



RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS – BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY



The lynchpin of an effective learning community is a shared and negotiated understanding of the ways in which learners treat one another (English and Dean, 2001).

WHAT IS OUR PHILOSOPHY?

Neville Bonner Primary School is a community of learners. It is a 'place' of learning. Our school fosters a positive, cooperative and supportive learning environment. Children, staff and parents/carers work together to develop and maintain respectful and quality relationships. We



value productive partnerships with our families. Neville Bonner Primary School is proud of the rich tapestry of diverse cultures, families and life experiences present in our community.

Our school expects that each person -staff, children, parents/carers -will take responsibility for her/his actions and accept the agreed consequences for actions which impact negatively on, or harm, members of

our community. Developing and maintaining our positive, safe school climate relies on each member of the school community taking responsibility for cooperative, caring and respectful relationships.

We believe that modelling, teaching and expecting respectful relationships is fundamental to the achievement of high quality learning outcomes and a successful community. Our staff is committed to connecting with the needs and experiences of all children. We believe that the building of 'connectedness', coupled with secure and focussed learning environments proactively encourages appropriate behaviours amongst the children.



WHAT ARE OUR EXPECTATIONS?

At Neville Bonner Primary School we focus on the building and fostering of a committed community of learners with a healthy sense of well-being. We expect that all members of our community will interact respectfully with each other.

Our rights:

- All members of our community have the right to feel safe and respected all the time
- Children have the right to learn, and teachers to teach, free from the disruption of others

Our responsibility:

- All members of our school community will treat each other with respect and care at all times

Our commitment:

- Each member of the community will take responsibility, with support as necessary, for her/his actions
- Positive language and practices will be used at all times

- Staff will actively develop productive partnerships and regular communication with families to improve children's relationship skills
- Staff will develop and foster supportive, cooperative and engaging learning environments where all children grow in their learning, and as learners
- All adults, parents/carers and staff will model appropriate forms of communication and respect for others
- We will each take responsibility for repairing any harm we may cause to another member of our community
- We will each develop ourselves as assertive and courageous community members in the interests of a safe and respectful collective
- We will use positive, assertive (as distinct from aggressive) responses when others act inappropriately
- We will seek adult help from staff whenever we do not feel safe
- We will report all forms of violence to a staff member
- Staff members will follow up on all reported matters

HOW DO WE FOSTER AND MAINTAIN A CLIMATE OF RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS?

Neville Bonner Primary School believes that a pro-active and supportive learning approach is the best way to develop children as community members who treat each other well. We recognise that children come to school with a range of skills and knowledge, not only in academic areas, but also in social/relationship areas. It has, of recent years, become a key work of schools to teach both the academic and the social/relational components of children's development.

Some key aspects of our school's work in developing a safe and positive school climate include:

- All staff working within a respectful relationship framework
- Engaging, purposeful learning programmes
- Promoting a love of learning and quality work
- Curriculum which develops relationship skills, assertiveness, resilience, cooperative behaviours and life skills
- Building a strong sense of belonging for all children
- Anti-sexual harassment and anti-racial harassment officers available to assist children
- School psychologist available to support children and families
- Commitment to working with children, and giving the gift of adult time to support them to 'unpack' and respond to conflicts or difficulties that may arise
- Commitment to thorough following-up of incidents and working with children to repair any harm they may have caused
- On-going professional learning for staff



- Learning Group Agreements are developed with each learning group, and form the basis of learning group relationship practice for the school year
- Learning Group Agreements are consistently re-visited and revised by the children throughout the course of the year
- Learning Group Agreements are shared with families
- Regular acknowledgement and celebrations of achievements of respectful relationships e.g. Certificates, feedback, notification to parents/carers, school assemblies

WHAT PROGRAMMES AND STRUCTURES DOES OUR SCHOOL HAVE TO ASSIST THE CHILDREN TO DEVELOP RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS?

Learning Group Agreements

Each learning group develops its Agreement at the beginning of each year. This Agreement, developed by the children, states the responsibilities and expectations of each other in maintaining a high quality and respectful learning environment.



Learning Group briefings, de-briefings and meetings

Learning Groups have daily briefings/de-briefings before and after play breaks to provide opportunities for the children to prepare for respectful play and to follow up afterwards. Learning Group meetings focus on a range of matters related to the children's learning and whole of school activities/initiatives, all with the purpose of enabling children's opinions and ideas to be heard and acted upon.

Circle Time

Circle Time provides the opportunity for children to meet with their teacher in a structured group to focus on the development of relationship skills and the celebration of successes in a safe and nurturing environment.

Flow Chart

Teachers respond to children who may be disrupting their learning/ the teaching/the learning of others within a flow chart model. This is consistent whole of school response process.

Yunggaballi

Each day begins with Yunggaballi (Ngunnawal ward meaning 'sing'). Our school community connects through sharing its talents, important announcements - starting our learning day with fun!



Assembly

Our weekly school Assembly provides the opportunity for the school to come together to celebrate achievements and learning.

Buddy Learning Groups

Each Learning Group 'buddies' with another in the school to develop cross- group relationships and enrich the opportunities for mentoring.

Staff Circles

At our weekly Staff Circle, we reflect on and evaluate our work in relation to our Respectful Relationship Framework. We determine new foci for the coming week and develop shared practices and approaches.

Student Council

Student Council is a forum of students, representing each learning group, who promote student voice within our school.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CONSEQUENCES IN DEVELOPING OUR SCHOOL CLIMATE?

Taking responsibility for one's actions, and committing to change are key attributes for children when we are supporting them to improve their relationships in our school community.

All incidents that result in a member of our community being harmed in any way, are viewed very seriously at Neville Bonner Primary School. Children are expected (and taught) to report to an adult, all behaviours/actions/words that cause them to feel unsafe or concerned. If a report



is made to parents/carers we expect that they will contact the school as soon as possible, as their first port of call. Consequences vary in relation to the situation. Decisions in relation to consequences are determined by the school Leadership Team in conjunction with other relevant staff. Consequences aim to provide the best-fit opportunities for children to change their behaviours, to reflect on their

actions and understand that violence of any kind is unacceptable at our school. We recognise the significance of all children knowing that there will be consequences for those who cause harm to others.

Examples of consequences include:

- Children engaged in a thorough investigation and follow-up with the leadership team
- Parents/carers contacted by or meet with the leadership team
- Round table meetings with child, parent/carer and the leadership team
- Apologies
- 'Working out' meetings
- 'Time-away' (from learning group or playground)
- Counselling
- Negotiated return to learning group or playground
- Individual plan
- Weekly parent/carer meetings
- Suspension from school

The Leadership Team take a great deal of time, and place a high value on, listening to the 'stories' of all children involved in incidents. The nature of incidents which seem simple and straightforward on the surface, are in fact most often complex and layered. At Neville Bonner Primary School, we seek to 'unpack' the layers of the incidents in a respectful and thorough manner to ensure that the best possible outcome is achieved.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND FAMILIES

Neville Bonner Primary School believes that timely and respectful communication between families and the school is fundamental to productive partnerships that support the learning, social and emotional outcomes for the children.

Central to the school's organisation and structures is the regular practice of contacting parents/carers about matters concerning their child, for example, to advise of a child's



forthcoming award or to celebrate an achievement or to advise of a matter that may have impacted on or involved their child. Whilst it is unrealistic for the school to contact a parent/carer about every single matter, the school is committed to working in partnership with families and encourages parents/carers to also initiate contact at any time there is concern.

Our Respectful Relationships' Framework ensures that all teachers take time to listen to children's concerns and thoroughly follow up on any reported incidents or matters of concern between children. This could be with a Learning Group teacher, a senior teacher, Deputy Principal or Principal – it is the practice of the school that we all share this strategic follow-up role. It is important that the children have the opportunity to develop strong relationships with as many members of staff as possible, so that they feel confident and comfortable to discuss matters and work towards solutions.

Through respectful, timely and purposeful communication between families and school, Neville Bonner Primary School's goal is always to support those who have been harmed in any way – physically or emotionally -and to change the behaviours of those who have caused harm.

Curriculum is an excellent vehicle to address matters which may arise in a school community (eg inappropriate language, racism, homophobic behaviours). Through curriculum, teachers are able to help children understand and analyse why such practices might be harmful, and develop a repertoire of positive behaviours in relation to the matters at hand.

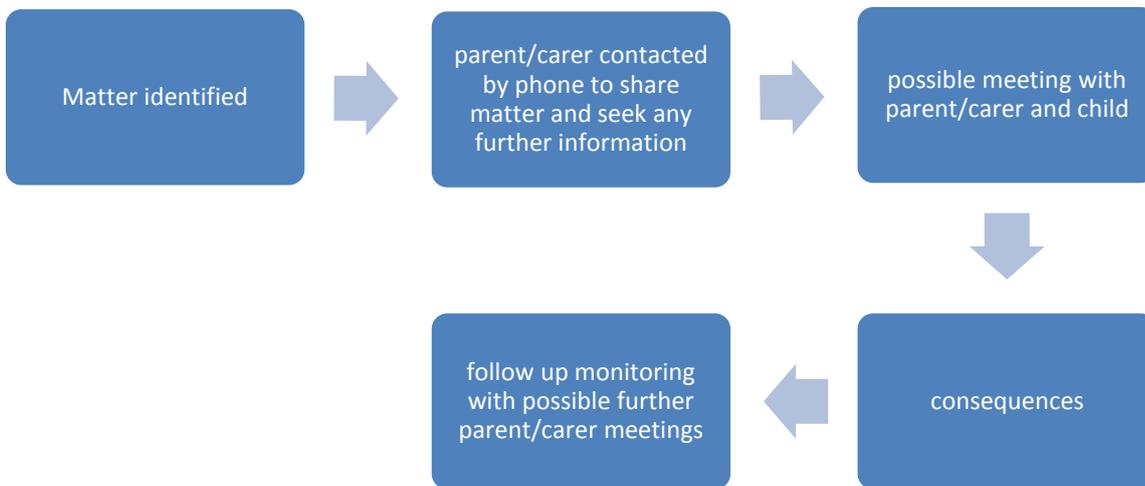
The following diagrams provide a useful summary of:

i] communication from the school to parents/carers when harm is caused

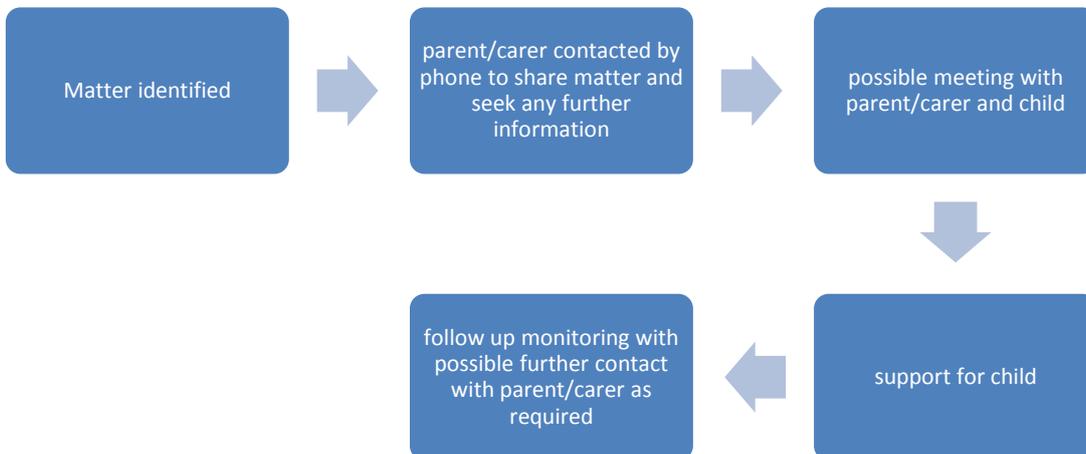
ii] the important balance between proactively creating and maintaining a respectful learning environment and outcomes based follow up when matters do arise.



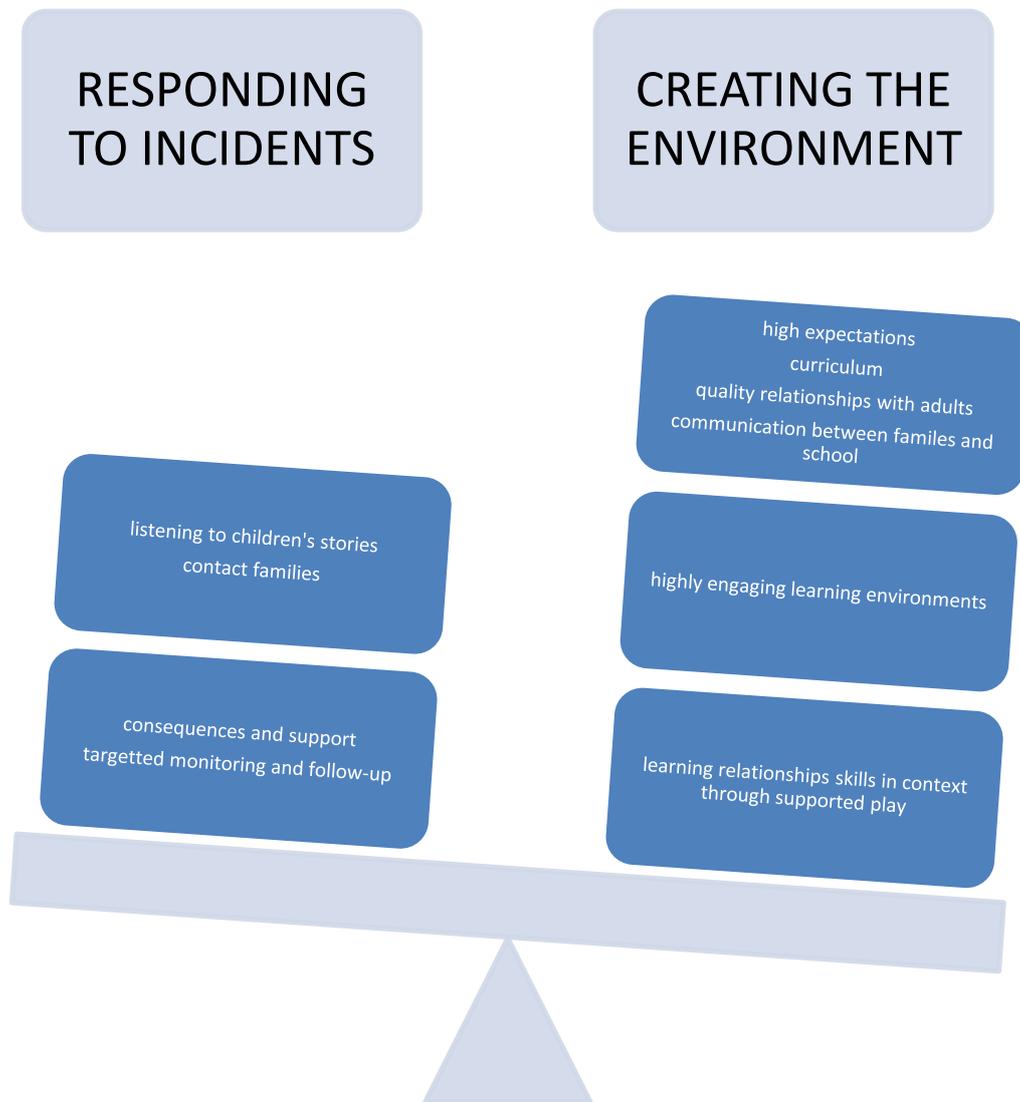
i] Process when the school determines that a matter should be communicated to parents/carers of a child who has caused harm to others:



ii] Process when the school determines that a matter should be communicated to parents/carers of a child who has been harmed by another child:



RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS: LEARNING TO LIVE SUCCESSFULLY IN OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY



HOW DO WE HELP CHILDREN TO IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONSHIPS?

Neville Bonner Primary School is a place of learning. Our academic learning will be stronger and more focussed if we also actively learn responsible and respectful ways of treating others. The most powerful way that we help children to improve their relationships and the way they treat each other is to have this at the



centre of everything we do throughout the regular learning programme and curriculum.

Examples of ways we help children to improve their relationships include:

- Strong school focus on children's learning and social needs
- Actively listening to children's 'stories' and experiences at school
- De-briefing with children
- Helping children to commit to changing their behaviours
- Implement process of consequences where necessary
- Work in partnership with children's parents/carers
- Modelling appropriate ways to treat each other
- Using our school 'Respectful Relationships' language guide
- Communicate with parents and carers
- Teach children how to analyse, understand and improve relationships
- Through curriculum, teach the concepts of power, culture, gender, violence - and their intersection
- Explicitly teach socially appropriate ways to respectfully solve problems and act assertively.



**TEACH, ENCOURAGE, INSPIRE, RESPECT AND BE GOOD TO
ALL CHILDREN.**

THEY HOLD YOUR FUTURE IN THEIR HANDS.