Houghton Primary School

Working hard to achieve our best

Therapeutic Behaviour Policy

Date reviewed and adopted:	December 2025
Reviewed and adopted by:	FGB
Signed: Chair of governors	Briony Rice
Signed: Headteacher	Andrew Spencer
Date of next review:	December 2026

Positive experiences create positive feelings. Positive feelings create positive behaviours

At Houghton Primary School we have high expectations of children's work and behaviour. These are fostered in a calm, secure, nurturing and caring environment, with a therapeutic and positive approach, where praise and encouragement are given.

This Therapeutic Behaviour Policy should be the plan for the majority of children at Houghton Primary School. In addition to this, some children may require a Therapeutic Plan with formalised strategies that differentiate from the policy. Others may need a more flexible approach at times of anxiety or change or in specific circumstances.

Children learn best when they are regulated and understand the reasons for behaving appropriately. The school can make a difference to the way in which children behave by teaching positive attitudes. Children should be guided to make decisions about the way they behave as early as possible so that they become responsible members of the community. The discipline of the school goes hand-in-hand with the ethos and the atmosphere created within the school.

The school follows the Therapeutic Thinking Cambridgeshire Steps approach to behaviour.

What is Therapeutic Thinking Cambridgeshire Steps?

Therapeutic Thinking Cambridgeshire Steps is the Local Authority's preferred approach to supporting positive behaviour management in schools and settings. The Therapeutic Thinking Steps approach forms part of the Local Authority's behaviour strategy.

Therapeutic Thinking Cambridgeshire Steps is a therapeutic approach to behaviour management and is based on the following principles:

- To develop a common language and a joint approach that is followed by all professionals in Cambridgeshire.
- To support schools and settings with developing a therapeutic approach to behaviour.
- To establish understanding of the inseparable link between teaching, learning and behaviour.
- To improve staff confidence and safety.
- To support the inclusion of those with difficult or dangerous behaviours.
- To reduce and eliminate exclusions.
- To support consistency within services.
- To support Senior Leadership Teams in the development of quality policy and planning.

Therapeutic Thinking emphasises the importance of consistency and internal discipline rather than imposing external discipline. It focuses on care and control, not punishment.

Houghton Primary School Core Values

At Houghton Primary, we celebrate and promote the following Core Values:

Responsibility	We are responsible for our environment, our words and actions and our learning journey
Respect	We treat our school community with care, patience, understanding and compassion
Ambition	We set goals, take risks and aspire to do great things
Determination	We keep going, no matter what challenges we face
Team Work	We treat everyone equally, support each other and work together
Confidence	We are brave and we believe in ourselves on our journey towards success

Therapeutic Thinking Key Principles

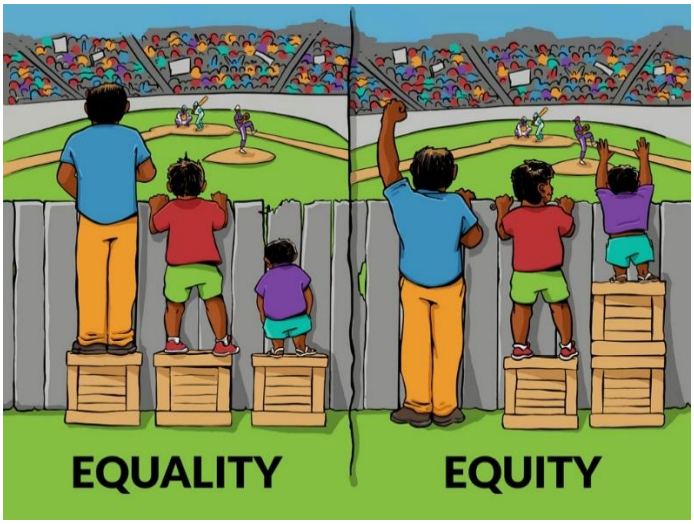
Therapeutic Thinking is an approach to behaviour that prioritises the prosocial (positive) feelings of everyone within the dynamic. This is based on the principle that:

- Negative experiences create negative feelings. Negative feelings create negative behaviour.
- Positive experiences create positive feelings. Positive feelings create positive behaviour.

All children within the dynamic should be given as many positive experiences as possible in order to create more individual positive feelings. The Therapeutic Thinking approach challenges the concepts of 'bribes and sanctions' frequently used to manage behaviour, which often results in children only following instructions because they will 'get something' for doing so.

Instead, the approach seeks to foster the independence of children by teaching them how to develop **internal discipline.** The aim is that they are always able to behave pro-socially, without the need for adults to manage this.

We provide pupils with what they need to succeed in their regulation and their learning. At Houghton Primary, we endeavour to create a culture which inspires a love of learning through emotional and social intelligence and responsibility of self-discipline, self-regulation and respect for others.



Equity & Equality

Equality is treating everybody the same. Equality aims to promote fairness, but this can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help.

Equity is giving everyone what they need to achieve success. At Houghton Primary, we advocate for each child to receive the resources, experiences, appropriate interventions and support in their learning to achieve their full potential.

External discipline is controlling behaviour…Internal discipline is teaching behaviour. To create change we need to understand and not simply suppress behaviours.

Types of Behaviour

Valued Behaviour

Relating to behaviour which is positive, helpful, and intended to promote social acceptance. Valued behaviour is characterised by a concern for the rights, feelings and welfare of other people. This behaviour benefits other people or society. Valued behaviour can be defined as the 'absence' of detrimental behaviour.

Inconvenient Behaviour

Not enjoying or making an effort to behave sociably in the company of others, but not to the detriment of others. Not doing as instructed, but not to the detriment of others.

Examples include:

- Leaving their desk without permission
- Leaving the carpet during input/story without permission
- Refusing to complete the work set
- Refusing to get changed for PE
- Choosing to do another activity than the one the class are doing (reading/drawing on whiteboard etc)
- Rocking on their chair Calling out/talking to a friend
- Not listening to instructions
- Playing/fiddling with equipment

Please note that all of these behaviours could be a sign of needing help, attention or that they are bored or impatient. No unsocial behaviour should require additional support unless it is persistent and disruptive and therefore becomes Antisocial.

Detrimental Behaviour (some of which are referred to as 'dangerous')
Behaviour that causes harm to an individual, a group, to the community or to the environment. Behaviour that is likely to cause injury to themselves or others. These are behaviours that violate the rights of another person.

Detrimental Behaviours	Dangerous Detrimental Behaviours
Aggressive shouting/calling out disruptively Continued interruptions Swearing Answering back Mimicking Name calling Refusal to carry out an adult's request Distracting and/or disrupting others' learning by shouting, banging, making noises Throwing small equipment Leaving the classroom without permission Damage to property/pushing over furniture	Leaving the school building Leaving the premises Spitting (directly at another) Pushing aggressively Scratching Pinching Hair pulling Hitting Kicking Fighting Biting Punching Throwing furniture Physical or verbal bullying

Conscious and Subconscious Behaviours
Conscious behaviour – unwilling to moderate or self-regulate
Subconscious behaviour – unable to moderate or self-regulate

At Houghton Primary, we understand that behaviour can be a mixture of both conscious and subconscious.

Predominantly conscious behaviours serve the individual well enough to encourage them to use the behaviour despite any known potential consequence or punishment associated with the behaviour.

Predominantly sub-conscious behaviour is a sign of a failure to cope with an overwhelming feeling such as, being overwhelmed with frustration or overwhelmed with anxiety (arousal). If we punish conscious behaviours, we can often create conflict. If we punish subconscious behaviours, we can often generate more of the negative feelings associated with injustice and the difficult or dangerous behaviours.

Teaching Regulation and Behaviour

It is important that all children are given the opportunities and the tools to support their own regulation and management of emotions.

At Houghton Primary, we can do this by:

- **Building positive relationships:** this should be invested at the start – children should want to do something because of the quality of their relationship with you. The more you know about the child, the more therapeutic you can be.
- **Role modelling:** this is essential e.g. we have to show children how to 'play nicely' by playing with them.
- **Being consistent** with our approaches to the child on a case by case basis (not equality)

- **Following routines**, but with flexible thinking referring to individual circumstances and quick wins.
- **Prioritising prosocial behaviour** that is really valued in every child – thanking them, proximal praise. **Planning alternatives** to antisocial behaviour and strategies to support children in crisis.
- **Using supportive strategies** to support regulation dependant on need of child.
- **Positive reinforcement** should be given freely and unexpectedly, not as a form of bribery e.g. if you do this, you'll get that. They should also not be taken away.
- **Feedback and recognition** - give feedback when something has not been asked for – don't just celebrate the things that are expected (e.g. sticker for holding the door open – this should be the norm)
- **Comfort and forgiveness** through nurturing understanding and knowing that we will do it differently tomorrow.
- **Ignoring** unsocial and low level behaviours, giving time for unsocial behaviour to stop – do not give attention to these behaviours.
- **Positive language** by tell children what you would like to see, not what you don't e.g. Please walk rather than don't run or feet on floor.
- **Restorative Practice** by following up the behaviour (if appropriate dependant of need of child), it's impact and consequences at the appropriate time, after regulation has taken place/provide strategies for further occurrences). Restorative approaches refer to a range of methods and strategies which can be used both to prevent relationship-damaging incidents from happening and to resolve them if they do happen.

We manage the development of internal discipline to gradually replace external discipline, using an approach based on self-direction and self-motivation. Any rewards given will be an acknowledgement of the child's internal discipline and not be used as a bribery ("If you do this, you will receive that…") Certificates or Team Points may be awarded, but these are given freely and equitably and not used as a bribe or consequence. Rewards are never taken away as a form of punishment. Feedback and rewards will also take into account the child's needs and staff will consider how privately or publicly this praise should be delivered.

We do not use public methods for tracking behaviour (traffic light systems etc.) as these risk creating negative feelings. We have also adopted private levels of praise. Predominantly, children expect feedback and verbal recognition or support.

Consequences – Protective and/or Educational

It is essential that there is always an element of restorative practice. Staff must be able to show how they have helped a pupil to develop new skills or new ways of thinking through discussion, debrief or rehearsal. Restorative practices provide the pupil with the skills and incentives to behave differently faced with the same set of circumstances reoccurring. If there is no natural consequence, then sometimes a protective consequence is needed immediately until we have been successful with our restorative practices. Protective consequences are solely actions to ensure no further harm occurs in the short term.

In all cases of inappropriate response/behaviour, an adult will try to talk to the child to try to find out what has happened.

The following structure for **restorative conversations** will be followed by staff:

- Explore what happened. Allow them to tell their story
- Support their story with non-judgemental, accurate descriptions
- Explore what people were thinking and feeling before, during and after the incident
- Identify who has been affected and how
- Consider how we can repair relationships
- Plan for a different response to the same experiences or feelings reoccurring

When supporting a child who is in crisis, the following **de-escalation script** will be used by staff:

- Pupil's name...
- I can see something has happened...
- I am here to help...
- Talk and I will listen...
- Come with me and...

Reporting and Recording of Behaviour Incidents

Incidents of unsocial and antisocial behaviour must be reported on My Concern the same day. Here they will be triaged and monitored by SLT and Designated Safeguarding Leads. There must be a clear follow up using consequences. It is the responsibility of the member of staff recording/reporting the incident to ensure that parents have been informed, if necessary.

When a child is exhibiting unsafe or dangerous behaviours, teaching staff and SENDco should devise a Therapeutic Behaviour Support plan to support the child. The summary and steps of this plan will be shared with parents.

Parental Partnership

Class teachers will keep parents informed of any incidents and changes in behaviour. If a more serious incident occurs the teacher will contact the parent by telephone, after first logging the incident in school. If a child's behaviour gives cause for concern and a Therapeutic Behaviour Support Plan is required, then parents will be invited into school to discuss the plan and the plan will be signed by all parties concerned.

Suspension and Exclusion

Suspensions and exclusions are always considered to be a last resort but the Headteacher may reasonably choose to suspend or exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to 45 school days in a single year), or permanently excluded. Any suspension or exclusion follows the guidance given to the school by both the Local Authority and DfE.

Monitoring

This policy is monitored by the headteacher who reports to governors termly.

Review

Policy reviewed and approved by the FGB in January 2026.
Next review: January 2027