

**A resource for schools to support children  
who have or may have Special Educational  
Needs**

**Chapter: Social Behaviour and Emotional  
Wellbeing**

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# Working with the Whole School Community to Understand, Nurture and Support Social Behaviour and Emotional Wellbeing

Social Behaviour and Emotional Wellbeing (SBEW) as an identified special educational need is unique in that at different points in their lives every single member of the school community will experience need in this area. It is therefore incredibly important that a whole school ethos is designed, built and maintained with a commitment to understand and support all our pupils, parents and colleagues in an atmosphere of collective care. Additional needs in this area, however severe, do not need to be long term and should not carry shame.

Strategies and interventions adopted without an ongoing whole school ethos firmly built on Trauma Informed Practice and the principles of nurture will have limited positive impact in the long term. The cornerstone to any approaches to understanding and supporting SBEW is strong positive relationships within the whole school community with a sense of belonging for all.

## RECORDING SEN AND MEDICAL CATEGORIES GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS DE 2019

Pupils with SBEW

- Will have difficulty in the development of their social, behavioural, emotional skills and well-being.
- May have immature social skills and find it difficult to initiate and sustain healthy relationships which is impacting on their learning and progress in school.

## Moving from Managing to Nurturing and Supporting

In the original SEN Resource File this chapter was called Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD). This identified special educational need has been redefined as Social Behaviour and Emotional Wellbeing and this reflects our growing understanding of the inseparable nature of visible behaviours and emotional wellbeing. There is a wealth of information available to us on how our experiences impact upon not only brain development, but our ability to regulate and manage our own behaviour.

This knowledge has led to an evolution in how we work with pupils experiencing SBEW needs. We understand that rather than use methods where adults manage and modify the visible behaviours in class, we support the young people and work with them to resolve the real need underlying the behaviour.

The good news is that while the problems are complex the solutions are more straightforward than we anticipate— this chapter is packed full of practical and doable strategies, activities and good ideas. The key is to start with one thing! Don't try every idea in

this resource straight away. Take your time and do one thing well! Change takes time, patience, team work and consistency.

## For Every Pupil

At the core of SBEW needs is often stress, anxiety, lack of self-worth/low self-esteem and fear of failure. These feelings can be caused by any number of factors including developmental delays, learning difficulties, skills deficit, fractured peer & adult relationships, domestic violence, parent experiencing mental health difficulties, alcohol/drug addictions, and parental separation.

This is an area of need important to every pupil. Some pupils in our class have experienced visible trauma, such as a parental bereavement or those listed above. Some pupils experience trauma every time they are asked to put pencil to paper. Some pupils communicate this trauma through socially unacceptable behaviours. Some pupils communicate this trauma by withdrawing and may go unnoticed.

Following nurture principles and trauma informed practice is critical to supporting the social behaviour and emotional wellbeing development of every young person in the school community regardless of their age and stage of development or the underlying factors.

“A school culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists – with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability.”

*ESAGS DE 2009*

“The importance of having a culture of high aspiration and achievement where every young person is cared for supported and encouraged to reach his full potential and where progress and achievement is acknowledged and celebrated cannot be overstated”

*ESAGS DE 2009*

“All pupils need to have the opportunity to be involved to know they are listened to and that their views are valued.”

*Circular 2014/14 Pupil Participation*

“...pupils have improved outcomes where...members of staff...are skilled in the assessment of individual needs, have insight into how the pupil learns and a range of appropriate interventions, along with the skills to provide effectively and individually tailor such interventions for the pupils.”

*Report of a survey of Educational Needs in mainstream schools, ETI 2019*

“The arrangements for the care and welfare of the pupils contribute significantly to the identification and overcoming of barriers to learning such as: health, family circumstances, social and emotional factors;”

*ISEF ETI 2017*

“Schools that matter are organized to meet developmental needs instead of focusing on test scores.”

*Steve Van Bockern*

## Trauma Informed Practice

Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland

### The 4Rs

Adapted from SAMHSA (2014) & Treisman (2018)

#### Realise

**Realise** the impact adverse childhood experiences and trauma can have. Through a reflective process we can raise our awareness that the approach we adopt in our schools can support the recovery of the young people we work with. Staff can and do have a significant impact on the emotional wellbeing of their pupils through supportive and positive relationships.

#### Recognise

**Recognise** that the young person or parent you are talking to or working with may be exhibiting signs of trauma. The behaviours we see may be due to the fact that they are experiencing stress due to current or past adverse childhood experiences. We pause before we react and we try to understand. This requires **self-awareness** and empathy.

#### Resist re-traumatisation

We are committed to not **re-traumatising** a person as far as is possible. All of our interventions **reduce tension**. While boundaries and routines are important, they are flexible, allowing for a pupil centred approach. When we recognise that a strategy is causing a person toxic stress we stop and change our action.

#### Respond

We **respond** in an informed and consistent manner at a whole school level with language, policies and procedures all reflecting the knowledge and experience we have of trauma. Our school embeds a mutually respectful, nurturing trauma sensitive response in every interaction. We recognise that all members of the school community, both pupils and adults, may have experienced adversity and bring this into work. We are committed to understanding and supporting the well-being and welfare of all members of the school community by actively fostering a sense of **everyone belonging**.

## Mitigating Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – The building blocks to resilience

Research (Bellis 2017) has shown that supporting resilience in children can help mitigate the impact of ACE's, identifying 4 essential factors for resilience:

- One or more stable and caring child-adult relationship
- Feel you can overcome hardship and guide your destiny
- Equipped to manage your behaviour and emotions
- Being involved and connected

The importance of a trauma sensitive and regulated adult in creating safe, secure adult-child relationship may well be the foundation for which children learn how to manage their relationships, emotions and overcome adversity effectively. Trauma sensitive responses from adults help create safety and calm for children helping them to regulate themselves more effectively.

For more information on ACE's click on the links below.

[Information about ACEs on the Safeguarding NI website](#)

[ACES online learning website](#)

## The 6 Principles of Nurture

Ref: Lucas, S., Insley, K. and Buckland, G. (2006) Nurture Group Principles and Curriculum Guidelines Helping Children to Achieve, The Nurture Group Network).

### 1. Pupil's learning is understood developmentally

Staff respond to pupils at their emotional/developmental level - not expected academic level. The response to the individual young person is "as they are", a non-judgemental and accepting attitude.

### 2. The classroom offers a safe base

Importance of structure and predictability. Adults are reliable and consistent in their approach—working together supportively. Adults recognise the link between emotional containment and cognitive learning. Relationships are key. We need to feel safe and to trust our environment and the people around us to progress

### **3. The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem**

Listening and responding to pupils - showing they are valued and thought about and kept in mind. Understanding the young person's internal working model of themselves, others and the world. Recognising - their view of themselves - bad, unlovable, who thinks things are their fault. Creating a safe place to make mistakes. They know their next steps, how to move forward and improve. They feel their voice is valued and worthwhile. Opportunities for consultation.

### **4. Language is a vital means of communication**

Language is more than words – a way of putting feelings into words (body language, eye contact etc.) Pupils are helped to understand and express their feelings - opportunities for extended conversations. Informal opportunities for talking and sharing. Language has to be heard, used, practiced and relevant to the situation. Develops sequentially. Modelling of nurturing relationships - respectful, consistent and positive interactions. Language used by adults is consistent with nurture, so that all are supported to feel:

- You belong here
- You are welcome here
- I like you
- You are safe here
- Your feelings are okay with me
- You can explore and learn
- You can work with me
- I will be thinking about you, and keeping you in mind
- I believe in you

### **5. All behaviour is communication**

Given what I know about this young person and their development - what is this pupil trying to tell me? If a young person senses that their feelings are understood this can help to diffuse difficult situations. Understanding what a pupil is communicating through behaviour helps us to respond in a firm but non-punitive way (not provoking or discouraging).

- We need to feel safe, to trust our environment and the people around us so we can develop new modes of behaviour
- We are aware of the relevance of pupil's non-verbal language – We are attentive and attuned to it
- We are aware of our own emotions and how this links to our communication behaviour – AND subsequently how this can impact a pupil's behaviour
- The function of negative behaviour is understood – we can explore these - high quality collaborative problem solving
- The overall approach should aim to be restorative “in essence”

## 6. The importance of transition in our pupil's lives

Staff acknowledge the feelings aroused by transitions. Understand even small changes in routine (e.g. coming to school, unstructured times, a visitor, a supply teacher,) can be overwhelming and unsettling for some young people. Experiencing good relationships (and nurture) is the best predictor for learning readiness.

## Whole School Ethos

Understanding and supporting SBEW starts from an ongoing and intentional whole school ethos built on healthy relationships and a growing resilience among the school community. This whole school focus should include a reflective approach and a commitment to inspire, support and challenge everyone to be the best they can be.

### The whole school community is committed to building and maintaining positive relationships.

Strong relationships have been identified as the cornerstone mitigating factor against ACEs by SAMHs, as a protective factor for mental health by the Education Endowment Foundation and as a building block for resilience by the Grotberg study. This is only to name a few. The importance of this area cannot be overstated.

*Reflect—Strategies built on traditional behaviourist approaches such as rewards and sanctions often lead to a mindset where positive relational experiences must be earned. This results in the pupils who have the greatest need for these experiences missing out. Reflect on your current systems in school and consider where these relational experiences can be safeguarded.*

### The pupil's voice is valued, listened to and is central to reflective practice.

All young people have something to say but not all young people have the language to express what they need to say. We can only express verbally what is emotionally manageable and for some young people behaviours are non-verbal communication which we need to learn the language of. Adults must have a commitment to understand and listen to their pupils. Pupils must feel noticed, heard and understood.

*Reflect—Traditional behaviourist approaches target the visible behaviour. This leaves the real underlying need unmet. Reflect on your current focus in school. Is the focus on the visible behaviour or understanding and responding to what the young person is communicating? Do you feel confident to focus on the underlying need?*

### The pupils are given choice and opportunities to develop in their independence—school is a safe place to make mistakes.

Accepting each young person where they are developmentally leads to a safe place to make mistakes. Our responses reduce tension and lead to new learning. Young people are given space to make plans and track their own progress rather than comparing themselves with others.

There is no toxic shame associated with making mistakes. Young people are intrinsically motivated to learn, rather than hooked on external approval.

*Reflect—Traditional behaviourist approaches lead to a mindset where mistakes are highlighted either through withholding a reward or issuing a sanction. Reflect on current responses to mistakes—do they reduce tension and encourage learning from trial and error. Do your young people confidently reflect on their own progress or do they look to adult approval and compare themselves with peers?*

## How do we do this as a whole school?

### The Take 5 Model

The simplest place to start is to embed a balance of activities and practice built around the Take 5 model developed by the Public Health Agency. Take 5 Steps to WellBeing is a set of evidence based messages aimed at improving the wellbeing of the general population modified from the Five Ways to WellBeing concept developed by the New Economics Foundation. They can be free, easily achievable and applicable to anyone's life regardless of their circumstances. The 5 steps to Well Being are Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give. They provide a simple evidence based model for designing, building and maintaining a whole school ethos which actively supports Social Behaviour and Emotional Wellbeing.

“Every school should work to create and maintain an **ethos** which contributes to the care, safety and well-being of children or young people”

*Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A guide for Schools, DE 2017, Updated 2019*

“Pupil welfare embraces all aspects of school life through the pastoral care system, preventative education curriculum, child protection, pupil behaviour, staff code of conduct, health and well-being of staff and pupils, physical safety and security.”

*ESAGS The Governors' Role A Guide for Governors DE 2019*

A positive school **ethos** does not come about by chance, nor is it always easy to create.

A climate of openness, consultation and participation, in which pupils' views are sought, listened to and respected, build the kind of sound working relationships in which behaviour is no longer an issue...

“...an **ethos** in which pupils are respected and valued as individuals and where their self-confidence and self-esteem are fostered routinely.”

*Promoting Positive Behaviour DE 2001*

“Evidence suggests that schools that are performing well invariably have a strong ethos and



a positive, caring culture, one that drives and motivates not just staff and pupils but also parents and the wider community served by the school.”

### *ESAGS DE 2009*

On the pages that follow you will find practical strategies, activities and good ideas to help nurture positive emotional health and wellbeing across your school community. Each idea comes under the headings of the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing. Involve your pupils in choosing where to start. Ask what kind of school/class do we want to have? How will we support each other to achieve this? Remember don't try everything at once— pick one or two ideas and take time to really embed them into your school life. Once it's embedded— pick something else to try!

### Connect

Look at all the opportunities for connections in your school. Consider between adults, between young people, between young people and adults. Work together to include everyone in positive relationships.

### Take Notice

Schools are busy places so it's easy to miss the small things. Take notice of the good things every day. Take notice of yourself and allow yourself time to ask for help when you need it. Be a school community who take notice of each other and offer support when it's needed.

### Keep Learning

Share the learning process with the young people and celebrate progress in areas beyond the usual academic. Nurture a love of learning and challenge in the whole school community. Take on challenges together.

### Give

Take opportunities to look out for each other and display acts of kindness. Look at the members of the school community and ensure everyone has the opportunity to contribute and belong with value. Work together to help others.

### Be Active

Exercise reduces the stress hormones and brings opportunities for shared fun. Build regular movement into the school day, whether in short bursts or longer sessions.

### Connect

*Nurture Principle 6. The importance of transition in our pupil's lives*

Staff acknowledge the feelings aroused by transitions. Understand even small changes in routine (e.g. coming to school, unstructured times, a visitor, a supply teacher,) can be overwhelming and unsettling for some young people. **Experiencing good relationships (and nurture) is the best predictor for learning readiness.**

**The 4 Rs- Realise** the impact adverse childhood experiences and trauma can have. Through a reflective process we can raise our awareness that the approach we adopt in our schools can support the recovery of the young people we work with. **Staff can and do have a significant impact on the emotional wellbeing of their pupils through supportive and positive relationships.**

### Between Pupil and Adult

- Get to know the young person – their interests, hobbies, family, pets
- Display a warm, nurturing demeanour and smile regularly
- Create a sense of belonging- show them they are a valuable member of the class & school community. Display their photographs, celebrate birthdays, provide roles of responsibility
- Welcome daily- Meet, Greet & Gauge
- Goodbye routine – no matter what each lesson or day brings, every pupil leaves on a positive
- Have some fun and laugh together, join in with games/activities
- Share some information about yourself e.g. family, pets, own childhood/school experience
- Show empathy- try to see the world from their perspective, listen to them and their point of view, show them that their inner thoughts and feelings are important to you
- Build trust- safety, consistency & predictability
- Acknowledge how your pupils feel even if the resulting behaviour is unacceptable
- Express interest rather than praise or censure to avoid sense of conditional connection (e.g. notice and commentate- *You are tidying up. That will help our caretaker. / Your pen is running out. That could be frustrating.*)
- Show curiosity when they encounter challenges e.g. ‘What do you think that was about?’
- Let your pupils know you like and value them e.g. *‘It’s lovely to see you’, I’m not giving up on you’*
- Have positive expectations for your pupils (whilst matching those expectations to their skill set at present) e.g. *‘I know you can do it, I believe in you’*
- Hold/keep them in mind
- Tell them about their strengths and positive qualities regularly. It can be helpful to write these down to remind you and the child of the positives when things get tough
- Understand that arguments will limit connection– avoid engaging in these with young people

Remember– relationships are key. But relationships are also fragile so we need to build,

maintain and repair the relationships within our school community. For young people, being included and feeling a sense of belonging with their peers is hugely important.

#### *Mitigating ACES*

- *Being involved and connected*

#### Between Pupils

- Model appropriate social skills – treat all the children the way you want to see them treated
- Actively teach social skills e.g. waiting, turn taking, listening to others
- Allow lots of opportunities to practise these skills
- Plan games/activities carefully
- Develop emotional literacy through PDMU/PSE/LLW/RE lessons
- Teach children about individual differences
- Encourage the young people to give compliments to each other. Pupils will need practise giving and receiving compliments so start with lots of adult modelling alongside activities: **Compliment Circle** (Pupil says something positive about themselves and about a peer e.g. I'm really good at/getting better at... You are good at... Thank you for... You worked really hard at....) **Treasured Words** (All pupils focus on a particular pupil and provide lots of positive feedback. Compliments can be written down for the pupil so they can refer to them at any time and share with family)
- Actively teach conflict resolution
- Circle Time Lessons
- Actively involve the young people in building a safe classroom / environment asking—what kind of class / school do we want to have? How will we support each other to achieve this?
- Notice and promote an environment where peers support each other rather than tell on each other

*“Calling students by their name, greeting them at the door, having them create their physical environment and establishing a coherent routine all reduce stress and fear. Classroom meetings are another opportunity for students to participate in building safe communities.”*

*Steve Van Bockern*

Consider all the connections in your setting. Regularly take notice of where they need protected, rebuilt or maintained. Don't forget to look after and nurture the relationships between the adults in your school community.

#### *Mitigating ACES*

- *Being involved and connected*

#### Between Adults

- Support & look out for each other

- Share a task/work collaboratively when possible
- Check in with colleagues regularly
- Listen to each other
- Regular and open communication
- Respect and accept differences
- Small acts of kindness e.g. bring a cup of tea to a colleague after a hard day. Set up a gratitude box in the staff room – one member of staff is picked randomly, other staff members fill their 'box' throughout the week with positive notes, small treats.  
Treasured Words activity for staff.
- Highlight staff successes regularly
- Set aside specific times throughout the year for staff to engage in team building activities (not curriculum/school activities)- allow staff to select preferred activities
- Show an interest in parents, talk to them about more than what their child does
- Support and help parents navigate issues arising around their child
- Take into account the parent's experience, perspective and environment
- Use the parent's first names and let them see that they are valued as a person
- Consider room chosen for meeting parents and the seating– don't sit them on a pupil chair while you tower over them on a teacher chair
- Offering a cup of tea can help alleviate stress
- It can be daunting and difficult for parents to speak about their child's difficulties. Begin discussions by highlighting the young person's strengths / successes and let meeting their needs remain central to all discussion.
- Invite parents to join activities in school
- Plan positive engagements and experiences with parents who usually keep their distance

## Take Notice

Taking notice needs to become second nature to our school community. Noticing how we are feeling, when we need help. Noticing the good things around us, noticing the things we would like to change. Noticing others- who could do with my support right now?

*“Focus on clarifying what is being observed, felt and needed rather than on diagnosing and judging.”*

*Marshall B. Rosenberg– Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*

## Take notice of yourself (the adult)

- Notice how you're feeling at the start of each day- do you need to build in some personal calm activities before starting the day
- Try to make time for yourself every day
- Talk to someone when you feel you need a break
- Model taking notice of yourself. Tell your pupils when you need to take a moment to calm down.
- Notice what calms you most and build this into your day

- Notice what triggers stress responses in you and consider what would help

### Take notice of your pupils

- Take a moment at the start of each day to check in with pupils e.g. observe facial expressions/body language etc.
- Check-in with pupils throughout the day
- Notice new haircut/coat etc.
- Acknowledge birthdays
- Notice and highlight the small achievements/progress made
- Learn the small signals that indicate tension rising in them (will vary for every pupil)
- Use WIN language:
- *“I **wonder** if you are wriggling around because assembly feels too long. I **imagine** you feel a bit bored. I **notice** that you don’t like sitting in one place for a long time.”*
- *“I **wonder** if you’re starting to lose concentration because it’s your third class in a row. I **imagine** it’s getting harder to pay attention. I **notice** you find it easier to concentrate when you’ve had a break between classes.”*

Help the pupils join the dots to make sense of life and notice what’s working for them right now. We give the pupils opportunities to watch and listen to what is going on around them, taking notice of how they feel.

### Mitigating ACES:

- *Equipped to manage your behaviour and emotions*
- *Being involved and connected*

### Take notice as a whole class

- Use of feeling/emotion self-register- using emotion scale for older pupils, visuals for younger pupils. Older pupils may be more comfortable doing this individually i.e. take note of how you’re feeling this morning, where are you on the scale throughout the day and at the end of the day?
- Think Journal– allow young people to write or draw about their experiences and feelings, positive and negative. This method can lower levels of stress and anxiety and can help them process and understand emotions.
- End of day ritual e.g. ‘something that made me smile today, something I’m proud of’
- Reflective time built into the end of days, weeks, academic terms are helpful. What do you know now? What can you do now? How do you feel now? Where are you going next?
- Curriculum topics to be mindful of – Death/loss, mother’s day/father’s day, Christmas, sex education, baby pictures, autobiography.
- Display a range of prompt statements around class/school to encourage pupils & adults to take notice of others e.g. can you give someone a helping hand today?
- Encourage pupils to take notice of each other e.g. does someone look worried/sad/lonely/stressed, is someone sitting alone?
- Build in regular opportunities throughout the day to engage in low demand time –

mindful colouring, free choice, doodling, etc. - after breaks, following concentrated/challenging pieces of work

- Mindful Minute – what sounds did you hear?
- Set up an area in the class where pupils and adults can take some time away when necessary
- Set up a weekly 'Mindfulness Club' where pupils can spend some quiet time listening to calming music, colouring,
- Learning & practising calming activities e.g. belly breathing
- Play relaxing music regularly throughout the day (in class) and throughout the school communal areas
- Notice when the tension is rising in the room and change the task
- Class calendar up for the month– mark on when a sub teacher will be in, trips, visitors, holidays, birthdays
- Base room/form class notice board, include picture of the classroom events coming up, past achievements etc.

## Keep Learning

We need to proactively teach and nurture positive skills and qualities. We accept our pupils where they are developmentally and start there. We intentionally want to develop resilient, independent learners. We must give our pupils choice and opportunities to develop their independence where school is a safe place to make mistakes.

### *Mitigating ACES*

- *Feel you can overcome hardship and diversity*
- *Equipped to manage your behaviour and emotions*

"If [schools] want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. That way, their children don't have to be slaves of praise. They will have a lifelong way to build and repair their own confidence."

*Dr Carol S. Dweck – Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential*

- Ethos based on 'having a go' - reinforcing that all learning is about taking risks, experiencing some failure and to keep going
- Encourage and support pupils to try something new e.g. join a new club
- Use Persistence Coaching e.g. 'you can do it, keep trying, look at how far you've come'. Teach and encourage pupils to also use this language for themselves (positive self-talk) and with peers
- Encourage pupils to teach classmates something e.g. Newcomer pupil could teach aspects of language or culture
- Invite parents/grandparents into school to teach new skills to pupils
- Set challenges/goals regularly

- Find out something new about a classmate
- Get pupils to vote for a new skill everyone in school could learn at the same time e.g. how to play an unusual game like Handball, Muggle Quidditch or Korfbal (see [British Heart Foundation article: 10 Weird Team Sports to Try](#)).
- Everyone in class learns a new song/dance/skill/language phrase/complete a project together
- Choose a specific ICT focus so that each year group can learn a new skill and showcase how they can use it.
- Opportunity for skills development and achievement
- Fostering expectations of high achievement and providing opportunities for success
- Schools need to promote an ethos of a 'safe space' to try, make mistakes and to fail
- Growth mind-set ethos within the school—change “I can’t” to “I can’t yet!”
- Provision of a wide range of clubs to cater for interests – cookery, choir, band, judo, dance, eco, language
- Designated News slot using the C2k Newsdesk App – promotes learning and feelings of connected to community
- Build in a time each day where pupils can choose what they do e.g. reading, get a start on homework, etc.
- Encourage pupils to set themselves a target to master a new skill each half term/term and support them to achieve their goal by scheduling time to provide support and time for them to practice, e.g. when they get work finished early or on a Friday afternoon. If pupils have similar goals encourage them to work together and help each other achieve them, this can work well across year groups.

## Give

An ethos of giving means that our first response to seeing need will be support rather than judgement. Helping, giving and sharing are associated with increased feelings of self-worth and positivity. It stimulates the reward system in the brain making the person feel good and increasing cognitive and social functioning particularly in early life. It's important that we give all our pupils the opportunity to belong with value with opportunities to contribute to the school community.

### *Mitigating ACES*

- *Being involved and connected*

## Whole School/Class Giving

- Set up mentor and/or buddy systems- within classes/playground/younger & older pupils
- Encourage and notice random acts of kindness
- Highlight kindness in others
- Give compliments
- Volunteering day – Give back to the local community by volunteering e.g. litter picking, planting flowerbeds, clearing weeds, writing cards/drawing pictures for the residents of local care homes etc.



- Nominate a charity – Ask pupils to research, make suggestions, contact by email/letter, organise and promote fundraising events.
- Hold a 'Give' themed afternoon – Encourage pupils to think about a skill they could teach another pupil in their class within 45min, e.g. teach them a skill like how to dribble a football, use a skipping rope, play chess, use a computer program, create a video clip etc.
- Participation in school and community activities (shoe box appeal, school council, ECO clubs, form class activities, etc.)
- Sharing acquired knowledge and supportive behaviour strategies with parents
- Offer each student an equal chance to participate, learn, grow and succeed.
- 'Bucket Fillers and Bucket Dippers' adopted as a whole school. Range of resources - posters, leaflets for parents, books available to support this
- 'Gratitude Tree'- displayed in entrance where anyone can thank people in school for acts of kindness
- Giving to animals – bird tables, insect shelters
- Giving to community – Invites to break, lunch, assemblies,
- School/class/year group commitment to a charity or community group. - Raising money, volunteering time
- Adult modelling manners and kindness

## Be Active

"...it is through play that children can develop and practice new behaviours, and try out new strategies or solutions to challenges and emotions. Play is therefore vital for developing resilience and helping children to deal with stress and anxiety, and contributes to good physical and mental health."

*Professor David Ball, Tim Gill and Andy Yates (Stresshealth.org, 2019)*

## Whole class brain breaks

- **5-4-3-2-1** In this simple game, pupils stand up and the leader has them do five different movements in descending order, e.g. the leader might say: "Do five jumping jacks, spin around four times, hop on one foot three times, walk all the way around the classroom two times, give your neighbor one high-five" (pausing in between each task to give the pupils time to do the activity).
- **Trading Places** Have pupils stand behind their pushed-in chairs. Call out a phrase, and everyone it applies to must change places with someone else (the rest stay where they are), e.g. "Everyone with curly hair, everyone who ate cereal for breakfast, everyone wearing stripes."
- **Six Spots** Number six spots around your room from 1-6. Have pupils each go to a spot of their choice. Choose a pupil to roll a die. All the pupils at the number rolled on the die must go back to their seats, those left go to a new spot, and the die is rolled again. Continue until only one/a few are left.
- **Dance Party!** Put on some music and dance freely!
- **Freeze Dance!** Similar to Dance Party, except that every so often the music stops, and pupils must freeze and hold the position they are in until the music begins again,



- **Keep It Up** The aim is for pupils to keep a beach ball or balloon from hitting the ground. Add more balls for more fun!
- **Simon Says...** An oldie but a goody!
- **Movement Songs** Sing a song with whole-body movements e.g. Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes or Shake Your Sillies Out- click on the link below: [The Learning Station YouTube Channel - Shake Your Sillies Out](#)
- Older pupils might enjoy a simple **Zumba routine**, click on the links below for these. [Kids Zumba choreography to Taylor Swift's "Shake It Off"](#)  
[Music Express Choreography to Justin Timberlake's "Can't Stop the Feeling"](#)
- **Animal Antics** Younger children will enjoy stretching and curling as they pretend to be various animals (or even objects such as lawn mowers or airplanes), just call out a few in sequence.
- **Go Noodle** Short and easy to drop into lessons throughout the day. Click on the link below to go to Go Noodle
- [GoNoodle website - a variety of movement videos](#)
- **Touch it quick!** Call out a colour or other trait (e.g. something round, something made of wood), pupils must find an object in the room that fits the trait and get to it quickly.
- **Co-ordination Challenges** Challenge the class to do something physically difficult, such as standing on one foot with arms extended. This can be extended with some simple resources, e.g. juggling, jump rope challenges or balloon hockey. See [Link to GMB Fitness web page on co-ordination](#) for more ideas.
- **Balance Challenge** Give each pupil a paper plate or a bean bag, challenge them to walk around the room balancing the plates on their heads. If a pupil drops his or her plate, they must freeze until a friend picks it up and places it back on their head for them (while keeping their own plate in place, of course!).

### Opportunities for active play

- Teach traditional playground games during PE
- Encourage adults to join in with games during playground sessions
- Allow pupils to teach peers selected games/activities
- Encourage pupils to reflect on how they feel after exercise/activity and the short-term and long-term benefits of regular activity- health benefits, emotional wellbeing
- Designated walk/ cycle to school week
- Lunch Time Supervisors initiate and take part in games
- Provision of School clubs to allow individual participation e.g. dance, judo or team participation e.g. football, basketball, etc.
- School policy of Weekly Wiggle, Daily Mile
- Wall push ups
- Whole class stretches
- Set class challenge of steps in a day
- Shooting hoops (basketball)
- Exercise videos
- Additional use of gym/personal training programs or sports coaches
- Structured activities at break and lunch e.g. football matches refereed by staff, whole

class gardening or art projects, etc.

Life skills can be reinforced with games. Group games and imaginative play help children to manage their own emotions, collaborate with others and solve problems. Games encourage teamwork, decision making and nurture positive relationships.

“Most importantly of course play is fun, it is a chance for children to let off steam and enjoy themselves.”

*Playboard NI*

## How do we support those who are experiencing SBEW needs?

### Beyond Whole School

At various points in life everybody experiences challenges that mean we need more support. We find it difficult to access the supports available through our whole school ethos and will need help to make sense of what is happening and empathy for the journey. Our ability to engage with Take 5 experiences fades.

This is what is happening with our pupils who need something beyond our whole school ethos firmly grounded in the nurture principles and trauma informed practice. These pupils communicate their need through a wide range of behaviour. At this point it is very easy to focus on the visible behaviour but we recognise and realise that this is simply an indicator of a real problem underneath. These pupils need understanding and support not judgement. They need us to notice what their behaviour is communicating and they need us to be on their side as they learn to overcome this challenge. We need to confidently focus our support on the unmet need underneath the behaviour and resist re-traumatisation.

### Reference to guidance:

“Whatever strategies are used...it is the quality of the relationship between the pupil and the teacher which will ultimately determine the success or failure of the strategy employed.

Every teacher needs to focus on fostering self-confidence and self-esteem: in every pupil, in every lesson, every day.”

*Promoting Positive Behaviour DE 2001*

“Ensuring that schools make inclusion an integral part of self-evaluation...will enable most children experiencing barriers to learning to get effective, well targeted support”

*ESAGS The way forward for special educational needs and inclusion DE 2009*

“Thinking of a young person as behaving badly disposes you to think of punishment. Thinking of a young person as struggling to handle something difficult encourages you to help them through their distress.”

*‘How schools can become attachment and trauma friendly– a three step plan’  
Stuart Guest 2018*

“...all children are supported effectively to overcome barriers to learning and to realise their potential;

...the pupils who have special educational needs or additional learning needs achieve standards in line with or above the appropriate learning goals set for them;

...the arrangements for the care and welfare of the pupils contribute significantly to the identification and overcoming of barriers to learning such as: health, family circumstances, social and emotional factors;”

*ISEF ETI 2017*

## Supporting the Individual

On the pages that follow you will see how the Take 5 model gives a guide to supporting the individual presenting with SBEW needs. Our strategies and good ideas are aimed at the young people, however this model is also appropriate for supporting colleagues or parents. When planning support always start with Connect and always involve the young person in the planning. Start with one good idea and do it well. Then build on that success.

### Connect

First we connect with the individual experiencing SBEW needs. We actively build trust with the young person, repair broken relationships and build new ones.

### Take Notice

As you connect, take notice of what it is like to be this young person right now and help them take notice of themselves. What are their recurring thoughts? What is their visible behaviour communicating? What are their triggers? What are their strengths?

### Keep Learning

Actively learn new skills which address the underlying unmet need. Learn from experiences, find ways to repair. Teach a growth mindset and create an environment where it's not the end of the world if we don't get things right every time.

### Give

Let the young person have opportunities to be kind to themselves and contribute to the school community. Be kind to the young person— let them experience care.

### Be Active

The young person needs to let off steam and engage in activities which release positive hormones. Build in plenty of calmers and opportunity for movement.

## Connect

The first step in supporting any individual struggling with SBEW needs is to strengthen and rebuild connections. The young person needs to feel safe and connected. Take notice of connections that have ruptured. Take notice of consequences that lead to increased isolation. Intentionally create opportunities for this pupil to connect with peers and staff. Strong connections will lead to greater understanding and the pupil will feel more able to communicate with us.

### *Mitigating ACES*

- *One or more stable and caring adult-child relationship*
- *Being involved and connected*

## Our interactions need to have **PLACE**. They need to be...

### Playful – having fun together strengthens relationships and reduces anxiety

- A relaxed, playful, happy environment is more effective than rewards, sanctions or an anger based environment.
- Soft eyes, encouraging and positive facial expressions
- Take notice of your tone and pitch of voice
- Communicate acceptance regardless of achievements

### Liking – Find something valuable about the young person that you can continue to like, even when you are clashing

- Remain calm even when they display socially unacceptable behaviour—their behaviour does not change your regard for them
- Reconnect quickly after an incident
- Find opportunities to enjoy their company

### Accepting – Show the young person it's ok to feel the way they do

- Young people can learn to remain regulated if you communicate an acceptance of the reasons for their behaviour even if you don't accept the visible behaviour— let them see that they are being heard and understood
- We are not here to change the behaviour— we want to meet an unmet need and change the means of communication

- Remember the behaviour will deteriorate if the young person is stressed
- I really like you in my class and it is not OK to hit people—let's find a better way
- I like having you in my class and it is not ok to swear, let's figure this out together

### Curious – don't assume how others are thinking or feeling

- Wonder aloud - I wonder why you threw the bottle? I am wondering is it because you can't find the pencil sharpener? Would it help if I keep a sharpener on my desk so you will always know where to find one?

### Empathetic – take notice of what the young person is going through without trying to fix it

- I know these spellings are hard for you to remember
- Your knee looks really red, I bet it hurts
- You are brave to have a go
- BIG EMPATHY—over express concern and curiosity

Dan Hughes

“What we want to achieve in our work with young people is to find and strengthen the positive and healthy elements no matter how deeply they are hidden.”

*Karl Wilker, Der Lindenhof, 1921*

### Mitigating ACES

- *One or more stable and caring adult-child relationship*
- *Being involved and connected*

### Young people tell us most when...

- They are busy doing other things
- They can trust us to 'hold' or contain what they tell us and trust we will know what to do with it
- We are not asking them to tell us anything too intense
- We ask them to engage in structured discussion routinely, not just when they are in trouble or we are worried
- Our questions are inclusive of all and not just aimed at them.
- Our language and method/approach is developmentally appropriate
- We provide a range of tools for expression; not just words but art, drama, music and play

- We are not trying to change them
- We are asking for their help to understand
- We have taught them how to communicate and enabled them to help themselves.
- They know that we believe in them
- They feel that we respect and accept them for who they are
- Reflection is a familiar and everyday part of our teaching style

## Nurture Principle 2. The classroom offers a safe base

*Importance of structure and predictability. Adults are reliable and consistent in their approach—working together supportively. Adults recognise the link between emotional containment and cognitive learning. Relationships are key. We need to feel safe and to trust our environment and the people around us to progress.*

## Nurture Principle 3. The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem

*Listening and responding to pupils - showing they are valued and thought about and kept in mind. Understanding the young person's internal working model of themselves, others and the world. Recognising - their view of themselves - bad, unlovable, who thinks things are their fault. Creating a safe place to make mistakes. They know their next steps, how to move forward and improve. They feel their voice is valued and worthwhile. Opportunities for consultation.*

### The Mistrust to Trust Scale (Dan Hughes & John Baylin, *Brain Based Parenting*)

**Stage One: Mindless mistrust** *You're mean and I'm bad!*

**Stage Two: Good confusion** *Whoa! This is weird, you are being different from the adults I've known before!*

**Stage Three: Conflict** *To trust or not to trust*

**Stage Four: Practising trust over mistrust**

**Stage Five: Resolving conflict** *I can trust you and I'm a good kid*

Take notice of where your young person is on **the mistrust to trust scale (Dan Hughes & John Baylin, Brain Based Parenting)** and respond appropriately. Traditional approaches based on adult led artificial consequences will lead to pupils being reinforced in their view at stage one on the scale. Stage 3 and stage 4 are important—this is when there appears to have been progress but the young person is involved in an incident. Realising where they are on the scale helps us as adults make sense of what has happened and not give up. It is very important to protect the connections and relationships built as you respond to this using supportive and restorative post incident learning.

The mistrust to trust scale shows clearly why our first response to a young person presenting with SBEW needs must be to strengthen and rebuild connections. Strategies focused on visible behaviours, such as reward systems, will be counterproductive in trust building.

Communicate to the young person that their value is in who they are not what they do. Communicate unconditional positive regard. Connect before you correct. The mistrust to trust scale provides a framework to help with planning intentional relationship building and a system to measure progress.

“Relationships matter: the currency for systemic change was trust, and trust comes through forming healthy working relationships. People, not programs, change people.”

*Dr Bruce Perry– The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook*

## Rebuild adult-pupil relationships

### Nurture Principle 4. Language is a vital means of communication

*Language is more than words – a way of putting feelings into words (body language, eye contact etc.). Pupils are helped to understand and express their feelings - opportunities for extended conversations. Informal opportunities for talking and sharing. Language has to be heard, used, practiced and relevant to the situation. Develops sequentially. Modelling of nurturing relationships - respectful, consistent and positive interactions. Language used by adults is consistent with nurture, so that all are supported to feel: You belong here; you are welcome here, I like you, you are safe here, your feelings are okay with me, you can explore and learn, you can work with me, I will be thinking about you and keeping you in mind.*

“One good relationship, when you have someone who’s able to make you feel that they’re interested in you, that they care about you, can actually begin to reverse a history of very bad things”

*Dr P. Fonagy*

- **2x10 Approach** - Take 2 minutes a day for 10 days to talk to the young person about anything at all. This should appear incidental and the young person should not know that this is a planned intervention. This should be adopted in a staggered pattern by key staff e.g. class teacher, supervisory staff, etc.
- **Share a job**– Ask the young person to help you with a job. Chat as you work alongside each other. Thank them for their help.
- **Have fun**– Place yourself in this pupil’s group during less structured times, showing that your interest extends beyond academic subjects.
- **Firm touch** – touch can make dysregulated students feel grounded. For primary pupils try ‘jungle fun’ – where a pupil has to guess what animal is being drawn on their back. ‘Weather report’ is similar – where the pupil has to guess the weather through touch. (*Be aware of sensory processing difficulties– pupils should only join in with this if they feel comfortable*)

- **Attune to pupil's energy, vitality and rhythm** – Pupils feel heard and understood when we match the intensity of their feelings. The idea is not to match the pupil's anger or fear, but to match the intensity with which they express those feelings while substituting wonder, acceptance and empathy. Use movement, volume and energy similar to the pupil.
- **Remember something about the pupil** and reference it in conversation—ask about their pets, how the trip to the cinema went etc.
- **Share positive stories with parents**—Don't just talk to parents about what the young person does. Talk about the day in general—e.g. "The class learned a new dance—it was so funny!" This lifts tension with the pupil and communicates that their value goes beyond what they do. Parents will as a result speak more positively about school at home.

## Rebuild peer relationships

Relationships between peers will break down during school life. Sometimes pupils repair these themselves but sometimes they need a little help. It's important to take notice of the dynamics in your room and help to repair, build and maintain the relationships and connections.

### *Mitigating ACES*

- *Feel you can overcome hardship and diversity*
- *Equipped to manage your behaviour and emotions*
- *Being involved and connected*

### When there is specific problem

It may be the same group of pupils having repeated conflict, it may be regular fights during football at lunch. When you start to see a pattern take time to guide the pupils to a solution.

Include all involved. If it is happening at lunch, include the staff present at lunch.

Use a circle time setting as this allows for some fun—allow the pupils to have a positive experience with each other. Laugh together.

Simple rules - no blame, listen to each other's point of view, take turns to speak and focus on the problem

Follow the same pattern each time with the same language:

*What is going well?*

*What is not going well?*

*Would it help if I...?*

*Would it help if you...?*

*Would it help if we...?*



Have a go at the ideas suggested and review.

It's important to allow the pupils to come up with the solution.

### When the young person is avoided

Your class take their lead from the adults. When you treat this young person in a way that shows you like them and aren't afraid, your class will feel more relaxed around them and follow suit.

Create opportunities for positive experiences together

- Circle time
- Group games
- Peers work with young person on a job around the school

Understanding and supporting a person presenting with SBEW needs requires a combination of connecting and taking notice. The process of building relationships and discovering the unmet needs underlying visible behaviours is therapeutic in and of itself and will help all involved.

This will then lead on to supportive responses which target the unmet needs. The person experiencing these needs is central to the whole process and part of finding solutions.

The intervention and support is worked through with the individual. They feel, perhaps for the first time, that they have the power to overcome hardship and guide their destiny.

## Nurture Principle 5. All behaviour is communication

Given what I know about this young person and their development - what is this pupil trying to tell me? If a young person senses that their feelings are understood this can help to diffuse difficult situations. Understanding what a pupil is communicating through behaviour helps us to respond in a firm but non-punitive way (not provoking or discouraging).

- We need to feel safe, to trust our environment and the people around us so we can develop new modes of behaviour.
- We are aware of the relevance of pupil's non-verbal language – We are attentive and attuned to it
- We are aware of our own emotions and how this links to our communication behaviour – AND subsequently how this can impact a pupil's behaviour.
- The function of negative behaviour is understood – we can explore these - high quality collaborative problem solving.
- The overall approach should aim to be restorative “in essence”

**The 4Rs Recognise** that the young person or parent you are talking to or working with may be exhibiting signs of trauma.

The behaviours we see may be due to the fact that they are experiencing stress due to current or past adverse childhood experiences. We pause before we react and we try to understand. This requires **self-awareness** and empathy.

The examples that follow show individual cases worked through this process. Listen to the young person's both verbal and non-verbal communication and see how it leads to a support plan built around promoting positive skills and qualities, raising self-awareness, rebuilding a sense of belonging and reducing tension.

## Take Notice

### Case study 1

Take notice of both the verbal and non-verbal communication. What is the young person telling me? Remember to look for positive motives. In the real life example below the young person only shared one thing verbally. But when we take notice with a commitment to understand we realise he has told us a lot. The green sections are the visible behaviours, the blue sections are the young person's voice.

Pupil tells us "I think it is hard being the oldest." He feels like he has to fight to hold his place.

Green section – visible behaviour	Blue section – young person's voice
I hate to lose a game.	I am afraid of not being the best.
I start to argue if I haven't got time to finish something.	I like something to be completed.
I fight / flight if told to do something.	I like to be given a choice or asked nicely.
I get anxious when I talk about friends.	I need help to make friends. I am lonely and sad.

Taking notice and recognising what the young person's behaviour is communicating leads us to an understanding of the areas we need to support.

We need to support him to connect with his peer group. We need to support him to keep learning by developing a growth mindset. We know that right now he needs to feel that he has a lot of control over his life so we will use choice when asking him to do something. We will support him to belong with value by giving him opportunities to help others in school. We will use restorative questions and commentary to support him to take notice and make sense of his life right now.

## Take Notice Case study 2

Take notice of both the verbal and non-verbal communication. What is the young person telling me? Remember to look for positive motives. In the real life example below the young person shared three things verbally. But when we take notice with a commitment to understand we realise she has told us a lot. The green sections are the visible behaviours, the blue sections are the young person's voice.

Pupil tells us:

"The class all talk behind my back."

"I don't like reading the words because I might get it wrong."

"In foster care I feel like my life is shorter because my family is dying quicker."

Green section – visible behaviour	Blue section – young person's voice
Sometimes even if I like the adult I will say rude and mean things.	I want you to stick with me- don't give up!
I argue and fight at break and lunch.	I feel alone. No-one has my back.
I won't try something new.	I'm afraid of failing. My work isn't as good as other people's.

We need to show her that we are on her side. We need to help her feel safe through connections with her peers. She worries about what people are saying about her so we will notice and commentate on the positive things that happen to her throughout the day. We will gently change the negative inner voice through our positive commentary. The adults at break and lunch will take notice and build connections with her so that she feels safe outside. She compares herself to other people so we will encourage a growth mindset. We will draw attention to her strengths and we will give her opportunities to share or teach a skill to her peers. We won't ask her to read aloud in a group until she has more confidence. She needs a strong attachment with an emotionally available adult so we will arrange time for her to have tea and toast with an adult in school.

## Take Notice Case study 3

Take notice of both the verbal and non-verbal communication. What is the young person telling me? Remember to look for positive motives. In the real life example below the young person only shared one thing verbally. But when we take notice with a commitment to understand we realise he has told us a lot. The green sections are the visible behaviours, the blue sections are the young person's voice.

Pupil tells us:

"I talk a lot about my dad and how he died."

Green section – visible behaviour	Blue section – young person's voice
Sometimes I become non-compliant and I have sworn at the teacher.	Please don't confront me. I need time and space to be on my own.
Friendships are tricky. Children and parents complain that I say inappropriate things.	I want to be noticed. I want to understand all that has happened in my life, I want a friend to hold onto.
I refuse to do my work at times.	I find it hard to concentrate.

He needs us to notice that he is going through a very difficult experience. He needs us to give him opportunities to talk about his dad. He needs time with low demands where he can be on his own. We will arrange space and time for him to work at a Lego station during the day. We will use language that shows interest and takes notice rather than criticise e.g. *"I notice you are on question 2. That's a tricky one so let me know if I can help."* We need to help him develop his concentration. We will build in movement breaks and active learning to his day. Giving him jobs to do will meet his needs for a break, feeling noticed and time on his own. We will set up opportunities for him to connect with his peers. Staff at break and lunch will organise structured activities and model appropriate interaction.

## Take Notice Case study 4

Take notice of both the verbal and non-verbal communication. What is the young person telling me? Remember to look for positive motives. In the real life example below the young person shared three things verbally. But when we take notice with a commitment to understand we realise she has told us a lot. The green sections are the visible behaviours, the blue sections are the young person's voice.

Pupil tells us:

"I'm worried in case adults shout at me because I'm bad."

"I don't know anyone who likes me."

"I'm stupid."

Green section – visible behaviour	Blue section – young person's voice
In the middle of lessons I slide off my chair and lie under the desk or on the floor.	There's not enough of me left to keep going - it's too much. I'm overwhelmed!
I am with the other children outside but I stay near the side of the group. I don't say much.	I don't really know what's going on. I wish the others would notice me.
I am really happy when I'm drawing and colouring. I smile.	I know I can do this! I'm not scared because I can do this well.

She needs to know and feel that someone in school likes her. We will make sure an adult meets and greets her every morning. We will give her jobs to do alongside adults and peers.

We will sit with her and chat to connect with her when she is drawing/colouring/doodling. We will ask her to share drawing tips with her peers.

The adults outside will talk to her and facilitate increased interaction with her peers.

In class we will break down her tasks into smaller chunks and we will incorporate her strengths by including drawing and colouring in her numeracy and literacy. We will nurture a growth mindset in the class so that she can feel safe to make mistakes. She worries a lot about what adults think so we will use feedback that notices and affirms, directing her to self-reflection. We will avoid judgement language or tone.

## Take Notice

**4Rs- Recognise** that the young person or parent you are talking to or working with may be exhibiting signs of trauma. The behaviours we see may be due to the fact that they are experiencing stress due to current or past adverse childhood experiences. We pause before we react and we try to understand. This requires **self-awareness** and empathy.

“High stress affects the part of the brain responsible for judgement, memory, reasoning and problem solving.”

*Nadine Burke Harris*

## What is a trigger?

A trigger is a word, sound, person, smell or situation that activates the alarm system in the brain. It is a perceived threat. It is not possible for this to happen without a trigger. It is possible for those of us around the child to not know what that trigger is. Take notice when this happens. Is there a pattern? Where, who, what, when? Remember it could be as subtle as a smell that triggers a traumatic memory.

When the alarm system is triggered the survival state kicks in and the young person is only concerned with safety. They can't access higher order thinking at this point.

This does not always translate into an explosive incident. Pupils who are at stage one on the mistrust to trust scale are operating in the survival state throughout the day, even though it may not be immediately obvious. These young people appear to have explosive responses out of nowhere. In reality they have been in a state of dysregulation for a length of time before it was evident.

### Nurture Principle 1. Pupil's learning is understood developmentally

*Staff respond to pupils at their emotional/developmental level - not expected academic level. **The response to the individual young person is “as they are”, a non-judgemental and accepting attitude.***

**4Rs** - We are committed to not **re-traumatising** a person as far as is possible. All of our interventions **reduce tension**. While boundaries and routines are important, they are

flexible, allowing for a pupil centred approach. **When we recognise that a strategy is causing a person toxic stress we stop and change our action.**

## The Three Rs - Dr. Bruce Perry

What do we do when the young person's brain is responding in a way that has triggered the alarm state?

Regulate	Relate	Reason
First the young person needs to feel safe so focus on reducing tension and reassuring them. Say very little and give them space and time.	Next the young person needs to feel loved so focus on connecting with them, take an interest in them. Share a happy memory.	Now the young person is able to talk about what happened. Talk about alternative ways to manage these emotions when they come.
<b>Do</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce your language and the number of people nearby</li> <li>• Give space and keep safe</li> <li>• Be patient</li> </ul>	<b>Do</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let them know you are ok with them</li> <li>• Take an interest in them</li> <li>• Wonder aloud, be curious</li> </ul>	<b>Do</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide the young person through post incident learning</li> <li>• Work with the young person to find a solution</li> <li>• Use a third person e.g. celebrity, character in story, puppet etc. to link actions with consequences</li> </ul>
<b>Don't</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about behaviour</li> <li>• Overload with language or people</li> <li>• Make demands, ultimatums or threats</li> </ul>	<b>Don't</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about what just happened</li> <li>• Make demands</li> <li>• Sound annoyed</li> </ul>	<b>Don't</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insist on an apology</li> <li>• Disregard the young person's feelings</li> </ul>

Until the young person is regulated they won't be able to relate and until they relate and are connected to you they won't be able to reason with you and talk about what happened. When you see a young person begin to struggle, **take notice and recognise which R they need right now**. Be patient, it can take a while before the young person is ready to talk about what happened. Sometimes it's even the next day. It's important to respond to the young person where they are at. This allows for genuine processing and learning from the incident and a reduction in the likelihood of longer term repetition. It also **reduces the risk of**

retraumatisation. Take notice of where the pupil is at. What support are they ready for right now?

## Helping the individual take notice of themselves and make sense of their world - approach

“Children are compelled to give meaning to what is happening to them. When there is no clear explanation, they make one up; the intersection of trauma and the developmentally appropriate egocentrism of childhood often leads a little kid to think, I made it happen.”

*Nadine Burke Harris— The Deepest Well*

- **Following the leader** – The key adult introduces the idea of taking the pencil for a walk around a piece of paper, creating intricate designs. The pupil does this with the key adult following with their own pencil on the page at a parallel distance, in tune with the pupil, commenting throughout. Roles are then reversed with the pupil following. Depending on child’s interest this can be adapted for a dance sequence, sport or music (using instrument or singing).
- **Safety around the school**—Hyper-vigilance and hyper sensitivity are common responses to relational trauma. Pupils are wired to expect danger and are constantly on the alert. They need time to scan the environment of each new context they arrive in. The fewer staff the pupil has contact with the better. Take the pupil on a safety tour, noting anything which is designed to maintain safety for all pupils e.g.  
**Physical**—CCTV, visitors book, identity badges, fire extinguishers, first aid box, enough food in the dining room and access to water; **Psychological**—rules and expectations, predictable routines, professional staff, supervision of students, anti-bullying policy, school counselling and peer mentoring, information sharing, secure base.
- **Parts language**—Pupils may have low self-esteem and toxic shame. Communicate that they are the sum of many parts. Parts that we’re proud of and parts we’d like to change.
- **Parts picture**- (completed 1:1 over a number of weeks)
- **Primary**— roll out paper and draw around the shape of pupil, painting on skin tone, hair and clothes. Use post it notes to describe the parts, spreading these all over the body.
- **Post Primary**— draw a jigsaw design on a large sheet of paper and describe the parts in each piece.
- **For all ages**— to identify parts start with the positives, strengths and ‘likes’. When moving onto parts the student would like to change, start with yourself and give examples. Use arrows to indicate which parts they want to increase or decrease e.g. patient, smiley, funny, playful or snatching, unkind, selfish, sad, stealing parts.

- **Reducing stress** – With a lack of empathetic connection in early life, the capacity for appropriate and healthy self-soothing and self-control are rarely evident. Pupils need to be taught how to become self-aware and provided with a range of tools to self-soothe. The starting point must be self-awareness. It is essential that we provide opportunities in schools for pupils to get to know themselves better. Pupils can be given tools to self-soothe.
- **Reflective dialogue** – *Making observations*: observe pupils in a non-intrusive way. Commenting: I notice you are rocking in your chair. *Wondering aloud*: Attempt to make connection by articulating why the behaviour is happening, what it is revealing.

## Helping the individual take notice of themselves and make sense of their world - resources

Helping a young person make sense of their world is an important step as it allows them to process what has happened or is happening to them. It's helping the young person to join the dots and have their experiences noticed and valued. Have a third thing in the room when you do this, e.g. Lego, sand, notebook for doodles, etc.

- **Fidget toys** – providing the pupil with something to fiddle with brings both the need and support tool into their awareness e.g. stress balls, tangle, blu-tack
- **Weighted blankets** – provide sensory feedback through deep pressure to pupils with sensory issues, making them feel safe, relaxed and calm.
- **Sensory activities** - clapping games, mindfulness/grounding activities such as 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can touch
- **Teach Belly breathing** – Deep, slow regulating breaths focus attention on the present and slows down rapid breathing which is linked to 'fight or flight'. Get the child to put their hand or small soft toy on their belly and breathe right down so the belly expands and the soft toy lifts up. Breathe in for the count of 3, then hold for 1 and then breathe out for 4 counts. Repeat until they feel calmer.
- **Use characters** in stories or celebrities to explore issues in life– less intense than talking about the child
- **Small world play**—replay school or home during play, allowing the play to be led by the pupil
- **Diary**—pupil keeps a diary noting down visitors, events in school, when PE is, holidays, birthday, whose house they are staying at and when

## Supporting individuals to process an incident and make sense of what happened

- **Review positive and negative incidents** – making sense of what happened involves joining the dots to see what didn't work. It's important to also spend time when things go well to join the dots and see what worked.
- **Use a consistent structure**—This allows the pupil to feel safe, know what to expect and most importantly to internalise the thought processes.
- **Include everyone involved- Processing** is important for all involved in an incident, not just the person who displayed unacceptable behaviour.



- **Focus on repair**– Allow the young person to think of ways to repair and restore following the incident. Always make sure they can see a way out of the problem.

A useful structure for post incident learning follows.

## Keep Learning

“Too often we forget that discipline really means to teach, not to punish. A disciple is a student, not a recipient of behavioural consequences.”

*Dan Siegel– The Whole Brain Child*

### Mitigating ACES

- *Feel you can overcome hardship and diversity*
- *Equipped to manage your behaviour and emotions*

Traditional approaches based on artificial consequences, such as rewards or sanctions, rarely lead to a long term reduction in unacceptable behaviour as they are adult led and concerned with visible behaviours rather than underlying unmet needs. The important learning is missed.

The most effective consequences are natural and real life as the pupil has genuine control over these and they have a meaningful impact. With artificial consequences control lies with the adult in authority. Post incident learning should focus on supporting all involved to make sense of what happened before, during and after an incident so that they can process, repair, learn and move on. This process shows the young people that they can overcome hardship and diversity and equips them to manage their own behaviour and

Open Restorative Questions	Possible Prompts
What happened?	Who..? Where..? When..? (avoid why questions)
What did you think? How did you feel about...? I wonder what [name others involved] felt about that?	Discuss emotional impact Join the dots—you thought...so you felt... Empathise (We aren't trying to fix things here)
What did you do then?	Join the dots and help the pupil make connections between the actions and the natural real life consequences  Did that help? Did the problem get smaller or bigger?

Open Restorative Questions	Possible Prompts
What could you try next time this happens?	Suggestions of positive actions (but only if needed, ideally let the young people come up with these)  Would it have helped if...
What do you think would help to fix this?	Again, let the young people come up with these if they can.  I wonder if it would help if...

Throughout this process give the young people permission to speak by using non-verbal cues such as: supportive tone, nods, smiles, echoing the last word, mmms of agreement, lean slightly forward, relaxed eye contact, silence, paraphrase/summarise, affirm, empathise.

When this process is a familiar and consistent part of school life it takes less time to work through. Our young people internalise the process and begin to work through it with a growing independence. Eventually the young person automatically works through it before they respond to triggers.

“Children supported **acquire skills and concepts which they can apply across a range of contexts**”

“Teachers use an appropriate range of learning and teaching strategies which motivates children, engages them in their work (both collaboratively and independently) **uses errors as learning opportunities and encourages creativity and risk taking**”

*ISEF 2017*

#### *Mitigating ACES*

- *Feel you can overcome hardship and diversity*
- *Equipped to manage your behaviour and emotions*
- **Paired reading** – pupils are practicing dependency while developing essential reading skills through an evidence-based approach. Key adult and pupil read along simultaneously, with pupil indicating through agreed signals when it's time to try independently. The adult joins in when there is a slip, minimising stress and promoting comprehension and fluency.
- **A coping skills wheel:** to give children a visual of the different coping strategies for coping with different situations.
- **Regular review**– Pupil reviews and learns using three key questions: *What's going well? What's not going well? What would help? (can be applied to individual/group/class/school and any setting)*

- **A focus plan**– pupil identifies three strategies to help them stay focused and calm in the classroom
- **A playground plan/Unstructured time plan**– pupil identifies three strategies to help them manage in the playground / during breaks
- **Role-play** – key adult taking the role of the pupil and offering different scripts. Encourage the pupil to try the script out in the next stressful situation.
- **Setting small achievable challenges and goals**– We may want the young person to get there quicker but just as in any new learning it has to be one step at a time. Remember to celebrate the small wins every day!
- **Introduction at an individual level of new routines/games/skills- allows** the young person space without comparing themselves to others. Identify areas where challenges present and target e.g. take a small group into the quiet playground and teach how to play together– this will scaffold relationships to help them engage positively in a safe space.
- **Use a third thing**– explore issues, actions, emotions through a third party rather than focusing directly on the young person. Characters in stories, films, celebrities and stories from our own lives give the young person a safe place to explore.

A fear of failure and academic anxiety is a common underlying need and presents itself in a wide range of visible behaviours. A growth mindset approach is particularly effective as it removes the pressure of external approval and empowers the young person to reflect on and track their own progress. It gives them the resilience to be able to handle constructive challenge.

### *Mitigating ACES*

- *Feel you can overcome hardship and diversity*
- *Equipped to manage your behaviour and emotions*

“I want her to share her pleasure with me, not look to me for a verdict. I want her to exclaim, “I did it!” (Which she often does) instead of asking me uncertainly, “was that good?”

*Alfie Kohn*

- **Experience fun making mess and mistakes**– recreate messy and abstract artists like Jackson Pollock, Kandinsky, etc.
- **Learn a skill and document the progress**– identify a skill (e.g. tying laces, tying a tie, an IT skill, etc.) and break it down into achievable steps. Young person photographs each step as it's achieved with a date. Reflect on the journey as it goes.
- **Adopt growth mindset scripts**–  
Mistakes are ok  
Never mind  
I'll keep going  
It's perfect-ish!  
Just make a mark and see where it takes you!

I can see you are struggling– great! That means you are learning something new!  
I'll have a go first  
I can't do this...yet!

- **Focus on a decade**– Ask the young person to make a list of all the things they can do now that they couldn't do ten years ago. This encourages them to compare themselves with themselves, rather than with their peers. For children under 10 focus on the fact that they are still in the magic decade– the progress made between birth and 10 is unmatched later in life!
- **Look for the beautiful oops**– Highlight the opportunities that come from mistakes. The young person is encouraged to be creative with mistakes.
- **Use bravery language**– Connect challenge and having a go with the idea of being brave. Use this language when you are noticing and taking an interest in their work.
- **Encourage curiosity**– Use a lot of what if questions!
- **Take notice rather than praise**– Give the young person head space to reflect on their own work without seeking out or worrying about your judgement. Notice the positives without going overboard on praise.  
“That is an interesting twist at the end of the story, I didn't see that coming! “  
“I'm noticing that you are getting the ball in the basket more often than you were a week ago.”

## Give

Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you. Highlight the real life impact on the people your young people help. Give them opportunities to contribute to school life. Be kind to the young person– this will lift your mood and strengthen your connection.

### *Mitigating ACES*

- *Being involved and connected*
- *Feel you can overcome hardship and guide your destiny*

## From the pupil

- Give yourself a compliment
- Value strengths and positives
- Notice and highlight small achievements/progress
- Draw a picture/write a card/plan a treat for your Principal/Classroom Asst./Teacher to let them know they are appreciated.
- Nominate a 'secret buddy' for each pupil to do nice things for on a daily basis.
- Give the pupil specific real jobs that contribute to school life, e.g. emptying the bins with the caretaker, sweeping up, shredding paper, etc.

## From the adult

- **Random acts of kindness** – The key adult going the extra mile and engineering opportunities to express kindness.
- **Show recognition and appreciation of the young person**—share news with the adult in their life, send a card home stating what they have accomplished, create moments of joy for the young person.
- **Meet and greet** – Pleasure in seeing the child should be expressed. Be mindful of proximity, eye contact, facial expressions, posture, tone and pace of voice. Once a relationship has been built up, a brief touch to connect with the pupil can be helpful. Concentrate on giving pupil full attention, sit alongside the pupil (preferably with back against wall). Invite child to talk about last night, journey to school. Give eye contact and summarise back what is shared, including what is inferred. Objects from home have important value. Prepare the pupil for day ahead by looking at visual planner/diary. Use sequencing connectives such as *before*, *after*, *next*. Encourage self-reflection by asking the pupil to ‘scale’ the effort levels they anticipate. If there is any change to the routine, map this out carefully. Social stories can be used for this. If there is a breakfast club, ensure it is served in a small, quiet and calm setting. Ending the meet and greet, remind the pupil they will continue to be ‘kept in mind’ and when you will meet next.
- **Thinking doodles** – the pupil is permitted to draw/scribble/graffiti while listening and the key worker can do the same. Allowing the pupil to engage in tasks frees up another part of the brain to listen well.
- **Choices** – pupils can feel ‘cornered’ by a rigid approach which can exacerbate their stress. Flexibility is imperative. Offering positive choices, meets the pupils legitimate need to retain a degree of control whilst reinforcing the teacher’s authority.
- **Puppets** - Use of puppets to model and practice empathy, kindness in a safe and controlled environment where kindness is not always reciprocated by peers

## Be Active

Our pupils need to move! Be creative and find ways to incorporate movement into your teaching and learning— invent games with your pupils, take lessons outside. Take notice of when your pupils need a break or something different. Let them choose whether to stand, sit or work on the floor.

“One of the most helpful ways to move children from these super-high anxiety states, to their calmer ‘thinking brain’, is patterned, repetitive rhythmic activity”

*Beacon House*

“Daily physical activity can help counteract some of the key impacts of ACEs. For kids, regular workouts can reduce stress hormones, improve behaviour and concentration in school and strengthen the immune system”

*CenterForYouthWellness.org*

## Safe outlets for stress

Notice which part of the body is expressing the dysregulated state and think up an alternative for that same part of the body. For example- Kicking, replaced with short sprints. Spitting, instead blow some bubbles. Fidgety, pound some playdough

## Brain Stem Calmer Activities

- Walking—Asked to do regular jobs to allow breaks between tasks; show visitors where things are in the school; give the young person information while walking
- Running— Movement breaks during a lesson e.g. running around the hall
- Drumming— A playful activity between tasks (adult and pupil use call and response to mirror drumming patterns on desk or knees)
- Tapping— Self tapping on knees while thinking of good or positive things; self-tapping while breathing; self-tapping while engaging in something fun.
- Singing— Singing while working on something; have music playing in the background while working
- Breathing— Blowing things as a focused activity (e.g. bubbles)
- Movement— Tension stretches at the end of the day; chair aerobics [NHSGGC examples of tension exercises](#)
- Music— Using headphones to listen to music privately

## Active Learning Opportunities

- **Jump Skip Counting** Have pupils count by twos, fives, tens etc. while jumping or skipping with each count. You could also practice spelling words this way.
- **Dance and move** to the times tables songs.
- Play **active mental maths games**, e.g. ‘Puddle jump!’ [Nurture Store website - Puddle Jump Active Math Game](#)

## Looking after each other

“The best thing about being a teacher is that it matters. The hardest thing about being a teacher is that it matters every day.”

*Todd Whitaker*

Children who have experienced trauma, abuse, violence or neglect need to be surrounded by adults who care about maintaining positive relationships – sustaining these positive relationships can be draining, especially when difficult things arise within our own lives. The importance of promoting collective care cannot be over-emphasised.

*Louise Bomber in ‘What about me?’ (2011)* details the importance of care for staff;

“...these [collective care] strategies need to be integral to any intervention that goes on [to support the child], and not an additional extra! Looking after ourselves and each other in this way has a powerful impact not only on us but on the pupils we are walking alongside.”  
(p250)

Take a sheet of paper and using the Take 5 model, note down how you take care of your wellbeing, then think about any gaps, how could they be filled? Think about including activities that will promote the release of feel-good hormones and neurotransmitters as detailed on the next pages, these will increase your sense of wellbeing and in turn will boost your motivation to keep looking after yourself.

### How can I Take Notice?

- Carve out time for rest and relaxation; do I do this regularly or is this something that I need to schedule for myself?
- Build small, relaxing rituals into your daily routine e.g. a relaxing Thursday night soak in the bath, taking a few moments to focus on your breathing after a shower etc.
- Do I find ways to accept and express my feelings and emotions? E.g. it could be taking time over your Sunday morning coffee to write in your journal or taking a moment to pause and reflect on what each of your senses notice as you go about your day.

### How can I Be Active?

Exercise releases endorphins and serotonin which help us feel good and prevent/relieve depression. Serotonin is connected to sleep, digestion and appetite.

- What type of exercise do I enjoy? Walking the dog, swimming?
- How can I build gentle exercise into my weekly routine?

### How can I Connect?

- With family/close friends? Think about the ways that you enjoy connecting with family and close friends, e.g. Saturday morning catch-ups over coffee, a round of golf, a regular telephone/video call.
- With the wider community around me? Think about your interests and what is important to you, e.g. local community organisations, wildlife/animal rescue charities, church groups.

It is important to build these wider connections when things are going well. Maintaining them becomes important during more difficult times when they will provide a wider support network or a welcome distraction. Production of the hormone oxytocin is stimulated by close relationships and touch (this could be a hug from a friend or stroking your dog after a long day). Oxytocin is an anti-inflammatory and works by reducing anxiety and promoting feelings of calm. Think about how you can protect the important connections you have made with others, especially when you feel pressure from the other demands on your time.

## How can I Keep Learning?

Allowing your mind time to focus on a challenge or on learning something new can be such an important way to give your mind a rest from your own thoughts. Dopamine is the neurotransmitter that flows when we feel that we have achieved something worthwhile.

- Consider, what would I like to try? It could be signing up for an online course on woodworking, learning how to play an instrument or borrowing a book from the library about how to cook Thai food, upcycle furniture, sew, etc.

## How can I Give?

*'No-one has ever become poor by giving'*

*Anne Frank.*

When we help others our brains release oxytocin, serotonin and dopamine. These hormones have the effect of boosting our mood and help to counteract the effects of cortisol, the 'stress hormone'. The great thing about giving is that the 'giver' gets a boost of the feel-good hormones as well as the 'receiver'!

- Do something kind for a family member/friend/colleague, e.g. make them a cuppa, bake them a cake, leave a note, give a compliment, leave a book you have enjoyed in the staff room
- Think about simple gestures such as a smile, holding the door, saying hello
- Join a community group
- Volunteer for a charitable organisation
- Take part in a sponsored event
- Make a donation of items to a charity shop
- Teach someone a skill
- Put together a care package for someone who is ill/having a hard time

## This is about collective care– schools need to think about how to take care of each other as a staff team:

- Have a clear, shared ethos, this will mean that everyone is pulling together in the same direction
- Encourage and develop a sense of community among staff, consciously greet one-another, ensure everyone is welcomed and included
- Offer regular training; there is always more to learn! Look for training that will inspire and motivate staff
- Provide up-to-date resources/if staff have had recent training allow some protected time to develop their own
- Encourage sharing of resources, skills and knowledge; notice the strengths and skills of each staff member, let them share these and develop them further
- Promote equality amongst staff – ensure all staff feel respected and honoured regardless of status or responsibilities



- Protect breaks for staff and encourage them to go home at a reasonable time each day without taking work to do at home
- Facilitate team-building opportunities; it is vital that staff don't feel isolated
- Encourage appropriate humour, laughter really is good for us all!
- Offer peer support and mentoring; linking in with other schools can be a good way to promote this
- Consider having a 'Team Around the Child' (Louise Bomber, 2011) to facilitate reflective discussions, plan and review support, this can be a powerful way to support staff
- Think about how staff are given opportunities to give feedback to senior leadership, e.g. regular face to face meeting, questionnaires etc. Do staff have a way to communicate issues in a no-blame, solution focussed way?
- Ensure that private spaces such as the staff-room and staff toilets are pleasant and restful places, consider hand lotions, pictures and pleasant smells!
- Encourage staff to 'have each other's backs' by e.g. allowing them to cover each other for 5min. to have a walk/cuppa if they need to
- Ensure balanced workloads and access to additional support is provided
- Provide regular encouragement to staff, everyone needs positive feedback, words/cards/small gifts are appreciated as token of thanks, showing that each member of staff is noticed and built up
- Celebrate success! Think about how staff efforts and achievements are recognised and celebrated by the staff team
- Think about the end of each day, do staff have some time and space to reflect on their day and prepare for the next?
- Think carefully about how staff well-being days can be used to give staff what they need at that particular time whether that is to bond and have fun as a team or to have an opportunity to try out some new self-care ideas
- Ensure that staff are regularly signposted to the external supports available to them e.g. Inspire

"Safe, stable and nurturing relationships are healing for kids and for all of us"

*Nadine Burke Harris*

## Where are we now?

The approach outlined in this chapter is firmly grounded in nurture principles and trauma informed practice. It is a proactive rather than reactive ethos and uses restorative practice.

Restorative Practices provide schools with a framework which:

- Builds, nurtures and sustains positive relationships
- Promotes inclusion and values diversity
- Enables issues to be identified and solutions agreed in a supportive non-confrontational manner

- Affords opportunities for restoration and reparation

Implementing restorative practices in schools requires a shift from:

*Punishment–orientated to restorative thinking.*

Making this shift can prove challenging for pupils, staff, parents, carers and Governors as it involves learning different ways of responding to challenging behaviours and situations.

Restorative practice encompasses a suite of principles and skills which inform and guide the way the members of the school community interact with one another.

Embedding restorative principles creates an environment in which members of the school community:

- Value and support each other
- Develop and maintain respectful relationships
- Recognise behaviour as communication
- Are solution focused
- Feel they are seen, heard and respected
- Know how to restore and repair damaged relationships
- Understand how feelings and thoughts drive behaviour
- Learn from experience

Outcomes include:

- A happy, welcoming and safe school environment
- High morale and positive attitudes
- Collaborative partnerships
- Positive whole-school and community relationships
- Enriched teaching and learning
- Barriers to learning reduced
- Improved behaviour
- Enhanced support
- Achievement is acknowledged and celebrated
- Confident, achieving pupils

Establishing and maintaining a strong restorative ethos is a key factor in promoting and sustaining the emotional health and wellbeing of a school community.

*How restorative is your school's ethos?*

## **Reflect: HOW RESTORATIVE IS OUR ETHOS?**

Discuss, evaluate and agree the extent to which restorative principles and practice are:

- Consistently reflected in current school policies such as Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying
- Understood, valued and modelled consistently by all members of the school community—staff (teaching and non-teaching), pupils, parents, guardians and Governors

What stage of restorative development is your school ethos currently maintaining? How do you know? Where is the evidence?

## Take Action

On the basis of your evaluation outcomes, what actions are required now to ensure the school ethos is actively restorative and effectively:

- Promoting the health and wellbeing of the whole school community
- Supporting and sustaining the well-being of all its members

*Reference- Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools, Education Endowment Foundation:*

*“The self-audit review...aims to prompt a ‘dialogic’ approach to development, providing starting points for useful conversations. The conversations will shape your view on where your school is on the path to providing all your children with the social and emotional skills that underpin personal and academic development – from early stages to developed practice.”*

The tool represents a different way of thinking about an audit. We know that schools are under intense scrutiny, so this is not another ‘tick box’ process. The aim is to get you talking about your practice in ways that genuinely support you to understand what you are doing that is working, as well as promoting some new thinking and ideas.

This tool is for: non-teaching, teaching staff, leaders and governors.

## Policies and Planning

**How do we plan in a way that reflects the knowledge and experience we have of trauma?**

**4Rs-** We **respond** in an informed and consistent manner at a whole school level with language, policies and procedures **all reflecting the knowledge and experience we have of trauma**. Our school embeds a mutually respectful, nurturing trauma sensitive response in every interaction. We recognise that all members of the school community, both pupils and adults, may have experienced adversity and bring this into work. We are committed to

understanding and supporting the well-being and welfare of all members of the school community by actively fostering a sense of **everyone belonging**.

Planning to understand, nurture and support SBEW both as a whole school and with individuals is different from planning to reduce visible unacceptable behaviours. A lot of what you plan will become embedded and second nature in your community. Outcomes will be linked with mood, relationships, resilience and the development of positive qualities and skills.

Social Behaviour and Emotional Wellbeing is not something that can be put through a standardised test to establish clean baselines which will then be neatly tracked. Pupils will progress at their own pace and it is rarely smooth!

Consider a time when a family member, friend or colleague was going through a difficult experience. Your first thoughts were probably:

*What happened?*

*What does this person need?*

*How can I help?*

You then respond to their needs and maintain a connection so that you will know if things get better or not.

This is the correct way to plan support for someone experiencing SBEW needs. Keep it simple and keep it about the person. Avoid trying to replicate an education plan for SBEW. Trying to write SMART targets will lead us back to modifying visible behaviours and away from meeting the underlying unmet needs.

As a guide—:

**Baseline**—Must include the voice of the pupil. What are they communicating? What do they need right now? Commit to understanding this young person.

**Support**—How will we help the young person meet these needs? Do we have the right people involved? Who else do we need?

**Monitor**—Keep listening to and recording the pupil's voice as this will track their unique journey and progress. Use a journal, doodle book, etc. to record this.

**Review**—Include the young person. Is anyone better off following this support? What's going well? What's helping? What's not going well? What would help?

## Sample Proforma

Complete this baseline section as you connect and take notice with the pupil. This section should be a picture of what it is like to be this pupil.

What's going well?	What's helping?	[What is the child communicating verbally and non-verbally - what are the needs underlying the visible behaviours]
What's not going well?	What would help?	

Next, plan supports:

<p>Connect</p> <p>[How can we help this pupil to feel safe in our school?</p> <p>How will we let this pupil know that the adults and their peers in school like them?</p> <p>What opportunities are we giving this pupil to connect with their peers?]</p>	<p>Take Notice</p> <p>[How will we help this pupil join the dots and make sense of life?</p> <p>How will we help this pupil notice what's working for them right now?</p> <p>How will we ensure this pupil has low demand time set aside for peace and calm? Are we giving the pupil permission to take notice?]</p>	<p>Keep Learning</p> <p>[What new skills will address the underlying unmet needs?</p> <p>How are we showing this pupil that we are on this journey with them?</p> <p>How will we reflect together upon moments of disconnect?]</p>
<p>Give</p> <p>[How will we show this pupil care?</p> <p>What simple changes will reduce tension and make life a little easier for this pupil?</p> <p>How will we make sure this pupil has opportunities to participate in school life?]</p>	<p>Be Active</p> <p>[What opportunities are there for shared joy in this pupil's class?</p> <p>What movement time do we need to protect for this pupil?</p> <p>How can we use movement as a calmer for this pupil?]</p>	<p>Supporting Adults Will Need Support</p> <p>[How will we demonstrate collective care?</p> <p>How will we support the key adults around this pupil?]</p>

Finally review

Complete this review section showing a picture of what it is like to be this pupil now. Is anyone better off as a result of the support?

What's going well?	What's helping?	[What supports does this pupil need to remain in place? Are there ongoing needs to meet?]
What's not going well?	What would help?	

## Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools DE Updated 2019

List of complementary/linked policies taken from chapter 10 - other Policies, page 67

The school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions, ensuring a culture of care. The child protection policy should complement and support a range of other policies including:

- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Management & Discipline Policy (This is now the Positive Behaviour Policy)
- Pastoral Care
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- First Aid & Administration of Medicines
- Health & Safety Policy
- Relationships & Sexuality Education
- Intimate Care
- E-Safety Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

## Further Reading and Useful Links

### Videos

[ThinkTVPBS YouTube video - Stress, Trauma and the Brain](#)

[NHS Education for Scotland - Animated video on Trauma Informed Practice](#)

[Family Action YouTube video - Four Stages of Behaviour](#)

[Lives In The Balance website - common queries videos](#)

[Dr Dan Siegel YouTube video - Hand Model of the Brain](#)

[Roots of Empathy videos on coping during Covid](#)

### Reading

[Safeguarding NI website - Aces and Trauma Informed Practice](#)

[Minding Your Head website - Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing](#)

[Fagus website - Louise Bomber Strategies](#)

[Lives In The Balance - Research information](#)

[Irish Department of Education website - publication on Well-Being in Primary School: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion](#)

[Play Board NI website](#)

[Center For Youth Wellness website - ACEs-informed Tips for Self Care During a Pandemic.](#)

[Education Endowment Foundation - Improving Social And Emotional Learning in Primary Schools](#)

[Reclaiming Youth At Risk website](#)

[DENI publication - Putting Care Into Education](#)

## Resources

[Mentally Healthy Schools website](#)

[Trauma Informed Schools web page - Useful Resources](#)

[Lives In The Balance website - Paperwork and Documents](#)

[Te Rito Toi website - lesson plans](#)

[Inner World Work - Whole Class Happy pack](#)

[University College Cork - SPARK Staff Self-Care Tool](#)

[EANI website - PBSP High 5 Newsletters](#)

[Youth Online website](#)

[Beacon House website - Useful Resources](#)

[EANI website - Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour video](#)

[Safeguarding NI - Information on ACEs and Brain Development](#)

[Inner World Work - Whole School and Class Resources](#)

[Inner World Work - Survival in Secondary School eBook](#)

[Nurture UK - Boxall Profile Information Leaflet](#)

## Recommended Reading

Inside I'm Hurting– Louise Bomber

What About Me?: Inclusive Strategies to Support Pupils with Attachment Difficulties Make it Through the School Day- Louise Bomber

The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog– Bruce Perry

Punished By Rewards- Alfie Kohn

Building the Bonds of Attachment: Awakening Love in Deeply Troubled Children- Dan Hughes

The Whole Brain Child: 12 Proven Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind– Tina Payne Bryson, Dan Siegel

The Body Keeps the Score- Bessel van der Kolk

The Teacher's Introduction to Attachment - Nicola Marshall

Attachment in Common Sense Doodles - Miriam Silver

Observing Children with Attachment Difficulties in School - Kim Golding

Attachment in the Classroom - Heather Geddes

Settling Troubled Pupils to Learn- Louise Bomber & Dan Hughes

What Can I Do About the Kid Who..?: A Teacher's Quick Guide - Marie Delaney

Creating Loving Attachments - Kim Golding & Dan Hughes

A Therapeutic Treasure Box for Working with Children and Adolescents with Developmental Trauma - Dr Karen Treisman

Working with Relational and Developmental Trauma in Children and Adolescents - Dr Karen Treisman

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Perry, B.D. 2017 The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook– What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us About Loss, Love and Healing

Burke Harris, N. 2018 The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity

Payne Bryson, T., Siegel, D. 2012 The Whole Brain Child: 12 Proven Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind

Bomber, L.M. 2011 What About Me?: Inclusive Strategies to Support Pupils with Attachment Difficulties Make it Through the School Day

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Whitaker, T., Whitaker, B. 2013 Teaching Matters: How to Keep Your Passion and Thrive in Today's Classroom

Ref: Lucas, S., Insley, K. and Buckland, G. (2006) Nurture Group Principles and Curriculum Guidelines Helping Children to Achieve, The Nurture Group Network

Guest, S. 2018 How schools can become attachment and trauma friendly– a three step plan



Education Endowment Foundation 2019, Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools,

Fonagy, P 2019 – referenced by Hallaghan, G. (2019) [TES website - Attachment Aware Teaching article](#)

Kohn, A 2001 [Alfie Kohn website - article on Five Reasons to Stop Saying Good Job](#)

[SafeGuarding NI website](#)

[Play Board NI website](#)

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