



Where each child is special and every child matters

## Behaviour Policy

### Appendix One- Impact of COVID 19 on Children's Emotional Health and Well-Being and Behaviours.

Children thrive when they are safe and protected, when family and community connections are stable and nurturing, and when their basic needs are met.

The coronavirus pandemic and the unprecedented measures to contain its spread are disrupting nearly every aspect of children's lives: their health, development, learning, behaviour, their families' economic security, their protection from violence and abuse and their mental health.<sup>1</sup>

Children are keen observers of people and environments, and they notice and react to stress in their parents and other caregivers, peers, and community members.

Children may ask direct questions about what is happening now or what will happen in the future and may behave differently in reaction to strong feelings about the pandemic and related conditions.

Children also may worry about their own safety and the safety of their loved ones, how they will get their basic needs met (e.g., food, shelter, clothing), and uncertainties for the future.<sup>2</sup>

Children's responses to stressful events are unique and varied.

This list is not exhaustive some children may be:

- Irritable not enjoy things that they used to.
- Tearful and easily upset become clingy needing to be near a safe adult,
- Regressive behaviours
- Demand extra attention
- Excessive focus on anxieties,
- Increased aggression or self-harm
- Difficulty with self-care not wanting to sleep alone or even go to the toilet independently.
- Changes in sleeping and eating.<sup>3</sup> (nightmares/night terrors)

New and challenging behaviours are natural responses, and adults can help by showing empathy and patience and by calmly setting limits when needed. Adults can help by holding and containing children's emotions.

The primary factor in recovery from a traumatic event is the presence of a supportive, caring adult in a child's life. Even when a parent is not available, children can benefit greatly from care provided by other who can offer them consistent, sensitive care that helps protect them from a pandemic's harmful effects.

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<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum May 2020

<sup>2</sup> Child Trends March 2020

<sup>3</sup> Child Trends March 2020

As a school community we will support children in the following key ways:

**reassure** listen and validate children's fears about their safety and the safety of loved ones. We will reassure as much as we can do so honestly.

**routines** maintain routines to provide children with a sense of safety and predictability. The use of photographs and visual timetables to allow children to know what is going to happen with whom.

**regulation.** When children are stressed, their bodies respond by activating their stress response systems. To help them manage these reactions adults will help them to validate their feelings (e.g., "I know that this might feel scary or overwhelming") and encourage them to engage in activities that help them self-regulate for example exercise, breathing exercises and mindfulness.

**self-efficacy** is the sense of having control—an especially important trait during times of fear and uncertainty. Children often feel more in control when they can play an active role in helping themselves, their families, and their communities. For example, children can help by following safety guidelines (e.g., washing their hands, drawing rainbows for the NHS etc) Adults will actively provide opportunities for children to develop a sense of control and stability. <sup>4</sup>

We remember that the greatest influencer on the emotional health and well-being of a child /class is the emotional health and well-being of their teacher. We know we must look after our wellbeing so that we do not pass on stress and tension to our children.

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*Resources for Supporting Children's Emotional Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic*

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<sup>4</sup> Child Trends March 2020