



## POSITIVE LANGUAGE POLICY AND PRACTICE

*This plan supports the ANTI-BULLYING policy and  
the BEHAVIOUR & DISCIPLINE Policy*

### PREP SCHOOL INCLUDING EYFS

|  |                    |
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| <b>Governors' Committee normally reviewing:</b>      | Academic Committee |
| <b>Date last formally approved by the Governors:</b> | Spring 2019        |
| <b>Date policy became effective:</b>                 | April 2016         |

|                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Period of Review:</b> | Annually         |
| <b>Next Review Date:</b> | Spring term 2020 |

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| <b>Person responsible for implementation and monitoring:</b> | Head   |
| <b>Other relevant policies:</b>                              | Safeguarding (Child Protection and Staff Behaviour) Policy, Procedure on Discipline and Exclusions, Equal Opportunities Policy, Curriculum Policy, Citizenship Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Policy for Safety and Security of pupils, Complaints policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, First Aid and Treatment and Medication Policy, Pupil Review Policy, Internet and E-Safety Policy, Record Keeping Policy, Restraining Policy, Sex and Relationship Education Policy |

## **The following Policy covers the Aims and Ethos of the Prep School**

**Mr Simon James**  
**Head, Prep School**

### [Aims and Ethos](#)

#### **SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

*Felsted is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all pupils and a 'culture of vigilance' to safeguard and protect all in its care, and to all aspects of its 'Safeguarding (Child Protection and Staff Behaviour) Policy'.*

#### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

*The aims of the School and the principles of excellent pastoral care will be applied to all children irrespective of differences in ethnic background, culture, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender and disabilities, so long as in the last matter the student is able to involve himself or herself in the activity concerned; equally these differences will be recognised and respected, and the School will aim to provide a positive culture of tolerance, equality and mutual respect.*

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### 1. The objective of the Positive Language Policy

Respect lies at the heart of our school:

*'In the Prep School, the mighty prep school, respect rules here OK'*

In September 2009, the Pupil Council devised the School Jewel (Revised Sept 2011 & 2013). Our

School jewel '**RUBY**' promotes children to see the best in themselves:

**Responsibility for yourself, others and stuff**

**Understanding others**

**Best – achieve your best in all you do!**

**Yourself – become yourself, believe in yourself, be yourself!**

At Felsted Prep School ("the School") we speak with the children about appropriate behaviour and inappropriate behaviour. Children are asked to consider their behaviour and change it if necessary and know what is expected of them. Positive language gets a good response from children. Subconsciously it helps children develop a positive mind set so that when he/she runs into problems he/she is more likely to think positively about what to do instead of negatively about what he/she can't do. Therefore, common negative language such as "Don't swing on the chair" or "Don't forget your pencil" should be translated into explicit positive language such as "Sit safely on your chair" or "Be prepared".

Our choice of words can have a huge impact. As teachers we know that the way we talk to the children is crucial to helping them learn to see themselves as capable individuals and to build successful communication skills of their own. We understand that all children are different so it is appropriate to adapt approaches to different children for example, A robust confident child will react and respond very differently to a shy and nervous child. This awareness should be paramount to 'how' children are spoken to with particular consideration given to tone.

We also know that it's not easy to say the right thing on the spur of the moment. If we use the blame approach and say the problem lies with the Felstedian parenting or their previous school, teachers etc, we then inadvertently relinquish our responsibility for taking the role of teacher and actually teaching how we expect a Felstedian to behave. If we lose control or do not model good manners to Felstedians, then we fail in our responsibility to teach.

## **We have a responsibility to model what we want to see from the children.**

We will promote the use of positive language through our choice of words and phrases.

We will tell children clearly what is expected and what to do rather than what not to do.

We will act respectfully by considering what we are saying and how we say it.

### **2. Those involved in the Positive Language Policy are:**

**(i) All pupils**

**(ii) All teaching staff**

Form Tutors

Heads of Phase

Houseparents, Assistant Houseparents & Boarding House Team

Deputy Head

Head

**(iii) Other adults**

Learning Assistants

GAP Students

External Co-Curricular Staff

Health and Wellbeing Assistants

School Chaplain

School Doctors

School Counsellor

Parents

### **3. Promoting Positive Language**

If we are to “teach” behaviour in the same way as we approach any other part of the curriculum, then certain basic steps should be in place. These steps or stages should apply to all aspects of pupil behaviour, in the context of the whole school, in independent work, moving around the building, asking questions and interacting with others etc.

Whether giving directions, noting positive behaviours, prompting children to remember rules, stopping misbehaviour, or holding a discussion, it’s important to use clear, direct language that is free of innuendo or sarcasm. With words, tone of voice, facial expression, and body posture, you can communicate calmness and respect. In this way, you’ll avoid shaming and judging children, keep the focus on the positive behaviour you want to see, and reduce the likelihood of power struggles. Raising your voice and/or using humour should be done with extreme caution and must never humiliate a child.

All children should be treated fairly. Children are very perceptive to this and whilst it may be acceptable to abbreviate names when talking to a child, we should be **very careful** when using nicknames for some children and not others as this could be perceived as favouritism.

## EXAMPLES

### Translate negative language into the positive.

By telling the child what they should be doing rather than what they shouldn't be doing, a clear and positive message is given without confrontation.

| -ve  | +ve  |
|--|--|
| Don't slam the door.<br>Don't throw that stone.<br>Stop running.<br>Oliver, don't even think about running to your classroom this morning. I'm watching you! | Shut the door quietly.<br>Put the stone on the ground.<br>At our school we walk, thanks.<br>Good morning Oliver! I'm so glad you're here today. I see you're remembering to walk safely in the hall. |

### "Check yourself"

The message you are giving the children is "I can see you as individuals who can check yourselves. Checking is your job. I believe you can handle it. Using "Check yourself" regularly with students encourages responsibility and autonomy. You'll be giving students the opportunity to be responsible for their own choices.

| -ve   | +ve   |
|---|---|
| Stop talking<br><br>What are you doing? I've told you to line up. | It seems noisy to me. Please check yourself to see if you are using your indoor voice.<br>We are going to go outside please check yourself to see if you are standing safely in the line. |

### "Next time"

When you use "next time" as a positive alternative to the word "don't" you place a positive image in your students minds about what you want to see happen in future. "Next time" communicates to the child that any 'mistake' he/she made is over and you have moved on.

| -ve  | +ve  |
|--|--|
| Stop interrupting me. I'm talking.<br><br>Stop playing around with those scissors it's dangerous.<br>Stop shouting/ Don't shout at me. | Next time please let me finish my sentence before you start talking.<br>Next time please respect the safety rule for using scissors.<br>Next time I'd like you to use words to communicate your feelings |

### "Make a different choice. Thanks"

This phrasing does not tell children what to do; it gives them information about their present behaviour and respectfully asks that they choose a different behaviour. Asking the children to make a different choice communicates respect. "Please make a different choice. Thanks" may be exact words, but the real message is 'I see you as responsible for your actions. You choose your responses in life. I believe in your ability to find a response that is appropriate. I am leaving that choice to you.

| -ve  | +ve   |
|--|---|
| Stop talking and get on with your work.<br>Stop doing that. What are you doing throwing crayons around the room? | X, your talking is disturbing silent reading time, please make a different choice.<br>Y, crayons are not for throwing, make a different choice. Thanks. |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>"I see"</b>  |   |
| An alternative to telling children what to do, you are describing the situation at hand and are leaving the 'what to do' part up to them. The children must stop and think "What do I do next?" instead of "what does the teacher want me to do?". Giving fewer orders and commands reduces defiance. It communicates to your students that you think they are capable of creating the appropriate response once they understand the situation. |   |
| <b>-ve</b>  | <b>+ve</b>  |
| Pick that pencil up that you've dropped.<br>Stop talking when it's not your turn.   | I see a pencil under the table.<br>Alice, I noticed that you caught yourself and stopped talking when Hannah was sharing. You're getting better at holding on to your ideas until it's your turn to talk. |

**"You decide" "I think you know what choice to make"**

Many times during the day children ask questions that place the teacher in the role of permission giver "Is it o.k. if I get X to help me?" "Can I get a book to read, I'm finished my work?" . When you respond to these questions with a "yes" you assume the role of permission giver. If the request is clearly within the bounds of class rules, step out of permission giving role and empower the children with "You decide". This phrase along with similar language such as 'you choose', 'you think with your own brain', 'it's up to you' etc creates opportunities for children to practice being decisive. It is one more chance for them to experience their own power and to exercise independence.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>"I am really surprised"</b>  |   |
| This phrase conveys much more than surprise. The real message is: <u>I expect good things</u> . I don't see you this way. This behaviour doesn't fit my picture of you.<br>Surprise talk is a way to communicate positive expectations to your pupils. Conversely "well I'm not surprised" is language that announces to the child that the behaviour was expected. Surprise talk informs them that, in your mind, this particular behaviour is not who and what they really are. |   |
| <b>-ve</b>  | <b>+ve</b>  |
| You never listen. Stop talking.<br><br>What are you doing. Stop that.<br>That's dangerous. You know that. I've told you a million times.  | X said you didn't listen, I'm really surprised at that.<br>I was surprised by your behaviour today.<br>X said you weren't playing safely, I'm really surprised at that. |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Please think carefully about the following language before you use it:<br><b>Don't</b><br><b>Punish</b><br><b>Bully</b><br><b>Bad</b><br>Always as in 'Your always in X's space', 'You always do this'<br><b>Shouldn't</b> | At Felsted Prep School the use of the following language is not permitted:<br><b>Lazy</b><br><b>Hate</b><br><b>Kill</b><br><b>Stupid</b><br><b>Liar</b><br><b>Shut up</b> |
|--|---|

#### 4. Dealing with difficult Situations

It is important to keep in mind the reasons for building positive relationships, and this is true for all children, not just the difficult ones!

You should at all times be aiming to provide a teaching and learning environment that allows all involved to achieve their maximum potential.

You should be able to teach and the students in your care should have the opportunity to learn.

Try to plan your style of approach with the “difficult” child. Take into account the following:

- What exactly are the issues that cause you concern? Try to specifically identify the behaviours.
- When do these behaviours occur? All the time? When asked to “put pen to paper?” At the start of the lesson? When sitting with certain classmates?
- What have your responses been to date? Are any more successful than others? Talk over the problems with another member of staff. Listen to their techniques. Try to observe the child in another situation.
- Raise your issues with all appropriate concerned parties, student, parent, form tutor, head of year etc.

Once you have a clearer picture of the child this may throw some light onto the reasons for their behaviour, and why you should find him/her so difficult.

The next steps may well take some time to implement. The child will obviously now feel that you are “On their case!”. Remember you are the role model. **Do not** be led down the road of confrontation and reluctance to communicate. This will only prolong the whole situation. Have a range of strategies to try. As in any good problem solving process, once you have identified the problem, come up with a range of solutions that should be considered and then tried.

- Meet on a 1-1 basis with the child. This should be quite formal and away from an audience. State the relevant issues and try to come up with some solutions with them.
- Make time to see the child in other situations. At change of lessons, in the dining room, break time etc
- Practice some self-calming techniques
- Be supportive and look for opportunities to use praise (No matter how difficult this may seem; remember you are the role model in this situation)

**Communication is vital. If you are only prepared to “deal” with the child during lesson time, then he/she will, in your eyes, remain difficult.**

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|--|---|
| <b>P</b> raise<br><b>I</b> n<br><b>P</b> ublic | <b>R</b> eprimand<br><b>I</b> n<br><b>P</b> ivate |
|--|---|

## Appendix 1

This is the document that the School Council updates annually to share with the School as part of the RUBY campaign.

### **Pupil Procedure to Prevent Bullying**

The School aims to provide an environment in which each pupil is personally involved, and in which they can develop as young people of integrity, social conscience and courage. We aim to establish a community in which everybody feels valued and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Every pupil has a right to enjoy their time at school. Felsted expects you to be law-abiding and does not tolerate bullying or harassment. Respect for others is expected.

#### **At Felsted everyone has rights and responsibilities:**

| <u><b>Rights</b></u> | <u><b>Responsibilities</b></u> |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| to feel safe         | to respect yourself            |
| to learn and grow    | to respect others              |
| to be respected      | to use common sense            |
| to be valued         | to support others              |

It is the right and responsibility of everyone to report bullying, whether it happens to them or to someone else. No one will get into trouble for doing this.

#### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is the persistent misuse of power, is uninvited aggressive words or actions, and is hurtful. Any behaviour intended to hurt, injure, threaten, or frighten, including:

- using hurtful or sexist names or any names that obviously upset
- making reference to a person's sexuality, religion, culture or race
- picking on an individual for any reason including disability
- punching, hitting, pushing
- teasing or mocking
- spreading rumours
- exclusion, deliberately ignoring or avoiding and/or encouraging others to do the same
- repeatedly 'putting down' someone
- threatening
- taking or damaging property
- using mobile phones, emails and/or text messages, photographs, social websites to be abusive, unkind or cyberbullying.
- Online Bullying

#### **What to do if you are bullied:**

- seek help. Talk about it to someone you trust.
- tell the bully to stop. State quite clearly that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive
- report it to a member of staff, or a League Captain/Prefect/Boarding Captain. The school does not tolerate bullying.
- Feel confident that any incident can be resolved satisfactorily.

### **What to do if you know someone is being bullied:**

- care enough to do something about it, whether it affects you personally or not; early intervention can defuse a situation before it gets out of hand
- report it to a member of staff, or a League Captain/Prefect/Boarding Captain.

### **To prevent bullying:**

- respect yourself and others
- work to create a pleasant school environment for all
- learn to tolerate and accept individual differences
- support the School policy on bullying

Bullying sometimes involves exclusion from the group. If you are popular and part of a group perhaps you could make sure that others don't feel excluded

### **The School:**

- expects a high standard of behaviour at all times
- aims to provide a safe and caring environment for everyone
- has a policy for detecting, preventing and dealing with bullying
- is educating pupils about issues related to bullying behaviour
- offers support to all pupils through the pastoral care system

If you are unhappy or worried about a problem or wish to make a complaint you should talk to someone or email them. That person might be:

- Your Form Tutor
- Your Head of Phase
- Another member of staff
- The School Counsellor (who act as Independent Listeners)
- Independent Listener: Alex Keane – 07707 602167
- Boarding House - Independent Listener: Alex Keane – 07707 602167
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- The School Medical Centre: 01371 822791
- Health & Wellbeing Assistants:: 01371 822784 & drop into the Wellbeing Centre
- Boarding: 07788 319002
- Reverend Little: 07730 412647
- The Deputy Head, Mr Fincher ([jpf@felsted.org](mailto:jpf@felsted.org))
- The Head, Mr James ([scj@felsted.org](mailto:scj@felsted.org)), either knock on the door or make an appointment with Miss. Prior – tel 01371 822612)
- Comment/Suggestion/Ideas boxes in Hamilton House (for Boarders)
- Sharing/Caring box: Courtauld House, Cloister, Ffrome Court, Stewart House

### **Outside the school:**

Your parents or trusted adult

National Drugs Helpline (tel: 0800 77 66 00)

Childline (tel: 0800 1111)

Office of the Children's Commissioner - 0800 528 0731

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

Email: [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk) (online contact form) Telephone: 0870 000 3344

Don't be afraid to speak out if there are matters that you don't know how to deal with. Everyone at Felsted is most concerned about your welfare and there is always help available.



# Put a **STOP** to bullying

It is vital for our school to work in partnership with parents in order to tackle bullying effectively. We believe that everyone in our school should feel safe and be treated with respect. At Felsted, we help children to develop coping strategies and assertiveness to ensure that they are happy, feel safe and feel good about themselves. As parents, you also provide a key role in supporting your child in school.

**Bullying is totally unacceptable behaviour. To tackle it effectively we must all work together. We have a whole team of staff that can help your child if they feel they are being bullied.**

## What is bullying?



**'Behaviour by an individual or group usually *repeated* over time, that *intentionally* hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.'**

Bullying can happen in all walks of life and from time to time in all schools. It can also occur out of school or wherever groups of children come together. It can even happen online whilst using digital devices such as mobile phones, tablets, computers or games consoles.

### Forms of bullying...

- *Repeated* name calling, offensive comments to the same child
- *Repeated* threats to a child or their family
- Pressuring someone to give them money or possessions
- Hitting, kicking, pushing and provoking the same child regularly
- Damaging someone's possessions intentionally

### Bullying is not...

- A one-off fight or argument or a play fight that gets too aggressive
- A friend sometimes arguing with you and saying hurtful things
- A nasty remark or swear word which happens once
- Someone accidentally knocking you over in the playground

We are committed about informing our children and as a result of our recent anti-bullying awareness campaign, our children know that bullying is:

**Several Times On Purpose**