



Therapeutic Thinking

Our whole school approach to supporting children's emotional literacy and promoting positive behaviour.

So that we can be the best that we can be!

What are the benefits of our approach?

Empowered children, who are able to regulate their emotions successfully.

Positive relationships are developed, both within the classroom and at playtimes.

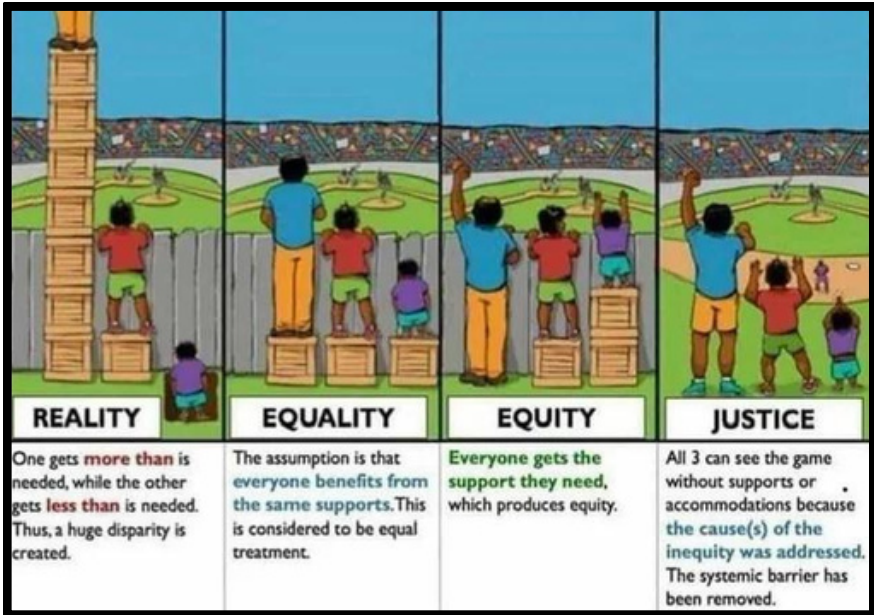
Emotional literacy is developed, supporting children's mental health.

Children develop a clear understanding of valued behaviours, within school and the community in which they live.

Children are enthusiastic and ready to learn.

so that we can *be the best that we can be!*

Equity vs Equality



A ‘Therapeutic Thinking’ approach is not about treating everybody the same, it’s about giving equity to achieve equality. Equality is about treating everybody the same regardless. Equity is about giving everyone what they need to be successful.

We aim to provide equality by providing the same valued experiences for all children and equity by differentiating support and resourcing to remove any barriers.



So that we can be the best that we can be!

A child's behaviour is
telling us something.

The Therapeutic Thinking approach is recommended by WSCC and fully compliments our school ethos to 'be the best that we can be'.

Therapeutic Thinking starts with the creation of a positive classroom by providing a calm and safe learning environment in order that children feel more secure and are better able to regulate their emotions. This supports children to be ready for learning.

When a child shows an emotion such as being worried, happy, calm or upset there is **always** a factor behind this, as there are for us as adults!

Sometimes people feel children are being 'naughty'. However, if we were to unpack the reasons behind the behaviour we would understand, and be able to support the child to find a better way to deal with their feelings e.g. rather than a child becoming aggressive or withdrawn they will be able to express their emotions in a more appropriate way.

You can find out more about the WSCC approach here:
<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/tools-for-schools/inclusion/wellbeing-and-behaviour-in-west-sussex/therapeutic-thinking/>

So that we can **be the best that we can be!**

How do we recognise valued behaviours?

Private Praise that is specific.
Marvellous Me badges linked to valued behaviours.
Communication with families.
Non-verbal signals and gestures.



Historically society has a belief that the best way to get somebody to do something is to offer them a reward or bribe and the best way to stop somebody doing something is the threat and application of punishment.

Fundamentally this does not change the behaviour of the individual or support the development of strategies, nor the ability to manage emotions in a positive way. The only thing that becomes relevant is the size of the reward or the severity of the punishment.

Whilst giving public praise and rewards might make an individual feel positive and motivated, other children can feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. In addition, other children who have acted in the same way and are not in receipt of the public praise, may feel worse about themselves.

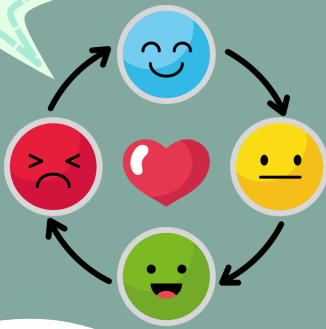
If the reward is being used as a carrot this will not change children's behaviour in the long term and in order to maintain behaviours, often the size of the reward has to increase.

Private praise and rewards are personal to the individual and can be tailored in a way that supports individual development and does not negatively impact on others.

So that we can be the best that we can be!

Emotional Literacy

What is emotional literacy?



Emotional literacy involves having self-awareness and recognition of your own feelings and knowing how to manage them, such as the ability to stay calm when you feel angry or to reassure yourself when in doubt.

It includes empathy i.e. having sensitivity to the feelings of others.

How do we explore this in school?

Circle times – To talk about feelings and relationships

Word of the week – Use of our ‘classroom trees’ to develop their understanding of emotion words in order to extend their vocabulary

PSHE/RSE curriculum – To develop children’s understanding of their sense of self and their relationship with others

Social stories – To help children visualise how to manage a situation

ELSA- Some children visit our Emotional Literacy Support Assistants to support them, if required.

Feelings Hubs- these are areas in the classroom where children can develop their emotional literacy.

So that we can be the best that we can be!

What consequences are there in place?

The use of consequences places an emphasis on repairing the harm done rather than using punishment to assign blame and shame. The Therapeutic Thinking approach supports children to have educational consequences, where they think about the impact of their actions. This helps them to develop strategies to deal with situations more positively in future.

This might be through:

Discussion with staff and people affected to understand the impact of their actions.



Rebuilding the relationship through a range of approaches, for example, writing a sorry letter or drawing a picture, giving a verbal apology, helping to repair a broken model.



With support from staff children are able to find alternative, more positive ways for dealing with difficult situations, for example, walking away, counting to 10, getting help from a grown up, using the feelings hub or using language of the 'Rights' (I have the right to be safe).



*you can't
teach children
to behave better
by leading them
to FEEL worse.
when children
FEEL better
they behave
better.*

so that we can be the best that we can be!

Valued:

Relating to behaviour which is positive, helpful, and intended to promote social acceptance. Behaviour which benefits other people or society.

Detrimental:

Unwilling or unable to behave sociably in the company of others, but not to the detriment to self or others. This includes quiet communication of unsocial feelings.

Glossary of terms

Externalising:

Where your natural response to detrimental feelings is to act on the world around you. This can lead to physical and verbal responses that affect the wellbeing of others, such as fighting, impulsive actions, damaging property etc.

Internalising:

Where your natural response to detrimental feelings is to withdraw from the world around you. This can impact the wellbeing and engagement of the individual concerned, such as refusal to communicate, self-isolation, school refusal, self-harm etc.

Our therapeutic behaviour policy can be found on our website [here](#)

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