

School:	Northcroft School		
Policy:	Promoting Good Behaviour Policy		
<p>This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis; however, should a need arise, it will be reviewed when required.</p> <p>This policy will be read, understood, and signed by all staff yearly and when changes have been made in line with government and DfE guidelines and changes.</p>			
Document Control:			
<p>Policy linked to : Curriculum Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Managing Allegations against Professional Staff Policy, Health and Safety Policy, E-Safety Policy, Exclusion Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Attainment Policy</p>			
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1	July 24	Created and implemented	RR
2	May 25	Updated and reviewed	EC

Aims

The aim of this policy is to outline the Thrive approach adopted by Northcroft School ensure that it is applied consistently. Thrive is a whole-setting, systematic approach to early identification of emotional developmental needs in children and young people. At Northcroft School we aim to promote positive social, emotional, and behavioural change and regulation in our students through a supportive and consistent approach across education in line with the needs of our students. Our behaviour management strategy is based on holistic approaches and the therapeutic belief that all people have the capacity for growth and development no matter what their ages or life experiences and that behaviour can change, to enable students to access a broad and well-balanced curriculum and reach their full potential in adulthood. The school's pedagogy works in conjunction with the behaviour policy to ensure that Northcroft School consistently develops students' knowledge of themselves and the wider community, to enable them to self-regulate and to be self-motivated towards their learning to ensure that their supported to be the very best individual they can be.

Rationale

Children and young people learn who they are and how the world is, by forming relationships with people and things around them. The quality of a pupil's relationship with significant adults is vital to their healthy development and emotional health and wellbeing. Northcroft School enrolls vulnerable students who experience social, emotional, communication difficulties and associated challenging behaviours. Many of our student's exhibit and display behaviours that act as barriers to learning and inclusion. An integral part of our holistic strategies is to overcome these barriers. We aim to provide a consistent and well supervised environment where Students feel safe and secure and reach their potential through positive relationships. All pupils at Northcroft School will have access to the Thrive programme to support their emotional development (see Appendix A). Pupils who require support from the Thrive programme often present below age-related expectations for social and emotional development. These pupils frequently have difficulty accessing the taught curriculum in a positive way as a result of these poorly developed skills.

As a school, we recognise that every young person has a right to feel comfortable, safe, special and have their needs met. We encourage our young people to express how they feel and recognise what they might need from those people around them. Therefore, building relationships and connecting with our pupils is really important as it enables them to trust us, talk to us, and feel safe with us. Many of our Students have significant barriers to this due to their past trauma/ experiences, SEN need and diagnosed mental health conditions. This challenge requires a nuanced, individualised approach based on promoting growing independence and responsibility. This way of working is therapeutic in nature, underpinned by attachment. This works alongside educational outcomes ensuring that students can meet their full potential socially and academically, ensuring opportunity for them to have a successful adult life.

Thrive activities and approaches keep the pupil at the centre and follow the direction and preferences of the pupil. For example, if they want to experiment, we might make slime,

potions, or playdough. If the pupil wants to explore, we might go to the forest school, Gardening or for a walk in the local area (if appropriate) to allow them to have that opportunity. Staff at Northcroft School recognise that pupils are curious individuals and our principles are based on acceptance of this which we believe allows them to flourish and Thrive.

Thrive

- Uses relational strategies to meet the needs of children and young people when they are experiencing change, loss or significant life events.
- Uses targeted reparative work to fill the gaps where children’s needs have not been met at the right time in their earlier development.
- Supports right time development.

What does Thrive Consist of?

- Thrive Online: a web-based assessment and action planning tool.
- Training and licensing
- Informed and based on established research in neuroscience, attachment research, child development theory and research into the role of play, creativity and the arts

Roles and Responsibilities of School Staff in Implementing the Promoting Good Behaviour Approach

Head Teacher will;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure the policy and practice is embedded through the school by ensuring a commitment to Thrive across the school. - QA behaviour actioning on CPOMS. - Analyse behaviour trends within the head teachers report and feedback to governors.
Senior Leadership Team will;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure they are kept up to date regarding the Thrive implementation within their respective areas across the school. - Support the Thrive team to ensure implementation. - Lead restoratives. - Undertake behaviour debriefs.
Pastoral Leader and Mental Health Lead will;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-ordinate the Thrive work across the school. - Review policy and practice and report to the SLT. - Provide line management to Thrive practitioners. - Provide training of the schools approach to managing behaviour in staffs induction process. - Review behaviour trends in the school and provide appropriate support and interventions. - Action CPOMS behaviours. - Update student risk assessments half termly and or after an incident.

<p>Thrive and Therapeutic trained Practitioners will;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Run workshops for staff to provide ideas of 'Brain Break' activities to do within their sessions so it is embedded across the school. This could be as simple as reading a book together or playing hide and seek to allow the pupil to help meet with their developmental strand (Being, Doing, Thinking, Power and Identity, Skills and Structure and Interdependence). - Feedback to line managers. - Support with the upkeep and reviewing of young people's Thrive action plans. - Keep up to date with training and CPD.
<p>All staff will;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopt the Thrive and PACE approach in their interactions with our young people. - Report and record behaviours using CPOMS. - Reflect therapeutically during daily debriefs to support behaviours. - Attend half termly supervisions to support with reflection and practice based on trends of behaviour.

Governors; Work alongside the Head Teacher to review and evaluate the strategic oversight for Thrive.

Purpose

It is our purpose at Northcroft School to provide a secure caring atmosphere of trust and stability, giving all children and young people the necessary support and guidance for their social and emotional development. We hope to achieve this through the following:

- A fair and consistent approach towards requests for support
- All school staff to be aware of the theory, underlying principles and assessment procedures of Thrive
- All staff to either use Thrive techniques and strategies on a daily basis when encountering children and young people or be able to refer then to appropriate Thrive Practitioners
- Designated time slots throughout the week for group and/or 1:1 work with the Thrive practitioners.
- A developing bank of resources for activities agreed in the action plan
- Identify vulnerable pupils to Thrive trained staff or pupils raised as a concern on a whole class screening
- Online Assessment and Action Planning Tool used based on observations and/or class teachers views
- Action Plan created (if possible with parents and key workers) based on assessment outcomes
- Sessions carried out on a weekly basis
- Review Action Plans (approx. every 6 – 8 weeks / half term)

Thrive Assessments

The Thrive assessment model is complex so the assessment must be carried out under the guidance of the Thrive licensed practitioner. Once a minimum of 2 assessments have been completed, further assessments may be carried out independently under supervision from the named licensed practitioners. All assessments must be shared to the Thrive licensed practitioner and copies must be kept in the student's file.

Thrive in Practice

- **Level 1:** Delivered in the classroom through strategies that will benefit all pupils in the class but in particular the pupil who requires Thrive. These will be built into daily routines, tutor time and when supporting the pupil with learning. Strategies for the teacher will be provided by the Thrive licensed practitioner.
- **Level 2:** Small group interventions led or overseen by one of the Thrive Practitioners. Groups will be made up of pupils who have the same 'interruption'.
- **Level 3:** Mix of 1:1 sessions and group sessions. Pupils receiving 1:1 sessions will be given strategies to use outside of the Thrive sessions by the practitioners.
- **Level 4:** Entirely focussed on offering a pupil 1:1 sessions with the aim of working towards Level 3 when deemed appropriate.
- The progress of pupils at levels 2 and 3 and 4 is reviewed on a 6-8 week basis and action plans will be adjusted accordingly.

Our Restorative Approach

The five key themes underpinning our restorative approach to behaviour support are:

- Theme 1:** Everyone has a unique and individual perspective
- Theme 2:** Our thoughts influence our feelings and feelings influence our behaviour
- Theme 3:** Our behaviour can have a negative impact on others and cause harm; this harm needs to be repaired (repairing the harm is the consequence)
- Theme 4:** In the event of harm, everyone involved will have needs which must be met to move on
- Theme 5:** Those involved in conflict are the best placed to take responsibility and ownership for problem solving (taking responsibility and ownership is the consequence) All staff will be expected to positively promote the restorative approaches based on the above restorative principles; these encourage an environment, which promotes mutual respect, the development of good relationships and the need to take responsibility for one's own behaviour. Outcomes are decided by following the processes set out in the diagram below:

Restorative Approaches are inspired by the philosophy and practices of Restorative Justice, which puts repairing harm done to relationships and people as the consequence, over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment.

Key values create an ethos of Respect, inclusion, accountability and taking responsibility, commitment to relationships, impartiality, being non-judgmental, collaboration, empowerment and emotional articulacy.

Key skills include active learning, facilitating dialogue and problem-solving, listening to, expressing emotion, and empowering others to take ownership of problems.

Restorative processes and practices include interventions when harm has happened, including:

1. Restorative enquiry (completing a restorative iceberg and reflecting on incidents and actions)
2. Mediation
3. Community conferencing

There are also processes and practices that we use to help to prevent harm and conflict occurring, and which build a sense of belonging, safety and social responsibility. These include:

- 1) Group time
- 2) Restorative pedagogy: teachers modelling values and skills and creating opportunities for their development amongst the students whatever the subject being taught

Implementation of restorative approach in response to unwanted, distressed or challenging behaviours:

Restorative enquiry

This is the starting point for all restorative processes involving active non-judgemental listening. The process can be used with one person to help them reflect on a situation and find ways forward for themselves. It is also useful before and during face-to-face meetings.

Restorative discussion

This is used in a challenging situation, often between a more and less powerful person. Skills include expressing and listening for feelings and needs and understanding why each person has acted the way they have.

Mediation

This is useful when both X and Y believe the other person is the cause of the problem. The mediator remains impartial, and helps both sides to consider the problem as a shared one that needs a joint solution.



Victim/Wrongdoer mediation

This is useful when someone acknowledges they have caused harm to another person and both sides agree to see how the matter can be put right, with the help of an impartial mediator.

Restorative conference

This involves those who have acknowledged causing harm meeting with those they have harmed; seeking to understand each other's perspective and coming to a mutual agreement which will repair the harm as much as possible. Often all sides bring supporters, who have usually been affected, and have something to say from a personal perspective.

Physical Intervention

A restrictive physical intervention is defined as a planned or reactive act that restricts an individual's movement, liberty and/or freedom to act independently; and the sub-categories of restrictive intervention using force or restricting liberty of movement (or threatening to do so) (Taken from Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention).

Restrictive physical intervention is always considered to be a last resort, and may only ever be considered when there is:

- Significant danger to themselves or to another.

Restrictive physical intervention where used must be reasonable, proportionate, and use no more force than is necessary. Physical interventions may take the form of an emergency intervention, or a planned intervention. Staff should be adequately trained and competent to use physical intervention (to be updated on yearly basis) and must adhere to all safety measures. Staff must only use physical intervention if they have been trained unless it is an emergency to prevent harm to the young person or others.

Reporting and Recording of the Intervention

Staff must report all unplanned interventions to the Head Teacher, and this must be recorded on CPOMS on the day which the intervention has taken place.

- Parents/Guardians must also be contacted on the day.
- Incident to be recorded onto CPOMS
- Student must be accessed, if necessary, by a first aider
- Restorative meeting to be held with student and staff.
- Staff member involved in the incident must have a debrief logged which is logged on ClearCare. The school should assess the incident as soon as possible and a behaviour support plan/risk assessment will be drawn up or updated to reflect this.

Unacceptable Behaviours includes:

- Physical assaults
- Verbal/threatening/racial abuse
- Bullying and intimidation

- Discrimination and prejudice towards age, ability, gender and gender identity, race, sexual orientation, or religion
- Smoking including vaping is not permitted anywhere on the school site and will be treated as a serious breach of the school code of conduct.
- The use of students' own mobile phones and electronic devices is prohibited in school; all equipment should be handed in on arrival at school for safe keeping during the school day.

Sexualised Behaviour

See safeguarding policy.

Safe Touch

Please see Appendix 1.

Consideration of Fixed Term Exclusions

The Head Teacher will consider applying fixed term exclusions for continuous breaches of the following unacceptable behaviours and if it is felt that the student is unsafe to themselves and others:

- Bullying and intimidation especially if based on protected characteristics.
- Sexualised behaviour that puts others at risk of harm – including their mental health
- Persistent infringement of the non-smoking rule
- Persistent infringement of racist abuse/language
- Persistent infringement of criminal damage
- Persistent health and safety issues e.g. unsafe travel in transport to and from school, unsafe behaviour during the school day including serious violence

Explanation of racism and discriminatory behaviour

There is a zero tolerance with racism and discriminatory behaviour in line with our British Values here at Northcroft School. A phone call home will be made, and the incident will be recorded and monitored through the schools safeguarding committee meetings ship working with parents, and to prepare our students for society. It is the first priority to support this young person through curriculum implementation , 1-2-1 sessions with a tailored package of support, if the incident is deemed serious enough for an exclusion this will be lead by the headteacher.

A similar system is pursued for criminal damage where the damage is over £100. There is a degree of discretion used – for example for a student who is in emotional distress and breaks something may not receive a letter.

Consideration of end of school placement

- Persistent violent physical assault on another individual that causes actual bodily harm.
- Persistent use of alcohol or prohibited drugs

- Knowingly bringing weapons onto the school site with an intent to harm others.

Support after exclusion or concerning behaviours:

A reintegration meeting can be used to monitor concerns after a period of exclusion or concerning behaviour. We initiate a meeting between school, student, and the student's parents/carers. We focus on the key behaviours which the student is struggling with that we would like to see change and work together to see how staff can support that change. Our aim is to take steps toward improvement so that it feels more achievable to the student. We emphasise that the parent, student, and school are all part of the same team, and we all want the very best for our students/child. Good school-to-home communication helps significantly with students' progress. Teachers are consistent with the student in the classroom, adhering to the wording of the behaviour plan and the support of a thrive action plan, emphasizing the positives that come along with good behaviour choices and encouraging the student to get used to new habits of good behaviour, while the teacher identifying the missed areas of development and natural consequences. Northcroft School will make every attempt to promote positive behaviour. The school hopes that by promoting positive behaviour all students will access the wide range of enrichment extra curriculum opportunities and incentives available.

See Exclusion Policy for further details on Exclusions and the process taken within the school.

Mobile Phones

Students are encouraged on arrival to school to hand their electronic devices into the school office. We have a no mobile phone policy for students in school.

Expected Standards of Student Behaviour

Northcroft School will provide clear behaviour guidelines to students and parents, with regards the schools' expectations. The school sets high standards of behaviour from students both in and out of school, the following is a code of conduct for students: **School Code of Conduct**, Our school's 3 rules:

1. Be Safe
2. Belong
3. Be Inspired

Every student will be expected to follow the classroom expectations as set out below:

1) Be Safe

- To be respectful to ourselves.
- To be respectful towards others.
- To respect our learning environment.

2) Belong

- To be in the right place.
- To be in the right place at the right time.

- To complete the task set.

3) Be Inspired

- To be part of the learning.
- To work kindly with others.

At Northcroft School some of our students regulate when heightened more effectively in the outdoor environment individually. When this is the case staff are to observe the student from a distance (this can be from indoors) to assist with regulation and support the behaviour when the student is safe and receptive to do so.

Staff's Responsibilities and the Legislative Framework

The Staff of Northcroft School will set out measures in this policy, which consider the principles, values and objectives identified above and act within the legislative framework. The Head Teacher must decide on the standards of behaviour expected and strategies to teach good behaviour and determine the rules and any disciplinary penalties for breaking them. The Head Teacher will also consider measures and strategies to manage the following:

- Students' behaviour, attitude and conduct outside of school, e.g., transport and educational visits.
- The screening and searching of students.
- The power to use reasonable force and other physical contact.
- Working with other local agencies to assess the needs of students who display continuous disruptive behaviour.
- To have in place an effective Safeguarding policy and procedures
- To make this policy available on the website
- Support and pastoral care for staff accused of misconduct.
- Clear guidance to all staff with regards to their responsibilities to manage students positively.

The legislative framework and guidance Head Teachers are required to consider:

- Education and Inspection Act 2006
- DfES Creating Positive environments where children can flourish (2021)
- The Education Act 2002, Section 175
- Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 (Amended) (England) Regulations 2019
- EU Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

- Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- OFSTED Summary Report – Managing Challenging Behaviour (2005)
- DfES Guidance the Use of Force to Control or Restrain Students 2007
- DfES Guidance on Use of Reasonable Force (July 2013)
- DfE Advice to Head Teachers and School Staff; Behaviour & Discipline (2014)
- DfE Advice to Head Teachers and School Staff: Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (January 2016)
- UK Gov Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention (2019)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

Appendix 1 POLICY ON SAFE TOUCH/ SAFE HOLDING

May 2025 (Review May 2026) Responsibility: SLT/Thrive lead

To whom does it apply?

It applies to all staff and children working within the specialist Thrive provision. It may be extended, at the school (or other setting's discretion) to all staff. Named members of staff need to have received 'Positive Handling' or Restraint or 'PIPS' or 'Positive Touch' (or equivalent) training to know how and when to hold children in safe ways within governmental guidelines. As a Thrive Licensed Practitioner, these trained delegates are then trained by Thrive staff to combine their practice with the Thrive Approach™ so they can identify and use safe touch as a developmental intervention.

Why have a policy on touch?

In order to protect children and school staff from allegations under Child Protection procedures many schools, education authorities and academies have adopted 'No Touch' policies. However such policies do not address the emotional health and social wellbeing needs of children.

Northcroft School is adopting an informed, evidence-based decision to allow safe touch in special cases as a developmentally appropriate intervention that will aid healthy emotional growth and learning.

Research

Research shows clearly that healthy pro-social brain development requires access to safe touch as one of the means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, sad or angry child. It is essential for all children to learn the difference between safe and unsafe touch and to experience having their strongest emotions contained, validated, accepted and soothed by a significant adult.

If children are behaving in unacceptable, threatening, dangerous, aggressive or out of control ways, they have not yet learned how their strongest emotional reactions can be contained, channelled and communicated safely. In recognition of this, under special, agreed and supervised conditions, specially trained staff will consider using safe touch as one of the means available to them, for example to calm a distressed child, to contain an angry or wild child and/or encourage or affirm an anxious child or to support a child with low self-esteem.

Safe touch used to calm, soothe and regulate a child's emotions is a needed developmental experience. The brain does not develop neuronal pathways to initiate calming and self-soothing unless and until this safe emotional regulation has been experienced within a positive relationship with a significant adult. Where children have had insufficient experience of safe touch and calming regulation, this may be a priority to help their brains to develop access to thinking, judging, evaluating and choosing mechanisms. These are sometimes known as 'higher executive skills' and they are an intrinsic part of cognitive regulation.

Safe touch is one of the keyways of regulating children's emotions, but it is a strategy that fully trained staff will use only under supervision

Ways of regulating children's emotions

Other means of calming, soothing and containing children's strong emotions include:

- Slowing one's pace
- Lowering the voice
- Breathing more deeply
- Initially matching the pitch and volume of the child's emotional display (shout, cry etc) and then regulate it down
- Talking slowly, firmly and quietly in an unhurried and unflustered way • Providing clear consistently held boundaries

The developmentally appropriate (and reparative) use of safe touch is defined by situations in which abstinence would actually be inhumane, unkind and potentially psychologically or neurobiologically damaging.

Examples include the empirically backed beneficial use of touch in the comforting of a child who is an acute state of distress and/or out of control. Not to reach out to the child in such circumstances could be re-traumatising and neurobiologically damaging as well as confirming or inviting anti-social behaviour patterns.

Refraining from physically, safely holding a child in the face of their intense grief, stress and/or rage reactions can lead to a state of hyper-arousal, in which toxic levels of stress chemicals are released in the body and brain. The severely damaging long-term effects of this state have been intensively researched worldwide and are well documented.

Moreover, gentle safe holding is appropriate if a child:

- is hurting himself/herself or others, (or is likely to hurt himself/herself and/or others) or is damaging property, and/or
- is incensed and out of control, so that all verbal attempts to engage him/her have failed.

Trained staff team members are trained in the safest and gentlest means of holding a child that is entirely designed to enable the child to feel safe and soothed, and to bring him or her down from uncontrollable states of hyperarousal.

Whilst limits and boundaries in such circumstances can be a vital corrective emotional experience, without such an intervention (holding) the child can be left at risk of actual physical or psychological damage.

Such necessary interventions are fully in line with guidelines set out in the Government Document, 'New Guidance on the Use of Reasonable Force in School.' (DfEE 1998) and 'Use of Reasonable Force' (2013)

What about other physical contact with pupils? (2013, Crown op cit)

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school.
- When comforting a distressed pupil.
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised.
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument.
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and to give first aid.
- Supporting a child when they are distressed and need to be picked up and comforted.

Appropriate and inappropriate touch

We are highly aware of the current atmosphere where due to fears of abuse, touch as a natural and important form of human connection has been almost vetoed in some school contexts. Our policy rests on the belief that every member of staff needs to appreciate the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. Hence all staff members need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the difference. They need to show themselves to be highly aware of both the damaging and unnecessary uses of touch in an educational context. Touch is not to be used as an ill-thought out or impulsive act of futile reassurance/gratification or as a block to referral for

psychological assessment. Equally, when a child is in deep distress, the Thrive Licensed Practitioner is trained to know when and how sufficient connection and psychological holding have been or can be provided/established without touching.

Guidelines for the use of Safe Touch

To ensure touch is only used appropriately the following guidelines are to be followed:

- Parents/carers wherever possible should be involved in the Thrive Assessments and Action Plans and be regularly updated as to their child's progress through the program
- Teachers/support staff should be trained in the Thrive approach
- Teachers/support staff should be trained in all aspects of safe touch
- Staff members should agree the use of safe touch in discussion with their manager.
- Child should be consulted, appropriate to their understanding, and involved in the development of a plan, based on a comprehensive risk assessment.
- Strategies should be rehearsed and practised (as is possible) with the child in preparation.
- An Individual Behaviour Management Plan or Safety Plan should be added to a child's RA and its use recorded and monitored. This will supplement the Thrive Action Plan which will also include the use of safe touch as a strategy.
- Both adults should have the closest / best relationship with the child.

Where touch is used, contact should be brief and gentle, on clothed or publicly visible parts of the body: hands, arms, shoulders, head, hair, shoes.

Unsafe touch

- At no point and under no circumstances should staff members use touch to satisfy their own need for physical contact or reassurance.
- No unsafe touch: All staff are trained to be fully cognisant of touch that is invasive, or which could be confusing, traumatising or experienced as eroticising in any way whatsoever.

[Appendix](#)

USE OF REASONABLE FORCE ADVICE FOR HEAD TEACHERS, STAFF AND GOVERNING BODIES

[When can reasonable force be used?](#)

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.
- The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot: Use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Source: Extract from Department of Education, Use of reasonable force Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies - July 2013 Section 93, Education and Inspections Act

Appendix A. The Development of the brain

Thrive identifies 6 developmental building blocks of healthy brain development:

- **Being 0 – 6 months**
- **Doing 6 – 18 months**
- **Thinking 18 months – 3 years**
- **Power and Identity 3 – 7 years**
- **Skills and Structure 7 – 11 years**
- **Interdependence 11 – 25 years**

The Thrive staff will often refer to the Thrive developmental strands. Pupils attending Northcroft School fall into the chronological age range of 5 - 16, however many are functioning between lower strands of development and so need a carefully planned and implemented approach to successfully engage in learning. When a child's life is interrupted by fear or anxiety, their thinking brain will be disengaged. This is because how we feel is closely linked to how we behave, and our emotions are key to that learning process.

PACE

As part of our work within Thrive, we use the acronym PACE:

- Playfulness
- Acceptance
- Curiosity
- Empathy

The psychologist Dan Hughes identified four key areas of the PACE attitude; playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy. When working with a young person, staff are expected to maintain an attitude of PACE in order to create and feel a sense of safety in the relationship. It is important to recognise that it can be difficult to maintain the PACE attitude when pupils behave in unacceptable ways, however this is when it is crucial to demonstrate PACE. It is important that we separate the children and young people from their behaviour: whilst their behaviour might be unacceptable, we still care about them.

The Vital Relational Functions (VRFs)

In all interactions with pupils, staff endeavour to use the VRFs outlined in the Thrive Approach. These are drawn from the teachings and findings of leading commentators on emotional, psychological and child development (Sunderland, Kohut, Stern). These skills provide a relational basis for a pupil's emotional, social and neurological development. They are:

- **Attunement** – demonstrating an understanding of how they are feeling by “catching and matching” their emotional state.
- **Validation** – demonstrating that their feelings are real and justified.
- **Containment** – offering their feelings back to them, named and in small pieces.

- **Regulation** – communicating the capacity to regulate emotional states by modelling how to do it.

The provision of emotional containment by the adult who is working closely and regularly with the pupil is a significant contributing factor to the pupil's developing capacity to contain and regulate his/her own emotions. The relationship between a pupil and a significant adult can be an under recognised and under-used resource so, by using Thrive, this relationship is enhanced. It can help a child get ready to learn and enhance their learning, build positive relationships between a child and their peers and it can improve attainment.