



# Positive Behaviours, Relationships and Wellbeing Policy



The Stour Federation: Learn, Grow, Succeed Together

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

At Acorns Primary, we recognise the importance of exemplary relationships with others and positive behaviours are modelled continuously and professionally. We value children as individuals, use praise for effort, demonstrate warmth and empathy, and show respect for all (Carpenter, 2018). We work 'with' our children and families as a way of 'being', rather than a way of 'doing' to develop positive relationships and genuine, mutually beneficial learning experiences where everyone has something to bring, share and learn. (Finnis, Restorative Practice, 2021).

## **2. PHILOSOPHY**

'Be Ready, Be Respectful, Always do my best' and 'From Little Acorns, mighty oaks grow' form the basis of all relationships within our school community and behaviours for learning. Underpinned by a relational restorative ethos, this enables us to build and maintain healthy relationships and ensure the creation of a secure and safe environment to improve the emotional well-being of all. Our staff authentically and unconditionally care for the pupils in our school and check in regularly, listen deeply, support thoroughly, build children up and champion them, to facilitate them being the very best versions of themselves.

## **3. AIMS**

- To provide a consistent approach across the school.
- To build and maintain positive relationships within school (with peers and adults) to enable talking and connecting whilst supporting and challenging each other.
- To create a climate for learning that strengthens confidence and motivation, with the use of effective strategies to regulate emotions, enabling all members of the Acorns community to thrive, grow and reach their potential academically and socially in line with our school vision.
- To guide and support all members of the school community to effectively manage conflict and heal wounds caused by conflict, support forgiveness and repair of relationships, ensuring children and adults 'are crew and not passengers' along the way.

# FROM LITTLE ACORNS MIGHTY OAKS GROW



## OUR MISSION

We are **compassionate** - we ensure everyone belongs in our school community by recognising and nurturing diversity and equity.

We are **curious** - we create memorable experiences and aspirational journeys.

We are **courageous** - we can make a positive difference through determination and perseverance.

## OUR VISION

We will make a promise of excellence and unswerving devotion to create a community where each little acorn belongs. Through mutual respect and honesty, we will encourage and nurture.

We will lay the foundations to develop an enduring love of learning and ambition so pupils feel empowered to steer their own lives, challenging and supporting those around them.

We will motivate and provide direction and purpose so children build a sense of community they are proud to be a part of.

We will serve our whole school community to mastermind journeys and create memories to allow our mighty oaks to flourish.

## SCHOOL VALUES



Compassion



Curiosity



Courage

## TRUST VALUES

Relationships

Excellence

Service

Passion

Ethics

Collaboration

Trust



<https://www.acornsprimary.co.uk>

The Stour Federation’s values RESPECT values underpin system leadership, and the capacity to collaborate with others leads to a long-lasting driver for improvement - partnership only works when both sides are adding capacity and receiving support as the foundation of the relationship. Values inform expectations. Expectations influence behaviour. Behaviour creates culture.

## 5. STRATEGIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR THROUGHOUT SCHOOL

Staff in every role at Acorns have the same expectations of children’s behaviour throughout the school day and extended school day as outlined in this policy.

The following positive strategies will be used consistently by all adults in the school. They are designed to ensure ‘first attention goes to best conduct’ and to create clear, simple routines and expectations that make everyone feel valued members of our learning community and motivated to always try their best.

*‘The foundation of every school must be excellent behaviour. We should be keeping the focus on a visible culture of impeccable conduct, and making the consistency palpable, audible and highly visible.’*

Paul Dix (2017) ‘When the Adults Change, Everything Changes’

What?	How?
Create a sense of belonging	Simple positive greetings, taking time to get to know children and their families, checking in and checking out with children. Class charter which is refreshed at different times in the year to ensure it remains relevant and a useful tool.
Always model positive body languages and tone	Through positive communication. Polite, calm tone and language structures must be used and modelled at all times by adults.
Always using praise and noticing good behaviours (catch the children in, rather than catching them out)	Verbal praise, class recognition boards, house points, values tokens, stickers, stamps.
Sharing children’s successes with other staff, children, and families	Verbally through phonecalls/meetings, postcards home, Parent Assembly certificards (6Cs), Head Teacher certificates and ambassador awards, Parent Sharing afternoons, Parents Evenings, Seesaw, school displays.

Having a good awareness of children's emotions and well-being	Use of the RULER anchors: the mood meter, class charter, emotion regulation strategies, values and 'Be Ready, Be Respectful, Always do my best' when communicating, Thrive metaphors to demonstrate feelings.
A structured approach to tackling common misdemeanours to ensure consistency	Acorns Behaviour Blueprint

## 6. UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR AND THE THRIVE APPROACH (See Appendix 1 also)

Acorns staff are trained in supporting good behaviour for learning through the Thrive approach, providing the right support in the right place at the right time. The Thrive approach works to meet unmet developmental needs as a foundation to learning, supporting social and emotional development. Staff use the Vital Relational Functions (VRFs) to help pupils to regulate behaviour. These are:

- **Attune** - match the child's energy using your body, face and voice.
- **Validate** - let the child know that it is ok to have the feeling.
- **Contain** - be alongside as a helpful supportive adult.
- **Regulate** - soothe or stimulate back to social engagement.

Staff will also support a child by maintaining an attitude of PACE; maintaining this stance will develop trusting relationships and help a child to feel safe. We use the Thrive acronym WIN - I Wonder, I Imagine, I notice to help children think about and recognise their feelings.

- **Playful** - to reduce stress - personalised greetings, fun rehearsal of new routines.
- **Acceptance** - of the child's thoughts and feelings - E.g. 'I'm wondering if you loved playing football and are sad that you have had to come back inside.'
- **Curiosity** - to help elicit the child's views - E.g. "I've noticed that you have been quiet this morning."
- **Empathy** - the child feels connected - E.g. "I'm sensing that this is really tough for you."

We separate the child from the behaviour, we make it clear to the child that while their behaviour might be unacceptable, we continue to care about them and are committed to maintaining the relationship with them. We recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication and strive to support children through times of distress through recognising emotions and providing a quiet space. We follow our school values, showing compassion and curiosity when considering the behaviour of children.

The Thrive approach is designed to support our whole community to develop positive relationships with each other, and individually to support positive mental health. Thrive is designed to support children in learning how to recognise different emotions in themselves and others and how to successfully manage those emotions to develop self-regulation strategies.

We have fully trained Thrive Practitioners and all teaching staff have regular training in how to support children to ‘thrive’. All children in school are screened for their emotional needs through the thrive programme regularly. These are then used to identify support plans which are delivered by class teachers as part of their daily classroom practice. Some children may be identified as needing additional reparative support and be involved in separate work with a school adult trained in delivering this. Some children may be identified as requiring additional support daily to help them to attend and be punctual regularly and to feel settled at the start of each day. Parents are informed if children are involved in 1-1 support.

## 7. BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS

(This list provides examples, rather than being exhaustive.)

How is ‘good’ behaviour defined?	How is ‘misbehaviour’ defined?
Showing courtesy, consideration, and respect for others and property	Persistent disruption in lessons which interferes with the progress of themselves and others (talking, not managing distractions, acting in a non-collaborative manner)
Being honest and truthful	Aggressive or violent behaviour directed towards themselves and others
Working and playing co-operatively	Rude or abusive language, including using unkind words, swearing, or spitting
Caring for one another	Acts of vandalism to school or other’s property
Lining up and moving around the school in a quiet, orderly manner	Taking property which doesn’t belong to them
Using common manners: please, thank you, sorry, at appropriate times	Bullying, including acts of violence, racism, persistent name calling, online bullying – Several Times On Purpose (Refer to Anti-bullying Policy)
Displaying good table manners	Non completion of schoolwork or homework due to lack of effort applied
Taking responsibility for their learning: resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness, reciprocity (Building Learning Power)	

Developing deep learning characteristics: character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking (6Cs of global competencies)	
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## 7. CONFLICT IN SCHOOL

When conflict does occur, we need to give children the best chance possible of getting back on track. This is when staff will use the Acorns Behaviour Blueprint to guide restorative conversations. Staff will always consider the following when initiating these conversations with pupils:

1. Give children the opportunity to tell their side of the story – their unique perspective and account of what happened.
2. Encourage children to express their thoughts and feelings from their perspective (using the mood meter and RULER approach).
3. Provide an opportunity to understand the perspectives of others and the impact of the behaviour in question on everyone.
4. Give the space to think about how to prevent a recurrence of the behaviour.
5. Seek the opportunity to accept responsibility for the harm caused.
6. Provide the space to identify what needs everyone has.
7. Support the development of a plan to meet these needs and move forwards.
8. Provide the chance to explore issues of reintegration as part of moving forward.

(Finnis, Restorative Practice, 2021)

Finnis (Restorative Practice, 2021) promotes 'The Restorative Five' as a model to draw upon when restoring conflicts:

1. What happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. What are your feelings?
4. Who was affected and how were they affected?
5. What are everyone's needs when it comes to what should happen next?

These can be found on the Acorns Behaviour Blueprint and form the basis for restorative conversations within our school.

If a child is not responding positively to restorative conversations and there is no change to behaviours being displayed, the adult may ask the child to miss 10 minutes of breaktime or go into another classroom to complete their work. If both of these consequences have been implemented without positive effects, a senior teacher or Headteacher will be sent for.

8. ACORNS BEHAVIOUR BLUEPRINT



**Acorns Mission Statement: From Little Acorns, mighty oaks grow**

**Stour Federation: Learn, grow, succeed together**

**Aims**

- Consistent approach
- Strengthen confidence & motivation
- Talk & connect
- Support & challenge
- Effectively manage conflict

**Positive Recognition**

- Verbal praise
- House points
- Values tickets
- Recognition board
- Stickers & stamps
- Certificards & Ambassadors
- Postcards

**Reminder**

**Warning - assert choice direction**

**Talk Time - restorative conversation**

**Talk Time**

1. What happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. What are your feelings?
4. Who was affected and how were they affected?
5. What are everyone's needs when it comes to what should happen next?

From Little Acorns, mighty oaks grow.

Learn, Grow, Succeed Together.

Compassion, Curiosity, Courage

**Be ready.**

**Be respectful.**

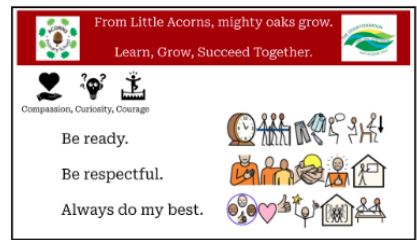
**Always do my best.**

8a. CONSEQUENCES POSTERS USED AROUND SCHOOL

Reminder

Warning - assert choice direction

Talk Time - restorative conversation



Talk Time

1. What happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. What are your feelings?
4. Who was affected and how were they affected?
5. What are everyone's needs when it comes to what should happen next?

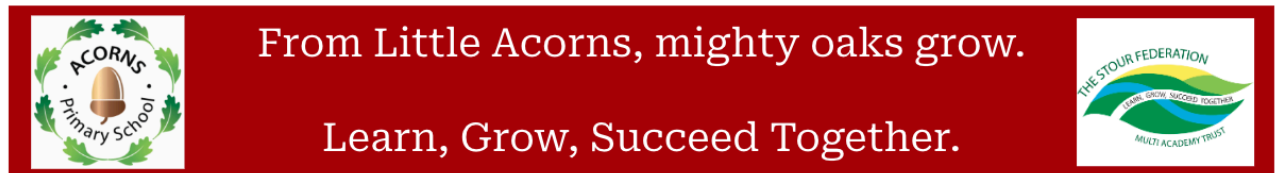
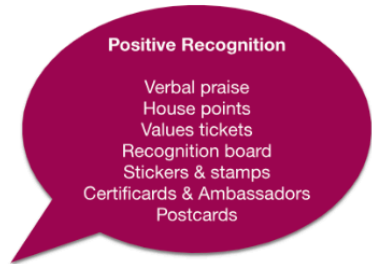
Consequences



10 minutes missed break



Work in another classroom



Consequences



10 minutes missed break



Work in another classroom



## **9. USING DE-ESCALATION AS A STRATEGY FOR MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS**

Occasionally, pupils may experience anxiety or other feelings that may trigger certain behaviours. This is usually as an expression of an unmet need or not getting their desired outcome in a situation. Our aim as a school is to employ strategies to avoid a young person reaching their 'peak'. A range of strategies are implemented to achieve this, depending on the age of the child, circumstance, cognitive ability and the needs of the child. Interventions are tailor-made to the pupil involved. For pupils who are frequently dysregulated, a Thrive Behaviour Support Plan is implemented that outlines strategies for that individual. It also outlines how the pupil can best support themselves in the regulation of their emotions.

## **10. SERIOUS BREACHES OF THE SCHOOL'S BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

We promote equity and treat each child and their behaviour individually, according to their needs. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to behaviour and possible sanctions. This does not mean that children with any underlying condition or SEND need are not expected to follow our behaviour expectations.

The decision to suspend or permanently exclude a child is a serious one and will only be taken in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy, and if allowing the child to remain in the school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the child or others in the school. Please refer to The Stour Federation's Suspensions and Exclusions policy; this policy is in line with the [DfE guidance](#) on school suspensions and permanent exclusions. Serious breaches may include:

- Where behaviour presents a threat to themselves and others.
- Serious disruption to the calm running of the school and effective education of others.
- Presents continued deliberate, unwanted behaviour.
- Uses deliberate abusive, derogatory or racist language.
- Causes deliberate damage to property.

## **11. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

We understand that all children are individuals, and all have the right to personalised behaviour management support. We ensure that all children are treated equally and fairly in accordance with this policy. We know that the Disability Discrimination Act applies when behaviour is the disability and that we have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to environments, policies, and procedures to ensure the equality of opportunity to which we all aspire.

## **12. BULLYING**

At Acorns Primary School, we acknowledge that bullying may happen from time to time, and we will deal with incidents as promptly and effectively as possible. As per our Mission and Vision, we aim to uphold a caring ethos where each 'little acorn belongs'.

We use the acronym **STOP** to remind children that while bullying behaviour can be a one-off incident, bullying is when the behaviour carries on **Several Times On Purpose** and the child should **Start Telling Other People**.

All allegations of bullying will be recorded in line with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy recording procedure and acted upon, with outcomes reported back to School Leaders and those involved, both the child or parent/carer who has made the allegation and the child who has done the bullying if proven. See Anti-Bullying Policy. Any incidents of bullying will be recorded on CPoms.

### **13. ONLINE SAFETY AND BULLYING**

We educate children about how to stay safe online and to make positive choices about their online behaviour as part of our curriculum (using Project Evolve as a teaching resource) and in assemblies. Children are taught to report any online abuse or bullying just as they would any other behaviour.

Mobile phone use is not allowed in school and only school devices with the correct firewalls and behaviour reporting software may be used. If children need to bring a phone to school (for walking home with or going to a friend's house after school), they must be switched off on arrival at school. They must then be handed in to the school office where they will be kept safe until collection at the end of the school day. School will take no responsibility for the phone if it is damaged or stolen. Children who do not use their phone responsibly, either in school or on their way to or from school, may be banned from bringing phones to school either permanently or for a period of time.

### **14. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNICATION**

All staff are responsible for: modelling positive behaviours, promoting the philosophy and aims of this policy, implementing the strategies within this policy and for having restorative conversations with pupils.

The school behaviour log on the Acorns Google Drive will be used by staff to record achievements (such as Headteacher awards, certificards, ambassadors) and minor behaviour incidents as part of the monitoring process. More serious behaviour incidents (including bullying, racism, online safety breaches, physical assault, homophobic incidents, sexual harassment, sexual violence) will be recorded on CPoms. Both the log and CPoms will be checked weekly by the Headteacher.

Any restorative conversations not led by the class teacher, will be fed back to the class teacher in brief, so that situations can be monitored effectively and fairly.

Depending on the incident, children must always be encouraged to suggest how to put things right, but also depending on the incident, some things have to happen in addition to their own suggestions - for example parents contacted, some loss of playtime to reflect on what went wrong.

On the rare occasion when a child does not respond to a restorative discussion, they will be given thinking time. This may involve spending time with the Headteacher.

All parents, children and staff are responsible for implementing the school's Home/School Agreement and parents can expect to be kept well informed of their child's behaviours in school (at Parents' Evenings and more frequently if and when appropriate).

Class teachers will inform school leaders and seek advice when there is a continued need for restorative conversations with the same child/ren.

Class teachers will phone parents/carers to explain and share any ongoing concerns; these concerns will be dealt with in a timely manner and not left until parents' evening consultations/end of year reports. Sometimes behaviour 'mistakes' are cumulative and whereas an isolated incident may not need to be shared with parents/carers, where a pattern emerges, parents/carers do need to be informed and this conversation should be one of mutual support - a talk around what can be done both at home and at school to support better behaviour choices for the child.

Parents/Carers will be informed by letter if their child has intentionally used swear words (with meaning and purpose) in school.

The Headteacher will regularly speak with pupils to celebrate positive behaviours and to support conflict resolution, relational repair and reconciliation as and when necessary.

## **15. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

We expect parents and carers to support the actions of the school but in order to gain their support, we must work in partnership through good communication:

- Sharing our behaviour policy.
- Informing parents/carers of any concerns that we have as early as necessary, as detailed above.
- Encouraging our parents/carers to keep us informed of any behaviour issues they may be experiencing at home and of any traumas that may have occurred i.e. death of a family member, change in family circumstances, as these may influence their child's behaviour.
- Encouraging parents/carers to report back good behaviour/work so staff can follow up with a reward if judged necessary.

Parents/Carers who have any questions or would like to talk further about behaviour and relationships at Acorns Primary School are very welcome to make an appointment to speak with the Headteacher.

If parents and carers have any concerns about the way that their child has been treated, they should initially contact the class teacher. If the concern continues, they should then contact the Headteacher. If these discussions cannot resolve the problem, parents or carers should refer to our formal Complaints Policy on our website.

## 16. THE USE OF SAFE TOUCH AND PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with pupils for a variety of reasons, with the child's consent, for example:

- To comfort pupils in distress.
- To gently direct a pupil.
- For curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc.).
- In an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or pupils.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and pupils takes place, staff must consider the following:

- The pupils age and level of understanding.
- The pupils' individual characteristics and history.
- The location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present).

Staff have undertaken de-escalation training and some staff have completed safer handling training.

### **The Use of Reasonable Force**

The school follows the DfE's non-statutory advice [‘Use of Reasonable Force’, April 2026](#); ‘reasonable’ force means ‘using no more force than is needed’. All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (Section 93 Education and Inspection Act 2006).

At Acorns Primary School, there are a number of staff who have completed safer handling training, giving them the confidence and strategies needed to de-escalate challenging situations and reduce the need for physical intervention. De-escalation and safer handling training, supports positive, respectful and safe relationships, equipping everyone to manage distressed behaviours and conflicts safely and respectfully.’

Staff will only manually handle a pupil if:

- The child is at risk of harming themselves or others.
- The child is causing significant damage to property.

Staff will seek support from a colleague if help is needed (either verbally or through the red triangle system in school).

Incidents of positive, manual handling will be recorded in the Bound and Numbered Book stored in the Headteacher's office and parents will be informed.

## **17. SAFEGUARDING**

If staff feel that a child's behaviour represents a safeguarding risk, they will report this via CPOMS. (See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy).

If anybody has any concerns over the behaviour of an adult in school they should complete a yellow form detailing their concern and hand it to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. (Refer to Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy).

## **18. LEAVING THE PREMISES**

In the serious event of a child leaving the premises, the Headteacher, and in their absence the Deputy Safeguarding Lead should be informed and they will be responsible for informing the police and the child's parents/carers. A member of staff should observe the child, if practical to do so, but on no account should they chase or run after the child, as this may make the situation worse.

## **19. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Headteacher is responsible for the annual review of this policy and for ensuring it is implemented by all staff consistently.

The Local Academy Council Governors for Acorns Primary School are responsible for approving this policy. They will also monitor its effectiveness, holding the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

## **20. SUMMARY**

'All children have the right to feel safe all of the time as well as the right to talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small' (Protective Behaviours). Social environments have a significant influence on social emotional skills, well-being and behaviour; children who have a good start in life are shown to have significant advantages and tend to do better at school, attend regularly, form more meaningful friendships and are significantly less likely to offend or experience physical or mental health problems (<https://www.nurtureuk.org/nurture/what-nurture>). At Acorns Primary we aim to support children in the development of social and emotional skills and relationships so that they can do well at school and develop their resilience and their capacity to deal more confidently with life's challenges.

## **21. LINKED POLICIES**

**This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies:**

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Behaviour (Code of Conduct)
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

- Helping Hands Guide for Volunteers
- The Stour Federation Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

**Policy Date: July 2024**

**Approved by Acorns' Local Academy Council.**

## Appendix 1: Thrive De-escalation Strategies



### Thrive De-escalation Process

We recognise that wellbeing and behaviour are inextricably linked. Research into child development, neuroscience and attachment theory all provide us with the understanding of the direct correlation between positive mental health and optimum education outcomes. When children experience safety in their relationships, they can challenge themselves and are open to new learning. We know that a strong focus on a pupil's wellbeing increases the likelihood of children achieving their full potential so it is vital that wellbeing is placed at the very heart of our school.

We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication, we therefore take responsibility for listening to the needs a child is expressing through their behaviour, whilst setting clear boundaries and expectations.

The escalation of a child's emotional intensity will always have an inciting stimuli, be it something said by a peer or something related to an adverse childhood experience that triggered them. This will cause a release of adrenaline into the body, heightening their 'fight' or 'flight' response which will inhibit their ability to regulate their emotional responses. Your first step should always be the removal of the triggering stimuli. This can be done by moving the individual or their peers to a safe space.

We can help children to regulate their emotional state in many ways. Guided by the Thrive approach de-escalation begins with the **Vital Relational Functions** (VRFs):

- **Attune** - match the child's energy using your body, face and voice.
- **Validate** - let the child know that it is ok to have the feeling.
- **Contain** - be alongside as a helpful supportive adult.
- **Regulate** - soothe or stimulate back to social engagement.

#### Things to consider whilst using the VRF's

We understand that children who are dysregulated do not have access to their prefrontal cortex (thinking brain) therefore language should be kept to a minimum. Be alongside to soothe and

contain, using short phrases such as 'I can see this is tricky for you, and I will keep you safe' or 'let's breathe together'.

It is important for the child to recognise the sensations (trembling, pounding heart, fuzzy feeling, queasiness etc) that they experience and relate them, with adult support, to the actual feeling i.e anger, sadness, excitement.

It is important to be empathic and non-judgmental - feelings for the child are absolutely real for them whether you as the adult feel they are justified or not. Avoid reasoning with the child until later. Shining a light too soon may lead to escalation.

Additional adults getting involved may escalate the situation. The adult dealing with the incident is the person who takes the lead to request help or to tag team. We recognise that relationships vary between staff and pupils, it is important that this is held in mind when staffing an incident.

Once the child is regulated, the child will need an adult to lend them their thinking brain (Captain Thinking). The following questions will allow learning to take place.

- Can you show me what happened? (using the arts will allow the child to express the incident eg. using puppets or a sand tray.)
- I am wondering if you felt angry / frightened / sad etc.
- I can imagine it's difficult to have those big feelings but it is not ok to ....., I think I could help you with that.
- How do you think..... is feeling?
- I wonder if there is a way that we could make this right?

The adult lends their thinking brain to problem-solve, by paraphrasing, offering it back in small chunks to the child to work out an appropriate solution. It is important to focus on the issue at hand and not bring up previous incidents or events that are not relevant. Use **WIN** ( I wonder, I imagine, I notice), not necessarily in that order. All staff will take responsibility for leading restorative conversations to ensure a positive outcome.

It is important that after you have been dealing with a child presenting with distressed behaviour, you take time to reflect on what has happened and check in with a trusted colleague.

