



**GREENWAY PRIMARY AND
NURSERY SCHOOL**
Positive Behaviour
Hints and Tips

USEFUL STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

The following is an extract (Annex B) from the latest Greenway Behaviour Policy as approved by the Governing Body.

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Introduction

School staff take-part in regular training on behaviour management. Information is given here about some of the key strategies that they are trained to use to support and encourage positive behaviour.

This annex supports our Behaviour Policy and promotes consistency of application. This is how staff at Greenway seek to develop and drive pro-social behaviour for pupils. It is also shared with parents/carers because many of you told us that you would find it helpful to have practical information about how behaviour issues are approached at school. We also know that strategies used at school will always be most effective when pupils understand that they are supported (and particularly where they are also adopted) by parents/carers at home.

Modelling Desired Behaviour

Children learn from the behaviours they see and experience around them, making it very important for adults to always demonstrate in themselves the behaviours that they expect from children. In school, this is particularly important in terms of behaviours like respect, concern, compromise, fairness, apologising and accepting apologies, acknowledging mistakes, resolving difficulties fairly and amicably, and so on.

Dealing with difficult behaviour can trigger feelings of anger, irritation, disappointment or even despair. Staff avoid communicating these feelings to the child/ren and at school will

work hard to keep responses low key and matter of fact. This encourages a calm and logical, rather than heated and emotional, response.

Public Praise/Private Criticism

Public acknowledgement of pro-social behaviour and individual success can be very powerful in a positive way. Similarly, public criticism of anti-social behaviour, or correction in public, can often be very damaging. Usually, drawing any attention to anti-social behaviour should be as private as possible; lowering a child's self-esteem (making them feel inadequate or at all foolish especially in front of others) is likely to increase misbehaviour, if not now, then later.

In the classroom, adults will always seek to come close to a pupil to speak to them quietly, avoiding drawing attention to anti-social behaviour in front of other children or loudly across the classroom. In this way the behaviour is still pointed out, but the child is given privacy and time to reflect on choices they made and to think for themselves about what they might do differently moving forward.

Being consistent and clear

Children need for their world to be as reliable as possible. When adults act consistently and reliably, they help children understand where the behaviour boundaries are and makes them feel safer and less anxious. This in turn will make it less likely that events will trigger anti-social behaviour.

Adopting a Growth Mindset

An individual's 'mindset' is now recognised as key to achievement and success in all walks of life, including in education. The idea that we have either a fixed or growth mindset has developed out of decades of research by leading psychologist Professor Carol Dweck and helps to explain what is required for improved resilience, behaviour and achievement.

It is important that children relish challenges, embrace their mistakes as part of the learning process, value the importance of effort, respond carefully to feedback and take inspiration from others. This will help them to achieve well, not only at school but also in their future lives as adults.

We know that in order to fulfil their potential and encourage children to become confident and resilient learners we, as a team of parents/carers and staff, need to be modelling the mindset of a learner who is not afraid of making mistakes but who thrives upon them, knowing that this is all part of the learning process. The way in which we encourage children to learn and explore is vital to their success, not only at school but at home as well.

Central to this attitude and approach to learning, are the theories and proven evidence of Growth Mindset. In Professor Carol Dweck's research, the characteristics of learners with a fixed and a growth mindset have been identified as follows:



Key aspects of growth mindset that we apply at Greenway include:

- Celebrating mistakes and learning from them;
- Never giving up – perseverance is necessary to succeed;
- Collaborating to learn from each other;
- Seeking inspiration but not comparing ourselves to others;
- Challenging ourselves, taking risks and continuously improving our performance;
- Remembering that our brains are making new connections and growing all the time

The following videos explain the concept in more detail:

- 'Growth Mindset v Fixed Mindset' (Hand drawn cartoon by MinuteVideo) 5 mins at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUWn_TJTrnU
- 'The Power of Belief – Mindset and Success' with Eduardo Briceno (TEDx Talk) 10 mins at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN34FNbOKXc>

For further information and practical ideas on how to encourage confident and resilient learners at home, you can look for works published by Professor Carol Dweck or have a look at the links below:

- <https://www.mindsetworks.com/parents/growth-mindset-parenting>
- <https://www.oxfordlearning.com/growth-mindset-tips-for-parents/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/help-your-child-try-new-things>

Demonstrating pro-social behaviours

Anti-social behaviour is easy to spot. It is disruptive and often noisy and stands out in a crowd, making it obvious and giving adults a prompt to respond. Pro-social behaviour is what we expect and is practiced by the majority of children most of the time, making it much less obvious and also less likely to receive attention. However, as reward and

recognition strategies demonstrate, positive praise is an incredibly powerful motivator for children to behave well.

To provide a prompt for adults, to help them respond to children's pro-social behaviour, what follows is a (non-exhaustive) list showing how children might demonstrate pro-social behaviours:

- Being polite
- Saying 'please' and 'thank you'
- Holding a door open for someone else or letting them pass first
- Taking turns and waiting for others
- Moving quickly, quietly and without fuss (e.g. into the class or to the dining table)
- Making eye contact quickly and quietly when asked to listen
- Paying attention
- Sitting still when required (e.g. in assembly or at a performance)
- Responding when asked (e.g. to start class work, homework, or to eat tea)
- Treating books, equipment, belongings carefully
- Following instructions at the first time of asking
- Keeping books, work, possessions, their room, etc tidy
- Keeping themselves and their physical appearance clean, smart and/or tidy
- Tidying and clearing up
- Moving from one task to another without reminders
- Working very hard at something
- Taking a lot of care or giving something a lot of thought (e.g. work or a present)
- Contributing in discussions (willing to answer questions or talk about a subject)
- Asking for help when they need it
- Keeping calm in a difficult situation
- Being a good friend
- Working well with classmates or siblings
- Listening and acknowledging someone else's point of view
- Finding things to occupy themselves (especially once one task is done)
- Speaking up on behalf of another person (perhaps if they are being bullied)
- Sharing concerns with an adult
- Being prepared to try something new or difficult
- Performing in front of others or speaking up in front of a large group
- Asking to borrow something without just taking
- Sharing (equipment, books, toys as well as games)
- Encouraging others to join in or befriending in other ways
- Doing classroom jobs or household chores willingly and well
- Offering to help without being asked

De-escalation tactics and phrases

Sometimes when children display anti-social behaviour, they will initially be so upset or emotionally distressed, that action needs to be taken to calm the situation before you can begin to address the behaviour itself.

Here is the script (with guidance) that experts in behaviour management suggest will help (and that teachers at Greenway use), when that happens:

- **Use the child's name** when you begin to speak to them - it addresses them and shows them that they have your full attention and that you mean to sort the situation out for and with them.
- ***"I can see something is wrong"*** – a phrase like this acknowledges their feelings and helps to reduce the emotion so that you can move on to a more logical conversation.
- ***"I am here to help you"*** – a phrase like this offers the child a safe and constructive environment where they know that the point is to resolve the problem that led to the behaviour and not just to punish them for it (though note that while this is important and is most likely to address the issue effectively, it may still be necessary for the adult to issue a consequence so that the child is clear that regardless of the reason for the behaviour, the behaviour itself was not acceptable).
- ***"Talk and I will listen"*** - this tactic provides children with a calm option to explain what's on their mind and again is most likely to address the issue that the child had/has effectively, so that the unacceptable behaviour won't be repeated in the future.
- ***"Come with me and we'll talk about it..."*** – quite often it will be useful to remove the child from their current setting, gently encouraging them to walk with you or using open arm movements to guide them to sit somewhere quiet and calm. You should always use this tactic if they're in an unsafe place (e.g. on a wall or on the roadside).

Using Language of Choice and Assertive Discipline

In disciplining children, adults are not only seeking to stop an immediate undesirable behaviour, but also to teach them about the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others, and about the power of their own choice. This helps them learn how to avoid the undesirable behaviour (and so also the undesirable consequence) for the longer term.

Using 'language of choice' is in contrast to using 'language of demand'. If you demand something of someone, for example *"If you don't stop talking now, you'll get a 'time out'!"* you are directly prompting one of two natural responses, which is either to:

- Resist the demand (and create conflict)
- Accede/Give in to the demand (and lose face)

Instead, language of choice places responsibility for behaviour with the child, for example, "If you choose to interrupt again while I am explaining this you will have to receive a 'time out'. Think about making the right choice. Thank you!" Crucially, this approach bypasses the natural instinct to resist, that can more easily occur when we are simply told what to do, while still leaving the option of a consequence open if the child does not make the right choice.

Given below are sample scripts giving the sort of language and guidance that teaching staff at Greenway have been trained to adopt. Although Scripts 1, 2 and 3 naturally escalate (so if Script 1 fails to have the desired effect you would tend to step up to Script 2, and so on), depending on the circumstances, you might start with any of the four scripts. You would also, of course, need to amend the name and detail to suit each occasion.

- **Script 1: Statement of Reality (i.e. simply tell them what you see)**

“Fred, you’re... (e.g. running in the corridor/tapping your pencil on the desk/talking when I’m speaking...)”

Use a firm but calm voice. This helps to show that you mean business but in a non-confrontational way that might otherwise lead to a defensive response.

Don’t ask ‘why?’ they are doing what they’re doing – It’s confrontational and you don’t need to know why. They just need to know that you’ve noticed it.

After hearing the statement of reality many children will quickly change their behaviour without the need to take the script any further or without attracting a consequence.

Remember to give them ‘take up time’ to think about their behaviour and respond. It may even be desirable to deal with another task or child, to temporarily divert attention away from them, and allow sufficient space and take-up time.

When they are demonstrating a positive change make sure to acknowledge that with praise:

“Thank you Fred for... (e.g. walking/putting your pencil down/listening nicely...)”

If the child’s behaviour doesn’t change after a reasonable take-up time, move on to Script 2.

- **Script 2: Tell them the behaviour you want to see**

“Fred, I need you to...(e.g. walk in the corridor – thank you/ put your pencil down – thank you/ listen when I am speaking – thank you)”

Be assertive and avoid starting or ending with ‘please’. Use ‘I need you to...’ and end with ‘thank you’ instead. This carries an expectation that they will do as you have asked of them and helps support the idea that your request is not optional.

If you then see a positive change in behaviour, acknowledge it with a further ‘thank you’ or with a gesture (e.g. a smile or a thumbs-up).

Should you not see a positive change in behaviour, move on to using a ‘language of choice’ in Script 3.

- **Script 3: Statement using Language of Choice**

“Fred, you are choosing to behave this way and if you choose to continue to... (e.g. run/ tap your pencil/ speak when I’m speaking) then I will have to [consider a suitable consequence]”

You need to remain calm, without any sense of agitation or lack of control, while making it clear to the child that *they* are responsible for the consequences of their actions; that what has happened so far and what will follow is *their* choice.

Be careful to make sure that any consequence you threaten is proportionate to the behaviour, is reasonable in the circumstances and is something that you know you can and will carry through if the behaviour doesn’t change.

You may need to ignore minor secondary behaviour – stomping about, muttering, or a bit of back-chat – the most important thing is that they have made the right choice about their initial undesirable behaviour. Where appropriate, allowing a child to have the last word can help resolve or avoid further conflict and can also be valuable in helping you to role-model grown-up behaviour.

If the child chooses to do the right thing, then you must praise them for making the right choice. This will help them learn that it’s good to do the right thing and that you are pleased with their choice. Every child likes to be praised and acknowledged on the inside, even if they might not show it on the outside:

“Well done/Thank you Fred, you made the right choice”

Should the child choose not to do as you have asked, then you *must* follow through with the consequence that you threatened. This is very important so that the child comes to understand that you mean what you say. Failing to be consistent in carrying out consequences that you have threatened quickly undermines your authority and indicates to the child that they need not listen to your future requests for improved behaviour.

Once a consequence has been issued you should see it through. Don’t cave in to protests, remove or reduce the sanction. If good behaviour follows, then reward that separately, but still maintain the consequence. When you are consistent in seeing through consequences, as you threatened, these scripts work!

- **Script 4: Reinforce and depersonalise**

“Fred, at Greenway we respect and listen so that everyone can learn”

Repeatedly referring to whole school expectations (i.e. Golden Values or at home referring to family rules or expectations) can be very helpful in reminding children of an objective set of rules and values which never change.

This approach indicates that the request is fair and consistent; it is simply what has always been and what will always be expected, rather than personal ‘against’ them.

Other options for dealing with challenging behaviour

With a therapeutic approach to behaviour management, adults are always seeking to de-escalate challenging behaviour calmly so will need to be able to call on a range of techniques, depending on the situation. Additional ones (to the ones set out above) used by Greenway staff include:

- Limited choice e.g.
 - *“Put the pen on the table or in the box”*
 - *“Talk to me here or in the playground”*
 - *“Are you going to wear shoes or wellies?”*

- Disempowering the behaviour e.g.
 - *“You can listen from there” [under the table]*
 - *“Come and find me when you come back/feel calm”*
 - *“Come over/down/in in your own time”*

The Importance of Restoring a Relationship

We want our children to learn from their experiences – particularly those that result in a crisis - and to develop increasingly healthy, pro-social behaviour responses. It is therefore worthwhile routinely encouraging them (as appropriate in the circumstances) to use the 3Rs, just to *reflect* on what happened, to *repair* any damage (to themselves or others) and to *restore* (themselves and others) to their previous (or improved) good selves.

Where a response to unacceptable behaviour still leaves a lasting impact for that child or for others, it will often be necessary to take formal steps to review how to learn from mistakes and restore relationships. This can include restoring relationships with other children as well as teaching staff or other adults. It also helps the individual(s) concerned to draw a line under the matter and move on.

The process can only start when the individual(s) concerned is/are calm and ready to learn from the experience. It may take time and it may be something that an adult will have to come back to over a few hours or even days.

The aim is to demonstrate that it is very possible to learn from a negative experience; to work out what went wrong and why; to make amends; and to help avoid it happening in the future. In this respect the process is a positive one and teaching staff find that it helps to reinforce this by using a template of standard questions. Almost always, they will sit with the child/ren and work through the questions and responses with them. The questions would include any or all of the following:

- What (in your words) happened?
- What do you think the people involved were thinking and feeling at the time?
- Who has been affected and how?
- How can we put right the harm?
- What have we learned to make a different choice next time? (*Next time I will...*)
- What would you like to happen next?
- How can we make things better for _____?

- If everything was going to be OK, what would need to happen?
- How can you help to put this right?
- How can we make it OK for you to go back to your lessons/activities/friends?
- What do you think _____ might need?

Sources of Support on Behaviour

We have shared above some of the key approaches used at Greenway, including those from the Department for Education and Hertfordshire County Council's 'STEPS' training for schools.

If you have concerns about behaviour at school or your own child's behaviour, we would ask that you speak with your child's class teacher, the Head Teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Deputy Head in the first instance. School will treat what you say in confidence and will always aim to be as supportive and constructive as possible.

From time-to-time, we will also send home information about training sessions to support behaviour improvement or issues that are available locally to all our parents/carers.