



Behaviour Policy

Approved by:	Full Governing Body
Last reviewed on:	September 2024
Next review due by:	September 2025



"You can be strict without being nasty, maintain boundaries without cruelty and correct children without aggression". (Paul Dix, Pivotal Education)

"I strongly believe that deep down in every child, however invisible, hostile or rejecting they may seem, is a deep longing to be seen, known and truly understood" (Louise Bomber 2007)

Introduction:

At Hermitage Primary School we will not accept discriminatory behaviour of any kind from any party. All children and adults have a right to be respected and the responsibility to give respect to others including those with Special Educational Needs. This is in accordance with the 2010 Equality Act. It is a primary aim of our school to ensure that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly. We are a caring community, whose values are built on mutual trust and respect for all. The school behaviour policy is therefore designed to support the way in which all members of the school can live and work together in a supportive way. It aims to promote an environment where everyone feels happy, safe and secure. This policy will explain the ways in which we work together to ensure a positive and consistent approach.

Purpose: Our Behaviour policy aims to:

- Encourage a calm, purposeful and happy atmosphere within the school;
- Foster positive, caring relationships where achievements at all levels are acknowledged and valued;
- Encourage increasing independence and self-discipline so that children learn to accept responsibility for their own behaviour;
- Promote positive learning behaviours through using Growth Mindset approaches, encouraging resilience in the face of challenges and through promoting independence for all learners including those with Special Educational Needs.
- Have a fair approach to behaviour throughout the school which takes into account the differences between pupils, while promoting an understanding of the expectations and consequences.
- Create clear boundaries of acceptable behaviour and ensure safety;
- Help children, staff and parents/carers to have a shared understanding and a feeling of common purpose.

How we promote positive behaviour:

- We make our expectations of good behaviour clear through consistent messages from all staff
- We promote mutual respect;
- We encourage children to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour;
- We lead by example;
- We praise and reward good behaviour both privately and publicly;
- We believe in the importance of calm discussion and acknowledge that encouragement is more effective than threats
- We use the language of Growth Mindsets

- We expect pupils to work independently for some periods of the day including those with Special Educational Needs so that they develop independence and resilience.

How we celebrate positive behaviour:

- We praise children verbally for positive behaviour
- We use an awards system where children earn merits.
- We organise weekly achievement assemblies where children are rewarded for their achievements and for positive learning behaviours with a certificate presented in assembly.
- Parents/Carers are kept informed of achievements when the certificates are taken home;
- Star card sent home for getting to the gold star;
- End of term Effort Award;
- A class reward, for class points gained for positive class collaboration - learning and working together.

Responsibilities and Expectations

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- implementing measure to secure acceptable standards of behaviour in line with the national minimum expectation.
- Ensuring all staff understand the behaviour expectations and apply them fairly and consistently to create a calm and safe environment;
- Supporting staff in managing pupil behaviour through following the behaviour policy
- Encouraging good behaviour and respect for others
- Promoting, among pupils, self-discipline and proper regard for authority.
- Ensuring regular training and induction for staff
- Informing Governing Body of Behaviour incidents including bullying and any discriminatory or prejudice behaviour.
- Monitoring and analysing removal data to determine patterns and effectiveness of removal including for those pupils with protected characteristics – pupils who are frequently removed may need additional and/or alternative approaches

The SENCo

The SENCo is responsible for:

- Supporting staff to put in place interventions to improve pupil behaviour
- Supporting pupils to help them meet behaviour standards, including making reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability as required.
- Supporting the staff with pupils who have been identified as needing additional and/or alternative approaches (e.g. through removal data).

We expect children to:

- Respect each other and show respect for all adults;
- Attend school every day, on time and be ready to learn;
- Co-operate with other children and adults;
- Have good manners;
- Follow the school rules at all times:
 - ✓ **Ready** – be ready to learn
 - ✓ **Respectful** - look after yourself, others, the school and environment
 - ✓ **Safe** – keep yourself and others safe
- Tell an adult if they have a problem.

We expect staff to:

- Provide positive role models at all times;
- Create a culture of respect for all people;
- Respect children and listen to their views without discrimination or prejudice;
- Implement the school's rules, rewards and consequences fairly and consistently as detailed in this policy;
- Raise all children's self-esteem and develop their full potential;
- Encourage self-motivation and independence;
- Provide a challenging, interesting and relevant curriculum;
- Create a safe and pleasant environment in the classroom and elsewhere, both physically and emotionally;
- Form a positive relationship with parents/carers so that all children can see that the key adults in their lives share a common aim;
- Recognise that children are individuals and be aware of their needs.
- Ensure that pupils complete any tasks reasonably assigned to them in connection with their education
- Deliver the curriculum areas that support the Behaviour Policy – PSHE including KiVa and No Outsiders.
- Ensure that pupils understand the school rules and behaviour systems at the beginning of the year, throughout the year and when new pupils join.

We expect parents/carers to:

- Show respect for all members of the school community;
- Be aware of the schools' Behaviour Policy and support the implementation of it, contacting school if there are any uncertainties or concerns
- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually;
- Support their child's learning, and to co-operate with the school, as set out in the Home-School Agreement;

- Support the actions/consequences given to their child. If parents/carers have any concerns about the way that their child has been treated, they should contact the school immediately;
- Support their child in learning to resolve difficulties in a positive manner.

We expect governors to:

- Ensure that the school has a behaviour policy
- Support the Head Teacher in carrying out these guidelines
- Promote whole school adherence to the practices within this policy;
- Be informed about the successes of the policy in maintaining high standards of behaviour
- Promote and monitor the implementation of this policy;
- Ensure equality of delivery to individuals and groups through monitoring exclusions.

How we deal with negative/inappropriate behaviour:

- We use positive praise with children displaying good behaviour as role models and use them to support younger children who may show challenging behaviour;
- We use a stepped system throughout school. Inappropriate/negative behaviour is recorded by each teacher. The steps are used consistently both inside and outside the classroom.

Steps	Actions
1. First attention to best conduct – reward those doing it right	Calm and controlled Respectful and positive – care about all pupils and be relentlessly positive
2. Redirection/reminder	Gentle encouragement – a nudge in the right direction A reminder of expectations (privately, no threats or humiliation) Praise as soon as possible when the learner shows positive behaviour Remember PACE (see appendix)
3. Caution	A clear verbal warning delivered privately where possible making the learner aware of their behaviour and clearly outlining the consequences if they continue. The learner has the choice to do the right thing. Learners will be reminded of their previous good conduct to prove that they can make the right choices. “stop, think, ... make the right choices” “think carefully about your next step”

	Remember PACE (see appendix)
4. Last chance	Speak to the pupil privately and give them a final opportunity to engage. Use the 30 second micro-script "I have noticed that you are... (e.g. having trouble getting started, wandering around etc.) right now. I expect you to be... (what should a learner in your classroom be doing right – what expectation have you a set) Remember when... (example of previous example of positive behaviour – helped tidy up, joined in with the group, completed the excellent ... work). That's the (name) I need to see today. Thank you for listening." Leave the child to their choice, walk away, don't turn back – give the learner time to make a choice, time to get back to work, time for the other children to turn their attention away. Don't engage in a discussion, a debate or barter with the child. Don't give the negative behaviour any more time.
Cool off	Cool off might be needed for certain children – they will know that this is one of their strategies and it will be part of their Behaviour Plan, agreed with parents. If needed, privately remind the child of the option to take a short time away from the classroom e.g. in Rainbow Room or in practical area outside of classroom – a calm space for child away from busy classroom and potential sensory overload to help them regulate with a trusted adult. <i>The child isn't being sent out or punished.</i>
5. Time-out	The learner is asked to speak to the teacher away from others. Depending on the situation and how regulated the learner is, this can be immediately after the lesson or at the next break/lunch time. 3 minutes should be enough: • Boundaries are reset • Learner is asked to reflect on their next step • Again they are reminded of their previous conduct/attitude/learning.

	Learner is given a final opportunity to reengage with the learning / follow instructions. In general, three minutes should be enough. If this step above is unsuccessful, or if a learner refuses escort the learner to a workspace outside the teaching room to avoid disrupting the learning for the rest of the class. You may need to call on SLT/other staff to support you with this.
6. Repair (Restorative conversation)	Do this only once the child is calm and regulated. In the majority of situations this will be the same day. 5 questions is usually enough from the following: - What happened? - What were you thinking at the time? - What you thought since? - Who has been affected? How? - How did this make people feel? - What should we do to put things right? – Link this to the consequence – a logical consequence not a punitive punishment. - How can we do things differently in the future? Some children may benefit from comic strip drawing of the situation. As part of the restorative conversation, the member of staff needs to ascertain the reason for the antecedent to the behaviour and it is the member of staff's responsibility to devise strategies to help prevent reoccurrence (e.g. was the pupil finding the work too difficult) – if needed, ask for support from the SLT and SENCo.
7. Consequence*	Logical consequence that considers the developmental age of the child. Distracting others – move place Torn down display – repair it in own time Not completed work – complete work in own time – break/lunch/at home Tidy area of classroom that has been disrupted Apologising to people who were affected Writing sorry note/letter (depending on age) Lunch time/break time – completing Think Sheet
8. Restore	It is important to restore relationships and make sure the child knows that they are still held in positive high regard – staff must praise positive behaviour at the first opportunity to reduce attention from the

	inappropriate behaviour. Staff need to reassure pupils that the behaviour has been dealt with and that all involved will move on and start afresh. Unconditional positive regard must be maintained.
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***Consequences:**

Rather than thinking of a child behaving badly and needing a punishment, we think of a child as struggling to handle something difficult so we can help them learn how to handle the difficult situation for next time – we want children to learn how to behave. Children with behavioural difficulties are vulnerable. Not all behaviours are a matter of choice and not all behaviours are in a child's control – the vast majority of children are not choosing to misbehave – children want to have an adult that understands them, champions them and they want to be able to connect with that adult. Consequences must not shame or humiliate.

Consequence *should*

1. Make it clear that unacceptable behaviour affects others and is not how we treat each other at Hermitage Primary School.
 2. Not apply to a whole group for the activities of individuals.
 3. Be **consistently** applied by all staff to help to ensure that children and staff feel supported and secure
 4. It should also be made very clear that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable, and any consequence should address this, not be made personal to the child.
- For some pupils further support may be needed in the form of a Behaviour Plan, and staff will liaise with parents/carers and SENCo/PLAC/LAC teacher about systems to support with managing behaviour for those pupils identified.
 - The Leadership Team, supported by the SENCo, have an overview of the children with challenging behaviour and work alongside staff in meetings with children and their parents/carers;
 - We inform parents/carers of persistent negative behaviour and may write a Behaviour Plan, in partnership with parents/carers, that has clear targets and a timeframe for improvement;
 - We refer children to the appropriate external support services (e.g. Educational Psychologist) if serious and challenging behaviour arises;
 - We respond quickly and systematically to all negative behaviour.

Bullying in all forms, including cyberbullying and any form of prejudice based and discriminatory bullying, physical threats or abuse and intimidation are not tolerated and any incidents of bullying, discrimination, aggression, and derogatory language (including name calling) are dealt with quickly and effectively (see Anti-Bullying Policy and Child on Child Abuse Policy).

- Where circumstances arise that endanger the safety of a pupil or staff member, the school will act swiftly and decisively to remove the threat and reduce the likelihood of its recurrence.

Behaviour Expectations and pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)

We aim to promote consistently high standards of behaviour and provide the necessary support to ensure all pupils can achieve and thrive both in and out of the classroom. We aim to create a calm environment which will benefit all pupils, including pupils with SEND, enabling them to learn.

Some behaviours are more likely associated with particular types of SEND, such as a pupil with speech, language and communication needs who may not understand verbal instruction. Behaviour is considered in relation to a pupil's SEND (although it does not follow that every incident of misbehaviour will be connected to their SEND). We use a graduated approach to assess, plan and deliver and then review the impact of support.

The school has due regard to the following duties:

- Equality Act 2010 – the school has a duty to take reasonable steps to avoid substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil caused by the school's policies or practices
- Children and Families Act 2014- the school has a duty to use their best endeavours to meet the needs of those with SEND
- For pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan, the school must secure the provisions set out and co-operate with the local authority .

As part of meeting these duties the school will endeavour to anticipate likely triggers and put in place support where needed to prevent those. This may include but is not limited to:

- Short, planned movement breaks for pupils whose SEND means that they find it hard to sit still for long
- Adjusting seating plans to allow a pupil with a visual or hearing impairment to sit in sight of the teacher
- Adjusting uniform requirements for a pupil with sensory issues or who has severe eczema
- Training for staff in understanding conditions such as autism

Preventative measures will take into account the specific circumstances and requirements of the child.

Exclusions – Please see Exclusions Policy for full details of Exclusions

Exclusion (Consequences of serious unacceptable behaviour):

We will always try to identify the causes of behaviour issues and promote strategies to support the child in order to modify their behaviour. We see exclusion as a last resort. However, there are incidents or circumstances where it will be the only appropriate step. For example; in line with the Local Authority's policy, there will be a minimum of a 5 day fixed term external exclusion for bringing an offensive weapon to school.

Internal Exclusion:

An internal exclusion means that a child will complete their set work either in another classroom or in the office with a member of the Leadership or Senior Leadership Team for at least half a day. The duration will be dependent on the circumstance and history of behaviour. The child will not be permitted to be in the playground at break or lunchtime, nor be able to attend an educational visit on that day. Repeated internal exclusions could result in a fixed term external exclusion.

Fixed Term External Exclusion:

When a fixed term external exclusion is deemed appropriate, it is expected that the child remains supervised at home for the day and completes work there. The letter, which is issued when a child is excluded, explains clearly the responsibility that a child should not be in a public place during the period of the exclusion.

If an incident may be deemed serious enough to consider a fixed term exclusion, the school will endeavour to contact the parents/carers on the day of the incident to inform them an investigation will take place. A letter will be sent home outlining the reasons for the exclusion and the measures parents/carers can take in relation to them. On return to school, the parents/carers and child will meet with a member of the Leadership Team at a re-integration meeting to discuss future actions to ensure the behaviour does not reoccur.

Support Plans

On very rare occasions it may be felt that a child is at risk of permanent exclusion due to the inappropriate behaviour or persistent poor behaviour being displayed. In this circumstance, the school will put a Support Plan into place in order to support the child and try to prevent the behaviour reoccurring. This plan will have a clear timeline and will involve the child, school and parents/carers working together to establish clear targets for improvement and the support measures (both at home and school) needed to achieve these. Regular reviews will be organised to assess progress and make amendments as required. Where appropriate, other agencies, including the Educational Psychologist will also be contacted to ensure that specific professional expertise is accessed in order to meet the needs of the child.

Safeguarding

Staff will consider whether misbehaviour gives cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm. Where this may be the case, as set out in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, school staff will follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy). The school will consider if pastoral support, an early help intervention or a referral to children's social care is appropriate.

Removal From Classrooms

Removal from a classroom is where a pupil, for serious disciplinary reasons, is required to spend a limited time out of a classroom at the instruction of a member of staff. This should allow for the continuation of the pupil's education in a supervised setting. Removal from the classroom is considered as a serious sanction. It is only used when necessary and only once other behavioural strategies have been attempted unless the behaviour is so extreme as to warrant immediate removal. Removal from a classroom will be for a set period of time, for example the remainder of the lesson, up to 1 hour or when it is safe to do so. Pupils are never locked in the room of their removal; however, there may be exceptional circumstances in which it is necessary to physically prevent a pupil from leaving a room in order to protect the safety of pupils and staff from immediate risk. Parents will be informed on the same day if their child has been removed from the classroom. Removal may be used for the following reasons:

- To maintain safety of pupils and to restore stability following an unreasonably high level of disruption
- To enable disruptive pupils to be taken to a place where education can be continued in a managed environment
- To allow the pupil to regain calm in a safe place

When the pupil is safe to return to class, the teacher or another adult will ensure that they know what is expected of them and what lesson they are returning to.

Removal is different to the use of our Nurture Room (Rainbow Room) for non-disciplinary reasons for example when a pupil is taken out to regulate his or her emotions because of identified sensory overload as part of a planned response.

Preventing Recurrence

We use a range of strategies to help pupils manage their behaviour and to prevent recurrence. This includes but is not limited to:

- Frequent and open engagement with parents
- Support of trusted adult
- Short term behaviour report cards or longer-term behaviour plans
- Support of external agencies – Visyon, Educational Psychologist, behaviour consultants

Health & Safety:

We will:

- Undertake a risk assessment of any children who display disruptive behaviour;
- Create a Risk Assessment for any child who requires positive handling;
- Train staff who may need to work with children who require positive handling;
- Ensure all staff are aware of the policy on positive handling of children.

Physical Intervention:

The general principle is that the use of physical intervention should, wherever possible, be avoided. Before using physical intervention, staff should always attempt to use diversion, diffusion or distraction to manage the situation. However the Education Act (Chapter 2 of Part 10 of EA 1996 (punishment and restraint of pupils) amended as set out in subsections (2) to (5).) allows all teachers to use reasonable force to prevent a child from:

1. Assaulting or injuring another person;
2. Injuring themselves;
3. Putting himself/herself into danger (e.g. attempting to run away);
4. Damaging property.

Use of physical restraint is in line with the DfE document Use of Reasonable Force In Schools July 2013.

Confiscation, banned item and Searching Pupils

The head teacher and teaching staff have the right to confiscate any item from a pupil which is deemed inappropriate to be in school.

The head teacher and teaching staff have the right to search any pupil or pupil's belongings, without consent, if they believe they are hiding any items which should be confiscated or are on the banned list. If the pupil needs to be searched, two members of staff will be present.

Any items found on the banned list will be handed directly to parents or police, depending on the seriousness of the confiscation. Items on the banned list include:

- alcohol
- drugs
- stolen items
- knives
- weapons
- cigarettes
- pornographic material
- anything else perceived to pose a threat to pupils at the school
- fireworks

Incidents Outside of the School

In accordance with the information published by the Department for Education entitled "Behaviour & Discipline in Schools", the school has a statutory power to discipline children for misbehaving outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, gives Headteachers a specific statutory power to regulate children's behaviour in these circumstances "to such extent as is reasonable". Examples of such unacceptable behaviour include:

- Taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity;
- Travelling to or from school;
- Wearing school uniform or in some other way identifiable as a child at Hermitage Primary School.

In extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour (such as cyber bullying) at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply, that:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school;
- Poses a threat to another child or member of the public;
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

Child on Child Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

We recognise that child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Sexting (youth produced digital imagery);
- Bullying- name calling, physical,
- Prejudiced behaviour- homophobic, disabilities;
- Cyber bullying & online abusive behaviour;
- Radicalisation;
- Abuse in intimate relationships, including teenage relationship abuse;
- Children who display sexually problematic/harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment;
- Gang association and serious violence- County Lines, initiation, hazing;
- Race hate and Racism.

See separate "**Child on Child Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviour**" policy for full details of the policy and procedures for Child on Child Abuse and harmful sexual behaviours.

Also refer to Behaviour in Schools – Advice for headteachers and school staff July 2022 paragraphs 112-118.

Resources:

- We use books, videos, circle time and assemblies to whole school, classes or groups of children to learn about appropriate behaviour;
- We use experts such as Community Police to deliver workshops to children.

- We use the Jigsaw PSHE, No Outsiders, KiVa and Discovery RE schemes to promote inclusion, understanding and tolerance for others and the beliefs of others
- We are a KiVa school and use the KiVa resources to deliver anti-bullying lessons and to promote a culture of peer support against bullying.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- The Behaviour Policy;
- The Anti-Bullying policy;
- Child on Child and Harmful Sexual Behaviours Policy
- The Online safety Policy;
- The Acceptable Use Policy.

Steps – recorded in teacher's file (not publicly displayed)

1. **Before the first reminder to an individual child – use positive praise – reward those doing it right! Publicly praise those children doing the right thing – make it explicit what expectation it is that they are doing e.g. starting work, good sitting....**

Exceptional Positive Behaviour

For children who demonstrate exceptional positive behaviour including behaviour for learning such as resilience and determination, they will be acknowledged through positive praise explaining what they have achieved and why. They will be awarded a certificate to take home.

2. **First reminder**
In private/one to one with child, verbal reminder of expected behaviour. No public humiliation or threats.
3. **Second Reminder — in private – one to one with child – no public humiliation or threats**
Chat with adult (use 30 second micro script), – if necessary move places

30 second micro-script:

"I have noticed that you are... (e.g. having trouble getting started, wandering around etc.) right now.

I expect you to be... (what should a learner in your classroom be doing right – what expectation have you a set)

Remember when... (example of previous example of positive behaviour – helped tidy up, joined in with the group, completed the excellent ... work).

That's the (name) I need to see today.

Thank you for listening."

4. **3-minute scripted chat straight after the lesson or at the next break – 5 questions is usually enough from the following:**
 - **What happened?**

- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought since?
- Who has been affected? How?
- How did this make people feel?
- What should we do to put things right? – Link this to the consequence – a logical

Decide on the logical consequence and ascertain the reasons for the behaviour

Persistent poor/disruptive behaviour

Consequences - depending on actions:

Teacher to decide on logical consequence:

Child to fill in Think Sheet (age appropriate) – account of incident including their feelings and feelings of others

Loss of privilege

Detention –child to complete any work missed at breaktime or lunchtime (ensure pupil has time to use toilet and each lunch)

Child will also need to make apologies either verbal or written (following discussion, the teacher may need to speak on behalf of the pupil depending on communication needs)

In addition, a letter will be sent home explaining behaviour.

SLT and SENCo involved – Behaviour Plan

Extreme behaviour

Examples:

- * Deliberately injuring another child – physical assault
- * Wilful damage of school or other people's property including graffiti
- * Racism & Bullying
- * Theft
- * Use of bad language – verbal assault
- * Disrespecting adults in school
- * Putting yourself and/or others in an unsafe position such as; leaving the classroom without permission
- * Serious behaviour outside of school
- * Other premeditated behaviour
- * Malicious allegations against staff

A Senior Leader will be informed who will support the situation and will discuss with the child, the consequences of their behaviour and ways forward. Parents/carers will be called and a letter will be given to Parents/Carers. A meeting may be arranged if required.

These behaviours could lead to removal from the classroom or exclusion, depending on the severity and circumstances.

Appendix

PACE Model

What is PACE?

- PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating, and behaving that helps a child feel safe.
- It helps to promote secure attachments and enables a child to reflect on their thoughts and behaviours without being judged.

Principles of PACE

Playfulness - A light-hearted, relaxed and playful attitude. Helps the child feel connected within their relationship. Helps the child experience fun and love.

Acceptance - Accepting the child for who they are and not what they achieve is very important. It is important to make the child aware that it is their behaviour that is unacceptable not them as a person. The child needs to feel liked and accepted for who they really are.

Curiosity - Figuring out what is going on. Understand the meaning behind the behaviour. Make best guesses about the inner experience of the child.

- Wonder about the child.
- Wondering with the child.

Empathy - One of the most important aspects of the PACE approach. To understand a child's needs you have to be able to "step into their shoes".

Empathy allows an individual to feel their feelings and know that their feelings have been heard and are valid. You may not agree with their feelings and opinions, which is ok but by listening you are supporting them to not suppress their feelings, which is crucial to positive mental health.

Think about your relationships in your own life. Do you open up to people who are harsh and do not listen to you? Or people who listen, are accepting of you, and value you as a person?

Top Tips for Empathy by Dr Johanna Hilton CPsychol

1. Empathy is a skill to develop with practice.
2. Say something that guesses at how the child is feeling.
3. Use cautious language – "I wonder if / you might be / it seems" rather than "you must be / I bet you are".
4. Match your voice tone to their feeling.
5. Avoid direct questions – don't ask "are you feeling angry?"
6. Talk about their feelings, not yours or another's – don't say "imagine how your mum / sibling / peer will feel".
7. Try to stress the here and now of their distress – use "today", "right now", "at the moment".
8. Remember, avoid the temptation to add a BUT!