

# **United Against Bullying School Case Study: Setting up support targeted at Looked After/ Adopted Children**

## **How Gordon Primary School developed a trauma-informed approach and ensured LAC and their and parent/ carers are able to access thoughtful individualised support**

### **Context of our anti-bullying work**

For staff to be Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed through having a regular focus in staff meetings/training and to understand the impact of trauma on behaviour and relationships including vulnerability to bullying.

### **What we hoped to achieve**

For Looked After/Adopted children and parent/Carers be able to access thoughtful individualised support in school.

### **The action we took**

- We include children who are/have been looked after as a vulnerability factor in our Anti-Bullying Policy
- To put relationships at the core of whole staff practice
- For staff to be aware of attachment styles and 'survival coping strategies' that might play out in relationships eg controlling behaviour that might hinder relationships, seeking out peers that are unkind to them etc to recognise 'attachment seeking behaviours', survival mechanisms
- Staff are aware of developmental age v biological age and how it might impact on relationships and understanding
- We introduced safe spaces such as the Sanctuary Room and Nurture Room for play 1:1 or small groups and as a lunchtime provision
- To have key adults to check-in with children
- Pupil Passports
- We meet regularly with Parent/Carers/child to help maintain positive relationships
- We liaise with some parent/carers a term ahead of the class curriculum including SRE and activities so possible trigger themes for their child can be highlighted and thought about Eg planning ahead we were able to discuss a class book in relation to a possible trigger ahead of time and we decided to make a change
- We are aware some children might find Anti-Bullying Workshops, Police Safety talks, NSPCC workshops, class/sibling photos etc triggering events – we liaise with the parent/carers of children and make a plan to support them – eg a key adult might support a child to meet the Police before a Safety Talk if they want to

- We work closely with outside Agencies and are thoughtful together about individual children with regular reviews
- We aim to be curious around behaviour and help children to recognise their comfortable/uncomfortable feelings and to develop strategies such as sensory breaks to help them with regulation
- We work hard to help Looked After Children resolve any friendship worries
- We remind staff regularly about the importance of their own emotional regulation
- We have a clear no photography/mobile phone policy and this is regularly noted in our weekly newsletter (see below)
- Regular reminders in staff meetings and resources shared with staff and relevant information displayed in the staff PPA Room/emailed from DSLs

### Impact and outcomes of the work

- Parent Carers of Looked After Children have reported how supported they feel by school in comparison to other Parent Carers they talk to in Adoption parent Groups.
- Therapists working with the school have reported our support of LAC is good and they share examples of practice with other schools.
- Building a relationship early on helps us to weather any difficulties that might arise later-on at points of challenge.
- Looked After Children are feeling happy and Safe in School (PEP Reviews) and feel they have friends and positive relationships.

### What we have learned

- A continued reminder to see 'behaviour as communication' and to revisit regularly with staff and parent/carers
- Supporting children to be aware of their own 'behaviour as communication' helps them to find ways to notice and regulate/ask for what they need to restore comfort
  - I've noticed...
  - I've communicated...
  - I've repaired...
- To provide sensory experiences to support children with uncomfortable feelings – we recognise they might not be able to say what the feeling is etc
- A thoughtful and developing long term approach is important for example sometimes in KS1 children want to share their story and then sometimes they change their mind in KS2. Peers of Looked After/Adopted children can sometimes be curious and ask questions that sometimes feel uncomfortable. This can be a difficult peer issue to manage and could be viewed by a parent/carer as bullying rather than curiosity. In such a case we have liaised with all children and parent/carers and a therapist to make a simple short script for the Adopted child to help them feel in control and more comfortable in responding.
- To be mindful when we use the term 'Trusted Adult' some children have trusted adults that have abused that trust.

**Over the next year we aim to:**

- continue to embed understanding and reflective practice
- We have booked an Attachment Aware Trauma Informed whole staff training with Course We Do, Reach to Teach for the Autumn Term 2023  
<https://www.coursewedo.com>