

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Summary

Introduction

We at Moyle Primary School and Nursery Unit aim to enable our children to develop skills for life and learning. Through providing the right support and experiences, we hope to equip our children for a happy, productive and successful adult life, with the capacity to fully engage in society.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum states, “It is important that children have secure relationships with peers and adults in a positively affirming environment which supports their emotional development, and which is sensitive to their growing self-esteem and self-confidence.”

In light of this directive, we are committed to promoting a climate within Moyle that recognises the benefit of these positive relationships and the significant and long-lasting impact on our children’s lives, both academically and socially.

As a school we believe that strong relationships foster appropriate behaviour.

To foster successful, enabling relationships we need to:

- Actively build trust and rapport
- Demonstrate belief in the pupil that they can succeed
- Treat pupils with dignity and respect
- Maintain consistent boundaries for children
- Listen respectfully to children
- Hear the message behind the words/behaviour
- Keep our word and do whatever we say we will do
- Identify and affirm the positive aspects of every child
- Apologise if we make a mistake
- Manage our own emotional reactions to children’s behaviour – it’s not personal
- Let go of our memory/feelings of a child’s previous difficult behaviour
- Support the child to develop techniques to respond more appropriately

All Moyle contracts have **three strands** running through their agreed rules:

- **Rules that keep us safe** - exploring how to move safely in class, around school, in the playground etc.
- **Rules that keep us friends** - exploring relationships, inclusion, ‘getting along’ behaviours and positive play etc.
- **Rules that help us learn** – exploring attitudes to work, appropriate interactions with peers and adults, self-management, manners and consideration for others etc.

Developing Positive Behaviour

Developing an understanding of why children behave as they do, maintaining a positive attitude to the child and their behaviour and being equipped with effective strategies for managing that behaviour are core requirements of the job. We are committed to ongoing professional development.

In Moyle we recognise that children need to learn *how* to behave. Children can often tell us what the rules are – even if they struggle to actually apply them.

Staff will model and teach behavioural skills to children, aiding the development of:

- confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline
- empathy, by understanding their own and others' feelings and emotions
- positive peer relationships based on tolerance and mutual respect
- responsibility for their own actions
- a sense of fairness that informs their values, choices and decisions
- an awareness of how actions can affect others
- co-operation
- an awareness of right and wrong
- an understanding of ways in which conflict can begin and the skills to resolve it

Staff will always give clear expectations of the behaviours they would like to see and provide real examples to help children achieve them.

Where possible, staff will use *real* opportunities to practice and build these skills, using *real* circumstances with *real* people.

In Moyle, we recognise that all children have the potential to develop positive behaviour skills. We believe that if a pupil is struggling to meet an expectation it may be due to a *lack of skill rather than a lack of will*.

Practical strategies for promoting and enabling positive behaviour.

In Moyle, we use a number of strategies to promote positive behaviour.

All classes promote the development of positive behaviours, through the teaching of PDMU.

Appendix 1: Social stories list

We use a variety of responses to encourage and celebrate good behaviour and these include:

- verbal praise
- praise cards/stickers
- stickers from class teacher, principal, VP

- 'catching' a child doing the right thing
- Whole Brain Teaching
- messages to parents/carers and other members of staff
- special responsibilities, privileges, helping a member of staff etc
- Star of the Week and merit prizes
- Peer rewards
- Opportunities for greater responsibility in school

Supporting Behaviour

Behaviour usually has meaning. It is not random. It serves a purpose and has goals. At Moyle we recognise behaviour as a form of communication. It can be helpful to ask ourselves; 'What is the child trying to tell me?' There are many influences that may affect children's behavioural and emotional wellbeing. We at Moyle should continue to develop our learning about environmental and biological influences that have a bearing on behaviour in our classrooms.

We at Moyle avail of a number of services that support our children and their families:

- Zoe Lutton, our School Counsellor, supports children from P1 – P7.
- Banardo's Friendship Group, part of the PATHS programme, is run by school staff and is aimed at promoting the development of self-control, emotional awareness and interpersonal problem-solving skills.
- Homework Club – a targeted intervention aimed at developing social and emotional skills alongside offering academic support in a nurturing environment. This programme is run by school staff.
- Explorers Club, a targeted club for P1 and P2 children, is aimed at developing positive Social and emotional behaviours and developing and self-esteem. This club is facilitated by Action for Children.
- The Early Intervention Support Service (EISS) offers short term support to families who are facing challenges or difficulties. Support is tailored to the needs of individual families and is facilitated both in the family homes and in school.

The language of choice.

We actively encourage children to choose the right thing to do, by explaining the outcomes of their choices, both positive and negative. We link behaviour to outcome to help the children make the best choice. These are opportunities to build and develop skills of responsibility, self-management, awareness of a behaviour's impact etc.

This language:

- Is positive
- Increases children's sense of responsibility
- Can help mitigate the struggle for power and control
- links responsibility, choice and outcome

- Helps to develop skills to manage behaviour
- Increases independence

Reflection

To develop skills in effective communication, empathy, co-operation and resolution in our children, we adopt a reflective behavioural approach.

Together staff and child use these questions to explore:

- What has happened?
- Why do you think this happened?
- How do you feel now about what happened?
- How do other people feel now?
- What needs to be done to put things right?
- Is there anything we have learned?

Appendix 2: Scripted Intervention

These reflective conversations are consistent. They are non-confrontational and allow the child to have their voice heard. These opportunities to reflect and learn about their behaviour develop emotional awareness and maturity.

Restoration

When restoration is our goal, we find that relationships are stronger, and learning is more effective.

What is being restored? Depending on the context and needs of those involved, it may be the restoration of a connection *between* children, for example friendship or respect, or the restoration of something *within* the child, for example self-confidence, self-respect or dignity.

When a child is led through a restorative conversation, trust can be restored, boundaries can be redrawn and re-established - all with the assurance of a fresh start.

Restorative Sanctions

As staff, we are mindful of where the discipline is coming from. Our sanctions are designed to help our children, to repair relationships, to reflect on behaviour, to explore a behavioural change and to influence discussion about what happens going forward.

When a contract is broken, it may be necessary to allow a child to experience the negative outcome of their behaviour in order to promote change – but always with the end goal of restoration.

For example, a child might need to experience:

- a rule reminder
- a move of location in a classroom
- time out
- extra work

- a restriction of playtime either at break or lunch
- a move to another classroom – a similar year group where possible
- home/school telephone call
- removal of privileges e.g. after school club, school trip etc
- placed on a home/school communication report allowing teachers and parents to monitor and support behavioural modification
- interview request with Mr. Hamilton and parents

When a child's behaviour has been a danger to themselves, others or school property, the restorative process may require staff to involve safeguarding staff, the principal and parents. In these instances, a record of the conversation may need to be kept.

Each case will be dealt with individually.

Applying restorative sanctions offer opportunities to teach children the boundaries of appropriate behaviour, to model appropriate behaviour, to demonstrate consistency and to reinforce rules and routines. When focusing on the child behind the behaviour, we are better able to empathise, teach and guide the child to better behaviour.

Punitive sanctions however, may compound problems, causing shame or humiliation. Children who feel shame are more likely to become aggressive and exhibit self-destructive behaviours. Shame can cause children to withdraw from relationships and to become isolated.

Therefore, staff should not:

- give lines
- stand children outside a room
- single children out for public discipline
- give whole class punishments
- withdraw curricular subjects

We at Moyle take seriously our responsibility for promoting positive behaviour. We also have a duty of care for all staff and children. For serious or persistent negative behaviour, the school may follow procedures for the referral, suspension or expulsion of children in school as outlined by the Education Authority Procedures.

Playground Expectations

The three strands; safety, friendship and learning, set the standard for playground expectations.

Behaviour Outside School

Expectations of our pupils extend to journeys to and from school and on educational trips or visits. They are taught to make safe choices regarding road safety and general vigilance.

At Moyle, we believe parents and school have a joint responsibility to ensure children behave appropriately to and from school. We reserve the right to request a parent to escort their child to and from school if the child cannot behave safely and appropriately.

Parental Involvement

The success of our positive behaviour policy depends on the support of our parents and carers. We seek parental support in:

- Celebrating their child's achievements
- Working in partnership with school in order to support their child's behaviour
- Co-operating with any restorative sanctions

Conclusion

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that all staff, teaching and non-teaching, should be fully aware of the contents of this policy and their role in its delivery. All staff have a responsibility to ensure that a culture of positive behaviour is promoted in Moyle. In support of this we regularly review our positive behaviour procedures, encouraging innovation and flexibility in interacting with our children.