



HOPEBRIGHT
S C H O O L

Behaviour Management Policy

Reviewed: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027



Hopebright School

Engagement, Behaviour and Emotional Regulation Policy

Policy Title: Engagement, Behaviour and Emotional Regulation Policy

Version: 2026

Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review Date: April 2027

Policy Owner: Headteacher

Linked Policies: Safeguarding, Child Protection, Positive Handling, Anti-Bullying, Equality and Diversity, Exclusions, Attendance, SEND, PSHE, RSE, Health and Safety

1. Introduction

At Hopebright School, behaviour is understood as **communication**. Every behaviour—whether positive, withdrawn, dysregulated or challenging—communicates an emotional state, unmet need, sensory experience, relational difficulty or response to environmental stressors. We do not view behaviour as something to “manage” but as something to **understand, support, and respond to with compassion and consistency**. Our pupils often present with complex **SEMH needs, neurodiversity, attachment differences, trauma histories, and communication needs**. These factors shape emotional regulation, stress responses, and behaviour.

Therefore, our approach is:

- trauma-informed
- attachment-aware
- neurodiversity-affirming
- relational
- restorative
- therapeutic
- consistent
- emotionally safe

We recognise that **adult behaviour sets the emotional tone**. Staff therefore have a responsibility to:

- regulate themselves
- co-regulate pupils
- maintain predictable boundaries
- model emotional literacy
- repair relational ruptures
- respond rather than react

This policy ensures that pupils experience **coherent, predictable and emotionally safe responses** from all adults across the school.

2. Our Vision

At Hopebright School, we are committed to building a nurturing, inclusive, and emotionally intelligent school community where every child and adult is able to thrive. Our vision is grounded in the belief that education is most effective when it is rooted in safety, strong relationships, emotional understanding, and high expectations for all.

We aim to create a school environment where:

- every pupil feels safe, emotionally secure, understood, and genuinely valued as an individual
- emotional wellbeing is prioritised alongside academic progress, recognising that both are essential for success
- trusting, respectful relationships form the foundation of all learning and interaction
- diversity in all its forms is recognised, respected, and actively celebrated as a strength of our community
- emotional regulation is explicitly taught, modelled, and supported so that children develop lifelong self-awareness and self-management skills
- conflict, misunderstanding, or relational rupture is viewed as an opportunity for learning, reflection, and repair
- accountability is restorative in nature, focusing on responsibility, reflection, and making things right rather than punishment alone
- learning is engaging, purposeful, and meaningful, fostering curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning
- staff wellbeing and professional growth are valued as essential to sustaining a positive school culture

We believe that children learn best and achieve their full potential when they feel:

- safe in their environment and relationships
- connected to trusted adults and peers
- calm in body and mind
- respected as capable and valued individuals
- supported in developing emotional regulation skills
- successful through meaningful opportunities for achievement and progress

At Hopebright School, wellbeing and learning are inseparable. We strive to create a community where every member is empowered to grow, connect, and succeed together.

3. Core Principles

Our behaviour approach is underpinned by a set of core principles that guide every interaction, decision, and response across the school. These principles ensure consistency, emotional safety, and a shared understanding of behaviour as part of a wider developmental and relational process.

3.1 Behaviour is Communication

At Hopebright School, behaviour is understood as communication rather than compliance or defiance. Behaviour reflects underlying emotional, cognitive, sensory, physiological, or relational needs. It is a form of expression, particularly when a child does not yet have the language, capacity, or regulation skills to communicate more directly.

Behaviour may communicate:

- anxiety or worry
- emotional overwhelm
- unmet physical or emotional needs
- fear or threat response
- shame or low self-worth
- frustration or blocked goals
- sensory overload or under-stimulation
- attachment insecurity or relational uncertainty
- confusion or cognitive overload
- emotional pain or distress

Our responsibility is to look beyond the surface behaviour and seek to understand its function. We respond with curiosity rather than judgement, aiming to identify what the child is communicating and what support they require in that moment.

3.2 Regulation Before Reasoning

We recognise that a child who is dysregulated is not in a neurological state to access logic, reflection, or learning. The priority in any escalation is therefore emotional and physiological regulation before cognitive processing or consequence.

Our consistent sequence of support is:

1. Safety – ensuring physical and emotional safety for the child and others
2. Regulation – co-regulating through calm presence, strategies, and environment
3. Connection – restoring relational safety with a trusted adult
4. Reflection – supporting understanding of emotions, triggers, and impact

5. Restoration – repairing harm where appropriate and rebuilding trust
6. Learning – re-engaging with academic or behavioural learning once regulated

This sequence ensures that responses are developmentally appropriate and emotionally safe, rather than reactive or punitive.

3.3 Relationships First

We recognise relationships as the most significant protective factor in a child’s school experience and outcomes. Positive, consistent, and attuned relationships with trusted adults provide the foundation for emotional regulation, engagement, and behaviour change.

All staff are responsible for:

- actively building trusting relationships with pupils
- maintaining consistency and emotional availability
- noticing and responding to relational needs
- repairing relationships following moments of rupture or difficulty
- prioritising connection even during times of behavioural challenge

Behaviour support is therefore relational at its core, not transactional or purely procedural.

3.4 Restorative Practice

We adopt a restorative approach to behaviour and conflict, focusing on understanding impact, repairing harm, and restoring relationships. Our aim is not simply to respond to incidents, but to rebuild trust and strengthen the school community.

Restorative practice prioritises:

- repairing harm caused to individuals or the community
- rebuilding trust between pupils and staff
- restoring relationships where there has been rupture
- understanding the emotional and relational impact of behaviour
- supporting accountability that maintains dignity and respect

Consequences, where used, are designed to be educative and restorative rather than purely punitive, ensuring pupils are supported to take responsibility in a meaningful and developmentally appropriate way.

3.5 Trauma-Informed Practice

Our approach is grounded in trauma-informed principles, recognising that behaviour may be shaped by past or present experiences of adversity, loss, or threat. We respond with empathy, curiosity, and emotional safety at the centre of all interactions.

We consistently adopt the stance:

“What has happened to this child?” rather than “What is wrong with this child?”

This approach ensures that responses:

- avoid re-traumatisation or shame-based practices
- prioritise emotional safety and predictability
- recognise the impact of adverse experiences on regulation and behaviour
- support staff to respond with calm, attuned, and reflective practice
- maintain high expectations alongside high levels of support

Through this lens, behaviour is interpreted developmentally and contextually, enabling more accurate understanding and more effective support.

4. Shared Values and Beliefs

At Hopebright School, our culture is shaped by a shared set of values and beliefs that guide how we interact with one another, respond to behaviour, and create conditions for learning. These values underpin all relationships between pupils, staff, and the wider school community, ensuring a consistent and emotionally safe environment.

We value:

- emotional and physical safety as the foundation for all learning and development
- dignity in every interaction, ensuring that all individuals are treated with respect and humanity
- respect for self, others, and the learning environment
- belonging, so that every pupil and adult feels accepted and included within the school community
- fairness, ensuring responses are consistent, transparent, and proportionate
- empathy, enabling us to understand experiences and respond with care and attunement
- honesty, promoting trust, openness, and psychological safety
- accountability, supporting individuals to take responsibility for their actions in a constructive way
- restoration, prioritising repair of relationships and harm over exclusion or punishment alone
- inclusion, ensuring that all pupils, including those with additional needs, can access support, learning, and opportunity

We believe that every member of our community has the right:

- to feel safe at all times, both physically and emotionally
- to be treated with dignity, even during moments of challenge or dysregulation
- to learn in a calm, predictable, and well-regulated environment
- to express emotions safely, appropriately, and without fear of shame or rejection
- to receive support during times of distress, overwhelm, or difficulty
- to make mistakes and be supported to repair and learn from them
- to be listened to with genuine attention and respect
- to be understood in context, including consideration of needs, experiences, and communication differences

These rights apply equally to pupils and staff and underpin our commitment to relational safety and consistency.

We believe:

- children do well when they can, and behaviour reflects capacity rather than intent alone
- emotional regulation is developmental and must be taught, modelled, and supported over time
- behaviour change is most effectively achieved through relational safety and secure attachment experiences



- consistency in adult responses creates predictability, which in turn supports emotional security
- connection is a primary protective factor that reduces escalation and supports regulation
- shame is not a tool for behaviour change and instead undermines regulation, trust, and learning
- repair strengthens relationships and provides powerful opportunities for learning, growth, and resilience

5. Aims of the Policy

This policy sets out a clear, consistent framework for promoting emotional safety, positive behaviour, and effective regulation across Hopebright School. It is designed to support both pupils and staff in understanding behaviour through a relational, developmental, and trauma-informed lens, while maintaining high expectations for conduct and learning.

We aim to:

- create a calm, predictable, and emotionally safe environment where pupils feel secure enough to learn and thrive
- support emotional regulation through adult modelling, co-regulation, and consistent relational responses
- explicitly teach self-regulation skills so pupils develop lifelong strategies for managing emotions, impulses, and stress
- reduce incidents of dysregulation through proactive, preventative approaches, including environmental adjustments, relational support, and early identification of need
- improve engagement in learning by reducing emotional, sensory, and relational barriers that prevent access to education
- develop resilience by providing safe, supported opportunities for challenge, alongside consistent adult support for recovery and reflection
- promote restorative accountability that encourages reflection, understanding of impact, and meaningful repair of relationships and harm
- reduce the need for exclusion by identifying and addressing underlying causes of behaviour rather than focusing solely on surface presentation
- ensure that any crisis responses are safe, proportionate, and lawful, prioritising de-escalation, dignity, and physical and emotional safety for all involved
- strengthen effective partnership working with families and carers, recognising their essential role in understanding, supporting, and meeting pupils' needs

Through these aims, the policy seeks to ensure that behaviour is understood and responded to in a way that is consistent, relational, and developmentally appropriate, enabling all pupils to feel safe, supported, and able to succeed both emotionally and academically.

6. Teaching and Learning

At Hopebright School, we recognise that emotional regulation and learning are inseparable. A pupil's ability to engage with teaching and learning is directly influenced by their emotional state, sense of safety, and capacity to regulate stress and sensory input. As such, high-quality teaching is underpinned by emotional attunement, predictability, and relational security. Staff are expected to ensure that teaching and learning experiences are carefully planned to support both academic progress and emotional regulation.

This includes:

- delivering engaging, structured lessons that maintain interest, clarity, and purpose
- setting clear expectations and consistently modelling desired behaviours and learning behaviours
- using effective differentiation to reduce frustration, anxiety, and barriers to access
- providing visual supports, scaffolding, and explicit instructions to support understanding and independence
- breaking learning into manageable steps to prevent cognitive overload and emotional overwhelm
- incorporating movement breaks and sensory regulation opportunities to support attention, arousal levels, and self-regulation
- embedding co-regulation as an everyday practice, recognising that adults actively support pupils to regulate emotions throughout learning

To support emotional safety and consistency, all classrooms follow predictable routines. These routines are intentionally designed to reduce anxiety, build trust, and support regulation so that pupils can focus on learning.

Predictable routines include:

- positive and consistent welcomes at the start of the school day and lessons
- emotional check-ins that allow pupils to be seen, heard, and supported in their current emotional state
- clear communication of lesson intentions so pupils understand what they are doing and why
- structured and supported transitions between activities, lessons, and environments
- predictable endings that support emotional closure and preparation for change
- planned reflection opportunities that encourage metacognition, emotional awareness, and restorative thinking

7. Emotional Regulation Framework

Hopebright School uses a graduated emotional regulation framework to guide staff responses to pupils' emotional states and behaviour. This framework ensures consistency, reduces reactive responses, and supports pupils to move safely from dysregulation back to regulation and learning readiness. It is not a disciplinary model, but a relational and regulatory one. Staff are expected to identify the stage a pupil is in and respond in a way that prioritises safety, co-regulation, dignity, and long-term emotional development.

Stage 1: Regulated

At this stage, the pupil is calm, emotionally available, and engaged in learning or interaction. The nervous system is regulated, and the pupil is able to access learning, reasoning, and social connection.

Adult response:

- reinforce positive behaviour and emotional regulation
- maintain warm, consistent relational connection
- provide specific praise linked to effort, behaviour, or learning
- build confidence and independence through appropriate challenge
- continue predictable routines and expectations

The focus is on sustaining regulation and strengthening secure attachment and learning behaviours.

Stage 2: Dysregulation Emerging

At this stage, early signs of emotional or sensory overwhelm are becoming visible. The pupil may show anxiety, withdrawal, irritability, restlessness, reduced focus, or changes in tone or body language.

Adult response:

- actively co-regulate through calm presence and tone
- reduce cognitive, social, or environmental demands where appropriate
- offer limited, structured choices to restore a sense of control
- validate feelings without escalating intensity ("I can see this is feeling difficult")
- increase predictability and clarity of instructions
- monitor closely and intervene early to prevent escalation

The priority is early intervention to prevent movement into escalation.

Stage 3: Escalation

At this stage, the pupil is experiencing significant distress or loss of emotional regulation. Behaviour may become unsafe, verbally aggressive, highly withdrawn, or physically agitated.

Adult response:

- prioritise safety for the pupil, peers, and staff
- reduce verbal input and avoid complex language or reasoning
- use calm, simple, and directive communication where necessary
- de-escalate using proximity, tone, and non-threatening body language

- remove unnecessary audience or stimulation where appropriate
- seek additional adult support if risk increases or situation cannot be safely managed alone

The focus is containment, safety, and reduction of emotional intensity rather than reasoning or consequence.

Stage 4: Crisis

At this stage, the pupil has lost behavioural control and is in a heightened survival state (fight, flight, or freeze). Cognitive processing is significantly reduced, and immediate emotional and physical safety becomes the priority.

Adult response:

- maintain safety as the absolute priority for all involved
- use positive handling only when there is an immediate risk of harm and in line with training, policy, and legal guidance
- preserve the pupil's dignity at all times, avoiding shame, blame, or punitive language
- reduce environmental stimulation (auditory, visual, social) where possible
- maintain calm, minimal, and reassuring communication
- ensure staff support is summoned appropriately and promptly

All responses must be proportionate, necessary, and the least restrictive option available.

Stage 5: Recovery

At this stage, the pupil is transitioning out of crisis or escalation. They may appear tired, withdrawn, emotional, embarrassed, or emotionally flat. This is a vulnerable stage where relational repair is essential.

Adult response:











- reconnect with the pupil in a calm, non-threatening manner
- offer reassurance and emotional containment
- avoid immediate questioning or detailed discussion until the pupil is ready
- support physiological recovery (space, water, rest, regulation strategies)
- debrief when appropriate and only when the pupil is emotionally available
- focus on restoring the relationship rather than assigning blame
- support reflection, understanding, and repair where appropriate

The priority is emotional recovery, restoration of trust, and re-establishing safety before re-engagement with learning expectations.

This framework supports staff to respond consistently, calmly, and predictably across all stages of emotional escalation. It ensures that behaviour is managed through understanding and regulation rather than escalation or punishment, and that pupils are supported to return to a state where learning and connection are possible.

7. EMOTIONAL REGULATION FRAMEWORK

Hopebright uses a graduated framework with five stages to support emotional regulation and behaviour.

STAGE	PUPIL STATE		ADULT RESPONSE	KEY FOCUS
1 STAGE	 REGULATED	Pupil is calm and engaged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce success • Maintain connection • Build confidence 	 SUSTAIN & STRENGTHEN Keep doing what works. Celebrate effort and positive choices.
2 STAGE	 DYSREGULATION EMERGING	Early signs of overwhelm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co regulate • Reduce demands • Offer choices • Validate feelings 	 SUPPORT & PREVENT Intervene early to prevent escalation and support emotional regulation.
3 STAGE	 ESCALATION	Increased distress or unsafe behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise safety • Reduce language • De-escalate • Call support if needed 	 REDUCE & CONTAIN Reduce distress and risk. Keep safe. Get additional support as needed.
4 STAGE	 CRISIS	Loss of behavioural control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain safety • Use positive handling only if necessary • Preserve dignity • Reduce stimulation 	 SAFETY FIRST Ensure physical and emotional safety. Use least restrictive interventions.
5 STAGE	 RECOVERY	Exhaustion, shame, quietness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconnect • Reassure • Debrief when ready • Restore relationships 	 RESTORE & REPAIR Support recovery, rebuild trust and relationships, and reflect when ready.



Our goal is always to support regulation, not to punish. Connection before correction. Relationship before response.

8. Co-Regulation (Expanded)

Co-regulation is an ongoing relational process in which a regulated adult supports a dysregulated or emotionally overwhelmed pupil to return to a calmer physiological and emotional state. It is grounded in attachment theory and neurobiological principles, particularly the idea that children, especially in moments of stress borrow the nervous system regulation of a safe adult before they can independently self-regulate. Rather than focusing on behaviour management, co-regulation prioritises shared emotional stability, predictability, and felt safety.

Core Principles of Co-Regulation

1. Calibrated Adult Presence

Adults intentionally regulate their own emotional state first. This includes:

- Maintaining a calm, steady tone of voice
- Using slow, predictable speech patterns
- Avoiding escalation in facial expression, posture, or volume
- Remaining physically grounded and non-threatening in stance

The adult's nervous system effectively becomes a "regulation anchor."

2. Emotional Containment

Emotional containment refers to the adult's capacity to:

- Hold the pupil's emotional expression without becoming overwhelmed or reactive
- Communicate that emotions are safe to experience
- Provide psychological "boundaries" around intense affect (e.g., anger, panic, shame)

Example language:

- "I can see this feels really overwhelming right now."
- "I'm here with you, and we'll work through this together."

3. Proximity and Safe Presence

Physical presence is used intentionally to communicate safety, not control:

- Sitting nearby rather than across a barrier (where appropriate)
- Positioning at the pupil's level (reducing perceived threat)
- Respecting personal space while remaining accessible
- Allowing the pupil to choose closeness where possible

This reinforces felt safety without coercion.

4. Sensory and Physiological Regulation Support

Because emotional dysregulation is often physiological, adults can support nervous system settling by:

- Encouraging slow, visible breathing (modelling rather than instructing)
- Reducing environmental stimuli (noise, visual clutter, crowding)
- Offering grounding input (e.g., feet on floor, noticing surroundings)
- Providing sensory tools (fidgets, weighted items, headphones if appropriate)

5. Movement-Based Regulation

Movement can discharge stress activation and support nervous system reset:

- Walking alongside a trusted adult
- Pacing in a safe space
- Simple repetitive movements (stretching, wall pushes, grounding walks)

Movement is particularly effective for pupils in fight/flight states.

6. Language That Organises Experience

Co-regulation often involves “naming to tame” emotional states:

- Identifying emotions without judgement
- Linking feelings to understandable causes
- Reducing internal confusion through clear, calm language

Example:

- “It looks like something really frustrating just happened, and your body is reacting strongly.”

This helps shift experience from chaotic to organised.

7. Environmental Regulation (Reduction of Load)

The environment is adjusted to reduce stressors:

- Lowering noise or moving to quieter areas
- Reducing audience effects (fewer peers present if possible)
- Minimising demands temporarily
- Allowing pause from academic expectations

This prevents further escalation and supports recovery.

Practical Examples in Context

- Sitting beside a pupil who is distressed rather than confronting them across a desk
- Walking with a pupil while they talk or remain silent
- Offering water, a calm space, or a sensory break without requiring explanation first
- Using a designated regulation space where the pupil can decompress safely

- Calmly naming: “You seem really overwhelmed right now. I’m here with you.”
- Modelling slow breathing without forcing participation

Key Distinction

Co-regulation is not:

- punishment reduction
- ignoring behaviour
- or verbal reasoning during peak distress

It is a biological and relational stabilisation process that must occur *before* reflection, learning, or problem-solving can be effective.



8. CO-REGULATION









Co-regulation is a continuous relational practice in which calm, connected adults support pupils to return to a regulated state. It is grounded in safety, connection and predictability.



Children regulate best in relationship. A calm adult helps a child's nervous system find calm.



HOW ADULTS SUPPORT PUPILS THROUGH CO-REGULATION

 <p>CALM TONE & PREDICTABLE LANGUAGE</p> <p>Use a calm, steady tone.</p> <p>Speak slowly, clearly and predictably.</p> <p>Keep language simple and reassuring.</p>	 <p>EMOTIONAL CONTAINMENT</p> <p>Hold and accept big feelings without judgment.</p> <p>Show that emotions are safe to have.</p> <p>Provide psychological safety.</p>	 <p>SAFE PROXIMITY</p> <p>Be near, not invasive.</p> <p>Offer presence and connection.</p> <p>Let the pupil choose closeness where possible.</p>	 <p>MODEL STEADY BREATHING</p> <p>Model slow, steady breathing.</p> <p>It helps regulate the pupil's nervous system.</p> <p>You don't have to ask them to—just model.</p>	 <p>REDUCE SENSORY LOAD</p> <p>Lower noise, light, visual clutter and demands.</p> <p>Reduce the environmental stressors.</p>	 <p>USE GROUNDING STRATEGIES</p> <p>Support connection to the here and now.</p> <p>Use grounding through senses, body, or the environment.</p>	 <p>OFFER SENSORY TOOLS</p> <p>Provide sensory tools that help the pupil regulate.</p> <p>Let them access what helps.</p>	 <p>SUPPORT MOVEMENT-BASED REGULATION</p> <p>Movement can discharge stress and reset the nervous system.</p> <p>Offer movement options.</p>
--	--	--	---	---	---	---	---

WHAT CO-REGULATION DOES

- ✓ Provides felt safety
- ✓ Helps the nervous system settle
- ✓ Reduces intensity of emotion
- ✓ Restores connection
- ✓ Creates the conditions for learning, reflection and problem solving



WHAT CO-REGULATION IS NOT

- ✗ Punishment
- ✗ Ignoring behaviour
- ✗ Talking a pupil through big feelings
- ✗ Reasoning during peak distress



EXAMPLES OF CO-REGULATION IN PRACTICE

 <p>SIT ALONGSIDE</p> <p>Sit near the pupil in a calm, non-threatening way. Your presence communicates safety.</p>	 <p>NAME EMOTIONS CALMLY</p> <p>It seems like you're feeling really angry right now.</p> <p>Name what you see without judgment. It helps pupils feel understood.</p>	 <p>OFFER WATER OR QUIET SPACE</p> <p>Simple offers can help meet needs and lower stress. Give choice where possible.</p>	 <p>WALK WITH A PUPIL</p> <p>Walking side by side can help regulate, reduce pressure and create connection.</p>	 <p>USE REGULATION SPACES</p> <p>Designated spaces provide a safe place to reset and self-regulate.</p>	 <p>OFFER SENSORY TOOLS</p> <p>Fidgets, weighted items, headphones or tactile tools can support regulation.</p>
--	--	---	---	--	---

KEY REMINDERS



Regulate yourself first. You can't pour from an empty cup.



Connection before correction. Safety before strategy.



Co-regulation takes time. Give it the time it needs.



Small, consistent moments build big changes.

Co-regulation is not about fixing behaviour. It's about supporting the nervous system and building connection.

9. Trauma-Informed Practice

We recognise that behaviour is often a response to perceived threat rather than deliberate defiance. In trauma-informed practice, staff understand that dysregulated behaviour may reflect survival responses rather than conscious choice. These responses commonly present as:

- **Fight** – verbal or physical resistance, aggression, or confrontational behaviour
- **Flight** – avoidance, running away, disengagement, or refusal to participate
- **Freeze** – shutdown, dissociation, reduced responsiveness, or inability to act or speak
- **Fawn** – appeasing behaviour, compliance under distress, or excessive people-pleasing to reduce perceived threat

These responses are not “misbehaviour” but adaptive survival strategies that may have developed in response to previous adverse experiences.

Staff Practice Expectations

To maintain a trauma-informed environment, staff consistently avoid interactions that may escalate distress or replicate patterns of harm. This includes:

- **Public correction** that may cause shame or loss of dignity
- **Humiliating, shaming, or belittling language** in any form
- **Sarcasm or irony**, which may be misinterpreted under stress
- **Raised voices or aggressive tone**, which can heighten threat perception
- **Punitive escalation**, particularly in moments of dysregulation

Staff are expected to prioritise calm, neutral, and predictable communication, especially when behaviour is escalating.

Core Principles of Response

Our approach is grounded in three key priorities:

- **Safety** – Ensuring the individual feels physically and emotionally secure
- **Connection** – Using relationship-based approaches to reduce distress and co-regulate emotions
- **Relational repair** – Restoring trust after incidents through reflective, respectful, and supportive engagement rather than punishment

Practice Commitment

We respond to distress with curiosity rather than judgement, aiming to understand underlying need before interpreting behaviour. Intervention focuses on de-escalation, emotional regulation support, and restoring a sense of safety and control for the individual. The overall goal is not compliance through authority, but long-term emotional security, trust, and stable relationships that reduce the need for survival-based responses.

10. Positive Reinforcement and Recognition

Positive reinforcement is a key component of behaviour support and relational practice. It strengthens emotional security, builds intrinsic motivation, and reinforces pro-social behaviour by making expectations clear and success visible. Recognition is used consistently and intentionally, not sporadically, to create a predictable environment where positive behaviour is noticed and valued.

Methods of Recognition

A range of strategies are used to ensure recognition is accessible, inclusive, and meaningful to all individuals:

- **Verbal praise** delivered in the moment, focusing on specific behaviours rather than general approval
- **Recognition boards** to publicly and positively acknowledge achievements and effort
- **Certificates** awarded for sustained effort, progress, or demonstration of key values
- **Reward activities** such as structured privileges or preferred experiences
- **Phone calls home** to share positive achievements with caregivers, strengthening home–school links
- **Celebration assemblies** to recognise wider achievements within the community setting
- **Postcards or written notes home** highlighting specific successes
- **Privilege opportunities** such as leadership roles, choice activities, or additional responsibilities earned through positive behaviour

These approaches are designed to reinforce success while maintaining dignity and avoiding comparison or competition that may undermine emotional safety.

Characteristics of Effective Praise

For reinforcement to be meaningful and behaviour-shaping, it must meet the following criteria:

- **Specific** – Clearly identifies the behaviour being recognised, rather than vague praise
- **Authentic** – Delivered sincerely, ensuring it is perceived as genuine and credible
- **Immediate** – Given as close as possible to the behaviour to strengthen the association
- **Meaningful** – Tailored to the individual’s preferences, needs, and motivational drivers

Effective praise focuses on effort, process, and regulation skills rather than innate traits or outcomes alone.

Examples of Effective Language

- “Thank you for asking for help when you needed it.”
- “You showed real resilience by trying again after finding that difficult.”
- “I noticed how calmly you solved that problem, even when it felt frustrating.”
- “You made a thoughtful choice to pause before responding.”
- “That was a responsible decision that helped keep things calm for everyone.”

Recording and Reporting Procedures

To ensure consistency and transparency, recognition is also documented where appropriate. This may include:

- Recording positive incidents on behaviour tracking systems or logs
- Noting recognition given in individual progress records
- Sharing achievements with relevant staff to support consistent reinforcement across settings
- Communicating successes to families and carers through agreed reporting channels

This ensures that positive behaviour is systematically recognised and contributes to a holistic understanding of progress over time.

Practice Rationale

Positive reinforcement is used proactively to increase desired behaviours, reduce reliance on corrective approaches, and strengthen relational trust. It supports the development of self-esteem, emotional regulation, and a sense of competence, contributing to long-term behavioural and emotional stability.

APPENDIX 1 — Emotional Regulation Plan (ERP) Template

Pupil Name:

DOB:

Year Group:

Key Adults:

Review Date:

1. Pupil Profile

- Strengths:
- Interests / motivators:
- Known triggers (sensory, relational, cognitive, environmental):
- Communication needs:
- Relevant diagnoses / SEMH considerations:

2. Early Signs of Dysregulation (Stage 2)

What this pupil typically shows when beginning to struggle:

-
-

Adult Response:

- Reduce demands
- Offer choices
- Use co-regulation tone and proximity
- Provide sensory tools
- Validate feelings

3. Escalation Indicators (Stage 3)

What this pupil shows when distress increases:

-
-

Adult Response:

- Reduce language
- Remove audience
- Maintain calm body language
- Offer safe space
- Call for support if needed

4. Crisis Presentation (Stage 4)

Behaviours that indicate loss of control:

-



-

Adult Response:

- Prioritise safety
- Use positive handling only if necessary
- Reduce sensory input
- Maintain dignity

5. Recovery (Stage 5)

Signs the pupil is returning to baseline:

-
-

Adult Response:

- Reconnect
- Offer reassurance
- Delay reflection until fully regulated

6. Regulation Strategies That Work for This Pupil

- Sensory strategies:
- Movement strategies:
- Relational strategies:
- Environmental adjustments:

7. Pupil Voice

What helps me when I'm upset:

What adults should avoid:

What I want adults to know about me:

8. Parent/Carer Input

-
-

Signatures:

Pupil:

Parent/Carer:

Key Adult:

SENCO:



APPENDIX 2 — Risk Reduction Plan (RRP)

Pupil Name:

DOB:

Plan Owner:

Review Date:

1. Identified Risks

Risk	Description	Likelihood	Potential Impact
		Low/Med/High	Low/Med/High

2. Triggers / Predictors

-
-
-

3. Protective Factors

- Trusted adults
- Preferred activities
- Peer relationships
- Environmental supports

4. Proactive Strategies (to reduce likelihood of risk)

- Predictable routines
- Sensory regulation
- Adjusted expectations
- Pre-teaching transitions
- Emotional check-ins

5. Active Strategies (when risk begins to increase)

- Co-regulation
- Reduce demands
- Offer time/space
- Provide grounding strategies
- Remove audience

6. Crisis Management Strategies

- Safety planning
- Positive handling (if required)
- Staff roles during crisis
- Communication protocol



- Emergency procedures

7. Post-Incident Actions

- Recovery support
- Restorative conversation
- Parent communication
- Review of triggers
- Update plan if needed

Signatures:

Plan Owner:

SENCO:

Parent/Carer:

Headteacher:



APPENDIX 3 — Positive Handling Record

Date of Incident:

Time:

Location:

Staff Involved:

Pupil:

1. Antecedents (What happened before?)

- Trigger or event
- Early signs of dysregulation
- Staff responses prior to handling

2. Description of Incident

- Behaviour observed
- Level of risk
- Impact on others

3. Positive Handling Used

Type of intervention:

- Supportive hold
- Escort hold
- Standing hold
- Seated hold
- Other (specify)

Duration:

Reason for use:

- Risk to self
- Risk to others
- Serious property damage
- Preventing absconding

4. Staff Actions

- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Language used
- Environmental adjustments

5. Pupil Response

- Emotional state
- Physical presentation
- Verbal communication



6. Post-Incident Support

- Recovery time
- Emotional regulation support
- First aid (if required)

7. Restorative Work Completed

- Summary of conversation
- Agreements made
- Repair actions

8. Parent/Carer Notification

- Method (phone/email/in person)
- Time and date
- Summary shared

9. Leadership Review

- Was handling necessary and proportionate?
- Any injuries?
- Any learning for staff?
- Any changes required to ERP/RRP?

Signatures:

Staff:

DSL (if safeguarding concern):

Headteacher:

APPENDIX 4 — Restorative Conversation Script

Purpose: To repair relationships, build understanding, and support accountability without shame.

1. Reconnect

- “I’m glad you’re here.”
- “You’re safe now.”

2. Explore What Happened

- “Talk me through what happened from your point of view.”
- “What were you feeling at the time?”

3. Identify Impact

- “Who else was affected?”
- “How do you think they felt?”

4. Reflect on Needs

- “What were you needing in that moment?”
- “What might help next time you feel like that?”

5. Repair and Restore

- “What do you think needs to happen to make things right?”
- “How can we move forward together?”

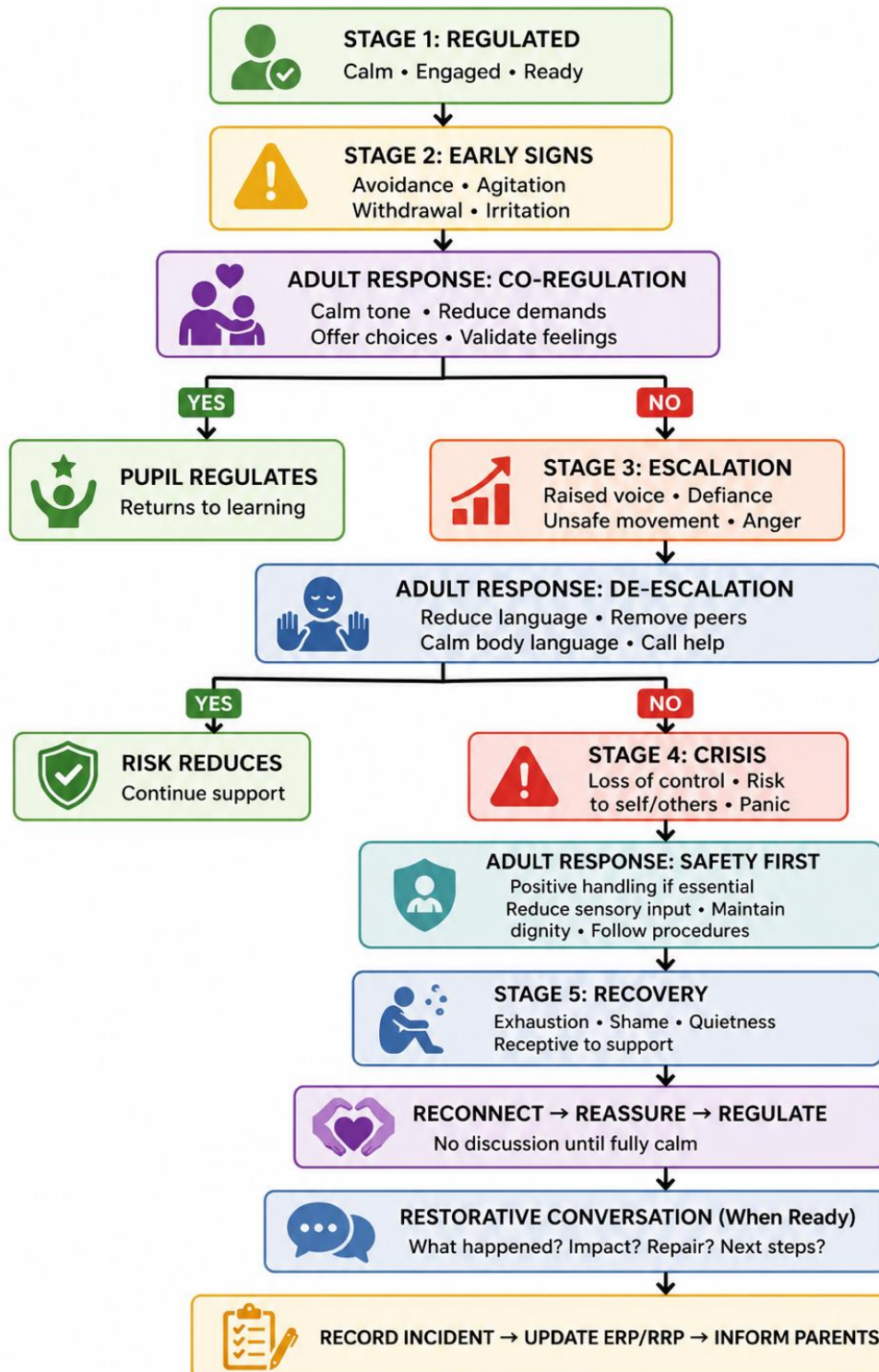
6. Agree Next Steps

- Repair actions
- Support needed
- Adult commitments
- Pupil commitments

Record of conversation:

- Summary:
- Agreed actions:
- Follow-up date:

APPENDIX 5 — Behaviour Incident Flowchart





APPENDIX 6 — Staff Training Requirements

All staff must receive training in:

1. Core Mandatory Training

- Safeguarding & Child Protection (annual)
- Prevent Duty
- Positive Handling (Team Teach or equivalent)
- Trauma-Informed Practice
- Attachment-Aware Approaches
- Neurodiversity Awareness
- De-escalation and Co-Regulation
- Restorative Practice
- Behaviour Recording & Reporting
- Health & Safety

2. Role-Specific Training

For SENCO / Pastoral Leads:

- SEMH assessment
- Risk Reduction Planning
- Multi-agency working

For Leadership:

- Behaviour data analysis
- Supervision & staff wellbeing
- Crisis management

3. Ongoing Professional Development

- Coaching and reflective practice
- Supervision sessions
- Annual refreshers in regulation and relational practice
- Scenario-based training
- Peer observations

4. Training Records

The school maintains:

- Individual staff training logs
- Whole-school training matrix
- Expiry/renewal dates
- Evidence of competency