



# Behaviour for Learning Policy

## Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Provost Williams CE Academy

*'Let your light shine'*

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## 'Let your light shine'

Our vision for our community is for everyone, children and adults, to flourish and shine brightly as the best and fullest version of their unique selves. We aim high and do not let circumstances limit us. In the Old Testament, we see that God created all human beings in his image as unique, loved individuals. It was God's plan for all of creation, including human beings, to flourish. God's desire is for us all to be amazing – loved, valued, represented, celebrated, and fulfilled.

**Genesis 1:27:** "So, God created human beings, making them to be like himself." Psalm 139:13-14: "For you created my inmost being you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful."

**John 10:10:** "I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of."

Our behaviour policy is firmly rooted in Christian values and the behaviour and safety of pupils is of paramount importance. Everyone is expected to maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, to accept responsibility for their behaviour and encourage others to do the same. Our behaviour policy guides staff to teach self-discipline not blind compliance and is rooted in positive practices that celebrate good behaviour in line with our school values which are:

- Love
- Hope
- Forgiveness
- Respect
- Fairness
- Honesty

These values underpin the way in which we play and learn together. Staff are expected to identify when children demonstrate the values and use verbal praise.

### **Aim of the policy**

- To create a culture of exceptionally good behaviour so that children can maximise their learning.
- To ensure that all learners are treated fairly, shown respect and to promote good relationships.
- To refuse to give learners attention and importance for poor conduct.
- To help learners take control over their behaviour and be responsible for the consequences of it.
- To build a community which values kindness, care, good humour, good temper and empathy for others.
- To improve relationships.
- To ensure that excellent behaviour is a minimum expectation for all.

### **Purpose of the policy**

To provide simple, practical procedures for staff and learners that:

- Recognise behavioural norms.

- Positively reinforces behavioural norms.
- Promote self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Teach appropriate behaviour through positive interventions.

## **ENTITLEMENT**

1. Every child has the right to learn without disturbance from others, and in a quality environment.
2. Every teacher has the right to teach.
3. Children and their teachers have the right to have difficulties in behaviour in education situations addressed without prejudice.
4. All persons involved in difficulties in behaviour have a right to have their views and feelings considered.
5. Policy and practice should actively promote mutual respect for schools, parents, teachers and children.
6. Staff should be supported through professional development and on a day-to-day basis by the Headteacher and Senior teachers.

## **PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES:**

1. Equal opportunity and maximum inclusion should be always encouraged. An individual's difficulties and needs can vary over time and in different settings. Thus, organisations and individuals should avoid "labelling" children and young people.
2. All children should have maximum access to the mainstream curriculum and children should be educated, as far as possible, with their mainstream peer group. Differences are acknowledged and accepted, and a differentiated approach is sometimes necessary to draw children in.
3. Policy, planning and action in the field of behaviour management should be anti-discriminatory and conform to the equal opportunity policy.

## **School Rules:**

- Ready
- Respectful
- Safe

These three core rules are the overarching principles which guide the expectations of pupils and staff in the school.

## **Consistency and Staff Expectations**

All staff are expected to

- Refer to 'Ready, Respectful, Safe'
- Model positive behaviours and build relationships.
- Plan lessons that engage, challenge, and meet the needs of all learners.
- Use a visible recognition mechanism throughout every lesson – Green, silver, gold and notes home.

- Be calm and take time when going through the steps. Work to the principle of prevent before sanction.
  - Follow up every time, retain ownership and engage in reflective dialogue with learners.
  - Never ignore or walk past learners who are behaving badly.

Each classroom should display the schools Ready, Respectful, Safe poster which outlines what this looks like for the children. These should also be on display throughout the school. This can be found in appendix 3

### **POSITIVE APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOUR:**

We seek to promote positive behaviour and reduce that which is negative. In all circumstances positive approaches to change or improve behaviour are preferred. Interventions in response to unwanted behaviour should be the least necessary and least intrusive.

The 'behavioural environment' should be evaluated at the starting point of all interventions and work to improve the context should always be accorded high priority. To this end, good relationships between staff, parents and pupils should be strong and teachers should model the good behaviour they require of the children in their care.

We recognise and reward learners who go 'over and above' our standards. Although there are awards, our staff understand that a quiet word of personal praise can be as effective as a larger, more public, reward.

### **FRAMEWORK FOR INTERVENTION FOR UNWANTED BEHAVIOUR**

All children start each morning and afternoon on 'Ready to Learn'. If a child is displaying behaviour that is leading to the significant disruption of learning for themselves or others and cannot be managed by low-level classroom management techniques, then the following steps should be implemented:

**Stage 1 (Green)** - Clear verbal reminder of the positive behaviour expected, starting with the child's name so they are clear it relates to them, e.g. If B is shouting out, "*B, remember that we put our hand up and wait to be called to talk so that we are fair to everyone. Thank you. If I have to remind you again, we will have to move your name to 'Time to Think'.*" If C is out of her seat, "*C, remember we stay sitting in our seats during learning to be safe and so that everyone can concentrate. Thank you. If I have to remind you again, we will have to move your name to 'Time to Think'.*" This reminder should always be given in a calm voice and encourage the child to make a good choice.

**Stage 2 (Orange)** - Second clear verbal reminder as above. At this stage, the child's name will be moved to 'Time to think'. It should always be clear what the child is thinking about and how they can return to green 'Ready to learn' quickly. As soon as a child is meeting expectations and has settled, their name should be returned to green, and their success acknowledged.

**Stage 3 (Blue)** - Final verbal reminder as stage 1 and child's name moved to 'Do something differently'. Where needed, an adult in the classroom may be used to support the child to make the right choice. Again, once the child is meeting expectations and has settled, their name should be returned to green, and their success acknowledged.

**Stage 4 (Red)** - If there is no change in behaviour, then the child's name should be moved to 'Time for a consequence' and the child should be clear that persistent disruption has now led to a consequence being issued.

The consequence should be that the child will miss 10 minutes of their playtime with a member of SLT. If a child is at this stage before playtime, then it should happen on that day; if the consequence is issued in the afternoon, playtime will be missed the following morning. Class teachers should inform parents at the end of the school day that their child has reached red, and the incident reported on CPOMS, ensuring the behaviour category has been checked.

During any missed playtime, children will reflect on what went wrong and understand how to rectify it. They will complete a reflection form. If appropriate, they may also be asked to write a letter of apology or write down. See appendices 1 and 2 for a summary of this approach and suggestions for the structure of a conversation.

Staff will always deliver sanctions calmly and with care. It is in nobody's interest to confront poor behaviour with anger.

### **EARLY YEARS - RECEPTION - DESIRABLE BEHAVIOUR**

Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour need to be learned and therefore taught in Reception. A specific behaviour will therefore be the focus of Personal and Social Development each week through our 'Tweak of the Week'. These will include the following:

1. Kind hands/touching
2. Walking feet
3. Good listening
4. Good manners
5. Look after our things
6. Share and take turns

The focus for the week will be displayed and shared with parents.

Throughout the week all staff will be involved in constant prompting and reminding children what is expected of them. Children will be praised when the target behaviour is noticed. Each specific behaviour will be a focus at least once a term.

### **REWARDS**

Children will be instantly rewarded through verbal praise and stickers. Children will be rewarded using dojos which can be traded in for rewards.

## UNWANTED BEHAVIOURS

Examples of ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE behaviours are:

Acceptable Behaviour	Unacceptable Behaviour
Respecting others and their property	Rudeness and aggression towards others
Being helpful	No fighting or physical attacks of any kind
Saying 'please' and 'thank you'	Name calling
Being fair	Refusal to follow instructions
Considering other	Threatening behaviour or bullying
Valuing others point of view	Stealing or damaging property
Playing well together	Leaving the classroom/school without permission
Trying your best with all you do	Behaving in an offensive way to others

**This is not an exhaustive list, and the school will determine where other behaviours sit within the policy.**

Procedure for children who exhibit unwanted behaviours:

1. Verbal reprimand – about the specific behaviour. The desired behaviour will be explained. The child can rectify the consequence of their behaviour and has a fresh start, e.g. says 'sorry' or picks up toy.
2. Remove the child from the situation and re-direct to another activity. When appropriate, revisit the behaviour and teach more appropriate responses.
3. Parents will be consulted if the unacceptable behaviour persists over a period of days or weeks, at the discretion of the practitioner.
4. If behaviour continues a personalised behaviour support plan should be put in place, which should be tightly targeted and bespoke to the child. The SENDCo and other members of staff who know the child well should contribute to this. This should be shared with parents.

### KEY STAGE ONE & TWO

Each child begins each day afresh – those pupils who show behaviour that should be rewarded can be praised through house points, verbal praise, stickers and any other devices individualised by teachers to their class

Following the framework detailed above teachers should make use of moving the child's name up the board if recognition can be given for demonstrating the focus behaviour the teacher has chosen for their class that day or week.

If any child is sent out of class, this then needs to be logged on CPOMs, so that the behaviour can be tracked to enable leaders and teachers to identify any trends or triggers that could help prevent

further issues occurring. Parents should also be notified if their child has had to leave class. Sample of the log in Appendix 4.

For particularly good work/behaviour children could be sent with their good work/behaviour to Miss Cullen

From time to time, teachers may use additional strategies and rewards in response to the needs of a particular group or individual. Such a strategy would be discussed and agreed with the SENCo.

### **THE SEVERE CLAUSE**

This comes into effect where misbehaviour is of such a serious nature that the hierarchical consequences are not appropriate e.g.:

- Child wilfully inflicts physical harm on another person.
- Child wilfully destroys property.
- Child is defiant and refuses to co-operate
- Child shows a wilful lack of respect to adults anything which prevents the rest of the class functioning, (i.e. screaming, swearing, general disruption etc)

If any of the above behaviours are seen the Headteacher/SLT should be sought to intervene, who will in turn communicate with parents. It is important that this clause is used with discretion. Other agencies are likely to be involved if these behaviours are repeated.

### **The Curriculum**

The PSHE curriculum includes work on self-esteem, building confidence, exploring and valuing diversity and reinforcing positive behaviour. Jigsaw forms part of the PSHE curriculum and has a high priority within the structure of the school week. Jigsaw encourages children to co-operate with each other and to value others.

### **SUSPENSION AND PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS**

In line with the DFE document 'Behaviour in Schools' Headteachers can use suspension and permanent exclusion in response to serious incidents or in response to persistent poor behaviour following in school sanctions and interventions.

Internal exclusions can be given because of severe incidents. When a child must spend time out of the classroom, they continue their learning, and parents will be informed on the same day. Removal from the classroom can be:

- To maintain the safety of all pupils and to restore stability following a high level of disruption.
- To enable disruptive pupils to be taken to a place where education can be continued in a managed environment.
- To allow pupil to regain calm in a safe place.

## **SUSPENSION**

Where a child is suspended from school the parents will be notified without delay as will the Local Authority and work will be set which should be returned to school for marking. Suspension may be used for whole days and parts of a school day including lunchtime and, in all cases, the above applies. Very serious incidents including violence, verbal abuse or behaviour threatening the health and safety of others or damage to property are likely to result in a fixed term exclusion. Parents will be notified and expected to attend a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (usually the head or deputy).

## **PERMANENT EXCLUSION**

A permanent exclusion is when a pupil is no longer allowed to attend a school (unless the pupil is reinstated). The decision to exclude a pupil permanently should only be taken:

- in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and
- where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others such as staff or pupils in the school.

For any permanent exclusion, head teachers should take reasonable steps to ensure that work is set and marked for pupils during the first five school days where the pupil will not be attending alternative provision. Any appropriate referrals to support services or notifying key workers (such as a pupil's social worker) should also be considered.

Incidents involving serious issues such as arson, assault, bullying (verbal or physical), theft, knives or persistent disruptive behaviour are likely to lead to permanent exclusion. In such cases parents are always notified and their right to appeal explained. In any of these cases the school may also involve the police, governors and Local Education Authority.

**Permanent exclusion is always a last resort**

## **PLAYGROUND BEHAVIOUR**

To ensure that pupils realise that their behaviour throughout the day should be consistent, Lunchtime Supervisors will reinforce the behaviours used within the classrooms at lunchtimes. Any behaviour exhibited in the playground can be rewarded via stickers or Dojo points whilst any negative behaviour choices should be dealt with immediately as it would in the classroom, leading to a verbal warning, time out and ultimately being reported to the senior member of staff on duty as appropriate.

Pupils demonstrating negative behaviour will be reported to class teacher at the end of lunch and recorded on CPOMs, alerting Sherrise Cullen and Davina Lambeth. "Severe" behaviours will be referred to the senior member of staff on duty.

Children who are having difficulty behaving well at lunchtime may be offered the support of the learning mentor. Persistent inappropriate behaviour for more than 5 days will mean that parents will be warned that it may be necessary to exclude children at dinner time if the bad behaviour continues for another week. Children will then be excluded from school at dinner time until the child can demonstrate a full understanding of the expectation and the ability to behave appropriately. In addition, the parents will sign an agreement stating their commitment to supporting the school's expectations.

### Expectations

Children should:

1. Play ball games when given permission and use all equipment with respect for others.
2. Use toilets for their given purpose.
3. Play on grassed areas when conditions are dry enough and/or made safe, with permission.
4. Always remain within sight of a supervisor.
5. Stay within school boundaries.
6. Play with the games provided and not bring toys from home.
7. Place litter in the bins provided.
8. At the end of playtime children will walk to class quietly.

### Midday Supervisors

Midday supervisors have the same authority as teachers during the lunch break; we expect the same adult/child relationship throughout the day. A supervisor will be responsible for a class. They will maintain a daily class record of behaviour incidents and give written feedback to the class teacher.

### **Our Social norms**

1. When moving inside school, always walk.
2. The school's uniform list and expectations of appearance should be followed.
3. Saying Good Morning and Good afternoon
4. Opening doors for one another
5. Saying please and thank you
6. Welcoming visitors

The structures for positive reinforcement and consequences will be known and given a high profile within the classroom and centrally within the school.

### **INCLUSION**

All adults in the school are required to take account of students' individual needs and circumstances when applying the school's behaviour policy. This is part of our professional responsibilities. Such students are primarily those with SEND but other students may need to have their needs and circumstances considered. This may include students that are at risk of exclusion, looked after children, children with illnesses, young carers or children with EAL. As a school we will make reasonable adjustments in the application of the behaviour policy to ensure the needs of these children are met and when applying sanctions, we refer to the Equality Act 2010 and schools' guidance. These will form personalised plans. These will be made at the discretion of the school. Examples of when adjustments might need to be made:

1. When a child who is on the autistic spectrum makes a personal comment about an adult's appearance when that child has no understanding that this was inappropriate.
2. When a child who hasn't followed instructions has speech and language problems and didn't understand the complex instructions.
3. When a child needs an additional short-term reward for achieving targets set as they have emotional needs.

## **WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND PARENTS**

At Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Provost Williams we believe that it is essential to have good communication and parental involvement to promote good behaviour and discipline amongst the children in our care. Parents should be informed, at least in an informal way, when an expression of a concern is made. Annually parents will be reminded of the schools Behaviour for Learning Policy.

## **WORKING WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES**

Provision for emotional and behavioural difficulties will be made by contacting the most appropriate agency and working in partnership with parents. In the best interests of the child there must be close cooperation and agreement in working practices between agencies. External agencies may be involved at any time through the usual school procedures. Such Agencies may include: - Educational Psychology Service (EPS), Children's Services, SEND Supported.

## **POSITIVE HANDLING**

Very occasionally situations may arise in which positive handling may be required. Should a child need positive handling to ensure their own and others safety, a member of staff who has been 'Team Teach' trained may use such strategies as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing the child from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Causing personal injury or damage to property
- Engaging in behaviour which puts their own or others personal safety at risk

Practical methods to defuse the situation should always be considered before positive handling is used including keeping calm, offering verbal prompts or retreat. Team Teach is based on the principle of 95% de-escalation and staff should ensure that all possibilities are explored prior to positive handling being implemented- strategies can be found in Appendix 5.

'Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique but a regrettable and infrequent 'side effect' of ensuring that a service user remains safe' (George Matthews Team Teach director).

If possible, a member of the Senior Leadership Team should be sent for before any form of physical intervention is used.

DFE guidance states 'All teachers and staff the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils automatically have the legal power to use force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.' At Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Provost Williams this includes all teachers, teaching assistants, and admin staff. Members of staff should not put themselves at risk. An individual would not be seen to be failing in their duty of care by not using force to prevent injury, if doing so threatened their own safety. If reasonable force is necessary, then staff will ensure that there is at least a second member of staff with them where possible.

The Governing Body of Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Provost Williams has adopted DFE guidance on 'the Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils' and the Warwickshire LA guidance on the Use of Reasonable force. Most of the guidance is non-statutory, though staff are strongly advised to follow all sections of the guidance, but the section on 'recording and reporting significant incidents' is statutory. All instances where positive handling has been used are recorded in the Team Teach incident book and scanned into CPOMS and parents should be informed as part of their feedback about their child's behaviour.

Where positive handling is part of a child's special needs plan, they have a positive handling plan which is shared with staff. These plans are also shared with parents. (see appendix 6).

Where possible staff should be released, and a short recovery time provided when positive handling has been used.

## **SEARCHING AND CONFISCATION**

At Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Provost Williams CE Academy, we follow the DFE guidance' Searching, screening and confiscation: July 2022

### Searching

Headteachers, and staff they authorise, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have prohibited items such as: knives, weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items (not an exhaustive list), any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or likely to be used, to commit an offence or to cause personal injury. An article specified in regulations: tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images. Before any searching takes place, the staff member should explain to the pupil why they are being searched. When a search takes place the designated safeguarding lead should be informed, and the incident should be recorded on CPOMS and should include the following information:

- The date, time and location of the search
- Which pupil was searched

- Who conducted the search and any other adults or pupils present
- What was being searched for
- The reason for searching
- What items, if any, were found
- What follow up action was taken because of the search
- The law states that the member of staff carrying out the search should be the same sex as the pupil. Parents would also be informed.

Confiscation- School staff will seize any prohibited item found, because of the search.

Screening- Schools can require pupils to undergo screening by walk-through or handheld devices. This is due to a schools' statutory duty to ensure the safety of staff, pupils and visitors. Should a pupil refuse to be screened the school can refuse to allow the pupil on site. In this instance the school have not excluded the pupil, and the absence should be unauthorised.

Further detail can be found in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

### **STAFF INDUCTION**

The behaviour policy alongside the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection policy outlines the school's response to any instances of Child-on-Child abuse.

### **TRANSITION**

At Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Provost Williams CE Academy, we are aware that transition between year groups can be an unnerving and anxious time for children. A whole school transition day will take place annually and, prior to this, children will have the opportunity to complete an 'All about me' sheet for their new class teacher which the staff will receive prior to Transition Day. For pupils with specific needs, enhanced transition takes place. Staff are provided with the opportunity to transfer information which includes strategies that work with pupil for whom challenging behaviour is an issue. The SEND lead will also arrange meetings with class teachers for specific pupils

### **DEVELOPMENT MONITORING & EVALUATION**

The effectiveness of the Behaviour Policy will be monitored by the Headteacher. This policy will be reviewed annually.

## Appendix 1

### Scripting conversation a sharp Intervention

- Removes 'magic' systems and bribes
  - Relationship management allows adults to become more skilled at defusing behaviour.
  - 30 second conversations for one-to-one interventions for poor behaviour (*See script*).
1. **Gentle approach, personal, non-threatening, side on, eye level or lower.**
  2. **State the behaviour that was observed, and which rule was broken.**  
*You need to understand that every choice has a consequence, and your behaviour is disruptive/dangerous.*  
**Ask the child:** What rule have you broken?
  3. **Tell the learner what the sanction is.**  
If you choose to (insert desired behaviour), that would be fantastic.  
If you choose not to, then this will happen... (consequence)  
**Immediately refer to previous good behaviour as a model for the desired behaviour.**  
Do you remember earlier today when you... that's who I want to see now.  
I'll leave you to make your decision.  
**Follow with:** You are going to be brilliant. I believe you can be a success. I care about what happens.
  4. **Walk away; allow the learner time to decide what to do next.**  
**If there are comments as you walk away write them down and follow up later.**
  5. **Look around the room with a view to catch somebody following the rules.**  
A copy of the script can be displayed in your classroom, readily available for all adults to use

## Appendix 2

### 30 second script

Limit formal one-to-one interventions for poor behaviour in class to **30 seconds** each time. Get in, deliver the message, anchor the child's behaviour with an example of their previous good behaviour and walk away.

As you walk away, the child may attempt to hook you back; if you rush back to confront secondary behaviour you pass over control to the child. For some children, a full-blown confrontation is exactly what they want. **Walk away and write down what just happened, so that you can speak to the child about it when they are calm.**

Scripted response:

"I have noticed you are..." (having trouble getting started etc.)

"It was our rule about... that you broke."

"You have chosen to..." (catch up with your work at break, come and talk to me at break etc.) Do you remember last week when you (positive)? That's who I need to see today." "Thank you for listening."

### Repair script

1. "What happened?" Listen carefully and dispassionately. Give your account from your perspective without judgement. Go slowly.
2. "What were you thinking at the time?" This helps the child to reconsider their actions. Do not accept a shrug of the shoulders; give them time to fully reflect.
3. "Who has been affected?"
4. "How have they been affected?" It is important that the child considers others and the impact of their behaviour.
5. "What do you think about what happened now?"
6. "What should we do to put things right?" This may not always be an apology as a forced apology is worthless.
7. "How can we do things differently in the future?"

Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Provost Williams CE Academy

Ready. Respectful. Safe



At Ryton-on-Dunsmore, we achieve excellence because we are...

**Ready**

- In school on time
- Look and listen to the person who is speaking
- Correct equipment in school and on desk
- Focused attention ready for to work

**Respectful**

- Greet adults politely when we arrive at school
- Looking after the learning environment
- Speaking in a positive tone to others
- Do things for other because it feels good

**Safe**

- Move calmly around the school and outside
- Kind hands and feet
- Tell adults if we ever feel unsafe – they will listen
- Use the equipment properly

## Appendix 4

### Behaviour Logs

<b>Class:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Have the parents been informed about the behaviour?</b>  <b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Details of incidence:</b>	
<b>Restorative next step:</b>	

<b>Class:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Have the parents been informed about the behaviour?</b>  <b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Details of incidence:</b>	
<b>Restorative next step:</b>	

## Appendix 5

In the following situations, staff must judge whether or not a physical intervention would be reasonable or appropriate:

- Risk to the safety of staff, children or visitors;
- Where there is a risk of serious damage to property;
- Where a child's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline;
- Where a child is committing a criminal offence

### Non-verbal strategies

It is useful to remember this when you are trying to de-escalate. Ensure you are modelling the behaviour you want the child to emulate, relaxed and open body language can be helpful. Non-verbal techniques include the following. •

- **Appear calm and self-assured.** Make sure you are not displaying the same signs of agitation that can be seen in the child, unclench your fists, do not hold eye contact for too long and avoid standing square to the child;
- **Maintain a neutral facial expression.** Even our eyebrows can indicate we are surprised or angry, and similarly our mouths can betray our emotions unwittingly. Another natural reaction we often have when under stress is to smirk or giggle, which must be controlled;
- **Allow space.** Entering a person's personal space can be useful to refocus on a task when the situation is calm, but when a child is agitated this can indicate aggression and escalate the situation. Staying some distance away will also help keep you safe should the child become physically aggressive;
- **Control your breathing.** When we are stressed, angry or tense, our breathing becomes more shallow and rapid. If we take deeper, slower breaths, this will not only help keep us calm, but the child will begin to match our own breathing pattern. It can sometimes help to match the child's breathing initially then gradually slow it down.

### Verbal strategies

- **Lower your voice and keep your tone even.** It is hard to have an argument with someone who is not responding aggressively back to you;
- **Distraction and diversion are extremely useful.** When a child is aggressive, they are responding with their own fight-or-flight instincts and not thinking about their actions. Distract them and engage their thinking brain, perhaps by changing the subject or commenting on something that is happening outside the window;
- **Give choices,** repeat these using the broken-record technique if necessary, and do not get drawn into secondary behaviours such as arguing back, which are designed to distract or upset you;
- **Acknowledging the child's feelings** shows that you have listened to them, and can be crucial when diffusing a situation; for example, 'It must be really difficult for you ... thank you for letting me know';
- **Use words and phrases that de-escalate, such as:**  
I wonder if... Let's try... It seems like... Maybe we can... Tell the child what you want them to do rather than what you do not want them to do; for example, 'I want you to sit down' rather than 'stop arguing with me';

- Give the child take-up time following any direction and avoid backing them into a corner, either verbally or physically.

