

**'Restoring relationships and
community is central to
restoring well-being.'**

Bessel Van der Kolk M. D.

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS: A RELATIONSHIP-BASED APPROACH TO INCLUSION

A practical toolkit for schools and educational settings

**'Too often we forget that discipline
really means to teach, not to punish.**

**A disciple is a student, not a recipient
of behavioural consequences.'**

Dr. Dan J. Siegel



Nottinghamshire County Council

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AIMS OF THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit was developed to provide an evidence-based set of guidelines for using a relationship-based approach to behaviour in schools and other educational settings. Our goal is for the toolkit to help all children and young people in Nottinghamshire to engage effectively and fully with education, in preparation for adulthood. This toolkit has been developed in response to local and national needs and recent research evidence. It outlines a relationship-based, restorative approach to understanding behaviour in schools as an alternative to traditional behaviourist approaches, shown to be limited in their effectiveness when used in isolation ([EEF, 2019](#)). This new, evidence-based toolkit provides an overarching framework to support the greatest impact for the greatest number of children and young people, by reducing incidents of emotional distress and challenging behaviour in our schools. The toolkit presents key ideas, values and evidence behind this approach as well as practical tools to support implementation in schools, designed in partnership with staff from a range of Nottinghamshire schools (See Appendix 7 for full list of contributors). We hope that individual schools and organisations can use the toolkit to adapt, develop or redesign their own relationship-based behaviour policies, incorporating local community and individual school factors.

BACKGROUND TO THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit was developed by representatives from various teams within the Education, Learning and Skills division at Nottinghamshire County Council as well as representatives from schools and alternative provisions within Nottinghamshire (See Appendix 7 for full list of contributors). The toolkit was written on behalf of the working party by Dr. Órlaith Green, Senior Educational Psychologist. The group have been collaborating since April 2019, in response to a local need for joined up working around understanding and supporting children's behaviour in schools, to explore an evidence-based alternative to behaviourist and within-child models of behaviour. Key references consulted include the recent report from the Education Endowment Foundation (2019) reviewing and analysing the most up to date research evidence on [improving behaviour in schools](#) and a similar local authority [guidance document from Brighton & Hove City Council \(2018\)](#), focusing in particular on support for children with attachment needs. This work was completed prior to the coronavirus pandemic, which creates a new context for us to consider. However, calls for an increased prioritisation of relationships and mental health in the return to school transition highlight the potential value of this toolkit (e.g. [Barnardos, May 2020](#); [Whole School SEND, 2020](#)). This toolkit therefore forms part of the Department for Education funded [Wellbeing for Education Return project within Nottinghamshire](#).

A NEW APPROACH

A relationship-based and restorative approach to understanding behaviour in schools presents an evidence-based alternative to traditional behaviourist approaches. This strengths-based approach is based upon well-established psychological theories of human development and reinforced by up to date research evidence. The approach involves these 3 key ideas:

1. UNMET NEEDS

Behaviour communicates an unmet need.

Therefore, to change behaviour, we must connect and respond to the unmet need.

Behaviour often reflects unmet human needs which can be met through relational connection ([Rutledge 2011 on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#)). Thinking about behaviour in this way, helps us to understand challenging or distressed behaviour as communication of an unmet need (e.g. the need to feel safe). Therefore, the most effective way to affect sustainable behaviour change is to try to meet the specific unmet need. A relationship-based approach helps children to learn how to communicate their

needs more effectively and this enhances their sense of self. This idea illustrates the importance of individual approaches to understanding and managing behaviour in schools. Although traditional behaviourist approaches involving rewards and punishments remain common within modern UK schools ([DfE, 2016](#)), this model used in isolation is limited in impacting sustainable behaviour change into adulthood without meeting children's needs and also providing learning opportunities to develop self-regulation skills, problem solving, cooperation, empathy and moral development.

2. INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCES

Children's behaviour cannot be fully understood in isolation, without considering their individual influences.

Within-child models of children's behaviour are limited as they do not consider the significant impact of the environment. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory states that children's needs and behaviour must be understood within the contexts or environments in which they develop e.g. their family, school, community. Furthermore, risk and protective factors models of resilience and recent research into [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#) illustrate some of the key

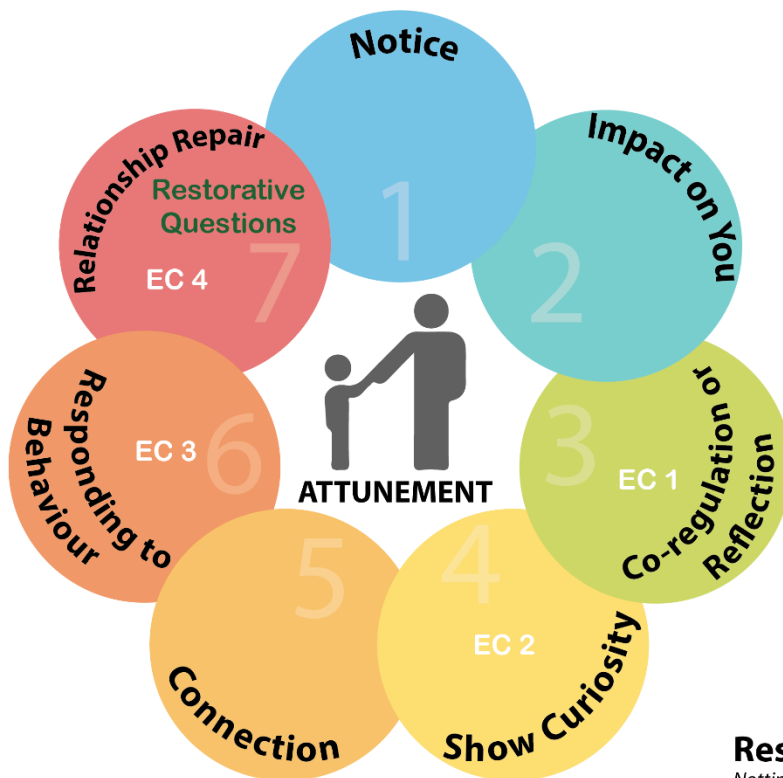
environmental factors which can impact directly on children's mental health and behaviour.

3. RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship-based, restorative approaches offer an evidence-based alternative to zero-tolerance behaviour management systems.

These strengths-based approaches emphasise relational connection, belonging and teaching effective conflict resolution skills. Restorative approaches have been shown to reduce exclusions, improve attendance and attainment ([Payne & Welsh, 2017](#)). Within trusted relationships, children and young people can learn, accept their individual strengths and areas for development and explore difficult, strong emotions and experiences with a view to moving forward ([Short, Case & McKenzie, 2018](#)). The Nottinghamshire Educational Psychology Service **Responding in the**

Moment model, shown below, is proposed to help schools to put this approach into practice, supporting the use of Emotion Coaching and Restorative Approaches together (See Appendix 1 for further details).



Responding in the Moment

Nottinghamshire Educational Psychology Service (2020)
adapted from *Parenting in the Moment* (Golding, 2015)

WHAT ABOUT BEHAVIOURIST APPROACHES?

The Department for Education guidance for behaviour management in schools remains largely based on behaviourist principles ([DfE, 2016](#)). The following facts highlight the need to question any

overreliance on this approach in isolation without also providing learning opportunities and seeking to understand behaviour in context.

- There is limited **research evidence** for the effectiveness of zero-tolerance behaviour management systems in schools and strong evidence to support personalised, relationship-based approaches to behaviour. Evidence-based critique states that behaviourist systems relying primarily on rewards and sanctions and exclusion are limited as a tool to change behaviour as they do not provide opportunities for young people to learn positive behaviours ([EEF, 2019](#)).
- Rates of fixed and permanent exclusions have been increasing steadily since 2012, particularly in secondary schools ([DfE, 2018](#)). Rather than changing students' behaviour, research suggests that **exclusion is linked to negative life outcomes** and does not provide learning opportunities for students to improve ([Michail, 2011](#)).



- **Exclusions have been linked to psychological distress** as both a cause and a result ([Ford et al, 2017](#)), and to potential re-traumatisation of children who have experienced trauma. Exclusion has also been linked to higher risk of specific negative life outcomes such as incarceration ([Timpson, 2019](#)).
- **Particular groups of children are significantly more likely to be excluded from school than their peers** e.g. children with Special Educational Needs, children from Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean ethnic groups and Children in Care ([DfE, 2019](#)) ([Ford et al, 2017](#)) ([Timpson, 2009](#)). The [2015 National Institute for Health and](#)

[Care Excellence \(NICE\) guidance](#) on children's attachment specifically advises against the use of exclusions for Children in Care.

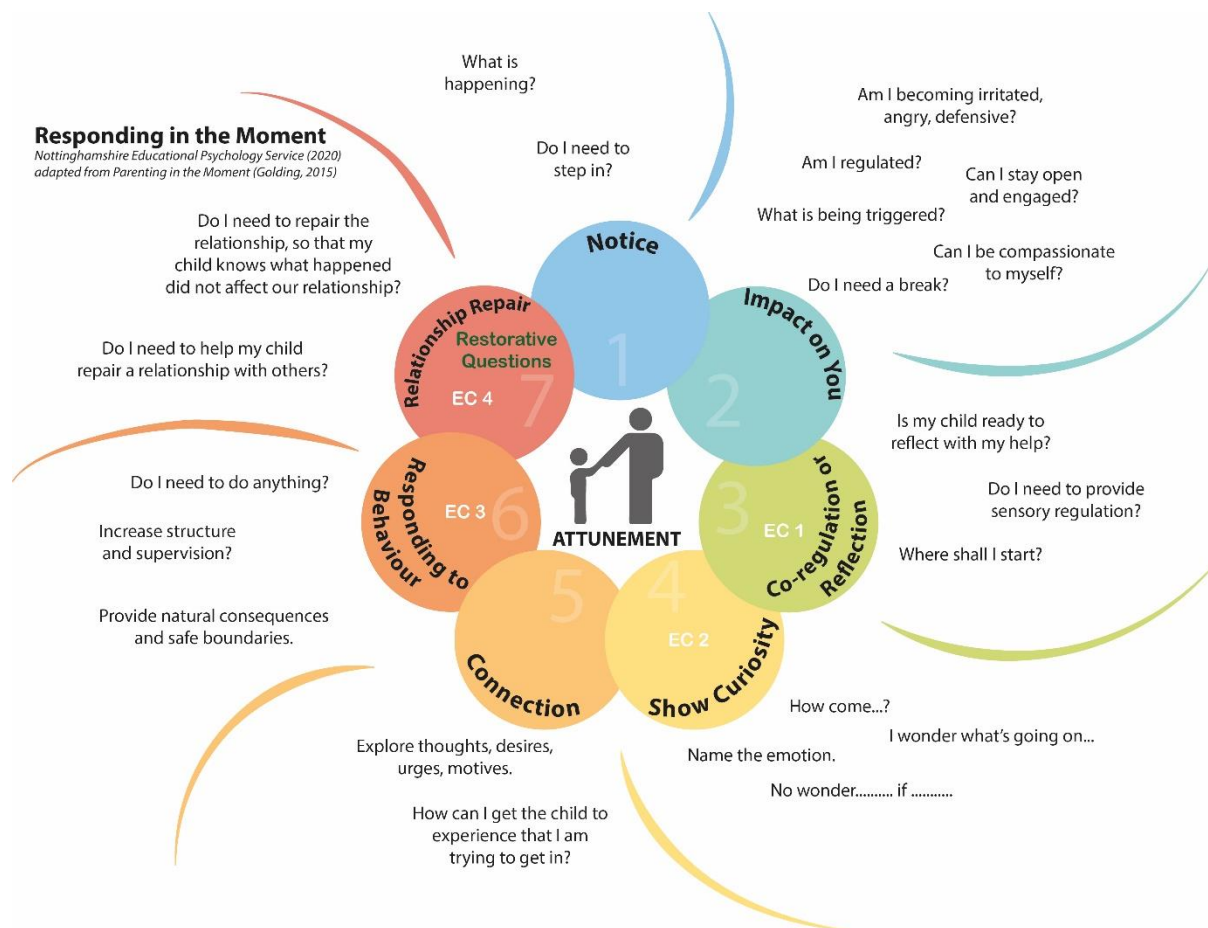
HOW CAN I USE THIS TOOLKIT?

The key ideas and evidence supporting the use of **relationship-based, restorative approaches to understanding behaviour in schools** can be used to inform practice and policy in individual schools and other organisations. The following series of appendices offer practical resources for school leaders e.g. sample behaviour policy, ofsted framework suggestions and practical tools for staff such as information about Emotion Coaching. The grid below is designed to encourage reflection on our common assumptions about academic and behaviour errors ([Hopkins, 2012](#)).

Consider the differences between these 2 sets of assumptions and the impact of these differences...	
Common Assumptions about Academic Errors	Common Assumptions about Behaviour Errors
Errors are accidental	Errors are deliberate
Errors are inevitable	Errors should not happen
Errors signal need for teaching	Errors should be punished
Students with learning difficulties need modified teaching	Students with behavioural difficulties should be punished

APPENDIX 1: PRACTICAL TOOLS AND MODELS

RESPONDING IN THE MOMENT



Responding in the Moment is a model for relationship-based conversations and interactions, particularly in the face of strong emotions and challenging behaviour. Created by Nottinghamshire Educational Psychology Service (2020), this model combines the practical elements of [Emotion Coaching \(EC\)](#) and [Restorative Practice](#), underpinned by the attachment-informed work of [Kim Golding \(2015\)](#). This model can be applied to support difficult conversations involving strong emotions between adults and children/young people. The following sections present Emotion Coaching and Restorative Practice tools separately.



Emotion Coaching UK have trained local licenced trainers within Nottinghamshire. Contact epstraining@nottsc.gov.uk for information about local trainers.

- Emotion Coaching is a practical, evidence-based, relational approach grounded in neuroscience, which develops children's self-regulation skills.
- Regulating emotions through healthy relationships promotes healthy brain development while dealing with behaviour in the moment. It provides a clear model for connecting feeling, thinking and behaving.

Four Steps of Emotion Coaching (Emotion Coaching UK)

'Connection Before Correction'

Recognise the child's feelings and empathise with them

- Recognising, empathising, soothing to calm
- e.g. 'I can see you are upset; I'm here'.

Labelling feelings and validating them

- e.g. 'Sounds like you might be feeling angry about that'. I might be feeling angry too if that had happened to me.'

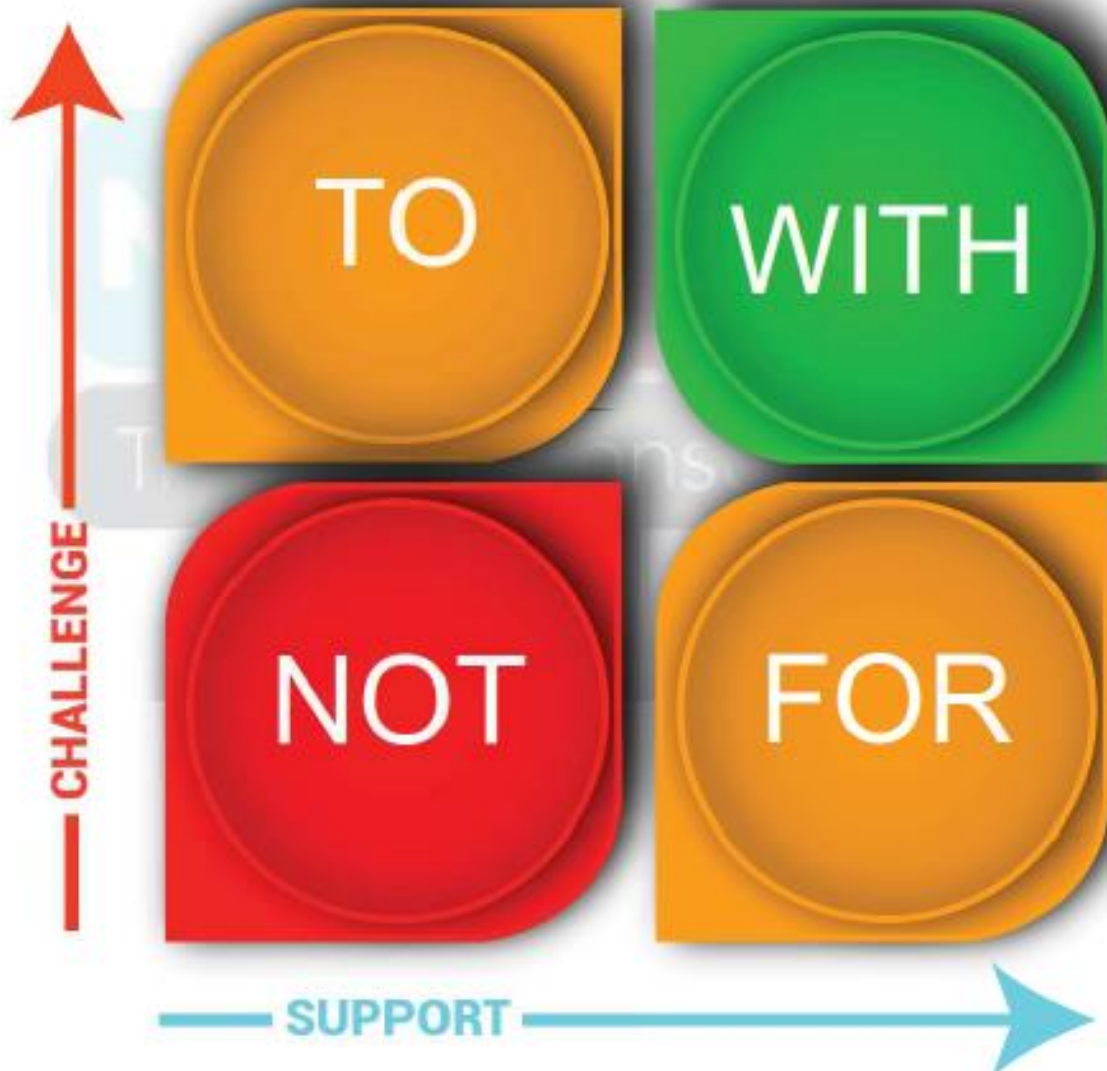
Setting limits on behaviour

- If needed
- e.g. 'We can't always get what we want'.

Problem-Solving

- With the young person
- e.g. 'We can sort this out'.

RESTORATIVE APPROACHES: THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW



High Challenge and Low Support = Punitive/authoritarian = Doing things TO people
Low Challenge and Low Support = Neglectful/not interpreted = NOT doing much of anything
High Support and Low Challenge = Permissive/rescue/makes excuses = Doing things FOR people
High Support and High Challenge = Restorative/Authoritative/Relational = Doing things WITH people

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“ The first tool to rethinking success is foreview the value of relationships” Paolo Gallo
Based on my experience and observations, here are 33 things to think about...

1. Be who you needed when you were at school
2. Connect before content
3. Make regular deposits into the social capital bank
4. Small ripples create big waves - Do the simple things well
5. Know your children well and allow them to know you well
6. Don't worry about doing things 100% better, rather a 100 things 1% better
7. Don't be afraid of the L word... Love. Spread it as thick as me mum spreads butter
8. Some children come to school to learn, others to be loved
9. Every child (and adult) needs a champion
10. Engagement has three forms – physical, emotional and mental
11. The language we use creates the reality we experience
12. The language we use to describe an experience often becomes the experience
13. Difficult child or child with difficulties? Troubled family or a family with troubles?
14. Get involved earlier in the life of the child, earlier in the life of the problem
15. Separate the deed from the doer
16. Health relationships are built on High Challenge and High Support
17. Punishment just creates resentment rather than reflection – separate the deed from the doer
18. There are always three truths, my truth, your truth and the truth
19. The best apology is changed behaviour
20. The small stuff is the big stuff
21. Create a sense of belonging
22. Catch em getting it right more than you catch em getting it wrong
23. Magnify strengths rather weaknesses and focus on gifts rather than deficits
24. Strike when the irons cold
25. We learn to care by being cared for
26. If you're not modelling what you're teaching, you're teaching something different
27. Most people don't listen with the intent to understand, they listen with the intent to reply (Covey)
28. Speak only if it improves the silence (Gandhi)
29. Difficult conversations, do they have to be? Remember though, there is no easyway to poke people in the eye. However we do it, its going to sting a little
30. Culture exists in every organisation, but is yours by design or by default?
31. Everything looks better when you put it in a circle
32. Smile at children, its good for you both
33. There is always another way




33 THINGS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS



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EMBEDDING THE EEF IMPROVING BEHAVIOUR REPORT (2019) INTO SCHOOL PRACTICES

 <p>Improving Behaviour in Schools Six recommendations for improving behaviour in schools</p>	<p>Approaches /Strategies/ Links to Research</p>
<p>1. Know and understand your pupils and their influences</p>	<p>Risk and Protective Factors of Resilience Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)</p>
<p>2. Teach learning behaviours</p>	<p>Self-regulation and metacognition Emotional Literacy Support Assistant Emotion Coaching Restorative Approaches</p>
<p>3. Use reflective classroom management strategies</p>	<p>Staff Supervision Solution Focused Coaching</p>
<p>4. Use simple approaches as part of your regular routines</p>	<p>Academic Resilience Approach</p>
<p>5. Tailor targeted approaches to meet individual needs</p>	<p>Staff Continuing Professional Development Resources and information for staff Attachment Aware Schools Project – Building Relational Schools Nottinghamshire</p>
<p>6. Use a consistent, whole school approach</p>	<p>Revising and developing new school behaviour policies (See Appendix 2)</p>

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE RELATIONSHIPS AND BEHAVIOUR REGULATION POLICY

Adapted from Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton and Hove Schools (2018)

Examples have been included from Nottinghamshire schools who are developing relational and restorative approaches.

Exemplar: Relationships and Behaviour Regulation Policy for <Enter School Name>

(NB: wording can be amended but we advise keeping in the words ‘Behaviour Regulation Policy’ to make it clear that this is the school’s legally required behaviour policy and not something ‘extra’ or different).

*e.g. ‘Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Behaviour Regulation Policy’;
‘Strengths-based working: A relationship-based behaviour regulation policy’.*

<insert School Logo>

Date policy agreed:	
Date of next review:	
Headteacher signature:	
Chair of Governors’ signature	

Importance of Language: *Consider careful use of language throughout the policy (See Appendix 4)*

1) School motto/slogan/vision statement

Your policy should reflect your school’s ethos. This section should include something around your **school’s values/principles** and the **philosophy** behind your relationship-based behaviour regulation policy.

The values should incorporate the three key ideas of the relationship-based approach to inclusion philosophy:

1. **Unmet Need:** Behaviour communicates an unmet need. Therefore, to change behaviour, we must respond to the unmet need.
2. **Individual Influences:** Children’s behaviour cannot be fully understood in isolation, without considering their individual influences.
3. **Relationship-based, restorative approaches** offer an evidence-based alternative to zero-tolerance behaviour management systems.

Examples:

Making a positive contribution through respect, R.E.A.L. Education

R.E.A.L Education, R.E.A.L Independent School and R.E.A.L Alternative Provision School, seek to create an environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place. The crucial element of building and sustaining this learning climate is based on respect, and all of the principles of this policy are also based on respect.

- 1. Respect for self and others*
- 2. Respect for the learning environment*
- 3. Respect for the learning community*
- 4. To strive to become an organisation that has a fully operational restorative practice model.*

‘Restoring relationships and community is central to restoring well-being.’

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Ravenshead CofE Primary: Promoting the Ethos of Good Behaviour

The basis of achieving good behaviour at Ravenshead C of E is through positive, caring and respectful relationships between adults and children. Our expectations are high and boundaries are clear.

Good behaviour means that everyone in school is:

- Caring and kind.*
- Polite and friendly*
- Helpful to each other*
- Calm and hardworking*

2) Policy Statement

Example wording: This policy was based on guidance provided by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) Local Authority and has included input from: e.g. members of staff, representatives from the governing body, parents and carers, pupils/students, our School Nurse, our link NCC colleagues etc. [adapt as appropriate].

3) Policy Scope

Example wording: This policy is for all staff, pupils/students, parents and carers, governors, visitors and partner agencies working within the school and provides guidelines and procedures as to how our school supports and responds to behaviour and emotional distress.

4) Policy Aims and Objectives

Example wording: Our school is committed to the emotional mental health and well-being of its staff, pupils / students and parents/carers. We wish to work towards this in all aspects of school life, and to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that supports the social, emotional and mental health of the whole school community.

It is acknowledged that members of the school community may have very different parenting experiences and views on behaviour. However, the aim of our Behaviour Regulation Policy is to bring us all together to adhere to some basic key principles and practices that reflect our school ethos.

Examples:

Mount CofE Primary – Behaviour Regulation/Attitude to Learning Policy – Policy Aims

- *Develop a positive, stimulating and caring environment where each individual is valued and respected.*
- *Promote self-discipline and proper regard for authority among pupils.*
- *Develop self-esteem in individuals.*
- *Work towards a collective commitment (pupils, staff, parents, governors and the Church) to maintain and develop positive attitudes in school.*
- *Children’s contributions valued and displayed in hall.*
- *A restorative approach to discipline as opposed to a behaviourist approach.*

‘Too often we forget that discipline really means to teach, not to punish.

A disciple is a student, not a recipient of behavioural consequences.’

Dr. Dan J. Siegel

5) Policy Links

This Behaviour Regulation Policy links to the following other policies we hold in school:

Add links to relevant statutory and non-statutory policies, and delete any aspects of this policy which are covered in other policies e.g.

- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equality Policy - including management of prejudice-based incidents
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy – including Contextual Safeguarding, linked to Keeping Children Safe in [Education](#)
- Physical Intervention/Coping with Risky Behaviour Policy
- Online e-safety and cyber-bullying policy
- Child running-off policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff handbook
- Extra-curricular policies and guidance

6) Roles and Responsibilities

Emphasise that it is not just the role or responsibility of a few key staff for dealing with behaviour in the school; it is a **shared responsibility**. The relationship-based approach applies to all relationships within the school community between all adults and young people.

Example: Magnus Church of England Academy – Behaviour for Learning Policy – Hierarchical Support Structure

Stage	Description
Classroom Teacher	<i>The classroom teacher is the most important person for any student whilst at school. Being punctual, well prepared, interesting and interested avoids many problems. Teachers should aim to build strong positive relationships with students which should act as the foundation for achievement. Teachers should always try to solve any problems with students themselves in the first instance.</i>
Head of Faculty	<i>Where a student receives 2 red cards in a half term the Head of Faculty would support the teacher in improving behaviour through a range of techniques which would include further contact with home and overseeing faculty report cards.</i>
Form Tutor	<i>Where issues persist across a number of subject areas the form tutor would intervene. Tutors are expected to support students with their pastoral needs (in line with tutor job description). Tutors monitor Level 1 reports and support the student through liaising with parents and teaching staff.</i>
Head of Key Stage	<i>Where the efforts of the head of faculty and the form tutor have not been effective, the Head of Key stage will advise and support colleagues to resolve the situation. No student should be sent to a Head of Key Stage without all supportive strategies having been explored by the heads of faculty, the teaching staff and tutors. This must include ensuring that all strategies provided by the SEN team have been adhered to and the SENCO has been consulted where appropriate. Heads of Key stage will monitor level 2 report cards.</i>
Extended Senior Leadership Team	<i>The extended leadership team will support heads of faculty and heads of key stage where issues persist. This will include monitoring of level 3 reports.</i>
Senior Leadership Team	<i>In the rare occasion that extended leadership team have not been able to resolve a situation, the Assistant Principal will be consulted to offer advice and support where appropriate.</i>
Principal/Governing Body	<i>Where issues escalate further the principal and governing body will be consulted to offer advice and support.</i>

7) The role of Nottinghamshire County Council

See Appendix 7 for local services offering guidance, training and support. All teams within the Education Learning and Skills division of NCC have been involved in developing and adopting the Understanding Behaviour in Schools Toolkit – A Relationship-Based Approach to Inclusion.

8) Details of Our Approach

Example wording: Please refer to ‘Understanding Behaviour in Schools: A relationship-based approach to inclusion’. We use a strengths-based approach include relationship-based practice and restorative practice. This is not really about what we do but *how* we do it, everything we do starts with relationships – building, maintaining and repairing relationships.

Key models and approaches include:

- Responding in the Moment (Notts EPS 2020)
- Emotion Coaching
www.emotioncoachinguk.com
- The Restorative Classroom: Using restorative approaches to foster effective learning by Belinda Hopkins (2011)
- Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need (1954)
- The whole school approach to behaviour regulation is in line with the Education Endowment Foundation recommendations on Improving Behaviour in Schools (2019).



Examples:

The Beech Academy Behaviour Policy

Restorative Practices: The Academy has adopted a restorative approach to managing behaviour. This approach relies on positive relationships and a willingness for all members of our Academy to talk through problems that may arise. In line with this practice we do not have sanctions, but pupils may be asked to put right the impact of their behaviour.

Killisick Junior School Behaviour Policy

Restorative Justice (RJ) - Staff will receive training on how to administer RJ. We are aware that some pupils may need some extra support at a given time to follow our ‘School Charter’. When providing this support, we must always remember we want restitution not retribution and reconciliation not revenge. We will create a supportive culture where all those affected by an incident are involved in finding a mutually acceptable way forward. RJ allows opportunities for pupils to reflect on, take responsibility for and learn from their own behaviours.

During reflection pupils will be encouraged to think about:

- *How has your behaviour affected others?*
- *What could you have done differently?*
- *How can you make amends/move forward?*

9) How the school supports staff well-being and reflection

We recommend that in your Behaviour Regulation Policy you acknowledge **the link between emotions and learning (EEF) and prioritises the adults' emotional needs (Anna Freud Centre).**

We also recommend that your policy highlights the importance of providing emotional support for staff in order to help manage stress and secondary trauma, and to reduce the likelihood of staff burnout. You could include the whole school perspective on self-care and what staff support systems you currently have in place internally/externally. Staff supervision models can also support the development of reflective practice, a key protective factor for staff wellbeing.

APPENDIX 3: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document provides a list of **frequently asked questions** about relationship-based, restorative approaches to understanding in behaviour in schools and **suggested responses/ideas**. These have been generated by groups of school staff and educational professionals working in schools and educational settings across Nottinghamshire. The purpose of this document is to support conversations and discussions about implementing these approaches within your school, to explore challenges, questions and supportive ideas etc.



What to do when staff are scared/refusing to work with a child/young person? i.e. relationships have been damaged? How can we maintain a relationship-based approach?

Recognise that working 1:1 with children can be complex and hard. Is this adult the best person to be working with this child? Awareness of staff well-being and collaborative working is key. “Nobody can do this on their own”.

Time may be needed to re-build, restore, repair (i.e. restorative practice). The adult needs to be the adult. Even if they are not the right adult to work with the child/young person, they need to demonstrate to the child that they still care, and they are keeping the child in mind.

Very clear risk assessment needed. Making expectations clear e.g. use of the Anxiety Curve or the Incredible 5 Point Scale accurately. Involve the child in creating these documents to avoid tokenistic use by adults.

Looking at the child holistically. Not demonising the child.

Solution-focused discussion – What works well? When do you and the child smile together? Where are the exceptions to the problem? Restoring people’s faith and confidence? Non-blaming, non-judgemental.

Reflective practice needs to be embedded. Looking beyond the US and THEM approach. Consider staff and children/young people as equal human beings. It’s ok to build supportive relationships with children and young people.

Supporting staff – Is there anybody in school that has the skills, confidence and resilience? Who else is engaged? Tap into the school’s resources. Restore faith and confidence in the staff members. Be supportive and understanding and recognise the staff member’s experience.

Is further training required in understanding behaviour? What about counselling or peer support for staff?

How to engage governors?

Clear pathways, consistency of message and careful management. Sharing resources and good practice e.g. models and local good practice examples contained in this document.

How to deal with parental complaints about children's behaviour?

Engaging governors in all decisions and having the same values – be clear in relationships and behaviour policy – a firm group of people to stand together.

Got to embrace whole-school culture, driven by the senior leadership team and explaining rationale for why school is doing what we're doing – this approach will positively affect everything i.e. emotional health and wellbeing and learning.

Emphasise the need to look beyond the individual child - it is about everyone in the school community: What values are we going to hold? How are they going to contribute/engage/represent their voice – what kind of things can we do?

Pull those in who shout loud to contribute to the school behaviour policy – be proactive – link to a relationship-based approach. Work together. Demystify US and THEM.

Do restorative approaches undermine/blame teachers for student behaviour?

No, when used well, restorative approaches are collaborative and non-blaming, they can enable teachers to teach behaviour skills and repair relationships.

How will students know where the line is for unacceptable behaviour? How will the child learn if there are no consequences?

It is a common misconception that restorative approaches means no consequences or that challenging behaviour is accepted within this approach. In fact, setting limits on behaviour and negotiating expectations within the context of a relationship is a core part of the approach.

By engaging with natural consequences, with the support of a trusted adult, children can learn to change their behaviour. Some examples of natural consequences that schools have found useful – writing letters of apology, repairing damage to property, completing missed work from a disrupted lesson during detention.

By building relationships with students, adults can connect with the students' values and the school community can develop shared values e.g. inclusion, valuing diversity, respecting others. Our actions come from our values, if we can connect with a child's values, we can help to change difficult behaviours in the long term e.g. valuing learning.

Are you saying we shouldn't use fixed term/permanent exclusion?

Effective, restorative consequences are those which lead to lasting behaviour change and learning. When considering exclusion within the framework of relationship-based and restorative practice,

some helpful questions to ask: When is exclusion in the best interest of the child? Is it going to benefit the child? Impact of exclusion? What are the benefits? What is going to change for them, what have they learned from that experience? What teaching has taken place – what has the child learned from the exclusion?

What about the child who excludes or ‘opts out’ themselves?

Ask why they are opting out or withdrawing. What is the unmet need behind this behaviour? In the short-term, this strategy may help them to regulate strong emotions however, in the long term, learning a new behaviour regulation skill will be helpful for them e.g. if it helps them to access the curriculum. Create safe spaces in school for children and young people to access, with the support of trusted adults. Consider the ‘Responding in the Moment’ model (Notts EPS, 2020).

How come pupil X has been treated differently to pupil Y? How is that fair?

Equality and fairness do not mean everyone should be treated in the same way. We need to teach children and their peers that different people need different things at different times, based on their individual needs (*link to the learning and behaviour assumptions grid p7*).

Consider the legal requirements of schools and educational settings to make reasonable adjustments for children with SEND which includes SEMH (SEND COP, 2015).

SECTION 1 – LANGUAGE AROUND THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

Reflect on our use of language - in discussions and in our written documents

When we are challenged by someone else’s behaviour, we are more likely to use language that is negative and provides a sense of hopelessness. It can be an indication of how we are feeling about the situation and the child. We may be keen for the listener to hear how difficult we are finding the situation and to justify our own thoughts/feelings/behaviour – we may also feel the need to pathologise their behaviour in order to gain resources, like additional staff in school.

It is human nature to categorise, put children into boxes and be reductionist to speed up complex discussions, help our memory etc. Language has the ability to hastily create a picture in our minds. Consider what images come to mind when we use the following phrases: tantrum, kick off, melt down and naughty. However, we must be cautious as the language that people use in their discussions actively constructs perceptions around a young person and the gravity of the situation.

Think about your immediate responses to the following descriptions of young people:

“He’s a spitter”, “He’s a runner”

“She’s a climber”, “He’s LAC”, “She’s feral”, “She attacked the staff”

“She’s manipulative”, “She’s ADHD”, “He’s violent”, “He went for another child”

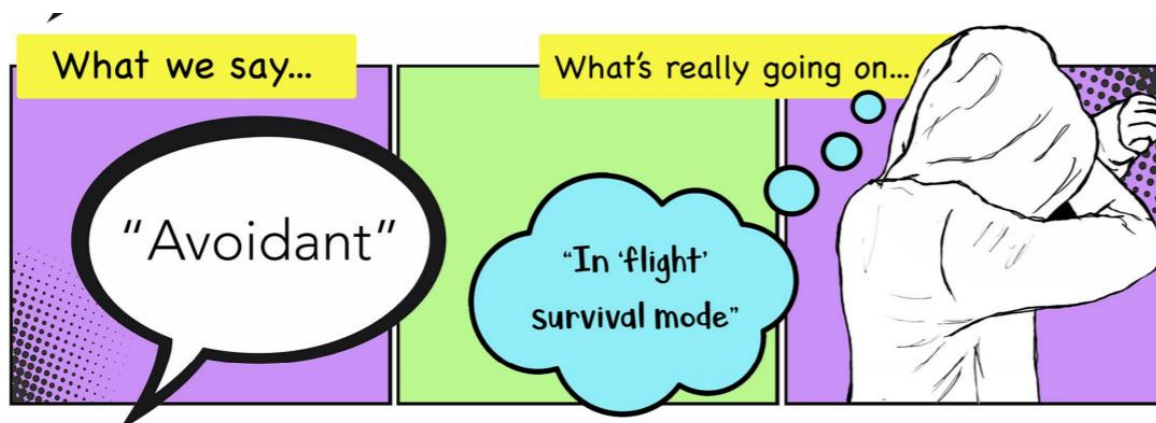
“In all my years of teaching I have never seen anything like it”

These sweeping statements (and often emotional statements) imply and assume that:

- The CYP is their behaviour or diagnoses.
- That behaviour is not separate to the CYP.
- Behaviour is unchangeable.
- Behaviours are not context dependent.
- The behaviours that the CYP presents are frequent.
- The child possesses the skills to ‘manage’ their behaviour.
- That these behaviours are ‘abnormal’.



Discussions using these kinds of statements can create and maintain a 'single story' of the young person and objectify them. Language can also create a sense of escalation, now and in the future, even when there is less evidence of this than the language implies....



Instead it maybe more helpful to consider:

- Normalising their behaviour and subsequently, your language about their behaviour. If you hear colleagues using unhelpful language, it will be beneficial to reframe their wording and **model more helpful language**...e.g. *“So, you’re telling me that when they’re upset or angry they will display that behaviour”, “It sounds like they were struggling to manage their emotions”, “They were in distress and unable to tell us using their words”*. This language demonstrates a higher level of understanding of the unmet needs behind behaviour.
- That **behaviour is a form of communication**. Consider *why* they are presenting this behaviour rather than simply describing the behaviour. Explore the function of their behaviour, what are they expressing to the adults around them? If you use reflective language, you are modelling this to the child and to other staff members.
- Where are you having these conversations? **Avoid having negative, emotive or judgemental discussions in front of the child**. It will only create and reinforce a their view and help perpetuate the cycle of behaviours you find challenging.
- Consider children as humans i.e. **talking about them as we/friends/family would want to be spoken about**.

Think about the power of stories

Language can help create and maintain a 'single story' of the young person and objectifies them. Equally, incidents of behaviours that adults have struggled to manage can become engrained in the child's history as adults pass these on and the child becomes the *“one who....e.g. broke a window of the foundation unit....climbed the roof...started a fire”*. It becomes impossible for the child to rewrite their story, as the discussions move quickly from class to class, school to school or placement to placement. Instead, you could be a part of breaking this cycle and changing the child's story.



SECTION 2 – LANGUAGE WITH THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

Think about the language you use when speaking or writing to the child

Strengths-based language working with the child – support the development of positive behaviour

Doing it together, using collaborative language

Non-directive, invite the child to engage with you, wonder aloud about their strong emotions

Be careful about non-verbal behaviour presented by staff

What is our response to language or non-verbal communication used by the children?

Inappropriate behaviour is subjective and culturally driven e.g. the context decides whether it is appropriate or not. Consider talking about 'expected or not expected behaviour in this situation' – some children need direct teaching and explanations.

Consider trigger language

Saying no – is it needed?

Being careful in your use of language

Using goal-orientated language – describing the behaviour you want to see, the things you want the child to achieve

Communicating safety and trust when setting limits on behaviour

Consider staff knowledge about the words they are using e.g. training, CPD, reflective supervision for staff

APPENDIX 5: GETTING STARTED – LESSONS LEARNED AND INCLUDING PUPIL VIEWS



Challenges and lessons learned by schools/professionals using a relationship-based, restorative approach to understanding behaviour in Nottinghamshire

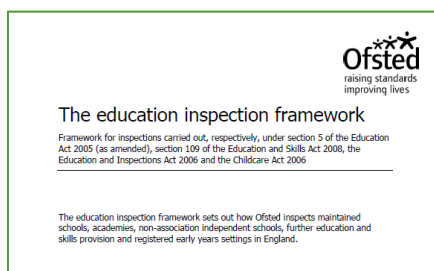
- Staff training a key factor in developing practice
- ‘Sign up from staff’ is important - recruitment processes and embedding in role and job descriptions and performance management processes
- Modelling practice is paramount
- Regularly reminding staff about the approach
- Making sure that there is a close link between staff well-being, and that staff have the resilience to apply the learning
- Consistency in repair strategies - in class and out of class
- Developing empathy - how to build on this when there is a lack of empathy?
- Include the pupil and parent/carer voice in the process*
- Fair processes that reinforces parent and pupil confidence
- Confidence in your use of the approach, use this toolkit as an evidence-base
- Individual members of staff who are confident/experienced - mentoring and providing ongoing support to others
- Emotional regulation: [Emotionally Regulate Before We Educate](#) - pupil and staff co-producing what will help me today, processes around why you may feel this way and what will help me today - staff and pupils to co-produce this
- Making the links between mental health and RSHE
- Having opportunities to talk about mental health and well-being
- Writing a whole school policy that is meaningful to all stakeholders

- Knowing your pupils and adapting to behaviour challenges using an Emotion Coaching approach alongside restorative approaches
- Staff being curious around the functions of the behaviour and the unmet needs
- Linking learning and behaviour in the same way and applying the same principles

***Ideas for engaging pupil views within this approach:**

- Use the RSHE curriculum- to start this process as a school within the RSHE curriculum
- Engagement - toolkit for pupils and pupil response
- Co-production through the school council, but also subdivisions for a range of diverse groups
- Environmental factors - where are there safe spaces in school for pupils to help them engage e.g. pastoral room, sensory room, libraries
- Participatory research - including pupils in how effective the approach is
- Respect, connection and belonging - this being a two-way process and asking pupils where they are in relation to these factors
- Use creative ways to engage that are relevant to the young person - music, vlogs, digital platforms
- Pupil Toolkit - examples of questions to ask, scenarios to help discussions, schemes of work for RSHE, content and discussion in tutor time. Enlisting support services including partnerships and [Tackling Emerging Threats to Children team - online resources](#).

APPENDIX 6: HOW A RELATIONSHIP-BASED APPROACH CAN BE DEMONSTRATED WITHIN THE NEW OFSTED INSPECTION FRAMEWORK



To be most effective, relationship-based approaches should be embedded within the core values and ethos of the school with daily practice and systems consistent with these values. Therefore, the approach should be apparent throughout an inspectors' visit to the school and evident within all sections of the inspection report. Much of the evidence could be provided in several areas of the inspection report and staff should be encouraged to see the links and overlap between various policies and practices, understanding how these are all incorporated within a relationship-based approach.

What Ofsted inspectors will consider when making judgements	Suggested evidence of Relationship-based Approaches
Behaviour and Attitudes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the provider has high expectations for learners' behaviour and conduct and applies these expectations consistently and fairly. This is reflected in learners' behaviour and conduct</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are high expectations for the behaviour of all people in the school community. Rather than being asked to display specific behaviours, students are encouraged to develop self-regulation and make positive choices. (EEF 2019 Rec 2) - Consistency and fairness are clear in school policies. There is consistency between the school's core values and ethos and their daily practice. The restorative concept of fair process is apparent in school systems. - Key values and principles are consistent but staff are able to show flexibility to incorporate the needs of each individual child when needed – equal opportunity does not mean the same treatment for everyone. (EEF 2019 Rec 5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>learners' attitudes to their education or training are positive. They are committed to their learning, know how to study effectively and do so, are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attitudes to behaviour and learning are positive and hopeful with a focus on relationship repair, negotiation skills and making everyone feel included in the process. - Resources around metacognition and self-regulation support this.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>relationships among learners and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture. Leaders, teachers and learners create an environment where bullying, peer-on-peer abuse or discrimination are not tolerated. If they do occur, staff deal with issues quickly and effectively, and do not allow them to spread.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All relationships within the school are positive and respectful, there is a real focus on a relationship-based approach within the school values and ethos i.e. building, maintaining and repairing relationships. - Staff know the children and each child feels like they have at least one strong relationship with a trusted adult at school (EEF 2019 Rec. 1)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calm discussions: knowledge of their influences and communication, de-escalation has happened, the child is in a place where they can have the discussion - Systems for de-escalation are clear – written in children’s behaviour plans (need a calm space, their triggers, restorative approaches), risk and control/approach for this child, how do staff know what works for that child - Children are able to express themselves in a positive way, with trusted adults dealing with incidents in a consistent, calm way
<p>Leadership and Management</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared values, policies and practice: reflect relationship-based approaches, values and rationale – linked to NCC values and principles, evidence of this approach across all school policies, embedded - Clear ambitious vision, inclusive education to all – including challenging behaviour - Behaviour policy linked to safeguarding policy – reflecting 3 key ideas in this toolkit, embedded in the day to day working of school - Language of restorative practice used throughout the school, led by the Senior Leadership Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>leaders focus on improving staff’s subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment. The practice and subject knowledge of staff are built up and improve over time.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of the approach, linking it to core values of restorative approaches - Everyone involved in the restorative approach - Content knowledge - Whole school approach, not just an intervention, developed collaboratively, not ‘done to’ staff – getting all staff on board, all staff understand the context of why school are using this approach - Cultural change

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>leaders aim to ensure that all learners complete their programmes of study. They provide the support for staff to make this possible and do not allow gaming or off-rolling.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systems are set up for students if they need to be away from the class e.g. rooms set up as calming areas with resources prepared, examples of more helpful behaviour (e.g. a child who likes to destroy things snapping wood for forest schools), children have a choice in consequences e.g. where to sit. - Natural consequences are provided following challenging behaviour direct e.g. writing letters, completing work from a lesson that was missed and indirect e.g. random acts of kindness, working for a local charity, cleaning and painting community facilities. - If a student needs alternative provision, this is not the end of the line or a punishment. Careful language is used to demonstrate this is a time to learn and repair relationships. Staff make explicit effort to maintain relationships with students while on alternative provision e.g. checking in, attending meetings, visiting the student at the alternative provision site, completing end of term reports, maintaining student data, maintaining relationships with parents/carers, joint risk assessments completed by school and alternative provision. - School seeks to avoid use of exclusion. If a relationship breaks down with a student, a managed move is considered rather than a permanent exclusion. Careful language is used to ensure the child does not feel blamed or shamed, the school provides support for transition to a new setting. Fixed term exclusion is used only as a last resort e.g. in the case of a serious assault to allow de-escalation to occur. If exclusion is used, staff take care to involve the student in the process as much as possible e.g. conversation is had to explain the reason, fair process is followed, restorative conversations are always used for re-integration. Exclusion is particularly avoided for vulnerable groups (e.g. children looked after or previously looked after, children with special educational needs and disabilities, children on a Child in Need or Child Protection plan) and data is careful monitored to identify patterns for these groups. Data is used as indicators
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	to consider their needs, for screening and intervention, to consider risk factors and safeguarding concerns.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaders engage effectively with learners and others in their community, including – where relevant – parents, carers, governors, employers and local services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School has strong relationships with the local community or their learners’ communities e.g. information sharing with parents, work with multi-agency colleagues including police liaison officer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>leaders engage with their staff and are aware and take account of the main pressures on them. They are realistic and constructive in the way that they manage staff, including their workload</i> • <i>leaders protect their staff from bullying and harassment</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for staff, supervision, head teacher support, CPD following any incidents, make sure staff are not bullied or harassed, consider staff individual needs, compassion focussed <p>Staff Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children making positive choices, staff wellbeing - Opportunity to step out when needed - Action Plan, SIP, evidence based, SEF – we’re on this journey together, honesty - Speak to staff, speak to children, see how it feels - Pilot? Case studies where the approach has worked.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. They ensure that the provider has a clear vision and strategy and that resources are managed well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education or training</i> • <i>those with responsibility for governance ensure that the provider fulfils its statutory duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010, and other duties, for example in relation to the ‘Prevent’ strategy and safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of learners</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governance buy in to the ethos, reviews of exclusion - Equality Act 2010 – SEMH identified as an area of need - Prevent Duty - is the school mindful of profiling and stereotyping?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the provider has a culture of safeguarding that supports effective arrangements to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>identify learners who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming or exploitation</i> – <i>help learners reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need, or referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help</i> – <i>manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to learners and vulnerable adults.</i> <p><i>30. Inspectors will always report on whether arrangements for safeguarding learners are effective.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing risk of harm = making positive choices, enabling them to do so ‘making positive choices’ - Knock on effect for reducing physical intervention and reducing exclusion - Restorative conferences for all incidents - Understanding the context of the community the school serves and the experiences of the pupils. <p><u>link to Keeping Children Safe in Education</u></p>
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Nottinghamshire County Council Education Learning and Skills

Educational Psychology Service: Órlaith Green, Kate Taylor, Maryam Nazir, Pauline Clarke, Katie Ruane, Charles Savage, Jo Marriott

Social Emotional and Mental Health Team: Karen Human, Tracy Ayers

Coping with Risky Behaviours Team: Jon Glover, Tricia Clarke

Tackling Emerging Threats to Children Team: Sarah Lee

Virtual School for Children Looked after and Previously Looked After: Sue Denholm

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Education Improvement Service: Jane Starbuck

Schools and Families Specialist Services: Simon Ray, Nancy Lee, Alison Patterson

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Kay Carter (REAL Education)

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Alex Conteh (Ravenshead CofE Primary)

Marie House (Flying High Partnership and Nottinghamshire Educational Psychology Service)

Kerry Nichol (Tuxford Academy)

Richard Lilley (Sparken Hill Academy)

Nottinghamshire County Council Support Services for Schools: [Educational Psychology Service \(EPS\)](#), [Tackling Emerging Threats to Children Team \(TETC\)](#), [Social Emotional Mental Health Team \(SEMH\)](#), [Schools and Families Specialist Service \(SFSS\)](#)

Linked to the [Wellbeing for Education Return Project](#)