Positive Relationship Policy

Version 2.1

Rationale

This policy is based on the latest research into how to promote positive relationships in schools (references given below). It is designed to inform all members of our community about our approaches to working together to ensure that both young learners and staff members can be their best in a way that promotes learning and works for everyone. We aim to:

- Set high expectations for behaviour.
- Apply approaches in this policy consistently across the school.
- Ensure teaching and learning is not affected by disruptive behaviour.
- Create a positive environment where everyone is safe and feels safe, in which bullying, physical threats or abuse and intimidation are not tolerated.
- Respond to any incidents of bullying, discrimination, aggression, and derogatory language (including name calling) swiftly and effectively.

All incidents are to be recorded in CPOMs.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff members, proprietors, volunteers, current and prospective young learners and parents. This policy is available to all parents of young learners at the school via our website, and a hard copy can be requested from Reception.

Principles of positive relationship management at Atelier 21

The individual in our community:

Just as we 'differentiate' our teaching and learning, so too do we tailor our responses to each young learner's behaviour. We see our community members as complex individuals, with their own set of circumstances and skills. We put the young learners and their needs right at the centre of our approach to promoting positive behaviour. Our work with young learners is trauma-informed, believing as we do that 'therapeutic approaches, when delivered well, work with all young people' (Rendel and Harrison 2023).

Collaboration and democracy:

We collaborate to set agreements, and if these agreements are not met, we work with our young learners to decide upon consequences which are fair and have a logical connection to the incident.

Roles:

- **Everyone** – understanding their needs and advocating for themselves, regulating themselves, using language to communicate effectively. Showing each other dignity, kindness and respect.
- **Young learners** – following the agreements.
- **Mentors and class teachers** – guiding young learners to set the agreements, holding high expectations of young learners and following through if these are met and should be celebrated, or not met and consequences are needed.
- **Parents** – supporting our efforts to maintain positive relationships between members of the school community and to respond to each young learner in the way that best suits them.
- **Ambassadors** – working with peers in class groups and in the Ambassador team to ensure that young learners express their voice and opinions about positive relationships and are heard by school staff.
- **Peer Mediators** – mediating between members of the school community to resolve conflicts.
- **School Leaders (SLT)** - ensuring that all members of staff understand this policy and are implementing it. Supporting staff if incidents need to be escalated. Communicating concerns with parents. Being visible and approachable.

Agreements

Our agreements are put together during conversations in class groups and meetings. These conversations are facilitated by adults but are not led by them. Conversations are focused on what we need to do as a group of learners to ensure that everyone feels they can be their best, and that our time in school is relevant, meaningful, and joyful.

Class groups decide upon their own agreements in the Primary School, and the Upper School mentor groups work collaboratively to come up with a shared document for all Upper School learners to use.

This year's agreements are available upon request.

Steps for promoting and maintaining positive relationships

Proactive

- Building relationships by knowing our young learners: we work hard to get to know our young learners as individuals, so we are well-prepared to work with them at challenging moments. Understanding their needs: physical needs, emotional needs and learning needs.
- Teaching and modelling positive learning behaviours.
- Setting high expectations whilst also providing a high level of support for them in meeting them.
- Celebrating positive relationships (see more detail below).
- Promoting self-advocacy.
- Teaching brain science and metacognition as part of the curriculum: recognising the impact of hormones, understanding how to self-regulate, providing a vocabulary for expressing needs.

Reactive (managing challenging behaviour)

Staff will adhere to the following steps when managing an incident of challenging behaviour:

1. De-escalation and Initial Response

Staff remain calm in the initial stages of responding to challenging behaviour, aiming to de-escalate the situation promptly. Young learners are moved away from any potential dangers, and individuals in conflict are separated. Staff must consider each young learner's unique needs, especially sensory needs related to SEND, as these may influence behaviour. Young learners are provided with space and time to self-regulate, and de-escalation strategies are employed where appropriate. If a member of staff deems it necessary to remove a child from class, they must remain just outside the classroom door for a few minutes so that a conversation can take place. Staff should aim to reintegrate the child back into class as soon as possible following this.

2. Connection and Emotion Coaching

Staff establish a supportive connection with each young learner involved by demonstrating empathy, noticing, acknowledging, and naming each young learner's emotions, using the Emotion Coaching model. This approach aims to help each young learner feel understood, without judgement on the behaviour itself. Staff do not need to agree with the behaviour but should recognise the feelings behind it. Primary teachers will additionally use the Zones of Regulation language to help young learners identify their emotional state and apply appropriate self-regulation strategies.

3. Support for Self-Management

Staff encourage young learners to manage their own responses by asking reflective questions that promote self-awareness. While suggestions may be offered, the goal is to empower young

learners rather than to 'fix' the situation for them. Where suitable, Peer Mediators may assist in supporting peer-to-peer conflict resolution (see more detailed information below).

4. Reintegration or Escalation

Once de-escalation has been achieved, young learners are either reintegrated back into their regular activities or the incident is escalated, as appropriate.

5. Follow-Up and Reflection

Mentors or Class Teachers are responsible for following up with the young learner(s) involved in an incident. These follow-up conversations should be conducted using a coaching model to encourage reflection, understanding, and positive behavioural change.

This approach fosters an environment of empathy, accountability, and development for young learners in managing challenging behaviours and in supporting their overall social-emotional growth.

Conflict resolution between peers

Self-Resolution Process: Young learners are encouraged to resolve issues among themselves (or between teachers and young learners) first by clearly and calmly addressing the behaviour causing discomfort and explaining how it makes them feel using "I" statements. If this does not resolve the issue, it escalates to peer mediation, followed by class reflection, and ultimately adult intervention if needed. Issues between more than one peer is automatically referred for class reflection as Peer Mediators can only mediate between two parties.

If the issue is not resolved between a teacher and young learner, and the behaviour is distracting from a positive learning environment or teaching is affected in a negative way, the issue will be escalated to a class reflection meeting.

Peer Mediation: Peer mediators receive comprehensive training in conflict resolution, communication skills, and neutrality. They are supported by the Assistant Head - Values to ensure they are well-equipped to facilitate productive dialogue between parties in conflict. Peer mediation aims to empower young learners to resolve conflicts independently in a structured and supportive environment. However, peer mediation is not suitable for problems originating from home, conflicts involving more than two people, disputes between close friends or relatives, situations involving extreme language, cases of bullying, incidents of violence, financial matters, or when parties do not consent to mediation.

Peer Mediators have a continuous provision meeting with the Assistant Head – Values at least once a half term. The Assistant Head – Values will also check in with Peer Mediators on a more regular basis if they or the Assistant Head – Values feel the need, after difficult mediation sessions.

Class Reflection Process: If an issue continues, it is brought to the attention of the rest of the class or mentor group. This will be addressed in a class meeting. The class or mentor group, including the teacher, reviews the matter together and discusses potential solutions and/or consequences if necessary. The outcome is logged for reference in the reflection book or on CPOMs.

Adult Intervention Process: If issues remain unresolved after class reflection, they are escalated to a teacher or a member of the SLT, who will facilitate a discussion to understand the problem and guide young learners towards a resolution. Appropriate measures or consequences will be implemented if necessary.

Ambassador Tribunal Process: If previous steps do not resolve the issue, it is brought before the Ambassador Tribunal, conducted by school Ambassadors and a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The Tribunal ensures a fair hearing and resolution with higher authority involvement.

Our escalation process

We believe that the vast majority of issues can be resolved via the approaches outlined above. However, if the incident is still not resolved or if agreements are repeatedly not being met, a process of escalation will need to happen. This can also happen if an incident is reported to staff by a young learner. At each stage, we only move to the next step if the incident has not been resolved by the one before. It may be necessary to skip stages depending on the severity of the incident:

1. Log the incident in CPOMS, which automatically tags the Assistant Head - Values, indicating if follow up is needed by the young learner's **Class Teacher or Mentor** by tagging them.
2. If appropriate, **Peer Mediators** work with the young learner(s) and staff involved to try and resolve the conflict. This intervention is logged on CPOMs by the teacher overseeing the resolution of the incident, tagging the Class Teacher or Mentor if this is someone else.
3. If appropriate, the **Class Teacher or Mentor** facilitates a special class meeting to discuss the incident and whether there should be fair and logical consequences. (N.B. Issues that come up in regular class meetings do not need to be logged unless they are being dealt with as part of the escalation process.) This intervention is logged on CPOMs by the Class Teacher or Mentor, and parents might be informed by the Class Teacher or Mentor if they deem it necessary.
4. **Class Teacher or Mentor** decides what further support is offered, or a fair and logical consequence is needed. Parents are informed, and the Ambassador Tribunal process is explained as the next step.
5. If appropriate, an **Ambassador** Tribunal is held. A meeting is conducted by two school Ambassadors along with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Similar to peer mediation, the focus is on fair hearing and resolution, but with higher authority

involvement. The Tribunal seeks to understand the issue in-depth and decides on the final resolution or fair and logical consequences. This intervention is logged on CPOMs by the teacher overseeing the resolution of the incident, and parents are informed by the Class Teacher or Mentor.

6. **Class Teacher or Mentor** to contact parents formally via email or in person to identify issues and share thoughts on approaches for resolution, with the support of the **Assistant Head – Values**. Correspondence is added to CPOMS.

7. Escalate to the **Assistant Head - Values** via email who will review CPOMS and make a plan in collaboration with the Class Teacher or Mentor. Each response will be designed in response to the young learner's particular needs. Potential responses include:
    a. Reflection meetings with the young learner, potentially over several lunchtimes
    b. A meeting with parents
    c. A formal support plan to be circulated amongst all staff who work with the young learner
    d. A mechanism for tracking positive behaviour (tailored for each young learner).

8. **Assistant Head – Values** to escalate to the **Executive Headteacher** who will review CPOMS and make a plan in collaboration with the **Assistant Head – Values** and the **Class Teacher or Mentor**. Each response will be designed in response to the young learner's particular needs. Potential responses include:
    a. A conversation with the young learner
    b. A meeting with parents
    c. Seeking support from an external source
    d. A fixed-term exclusion
    e. A permanent exclusion

Please refer to our Exclusion Policy for more details.

At all times, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

Celebration of positive behaviour

Approach: We believe it is crucial to recognise when a member of our community consistently meets our agreements and demonstrates behaviour that is good for them and everyone else around them. We aim to celebrate their behaviour, rather than labelling the young learner as being 'good'.

Young learner-led acknowledgement: As far as possible, we aim to include young learners in noticing, tracking, and celebrating their own progress. We might do this in learning conversations, through a process of written or verbal reflection, or at young learner-led conferences with parents.

Extrinsic motivators: We use extrinsic motivators for whole groups, rather than for individuals. We avoid extrinsic motivators for individuals throughout the school, believing as we do that intrinsic motivators are much more powerful and prepare young people better for the real world.

Positions of responsibility: We give young learners roles and responsibilities in order to develop their skills and grow their confidence. Examples of this might include the role of monitor in class groups, a member of a committee (e.g. the tuck shop committee, shed monitors, Peer Mediators), or becoming an Ambassador.

Shout outs: We offer all members of our community from Year 2 upwards the change to celebrate achievements in the form of 'shout outs' in Whole School Meetings.

Managing behaviour for students with SEND

Under the Equality Act 2010, with reference to young learners with special educational needs / disabilities, reasonable adjustments to processes within this policy will be made for these young learners and any young learners with protected characteristics. These are made on an individual basis where required and will take in to account any supporting plans the young learner may have i.e. an EHCP.

Banned items

Mobile devices: students are not allowed access to mobile devices during the school day. If they are found to be using a device, this will be confiscated and held securely by SLT until the end of the school day. Contact home will be made for repeat offenders. More details can be found on our mobile phone policy.

Other items: knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco, fireworks, pornographic images or articles that we reasonably suspect have been or are likely to be used to commit an offence or cause harm.

Other considerations

Reasonable Force: The school prioritises non-physical interventions with young learners and will only use physical restraint when it is necessary to prevent immediate harm. Physical restraint or reasonable force may be applied if a young learner's actions pose a significant risk to themselves or others, such as attempting to leave supervision or engaging in dangerous activities.

If a young learner becomes emotionally distressed or uncontained, staff will prioritize the safety of others by removing the class from the area and monitoring the young learner from a safe distance until they are calm.

According to Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, school staff are legally permitted to use reasonable force.

The school may also conduct searches of young learners' belongings if there is reasonable suspicion of prohibited items that could cause harm, including weapons, drugs, or other dangerous items.

Allegations against staff: these will be dealt with as per our safeguarding policy. Disciplinary action against young learners who are found to have made malicious accusations against staff will be taken using the process laid out above.

Support (victim support): support will be given to any young learner or staff affected by the behaviour of another individual. This support will be made on an individual basis depending on the how the young learner or staff have been affected and may include some form of counselling made available to them. Staff also have access to an externally run Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which they can access 24/7 confidentially.

Child-on-child abuse: Following any report of child-on-child sexual violence or sexual harassment offline or online, schools should follow the general safeguarding principles set out in Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) - especially Part 5. The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is the most appropriate person to advise on the school's initial response. Each incident should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Negative behaviour online: The school recognises that online interactions among pupils can significantly impact school culture and safety. Negative online behaviour, such as bullying, inappropriate language, sharing explicit images, and harassment, will be addressed with the same expectations and procedures as in-person behaviour. All pupils are expected to act with kindness, respect, and dignity online, as they would offline. When safeguarding concerns arise, such as incidents involving explicit content, these should be referred to the designated safeguarding lead following established protocols. Although online incidents may occur outside school hours and off-site, the school will address any behaviour that affects the well-being of pupils or the school's reputation and will sanction students accordingly when needed. Parents are encouraged to monitor and guide their children's online behaviour outside of school.

Suspected criminal behaviour: If a staff member or headteacher suspects criminal behaviour, the school will make an initial assessment to determine if the incident should be reported to the police, gathering only the necessary facts and documenting the investigation thoroughly while preserving relevant evidence. Once reported, the school will avoid actions that may interfere with police proceedings but may continue its own investigation and apply sanctions if these do not conflict with police actions. In many cases, a report to local children's social care will also be made, typically led by the designated safeguarding lead. Incidents of child-on-child sexual violence and abuse will be managed with guidance from Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

New staff induction

As part of the induction process, new staff will receive training on:

- Implementing this policy
- The Emotion Coaching Model
- Using reasonable force
- The Zones of Regulation

References:

Atelier 21 Positive Relationships Survey (October 2024)

Department For Education (2013). Use of Reasonable Force Advice for headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies. [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a819959ed915d74e6233224/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf.

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Kuypers L. (2023) The Zones of Regulation, Inc. Available at https://zonesofregulation.com/ (Accessed 31st October 2024).

Rendel, A. and Harrison, K. (2023) *Curious Not Furious: Empowering young learners to take charge of their brains and behaviour - a practical toolkit.* Ember Press.

Rhodes, I. and Long, M. (2021) *Improving Behaviour in Schools.* Education Endowment Foundation.

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