



RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Minchinhampton Academy

Reviewed by Committee Agreed by Governing Body // Date of review

Annually, Autumn

RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

This policy deals with the promotion of relationships most conducive to learning and wellbeing. The policy outlines the underlying philosophy, purpose, nature, organisation and management of relationships. It is connected with The Relationships Charter, the Safeguarding & Behaviour /Anti-bullying Policies, the SEND policy, the PSHE and RSHE Policies, the School Local Offer.

Vision

'Life in all its fullness'

- for us this means people who are flourishing
- people who have the wherewithal to shape their own life well;
- people who take a delight in learning;
- people who are compassionate, who appreciate the value and preciousness of each and every person and all life on earth;
- hence people who help to make the world a better place.

At the heart of this school's vision is a commitment to all the people in it; to an ethos and an approach that nurtures the human spirit...to helping to provide people with what they need in order to thrive, to search for meaning and purpose and shared values, to reflect deeply, engage bravely and have hope, to dream big, live life well and smile plenty; *'becoming aware of the truth has a liberating effect; it releases energy and defogs one's mind. as a result one is more independent, has one's centre in oneself, and is more alive.'* E Fromm *The Art of Being* p.43.

Principles

Minchinhampton C of E Primary Academy is committed to creating an environment where relationships enable all to feel safe and respected and all to learn together.

Adults and children alike are expected to maintain high standards of personal conduct, to accept responsibility for their actions and encourage others to do the same. We look to achieve our vision through demonstration of the following positive Christian values/ attitudes:-

Have Compassion

Be Curious

Always Persevere

Try Forgiveness

Take Responsibility

Be Courageous

Feel Grateful

Show Humility

Look for Friendship

Challenge Yourself

Have Faith

Don't Compare

Aims

- To develop positive relationships between all children and adults based on mutual respect.
- To foster a positive, caring, warm environment, in which all children can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem.
- To foster a caring, kind and calm approach in which each person responds sensitively to the needs of others.
- To act as guidelines for all present and future members of teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and pupils, by setting out what we mean by positive relationships and how we will think about and manage these relationships.

Relationships A-Z

Appreciation of difference.

- We embrace the enormous variety of interest and need amongst the people in our school as our raw material; as an awe inspiring, unpredictable, non-linear and ever evolving challenge. When working with our children, we are committed to a very flexible approach so every individual has a chance to flourish.
- We focus on **appreciating difference**, not simply accepting it. This might include not only racial, religious and cultural differences, but also differences in emotional, learning and social profile. Rather than expecting consensus and becoming frustrated at differences of opinion, we look to draw strength from our differences and from the ensuing dialogue. Our school identity should be *'defined by conflicts and dilemmas more than by agreements.'* Yuval Noah Harari. *'That everyone is different and unique to one another and I have learnt to appreciate that.'* Yr 6 Leaver 2020

Attunement

Attunement describes how we try to tune into, read and then respond to someone else's state and needs at any given time. For that other person we aim to be physically and emotionally present, to be attentive, attuned and responsive. *'The body speaks to those who know how to listen...the multifaceted language of the body depicts a lifetime of joys, sorrows and challenges, revealed in patterns of tension, movement, gesture, posture, breath, rhythm, prosody, facial expression ,*

sensation, physiological arousal, gait and other action consequences.' Ogden 2015

Autonomy

We aim for an approach that gives pupils the feeling of autonomy in and the confidence to take responsibility for how they conduct themselves, for their learning; that helps them become self-regulating. *'Children are likely to become enthusiastic, lifelong learners as a result of being provided with an engaging curriculum; a safe, caring community in which to discover and create; and a significant degree of choice about what (and how and why) they are learning.'* Alfie Kohn

Behaviour (see Behaviour Policy)

We are committed to creating an environment where exemplary behaviour, attitudes and relationships enable all to feel safe and respected and all to learn together. Adults and children alike are expected to maintain high standards of personal conduct, to accept responsibility for their actions and encourage others to do the same.

Bullying (See Anti-Bullying Policy)

We do not tolerate bullying of any kind.

For the purposes of this policy "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. All bullying incidents are sent to the Head teacher or DHT.

Core values: Adults will reference these values:- 'Try Forgiveness' 'Take Responsibility' when discussing bullying

Challenge

We look to challenge our children to be the best they can be, to keep learning from their mistakes, to keep trying. We expect them to work hard and with resilience. We expect them to engage in thought and discussion about how complicated human relationships are. We expect them to try hard to understand the opinions of others. *'We do not truly know what anyone is capable of until they are given interesting and difficult things to do... If children are engaged in thoughtful, absorbing practice, they are both paying attention to the now, are in the moment and are also on the path for a bigger story, which moves them into tomorrow and the future.'* (Mary Myatt) (See Pride, Expectations)

Charter (see Appendix 6)

The charter aims to cover two aspects: interaction and communication, which we see as forming the bedrock of positive relationships in our organisation. In this context, we define 'interaction' as 'how we talk to each other' and 'communication' as 'what we communicate to each other.' The charter aims to support all relationships within the school community including adult/adult, child/child and adult/child.

Given the central importance of relationships for delivering the best education possible for the children, the charter aims to have high expectations of relationships. We recognise that at the heart of wellbeing we need positive, trusting [relationships](#). We have a Charter that looks to safeguard all relationships in our school.

Child on child abuse (see Safeguarding Policy)

The school recognises that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex and can occur online and face-to-face and are never acceptable. The school takes a zero-tolerance approach. All incidents will be thoroughly investigated and plans put in place to avoid in the future. The recognition of and response to sexual violence and sexual harassment are taught as part of the curriculum and in assemblies.

Choice

We talk to children about the choices they make, including with reference to their behaviour. We stress to them that life is all about decisions-- often unconscious but happening all the same and we all go through the same basic process each time. When making choices we encourage pupils to think, Stop--or ask the other person to stop; Think-- what are you doing? what is the impact on others? Choose-- what are my choices? What is the best course of action for me and those around me? Equally we are mindful that the ability to choose wisely can be seriously compromised by our emotional state. We are wary about using the language of choices when a child is emotionally dysregulated.

Collaboration—

We encourage a collaborative approach because we know this benefits our children both socially and in their learning. We know group work and talk and collaboration *'achieve certain kinds of intellectual and social learning goals....for conceptual learning , for creative problem solving.. Socially it will improve intergroup relationships by increasing trust and friendliness.'* (E Cohen). For example we use talk partners throughout the week and we hold restorative conversations in groups (problem circles) or pairs when things go wrong. (see Restorative) Again we are equally mindful that for some pupils - perhaps those more introverted or with social and emotional challenges, cooperative learning can present as a significant challenge, if not a trigger for emotional dysregulation. We therefore remain, as ever, responsive to the needs of the individual.

Common Good

We believe in an education that encourages and enables all students and adults to contribute to the common good. *'...theories of contributive justice teach us that we are most fully human when we contribute to the common good and earn the esteem of our fellow citizens for the contributions we make.'* Sandel- *Tyranny of Merit* p212 We look for opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for others and to engage in activities that help others. When lessons need to be learned about how best to behave towards others, we will sometimes give pupils responsibility for others/ for the rest of us to help them learn. When we talk about good behaviour we often refer to what is needed for us all to thrive; we often use expressions like, 'in this school we are all trying to....' The overt and the hidden curriculum are peppered with these kinds of opportunities. (see Responsibility)

Comparison

We look to avoid a culture of comparison. We are wary of reward systems that inadvertently encourage pupils to compare themselves to others or inadvertently create winners and losers out of a situation. *'If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself'* (Max Ehrmann, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desiderata>)... instead to nurture **courage** and **humility**; to **recognise strength** and appreciate variety, appreciate differences...to be fascinated by other people. We cannot and will not apply a 'one size fits all' mindset. We will instead remain responsive to the individual. We look to find what is great inside all of our children: we want to dig it out and share it with the world. (See Appreciating Difference, Individuals)

Compassion

We look to maintain a culture of caring, of listening; a place full of **compassion** and empathy; a place of safety, where everyone has the best chance at self -regulation. We always look to understand, to reach out to pupils, to value them and to help. *'Children are more likely to grow into caring people if they know they themselves are cared about....if children feel safe, they can take risks, ask questions, make mistakes, learn to trust, share their feelings, and grow.'* (Alfie Cohen) We are

committed to developing emotional intelligence and growing empathy and **compassion** for others; *“Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind. Always.” (B. Meltzer)*

Connection

We prioritise the maintenance of relationships because we recognise the importance of connections for pupils feeling valued and held. We need strong relationships, we need to trust each other.... we need to find connection... to actively listen to each other... to be kind...to be an ethical community... *‘I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship’ -Brené Brown.*

(See Relationships)

Consistency

We recognise the need to respond as consistently as possible to children if they are to feel supported and safe and if they are to understand our expectations. 1. All adults must have the same expectations of pupil conduct- including how pupils talk to them. 2. All adults must hold to these expectations constantly and relentlessly. They must keep on and on, going back again and again about expectations. 3. All adults must take responsibility for all pupils. Adults must not hesitate to talk to another class (other than the one they normally work in) about expectations. Adults must welcome this support/ challenge with pupils from their own class. We are all responsible for all behaviour/ for all relationships. When addressing pupils from another class, whenever possible they could do this alongside the adult whose class it is- this to give the strongest impression of consistency possible.

In all this we recognise the need for judgement and flexibility when working with individual needs. However this should not compromise consistency. We are especially determined to be consistent in the way we think about children and their behaviour. (See Expectations)

We ensure that a common and consistent language is used to manage behaviour and to create clear boundaries for learning. Conversations should broadly follow established scripts- see appendices. These scripts will be constantly discussed/ revisited with staff to ensure there is shared ownership of their construction and adhered to.

Curiosity

We want to be curious as a community. We want curiosity to drive learning and we aim for an approach to learning that encourages this rather than quashing it. We want curiosity to drive our approach to relationships and behaviour also. We need to be constantly interested in/ delight in the individual. Curiosity, without judgement, is how we help children become aware of their inner life and reflect upon the reasons for their behaviour. Curiosity is wondering about the meaning behind the behaviour for the child. Curiosity lets the child know that the adults understand. Children often know that their behaviour was not appropriate. They often do not know why they did it or are reluctant to tell adults why. With curiosity the adults are conveying their intention to simply understand why and to help the child with understanding. The adult's intentions are to truly understand and help the child, not to lecture or convey that the child's inner life is *wrong* in some way. (See Faith, Individuals, Appreciating Difference)

Curriculum

In most ways a child's behaviour or emotions are very much part of the curriculum, part of the learning. We try not to view behaviour as a hindrance to learning- instead we see it as part of learning. We take opportunities across the curriculum to explore and reflect on relationships and behaviour, for example during collective worship,

when reading/sharing books, during class meetings.(See Learning, Perseverance, Mistakes)

Differentiation

We are responsive to need. While we accept the need for consistency, we also accept the need for differentiation. We recognise the need to strike a balance and the complexity of this task. 'Some people need more support and input– it's about making sure everyone's ok and get to the same level..... We should treat people how we'd like to be treated but if they need to be treated differently- then we need to treat them that way- if we can- to make them feel secure and safe. For example some people want other people around them all the time but others prefer a bit of space. For example if someone has been through something difficult, they might need more support. Of course we still need to make sure everyone around them feels cared for too. This is really difficult sometimes because say in a school there are so only so many adults to go around and it's really hard to make everyone feel supported. But then again it's not just about how many adults we have– we can all be support for each other..... If a teacher is working with one child all the time, the other children can miss out. There just needs to be balance– the school has to make sure things stay balanced and all of us helping each other can help..... If someone is struggling, they can have support outside of the class so that it doesn't interrupt the class. Sometimes a classroom feels too much– say if someone's feeling stressed. People need to understand that this is not a special treat- they're still doing learning out of class but they're probably missing out on lots too so we should feel concerned about them. The teachers should make it clear to everyone why this is happening (without embarrassing anyone) so that they understand the situation better.' Year 6 pupils 2022

Emotional Dysregulation

We believe everyone is trying and we generally see behaviour as something communicated. We recognise that children can become emotionally dysregulated - that this can be short lived or, in the case of a mental health crisis, last weeks or even months. We recognise that for these pupils to be supported, a highly individualized, highly responsive approach will be necessary; an approach which could seriously challenge our need for balance (see Differentiation above). We recognise the moral complexity of this and are open with our pupils about it. However if love and compassion are to reside at the heart of our school, we cannot ignore the light of those most in need. We recognise the need for adults to model self regulation and the need for adults to engage co-regulation alongside the child before we can expect the child to learn to self-regulate. Staff are trained in co-regulation as well as de-escalation.

Equality (See Appreciating difference)

We are committed to an education that benefits us all, to a socially just, more equal society. *'We feel equal in class. Other people don't come across as better than me. They may know more about something but the teachers want us to share our learning.'* (Pupil self-report 2020) (See Appreciating Difference). We avoid comparisons and we look to ensure all pupils feel valued, feel seen, feel supported.(See Comparisons)

'Equality of Opportunity is not the same as treating everyone the same because people need different things in life to get the same opportunities. Everyone can learn but they learn in different ways. We need to help people get to the same place but it might take a different amount of time and one's person's journey might be zigzaggy and another person's might seem quite straight. Having said that, someone's straight journey might look straight but we're not in their heads and they might be having to try really hard, eg working extra at home, to keep their journey straight. We all have to try really hard to understand each other as best as we can; understand we're on different journeys– and try to fit them in as best we can.' (Year 6 pupils 2022)

Expectations

We want our pupils to dig deep, take pride in themselves /surprise themselves with what they discover about themselves and their relationships and by what they can achieve. We aim to hold our pupils and ourselves to high standards of conduct and a good attitude to learning. We must remain realistic about rules which can end up being inconsistently applied because there are endless possible variables – incorporating different individuals in different circumstances at different times in different emotional states. Individuals need to use their judgement each time.

Faith

At the heart of our approach lies a faith in people. We assume people are doing their best. We do not treat children as ‘unformed’ and their behaviour as wilful and obstructive. Of course they need to have parameters, to feel safe- we all do- but that shouldn’t stop us treating them as ‘young people,’ to demonstrate we have faith in them. (See Curiosity)

Feelings

We teach children explicitly about feelings and the importance of recognising them and expressing them (See PSHE).

We use the principles from Emotion Coaching to sensitively support pupils to reflect on relationships and behaviours.

The five essential steps of Emotion Coaching:

- Be aware of the child’s emotion
- Recognize the child’s expression of emotion as an opportunity for learning
- Listen with empathy and validate the child’s feelings (*Notice*)

- Help the child learn to label their emotions with words (*Name*) ● Set limits when you are helping the child to solve problems or deal with upsetting situations appropriately

We also use ‘Zones of Regulation’ to talk to pupils about their emotional regulation and to express themselves emotionally on an ongoing basis. We differentiate our approach for pupils who are emotionally dysregulated. (See Appreciating Difference)

We have staff who are ELSA trained. They work out of the ‘Flourishing Room’ with pupils who need support with their feelings.

Forgiveness

We see forgiveness as a central, key value. We see it as one of the hardest values to live by and one of the most critical if we are to learn from our mistakes and move forward together. Forgiveness is intrinsic to the restorative process and a core value for the school, explored deeply through collective worship. (See Restorative)

Growth Mindset

Carol Dweck’s ‘Growth Mindset’ research has had a profound impact on the way we teach at Minchinhampton, as well as how we manage our school. Dweck and her colleagues are interested in people’s beliefs about their ability. They found that that the more a person had a growth mindset (the belief that we can become more

capable with time and effort), the more likely they were to be successful in life: in essence they proved the age old maxim 'it's really important to believe in yourself.' We look to embrace mistakes in all aspects of school life- as a key resource for learning, as a fact of life, as something human. Behaviour is seen in this light- as another aspect of learning.

Honesty

We value honesty and encourage our pupils to learn from their mistakes. Our commitment to listening and forgiveness make room for honesty. We put great store by acts of honesty. We give it a high profile when looking to resolve issues and during collective worship.

Individuals

The vision expects fascination with the individual, with ourselves, with others. (See Curiosity) '*The same things which are helps to one person towards cultivation of his higher nature, are hindrances to another....Such are the differences among human beings...that unless there is a corresponding diversity in their modes of life, they neither obtain their fair share of happiness, nor grow up to the mental, moral and aesthetic stature of which their nature is capable.*' -John Stuart Mill. This fascination with the individual makes the act of teaching an endlessly enriching and fulfilling experience. It is enough.

Independence (see Autonomy, Responsibility)

We aim for pupils to become ever more independent learners as they progress through the school. We believe in giving pupils autonomy in their learning wherever we can and we expect them to use their initiative and solve problems/ learning dilemmas more and more independently.

In the classroom we refer to the 5B's to encourage pupils to be more independent:-

Brain
Board
Book
Buddy
Boss

Induction

All new staff undergo careful induction, including critically an introduction and explanation around this relationships policy.

Language

We recognise the language we use reflects how we think. We recognise the language we use as well as the tone of voice we use will be instrumental in achieving constructive outcomes for and with children. We recognise the importance of consistency between adults in the language they use. A number of appendices to this policy are devoted to detailing the kind of language/ language prompts we as a school use, including around attitudes to learning, independence, listening, choices, praise, feelings and behaviour management.

Learning

We are all about the learning and constant ongoing development. (See Curiosity) When things go wrong we see this as an opportunity for learning. We see behaviour as part of learning, as part of the curriculum. We feel strongly that '*to see the act of learning as something not for its own sake but because of what it will get you reduces the wonder of humanity. We are thinking, feeling, art-making, knowledge-hungry, marvellous animals, who understand ourselves and our world through the act of learning. It is an end in itself. It has far more to offer than the things it lets us write on*

application forms. It is a way to love living right now' (Matt Haig).

Listening

We value talk- we possibly value listening even more. This is an area our pupils sometimes struggle with. We give pupils as many structured opportunities as we can where good active listening is necessary- eg P4C, debating, talk partners, restorative conversations. Good listening is a key challenge and a key expectation.

Love

We look to follow Jesus's command to 'Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.' We must look to appreciate our differences; must look to adopt an approach that means '*disengaging temporarily from our own sense of right and wrong and opening ourselves to the moral logic of people with whom we disagree.*' D . We want our school to be a happy school where children learn to be happy but not at the expense of others' happiness.

Mindfulness

We teach mindfulness to our pupils. The Paws b Mindfulness in Schools Project has been shown to reduce anxiety, distress, reactivity and bad behaviour; to improve sleep and self-esteem, and bring about greater calmness and self-awareness. '*Every experience if it is done with mindfulness is clear, distinct, real and hence not automatic, mechanical, diffuse. The person who has reached a state of mindfulness is awake, aware of reality in its depth and concentratedness; he is concentrated and not distracted.*' E Fromm -*The Art of Being* p.51

Mistakes

We accept we will [all make mistakes](#) - [forgiving](#) ourselves and others for these mistakes; knowing that mistakes are an opportunity to learn. "*The wound is the place where the Light enters you.*"- Rumi

Modelling

We recognise it is critical that we practice what we preach. We just aim for our principles to permeate all thought and action; we must constantly and consistently model it. 'I believe that education means to acquaint the young with the best heritage of the human race. But while much of this heritage is expressed in words, it is effective only if these words become reality in the person of the teacher and in the practice and structure of society. Only the word that has materialised in the flesh can influence man; the idea that remains a word influences only words.' Erich Fromm *Beyond The Chains of Illusion* p.167

Non-judgemental

We must do our level best not to 'other' people's behaviour. It is too often still our natural default when we hear about/ see someone struggling with their mental health/ emotionally dysregulated -to start putting it away from us. Thoughts like, '...I feel really sorry for them but they really should...if that was me I would...'. Responses are too often a combination of advice, self-satisfaction, sympathy, judgement. We all need to hang onto a healthy dose of 'there but for the grace of God go I. (See Comparison)

PACE

PACE stands for [Playfulness](#), [Acceptance](#), [Curiosity](#) and [Empathy](#). We look to PACE as a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving in order to foster positive relationships. It is based upon how parents connect with their very young infants. As

with young toddlers, with safety the child can begin to explore. With PACE, the troubled child can start to look at himself and let others start to see them, or get closer emotionally. They can start to trust.

(See Appendix)

Parents

We like to work in a very close partnership with parents and we will, wherever possible, encourage parental involvement. With their support and understanding we will seek to understand, support and encourage our pupils. We will offer support to parents when an individual child is struggling and expect parents to contact the school whenever they need.

Parents can help by:-

- following the Relationships Charter
- encouraging children to realise the importance of the school and taking an interest in their learning and behaviour.
- meeting teachers regularly, so that they know how their child is progressing. -assisting with activities where appropriate.
- positively endorsing the school's vision and aims and talking about the positive behaviours and values we set out to achieve.
- discussing any problems promptly with school
- supporting the efforts of their children when they receive praise

Perseverance

We stress the importance of perseverance. We are all trying to do our best but sometimes we make the same mistake repeatedly. We try to teach our pupils resilience, teach them to keep trying. (See Growth Mindset, Mistakes, Learning)

Philosophy for Children (see Appendices)

We engage in Philosophy for Children (P4C) is a powerful educational approach which has been found through research studies to have cognitive and social benefits for children and schools.

Attainment and happiness are increased. It is centred on philosophical enquiry, where a trained teacher encourages children to think and reason as a group. It supports Personal, Social and Health Education and complements many government initiatives and education strategies. P4C is short for Philosophy for Children. Expectations re how pupils conduct themselves in a P4C session support good listening and cooperation.

Promotion

The central principles of this policy are displayed around school; this to encourage thinking and to initiate positive dialogue regarding the principles. We encourage children to consider these principles in every area of school activity and pupils are helped to recognise examples of good behaviour at all times.

Politeness

Our relationships must be founded in part on mutual respect and care. For us good manners are about this, about respect for each other. We will have high expectations of manners.

Positive Handling (see Physical Intervention Policy)

The Team Teach approach enables staff at Minchinhampton to comply with legal responsibilities to safeguard people and services. It develops and supports a positive behaviour management with training to promote a balanced approach towards reducing risk, restraint and restriction.

In rare individual cases the use of physical interventions may be needed. Staff should only use physical intervention as the very last resort when a child's or an adult's safety is threatened or the child in question is likely to cause significant damage to school property. Staff using physical interventions will have received appropriate training and an individualised risk assessment been made. It should never be used punitively.

Praise (see Appendix)

We look to recognise positive relationships and positive behaviour wherever and whenever we can. We are generous in our praise and enthusiasm about children and their achievements. We are free with how much we praise but careful how we praise see appendix. We aim to praise for growth- we provide feedback that describes/acknowledges specifics. We talk about the learning of individuals in a way that admires and appreciates efforts and choices. We do not offer praise that 'judges' intelligence or talent or sets out to control behaviour. We prize the effort not praise the result

Pride

We want our pupils to have pride in what they do, pride in themselves. This is a key expectation. (See Challenge). We discuss openly the value of pride as well as humility. (See Perseverance)

Professional Development

We recognise the need to go on learning and in particular to go on learning about children's needs. Training includes/ has included:-

- ACES, Autism, ADHD, Pathological Avoidance, Restorative Practice, Mindfulness, Restorative Circles, Mental Health First Aid, dyslexia, co-regulation, zones of regulation, Team Teach

We commit to learning on an ongoing basis through our monitoring and review of our practice (eg briefing meetings) and through ongoing dialogue around pupil needs (eg RAG forms).

PSHCE and RSHE

Our PSHCE and RSHE curriculum supports children's understanding of personal responsibility and positive life choices. The PSHE curriculum will be used both as a planned curriculum and as a resource for use with pupils and whole classes when things go wrong.

Record -keeping

-We keep thorough records of significant incidents and information regarding behaviour and wellbeing on CPoms. The DSL team reviews Cpoms regularly. - Staff are expected to hold the baton of an incident until they are sure appropriate action has been taken. The HT/DHT review actions regularly. (see also Support).

Reflection

We aim to be reflective. We build self evaluation into lessons. Each class puts aside

time on a Thursday to review learning that has taken place. They reflect on experiences and thinking and record thoughts in their Reflection Journals.

Relationships

- We believe emotional intelligence and relationships lie at the heart of a healthy human existence. *'If you were designing a curriculum in proportion to its eventual contribution to a good life, half of it at least would be devoted to relationships.'* Alain De Botton
- We want to encourage/ allow for concentrated relationships; to support active listening and the deeper understanding of others which push us to respond to them with compassion and care. (See Listening, Politeness)

Responsibility

Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility in class; around school and for people beyond school. When pupils make a 'mistake' in their behaviour, they are expected to take responsibility for their mistake/ to see their mistake as an opportunity to learn. We support individual pupils then to avoid these mistakes in the future- as we would do in say maths. We may use responsibilities around the school as a way to support them, as a practical, hands on approach to helping pupils understand the consequences of their actions and help them see how they can contribute. Examples might include reading with a younger pupil or working as a play-leader.

We help them to take **responsibility** for themselves and others. *'Teach children to see that there are many contributing causes to any problem and to take responsibility for what they have contributed to the problem, without blaming themselves for things out of their control.'* (Martin Seligman).

We encourage them to take responsibility for their responses and their actions; to recognise we all play our part and we all have impact on the world. *'Of all the existing things some are in our power, and others are not in our power. In our power are thought, impulse, will to get, and will to avoid, and, in a word, everything which is our own doing.'* Epictetus- *Enchiridion*

(See Common Good)

Responsiveness

We constantly use words like 'flexibility' and 'responsiveness' when discussing our methods. In all dealings with children, we look to be fascinated by what might be going on inside their head- this way lies good learning. When we approach a child who is struggling we ask 'why is this happening?' then 'what can I do to help?' (See Individuals)

Restorative (see Appendices)

When there is conflict, 'Restorative Practice' focuses on building, maintaining and restoring relationships and giving people agency in their own lives. *"It's all about how to re-build relationships when things go wrong; about trying to understand other people's feelings and our own"*(Year 6 Student 2020)

REFLECT - REPAIR - RECONNECT

With its roots in the practices of indigenous peoples and through a belief in people and relationships, restorative practice brings attention to many vital aspects of our school culture: how we get along with each other; our differences as an asset; the importance of curiosity rather than judgement and collaboration rather than competition; being responsible for what's yours and allowing others to be responsible for what's theirs; listening to understand; asking more than telling; and kindness. Staff

and students are encouraged to use the restorative practice questions, displayed on the posters throughout school.

We ask the following questions when looking to restore relationships in a restorative conversation:

What happened?

What were you feeling/ thinking at the time?

What are you feeling/ thinking now?

Who has been affected? How have you been affected?

What is needed to make things right?

What support do you need to do this?

SEND

We understand that some children exhibit particular behaviours as a way of communicating an unmet need. This may be from an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), a Special Educational Need and/or Disability (SEND) or another underlying Social, Emotional and Mental Health difference. We view behaviour as communication and are curious to ask 'why' a child may be showing these behaviours and question 'what happened?'

Self-importance

We let our pupils know that they are important but no more important than anyone else. We guide them to constantly consider others in their dealings with others. We encourage them to recognise we are all part of something bigger than ourselves; to tap into their natural creativity; to support them to make a valuable contribution;

Strengths

We recognise growth relies in part upon self-appreciation and gratitude... ●

We want to enjoy individuality and celebrate our human creativity, our own uniqueness and be grateful for what we have and are.

'And I think of each life as a flower, as common

As a field daisy, and as singular.' -Mary Oliver

In Year 4 pupils take the PENN State University Strengths Assessment.

Supportive of pupils

We aim for a supportive approach for all. Where a child needs more in depth support, we generally operate a 'team around the child' where a child's needs are discussed and reviewed thoroughly, including liaison with the child concerned, all adults involved including parents. We tailor our response and strategies to the needs of the child.

Good practice re planning for needs includes:-

- My Plans for those pupils struggling with emotional/ social
- Individual Behaviour Plans for pupils who have been involved in bullying
- Attendance Plans for those whose attendance is weak
- Individual Learning Plans for pupils who are dysregulated and struggling to stay in a classroom environment
- RAGS for pupils who are dysregulated and we need to understand their needs better

Good practice re supporting pupils includes:-

- Den
- Inner Space lunchtime support for those pupils struggling at lunchtimes
- Play Therapy,
- Cranial Osteopathy

- TA's supporting individuals with their pastoral needs

Supportive of staff

We recognise how challenging behaviour and emotions can be stressful for those adults working with these children. We look to ensure ongoing review and supervision support these members of staff. We look to ensure there are structured opportunities through the week/term to support staff with this challenge. Good practice includes:-

- Monday briefing meetings for all staff before the start of school.
- Balent circles or problem solving circles during staff meetings ●

Emotion coaching/ mentoring for those staff who need it

- Wellbeing Wednesdays
- Class/Team meetings
- DSL supervision meetings 6x a year
- Pastoral supervision between HT and Pastoral lead 1x a week
- Planning meetings between Play Therapist and teachers
- Encouraging each other to maintain a healthy work-life balance

Thinking

We work hard to counter our inbuilt prejudices and to have 'helpful' thoughts. The way we think about something clearly affects how we respond- how we speak to/ how we act towards someone who is struggling. In this context we see helpful thoughts as the ones that are more empathetic, compassionate, constructive. Example: As we approach a child who is struggling, two thoughts are useful:- 1. Why are they behaving this way? 2. What can I do to help? This way of thinking clearly sees behaviour as the communication of something that needs addressing. Example: We try to keep in mind 'PACE' when working through a problem or a moment of upset, which stands for 'Playfulness...Acceptance...Curiosity...Empathy.' Example: We encourage people to think before they speak, to consider **Is it True? Is it Honest? Is it Inspiring? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?**

Transition & induction

Expectations and parameters are re-stated at the outset of every year both in classes and in whole school assemblies. Pupils returning from an exclusion will have a expectations redrawn in a re-induction meeting and clarified in a Pastoral Support Plan (or in their My Plan if this is more appropriate).

Trauma- informed

The school's practice and policy is trauma-informed- that is we look to provide empathic, relational responses when children exhibit distressed behaviours brought on by adverse childhood experiences.

Trust

The school vision is preoccupied with putting people first and assuming they are doing their best. Some behaviour policies take mistrust as their starting point. Ernest Hemingway said, 'The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them.' We want to trust first and ask questions later.

(See Faith)

Understanding

We try to devote as much of our mental energy as possible towards understanding each other rather than criticism and judgement. For those pupils who are emotionally dysregulated, we record our understanding on RAG forms. Restorative conversations are designed to help us to understand each other better and hence find constructive ways forward. (See Restorative, Individuals)

Value

We know above all else that pupils and adults alike feel better for having strong, secure relationships and feeling valued. We want our pupils to know, 'I am lovable.' Our school needs to be *'a place where the future is bursting with possibility. A place where they (pupils) are loved and can learn to love.'* (Debra Kidd, 2014) (See Relationships)

Voice

Our starting assumption is that we are all born with a desire for knowledge and a desire to get it right. We must do everything we can, as a primary school, to maintain and nurture that desire as well as offer pupils the opportunity to think beyond their own experiences. We are excited by what our pupils bring to the table and wary of talking too much, of losing their voice as learners. Where possible we would like a learning process which engages both adults and pupils in partnership. *'We can never put ourselves in the shoes of children; we cannot fathom their thoughts, we lend them ours; and always following our own reasoning, we stuff their heads with extravagance and error.'* (Rousseau) (See autonomy, Individuals)

Wisdom

We want our pupils to develop the **wisdom** to solve problems; to help them respond well when things go wrong; when they are faced with risk, uncertainty and emotional exposure. We accept this is a long and difficult journey for us all - we look to concern ourselves not with the destination but with the act of walking in the right direction, in hope. We aim for spirituality and wisdom borne out of knowledge of the world within as well as the world without; *'People who learn to control inner experience will be able to determine the quality of their lives, which is as close as any of us can come to being happy....how we feel about ourselves, the joy we get from living, ultimately depends directly on how the mind filters and interprets everyday experiences.'* -(M. Csikszentmihalyi).

APPENDICES

- 1. Praise**
- 2. Restorative conversations**
- 3. Think before you speak**
- 4. P4C expectations**
- 5. Self-evaluation**
- 6. PACE**
- 7. Relationships Charter**
- 8. TIPPS for regulation**

Growth mindset phrasing which simply offers feedback:

'You have used descriptive adjectives. Your writing paints a really clear picture of the scene for me. I feel like I'm actually there.'

'You seem to have developed a real interest in non fiction books.'

'You have worked out how to get the ball rolling fast enough so it reaches the bucket.'

'You've given me a lot to think about –I hadn't thought of it that way before.'

'Hmm that's interesting- I wonder what else you could find out.'

Growth mindset phrasing for praising pupils:

'You really studied for your test and your improvement shows it. You read the material over several times, you outlined it and you tested yourself on it. It really worked.'

'I like the way you tried all kinds of strategies on that maths problem until you finally got it. You thought of a lot of different ways to do it and found the one that worked.' 'I like that you have taken on a challenging investigation in science. It's going to take a lot of cooperation, thinking and measuring. You are going to learn so much.' 'I know you used to find school easy and you used to feel like the smart kid all the time. But the truth is that you weren't always using your brain to its fullest. I'm really excited to see you stretching yourself now and working to learn things you find hard.' 'That task was so long and involved. I really admire the way you concentrated and finished it.'

'That picture of yours has so many beautiful colours. Tell me about it.' 'You put so much thought into this. I feel like I'm seeing the book in a whole new light.'

'The passion you put into your singing gives me a real feeling of joy. How do you feel when you're singing?'

'It's great that you're finding that tricky- it means you are learning.' 'I'm impressed with the way you persevered when you were

mediating.' 'OK, so how could you make your den big enough for the whole group.'

'This presentation tells me you have carried out the work thoroughly.' 'I like the way you have laid out your reading journal- you must be very proud of it.'

'You have been very thorough (as a play leader) preparing for today's activities.' 'I really like the contributions you have made to this morning's discussion- they showed you empathised with the character.'

'I can see by the way you are sitting that you are listening well to this assembly.' 'It's great to see you taking part in the play-leading.'

Growth mindset phrasing for encouraging pupils:

'I like the effort you are putting in- keep persevering with your talk partner and you could well gain a better understanding.'

'We all have different learning curves. This may take you a little longer than some just as they probably took longer to master the hockey dribbling yesterday- but you will get there if you keep persevering like this.' 'Everyone learns in a different way. We will find your way in if we keep looking.'

Appendix 2: Restorative Conversations



RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

Reflect - Repair - Reconnect



What happened?



What were you thinking / feeling at the time?



What do you think / feel about it now?



**Who has been affected?
How has this affected you?**



What is needed to make things right?



What support do you need to do this?

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

Is it **T**True?

Is it **H**Honest?

Is it **I**Inspiring?

Is it **N**Necessary?

Is it **K**Kind?

The 4C Posters

We're
caring

thinkers when we...

- think about what's said
- listen to others carefully
- imagine how others feel
- don't interrupt
- wait our turn

We're
creative

thinkers when we...

- make connections
- think of new ideas
- explore possibilities
- compare things
- suggest alternatives

We're
collaborative

thinkers when we...

- speak to each other
- build on ideas
- are friendly and helpful
- share our experiences
- work together

We're
critical

thinkers when we...

- ask 'big idea' questions
- test our ideas
- give good reasons
- look for evidence
- suggest conclusions

Appendix 5: Key phrases and examples to help pupils frame their self evaluation—some thoughts

Please encourage children to describe their learning by using open ended questions.

How did you do that?...'
What will you do next?'

What can you tell me about...?'

Tell me more

Please encourage them to evaluate the process they went through *What did you find easy about learning to...?'*

What are you most pleased about learning to...?'

What really made you think/ did you find difficult while you were learning to...? What helped you when something got tricky while you were learning about...? What did you need more help with when learning to...?'

How would you do things differently next time now that you know what you know?'

Please encourage children to evaluate the outcome for them

What can you do that you couldn't do before?

What have you learnt that is new about...?

I changed my attitude about...

I became more aware about...

I was surprised by...

Please encourage them to connect their learning to other learning *How do you think we can use what we have learnt today and in the future? This reminds me about....*

Please encourage them to evaluate the task itself

How would you change this activity for another group/ class who were learning to....?

Appendix 6:

Communication: PACE

<https://cavuhb.nhs.wales/files/resilience-project/resilience-project-logo-adjustments/pace-pdf/>

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/children-and-families/PACEforteachers.pdf>

PACE stands for Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy.

We look to PACE as a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving in order to foster positive relationships. It is based upon how parents connect with their very young infants. As with young toddlers, with safety the child can begin to explore. With PACE, the troubled child can start to look at himself and let others start to see him, or get closer emotionally. He can start to trust.

Playfulness

This is about creating an atmosphere of lightness and interest when you communicate. It means learning how to use a light tone with your voice, like you might use when storytelling, rather than an irritated or lecturing tone. It's about having fun, and expressing a sense of joy. It is similar to parent-infant interactions when both parent and infant are delighting in being with each other and getting to know each other. Both are feeling safe and relaxed. Neither feels judged nor criticised. Playful moments reassure both that their conflicts and separations are temporary and will never harm the strength of their relationship. Having a playful stance isn't about being funny all the time or making jokes when a child is sad. It's about helping children be more open to and experience what is positive in their life, one step at a time. Sometimes a troubled child has given up on the idea of having good times and doesn't want to experience and share fun or enjoyment. Some children don't like affection or reject hugs. A playful stance can allow closeness but without the scary parts. When children find it hard to regulate their feelings, anger can become rage, fear, terror, and sadness, despair. If this is the case, then children may also find it

hard to regulate feelings of excitement, joy and love. Feeling these emotions can sometimes turn to anxiety. Playfulness allows children to cope with positive feelings. It also gives hope. If you can help the child discover his own emerging sense of humour, this can help him wonder a little more about his life and how come he behaves in the ways that he does. When children laugh and giggle, they become less defensive or withdrawn and more reflective. A playful stance adds elements of fun and enjoyment in day-to-day life and can also diffuse a difficult or tense situation. The child is less likely to respond with anger and defensiveness when the parent has a touch of playfulness in his or her discipline. While such a response would not be appropriate at the time of major misbehaviour, when applied to minor behaviours, playfulness can help keep it all in perspective.

Acceptance

Unconditional acceptance is at the core of the child's sense of safety. Acceptance is about actively communicating to the child that you accept the wishes, feelings, thoughts, urges, motives and perceptions that are underneath the outward behaviour. It is about accepting, without judgement or evaluation, her inner life. The child's inner life simply is; it is not *right* or *wrong*. Accepting the child's intentions does not imply accepting behaviour, which may be hurtful or harmful to another person or to self. The parent may be very firm in limiting behaviour while at the same time accepting the motives for the behaviour. One hopes that the child learns that while behaviour may be criticised and limited, this is not the same as criticising the child's *self*. The child then becomes more confident that conflict and discipline involves behaviour, not the relationship with parents nor her self-worth. Curiosity is the foundation of acceptance of whatever underlies the behaviour. Making sense of how the child has learnt to behave in certain ways can help with acceptance.

Curiosity

Curiosity, without judgement, is how we help children become aware of their inner life, reflect upon the reasons for their behaviour, and then communicate it to their parents or therapist. Curiosity is wondering about the meaning behind the behaviour for the child. Curiosity lets the child know that the adults understand. Children often know that their behaviour was not appropriate. They often do not know why they did it or are reluctant to tell adults why. With curiosity the adults are conveying their intention to simply understand why and to help the child with understanding. The adult's intentions are to truly understand and help the child, not to lecture or convey that the child's inner life is *wrong* in some way. Curiosity involves a quiet, accepting tone that conveys a simple desire to understand the child: "*What do you think was going on? What do you think that was about?*" or "*I wonder what...?*" You say this without anticipating an answer or response from a child. This is different from asking the child, "*Why did you do that?*" with the expectation of a reply. It is not interpretation or fact gathering. It's just about getting to know the child and letting her know that. Curiosity must be communicated without annoyance about the behaviour. Being curious can, for example, include an attitude of being sad rather than angry when the child makes a mistake. A light curious tone and stance can get through to a child in a way that anger cannot. You might make guesses about what a child may be thinking and feeling, saying this aloud, and keeping it connected to the present. It can be about having a conversation, almost with yourself, with the child in the room, without anticipating a response. If an adult can stay curious about why their child is behaving

as they are, the child and adult are less likely to feel cross or frustrated. As curiosity is non-judgemental, this can help the child to be open to how she, and other people, are thinking and feeling. Curiosity lets the child stay open and engaged in conversations. Children then start to reflect upon their own inner life with their parent and therapist and start to understand themselves. As the understanding deepens, the child can discover that her behaviour does not reflect something *bad* inside her, but rather a thought, feeling, perception, or motive that was stressful, frightening, or confusing and could only be expressed through her behaviour. As the child communicates this to the adults, the need for the behaviour may reduce, and with that the behaviour itself. The child's feelings about the behaviour may change, with less defensiveness and shame but more guilt, leading to less of the behaviour.

Empathy

Empathy lets the child feel *the adult's* compassion for her. Being empathic means the adult actively showing the child that the child's inner life is important to the adult and he or she wants to be with the child in her hard times. The Power of Empathy, *RSA Shorts* With [empathy](#), when the child is sad or in distress the adult is feeling the sadness and distress with her and lets the child know that. The adult is demonstrating that he or she knows how difficult an experience is for the child. The adult is telling the child that she will not have to deal with the distress alone. The adult will stay with the child emotionally, providing comfort and support, and will not abandon her when she needs the adult the most. The adult is also communicating strength, love and commitment, with confidence that sharing the child's distress will not be too much. Together they will get through it.

The impact of communication using the principles of PACE.

PACE focuses on the whole child, not simply the behaviour. It helps children be more secure with the adults and reflect upon themselves, their thoughts, feelings and behaviour, building the skills that are so necessary for maintaining a successful and satisfying life. The child discovers that they are doing the best that they can, and are not *bad or lazy or selfish*. Problems diminish as the need for them reduces. Through PACE and feeling safer, children discover that they can now do better. They learn to rely on adults, particularly their parents, and trust them to truly know them. They learn that their parents can look after them in a way that they could never do on their own. When children experience the adults doing the best they can to understand them and trying to work out together more effective ways for the child to understand, make sense of and manage their emotions, thoughts and behaviour they start to believe that the adults really will keep on trying until things get better for all of them. For adults, using PACE most of the time, they can reduce the level of conflict, defensiveness and withdrawal that tends to be ever present in the lives of troubled children. Using PACE enables the adult to see the strengths and positive features that lie underneath more negative and challenging behaviour.

Appendix 7: The Relationships Charter

The charter aims to cover two aspects: interaction and communication, which we see as forming the bedrock of positive relationships in our organisation. In this context, we define 'interaction' as 'how we talk to each other' and 'communication' as 'what we communicate to each other.'

The charter aims to support all relationships within the school community including adult/adult, child/child and adult/child.

Given the central importance of relationships for delivering the best education

possible for the children, the charter aims to have high expectations of relationships.

We recognise that at the heart of wellbeing we need positive, trusting **relationships**.

We have a Charter that looks to safeguard all relationships in our school.

The Charter

RELATIONSHIPS CHARTER:::: INTERACTIONS AT MINCHINHAMPTON ACADEMY:		
ADULTS		PUPILS
WE TRY TO:-	WE TRY NOT TO:-	WE TRY TO:-
-be respectful towards each other, both in what we say and how we say it/ how we act.	-to become personal or use an aggressive or rude tone, including online.	-be polite
-be intent on finding a resolution to an issue--- <i>aim to give the other person a good hearing and deal with it in private.</i>	-not talk about others in a derogatory way in public, including online.	-look to sort out the problem
-say what is honest and kind and necessary	-be unkind in any way	-tell the truth

-stay positive and build on strengths	-become negative and dwell on weaknesses -think badly of others	-be kind
---------------------------------------	--	----------

<p>-listen actively to each other/ give each other time to speak - ie with an open mind, to listen to understand</p>	<p>-pre-judge a situation</p>	<p>-listen carefully</p> <p>-give others time to speak their mind</p>
<p>-put ourselves in the other person's shoes, to respect our own and other people's feelings and points of view equally</p>	<p>-see things from only our perspective</p>	<p>-understand others</p>
<p>-trust and value each other's perspectives on (partnership in) and roles in the children's lives (their learning and development)-- for example- child's self-awareness, parent as expert on their child// teacher as education professional.</p>	<p>-explicitly or implicitly demonstrate a lack of trust</p>	<p>-we value our differences</p>
<p>-have 'reasonable' expectations and make 'reasonable' requests based on an understanding of what each party will/can do and what they won't/can't do</p>	<p>-have expectations and make requests that disregard the time and resources available to the other person</p>	<p>-have sensible expectations</p>

-acknowledge openly when we have made a mistake <i>or when we have misjudged a situation</i> and forgive others their mistakes when they are willing to learn from them.	-be judgemental towards one another when they have made a mistake	-accept that mistakes happen
-compromise when it is not possible to agree	-be uncompromising	-come half way
-be clear about what has been said/ what has been agreed as a next step	-be unclear about next steps	-agree on what to do next

RELATIONSHIPS CHARTER::::COMMUNICATION AT
MINCHINHAMPTON ACADEMY:

ADULTS		PUPILS
GIVER/asker	RECEIVER/replier	
<p>-to be consistent re how and where information provided</p> <p>-to provide information that is clear, accurate and timely</p>	<p>-to know of the regular channels for communication and stay abreast of information provided</p> <p>-to take responsibility for accessing and storing information provided.</p>	<p>-to know when it is important to listen</p> <p>-to listen actively to instructions</p>

<p>-when making a request – provide receiver with a realistic time frame in which to respond</p>	<p>-to respond to a request in an organised and timely fashion....no more than 24 hours for most things// asap if urgent.</p>	<p>-to follow instructions</p>
<p>-to ensure style and content of communication is tailored to the audience- that context is taken account of (eg time available to read/ access the information)</p>	<p>-to have realistic expectations regarding quantity of communication- taking into account the context of the communicator/ time available eg school's primary purpose and time devoted to educating children</p>	<p>-to have realistic expectations of school—recognise you are one of many</p>
<p>-to give of our views and ideas freely but without expectation, in an ongoing dialogue around school improvement.</p>	<p>-to consider all views and ideas with an open mind</p>	<p>-to express your point of view</p> <p>-to listen actively to other points of view and ideas</p>
<p>-to be familiar with the process for raising concerns or compliments, and that this starts with the individual teacher or parent</p>	<p>-to respond to any concern in a timely and constructive fashion.</p>	<p>-to know there is someone you can speak to if you are worried about something</p>

Appendix 8: Easy Guide to DBT’s TIPP Skills

When emotions are out of control, you can use TIPP skills to bring down the intensity. There are four TIPP skills described in dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Using them in a crisis can calm things to the point that we can then use other coping skills. DBT TIPP skills can be lifesavers. Sometimes emotion is so intense it takes away our ability to use our other coping skills. TIPP (or TIP) skills won’t take the emotions away altogether. However, they help take the intensity down to a level where we can make use of the other things we typically do to cope with difficult situations and feelings.

Temperature — by changing our body temperature, we can quickly decrease the intensity of an emotion. Dip your face in cold water (not less than 50 degrees) and hold your breath. Try to hold it there for 30 to 60 seconds. (Do not attempt this TIPP skill if you have cardiac problems.) If that's not feasible for you, try an ice pack on your face around your eyes and cheeks.

Putting your face in cold water helps ease intense emotion by triggering what's called the mammalian dive reflex. (See video below.) This reflex slows our heart rate and activates our parasympathetic nervous system. Emotion is something we often experience with our bodies. With this TIPP skill, we use our bodies to change our emotions.

If you use an ice pack on your face instead of cold water, try holding your breath at the same time to more fully stimulate the dive reflex.

Intense exercise – by engaging in intense cardio/aerobic exercise, we engage our physical body in a way that de-escalates intense emotions. Ideally, try to exercise for 20 minutes or more, but if that's not possible, do what you can. Exercise so that your heart rate is 70% of its capacity. You can use [this calculator](#) to compute your target heart rate. To get the most out of this DBT TIPP skill, write down your level of emotional intensity (rate it from 0 to 100) before you exercise and then afterward. See what the difference is. Pick a type of exercise that's available immediately — remember, the TIPP skills are meant for help with managing emotions now, not later. One of the essential functions of emotions is to prepare us for action. When emotions are intense, the body is primed for intense activity; intense exercise can release that part of the emotional experience.

Paced breathing – try to slow your breathing down to 5 or 6 breaths per minute. This means that your inbreath and outbreath put together should take 10 to 12 seconds. To help you do this, a timer or app can be very helpful. Try using the “[Paced Breathing](#)” app for android (configure this ahead of time for your desired pace of breathing) or the [Breathing App](#) for iPhone.

Just as with the temperature TIPP skill, paced breathing works by activating our parasympathetic nervous system. This, in turn, will slow our heart rate and decrease emotional intensity.

Breathe into your belly to allow for a deeper and slower breath cycle. Plan to do this exercise for at least five minutes; don't give yourself the option to stop early. Before you start, just like you did with exercise, write down your level of emotional arousal by rating it from 0 to 100. After five minutes, take stock of how different you feel from when you started.

Paced breathing in DBT can be thought of as a [mindfulness](#) skill. However, unlike most mindfulness exercises, this one does not require you to do anything specific with your mind. It's a physical exercise, not a mental one.

Paired muscle relaxation – practice tensing your muscles as you breathe in for 5-6 seconds. Notice that feeling. Then relax them as you breathe out, paying attention to how that feels as you do it. Notice the difference between the feeling of tension and the feeling of relaxation. Go through each muscle group in the body (list can be found below) and tense then relax each one. As you relax a muscle group, say to yourself, “relax.”

Paired muscle relaxation is a DBT TIPP skill that improves with practice. It's helpful to practice it when you're not in an intense emotional state. That way, when you really need the skill, it will already be well-rehearsed.

It's important to say "relax" to yourself as you exhale and relax your muscles. This is where the "paired" in "paired muscle relaxation" comes in. By saying "relax" to yourself, you're pairing that word with the feeling of relaxing. This will help your ability to relax at times when you need to.

This skill is practiced by going through muscle groups in sequence, tensing then relaxing one at a time. Go through each of the following muscle groups:

- shoulders (raise shoulders up as high as possible)
- hands (make fists) arms (make fists and tense your forearms, biceps and triceps)
- forehead (wrinkle your forehead, lowering eyebrows)
- eyelids (shut them tightly)
- face (scrunch up nose and raise lips and cheeks)
- tongue and mouth (distort muscles around mouth, push tongue against roof of mouth)
- neck (push chin down toward chest)
- chest (take deep breath and hold it)
- back (arch your back)
- stomach (tense abdominal muscles)
- buttocks/glutes (squeeze together)
- thighs (tense quads and hamstrings)
- calves (point toes downward)
- ankles and feet (curl toes, heels out)