



# Ely and Caerau Integrated Children's Centre

## Relationships and Wellbeing Policy

## Introduction and Purpose

***As a Rights Respecting School we aim to teach children to understand and respect their own and others rights. This policy relates particularly to the following articles of the UNCRC: Articles 1, 3, 12,19, 28 and 29)***

At the Ely and Caerau Integrated Children's Centre we aim to create a calm, safe, happy, vibrant, purposeful, inclusive and positive environment. We also want to create an emotionally healthy and creative environment. This policy is not about how we 'control' or 'manage' behaviour, it is about how we take seriously the important job of teaching and nurturing our children to understand and reflect on their emotions and develop as caring and responsible people.

The purpose of this policy is to outline how we approach relationships within our school community. This involves a whole school approach to building, maintaining and (when needed) the repairing of relationships with everyone – children and adults, pupils, staff, governors, families, local community, and all the agencies with whom we work. We make every effort to achieve this using a consistent restorative approach. Principles

The principles which underpin this policy are:

### 1. Unconditional positive regard for all pupils.

We believe that children who are treated with empathy, understanding and respect will learn to be empathic and respectful towards other people.

### 2. Restorative

We are proactive in building and maintaining relationships in order to create a sense of community. When relationships are positive, we are less inclined to harm each other, thus reducing the amount of conflict in our Centre and community. We constantly reflect on what we need from each other in order for us to be our best. We will always endeavour to work actively with each other to resolve problems and conflicts, rather than trying to 'rescue', impose or ignore issues. We are developing the use of consistent restorative approaches.

### 3. An understanding that behaviour usually has a reason

We know that children who present with 'challenging behaviour' often have unmet needs. We understand that we need to address the underlying reasons for challenging behaviour in order to support children's developing emotional literacy and behavioural self-regulation.

Emotional literacy refers to children's ability to understand their own and other's emotions.

### 4. A highly individualised approach

We recognise that some children may have faced particular challenges that mean they will need a highly individualised approach.

#### 5. Positivity

We recognise the importance of the language we use with children. We commit to using positive language with children to build self-esteem. We acknowledge the power of praise and the notion that *'what we pay attention to is what we get more of'*.

#### 6. Consistency

We aim to have a consistent positive approach across the whole Centre based on restorative principles. We aim to set clear boundaries which are developmentally appropriate for the age and stage of our young learners.

#### 7. Self-awareness and self-esteem

We recognise the need for our own self-awareness as adults as well as the need for a curriculum that develops self-reflection in children and a policy that supports positive behaviour in the Centre

### **What is the role of adults?**

- 🎬 All adults will demonstrate love and unconditional positive regard for the children in our care
- 🎬 All adults at the Centre have high expectations of children
- 🎬 All adults will take a child centred approach; each child is respected and listened to. There is a clear emphasis on building and maintaining positive relationships.

All adults share a consistent, common language and approach although each child is treated as an individual.

All adults challenge the use of racist, homophobic, sexist and disablist language and behaviour

All adults understand the need to act as positive role models. This includes modeling apologising and offering and accepting forgiveness

All adults will deal with situations calmly and refrain from shouting unless there is a safety risk

All adults make it clear when inappropriate or challenging behaviour is displayed that it is the behaviour that is disapproved of and not the child

All adults will aim to help children to be reflective and self-aware, independent and self-regulating, respectful and non-judgemental

### **What is the role of children ?**

Children are encouraged to be active participants in their own learning and development. They are expected to take a role in choosing and planning their learning including mini trips, open days and expeditions.

Children can help address issues at the earliest and lowest level possible using a restorative approach themselves as appropriate to their development eg - finding a tissue to help dry tears if they have upset a friend; finding solutions to help to re-build a relationship

Children are taught to be kind and respectful through stories, games and discussions that are developmentally appropriate

### **What is the role of parents and other members of our community?**

Parents are a hugely important part of our Centre. As an integrated Children's Centre we recognise that parents have their own needs and we seek to address these.

We ask all parents to engage with the Centre and be supportive of the Centre's philosophy and ethos; to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality; and to celebrate their children's achievements

We value our relationships with parents greatly and seek to engage in a respectful, non-judgemental, co-operative and inclusive way.

When we have meetings with family members, carers and other agencies, we will adopt a restorative mindset and person-centred approach as our first choice wherever possible.

### **Developing emotional literacy throughout the school**

Emotional literacy is the ability to recognise, understand and appropriately express our emotions. At the Centre we believe that developing emotional

literacy is a crucially important part of the learning we offer. We help children to become emotionally literate through:

Genuine chats and conversations with individuals and in small groups (values and rights focus)

Daily family time (check in circles using restorative approaches are developing across the Centre)

Developing children's understanding of needs and the vocabulary associated with this

Developing awareness of children's rights

Agreeing clear consistent boundaries

### **When things are going well:**

#### **The Power of Praise**

Praise is an important way of encouraging and supporting children, of showing we are pleased, enthusiastic or grateful. Praise is a very powerful tool in managing children's behaviour. We recognise that there is a difference between praising a child for something they have done (praise for doing) and praising a child for who they are (praise for being). We recognise that children need both types of praise.

Ways in which we give children praise at the Centre:

Thumbs up

Smile

'Job well done' verbal praise

Collaborative rewards (Pebbles in a jar)

Going to visit another area for example, the office, baby room etc

Children are rewarded and praised differently according to their developmental stage. With our younger children, we may use photos of children engaging in positive behaviour as a way of celebrating their success or helping children to talk about their feelings or behaviour. We also recognise that some children

find praise very difficult to accept and staff may choose to praise in private rather than using any of the above 'public' methods. Staff will always try to ensure that praise is non-gender specific.

### **Collaborative Rewards**

Sometimes, some rooms will choose to use a collaborative reward approach. Collaborative rewards encourage co-operation and a sense of community. Every child can contribute to a shared, earned reward and so everyone's effort, no matter how small, is appreciated by the whole group. Practitioners may choose to operate a collaborative reward to which the children will contribute. Once the reward is given it is not taken away. When things are not going so well:

### **Ignoring and distracting**

Sometimes children will engage in negative behaviour to get attention. It is sometimes good to ignore this and to give lots of praise when the wanted behaviour is shown.

Reminding children with positive language

We always try and remind children what they should be doing using positive rather than negative language e.g. 'remember to walk', 'we share nicely in this class'

### **Repairing Relationships**

When conflict occurs, we expect those involved to find solutions to move forward and repair the relationship where possible. By having a common restorative approach to resolving conflict, we can achieve this in a fair and inclusive way with all affected. Our aim is to enable children to learn from these experiences.

### Clear Communication and the PLACE approach

We expect staff to use clear communication. This avoids unnecessary confrontation and supports children's growing vocabulary for their own needs and emotions. To this end emotion coaching and 'I messages' are used through the school. Emotion coaching refers to the process of acknowledging and labelling children's emotions. A PLACE approach (Dan Hughes) is used where the following: Playfulness, Labelling, Accepting, Curious, Empathy supports communication.

Staff and children are developing the use of I messages.

'I messages' refer to an assertion about feelings of the speaker without putting the listener on the defensive. For example,

- 'When I heard .....I felt .....
- When I see .....I feel disappointed that....
- This is affecting me (and maybe others) in this way.....
- I need you to...

The aim of our approach is always to repair and restore relationships and to enable children to learn to reflect on their emotions and actions. Therefore, there is less focus on punitive responses as the aim is always to promote learning and emotional growth. 1. Specific consequences

### **Natural Consequences**

We believe that children sometimes learn best where there are consequences tied to their negative behaviour; these are sometimes called 'natural consequences'. If they tip things out they will need to tidy up.. If they choose to fight over the football they will not be able to play with it. These consequences are immediate and are given in the context of 'choices and consequences'. Consequences are more meaningful if part of a restorative enquiry and suggested by the children themselves. Staff are also highly aware of developmental needs and milestones and that in some circumstances children are working through schemas and / or are developing an understanding of situations and contexts and are not being defiant.

### 2. 'Time Out'

Time out at the Centre is not about punishing children but about helping them to manage difficult emotions. It provides a cooling off period. Each room has a quiet space where they can take themselves away from the business of nursery to sit calmly and think or reflect. . Our aim is that as children get older they may begin to recognise the need to cool off themselves and use these spaces in a pre-emptive way. Some younger children may be asked to sit quietly near a member of staff whilst they reflect and calm down. A timer may used and children are never physically forced to stay.

We recognise that children need time and space to calm down and we will help them to recognise this by saying things like ‘ when you are feeling calm come and re-join the group’ etc. When children are calm, they are asked to reflect on the episode, talking about how they were feeling and what they could have done differently. This may also be followed up with appropriate story books specific to the emotion and developmentally appropriate to the child. This reflection is where children learn about their own feelings and how to manage them.

### **Internal Exclusion**

A our children are so young we do not enforce internal exclusions however we do encourage staff to tag team when children are being particularly challenging. We may invite a child to a different group to offer some space for the adult involved.

### **External Exclusion - The Centre has NEVER formally excluded a child. However the below guidelines will be followed should the need arise.**

The aim of the Centre is to make every effort to support the child in avoiding a formal fixed term exclusion.

When a fixed term exclusion is being considered the Centre will always have regard to the legal framework and guidance from the Welsh Government (Guidance 081/2012 Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units) and seeks the advice of the local authority exclusion team. External exclusion is a last resort and is only for serious breaches of behaviour and when alternative solutions have been ruled out.

The Centre will not carry out informal or unlawful exclusions, for example sending a child home for any period of the day to ‘cool off’ without following the procedures required for a formal exclusion.

A child will only be sent home as a formal exclusion. As stated in the guidance fixed term exclusions will always be for the shortest period of time and the time frame will always be fixed. The Governors Discipline Committee must meet when a learner exceeds 15 days of exclusion.

The school is required to take due regard of the Equality Act in this, and every area of school life. The best interests of the child, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, needs to be at the core of any decision to exclude.

If the Head of Centre decides to exclude a pupil the parents must be informed immediately by telephone and then by letter. The letter must state the reason for exclusion and the time period of the exclusion as well as the name and contact details of the Local Authority Exclusion Officer (Dave Williams).

Following an exclusion parents will be invited into Centre to discuss their child and how any problems can be addressed.



Permanent exclusions are extremely rare in our school and is always the very last resort. Where a permanent exclusion is deemed necessary and appropriate the legal framework and guidance will be followed.

### **Where children need additional emotional support**

We have a clear understanding that those children who display 'challenging behaviour' are usually amongst the most vulnerable in the Centre. Our approach therefore needs to be differentiated based on the needs and emotional state of the individual child. Our definition of what constitutes challenging behaviour and a vulnerable child includes:

- 🎬 Children who are unable to cope with their feelings and emotions
- 🎬 Children who cause injury to themselves or others
- 🎬 Children who clearly have needs which are not being met
- 🎬 Children who are disaffected, anxious, sad or lonely
- 🎬 Children who attention seek, needing either positive or negative attention
- 🎬 Children who have attachment difficulties or who have experienced adverse childhood experience
- 🎬 Children with other learning difficulties (e.g. ADHD, ASC)
- 🎬 Children with a very negative opinion of themselves because of low self-esteem
- 🎬 Children who are identified as either a bully or being bullied
- 🎬 Children with very poor attendance
- 🎬 Children who present with inappropriate behaviours, including inappropriate language for their age
- 🎬 Children who seem to be uncontrollable with poor strategies for poor regulation and for calming themselves down

In addition to the general approach of the school, children may also be given the following additional support:

1. Spending time with a trusted adult or in a small group

We are working towards establishing THRIVE as a Centre. The ALNCO is a THRIVE practitioner and over time more staff will be trained. Children with emotional needs may have a Thrive assessment and an action plan in place. A trusted adult may take time to work with a child on Thrive activities.

2. ELSA

We have a trained ELSA practitioner who may provide ELSA activities 1:1 with a child within the nursery environment. Sometimes ELSA sessions may be delivered in a separate space.

3. Referring to other agencies

Sometimes we feel it may benefit a child to have some additional support from another agency. Sometimes we may refer to the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Team or the Early Years disabilities and Inclusion team whose specialist staff work alongside school staff on strategies to support children. Sometimes we may ask the Educational Psychologist to work with your child. We will always speak to parents before a referral is made.