Learning Links: Emotion Matters

Welcome to Learning Links: Emotion Matters

A series of leaflets all about how our school supports the mental health and wellbeing of our children.

Volume 1: Supporting Everyone's Mental, Emotional and Social Wellbeing

Ratho Primary School
learning links

Our Relationships Policy

Great learning is built on great relationships.

Our relationships policy outlines how we expect our children to relate to one and another and the adults in school.

We have high expectations of our children, but we also ensure high levels of support to meet these expectations.

We teach children about emotions, so they understand their own feelings and those of others and how they can change our behaviour

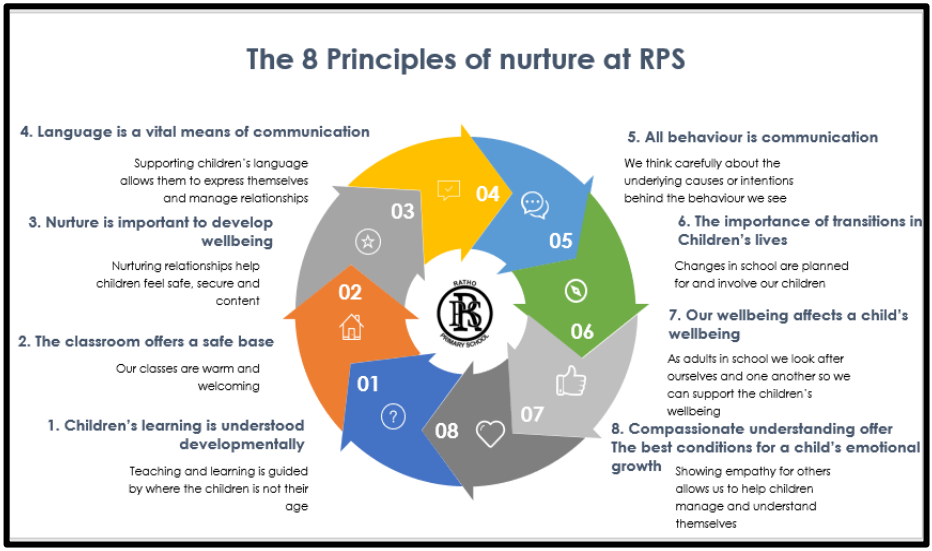
We ensure children have a voice and they are heard through restorative conversations when relationships need to be restored.

Recognising Achievement

We recognise children's positive choices and hard work through several ways. We use house points, class points, positive postcards home, good news phone calls, Vision Vouchers and positive praise. These help to boost the children's self-esteem.

A Nurturing Approach

Our staff are trained in the principles of nurture and use these to guide their interactions with children. We believe our classrooms to be warm, welcoming places where our children feel safe, secure, content and ready to learn.



Building Resilience

Our Building Resilience Program is taught over three years and aims to give children the tools to manage the ups and downs of life. The character Skipper is used to help children understand how to navigate choppy waters and each term has a different tool as its focus:

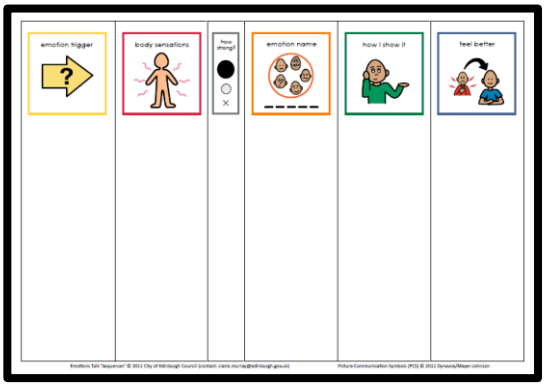
This programme is used all over Edinburgh and each tool in the toolkit is taught through stories, songs and discussion. Children are given strategies to manage their own mental wellbeing and develop their resilience to whatever life has to throw at them.

We recognise that sometimes children do very well at 'coping' at school, only to demonstrate anxiety, upset or stress at home. While this 'masking behaviour' can be common, it is important that the school knows how children are presenting in different environments. It may be that extra support are needed. See Volume 2 of these leaflets for more details of specific individual supports.

Emotion Talks

Emotion Talks is a whole school programme which teaches children about the names of different emotions, how they make our bodies feel, how strong these sensations can be, what behaviour they can cause and strategies for dealing with these emotions.

An example of a sequencer can be found below, paper copies are available to parents and carers on request:



The sequencer has 6 sections:

1. What was the **trigger** for how you feel?
2. What **body sensations** did you feel?
3. How **strong** were they?
4. **Name** the emotion
5. **How** did you **show** it?
6. What can you do **to feel better?**

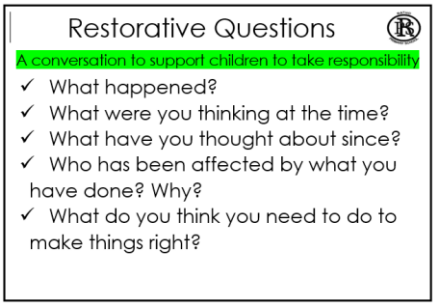
Learning about our emotions and how to manage them can empower our children to regulate their own feelings in different situations.

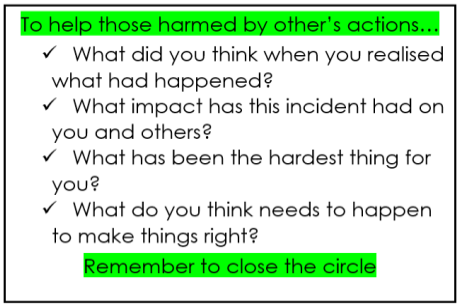
Restorative Approaches

Restorative approaches, sometimes called Restorative practices, are all the ways that we, as a school community, **build, maintain** and **restore** relationships.

Restorative approaches are both **proactive** and **reactive** in that we aim to teach our children how to have strong relationships with each other and all adults in school as well as supporting children to repair these relationships when they face difficulties.

When things go wrong between children, we use restorative conversations to establish what happened and how the relationship can be restored. These conversations use the '**Restorative Questions**'

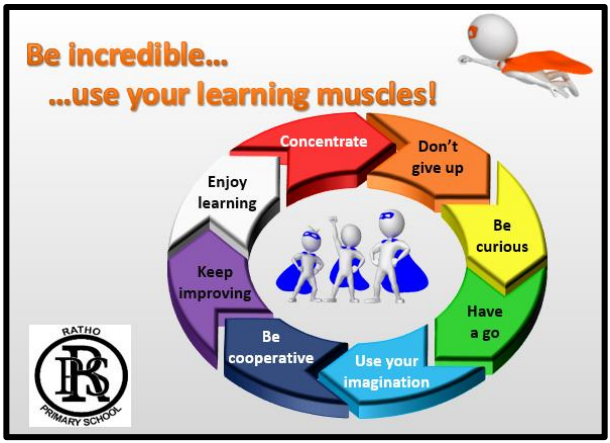




These approaches ensure that there is open dialogue between children and adults and all individual's voices are heard and valued. Children have a voice at our school and their views are considered.

Learning Muscles

At our school we build a culture of learning by talking about learning muscles. These 'muscles' are habits for good learning. The muscles are called:



Using these words to describe habits for good learning gives our children the tools to talk about their learning and the learning process. When children understand themselves and how they learn we call this **metacognition.** Metacognition has been proven to have a positive effect on children's learning.

Circle Time

A powerful tool for whole classes to use where all children and adults sit in a circle and play games, discuss issues or themes in the wider world, school or within the class. All children are equal within the circle and all have a chance to speak and be heard by others. This helps develop active listening skills and an understanding of each other.

Growth Mindset

We refer to growth mindset in our lessons, a belief, based on research, that intelligence is not fixed, and we can 'grow' our brains through practice. This supports children to keep trying when they face challenges, knowing that hard work leads to success. Having a growth mindset can support children's self esteem and lead to feelings of contentment at their progress.

We encourage children to think about their learning as a journey and each day is an opportunity to achieve a 'personal best' and not compare their achievements to others.

Relaxation Techniques

Teaching children how to relax can support the self-regulation of emotions and improve focus and concentration. We achieve this in several ways. These techniques are used when appropriate to meet the needs of the children in our classes.

- ✓ body scanning
- ✓ breath awareness
- ✓ abdominal (tummy) breathing
- ✓ deep breathing / breath counting
- ✓ alternate breath
- ✓ active relaxation
- ✓ mindfulness
- ✓ meditation
- ✓ visualisation
- ✓ guided relaxation

Coming soon

Find out more about these approaches on our Learning Links YouTube Channel!