



Mill Water School

Preparation for *their* best future

Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy

June 2026

Policy Objectives:

- To provide guidance to class teams, parents and carers, governors and other stakeholders on how to support our pupils to self-regulate, manage their behaviour and feel safe so they are ready to learn
- To provide a framework for our collective beliefs, understanding and insight into human behaviour as it relates to pupils with severe or complex learning needs at Mill Water School
- To provide a holistic, whole-person, inclusive model for our understanding of self-regulation and behavioural needs
- To underpin our beliefs with evidence-based practice and current research.

Legislation and statutory requirements

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

- The Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2024
- Mental health and behaviour in schools 2018
- Searching, screening and confiscation advice for schools 2022
- Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement 2024
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school 2015
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools 2026

It is also based on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice.

In addition, this policy is based on:

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

- DfE guidance explaining that maintained schools should publish their behaviour policy online

Other policies and documents that should be read in conjunction with this Policy are

- Special Partnership Trust (SPT) Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Administration of Medication
- Online Safety Policy
- Touch Guidelines

Understanding Attachment and Trauma

Attachment

Attachment is a theory developed by psychologists to explain how a child interacts with the adults looking after him or her. If a child has a healthy attachment, the child will be confident that the adults will respond to their needs, for example: if they are hungry, tired or frightened, the adult caregiver will respond to meet the child's needs or reassure and comfort them.

There are times when a carer's ability to look after a child and respond consistently may be interrupted e.g. due to post-natal depression, bereavement, divorce, misuse of drugs and alcohol. This can potentially have serious and damaging consequences for the adult that child will become. If caregivers are seriously inconsistent or unresponsive in their behaviour to the child, the child may become very anxious as they are not able to predict how the adults around them will act; the child may even give up trying to get their needs met.

It is the role of the adult to guide the child in developing confidence to explore their environment and develop a good sense of self-esteem. This will help the child grow up to be a happy and functioning adult.

Trauma

A traumatic event is a frightening, dangerous or violent event that poses a threat to a child's life or bodily integrity. Witnessing a traumatic event that threatens life or physical security of a loved one can also be traumatic. This is particularly important for young children as their sense of safety depends on the perceived safety of their attachment figures.

Traumatic experiences can initiate strong emotions and physical reactions that can persist long after the event. Children may feel terror, helplessness or fear, as well as physiological reactions such as heart pounding, vomiting or loss of bowel or bladder control. Children who are unable to protect themselves or who lack protection from others to avoid the consequences of the traumatic experience may also feel overwhelmed by the intensity of physical and emotional responses.

Even though adults work hard to keep children safe, dangerous events still happen. This danger can come from outside of the family, such as a natural disaster, car accident, community violence, or from within the family, such as domestic violence, physical or sexual abuse, or the unexpected death of a loved one.

It is key to remember that safety is not just the absence of danger.

Anxiety

Why do children become anxious?

There are a range of reasons why children and young people become anxious. In most cases, when children are extremely anxious there is a very real cause to this; perhaps they are having difficulties at school, for example, being bullied. Anxiety can also have no apparent cause, but be very real in its own right, and cannot be overcome by willpower. Attempts to get children to master their anxiety by telling them “Not to be so silly” will fail. Below are a number of reasons why children and young people might become anxious.

- A temperamental disposition. Anxiety can run in families. There is a genetic predisposition to some children being anxious.
- Physical illness or disability
- Family problems
- School worries
- Problems with friends and activities out of school.

At Mill Water School we provide a nurturing environment where everyone feels safe to explore their feelings and surroundings. Staff and outside agencies work tirelessly to ensure pupils gain access to the curriculum and the wealth of expertise available to ensure their individual needs are met.

Dysregulation

There will be times when a pupil will be triggered into a response and their reaction is deemed to be unacceptable i.e. hitting out, running away or damaging property. These reactions are not intentional but a form of communication, letting us know their needs at that time are not being met, for example, they may be feeling unsafe, there may be a perceived lack of trust (relationships), separation anxiety or fear.

What Experiences Might Be Traumatic?

- Traumatic events during the last trimester of pregnancy (alcohol, domestic violence, anxiety)
- Being placed in care
- Physical, sexual, or psychological abuse and neglect
- Natural and technological disasters or terrorism
- Family or community violence
- Sudden or violent loss of a loved one
- Substance use disorder (personal or familial)
- Refugee and war experiences (including torture)
- Serious accidents or life-threatening illness
- Military family-related stressors (e.g. deployment, parental loss or injury)

Risk and Protective Factors

Fortunately, even when children experience a traumatic event, they don't always develop traumatic stress. Many factors contribute to symptoms, including whether the child has experienced trauma in the past, and protective factors at the child, family, and community level can reduce the adverse impact of trauma. Some factors to consider include:

Severity of the event. How serious was the event? How badly was the child or someone s/he loves physically hurt? Did they or someone they love need to go to the hospital? Were the

police involved? Were children separated from their caregivers? Were they interviewed by a head teacher, police officer, or counsellor? Did a friend or family member die?

Proximity to the event. Was the child actually at the place where the event occurred? Did they see the event happen to someone else or were they a victim? Did the child watch the event on television? Did they hear a loved one talk about what happened?

Caregivers' reactions. Did the child's family believe that he or she was telling the truth? Did caregivers take the child's reactions seriously? How did caregivers respond to the child's needs, and how did they cope with the event themselves?

Prior history of trauma. Children continually exposed to traumatic events are more likely to develop traumatic stress reactions.

Family and community factors. The culture, race and ethnicity of children, their families and their communities can be a protective factor, meaning that children and families have qualities and/or resources that help buffer against the harmful effects of traumatic experiences and their aftermath. One of these protective factors can be the child's cultural identity. Culture often has a positive impact on how children, their families and their communities respond, recover, and heal from a traumatic experience. However, experiences of racism and discrimination can increase a child's risk for traumatic stress symptoms

Key Beliefs and Principles

At Mill Water School we want our Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy to reflect our insight and understanding of the complex needs of our pupils and how this contributes to their ability to self-regulate. We want our pupils to be able to manage their behaviour in a positive way so they can be ready to engage with their learning. It is imperative we understand how we can offer pupils the security and relationships needed to meet their individual wellbeing and mental health needs and guide them along their journey towards becoming independent, resilient, life-long learners.

We incorporate a holistic, whole-person approach to ensure we are reflecting and planning for the needs of all our pupils, some with complex layered needs. We are a special school implementing an Attachment and Trauma approach for all. We believe that behaviours which challenge are a consequence of unmet needs and may be the only way a pupil can communicate; it can arise for different reasons which are personal to the individual. Pupils who display, or are at risk of displaying, behaviours which challenge, may need support which involves both positive support, intervention and, as a last resort, some form of restrictive practice. Any restrictive intervention must be legally and ethically justified, be absolutely necessary to prevent serious harm, and be the least restrictive option for the shortest period of time.

At Mill Water School we believe that:

- Our pupils want to behave well.
- Behaviour is a means of communication. We use a Total Communication approach so that all pupils are supported to communicate their needs safely and appropriately using their preferred communication systems.

- Pupils are happy when their needs are understood and met allowing them to self-regulate and behave well, and that their effort to manage themselves and their behaviour should be recognised and acknowledged by adults and their peers.
- In developing self-regulation skills, pupils can learn to improve their behaviour. Pupils at Mill Water School find learning difficult: learning new behaviour is a task, just like learning to read or write.
- Pupils need a personalised approach to support them to manage their behaviour, and consideration must be given to sensory and emotional needs, pain thresholds, what self-injurious behaviour could be communicating, and levels of stimulation and engagement.
- As adults, we must consider our pupils' learning styles. We must also have realistic expectations about the rate of progress a pupil will make when learning to adapt or develop new behaviours.
- Mistakes are part of the learning process and we recognise that all of our pupils are at different stages of the developmental process. We don't make a judgement about it, instead we support and guide our pupils to get it right.
- Most of our pupils learn in small, incremental steps over a very long period of time.
- Supporting pupils to communicate effectively is a very important way to promote them to self-regulate, build resilience and behave in a positive manner.
- All adults can learn strategies to support pupils to improve their behaviour. Most adults have evolved ways of responding to pupils' behaviour based on a combination of personal and professional experiences and training and experiential learning. Teachers and class teams must be given the opportunity to learn, understand and have insight into why our pupils become dysregulated, and reflect on how/why it impacts on their behaviour.
- All adults need to understand pupils' communication styles, social interaction skills, sensory and emotional deficits, as well as the role we play in supporting them to develop these skills.
- We should work collectively with our pupils, their parents/caregivers and other professionals to develop strategies as part of a responsive co-regulation plan to support them to self-regulate and manage their behaviour in a positive manner.

Class teams can support our pupils by:

- Being mindful and reflecting on the quality of our relationships with each other as well as with pupils.
- Reflecting on and being committed to continuously improving the quality of our provision.
- Reflecting with parents, carers and other professionals so we are well-informed and have insight and understanding of pupils' individual needs.
- Reflecting on and planning the scaffolding we put in place to support them to learn self-regulation skills.
- Observing, gathering and analysing data on emotional development and behaviour to ensure our interventions are personalised, well informed and planned according to the needs of each individual within the context of their class or within particular lessons, on and off site.
- Working in partnership with our pupils, their parents and carers, and other professionals working with them, e.g. occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, CAMHS, etc.
- Giving time and space for pupils to practise these skills and make mistakes from which they can learn, develop and grow.

The resources, interventions and learning comprise:

- a variety of individualised and accessible modes of communication (total communication)

- clear and realistic expectations
- negotiable and non-negotiable rules
- boundaries
- routines
- reparation wherever possible and appropriate.

At Mill Water School we encourage class teams to reflect on what the underlying issues that drive or trigger behaviours might be, and to think about ways of responding in a non-judgemental and supportive way. This can be very difficult, especially if a pupil is aggressive and/or targeting others.

As a school, we support class teams to develop their own emotional resilience through professional support. This may be peer to peer, group or individual support and can draw on a range of expertise within school and beyond. There is an expectation that all staff will be committed to developing their practice and sharing their skills and experience through ongoing professional development.

Our aims are achieved when we:

- Create and maintain a positive and safe school climate where effective learning can take place and all pupils can grow socially, emotionally and academically, with mutual respect between all members of the school community.
- Provide a nurturing environment, using Dan Hughes' PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) (Appendix 1) approach to foster appropriate behaviour.
- Promote self-awareness, self-control and acceptance of responsibility for our own actions.
- Use PACE, Rights Respecting and Restorative approaches in our interactions with pupils.
- Use interventions which are specific to pupils' needs.
- Have high expectations and maintain boundaries at all times.
- Provide pupils with excellent role models.
- Allow all pupils to fulfil their potential, ready for their best future.
- Understand that behaviours have natural consequences which are applied consistently and fairly within the school in a calm and considerate manner.

The stage of emotional development and additional needs of a pupil will determine their ability to self-regulate and their readiness for learning. Interruptions that occur within a pupil's emotional development can affect a healthy development in wellbeing and mental health. It is therefore imperative we utilise what is on offer at Mill Water school to ensure a holistic approach for pupils.

The quality of our provision:

If we are able to meet each pupil at his/her point of need and learning, it is more likely that challenging behaviour will decrease or stop. To do this we need to:

- Have communication systems in place and readily available when the pupil is presenting as dysregulated. This is their "voice" and should be accessible at all times, but especially during times of dysregulation or distress when it is often difficult to make use of other communication methods.
- Know their sensory processing difficulties and have appropriate strategies and resources available to support the pupil to access sensory strategies that may allow them to de-escalate and return to a state of better regulation.
- Accurately assess and understand the pupils' needs by referring back to their EHCPs.

- Support the pupil to develop high levels of resilience and have high expectations for every pupil.
- Offer frequent positive reinforcement when things are going well and minimal feedback for low level undesirable behaviours. Focus on what you want the pupil to do.
- Offer personalised learning to ensure that we meet each pupil at his/her point of development and learning. Where appropriate, include the pupil in the target-setting and evaluation process for outcomes measurement, using appropriate language and methods (Blank level questions- see Appendix 3).
- Give the pupil feedback on progress in a supportive way that makes sense to them, focusing particularly on their achievements and what they need to do to make further progress.
- Praise the pupil for their specific achievements, i.e. descriptive praise, and do this often.
- Actively teach the pupil behaviour for learning.

Graduated Approach

In line with the SEND Code of Practice, we work alongside parents, pupils and other agencies to implement a Graduated Approach with four stages of action: Assess, Plan, Do and Review.

Assess: We complete assessments regularly to ensure that the support we offer matches the pupil's need. When there is little or no improvements in the child's progress, we will seek more specialist support such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Learning Disability and Educational Psychologist. This is all done in agreement with parents and pupils.

Plan: Teachers and parents meet together to discuss outcomes for pupils; this is usually done in Annual Reviews and regular termly meetings. We then develop and put in place interventions and support to help the pupils make progress. This may include referrals for support from other agencies. Where appropriate, plans take into account pupils' views and are monitored throughout the year.

Do: Class staff oversee the implementation of the interventions and support the pupil's needs, with support from the safeguarding team and behaviour lead.

Review: Annual Reviews happen once a year and look back on progress against EHCP targets. The impact and quality of support is evaluated by teachers and other professionals. The findings are then discussed with parents and pupils, where appropriate, and they agree any changes to the outcomes to ensure the pupil's needs are continuing to be met.

Interventions

Interventions respond to the social, personal and academic needs of our pupils. Pupils will receive interventions based on their identified needs and assessments. Interventions may include:

- Therapeutic Play
- Sensory Integration
- Speech and Language Therapy – S<
- Occupational Therapy - OT
- Mindfulness Sessions
- Lego Therapy
- Attention All
- smiLE Therapy/Narrative Therapy
- Sand Play

- Drawing and Talking Therapy
- Rebound Therapy
- Hydrotherapy

(Appendix 2)

To help reduce anxiety and build resilience pupils may have regular access to

- An identified member of staff
- Identified peer support
- Other spaces to use for work or to implement strategies to self-regulate
- Visuals i.e. timetable, instructions, sequence strips, now and then strips etc
- Interventions specific to their needs
- Stress toys, including chewy toys
- Outdoor Learning

The quality of our relationships with our pupils.

These relationships are crucial. Each adult is a significant adult for our pupils. To foster successful, enabling relationships we need to:

- Actively build trust and rapport which must be earned; it is not a given.
- Have high expectations for all pupils. When we demonstrate our belief in them, it supports them to succeed.
- Treat pupils with dignity and respect always by communicating carefully and clearly in a way that is accessible to them and their current level of need.
- Listen respectfully to the pupil and make a judgement about how/when to respond.
- Invest in our relationships with the pupils and have fun together.
- Consider what the unmet need behind the behaviour might be; why the pupil is behaving in this way. See things through, e.g. reflection as a response to behaviours, both desirable and undesirable.
- Be prepared to explain to pupils why things may not or cannot happen.
- Identify the strengths of the pupil – identify these with the pupil where possible and build on it. If a pupil cannot do this, advocate for the pupil within the team or professional group.
- Apologise if you make a mistake – you are modelling this for the pupil, and this will support you to build trust and respect.
- Name and manage your own emotional reactions to pupils' reactions/behaviour, i.e. demonstrate emotionally intelligent reaction/behaviour at all times. Seek help if you are finding it difficult to manage your feelings about a pupil.
- Where appropriate, resolve difficult feelings about pupils' past behaviour. Focus instead on getting it right in the future.
- Quietly but firmly hold appropriate boundaries for the pupils.
- Always be respectful to pupils; we do not talk about them over their heads or in front of other pupils.
- We are non-judgemental about pupils' life experiences.
- Invest in the quality of our relationships with parents and carers. It is important to reflect and plan with parents to ensure consistency in approaches between home and school. If any form of restraint has to be used to keep a pupil safe during their school day this needs to be shared with parents or carers.

- Invest in the quality of our relationships with other professionals. It is important to ensure we are working collaboratively with other therapists and professionals working with pupils to ensure their input into planning and strategies. It is also the class team's responsibility to share any needed information or strategies with other teams within school e.g. safeguarding team, to ensure consistency in strategies and enabling pupils to succeed in self-regulating and managing their behaviour in different contexts, lessons and environments.
- Allow pupils to act as positive role models to younger pupils. Give pupils first-hand experience of a wide range of aspirational role models from outside school.
- Recognise that touch is an essential element of the Attachment Aware approach and physical contact is not only inevitable but beneficial. Appropriate touch not only promotes a child's social and emotional development but is also a highly effective and powerful method of non-verbal communication and is key to the development of healthy relationships. Touch must be child centred not staff centred and meet the requirements of safeguarding. (See Touch Guidelines).
- Understand the role of appropriately used holding. By this we mean providing physical intervention, which is more directive in nature, e.g. the pupil is led away by hand/arm/around shoulder (using PIPS practices, see Appendix 6) or, for very young pupils, it may mean more direct physical support – cradling or hugging. Pupils with complex sensory needs may also request squashing or deep pressure. This will be documented in sensory profiles and form part of their sensory diets.

Classroom Organisation for effective communication, self-regulation and building resilience

Guidance is offered to class teams to help them reflect on the support our pupils need to learn how to self-regulate and manage their own behaviour successfully.

Expectations to support positive behaviour should be:

- Few in number
- Rights respecting
- Where developmentally appropriate, agreed with pupils
- Communicated in a way that the pupils can understand, including visual cues, objects of reference, social stories, etc.
- Stated in the positive – things we are going to do
- Regularly referred to by class team and support staff with pupils
- Appropriate to the activity/lesson and developmental range of the pupils.

Routines

Consistent class/lesson/activity/routines support our pupils to understand expectations, manage anxiety, and mentally and physically prepare themselves for their day. They allow them to learn how to self-regulate, engage with learning/activities and manage their behaviours positively. This must be explicitly taught – don't assume they know them. You will need to teach routines for all activities. The more consistency there is over routines, the easier it is for our pupils. Routines also support their emotional development and behaviour for learning.

Class teams should, however, also reflect on how they support pupils to adapt to changes to routines and how they prepare them for changes, as this is an important life skill. Changes to routines should be practised using appropriate visual resources to allow our pupils to learn that changes can be managed in a positive manner.

Communication and social interaction difficulties

Many of our pupils need support in developing these skills. Behaviour that challenges is often the result of a breakdown in communication. To support a pupil who has become dysregulated or is in distress, we should aim to understand the function of the behaviour or unmet need. Class teams need to have strategies in place to support pupils to express how they are feeling and how we can meet their needs proactively. Class teams need to consider the following:

- Communication devices and strategies should work both ways: to give instructions but to also allow our pupils to have a voice, make choices and express their needs.
- Pupils often need time to process information.
- Some of our pupils have difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication (body language).
- Pupils may have difficulties in:
 - understanding facial expression and tone of voice.
 - understanding or consistently remembering social rules and conventions.
 - understanding their own and others' emotions and how to tell an adult what they are feeling.
 - predicting what will/could happen next – this can cause anxiety.
 - coping in new or unfamiliar situations.
 - managing social expectations and/or interactions with peers including friendships and bullying.
 - judging risk/danger.
 - dealing with changes and transitions.

Class teams should use visual resources and other communication aids

Visuals:

- allow time for language processing.
- prepare pupils for transitions allowing them to feel less anxious and self-regulate better.
- help build independence, confidence and self-esteem.
- are transferable between environments and people.
- are helpful when pupils have become dysregulated as they replace verbal communication and social interaction which in times of distress can hinder de-escalation.
- reduce anxiety which impacts on self-regulation and positive behaviour.

Blank Level Questions

Pupils need to understand language from all 4 levels to understand all classroom language; questions require both receptive and expressive language. (Appendix 3).

Restorative Approach

We reflect and communicate in a non-judgemental way. We use restorative questions to promote telling the truth, taking responsibility, acknowledging harm and accountability. (Appendix 4).

Sensory processing needs

Sensory processing is the ability to register, discriminate, adapt and respond appropriately, both physically and emotionally to sensory input from the environment. Sensory processing difficulties can impact on our pupils' ability to self-regulate and manage their behaviour.

Class teams should ensure that they:

- organise the environment clearly, with visual cues and signposts.
- speak clearly, slowly and calmly, and give pupils time to respond.
- allow sensory processing issues to inform suitable learning environment adjustments and support understanding pupils' actions.
- ensure pupils' sensory needs are supported through embedding sensory diets and movement breaks into their daily class routine and ensure they have access to sensory equipment that supports self-regulation.
- teach pupils to recognise when they are becoming dysregulated (label emotions and feelings) so they are able to learn to ask for a break or an appropriate self-regulatory strategy to support them in regulating better.
- take social demands of working with other pupils into account.
- monitor physical and emotional well-being of pupils and recognise signals of being distressed, unwell, in pain or upset.
- understand that enabling environments through making reasonable adjustments is a statutory obligation in disability law (see Equality Act 2010).

Understanding self-injurious behaviour

Self-injurious behaviour is when a pupil physically harms themselves. It is sometimes called self-harm and may be the result of an unmet need. When it happens, staff should work collaboratively with the pupil, their parents or carers and other professionals to try to find ways to prevent or replace this behaviour. (Appendix 5).

Boundaries help to create a safe, harmonious community.

Communication should:

- increase pupils' sense of responsibility
- regard mistakes as part of learning
- remove the struggle for power
- be positive
- help them to take responsibility
- help them to self-regulate
- increase their independence.

Reinforce by

- using descriptive praise
- communicating with parents and carers to inform them of the behaviour or achievement
- giving special responsibilities.

Boundaries are linked to positive choices and achievements, particularly when safety is the issue. They focus on the specific behaviours we wish to improve.

Consequences

We do not impose sanctions or punishments. Instead, there will be natural consequences. For example:

Behaviour	Consequence
Pupil disrupts activity or behaves in a way that makes other pupils feel unsafe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil is offered some time away from the class • When they are able, pupil is supported by an adult to reflect on their actions • Pupil is allowed to re-join their class and enjoy positive interactions

When we are discussing incidents with pupils it is vital the incident is dealt with in a non-judgemental way. For positive communication we use PACE and restorative questions. If appropriate, when discussing behaviours/reaction we refer to the health and safety and the impact the situation may have had on others.

This should happen after an event when the pupil is regulated and able to reflect upon their behaviour/reaction. Staff should inform the pupil what the behaviour/reaction displayed was. Consequences will not involve taking away a previously planned or routine activity. Staff will avoid using words which could lead to shaming or humiliation of the pupil. We understand that such approaches are detrimental to the pupil's self-esteem and wellbeing and can escalate situations/incidents.

Reflection

There may be times when a pupil requires additional reflection time. During this time, a member of staff will guide and support the pupil to help promote their awareness and self-regulation of behaviours.

After a pupil completes lost learning or reflection time, it is important to repair and restore the staff-pupil relationship. Staff should praise his or her behaviour at the first opportunity to draw the attention away from the inappropriate behaviour/reaction. Staff must reassure the pupil that the inappropriate behaviour/reaction has been dealt with and that all parties will move on and start afresh.

It is important for pupils to link a specific behaviour with its consequence. We call this reflection and we discuss the behaviour using restorative language and Dan Hughes' PACE approach.

The consequence needs to be a natural consequence, to support the learner's understanding of the outcome. It is also important for adults to review what has happened. Was there anything that could have been done differently to support this learner to manage?

Reparation

Reparation means repairing relationships, or 'making good' in some way. We believe that pupils should always be given the opportunity to repair, and that they want to do this. Staff also need to reflect on their own practice, to consider if their actions may have escalated a situation and what they could do differently and proactively next time.

Where developmentally appropriate, we support pupils to take responsibility for what they have done and to repair it with the other person(s) involved/affected. Even pupils with complex difficulties can be supported to repair; this will look different for each learner. We can't make assumptions about what pupils feel. Unresolved difficulties can make pupils very anxious, and this can cause behaviours to escalate or become habitual.

Descriptive Praise

If we tell people what it is exactly that we like about what they are doing, we are reinforcing the behaviours we want to promote, e.g.

“I like how you used your communication device to tell me how you are feeling.”

“I liked that you asked for a break when you needed it.”

“I noticed you were being a good friend by helping Sam.”

“Thank you for coming back to your work so quickly.”

We are also giving them positive feedback and personal recognition. This raises their self-esteem and leads to improved behaviour. The use of descriptive praise is a feature of the school’s language. Descriptive praise supports emotional development and behaviour for learning.

Managing Transitions/Change

Change may trigger a traumatic response. To guide our pupils, we use the following strategies:

- visual aids e.g. photograph of people or places
- time spent with new class and staff
- visits to new settings including taster days to new schools
- if relevant, attending medical appointments with pupils and parents/carers
- when a pupil is transitioning to a new school, staff will initially accompany pupil then gradually withdraw.

Working with Mill Water Families

We work collaboratively with our pupils, their parents or carers, and professionals. This involves understanding the reasons for a pupil’s behaviour/unmet need and considering the person as a whole – including their life history, physical health and emotional needs. It focuses on creating physical and social environments that are supportive and capable of meeting pupils’ needs.

Pupils and significant number of incidents

It is expected that teachers and pupils begin each day/lesson afresh with optimism and expectations of success. There will be times when pupils may display signs/symptoms or react differently to a situation which is deemed to be their ‘norm’. For some pupils it may be a ‘one off’ bad time/day; however, for others, it may be a sign they are struggling with their emotions. Communication with parents/carers is vital. We may contact home to discuss displayed behaviours/reactions and ways to move forward. Staff may request a team meeting. The pupil may meet with their chosen member of staff. We might arrange a meeting with parents/carers and other agencies.

There may be times when it is in the best interests of a pupil that they have supported time away from their class. This will be explained to the pupil and their parents/carer by class staff.

Whenever harm is caused, parents/carers are informed. The incident is recorded on CPOMS and next steps are discussed with key staff and parents/carers. Risk Assessments are updated and shared with relevant parties.

Use of exclusion

We follow SPT, Local Authority and DfE Guidance and procedures when considering whether to exclude a pupil. Exclusion is always the very last resort, and the Headteacher and Senior Leaders will always consider all of the evidence available and discuss the situation with colleagues,

parents/carers, the SPT CEO, the Local Governing Body (LGB) and, on some occasions seek guidance from Devon County Council Inclusion Officers. Our ethos is strongly towards support, and, where necessary, looking as creatively and holistically as possible to address behavioural needs, with alternative support packages and interventions, rather than exclusion.

Bullying

Bullying is one of the most malicious forms of unacceptable behaviour within the school environment. Bullying usually takes place away from the supervision of adults and the misery and distress that it causes must not be underestimated. Children have a basic right to receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Pupils at Mill Water School should feel confident in the knowledge they will be protected from bullies; staff ratios and practice ensure that bullying within our school is minimised.

There are many definitions of bullying, but most have these three things in common:

- it is behaviour designed to deliberately hurt another
- it is repeated, often over a period of time
- it is difficult for those who are bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can take many forms - the most common are:

- physical (hitting, kicking, taking belongings, money extortion)
- verbal – name calling, insulting or racist remarks
- indirect – spreading unpleasant stories, exclusion from social groups.

There are a number of reasons that bullying must be dealt with. These include:

- the safety and happiness of pupils
- educational achievement
- providing a model for appropriate behaviour
- to maintain our reputation as an effective, caring school

Parents should feel reassured that Mill Water School will demonstrate through policy and action that it will respond positively and effectively to bullying.

Bullying (including Cyberbullying) key principles

- We do not tolerate bullying.
- Bullying will never be ignored.
- All instances of bullying will be recorded on CPOMS as suspected bullying.
- Parents and carers will be informed by teacher via telephone or in face-to-face meeting.
- Every instance will be addressed, in line with this policy, using our restorative approach.
- Pupils will be supported to develop age-appropriate levels of online literacy so that they are able to keep themselves safe online and report cyber-bullying.
- Opportunities will be given for parents and carers to learn more about online safety and how they can implement and manage this at home.

Expectations on School Visits and Out of School Activities

Expectations on school visits and out of school activities remain as those for school. At all stages of planning and preparation for an off-site visit, a risk assessment will be carried out. Additional support staff can be requested.

Procedures for Absconding

If a pupil absconds from the school building, parents/carers are informed immediately. We will inform the Police as soon as we lose sight of a pupil. School will ask Bicton College to be vigilant.

Recording incidents

Pupils at Mill Water School present with a range of behaviours, some of which can be challenging. Management of this range of behaviours requires a graduated response from members of staff. The chart below shows the strategies the school has in place to manage behaviour at three different tiers.

Degree of challenge	Strategies used by School Staff
Tier 1 (most pupils)	Adequate staffing Small numbers of pupils per class Appropriate groupings within the class Appropriately laid out classroom Differentiated activities Sensory diet where appropriate Appropriate and personalised communication strategies Highly trained staff Use of PIPS strategies
Tier 2 (some pupils)	Responsive Co-Regulation Plan and risk assessments in place All staff working with pupil aware of possible trigger points and preferred/recommended de-escalation strategies
Tier 3 (very few pupils)	Higher levels of staffing Greater range of staff members working with individual pupil Personalised timetable, with adapted activities, locations and staffing Protection strategies for staff, e.g. arm protectors, rhino pads, padded clothing, head protection

This graduated response aims to minimise both the number and severity of behavioural incidents.

Where behavioural incidents do occur, they are reported as follows:

Complete Incident Form on CPOMS if any one of these has occurred:	Complete locally held behaviour recording chart if:
This is a new behaviour	This is part of the normal pattern of behaviour as described in the pupil's Co-Regulation Plan
Restraint has been used	No restraint has been used

Member of staff has completed a Green OSHENs form	Staff have not sustained a reportable injury
There has been reportable damage to property	No damage to property has occurred
Other pupils have been injured	No other pupils have been involved

Records should be clear, detailed, non-judgemental and factual. The record will show what kind of incident it was, including what events happened prior to and during the incident and what took place just after the incident. The report will record who was informed of the incident and what action if any was taken as a result of the incident and must detail any medical attention required and received. The report will indicate whether physical intervention was used.

Physical Intervention

Although every opportunity will be taken to diffuse a situation there will be occasions when pupils will need to be kept safe by using physical restraint.

All staff at Mill Water School attend training and refreshers in the use of PIPS (Passive Intervention and Prevention Strategies) and follow the policy and procedures for Physical Intervention. Parents will be informed if their child is restrained.

Safeguarding

All staff are responsible for considering whether any changes in behaviour give cause to question whether a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. If such suspicions exist, staff follow Mill Water School's safeguarding procedures. We will also consider whether continuing disruptive behaviours might be the result of unmet educational or other needs. At this point, we will consider whether referrals to other agencies might be necessary.

Malicious allegations against staff (Refer to Grievance procedure policy)

Searching Pupils and/or their Possessions

When information has been received or there is a well-founded belief that inappropriate material has been brought into school, the school may carry out searches of pupils and/or their possessions. Only the Headteacher and authorised members of staff may conduct a without consent search of a pupil and/or their possessions. The school does not conduct intimate searches, and only outer clothing will be required to be removed. The consent of the pupil will usually be obtained before conducting a search unless the Headteacher and authorised members of staff reasonably suspects that an item has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property.

All personal searches will be conducted by a member of staff of the same gender as the pupil and in the presence of another member of staff. A search may also be conducted off school premises where the pupil is in the lawful control of the school. Items which may be searched for include any item banned under the rules of Mill Water School and any other item identified as such by law. If the item is an electronic device, the school may examine and erase any data from the device if the school considers there to be good reason to do so. Parents will be informed of any search conducted of their child and/or their child's possessions. The school will keep records of all searches carried out within CPOMS, including the results of the search and any follow up action taken.

Rights Respecting

As a rights respecting school, we believe every pupil has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status. There are four articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Pupil that are seen as special. They're known as the "General Principles" and they help to interpret all the other articles and play a fundamental role in realising all the rights in the Convention for all pupils. They are:

- Non-discrimination (Article 2)
- Best interest of the pupil (Article 3)
- Right to life survival and development (Article 6)
- Right to be heard (Article 12)

We expect everybody in our school community to respect these rights.

Appendix 1

Dan Hughes' PACE Approach

PACE refers to Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy:

- Playfulness involves spontaneity, openness and exploration; have fun and share enjoyment with the pupil. Using playfulness can defuse tense situations and is useful to manage minor behaviours, as the pupil is less likely to respond with anger or defensiveness.
- Acceptance involves unconditional positive regard for the pupil. Accept the pupil's inner experience without judgement and make sense of why the pupil is behaving in a certain way. Acceptance does not mean accepting negative behaviours but accepting the reasons behind behaviour. When necessary, criticise the behaviour but not the pupil.
- Curiosity involves wondering about the reasons behind the behaviours, rather than being angry. This shows the pupil that you care and helps them make sense of their behaviour, feelings and experiences. Use phrases like "I wonder if you are feeling like this because..." to open up discussions with the pupil.
- Empathy involves showing them that you understand how difficult they are finding things and reassuring them that you want to help them to manage this. Validate the pupil's emotional experience with phrases such as "I know how difficult that must have been for you" and work together to find ways to support them.
- For more information about the PACE approach please refer to literature by Dan Hughes.

Examples of PACE used with pupils at Mill Water School

Situation: Pupil in heightened state of anxiety, attempting to climb high gate and not following instructions to come down. Application of PACE:

- Playfulness – Use playful language to de-escalate the situation. "Goodness me, I really would rather you came down. Problem is that if you fall I will have to fill out a lot of forms and I'm a bit like you - I don't really like writing."
- Acceptance - the pupil is experiencing extreme anxiety because they are finding it hard to join in playing with a group of other children. Communicate that you accept how they feel (eg "I can see that this has made you feel really upset"). Avoiding saying things like, "Oh it doesn't matter, don't be upset about a silly game."
- Curiosity - Enquire and check what the young person's emotional experience is. "I wonder if you're feeling angry/sad because of what just happened?"
- Empathy - Show that you understand how difficult they are finding things. "I understand that this must be really difficult for you. I know that when I am feeling upset, I just want to run away from everything."
- Many children and young people at Mill Water do not have the verbal skills to express their emotions and feelings, however it is imperative to remember they have the full range. PACE may be delivered/expressed in different ways, such as Intensive Interaction, music, routines, overt body and facial expressions.

Appendix 2

Therapeutic Play

Imagination-driven, therapeutic play builds pupils' developmental skills. The process of pretending builds skills in many essential developmental areas. When pupils engage in pretend (or dramatic) play, they are actively experimenting with the social and emotional roles of life. This helps build emotional understanding and resilience.

Sensory Integration

Touch is important: it stimulates the brain to release important hormones that allow them to grow. As humans we need human touch to thrive. There are some incredible emotional and physical health benefits that come from touch: it is fundamental to human communication, bonding and health.

Speech and Language Therapy – S<

S< assesses speech, language, cognitive-communication, and oral/feeding/swallowing skills to identify types of communication problems (articulation; fluency; voice; receptive and expressive language disorders, etc.) and the best way to treat them.

Social skills can be targeted with the use of video modelling, role playing, specific therapy apps, social stories and other various strategies and tools. The use of aided communication with these strategies to work on improving these social skills is important.

Occupational Therapy - OT

Helps children with different needs develop skills to perform the purposeful activities that make up everyday life. Motor skills looks at the pupil's tone and strength, patterns of movement, posture, gross and fine motor function and hand-eye co-ordination. OT also help pupils work on fine motor skills so they can grasp and release toys and develop good handwriting skills.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness can help us maintain moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we're sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future.

Mindfulness helps improve our concentration and reduce ruminative thinking that contributes to the high levels of stress that is so prevalent in our society. It is also an incredible tool to help people understand, tolerate, and deal with their emotions in healthy ways. Regular practice of mindfulness has been known to decrease depressive symptoms, anxiety, stress and improve resilience.

Lego Therapy

Building with Lego bricks is a multi-sensory, open-ended experience, so the building projects can be tailored to any person's unique needs, such as blindness, deafness, mobility impairment, autism or ADHD. Lego can help develop and reinforce play skills and social skills such as, verbal and non-verbal communication, joint attention, task focus, sharing and turn-taking and collaborative problem-solving.

Attention All

Attention All is based on Attention Autism, an intervention which aims to develop natural and spontaneous communication through the use of visually based and highly motivating activities. Sessions are fun and “*offer an irresistible invitation to learn*”.

Its aims are to: engage attention; improve joint attention; develop shared enjoyment in group activities; increase attention in adult-led activities; encourage spontaneous interaction in a natural group setting; increase non-verbal and verbal communication through commenting; build a wealth and depth of vocabulary; have fun.

SmiLE Therapy

smiLE Therapy teaches pupils:

- to become actively responsible for their own communication and learning
- ways to prevent or repair communication breakdown in face-to-face situations
- a range of strategies to ensure they communicate their message successfully (hierarchy of communication strategies)
- strategies to clarify information received
- to self-evaluate
- to work with their peers in a group and be respectful
- socially appropriate behaviours eg greetings, to wait if another person is busy.

Sand Play

Sand play is a non-verbal, therapeutic intervention that makes use of a sandbox, toy figures, and sometimes water, to create scenes of miniature worlds that reflect a person’s inner thoughts, struggles, and concerns. This form of play therapy is practiced along with talk therapy, using the sandbox and figures as communication tools. Although sand play is often used with those who have suffered some form of trauma, neglect, or abuse it is especially well suited for working with young children, who often cannot express their inner feelings in words.

Drawing and Talking Therapy

Drawing and Talking therapy supports those who are not realising their full potential either socially or academically. Drawing and Talking is a safe and easy to learn serial drawing technique for use with children and young people who have suffered trauma or have underlying emotional difficulties affecting their mental health and well-being.

Appendix 3

Blank Level Questions

Normal Development based on Blank, Rose and Berlin [1978]

Level 1	Naming things	60% of typically developing 3 year olds understand level 1 and level 2 questions
Level 2	Describing things – Answering Who? What? Where?	
Level 3	Talking about stories and events	65% of typically developing 5 year olds understand level 3 and level 4 questions
Level 4	Solving problems and answering Why? questions	

Level 1 – Matching Perception

“RIGHT THERE – the answer is in front of you”

Apply language to what is seen. Includes matching, identifying, and naming objects

- Matching objects “Find one like this”
- Naming objects “What is this?”
- Imitating a simple sentence “Say this”
- Recalling objects or information “What did you see? (frog)”

Level 2 – Selective Analysis of Perception

“THINK AND SEARCH – the answer is in front of you but you need to look for it”

Focussing on specific aspects of the question. Includes identifying objects by function, describing and making basic classifications

- Identifying an object by function “Find something that cuts (scissors)”
- Describing a scene “What is happening?”
- Recalling information from a statement “What things.....?”
- Completing a sentence “Finish this: I like...”
- Attending to 2 characteristics “Find something that is sweet and red (apple)”
- Identifying differences “How are these different?”
- Giving an example within a category “Find a fruit (orange)”

Level 3 – Reordering Perception

“THE AUTHOR AND YOU – the answer is not in front of you, use clues from the book and form your own answer”

Restructuring and reordering ideas. Includes assuming the role of another, formulating generalisations and making basic predictions

- Predicting “What will happen next?”
- Taking on the role of another “How would he fix it?”
- Following a set of directions “Get the cup and bring it to mummy”
- Retell a routine sequence “Tell me how to make a sandwich”
- Identifying similarities “How are these the same? (Both hot)”
- Understanding negatives “Find one that is not red”

- Defining words “What is a....”

Level 4 – Reasoning About Perception

“IN YOUR HEAD – the answer is not in the book – it is your own opinion”

Problem solving at a higher level. Includes predictions, explanations and logical solutions.

- Predicting changes “What will happen if...”
- Justifying “Why can’t you use a spoon to row a boat?”
- Identifying causes “What made it happen”
- Formulating a solution “What could you do?”
- Problem solving “How could we fix it?”
- Explanations “How can you tell he is sad? (Because he is crying)”

Appendix 4

The Restorative Approaches Exploration

This conversation is an opportunity to enable the child to learn about themselves and others after an incident has occurred. It is helpful to communicate explicit safety cues and have the PACE framework at the forefront of your mind at any stage of this process. If we can be Playful, Accepting, Curious and Empathic throughout this conversation the child is more likely to be able to learn from the experience.

What Happened?

Allow the child to tell their story, listening with genuine curiosity and without judgement by:

- Mirroring – facial expression, body language, tone of voice, attuning to mood.
- Accepting and validating the child’s experience and feelings.
- Reflecting back what you hear in manageable chunks and with a structure which aids understanding
- Soothing. Using soothing (not cross) tones.

What were you thinking and how were you feeling?

Some children will find it hard to answer these questions and will need support to help them to integrate their feelings, emotions and thinking through:

- Listening and responding empathically, wondering aloud.
- Starting where the child is at developmentally. Explore physical sensations and name possible emotions.
- Letting the child know that you get it (big behaviour usually means big feelings) by accepting their feelings and letting them know that they are valid.

Who else has been affected by this?

Explore what effect this might have had on other people. If appropriate, use activities to help the child to see things from other people’s perspectives:

Call upon your own experience or experiences that you’ve heard about from others.

Stories and role play can support empathy. Wonder aloud to aid understanding.

Pictures and photographs, drawings and cartoons can help the child see other perspectives.

What do you need, and what needs to happen now so that the harm can be repaired?

This is about reparation in its widest sense. Apologies and restorative actions can be a part of this and can help children to move on, but they are not the goal and are not always appropriate at that time. What does the child need in order to move forward:

- Short term intervention to help to keep them safe, particularly in managing specific situations/transitions that they may find tricky
- Support, mediation and a structure to enable the repairing of relationships.
- **Reassurance that school provides a structure in which they can feel safe, and that everyone is working to try to ensure that the same things won’t happen again.**

Appendix 5

Self-Injury - Responses

- Respond quickly and consistently when a learner self-injures. Even if you think what the learner is doing is to get attention, it is never appropriate to ignore severe self-injurious behaviour.
- Keep responses low key. Limit verbal comments, facial expressions and other displays of emotion. Try to speak calmly and clearly, in a neutral and steady tone of voice.
- Reduce demands. The learner may be finding a task too difficult or overwhelming.
- Remove physical and sensory discomforts – consider their sensory processing difficulties and diets.
- Redirect: tell them what they need to do instead of the self-injurious behaviour, eg “David, hands down”. Use visual cues such as picture symbols to support instructions.
- Provide light physical guidance. If the learner is having difficulty stopping the behaviour, provide light physical guidance, eg gently guide their hand away from their head, using as little force as possible. Immediately try to redirect their attention to another activity and be prepared to provide physical guidance again. This approach must be used with extreme caution as it may escalate the behaviour or cause the learner to target others.
- Use barriers. Place a barrier between the learner and the object that is causing harm. For head-slapping, place a pillow or cushion between the head and hand. For hand or arm biting, provide another object to bite down on like a chewy.
- Consider physical restraint. If there is risk of serious harm, the class team will work with parents and carers and other professionals to use physical restraints such as arm restraints, gloves or helmets. These may also reduce the sensory experience and frequency of the behaviour. Physical restraints are very restrictive and should always be used under the guidance of a specialist/therapist to ensure they are used safely and appropriately, and with a plan to fade out their use over time. Physical restraints do not address the cause of the behaviour, so they must never be used in isolation without teaching the learner new skills which address the reason for the behaviour.

Appendix 6

PIPS (Passive Intervention Prevention Strategies)

Processes and Skills

PIPS is a training programme that promotes positive behaviour management and minimal physical handling techniques. This approach provides planned, systematic and graded strategies that are effective, safe and as least intrusive as possible. At Mill Water School staff receive training in the use of PIPS preventative strategies and physical techniques. No other physical intervention techniques are permitted.

Emergency Response

We recognise that there may be occasions when staff intervention might need to be an emergency response and therefore not have recourse to the planned intervention as previously outlined.

All staff are trained according to the provisions set out in the Department for Education Use of Reasonable Force in Schools 2019. Force will be appropriate if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. Any response should however be consistent with the legal obligations and responsibilities of Mill Water School and their staff and the rights and protection afforded to our young people under law.

Reasonable Force

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force' so it is not possible to set out comprehensively when it is reasonable to use force, or the degree of force that may reasonably be used. It will always depend upon the circumstances of the case.

There are two relevant considerations:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of the physical force and the situation could be resolved without using force.
- The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used must always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Elevated Risk

In any physical intervention staff must be aware of Elevated Risk. Staff must monitor the young person's Hypoxia (diminished availability of oxygen to the body tissues), Acidosis (the body fluids contain too much acid), and Positional Asphyxia (a form of asphyxia which occurs when someone's position prevents them from breathing adequately). Examples of things to take into consideration when monitoring are: Position during intervention; prolonged struggle; obesity; respiratory syndromes including asthma and bronchitis; cardio vascular disorders; prescribed drugs.

Risk Reduction

Since it is well established that a young person's behaviour is often adversely affected by the presence of an audience it will generally be helpful to remove the audience or, if this is not possible, to remove the young person in question from the audience. At Mill Water School we recognise the

benefit of time and space to de-escalate a crisis situation. Helping a young person to access an outdoor space or a preferred calming area may help them more quickly.

Staff are expected to apply professional judgement to determine the level of danger to the young person or to the others, including themselves. Staff should make a dynamic risk assessment during any incident to ensure safety of everyone involved.

Physical intervention, when applied, should be passive in intent. Its purpose must only be to limit the young person's ability to hurt him/herself, others or significant damage to property with minimum application of force. As soon as it is safe to do so the intervention should be gradually eased to allow the young person to regain his/her self-control.

Whenever circumstances allow, assistance should be sought from other members of staff at an early stage. All staff aware of another member of staff in difficulty have a responsibility to provide assistance and support providing that this does not compromise other young people's safety or wellbeing. In some circumstances this may involve the combined efforts of more than one member of staff.

Staff must remember throughout an incident that the purpose is to restore personal safety and security for all involved and to reduce the anxiety of the young person. When appropriate, opportunities should be taken to communicate to the young person, calmly and gently at appropriate stages during any incident and utilising a *Total Communication approach*.

PIPS techniques seek to avoid injury to the young person, but it is possible that injury may occur accidentally. This should not be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the young person remains safe.

PIPS emphasises positive relationships between staff and young people. It aims to protect and promote this. PIPS stresses that most crisis situations can be resolved through appropriately calm, controlled, dignified and skilled de-escalation intervention.

Planned Intervention

PIPS acknowledges that there will be times when there is no other alternative but to 'hold' or 'guide' a young person. The manner in which this is planned and then safely and therapeutically carried out is crucial. All young people at Mill Water School who need planned intervention have a Responsive Co-Regulation Plan. This document will list the proactive and reactive strategies for behaviour management, as well as listing the most effective PIPS physical interventions to use in response to identified behaviours.

Whenever and wherever possible, situations involving potential conflict or confrontation should be talked through. Young people will need to be in a receptive state for this approach to be successful. Staff present will form a judgment about the suitability of this approach.

Prevention from leaving the premises without permission

When a child is intent on leaving the building or site without permission, staff must use actions as appropriate to the likelihood of the pupil leaving the school premises.

The sequence of intervention should therefore be:

- Clear verbal instructions and warning of consequences
- Close supervision until the threat of departure has passed
- A permitted form of physical action.

Physical intervention should only be used as a means of preventing a child from leaving if:

- The child is so acutely and seriously troubled that it is clear he or she is in immediate danger
- The child is young and lesser interventions have either not been understood or successful and the child would, on leaving, be potentially in danger of harm
- The child is older but socially immature and vulnerable and consequently potentially at risk
- The use is intended to return a pupil to a less dangerous situation.