Knowsley Lane Primary School

Behaviour & Relational Policy

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Strong roots nurture belonging, safety and character; strong wings inspire confidence, independence and success. Through positive relationships and high expectations, we help every child grow, flourish and fly.

Knowsley Lane
Primary School

Vision

At Knowsley Lane Primary School, we recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication.

Children communicate their needs, emotions, worries, strengths and difficulties through their behaviour. Whilst some behaviours may be challenging, we seek first to understand what a child may be communicating rather than focusing solely on the behaviour itself.

We believe that children do well when they can. When behaviour falls below expectations, our role is to remain curious, compassionate and consistent whilst maintaining clear boundaries and high expectations.

Through our Roots and Wings approach, we strive to understand the experiences, emotions, developmental needs and individual differences that may be influencing behaviour. We recognise that children require support, co-regulation and positive relationships in order to develop the skills needed for successful self-regulation.

The Roots and Wings Approach

Our behaviour culture is built around the belief that children need both strong roots and strong wings.

Our Roots

Roots provide the foundation that every child needs in order to thrive.

At Knowsley Lane, roots are:

- Safety
- Belonging
- Connection
- Trust
- Emotional security
- Consistency
- Positive relationships
- Acceptance

Children who feel safe and connected are more likely to:

- Engage with learning
- Build resilience
- Manage emotions effectively
- Develop positive relationships
- Take responsibility for their actions

Every interaction with a child is an opportunity to strengthen their roots.

As adults we provide these roots through:

- Predictable routines
- Warm relationships
- Clear boundaries
- Consistent responses
- Emotional support
- High expectations with high care

Our Wings

Once children feel secure and connected, they can begin to develop their wings.

Wings help children grow into confident, capable and independent learners who can navigate challenges successfully.

At Knowsley Lane, wings include:

- Independence
- Responsibility
- Self-regulation
- Problem solving
- Resilience
- Confidence
- Empathy
- Accountability

When children make mistakes, we view these as opportunities for growth and learning.

Our role is not simply to manage behaviour but to help children develop the skills and strategies they need to flourish both now and in the future.

Core Principles

We:

✓ Assume positive intent
✓ Remain curious, not judgemental
✓ Separate the child from the behaviour
✓ Focus on regulation before resolution
✓ Use relational approaches before punitive approaches
✓ Maintain high expectations and firm boundaries
✓ Repair and restore following difficulties

We do not:

✗ Shame
✗ Humiliate
✗ Raise our voice unnecessarily
✗ Engage in power struggles
✗ Use sarcasm
✗ Remove dignity

Relational Practice

Our approach can be summarised as:

- Roots Before Wings
- Connection Before Correction
- Regulation Before Resolution
- Relationships Before Consequences

This does not mean lowering expectations.

Rather, it means supporting children to meet expectations through strong relationships, consistency and understanding.

Understanding Behaviour

We recognise that behaviour may be influenced by:

- Emotional wellbeing
- Developmental stage
- SEND needs
- Communication difficulties
- Trauma or adverse experiences
- Anxiety
- Sensory needs
- Friendship difficulties
- Changes at home or in school

Supporting Pupils with PDA Profiles

Understanding PDA

Some pupils may present with a profile of needs associated with Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), often described as a profile within the autism spectrum.

Children with a PDA profile may experience an extremely high level of anxiety when they perceive demands being placed upon them.

The behaviour displayed is not usually defiance, oppositionality or deliberate non-compliance.

Rather, it is often an anxiety-based response to feeling overwhelmed, threatened by loss of control or unable to manage expectations.

Children may:

- Refuse requests
- Delay tasks
- Distract from demands
- Attempt to negotiate
- Become distressed when expectations change
- Use avoidance strategies
- Display controlling behaviours
- Experience significant emotional dysregulation

Our PDA-Informed Approach

At Knowsley Lane, we recognise that traditional behaviour systems may not always be effective for children with a PDA profile.

Our approach remains rooted in relationships, flexibility and reducing anxiety.

The goal is to reduce threat and increase feelings of safety.

Staff Responses for Pupils with PDA Profiles
Staff Will:
✓ Maintain a calm, regulated presence
✓ Build trusting relationships
✓ Reduce unnecessary demands
✓ Offer flexibility where appropriate

✓ Use indirect language
✓ Collaborate with the child
✓ Offer choices and autonomy
✓ Focus on problem solving
✓ Prioritise regulation over compliance
✓ Follow individual support plans

Language Staff Should Use
Instead of:
❌ "I've told you three times."
❌ "You need to do it now."
❌ "Because I said so."
❌ "If you don't do this there will be a consequence."

Staff should use:
☑ "I wonder if..."
☑ "Let's see if we can do this together."
☑ "Which option would work best for you?"
☑ "How can we make this manageable?"
☑ "Would you like to start with this part or that part?"
☑ "When you're ready, we can tackle this together."
☑ "What would help make this feel easier?"

During Heightened Anxiety
When anxiety increases, staff should:

- Reduce verbal communication
- Avoid repeated instructions
- Avoid power struggles
- Avoid public correction
- Offer processing time
- Provide opportunities for movement
- Remove unnecessary demands
- Focus on maintaining connection

The priority is: **Co-regulation before compliance.**

Consequences for Pupils with PDA Profiles

Consequences may need reasonable adjustment where a pupil's behaviour is driven primarily by anxiety and demand avoidance.

The focus should remain on:

- Understanding triggers
- Teaching coping strategies
- Repairing relationships
- Building emotional regulation skills

Whilst high expectations remain, staff should consider whether a consequence is likely to support learning and growth or increase anxiety and future dysregulation.

SEND, Neurodiversity and Inclusion

Knowsley Lane is committed to being a fully inclusive school.

We recognise that some children may require adapted approaches in order to achieve success.

Being consistent does not always mean being identical.

Consistency means:

Providing every child with what they need to be successful whilst maintaining the same core values, expectations and principles.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Visual supports
- Individual regulation plans
- Sensory breaks
- Alternative methods of communication
- Processing time
- Adapted transitions
- Personalised behaviour support plans

Through our Roots and Wings approach, we seek to ensure that every child feels understood, valued and supported whilst continuing to grow in independence, resilience and responsibility.

Key Staff Mantra

- **Every child needs roots before they can grow wings.**
- **When behaviour challenges us, we remain curious.**
- **When emotions overwhelm a child, we prioritise regulation.**
- **When mistakes happen, we repair relationships.**
- **When children feel safe, connected and understood, they are able to thrive.**

Co-Regulation Strategies - Co-Regulation at Knowsley Lane

At Knowsley Lane Primary School, we recognise that children cannot always regulate their emotions independently.

Many children, particularly those who have experienced trauma, adversity, anxiety, developmental differences, SEND needs or periods of emotional overwhelm, require support from a calm, trusted adult before they are able to self-regulate.

Through our Roots and Wings approach, we understand that children develop the "wings" of self-regulation through repeated experiences of being co-regulated by adults who provide the "roots" of safety, connection and emotional security.

We therefore do not expect children to regulate independently before they have first experienced co-regulation from a supportive adult.

What is Co-Regulation?

Co-regulation is the process by which a calm and emotionally available adult helps a child return to a regulated state.

It involves:

- Connecting before correcting
- Supporting before sanctioning
- Remaining calm when a child is distressed
- Helping children recognise and manage emotions
- Modelling emotional regulation

The adult's emotional state often influences the child's emotional state.

When adults remain calm, predictable and emotionally available, children are better able to regain control of their behaviour and emotions.

The Co-Regulation Cycle

1. Regulate
Support the child to feel physically and emotionally safe.
2. Relate
Reconnect with the child through empathy and understanding.
3. Reason
Problem solve and reflect once calm has returned.

Adults should avoid attempting to reason with a child who is dysregulated.

Staff Reminder
"If a child is in survival mode, they are not in learning mode."

Practical Co-Regulation Strategies

The Adult's Role
Staff should:

- Regulate Yourself First

Before responding to a distressed child:

- Slow your breathing
- Lower your voice
- Relax your posture
- Speak slowly
- Maintain a calm facial expression

Children will often mirror the emotional state of the adults around them.

Communicate Safety
When a child is becoming distressed, the first priority is helping them feel safe.
Common Language

- "You're safe."
- "I'm here to help."
- "We'll work this out together."
- "Take your time."
- "You are not in trouble."
- "Let's focus on helping your body feel calm."

Reduce Verbal Demands
When children are overwhelmed, language processing often becomes more difficult.
Staff should:

- Use short sentences
- Allow processing time
- Avoid asking multiple questions
- Avoid lectures
- Avoid lengthy explanations

Instead of:
"What happened? Why did you do that? You know this isn't acceptable."
Use:
"I can see this is hard right now."

Use a Matching Energy Approach
Adults should aim to become a regulating presence rather than adding further emotional intensity.
Avoid:

- Rapid speaking
- Raised voices
- Repeated instructions
- Public correction

Instead:

- Sit nearby
- Speak quietly
- Slow interactions down
- Give time and space

Acknowledge Feelings

Children need to feel understood before they can engage in problem solving.

Common Language

- "I can see you're angry."
- "This feels really difficult."
- "I understand that you're upset."
- "That didn't go the way you hoped."
- "It's okay to feel disappointed."

Validation does not mean agreement. Validation communicates understanding.

Offer Supportive Choices

Providing choice can reduce feelings of overwhelm and increase a child's sense of control.

Examples

- "Would you like to sit here or over there?"
- "Do you want to talk now or in five minutes?"
- "Would you like me to stay with you or give you some space?"

Choices should be genuine and manageable.

Use Regulation Tools

Staff may support children by encouraging:

Sensory Strategies

- Fidget tools
- Weighted resources
- Sensory breaks
- Chew tools (where appropriate)
- Movement opportunities

Physical Regulation

- Walking
- Stretching
- Deep breathing
- Pushing against a wall
- Drinking water

Emotional Regulation

- Feelings cards
- Emotion scales
- Worry boxes
- Calm spaces
- Drawing or writing

Co-Regulation During Escalation

If behaviour escalates:

Staff Should

✓ Stay calm
✓ Keep language minimal
✓ Reduce demands
✓ Increase physical space if needed
✓ Remove the audience where possible
✓ Prioritise safety
✓ Follow agreed risk plans

Staff Should Avoid

✗ Arguing
✗ Threatening consequences
✗ Repeated questioning
✗ Public reprimands
✗ Demanding apologies
✗ Entering power struggles

Co-Regulation and Boundary Setting

Being relational does not mean removing boundaries.
Children need both compassion and containment.

The most effective approach is:
Validate + Boundary

Examples:

- "I can see you're angry. I won't let you hurt anyone."
- "I know you're frustrated. The expectation is still that we speak respectfully."
- "I understand this feels difficult. My job is to keep everyone safe."

This approach provides both roots (safety, understanding and connection) and wings (responsibility, accountability and self-regulation).

Supporting Recovery

When the child begins to calm:
Staff Should

- Welcome them back positively
- Avoid revisiting the issue immediately
- Offer reassurance
- Focus on reconnecting

Common Language

- "It's nice to see you feeling calmer."
- "Thank you for taking the time you needed."
- "Let's think about what helps next time."
- "We're ready to start again."

Recovery should be treated as a success.

Developing Wings Through Co-Regulation

Our ultimate aim is not lifelong adult regulation but the gradual development of self-regulation.
Every co-regulation opportunity helps children learn:

- Emotional awareness
- Coping strategies
- Resilience
- Problem solving
- Self-control
- Reflection

Through repeated experiences of co-regulation, children begin to internalise these skills and develop the confidence and independence to regulate themselves.

Universal Behaviour Expectations

All staff consistently remind children:

Common Language

- "At Knowsley Lane, we are safe, respectful and ready to learn."
- "Show me what being ready looks like."
- "What is the expectation right now?"
- "Let's make a good choice."
- "Thank you for getting back on track."
- "Everyone deserves to learn."
- "Everyone deserves to feel safe."

Universal Behaviour Reminders – Used for all pupils before behaviour escalates.

Step 1: Reminder

Staff Language

- "Remember our expectation."
- "Show me ready."
- "We walk indoors."
- "Use kind words."
- "Let's try that again."

Step 2: Re-direct

Staff Language

- "You have a choice."
- "I can help you get back on track."
- "What do you need to be successful?"
- "Let's reset and start again."

Step 3: Final Reminder

Staff Language

- "This is your final reminder."
- "You need to make a safe choice now."
- "I know you can do this."
- "If the behaviour continues, there will be a consequence."

Gentle Re-Direction (Low-Level Behaviour)

Used when pupils are distracted, off-task or testing boundaries.

Examples

- Calling out
- Fiddling with equipment
- Talking when others are speaking
- Minor off-task behaviour
- Not following a simple instruction

Common Language

- "Pause."
- "Check yourself."
- "What should you be doing right now?"
- "Have a look around. What is everyone else doing?"

- "Let's get started together."
- "Let's get back on track, thank you."
- "Show me the first step."

Relational Approach

- Use proximity.
- Use non-verbal prompts.
- Offer support before challenge.
- Praise the behaviour you want to see.

Boundary Setting

Boundaries should always be calm, clear and consistent.

Key Principle: *High warmth and high expectations.*

Common Language

- "The expectation is..."
- "I won't let you..."
- "You can be upset, but I won't let you hurt anyone."
- "I am here to help you."
- "You have two positive choices."
- "When you are ready, we can move forward."
- "My job is to keep everyone safe."

Script

1. State expectation.
2. Acknowledge feeling.
3. Hold boundary.
4. Offer choice.

Example:
"I can see you're frustrated. The expectation is that we speak respectfully. You can tell me what's wrong using kind words or take a moment to calm before we talk."

Emotion Coaching - (When a Child is Upset)

Step 1: Notice
"I can see something is bothering you."
Step 2: Name the Emotion
"You look disappointed."
"I wonder if you're feeling worried."
"It seems like you're feeling angry."
Step 3: Validate
"It's okay to feel that way."
"I understand why that is difficult."
"Lots of people would feel upset in that situation."
Step 4: Set Limits
"It's okay to feel angry, but it's not okay to hurt people."

Step 5: Problem Solve

"How can I help?"
"What do you need right now?"
"Let's work out the next step together."

Common Language

- "Feelings are okay."
- "All feelings are welcome."
- "We can feel upset and still be safe."
- "Let's figure this out together."

Responding to SEND Dysregulation

Some children may experience periods of dysregulation due to SEND needs, trauma, anxiety, sensory overwhelm or communication difficulties.

The aim is always:

Regulate → Relate → Repair

Stage 1: Early Signs

Examples

- Withdrawal
- Increased anxiety
- Refusal
- Restlessness
- Repetitive questioning

Staff Language

- "I can see this is becoming tricky."
- "How can I help?"
- "Would a movement break help?"
- "Let's use your regulation strategy."

Staff Actions

- Reduce demands
- Offer regulation toolkit
- Provide sensory support
- Use visual prompts
- Give processing time

Stage 2: Dysregulated

Examples

- Crying
- Refusal
- Hiding
- Shouting
- Heightened distress

Staff Language

- "You are safe."
- "I am here."
- "Take your time."
- "You don't need to talk right now."
- "Let's focus on helping your body feel calm."

Staff Actions

- Reduce verbal language
- Calm body language
- Provide space if needed
- Follow individual support plans
- Prioritise co-regulation

Stage 3: Recovery

Staff Language

- "It looks like your body is feeling calmer."
- "Would you like to talk or wait a little longer?"
- "Let's think about what happened."

Focus

- No lectures
- No immediate consequences linked to dysregulation
- Support reflection and repair

Escalation Responses – When behaviour increases despite support:

Staff Language

- "I can see things are becoming difficult."
- "Let's take a pause."
- "I want to help."
- "You don't have to do this alone."
- "I need you to move with me now to stay safe."
- "My job is to keep everyone safe."

Staff Actions

1. Stay calm.
2. Lower voice.
3. Reduce audience.
4. Remove triggers where possible.
5. Call for support if required.
6. Follow safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

Avoid

- Arguing
- Negotiating repeatedly
- Public confrontation
- Threats
- Power struggles

Restorative Practice

Restorative conversations occur once everyone is calm.

Purpose

To:

- Repair relationships
- Restore trust
- Promote accountability
- Develop empathy

Restorative Questions

For the child

- What happened?
- What were you thinking?
- What were you feeling?
- Who has been affected?
- How do you think they feel?
- What needs to happen to put things right?
- What will you do differently next time?

For those affected

- What happened from your perspective?
- How did it affect you?
- What would help repair the situation?

Common Language

- "Mistakes help us learn."
- "We repair, not replace, relationships."
- "What can we do to make things right?"
- "How can we move forward together?"

Consequences Framework

Consequences should be:

- Proportionate
- Predictable
- Relational
- Restorative
- Matched to age and need

Consequences should teach rather than punish.

Level 1: Low-Level Behaviour

Examples

- Calling out
- Minor disruption
- Off-task behaviour
- Talking over others
- Not following instructions first time
- Minor littering
- Running indoors

Consequences

- Reminder of expectation
- Re-direction
- Change of seat
- Brief reflection time
- Complete missed work
- Restorative conversation

Staff Language: "The choice you've made means we need a quick reset. Let's get back on track."

Level 2: Repeated Disruption

Examples

- Repeated calling out
- Repeated refusal
- Persistent interruption of learning
- Repeated inappropriate language
- Repeated low-level behaviours despite reminders

Consequences

- Reflection time in another classroom
- Loss of part of social time (maximum proportionate amount)
- Completion of missed learning
- Restorative conversation
- Parent informed if patterns emerge
- Behaviour recorded

Staff Language: "I've reminded you several times. We now need a consequence so learning can continue."

Level 3: Dysregulation

Examples

- Distressed crying
- Hiding under tables
- Flight response
- Severe emotional overwhelm
- Anxiety-led refusal
- Meltdown linked to SEND needs

Consequences

The priority is support and regulation rather than punishment.
Possible outcomes:

- Recovery time
- Co-regulation support e.g. practice grounding techniques
- Sensory break
- Safe space
- Individual reflection when calm
- Review of support plan if patterns emerge

Staff Language: "You are having a hard time, not giving us a hard time. Let's help you feel safe first."

Important: Dysregulation should not automatically result in punitive sanctions where behaviour is directly linked to emotional overwhelm or additional needs.

Level 4: Serious Behaviour

Examples

- Physical aggression
- Deliberate injury
- Racist, discriminatory or prejudicial language
- Serious verbal abuse
- Bullying behaviour
- Deliberate damage to property
- Leaving a supervised area
- Unsafe behaviour that places others at risk

Consequences

- Immediate intervention
- Senior leadership involvement within departments
- Parents informed the same day
- Restorative meeting when appropriate
- Internal suspension
- Risk assessment review
- Behaviour support plan
- Fixed-term suspension where necessary and in line with DfE guidance

Staff Language:

"I need to stop this because it is unsafe."
"We will work together to repair this, but first we must make sure everyone is safe."

Monitoring and Consistency

To ensure consistency:

All staff will:

- Use agreed common language.
- Follow behaviour stages consistently.
- Record significant incidents.
- Use trauma-informed and inclusive approaches.
- Apply consequences fairly.
- Prioritise relationships alongside accountability.

Summary Statement

At Knowsley Lane Primary School, through our Roots and Wings approach, we strive to create a culture where children feel rooted in safety, belonging and connection, whilst developing the wings they need to become resilient, responsible and successful learners. We hold high expectations, respond with empathy and consistency, and believe that every interaction is an opportunity to strengthen relationships, build self-regulation and help children flourish.