



Cabot
Learning
Federation

Behavior Policy

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1 Policy Statement

At Minerva Primary School, we endeavour to create the conditions for a calm and happy community where effective learning can take place. We believe in the importance of all pupils and staff feeling safe and happy in school. We champion positive relationships between;

- Pupils and staff
- Parents/carers and staff
- All staff

We believe that by creating an overwhelmingly positive environment, we will give all our pupils a better chance of success.

Our school culture and ethos are therefore inspired by trauma-informed approaches and the supporting science. Through developing a Trauma and Mental Health Informed Approach, we believe that we are supporting the current, and future, positive mental health and resilience of our children and the community we serve, which will enable them to engage fully in life and learning. We strongly believe in the power of relationships, and that all interactions are the opportunity for a positive intervention. We believe that all children need to feel safe and emotionally supported in school for any chance of academic success.

We recognise the impact of trauma on brain development and are mindful that children's responses are sometimes due to unavoidable chemical reactions in their brains, rather than 'negative choices'.

The evidence-based research that underpins our whole school approach to SEMH and supporting positive behaviours is based on three key models:

- Model One - The Ace Study and Protective Factors
- Model Two - The neuroscience of mental health and Panksepp's emotional systems
- Model Three - Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect

2 Reference to other relevant policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-bullying / Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Exclusions and Suspensions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Academy Council

- Must make arrangements to monitor the implementation and impact of the policy in the academy.
- Ensure that sufficient staff have received suitable training and are competent in applying the policy at MPS.

3.2 Principal

- Ensure that the ethos of the policy is shared and communicated with stakeholders
- Maintain day-to-day discipline and behaviour
- Determine the standards of behaviour that are acceptable
- Ensure that the ethos and approach is consistently practised by all staff.

3.3 All Staff

- To model high standards of respectful behaviour when interacting with children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children
- Practice the principles of PACE (See appendix)
- Use positive language and create a positive atmosphere for positive learning
- Follow the CARE de-escalation technique wherever possible (APPENDIX)
- Plan and prepare effective lessons for every pupil
- Be fair to all pupils by recognising that each is an individual with their own specific needs
- Raise self-esteem, confidence and develop potential
- Provide challenging learning
- Help pupils to reflect on their behaviours and make positive changes
- Be 'emotionally available adults' for all children
- Be aware of this policy, the Trauma informed approach and SEMH guides.

3.4 Pupils' responsibilities are to:

- Make a positive contribution to class discussions and written work
- To complete homework to the best of their ability
- Respect everyone in the community
- Care for their own and other people's property
- Respect the school learning environment both in and out of the classroom
- Attend school regularly, on time and suitably dressed in correct uniform
- Show self-discipline to enable themselves and other pupils to fulfil their potential at all times
- Refrain from swearing or using any inappropriate language or violence
- Listen to and follow adult instructions.
- Ask an adult for help if they are struggling
- Uphold the school values

3.5 Parents' responsibilities are to:

- Ensure that their child attends school punctually, every day
- Be aware of the school's expectations and rules
- Support the school in the implementation of this policy
- Respond promptly to all school communications
- Foster their child's awareness of appropriate behaviour
- Encourage self-discipline
- Participate in school meetings to support our values

4 Data Protection Implications

- 4.1 All records of incidents of behaviour is confidential and should be stored securely in a lockable cabinet/ cupboard or preferably, on an online system.
- 4.2 Any records held digitally should be secure with restricted access.

5 Implementation

5.1 Model One - ACES and Protective Factors

We understand the devastating impact of Childhood Adversity Experiences (ACEs) on long term mental and physical health, but more importantly, we recognise that through ‘protective factors’, we can mitigate the potential impact of early trauma and/or interrupt the progression from early adversity to mental ill-health and early death. Therefore, it is fundamental that, wherever possible, we put these key protective factors in place to support all of our vulnerable children’s short and long term mental, physical and societal ill-health.

Protective factors include:

- When I was a child, there were relatives or other people who helped me feel better when I was sad or worried.
- When I was a child, teachers, youth leaders or other adults outside the family were there to help me.
- When I felt really bad, I could almost always find someone I trusted to talk to.
- There are people I can count on in my life now.
- Someone in my childhood believed in me.

“One trusted emotionally available adult in the school, community or home before the age of 18 can make all the difference. For many children this trusted adult will be someone at school” (TIS 2019)

5.2 Model Two - The Neuroscience of mental health and Panksepp’s Emotional System

When planning our interventions and whole school approach to SEMH, including managing distressed behaviour, we believe that having knowledge of the neuroscience of mental ill-health is essential; we place particular importance on the ‘Panksepp Emotional System’.

Panksepp’s Emotional System identifies genetically ingrained emotion systems in the brain:

- RAGE, FEAR, PANIC/GRIEF (trigger stress hormones)
- CARE (attachment)
- SEEKING and PLAY (trigger pro-social chemicals)

Each system can be overactive, under-active or optimally activated. Children who have suffered trauma tend to have overactive (RAGE, FEAR, PANIC/GRIEF) systems and under active (CARE, SEEKING and PLAY) systems, resulting in behaviours related to stress, anxiety, depression and anger.

Through our approach, interactions with children and interventions, we hope to activate the pro-social systems of CARE, SEEKING and PLAY in order to restore a balance of the systems, which underpins positive mental health. We do not expect a child who has an overactive RAGE, FEAR or PANIC system to be able to successfully manage the demands of school life without extra purposeful interventions to activate the pro-social systems.

By activating these systems we can:

- Encourage an appetite for life
- Foster an eagerness to seek out what the world has to offer
- Enjoy the necessary drive to transform the seed of an idea into an amazing reality
- Develop brain capacities for emotional regulation
- Decrease impulsivity and increase the capacity for focused attention
- Programme the frontal lobe regions to support in concentration and capacity to manage stress
- Empower confidence in asking for help when troubled
- Nurture skills to enable deeply fulfilling relationships later in life
- Develop a capacity for Empathy

“The ability to form meaningful relationships is fundamental to mental health and happiness. It’s the quality of contact we have with other people that is arguably the most important determining factor in our quality of life. We can only truly develop ourselves through relationships with others” (TISUK 2019)

Our school is invested in supporting the very best possible relational health. Therefore, we are committed to implementing as many of the components of Trauma and mental health-informed schools Model Three (detailed below) as possible. This model is supported by evidence-based research which shows positive change in well-being and mental health, when implemented successfully and consistently.

5.3 Model Three: Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect

Protect - Our priority with any child in school, is to ensure safety first. It is the foundation on which everything else depends. Our focus is not only on the physical environment, but also on the relational environment and the very culture and ethos of our school. We aim to never place a child in a situation that they are not able to manage. We do this through:

- Whole School approach to SEMH (**See Appendix**)
- Practices which are informed by PACE (**See Appendix**)
- Ensuring that there are emotionally available adults in the school
- Optimally active Play and Attachment systems
- Constantly celebrating the positives
- Non-shaming developmentally appropriate sanctions
- Key conversational tools to ensure children feel safe to talk to adults

Relate - We agree that the ability to form meaningful relationships is fundamental to mental health and happiness. It is the quality of contact we have with other people that is arguably the most important factor in our quality of life. Therefore we see the importance in:

- Repeated positive relational experiences with emotionally available adults
- Enabling children to see themselves and their relationships and the world positively, rather than through a lens of threat or danger
- Implement procedures to transform the inner world of vulnerable children from harsh or desolate places, to warm, kind places, enabling them to better manage their home situations and life as a whole
- Increase the amount of nurturing experiences and relationships

Regulate - We recognise that a high Ace Score without the support of emotionally available adults, is likely to damage the children's minds, brains and bodies. This is due to a high level of toxic stress, therefore we place great emphasis on supporting children in such a way that means we don't leave them in a state of toxic stress. We do this by:

- Having a policy for 'time in' with a key adult rather than 'time out' to calm down
- Supported regulation by emotionally available adults
- Provision of regulation spaces and tools
- Individual plans for self-regulation and the ability to reflect rather than react
- Teaching stress regulation
- Whole school training on dysregulation

Reflect - It is important when supporting a child's emotional and mental health to have those conversations around 'big' and difficult feelings. We reject the notion that "*this is opening a can of worms*" and believe "*If I can't reflect on my feelings, I am far more likely to behave my feelings*". We need to support them to understand their thoughts and feelings, body sensations and reactions and encourage them to identify new options and strategies for ways forward, with both their hopes and difficulties. We can do this by:

- Helping children to heal emotionally
- Talking to them in ways that make them feel safe enough to want to talk
- Modelling how to reflect on their trauma rather than behave their trauma
- Conveying empathy through naming their pain
- Holding in mind their underlying feelings of distress etc

When considering 'distressed behaviours' (which often present as negative behaviours), we implement strategies supportive of a Trauma Informed Approach to help prevent as many of these distressed behaviours as possible. We place great emphasis on our staff being 'emotionally available adults' in order to best support our pupils, both day to day and in moments of distress.

We encourage all our pupils to develop a sense of self-discipline, therefore we place great emphasis on helping them to;

- Recognise their emotions
- Reflect on their behaviour
- Accept responsibility for their actions

Further To support positive behaviour, we believe in setting clear and consistent boundaries. We regularly remind the pupils why these boundaries are in place, with the vast majority being there to keep everyone safe and to help create a successful learning environment.

5.4 Whole School Approach

In order to create the best possible environment to support positive choices and behaviours, and support Trauma informed approaches we ask all staff to adopt a 'whole school approach' to support SEMH and behaviour. This approach is summarised in two supporting guides:

- Whole School Guide to SEMH- **Appendix**
- Teachers Guide to SEMH- **Appendix**

As part of their induction, all staff will watch 'Our Approach to SEMH' presentation and our 'Building Relationship' presentation. This will allow all staff to have a clear understanding of our expectations around supporting pupils' social, emotional and mental health and to ensure a consistent approach. Some of these strategies are listed below.

- Use of Empathy/Empathetic Approach
- Principles of PACE- **Appendix**
- CARE/ De-escalation Scripts- **Appendix**
- Positive Language Scripts- **Appendix**

5.5 Positive Recognition

Roles and Responsibilities

We recognise the importance of children having significant roles and responsibilities in school. To this end, we have a process in which children must write an application for a 'job role' in school. These include: Head and Deputy Head Pupils, School Council, Lunch Monitors, Bike Monitors, Librarians and House Captains. We utilise this opportunity to help teach the children about British Values.

Praise

Giving sincere praise straight away for good choices is essential. We will praise wherever possible. When we use 'praise' we try to ensure that it promotes a growth mind-set.

At times praise may need to be tailored in relation to the individual. For example, if a pupil struggles to settle after a break and does so well, this should be noticed and praised. Praise should be explicit, where possible linking to our school values and the positive choice they have made. All staff should reward positive choices with immediate praise.

Stickers

Positive behaviours can also be rewarded with stickers. This is dependent on the individual pupil. This way, pupils who struggle with certain aspects of school life can get given recognition that parents and other staff can see. This is linked to our Bucket Fillers initiative <https://bucketfillers101.com/>. We consider limiting the amount of 'extrinsic' rewards and materialistic systems in order to create a stronger sense of intrinsic value and motivation.

Dojo

We use the Class Dojo system to reward learning behaviours in class. Dojo points are given to pupils who do their very best or who demonstrate exceptional work. Test scores and rapid improvement can also be awarded 'dojos'.

The use of the word 'exceptional' here is important. It means that Dojos are not given for things that we would expect of all children such as sitting in their seat or starting work.

For example, a Dojo should not be given to an individual who is following expectations even if this individual often struggles to meet these expectations. This pupil would be given praise/sticker for their behaviour instead. Wherever possible Dojos should be recorded immediately. We use this system to help create a sense of team and community as children earn Dojo Points for their 'Houses'.

Star of the Week

In each class, each week a pupil is selected who has shown some 'star quality'. This may be in the form of an outcome such as an outstanding piece of work or an attitude such as the way they have responded to feedback. The pupils are presented with their star of the week certificate in Friday's celebration assembly.

Year 6 Leavers' Assembly

This is an annual event at the end of July to celebrate their time at our school. There are awards given to pupils who have achieved high 'levels' or who have made accelerated/exceptional progress.

5.6 Consequences and Sanctions

Speaking to pupils about their behaviour:

When discussing any behaviour with children, adults will do so in a Trauma Informed way by being empathic, nurturing and non judgemental regardless of the behaviour that they exhibit.

Adults will support children to make positive choices through the use of 'Positive Language' *see appendix* and when appropriate discuss with the child the potential consequences of their actions. This will not be issued as a threat but a supportive empathetic reminder of the boundaries that are in place. Staff can use 'Scripts for consequences' *appendix* to support them with this

When discussing behaviour with pupils, adults should refer to whole school concepts such as the 'Zones of Regulations' and 'Bucket Filling'. Although an appropriate sanction might be used, we believe that quality 'reflection' with an emotionally available adult is a more important and effective intervention to prevent further similar, unwanted behaviours. In this conversation the staff member should try to establish the child's concern- what led to the child becoming distressed/making negative choices, the adults concern- how their actions are impacting on the well-being of others and finally a solution moving forward. This is a 'collaborative problem solving approach' and where possible will be used after all distressed/challenging behaviours. *See Appendix*

When a pupil is in a heightened state of distress or anxiety, they will not be able to hear or engage in these conversations. In these instances, adults will support the pupil to make a positive choice and their main focus will be to make sure the pupil, and everyone else, is safe. Where possible, adults should empathise with the emotion driving the behaviour, name this emotion and explain it is okay, but the behaviour is not. This should avoid a toxic shame spiral. In cases of distressed behaviours, staff should follow the CARE approach *See Appendix*. Once the pupil is calm and safe, then staff can proceed with the reflection stage/collaborative problem solving approach and putting in place a possible consequence or sanction.

Adults should never use threatening body language towards children and where possible, adults should use a calm and supportive tone when addressing behaviour and should very rarely shout at a child; this would normally be reserved for a situation where a child is in immediate danger or attention needs to be gained from across the playground.

We must ensure that we use appropriate sanctions which are age appropriate, fair and consistent. Where possible we avoid 'punitive' sanctions and will always explain why the sanction is being applied and how it relates to their actions. We will also address what change in behaviour is required to avoid future incidents. We are also mindful that it is the behaviour rather than the child that is being identified as unwanted so we are saying 'I am concerned that your behaviour is currently unsafe'. We also believe that we must apply a sense of proportion to all situations and that the sanction is appropriate to the offence.

5.7 Reflection and Consequences

Low-Level

Behaviours considered to be 'low level' are those that break the flow of learning within the classroom. We will use the following "reminder process" to help restore good learning behaviours:

1. Reminder of a school rule or value- Quietly on a 1:1 basis with the use of 'positive language'
2. Second reminder of rule or value – Adult advise the pupil on how to succeed and change their current behaviour. The adult will remind them of a potential consequence of their negative choices. This will not be said as a 'threat' but a supportive reminder of the natural consequence of their behaviours and what might happen next.

We hope that this will prevent further unwanted behaviours and remove any potential triggers etc.

If there is a positive change in their behaviour, recognise it and help them reflect.

Persistent low level, refusal and disruptive behaviours

If there is repeated unwanted behaviour, a refusal to change their behaviour (after the appropriate support of an adult) or a behaviour that is disruptive to the whole class then we believe an 'intervention' is needed. This will be in the form of a 'positive interaction' away from the classroom where the child is supported to reflect on their behaviour with an 'emotionally available adult' At this stage, SLT will be informed. The 'collaborative problem solving approach' will be followed. Once the child and adult have successfully reflected and problem solved, then any actions needed to help prevent similar future behaviours will be actioned and if appropriate a sanction may be used.

Unsafe behaviour

If a pupil's behaviour continues to be disruptive or they show a significant level of anti-social behaviour, then they will be moved by a supporting adult to a safe space. These pupils will be supported using the CARE approach *See appendix* in order to understand why they are distressed. This will limit the need for physical intervention, which should only be used as a last resort and by where possible a qualified member of staff (Team-Teacher Trained). A member of SLT/Or the Head a will be updated accordingly in order to decide whether any further action is required.

Further action could include such things as:

- working in a quiet space with an adult until calm
- Spending time with an emotionally available adult until able to reflect

The child will have time with an emotionally available adult to discuss the incident. Again, the adult will use a 'collaborative problem-solving approach' to aid this discussion and hopefully prevent a similar incident from occurring again.

Parents will be notified by the end of the day.

Continued recurring behaviours

Where a pupil's behaviour continues to be a concern, a meeting will be held with parents / carers to agree the way forward. We believe that 'children do well if they can', so a supportive meeting would be held aimed at identifying specific 'lagging skills' or unsolved problems that the child may have, which results in the unwanted behaviours. We will look at how the adults can help address the lagging skills and unsolved problems. We will also again, encourage the pupil to develop a sense of self-discipline by helping them recognise their emotions, reflect on why and accept responsibility for their actions.

This will be recorded in two ways:

- As part of their IEPs
- CARE Plans

IEPs

Following three cycles of APDR (assess, plan, do review) any child who consistently needs support 'in addition to or different from' their peers is identified as SEN (SEND code of Practice 2015) Once they are entered onto the SEN register an IEP (Individual Education Plan) is written for them. As a school, our IEPs include the child's own voice about their skills and strengths and preferred ways of working. Each IEP comprehensively outlines the areas of difficulty the child is experiencing, the scaffolding which is needed to support and at least two current targets, to be working on which are reviewed and re-set regularly.

CARE Plans

The CARE Plan is a positive and personalised approach to supporting children during their most distressed behaviours. The CARE plans detail effective strategies to use when a child is showing signs of distress or has reached 'crisis point'. The CARE plans highlight signs of 'distressed' behaviours which are personal to each child and successful strategies and supportive language to help de-escalate, often this will be through co-regulation. The CARE plans are accessible for all staff to easily follow, even including helpful scripts to ensure consistency of language. We believe that if we have a common approach then we will be able to support and coach the child in moments of distress to make positive choices and learn to self-regulate in the future.

Suspensions/Permanent Exclusions

In the most extreme situations this sanction could be a suspension or permanent exclusion. This will follow the statutory guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion (2017). This document can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion> or there will be a copy in the school office.

After a fixed-term exclusion there will always be a reintegration meeting with the child, parent/carer and a senior member of staff.

5.8 Positive Handling

Staff will only use 'positive handling' techniques when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved by not using these techniques. These are:

- Where a pupil's behaviour is at risk of causing injury to him/herself
- Where a pupil's behaviour is likely to cause injury to others (adults or children)
- Where a pupil's behaviour is likely to cause significant risk of damage to property (does this need to be more explicit)

Wherever possible only staff who have been trained will 'positively handle' but on rare occasions this may not be possible. Every incident will be logged and checked by a senior member of staff. We strongly believe in the 'power' of language and empathetic approach will in all but the most extreme cases enable us to avoid positive handling.

5.9 Recording Behaviour

All behaviours will be recorded systematically on our information management system. This will enable us to have a positive overview of all behaviours across the school, allowing us to continually monitor positive and distressed behaviours and as a result develop strategies to help us continually improve behaviour.

5.10 Monitoring and Evaluation

Behaviour will be reviewed regularly by *the SEMH Lead*. High levels for any one child or type of incident will be brought to the attention of the senior leaders at their next meeting. Actions will be agreed and shared with all staff as necessary.