



Greenleas' Approach to Managing Behaviour

“Too often we forget that discipline really means to teach, not to punish. A disciple is a student, not a recipient of behavioural consequences.” Dr. Dan J. Siegel

Background

Since the full reopening of school in 2021, as well as the anticipated gaps in learning, school staff have noticed many changes in our children. This is not surprising, as the lockdowns had a huge impact on everyone, causing social isolation, anxiety, loss of income, a decrease in access to exercise and fresh air, as well as delays to medical services and specialist appointments including SEND referrals, impacting overall health and treatment of conditions. Family life has changed forever with many adults now fully or partially working from home, blurring the boundaries between work time and down time, and impacting parenting styles and expectations of children's behaviour.

The NSPCC published a statistics report in February 2022 which found the following:

- A survey of new and expectant UK parents found that almost half reported that their baby had become clingier, and one quarter (26 per cent) reported their baby crying more than usual.
- A survey of nursery workers in the UK found that 42 per cent had noticed signs that the emotional wellbeing of the children they were working had been affected.
- An online survey of 10- to 11-year-old primary school children, found that 41 per cent of felt their mental and emotional health had worsened.
- The Co-SPACE study, found an increase in behavioural and emotional difficulties among both primary and secondary school children during the January 2021 lockdown. This was especially the case in primary school aged children (4- to 10-year-olds)
- A large-scale survey by NHS England found that children and young people with a probable mental disorder were more likely to say that lockdown had made their life much worse (26.9 per cent of 11- to 16year-olds).
- There were 55,309 referrals to children and young people's mental health services in England of children and young people aged 0 to 18 in September 2021, 85% higher than the number of referrals in September 2019.
- The charity Young Minds reported a 48% increase in demand for its helpline supporting parents and carers with concerns about their child's mental health between 2019 and 2021.
- Children have been spending more time online with less adult supervision, exposing them to an increased risk of online abuse.
- The coronavirus pandemic has placed many families under heightened pressure. Data shows it has impacted on many people's relationships, financial situations, and their physical and mental health. These pressures combined have the potential to change what were previously low-risk concerns around children's safety into much more serious concerns.

Clearly, it would be inappropriate not to adjust our approach to managing behaviour to take into account the changing landscape. We can no longer assume a shared expectation for behaviour between school and home, and we need to understand that more traditional approaches are likely to provoke anxiety and overwhelm, and often make the situation worse.



Differences

The below table compares different ways of thinking and responding to behaviour using authoritarian (more traditional) and restorative models of discipline.

Authoritarian Approaches	Restorative Approaches
<i>The focus is on:</i>	<i>The focus is on:</i>
Rule-breaking	Harm done to individuals
Blame or guilt	Responsibility and problem-solving
Adversarial processes (e.g. detention)	Dialogue and negotiation
Punishment to deter	Repair, apology and reparation
Impersonal processes	Interpersonal processes
<i>And, as a result;</i>	<i>And, as a result;</i>
The needs of those affected are often ignored	The needs of those affected are addressed
The unmet needs behind the behaviour are ignored	The unmet needs behind the behaviour are addressed
Accountability = being punished	Accountability = putting things right

It is worth noting that those establishments which are designed to work with children displaying the most extreme behaviour such as SEMH units (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) and PRUs (Pupil Referral Units) all use restorative rather than punitive approaches.

The Restorative approach

Restorative approaches are built on values which separate the person from the behaviour. They promote accountability and seek to repair any harm caused in a situation. They help schools create peaceful learning environments for children to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Restorative approaches do this by changing the emotional atmosphere in a school, leading to more positive relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff.

Restorative Approaches are value-based and needs-led. They can be seen as part of a broader ethos culture that identifies strong, mutually respectful relationships and a cohesive community as the foundation on which good teaching and learning can flourish.

Restorative Approaches build upon the basic principles and values of humanistic psychology:

- Genuineness, honesty, openness, sincerity
- Positive regard for all individuals, valuing the person for who they are
- Empathic understanding – being able to understand another’s experience
- Individual responsibility and shared accountability
- Self-actualisation – the human capacity for positive growth
- Optimistic perspectives on personal development – that people can learn and change for the better



A key component of the restorative approach is the restorative conversation. This allows children to understand the impact of their behaviours. Examples of questions used in this conversation include:

- What happened?
- What were your thoughts at the time?
- What have been your thoughts since?
- What has been affected by what happened?
- How have they been affected?
- What do you need to happen now?

Through this approach, pupils accept responsibility for their actions, recognise the harm and upset caused, and are supported to find restorative responses to harmful actions. Developing positive, supportive relationships is key.

You can support the school by

- Talking to your child about how the school manages pupil behaviour
- Understanding that children learn developmentally, including how they behave and how their behaviour affects others
- Understanding that everyone learns best when they feel good about themselves. Punishments, whether right or wrong, can make children feel bad about themselves. This can hinder their ability to engage in their learning, including about their behaviour.
- Encouraging your child to see things from other people's points of view
- Encouraging your child to be a good friend
- Learning more about children's rights, including their right to human dignity, regardless of their behaviour
- Learning more about shame, and the impact of shame on children's readiness to learn.