introduction
2. Expectations – what they are, why meeting them benefits us and principles behind the consequences.
3. List the relational approaches that are embedded in practice.
4. Policy and practice – how the policy supports and is supported by other policies, structures and processes.
5. Any appendices required.

Suggested sections

1) Introduction

This is where the purpose of the policy and the schools values should be made explicit. There should be a clear link between values and behaviour. Principles behind the policy should be outlined and include:

- The explicit link between values, relationships and behaviour. Values are the principles that drive our thinking and behaviour. They influence our actions and attitudes and guide us through life in all that we do.
- Universal values such as kindness, respect and responsibility should be made explicit, taught and fostered through all aspects of school life.
- Values apply to everyone in the learning community and staff have a responsibility to model and demonstrate these values, using them as a basis for teaching and learning, relationship development.
- The policy is for everyone and all types of relationships; learner-learner, learner-staff, staff-staff, staff-parent.
- The role of positive relationships in enabling learners to access and engage with the curriculum and the development of the 4 capacities of the curriculum of excellence.

2) Expectations and Consequences

Expectations should apply all of the time to everyone. They should therefore be created and agreed to by everyone (learners/carers and staff). Expectations should be generic and as closely linked to values as possible, for example we keep ourselves safe or we respect each other. Then exemplification can be used for different situations, for example we walk in the corridors to keep ourselves safe or we leave the toilets clean because we respect each other. Always refer back to the initial expectation. The aim is that ultimately learners can generalise what, for example keeping ourselves safe or respecting each other means in difficult scenarios without adult explanations.

Expectations should be simple and cover all settings within the school, they can be added to in certain settings where more explicit expectations e.g in craft and design are necessary. Remember they should be easily recalled and referred to.

Make explicit the positive benefits of meeting expectations and don't assume that learners or parents will know what these are. Have them displayed, discuss them, regularly referring to them, explaining how they help and praising learners when they meet them.

Benefits of value based expectations include:

- Feeling safe and protected.
- Creating a good learning environment.
- Knowing and demonstrating how to relate and show respect for one another.
- Valuing the qualities and attributes that contribute to good relationships.
- Understanding our emotions and how our behaviour affects others.
- Being able to disagree without getting into conflict.
- Being able to use relational approaches to resolve problems and repair relationships.

- Be careful not to qualify expectations with things that some learners won't be able to do. Some children and young people will require help and support to meet the expectation. Offer the child help and seek to understand why. Be careful qualifying expectations with the 'first time rule'. Some children will not meet the expectation on the first time and we risk setting children up to fail by setting this.

Determining Consequences: key principles for responding to behaviour that fall below expectations

A schools behaviour policy should recognise that at times we all fall below the expectation we have of each other. The policy should make explicit the principles about how these situations will be resolved rather than detail explicit sanctions. One size fits all sanctions or responses do not allow for the individual needs of learners in differing circumstances. Principles should provide the foundation or value base upon which consequences will be determined. Consequences should always be delivered whilst maintaining a relational approach and upholding core values such as kindness, understanding and compassion. Staff are encouraged to think about the relationship and connection first before addressing the behaviour.

When consequences need to be applied they should be logical, related to the situation, have a focus on learning and should take into consideration the needs and capacity of those involved. This will mean response may vary for different individuals because their needs are different.

The approach however remains consistent focusing on:

- Responding, not reacting.
- Relationship first, behaviour second.
- Repairing the harm.
- Preventing it happening again.
- Returning to learning as quickly as possible.

Consequences can include repairing the harm caused, restoring damaged relationships, talking through what happened and how it can be prevented in the future. Consequences should be discussed with and understood by learners and parents where necessary.

Further consequences maybe necessary depending on the needs of everyone involved. They should always be proportionate.

3) Policy and Practice

The policy should include a brief overview of how it supports and is supported by other school policies, structures and systems such as teaching and learning, promoting attendance, anti-bullying etc.

There should be an application at the level of the whole school or setting and an acknowledgement that it will take time and effort to achieve from and by everyone in the system.

Consistency across the school is key as is staff behaviour, they should:

- Model positive relationships and behaviour in their daily practice
- Be flexible and responsive to children's needs
- Be reflective about how their behaviour can influence the behaviour of others.

Staff will need time, training, support and practice to develop knowledge and understanding and to refine the skills and strategies to become confident and consistent in their use.

1.1. Self-Evaluation

HGIOS 4 emphasises the importance of positive relationships as features of highly effective practice in learning, across different quality indicators, for example:

- *The learning environment is built on positive nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high quality outcomes (QI 2.3)*
- *Children tell us that they have been able to build up positive relationships with consistent adults who they trust enough to talk to when they need help (QI 2.1)*
- *Relationships across the school community are positive and supportive, founded on a climate of mutual respect within a strong sense of community, shared values, and high expectations (QI 3.1)*

Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach: A Framework to Support Self-Evaluation (Education Scotland, 2016) provides self-evaluation measures guided by the nurture principles. Tools included within this document support the implementation of relationship-based approaches at the whole school and systems level.

These self-evaluation frameworks will enable schools to align their systems to the relationship-based approaches outlined in this policy.

Appendix 4

Descriptors of Relational Approaches/Interventions

PACE.

PACE is grounded in attachment theory and neuroscience. It was developed by Dan Hughes more than 20 years ago as a central part of attachment-focused family therapy, with the aim of supporting adults to build safe, trusting and meaningful relationships with children and young people who have experienced trauma. It is based on the way that caregivers interact with very young infants. It describes a way of relating to others or 'a way of being'. It pays attention to how we deliver messages to children and young people through our communication. The principles offer a useful framework from which we can develop attunement and strengthen our relationships with the children and young people we work with. PACE stands for **Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy**.

Using PACE helps adults to slow down their reactions, stay calm and tune into what the child is experiencing in the moment. It supports us to gain a better understanding of what the child is feeling. In tricky moments it allows us to stay emotionally regulated and guide the child through their heightened emotions, thoughts and behaviours. In turn, PACE helps children and young people to feel more connected to, and understood by, important adults in their life and ultimately, to slow down their own responses.

1. **Playfulness:** Encouraging a playful and engaging interaction with the child.
2. **Acceptance:** Demonstrating unconditional acceptance and empathy.
3. **Curiosity:** Showing genuine interest in the child's experiences and emotions.
4. **Empathy:** Providing emotional support and understanding.

The PACE way of being, emphasises the power of connection and empathy. If implemented as a whole school approach, can play a pivotal role in educational settings. By fostering safe relationships and understanding, educators can create an environment conducive to healing and growth – both academically and emotionally.

Nurture.

Nurture is an ethos with its origins in John Bowlby's influential attachment theory. This theory was applied in Colwyn Trevarthen's research on the interactions which promote bonding between babies and their caregivers, to give a family of approaches which promote positive, trusting relationships in education and care environments. The Nurture ethos is at the base approaches such as **Nurturing Approaches, Roots of Empathy**, and **Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP)**.

Nurturing Approaches (Marjorie Boxall).

This family of approaches had its origins in the development of Nurture Groups in education and childcare settings in East London in the late 1960s. The concept of Nurture has more recently been embraced by the Scottish Government as an

overarching whole-school philosophy, moving away from the idea that the Nurture should exist in a discrete part of a setting for the benefit of a select few children.

The Nurture principles

Marjorie Boxall put forward six 'Nurture Principles' - key concepts that shape our understanding of child development through the lens of attachment. These principles, in Boxall's work, were used as an anchor and reference to underpin the creation and ethos of Nurture Groups.

NP1 Learning is understood developmentally.

NP2 The setting offers a safe base.

NP3 Nurture is important for the development of wellbeing and self-esteem.

NP4 Language is a vital means of communication.

NP5 All behaviour is communication.

NP6 Transitions are important in the lives of children and young people.

Whole school nurture

In 2017, the Scottish Government launched guidance to help establishments embrace and develop 'Nurture as a Whole-School Approach'. Whilst the main goal is to promote and develop Nurture as a universal approach in Scotland's education and childcare establishments, it is also an important cornerstone of more focused trauma-informed practice. In addition, the Nurturing Approach is key to responding to the increasing levels of anxiety present in Scotland's schools, particularly since the Covid 19 pandemic and the associated school closures from 2020. Education Scotland's self-evaluation framework <https://education.gov.scot/resources/applying-nurture-as-a-whole-school-approach-a-framework-to-support-self-evaluation/> acts as a powerful guide, and a highly practical audit tool, for schools and Early Years settings to use as they develop their nurturing ethos and practices.

The Compassionate and Connected Communities.

- A targeted professional learning resource based on evidence-based practice which complements nurturing approaches and contributes to staff understanding and practice around trauma and adverse early experiences.
- Participants are also encouraged to undertake further self-directed reading between sessions and key references and links are provided to support this.
- The resource can use a model of practitioner enquiry to enhance reflective practice and practitioners can engage in collaborative action research between sessions to further develop their knowledge and skills in supporting children/young people who have experienced trauma and adversity.

The Connected and Compassionate Classroom.

This is a free curriculum designed by Education Scotland for universal delivery by the class teacher to an Upper Primary yeargroup. The programme, consisting of 20 sessions, should be delivered in its entirety across the span of a single academic year. Through participating in the programme, children will develop greater empathy for each other, increased appreciation of Children's Rights, recognition of individual experiences and relationships, and an appreciation of the connections between thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. The course concludes with 4 sessions that teach children to strengthen their connectedness with each other and develop their resilience together. Schools considering delivery of the Connected and Compassionate Classroom should plan well in advance so as to get maximum benefit from the programme for all participants. It will be important to engage parents/carers as well as the pupils themselves. The teacher will require sufficient preparation time to understand the whole programme, as well as time to plan each lesson ahead of time. <https://education.gov.scot/resources/compassionate-and-connected-classroom/>

Emotion Coaching.

Emotion coaching, based on the work of American psychotherapist John Gottman, is an approach that teaches emotional self-regulation through experiences of co-regulation with skilled and trusted adults. Rather than being explicitly taught a set of skills, the child learns to manage the way they respond to strong emotions through their real-life experiences, mediated by adults who have completed training in Emotion Coaching. To find out more, visit the Emotion Coaching UK website: <https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com/> Orkney's Educational Psychology Service is accredited to offer Emotion Coaching training to staff working in Education and Childcare establishments throughout Orkney.

Zones of Regulation®

Created by American Paediatric Occupational Therapist Leah Kuypers, The Zones of Regulation® is a curriculum designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control. The concept is deceptively simple, making it easy to hold in mind even when experiencing a degree of emotional dysregulation. The programme teaches children to assess the intensity of their emotions 'in the moment', and to decide whether they are currently in the 'Green Zone' (comfortable intensity of emotion), the 'Yellow Zone' (experiencing a slightly uncomfortable intensity of emotion), the 'Red Zone' (overwhelmed with intense emotion), or the 'Blue Zone' (subdued/numb/tired/ill). Children go on to learn how to identify their own personal triggers, and are supported to develop their own personal toolkits of strategies that help them to consciously self-regulate and shift their emotional state.

Solution Orientated Approaches (Steve De Shazer, Insoo Kim Berg, Bill O'Hanlon).

Solution orientated approaches have their origins in therapeutic approaches such as brief solution-focused therapy and have been found to have much wider applications in the way people work together. The approaches centre on key principles which help focus our minds on solutions, positive futures and strengths. This empowering approach helps to avoid the easy trap of becoming embroiled in negative thinking patterns which can impede progress and hamper the prospect of positive change.

"It seems clear that one cannot solve the problem with the same thinking that created the problem" (Berg and De Shazer, 1993).

A Solution Oriented approach helps people identify what they want to achieve, understand what is in their capacity and explores what they can do to move towards this.

Solution Oriented approaches have a number of applications within settings to help encourage positive relationships, tackle difficulties in a productive way, and promote an inclusive ethos.

Restorative Practice.

Restorative approaches aim to improve behaviour and relationships in schools by moving away from a blame and retribution model of dealing with unacceptable behaviour towards one which is based on social responsibility and self-awareness. These approaches have their origins in North American Indian and Maori cultures. The concepts were taken forward as 'Restorative Justice' in Canada, New Zealand and Australia in the 1970's. The philosophy has been developed for the shaping of school ethos and conflict resolution in many forms, including the Scottish Government approach of 'Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour'.

Being restorative can be proactive (relationship building) or responsive (relationship repairing) and can be used at every level from everyday informal interactions to more formal restorative meetings. Restorative approaches articulate with, and compliment all other relational approaches, and influence the emotional atmosphere in a learning community.

A restorative approach provides a framework of values, thinking and language that is helpful when something needs to be repaired or restored.

Synergy.

What is Synergy?

Designed to help us "keep our heads" and act constructively in time of high stress. A way of thinking, being and doing to keep us centred, optimistic and open to ideas. A way of communicating with listening at its core.

Three strands – One Whole

1. Think Calmly

- Acknowledge the stress levels.
- Reduce the tension in stressful situations.
- Harness your logical thinking and help others to do the same.

2. Listen Actively

- Learn to use OARS.
- Open Questions.
- Affirmation.
- Reflective Learning.
- Summarising.

3. Build on the Strengths.

- Solution orientated thinking.
- Focus on any areas of existing strength.
- Generate hope for the future – and build on it.
- Empower people to make changes, to “walk tall not small”.

Pivotal.

The Pivotal approach to behaviour management starts with the behaviour of adults. Staff are expected to maintain a consistent, calm approach to behaviour at all times, with the emphasis on depersonalising behaviour interventions.

Pivotal behaviour management strategy is based on five pillars:

- Consistent, calm adult behaviour
- First attention to best conduct
- Relentless routines
- Scripted interventions
- Restorative follow up

Mary Astell Academy has 3 school rules on which our behaviour policy stands:

1. Be ready and willing to learn
2. Be Safe
3. Be Respectful

Staff give ‘**first attention to best conduct**’ praising compliance to indirectly tackle off task behaviour. Direct interventions are done calmly and in a non-confrontational

way, giving children **'thinking time'** to respond with requests. **Relentless routines** provides pupils and staff with a solid framework on which they can rely on repeatedly. **Scripted interventions** allow all staff to deliver the same guidance and advice in a calm, non-judgemental way.

Restorative conversations are used to engage in powerful dialogue with children. The focus is on what rules were broken, who was affected by their behaviour, and what can be done differently in future. These conversations are taken very seriously and are very effective in helping children take responsibility for their actions.

Particular emphasis is placed on recognising (rather than rewarding) positive behaviour, e.g. praise post cards, phone calls and text messages home.

Each term, one particular aspect of behaviour may be focussed on by staff, e.g. respect for fellow pupils and staff. All staff use scripting and the five pillars to help modify behaviours.

Circle

The CIRCLE resources were developed through a collaboration between Queen Margaret University, NHS Lothian and City of Edinburgh Council.

The information in these resources represent the reflective practice of hundreds of teachers as well as feedback from learners and parents/carers. It also reflects relevant research and policy guidance.

[CIRCLE: Ideas in practice - primary \(PDF\)](#)

[CIRCLE: Ideas in practice - secondary \(PDF\)](#)

The CIRCLE Framework is a way of organising and supporting input using a staged system of support, beginning with setting up an inclusive classroom. Checklists and planning tools are included to support discussion and can be used to document strategies used and record professional learning. It includes the CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale, and the CIRCLE Participation Scale developed with practitioners to support identification of changes required and the measurement of progress.

NAIT and Autism Level Up

<https://www.autismlevelup.com/#home>

<https://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk/home/about-the-autism-toolbox/>



Video Interaction Guidance (VIG).

VIG involves reflecting on the use of the 'attunement principles' (see Table below) within interactions, and the effect that this has, in turn, on communicative effectiveness and their relationships. This is of great value for professionals wishing to build mutually rewarding, positive relationships with pupils, clients, or even colleagues.

Table: Principles of Attuned Interactions and Guidance

Being Attentive.	• Looking interested with friendly posture. • Giving time and space for others. • Wondering about what they are doing, thinking or feeling. • Enjoying watching them.
Encouraging Initiatives.	• Waiting. • Listening actively. • Showing emotional warmth through intonation. • Naming positively what you see, think or feel. • Using friendly and/or playful intonation as appropriate. • Saying what you are doing. • Looking for initiatives.
Receiving Initiatives.	• Showing you have heard, noticed their initiative. • Receiving with body language. • Being friendly and/or playful as appropriate. • Returning eye-contact, smiling, nodding in response. • Receiving what they are saying or doing with words. • Repeating/using their words or phrases.

Developing Attuned Interactions.	• Receiving and then responding. • Checking they are understanding you. • Waiting attentively for your turn. • Having fun. • Giving a second (and further) turn on same topic. • Giving and taking short turns. • Contributing to interaction/activity equally. • Co-operating – helping each other.
Guiding.	• Scaffolding. • Extending, building on their response. • Judging the amount of support required and adjusting. • Giving information when needed. • Providing help when needed. • Offering choices that they can understand. • Making suggestions that they can follow.
Deepening Discussion.	• Supporting goal-setting. • Sharing viewpoints. • Collaborative discussion and problem-solving. • Naming difference of opinion. • Investigating the intentions behind words. • Naming contradictions/conflicts (real or potential). • Reaching new shared understandings. • Managing conflict (back to being attentive and receive initiatives aiming to restore attuned interactions).

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants

An Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) is a trained school-based professional who supports the emotional well-being of pupils. They are trained by educational psychologists and provide individualized and group interventions to help children and young people develop social, emotional, and mental health skills.

Key aspects of the ELSA role:

- Training:

ELSAs undergo a specific training program, often led by educational psychologists, to learn about emotional literacy, social-emotional development, and intervention techniques.

- Supervision:

ELSAs receive ongoing supervision from educational psychologists to ensure they are practicing within their scope and to support their professional development.

- Individualized and Group Support:

ELSAs work with children and young people either individually or in small groups, tailoring their support to the specific needs of each student.

- Focus on Emotional Literacy:

ELSAs help students develop their ability to understand, manage, and regulate their emotions, as well as their ability to connect with others emotionally.

- Building Capacity in Schools:

ELSA training aims to build the capacity of schools to support the social, emotional, and mental health needs of their pupils using their own resources.

- Scope of Practice:

ELSAs work within their scope of practice, which is defined by their training and supervision. They should discuss any concerns beyond their scope with their educational psychologist.

- Emphasis on Support, Not Fixing:

ELSAs focus on supporting students to identify their own strategies and solutions to emotional challenges, rather than "fixing" their problems.

- Collaboration with School Staff:

ELSAs work collaboratively with teachers, other school staff, and, where possible, with the students themselves to develop clear goals and support plans.

Promoting Positive Behaviour (PPB)

Promoting Positive Behaviour (PPB) is a relational, person-centred intervention that focuses on fostering positive behaviour in settings like social care, education, and homelessness services by employing proactive, adaptable strategies that prioritise understanding and supporting individuals, especially those with complex needs, in a trauma-informed and inclusive manner. PPB emphasises empowering individuals, reducing restrictive practices, and promoting growth and independence. The OIC PPB Policy aligns and is informed by Scottish Government's "Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3" guidance, emphasizing a rights-based, nurturing approach to behaviour management.

[Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3: A Relationships and Rights-Based Approach to Physical Intervention In Schools](#)

Promoting Positive Behaviour (PPB) training is a course designed to equip staff with a structured framework to follow when working with individuals who may exhibit distressed behaviours that put themselves at risk or challenge peers, the

environment, or staff. The philosophy of PPB should be adhered to at all times to ensure consistent, effective, and ethical practice.

Although staff may encounter situations where individuals pose a potential risk, it is their responsibility to minimise such risks through the application of theoretical knowledge. Physical interventions should be considered only as a last resort.

To support staff in reducing risk, the following documents has been developed for use within the services of Orkney Islands Council:

Behavioural Profile

The Behavioural Profile provides summary guidance to staff, emphasizing key aspects of an individual's care plan to identify and mitigate potential risks. Ideally, individuals who display behaviours that may pose a risk should be involved in completing this form. If necessary, staff or a representative may complete the form on their behalf, ensuring the individual's input to the extent of their ability.

It is crucial that this document is completed collaboratively, involving the individual that it refers to (where possible and if not by the individuals advocate), parents, caregivers, and other relevant parties in the individual's care. The Behavioural Profile must be stored confidentially and reviewed regularly, with the frequency determined by the setting manager or a designated person.

Risk Assessment

All potential risks must be documented using the PPB Support Plan (High Risk Behaviours & who is at Risk). This process should involve the individual or their representative, and a team approach is essential. High Risk Behaviours must be updated as needed to reflect changes in circumstances or behaviours.

The Assessment should identify strategies for staff to support individuals during episodes of distressed behaviour. It should outline clear approaches for staff to follow, including any agreed physical interventions, which should only be considered as a last resort.

Post Physical Intervention

If a physical intervention has been used the **PPB Crisis incident form** must be completed by the staff involved and setting manager. This will include a record of the incident including interventions, Record of **FINDAS** (Find a Strategy) support interview, record of staff debrief and record of authorities reported to. This will ensure PPB best practice procedures are followed, documented and shared with individual, parents / Carers, staff, setting management, Service Manager, Care Inspectorate, and PPB Governance Grp.



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a proposal or changes by anticipating the consequences and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

Should you have any questions or wish for your draft EqIA to be reviewed by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, please contact OD@orkney.gov.uk.

1. Identification of the Proposal or Change

Name of proposal or change being assessed.	Promoting Positive Relationships and Learning Policy
Responsible Service and Directorate.	Education Communities and Housing
Date of assessment.	30.09.2025
Is the proposal or change existing? (Please indicate if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	Existing, no significant changes will occur

2. Primary Information

What are the intended outcomes of the proposal or change?	Approval of the Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy
Is the proposal or change strategically important?	No.
State who is or may be affected by this proposal or change, and how?	Education staff will be more confident in creating and implementing a school relationships policy and operational guideline. They will and have increased skills and confidence in their practice with respect to relational approaches.

How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this proposal or change?	The draft policy was distributed to Education Managers, schools and parent councils for comment as part of a consultation process.
Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking.	Research data (referred to in the policy) indicates that approaches recommended in the policy increase equity and equality for vulnerable children and young adults.
Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.	Research data (referred to in the policy) indicates that approaches recommended in the policy increase equity and equality for vulnerable children and young adults.
Could the proposal or change have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?	Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons:
1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.	No differential impact anticipated.
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	No differential impact anticipated.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No differential impact anticipated.
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No differential impact anticipated.

5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No differential impact anticipated.
6. Age: people of different ages.	Yes, the policy is specifically designed to achieve benefits for children and young people.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No differential impact anticipated.
8. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	Yes. Research data indicates that approaches recommended in the policy increase equity and equality for vulnerable children and young adults (including those with disabilities).
9. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No differential impact anticipated.
10. Caring responsibilities	No differential impact anticipated.
11. Socio-economic disadvantage.	Yes, the policy is specifically designed to achieve benefits for children and young people.
12. Care experienced	Yes. Research data indicates that approaches recommended in the policy increase equity and equality for vulnerable children and young adults (including those who are Care experienced).

3. Impact Assessment

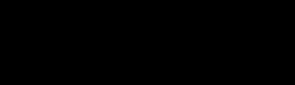
Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	No.
Does the analysis above identify any potential negative impacts?	No.
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes.

4. Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Please complete the following action plan where you have identified any differential impacts or potential negative impacts in Section 3 of the Equality Impact Assessment.

Impact Identified	Action to be taken	Owner	How will it be monitored	Date Action to be completed

5. Sign and Date

Signature:	
Name:	Catherine Lyner
Date:	30.09.2025

Island Communities Impact Assessment

Promoting Positive Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Policy

Preliminary Considerations	Response
Please provide a brief description or summary of the policy, strategy or service under review for the purposes of this assessment.	Orkney's Promoting Positive Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Policy has been developed to support schools and educational establishments to develop their own policies and implement an empathic, nurturing, relational approach to teaching and learning.
Step 1 – Develop a clear understanding of your objectives	Response
What are the objectives of the policy, strategy or service?	To provide guidance and support to Orkney's educational settings in relation to, and support of, high quality learning and teaching.
Do you need to consult?	A draft of the policy was distributed to Education Managers, Schools and Parent Councils for their consideration and comment.
How are islands identified for the purpose of the policy, strategy or service?	The policy relates to Orkney as a whole.
What are the intended impacts/outcomes and how do these potentially differ in the islands?	The goal is to provide a consistent approach across Orkney's learning communities; it is not anticipated that this will be different for the island schools and communities
Is the policy, strategy or service new?	New
Step 2 – Gather your data and identify your stakeholders	Response
What data is available about the current situation in the islands?	Island based schools operate under the same guidance and legislation as the mainland, rural schools. Island school generally operate with favourable adult/pupil ratios, which can mean building and maintaining positive relationships may be easier.
Do you need to consult?	No

How does any existing data differ between islands?	No.
Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place?	As noted above, generally islands schools benefit from more favourable pupil/teacher ratios.
Step 3 – Consultation	Response
Who do you need to consult with?	A draft of the policy was distributed to Education Managers, Schools and Parent Councils for their consideration and comment. Comments, where made, have been reflected in the text and structure of the document
How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales?	N/A.
What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities?	N/A.
What information has already been gathered through consultations and what concerns have been raised previously by island communities?	See above.
Is your consultation robust and meaningful and sufficient to comply with the Section 7 duty?	Yes.
Step 4 – Assessment	Response
Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities?	No.
Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts?	No.
How will you address these?	N/A.
You must now determine whether in your opinion your policy, strategy or service is likely to have an effect on an island community, which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities).	

If your answer is **No** to the above question, a full ICIA will NOT be required and **you can proceed to Step 6.**

If the answer is **Yes**, an ICIA must be prepared and **you should proceed to Step 5.**

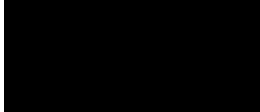
To form your opinion, the following questions should be considered:

- Does the evidence show different circumstances or different expectations or needs, or different experiences or outcomes (such as different levels of satisfaction, or different rates of participation)?
- Are these different effects likely?
- Are these effects significantly different?
- Could the effect amount to a disadvantage for an island community compared to the Scottish mainland or between island groups?

Step 5 – Preparing your ICIA	Response
In Step 5, you should describe the likely significantly different effect of the policy, strategy or service:	
Assess the extent to which you consider that the policy, strategy or service can be developed or delivered in such a manner as to improve or mitigate, for island communities, the outcomes resulting from it.	
Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required.	
Describe how these alternative delivery mechanisms will improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
Identify resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
Stage 6 – Making adjustments to your work	Response
Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities?	No.

Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?	No.
Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process?	Yes.
Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?	No.
How will outcomes be measured on the islands?	Positive relationships are regarded as critical to wellbeing and achievement. Measures are already in place to gather and analyse data in relation to both. For example, attendance, bullying, exclusion and attainment (including BGE/Senior Phase for junior high schools)
How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities?	N/A – new policy.
How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy making and service delivery?	Important to ensure policy initiatives reflect the needs and aspirations of the communities they impact on. The majority of school/nursery staff live within the community they work, it is important to acknowledge the interface between the professional, public and private relationships that will exist.
Step 7 – Publishing your ICIA	Response
Have you presented your ICIA in an Easy Read format?	Yes.
Does it need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language?	No.
Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it?	Attached to report present at Committee.
Who will signoff your final ICIA and why?	James Wylie – Director, Education, Communities and Housing

ICIA completed by:	Peter Diamond
Position:	Head of Education
Signature:	
Date complete:	24-10-25

ICIA approved by:	
Position:	Director, Education, Communities and Housing
Signature:	
Date complete:	24-10-25