



AUTUMN TERM

29TH NOVEMBER 2021

Values at Stepping Stones

The Value of the Week is Responsibility

We are continuing to focus on the value of responsibility as it seems to be a key area that we are currently working on across the school. Last week we were so proud of 13 children who achieved their responsibility values band. We outlined at the beginning of the week that we do not expect the children to be perfect but we do want to see improvements in them taking responsibility for their words, behaviour and learning.



Stars of the week receive a trophy to look after for the week, they are given special privileges for a whole week. The awards go to children that have demonstrated role model behaviour consistently.

Our Stars of the Week

Elm Class – The whole class for working towards their class target of taking time out safely and respectfully. A much improved week.

Maple Class – We are having a break this week and looking for a new star of the week this week. Our focus is taking time out safely and respectfully.

Oak Class – We are having a break this week and looking for a new star of the week this week. Our focus is speaking to all adults with respect.

Orchard Class – Reuben for taking responsibility and taking time out appropriately and safely when needed.

Pupil Behaviour and the Impact on Health, Safety and Staff Well Being

Firstly, we want to outline that we have approximately 60% of the school cohort who are following the school rules and making exceptional progress with their learning, safety and respect towards staff and other children. We are seeing some great examples of progress in all areas. However, we have around 40% of the school cohort who are having some very unsettled days where these children have displayed very unsafe behaviour which has put themselves, others and staff members at risk.

Our staff team are fully committed to providing excellent support for all the children at Stepping Stones, many of the staff have worked at the school for over 10 years and have a wealth of experience in working with children that display challenging behaviour due to social, emotional and mental health difficulties, including ADHD, Autism, Learning Difficulties etc.

The staff are caring, firm, fair and consistent. We are a school and we have rules, boundaries and expectations. Learning expectations are high and we ensure that each child's educational provision is tailored to their ability and needs. Our school is successful because **there is an expectation of learning** and supporting children to make progress academically, socially, emotionally and behaviorally. The staff team come to work each day to support each and every child and make a difference. They are positive and hardworking!

However, over the past three weeks we have encountered a high level of physical behaviour from a number of children. Spitting has increased from a small number of children, biting, punching, kicking, damaging school etc. We understand that some of this could be a secondary behaviour however there is a number of children who display this and do intend to cause harm to staff intentionally, to avoid the boundaries, avoid the work expectations etc. We can categorically say these children are not copying other people's behaviour and our experience is outlining that there is a high level of control and choice in some of these behaviours, which is very concerning. We absolutely understand that in a state of distress a child may lash out, however we are not reporting that level of distress. Some of the high risk behaviour appears to be 'a go to' for children to avoid work and school expectations.

This behaviour is totally unacceptable. As a school we do everything to stop the child from being sent home / excluded, like they may have experienced in mainstream provision. However, we also have a threshold and a duty of care to our staff team!

When it is the same child/ren persistently throughout the week then we expect support from parents and carers on rules, expectations and boundaries.

As I have previously outlined we don't have a reserve staff team. If a staff member is injured or decides that they no longer want to work at Stepping Stones because of the level the children's behaviour has reached, we lose the staff member from the team. This is not a situation we want to be faced with. However, last week we had 4 staff seriously assaulted / injured because they had to stop children damaging school property, stop children punching the staff etc. The trigger for these behaviours was 'school work'. We need our parents to outline to their children that we are a school, there is an expectation of work and all work is targeted to the child's needs.

During 2020-2021 we reintegrated 54% of the cohort to mainstream education. We know that what we do is effective in supporting children with their emotional regulation difficulties, learning and ability to manage day to day life and rules. We live in a law-abiding society where we are expected to be respectful and not to verbally or physically abuse anyone.

We need our parents / carers to value the work that our staff do and if you have been informed that your child has been part of an incident which has caused harm to a staff member then this should be followed up at home, because if it isn't followed up then the child begins to think this behaviour is acceptable at school.

In order to support our staff team and to ensure all children in school feel safe then we will be taking serious actions for any purposeful attacks on staff. We will call you and expect you to come to school, speak with your child and support the staff team. **It is totally unacceptable for parents/ carers to think the staff team should take this level of violence and abuse.**

We really do not want to get to this stage and we also need to stress that this is a small number of children. We safeguard all of our children and prevent them from being around behaviour of this nature.

To avoid such a situation and support school you could...

- Ensure you have clear rules and boundaries in place at home that are consistently applied.
- Promote similar rules to school – RESPECT and SAFETY in what we say and what we do.
- Give Praise for positive choices and positive behaviour. Give small rewards for positive choices over a period of time. **Not big rewards for small efforts.**
- Don't send your child to school with objects, devices, clothing, jewellery that is against school rules for the staff to then have to challenge and for us to pick up the pieces when we say 'no'. Have the challenge at home by setting clear expectations. This just sets up children to have a challenging day in school.
- Speak positively about school in front of your child. Too often we are hearing the rude comments that are made at home about our staff that are then repeated by your child/ren in school.
- If you are told that your child has hurt, spat, bit, damaged, then support the school. Perhaps consequences at home should be in place for this. E.g. withholding tuck shop funds, using their funds to pay for damage. We once were very well supported by a parent whose child had caused damage. They brought the child's PS4 to school and asked us to take charge of it until their behaviour improved.
- Another past example was a hard-working dad who took time out of his self-employed day to call in and check on his child. He even spent a few days sat with his child supporting the rules, boundaries and expectations.

We have some wonderful comments and support from past and present families. As we have outlined, Stepping Stones can be the most effective in supporting your child/ren when home and school work consistently together.

Our positive approaches to managing behaviour is built upon consistency, emotional regulation and fairness. As outlined in one of the videos we use with new staff.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lm9zekD17rw>

If you require support in putting in consistent approaches please do not hesitate to contact Micaela Armstrong who will offer further guidance, support and advice.

We hope that we can continue to work together with all of our parents / carers. Parenting a neurotypical child is hard enough! Parenting a child with complex needs, requires enhanced parenting skills.

Diary Dates

School Closes on Thursday 16th December 2021

School Opens on Wednesday 5th January 2022

Thank You for your continued support. Mrs Dodd and the team at Stepping Stones

