

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE A POSITIVE, CARING, SAFE ENVIRONMENT

(Supplementary to “Developing Appropriate and Responsible Behaviour”

“LOOK FOR THE GOOD AND ACKNOWLEDGE IT”

This needs to become an automatic habit in the way you approach every child and their behaviour.

Acknowledge the positive.

Verbal recognition (eg “Tom is listening really well)

Ticks and Stars: Place everyone’s name on the board. As someone does something right, put a tick beside their name and verbally recognise what they did right.

3 ticks earns a ‘star’

4 stars earns a “Good News Certificate” from the Principal

Positive ‘Dobbing’: After breaks let the children tell you what others did during the break that was the right thing to do eg helping someone, responsible behaviour, including others in the game etc

“PROMOTE AND SPECIFICALLY TEACH EMPATHETIC BEHAVIOUR”

(Empathetic communication and teaching empathy to children from a very early age is a fundamental feature of traditional culture).

Model and teach body language and voice tone that is respectful (especially when disagreeing or there is conflict).

After each break have a short period of quiet reflection/visualisation/relaxation to calm the classroom eg massage each others heads and shoulders, listen to music, have children visualize behaviour you are trying to encourage.

“How do I feel ladder”: At the beginning of each day (and after lunch?) have each child put themselves on the ladder. Then ask the class (and then remind through the day)

“How can we help each other move up the ladder to feel stronger?”

Make a list of the behaviours they suggest

“Helping Tree”

Draw a large tree (trunk and limbs only) prominently displayed. For each behaviour that makes the class and school stronger a cut out leaf is added to the tree. Set goals that result in the whole class being rewarded when the tree is full of a certain number of leaves.

Group Activities

For any group activities divide the class into groups of 3 and designate a “Manager”, an “Explainer” and “Encourager” for each group. Give each student a badge labelled with their role.

Teach and role play the function of each person to help the group function effectively.

Each 5 mins (as children improve working in groups extend this to 10 mins) stop the class and ask each ‘manager’ to report on how they are going. This keeps groups on task and reveals difficulties more quickly.

Personal Control of Feelings and Reactions

Help children understand how they can influence and control their feelings and reactions.

eg When a child is upset tell them they can choose how they respond.

Ask them to imagine that their upset is like a fire inside them that they can make bigger or smaller.

Suggest they notice how hot their “fire” feels if they imagine putting more wood on the fire and then what happens if they imagine pouring cold water on the fire.

(This makes good imagery to display as pictures near the “Thinking Spot”)

Dealing with Teasing and Harassment

(Also see my article on “Developing Appropriate and Responsible Behaviour”)

Engage the protagonist in a problem solving approach: “Tom is very upset and feels left out. What do you think can be done to make Tom feel better?”

Explore with questions like:

“How do you think Tom is feeling?”

“How could we change that”?

Effect of Behaviour on Others

Help children understand their effect on others by having a video recorder handy. Video extreme behaviour and especially the effects on others (including adults present) and then play back to children and discuss constructively to teach empathy and consequences to others.

Ask “How would Mum and Dad feel if they saw you behaving this way?”

These are just a few simple to implement strategies that can have a huge effect on how children see themselves and the school.

The overriding tone of the school no matter what happens needs to be **“We are all on the same side here. Now what can we do to fix this”**.

Contact me if you need further explanation or have a more specific issue.

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