



POLICY AND PRACTISE FOR OUR RELATIONAL APPROACH TO BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

*Date created: August 2024 by Claire Hughes and Sarah Law
based on training by Notts CC EPS on Relational and Trauma-Informed Practise.
Reviewed by Claire Hughes Aug25 Aug26*

We are committed to reviewing our policy and practise annually.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our policies on belonging, anti-bullying, anti-racism, safe guarding, child protection and our code of conduct.

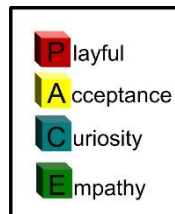
Our Pledge:

To foster a relational, curiosity approach to create connections in order to build a community where all participants feel heard, safe and valued and are able to develop at their own pace.



When we only look at behaviour, we stop seeing the child and only look with an intent to judge whether we need to reward or punish. When we look behind the behaviour, we see that little struggling human, our little human who needs our help with something.

Rebecca Eanes • Artist: Celeste Keller



"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 Siegal

Connection is the root of all growth.

Context of our setting:

Allowing all of our community to feel a sense of belonging and connection is at the heart of everything we do at Woodland Nurture.

We are a very diverse group with people of different ages, ethnic backgrounds, genders, gender identities, neurodiversities, religions, beliefs and life experiences all coming together to join as one community within the woods.

As an outdoor child-centred setting that values play, we aim not to be intrusive in children's play or to direct it in ways which limit their creativity or development. We believe that children can incorporate elements of risk into their play and in many cases, need an element of risk to develop.

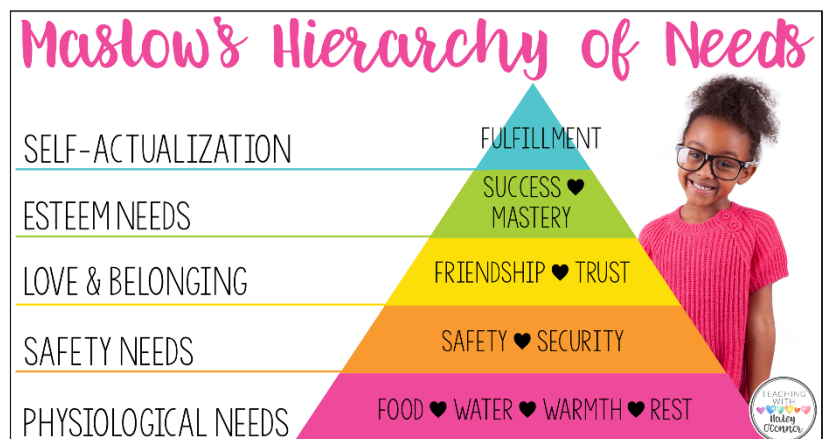
Our Goal:

To develop a community of caring, respectful, confident, self-aware, valued and well-balanced individuals working together to learn and have fun whilst keeping our code:

Care for yourself. Care for Others. Care for the Environment

Our Core Principles that ensure this goal:

- Everything we do is focused on building, maintaining and repairing relationships.
- We acknowledge that behaviour is a form of communication informing us of an unmet need.
- We are proud to have adopted a curious approach to understanding the needs and feelings of the children in our care.
- We know that our relational, trauma-informed approach supports the children in a positive and safe way.
- We work hard to build relationships with the child and their family. By knowing the context of the child, we can better understand their behaviours.
- We empower all our staff and children in an autonomous environment where we support and validate each other.
- Our clear policies eliminate bias and barriers, with the aim of creating a safe inclusive space, where everyone can thrive.
- We believe that children learn best when they are intrinsically motivated.
- We acknowledge children need to learn how to negotiate, compromise and collaborate and how to get on with a wide range of people.
- We acknowledge the role of Maslow's hierarchical needs theory.



Procedures and Strategies:

Our code underpins how we want our community to be and is discussed regularly; especially when we have new participants or when unwanted behaviour is witnessed.

All staff, volunteers and students model our code at all times.

New staff and volunteers and parents/carers are familiarised with our code and relational approach to behaviour as part of their induction.

As a staff we function as a team with joint responsibility for the learners in our care. We openly discuss incidents and act collectively and consistently.

We treat all incidents as learning opportunities in which we compassionately support our learners so that they can recognise why their behaviour was unacceptable and ways they could modify it.

We implement a range of strategies to support and manage our approach:

Positive Affirmation:

We recognise that affirmation of positive behaviour will encourage that child to repeat the behaviour as well as giving other children something to aim for. All participants are actively encouraged to notice and comment on examples of positive behaviour which is praised at the time of occurrence and/or at circle times.

“The advertising of poor behaviour doesn’t help, but routinely advertising the behaviour that you do want does.”
— Paul Dix, **When Adults Change, Everything Changes.**

PACE: We adopt PACE as an effective way to build, maintain and restore connections.

By being **Playful** we reduce the shame the child might feel. Difficult messages are much easier to convey when the tone is light.

By being **Accepting** we show children that we support them unconditionally – that we care about them regardless of their behaviour.

By being **Curious** we show our interest in understanding their behaviour and that we accept the feelings involved. This is not the same as agreeing to their perception.

By showing **Empathy**, we are helping the child to feel safe and understood. We are showing them that we are alongside them in their difficulty.



Playful - lighthearted - lighten the tone
Removes conflict and encourages connection
Calms from Fight or Flight to a zone of reasoning.



Acceptance - knowing that needs and emotions are driving behaviour and without accepting those needs the behaviours will continue.



Curiosity - I wonder if you're feeling a little bit worried about xxxx which I know is happening this afternoon.

I feel anxious/nervous/scared about that too, maybe we could hold hands and breathe deeply together.



Empathy - means connection and compassion.

This is the starting block for helping and improving.

Dr Dan Hughes

Anger Iceberg

When a child is heightened they often present as angry.

We acknowledge that anger is a form of self-protection.

When we present as angry, there are many more valid emotions playing out underneath the surface.

Recognising the root cause of anger can allow us to process those emotions and work through them in a healthy, productive way.



Executive Functioning:

When a person feels unsafe/threatened/powerless their thinking brain disconnects and they "Flip their lid."

This means they are left with only their basic limbic and brain stem connected, sending them into fight, flight, freeze or fawn mode.

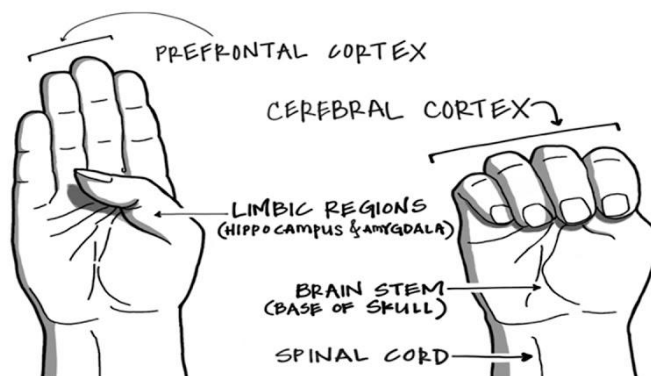
Human brains are not fully formed until they are in their mid-20s. To expect a child to know how to control their brains without support is unreasonable.

It is our job as educators to co-regulate and support. To teach children how to keep themselves and others safe until their thinking brain reconnects.

We do not punish a child for their behaviour errors, we support them and help them to do better next time.

Flipping Your Lid

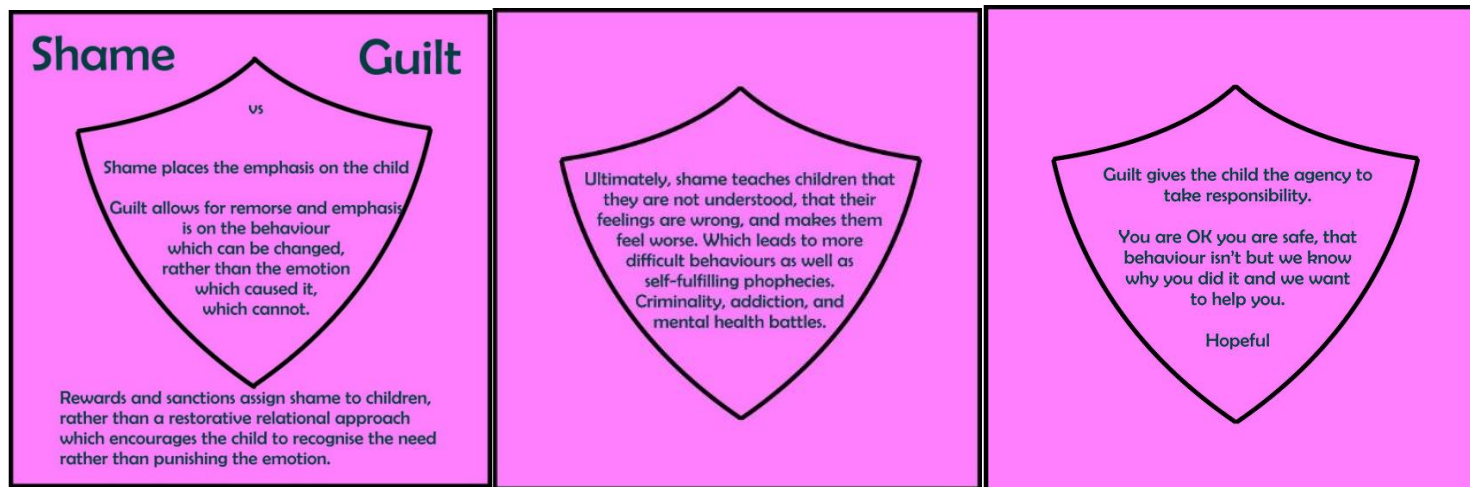
Hand Model of the Brain



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

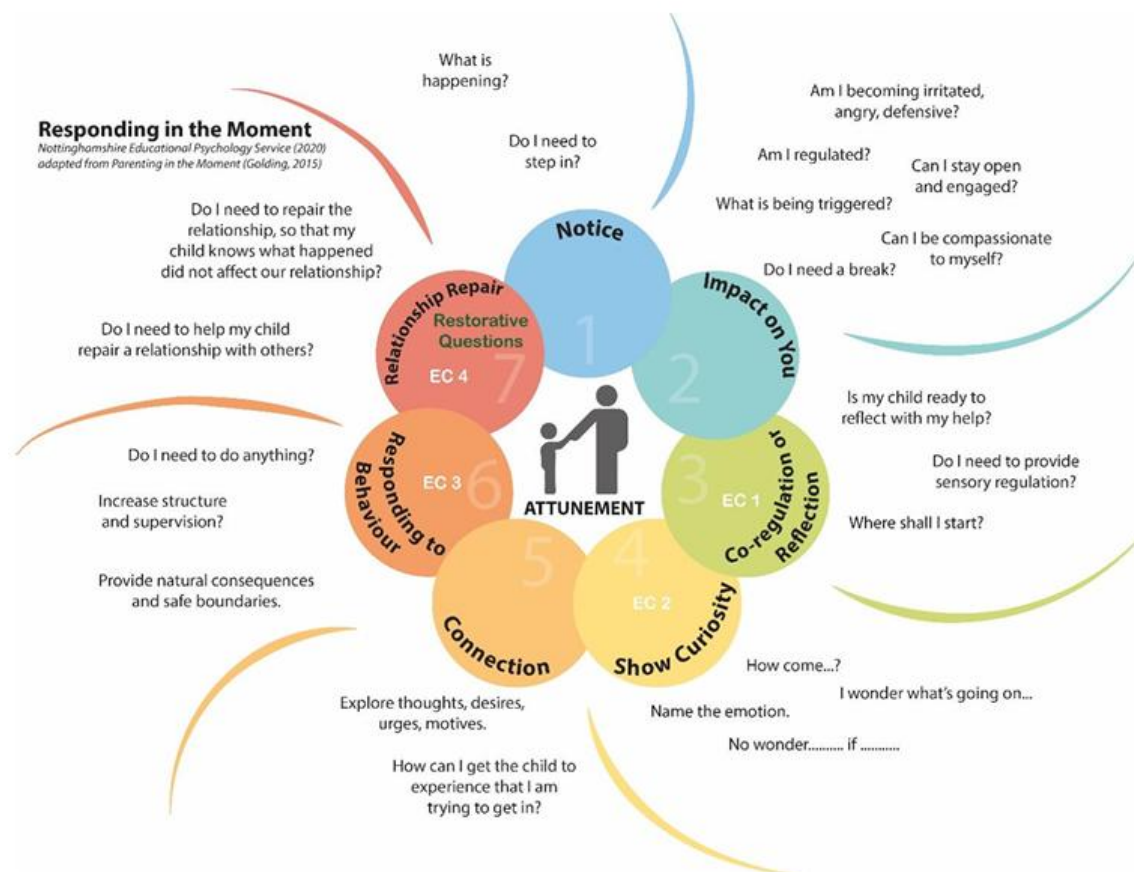
Shame and Guilt:

We acknowledge the difference between Shame and Guilt and try to eliminate feelings of shame, instead teaching children how to take ownership of their guilt and learn from their mistakes.



Responding in the Moment

Responding in the moment is a model devised by Notts Educational Psychology Department (2020) and adopted by Woodland Nurture in 2024 to support our staff in the way we support our children. Responding in the moment incorporates PACE, Emotion Coaching and Restorative Practise. By following these steps when we are faced with strong emotions and challenging behaviour we are able to remain in our thinking brain and therefore be the best support for the child when their thinking brain is inactive.



The Incredible 5 Point Scale:

Kari Dunn Buron's Incredible 5 Point Scale is a useful tool to rate emotions. By rating emotional reactions we are able to understand them and work together to control them.

We have adopted aspects of the Incredible 5 Point Scale to help in a variety of ways such as:

- The 5 point scale helps us to co-regulate with the children with the ultimate goal of self-regulation.
- We use the scale to communicate how a child is presenting to other staff and parents.
- We teach individual children about the scale and teach them how to check in with their feelings. This becomes part of every day speech, for example, we might say to a child, "I wonder if you might be feeling like a 3 right now, what could we do to help you to get back to a 1?"
- We can use the scale to check behaviour such as unwanted actions or words - we might say to a child, "That word is a definite 4, I don't want to hear it at Woodland Nurture again thanks."

Rating	Looks/Sounds like	Feels like	I Can Try
5			
4			
3			
2			
1			

Restorative Approach to Conflict Resolution:

If conflict resolution is not forthcoming, or a child is becoming distressed, we will step in, to encourage and facilitate mediation to try to resolve conflicts by discussion and negotiation.

A Restorative Approach will be taken to restore the peace.

To arrive at solutions and discuss cause and effect of actions, it may be prudent to ask the group ways that we can work together to eliminate unwanted behaviour. In these situations, anonymity will be maintained.

Staff will explore ways to tackle recurring issues over subsequent sessions which may include team games, drama, mindfulness or the increase of focused work for targeted children.

Restorative Questions:

What Happened?

Who or what has been harmed and in what way?

What needs to happen now in order to put things right and ensure this doesn't happen again?

Sorry - We acknowledge that 'sorry' is not a magic word that absolves responsibility. It is not always appropriate or helpful in a long-term context to insist that a child says sorry. Many children are not capable of fully understanding or feeling the emotion of regret until they are much older. Instead we model and encourage compassion for others. When children hurt each other physically or emotionally, we show the responsible child different ways that they can show compassion by helping someone who is hurt. This might be getting them a

drink, inviting them to play, or agreeing to change the rules of their game so that the same accident doesn't happen again.

Non-intent - Sometimes a child may behave inappropriately without intent. For example, causing offence to another child without realising or using language that we deem unacceptable. We recognise the difference between intent and non-intent whilst acknowledging that non-intentional acts can still be damaging and therefore still need to be resolved.

Gun play - Guns and war play are a natural stage and exploration of power and identity. We encourage children to role play different jobs and situations in order to make sense of the world around them. As long as all the participants are happy to be involved in the play, then we feel that gun and war play are completely acceptable.

Joining In - Often children are unsure about how to introduce themselves to play situations. We encourage and model for the children ways of asking other children if they would like to play. This can be asking if their games need an extra 'x', asking if a new child wants to be part of the war game or asking if a child would like to go and start a new type of play together. When children answer any of these questions with 'no', then that needs to be respected. Children may feel upset by being told they cannot play but we can reassure them with the knowledge that it isn't a no forever or a no because they don't like them, it's just how they want to play that game right now. They might change their mind or start a new game very soon.

Restorative Conference: If incidents are sustained or reoccur, a restorative conference may need to take place with all the affected people. Actions to repair the harm will be reasonable and meaningful and related to the incident and will be chosen and agreed between all participants involved. Feedback to parents will be given when a child has been harmed. The parent of the harmer may also be informed of the incident. It should always be made clear to the parent that the situation was dealt with in a restorative manner and that the situation is finished now as all parties involved left feeling the situation had been resolved.

Distinguishing between types of behaviour.

As part of our curiosity approach, we are able to distinguish between 'disengaged', 'disruptive' and 'unacceptable' behaviour.

'Disengaged' behaviour may indicate that a child is bored, unsettled or unhappy. With sensitive interventions, staff will often be able to re-engage a child in purposeful activity.

'Disruptive' behaviour describes a child whose behaviour prevents other children from enjoying themselves. Staff will listen to the child or children concerned and hear their reasons for their actions. Staff will then explain to the child or children what was negative about their behaviour and that such actions have consequences for both themselves and for other people.

'Unacceptable' behaviour refers to non-negotiable actions and may include discriminatory remarks, violence, bullying or destruction of equipment. Once the child is able to engage in conversations calmly, staff will be clear that consequences will follow from such behaviour, including a discussion with parents and ultimately, if repeated, a removal from the session/subsequent sessions.

Reasonable Adjustments – We acknowledge that we are all different with differing needs. Some of our participants require reasonable adjustments in the way we tackle unwanted behaviour due to their neurodiversities and capacity to understand. As a general rule, a calm consistent manner is adopted by all staff when dealing with any issues.

All About Me – We acknowledge that each child is an individual with differing needs. On their All About Me form that they completed on first attending the setting there may be some useful strategies that work for that individual child if they are at heightened anxiety/upset.

Care Plans or Risk assessments – In addition to All About Me forms, some children will have Care Plans or Risk Assessments which outline how we can meet their needs. These will be shared with relevant staff so we are all working towards the same goals.

START Chart – Following an incident of heightened anxiety/upset we will complete a Start Chart which indicates Setting/Trigger/Action/Response/TakeAway. Start Charts form a useful record to help us spot any patterns in behaviour thus helping us learn more about how we can support individual children.

5Ps form – The 5 Ps are: Predisposing, Precipitating, Presenting, Perpetual and Protective. If behaviours continue it can be useful to complete a 5Ps form for certain children to help us further understand their needs.

Staff Well-Being: – We acknowledge that working with challenging behaviours can be triggering to us. Trauma has no time line, it can present itself at any time. We take care of each other by checking in with each other; we encourage staff to be self-advocates and consider the impact of a situation on themselves – if they are not the right person at that time to deal with a situation, that is fine, we can swap in other staff to support; we have weekly feedback sessions as well as supervision to help support each other.

Physical Intervention.

We never use physical punishment or the threat of it.

Staff will use physical intervention as an act of care and control and **never** punishment.

Physical interventions will **never** be used purely to force a child to do what they have been told.

Staff will use physical interventions **ONLY as a last resort** and only then if they have **reasonable grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary to prevent a child from significantly injuring themselves or others or to prevent serious damage to property.**

Before reaching this stage, staff will have used all possible non-physical actions to deal with the behaviour, such as removing objects or other children out of harm's way, or by dialogue and diversion.

Staff should not feel they need to manage the situation alone but should call for the help of another staff member who will support and bear witness to the situation. (We have Walkie Talkies and whistles for this purpose.)

Sometimes another staff member may succeed in defusing the situation in which case physical intervention will have been avoided.

Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied, for example, by diverting a child or children by leading them away by a hand or by an arm around their shoulders.

A dialogue will be maintained with the child or children at all times, so that the member of staff can explain what they are doing and why they are doing it.

As soon as it is safe, the physical intervention should be gradually relaxed to allow the child or children to regain self-control.

The force of the physical intervention will be always appropriate to the age, size and strength of the child or children involved.

Where a member of staff has had to intervene physically to restrain a child, Claire Hughes will be notified and the incident recorded on a Start Analysis Chart . The incident will be discussed with the parent/carer at the earliest convenience, usually on the same day it occurred by telephone or face to face.

If a staff member or volunteer commits any act of violence or abuse towards a child, disciplinary action will be implemented, according to the provisions of the disciplinary procedures within the Staffing and Safeguarding Children Policies.

Staff have been trained in physical intervention training by No Fear Ltd on 1st September 2026.

Further information on this training can be provided upon request.

Refresher is due September 2027

Reasonable Force and individual needs. (from KCSiE 2026)

207. When using 'reasonable force' in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEND, mental health problems or with medical conditions, schools should, in considering the risks carefully, recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. They should also consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 (see paragraphs 92-96), for example in relation to making reasonable adjustments and their Public Sector Equality Duty.

By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children, and agreeing them with parents, schools can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use 'reasonable force'.

- Departmental advice for schools is available at 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools' [Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance](#)
- HM Government guidance Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention - GOV.UK](#) sets out how to support children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties who are at risk of restrictive intervention in special education settings; however all schools and colleges may find the information helpful.

References:

[PACE - A Therapeutic Approach - Help Children Live Better](#)

Paul Dix [When the Adults Change, Everything Changes](#)

[THE INCREDIBLE 5-POINT SCALE - HOME \(5pointscale.com\)](#)

Responding in the Moment, Notts EPS: <https://em-edsupport.org.uk/Pages/Download/958980d7-5edb-4d26-9372-e99b3d3599c4/PageSectionDocuments>

[Free and Premium Resources - Conscious Discipline](#)

https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/behaviour/EEF_Improving_behaviour_in_schools_Report.pdf?v=1724268763
[PACEforteachers.pdf \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)