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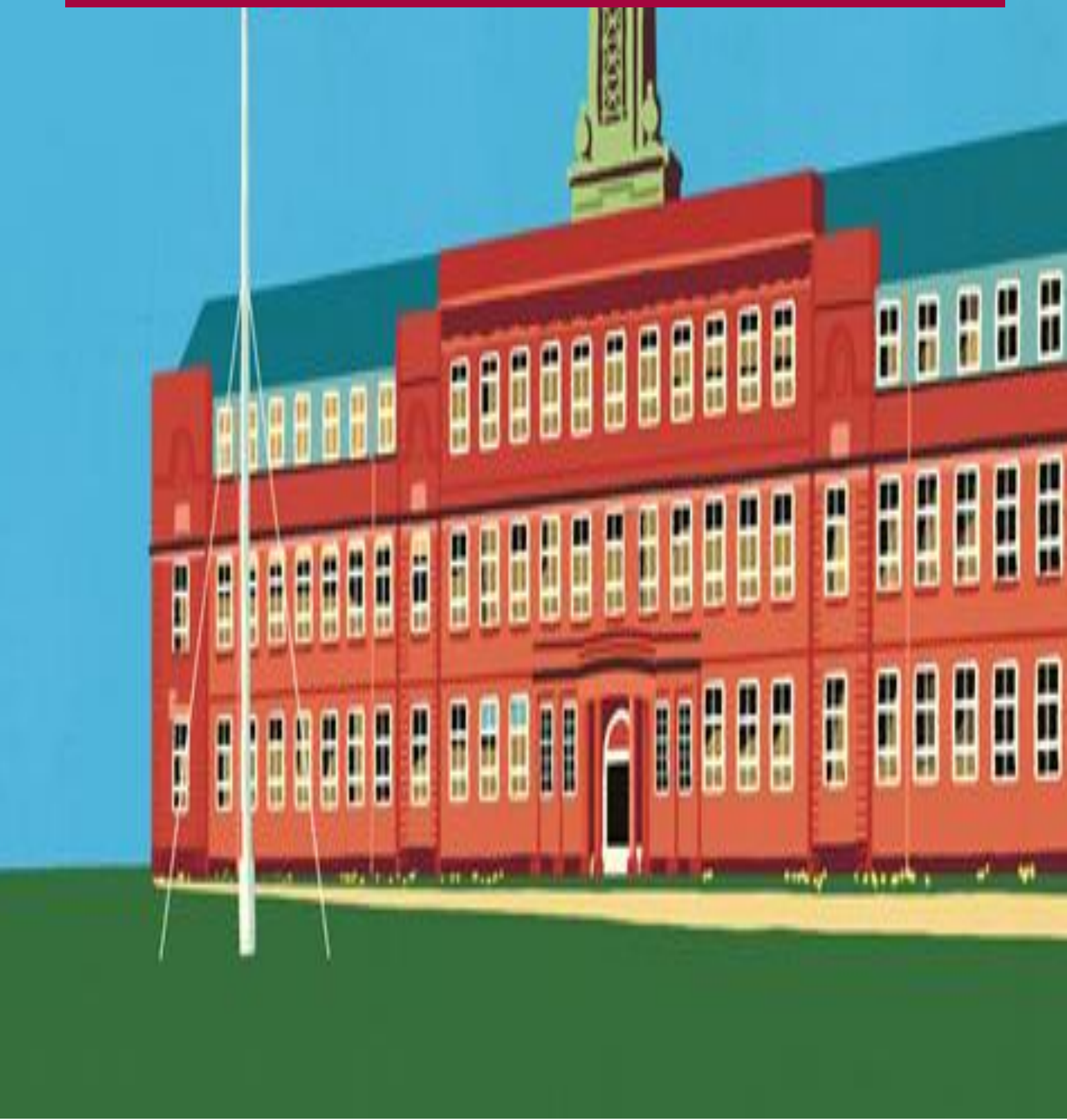
JORDANHILL SCHOOL

Our shared ethos: Promoting positive relationships



Jordanhill School
Strive for the Highest

What is the purpose of this guide?

This guide is designed to explain to parents* how we promote positive relationships in Jordanhill School and prioritise a calm and respectful climate for learning.

Introduction: Developing our ethos

The development of a positive pupil culture is central to a successful school. It creates the conditions necessary for effective teaching and learning, and improves pupils' sense of belonging and wellbeing. We treat this as an ongoing priority which we support in many ways – particularly through our work to embed our Vision, Values and Aims (VVA) in the everyday life of our school. Likewise, involving pupils and promoting respectful relationships and a safe school is an important part of our on-going work to promote Children's Rights.

Our motto

Ad Summa Nitor – Strive for the highest

Our vision

To inspire pupils to become the best version of themselves and make a positive impact on the world.

The values we wish our pupils to develop: *Gratitude Integrity Respect Kindness Perseverance*

Our aims

1. Provide excellent teaching and learning to challenge, excite and support pupils to learn and achieve highly

2. Promote enjoyment and encourage wider interest

3. Develop wellbeing by helping pupils understand themselves and others

4. Nurture pupils to become confident and a source of good for their families, local community, and society.

We believe that our VVA articulates with a day-to-day ethos that is purposeful, disciplined and caring. We describe this as one of **warm demand** (see the Appendix 1).

We know that it can be hard for pupils to see the link between daily rules – such as secondary pupils being asked to tuck in their shirt – and our wish to create an ethos that best supports their learning, long-term wellbeing, and life chances. This link requires ongoing reinforcement including to senior pupils who are important role models for younger pupils.

School ethos and culture is complex and there is a lot to consider for pupils, parents and staff but this quote from a Pupil Council discussion with S6 Leavers gives a good indication of how we want pupils to feel about attending Jordanhill School.

> *School is strict and while I might not like every individual rule, I understand that the rules are in place to create a positive push in which every pupil – including me – can do their best.*

*Parent refers to all parents, carers and those with parenting responsibilities

Balancing the individual and the community

'The one constant in life is change.' (Heraclitus, 500 BC)

It is not helpful to generalise too much about the experiences of young people – particularly given the polarising influence of social media – but it is probably fair to say that young people are growing up in a time when:

- Individual identity and identity politics are more prominent than in the past ie young people are often encouraged to think more about what is **different** about people (gender; sex; race; neurodiversity; sexual orientation; wealth and opportunity) than what is the **same.**

- They are more likely to be encouraged to think about and share their feelings than they are to adopt a stoic or 'stiff upper lip' approach.

Some may see these changes as positive and others as negative; and there isn't room in this document to explore either with any sensitivity. However, we know that a culture which focuses on individual differences and the needs of individuals to the exclusion of others will not lead to positive outcomes. We mention this as our approach aims to promote the common good by balancing the needs of individuals whilst recognising that we must all work together. It is our belief that the needs of individuals and the community can be achieved through a balance of support and challenge (warmth and demand). This is in keeping with our work with Educational Psychologist, Alan McLean and his wellbeing framework, **'The Emotion Ring'.**

Developing emotional literacy and granularity

The Emotion Ring centres on how we can explicitly teach young people to value themselves and value others in equal measure. It encourages people to be aware of – and enjoy – the positive emotions that relate to us 'stretching ourselves' and 'connecting with others'.

Stretching me	Connecting me
Being determined	Being friendly
Being adventurous	Being thankful
Being proud	Being kind
Feeling thrilled	Being caring

The Emotion Ring is a nuanced and profound wellbeing framework which requires people to reflect and give thought to their emotions. Below are some key messages from The Emotion Ring which are relevant to how we develop our ethos and culture.

- Connection comes first. While we should aim to 'stretch' and 'connect' in equal measure, the experiences and emotions related to connect gives us the foundations on which we can stretch ourselves
- Support (warmth) and challenge (demand) are interrelated so must be in equal balance – we can't make up a deficit in one by maximising the other
- Achieving 'stretch' goals supports our wellbeing – our young people shouldn't feel that they need to choose *either* academic success or being happy

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- Schools can have a long-lasting positive impact on the wellbeing of pupils – particularly when staff act as coaches and role models in emotional literacy
- By building their understanding of both stretching and connecting emotions, young people become agents of their own wellbeing
- Having a sense of purpose in what we do also supports wellbeing

On being a warm demander as a teacher, leader or parent, McLean says:

'The demanding style is effective as long as it is accompanied by warmth. As soon as it is combined with toxins such as judgemental criticism, indifference or arrogance, the leader may be respected but feared or even hated. Similarly, a caring style is effective only if the leaders is efficient and knowledgeable. Caring without competence will be seen as weak.

If we are aware of our default 'good day' style and its strengths, as well as the 'bad day' style we adopt when stressed or threatened, we can give the best of ourselves and get the best from others.'

Building positive habits that lead to positive outcomes

One major development in pedagogy and learning is the understanding that novices and experts learn in very different ways. This has had a major impact on classroom teaching but the same is also true of how we help young people to develop pro-social habits. That is, we cannot assume that all children know how to interact with others, how to play well, how to contribute positively to a class discussion, how to respond when they are upset etc. We have to teach children how to develop these traits, a finding underpinned by our work reviewing the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Research on behaviour (Appendix 2).

In practice, this means that we try to simplify the lives of pupils (and staff) by making school rules automatic. Repeated actions become traits, which in turn become our character. For this reason, we are unapologetic in relentlessly – albeit gently – detailing our expectations and correcting errors.

It is a great strength of our school that the culture is positive and supportive – almost all of our pupils show that they care about themselves and about others. However, to get the best from **every** pupil we need to minimise behaviours that disrupt or negatively influence others. We believe that all pupils respond best to a mix of warmth and consistently high expectations, and that reducing ambiguity about rules helps to support those most likely to underachieve.

The Jordanhill School Pupil Rights charter is one example of co-created ideals that we use to simplify the classroom and help pupils get into good habits.

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Scripting the 'why' as well as the 'how'

We use assemblies and tutor time presentations to reinforce the 'why' of our school rules and to link them to our school values and purpose.

In secondary, we also explain to pupils that lessons are busy, and that staff do not always have time to give detailed explanations for all their decisions. We will continue to work to strike the right balance between explaining why rules are in place without impacting on learning time.

Examples of the 'why' messages we have shared at assemblies and tutor presentations:

- Negative behaviours have an impact on others. We know some pupils can still do well in a less ordered environment but for the majority – particularly the less able or most easily distracted – a calm and disciplined ethos gives them the best chance of success.
- There is a strong statistical correlation between time spent in education and long-term success such as positive wellbeing, annual income, and even life expectancy. The correlation is not about the level of exam successes ie it is how many years of study rather than getting top grades which most influence future outcomes.
- Our focus on the rules is designed to support everyone. If they want their friends to do well, then they should act in ways that maintain a calm, purposeful environment. The same is true if they care about those that find learning hard or are easily distracted.
- When we speak to pupils or survey them for their views, they frequently say that losing learning time to disruptive behaviour is annoying and frustrating.
- Our high expectations for all pupils are a sign that we believe that every one of them has the capacity to develop and improve.
- School has the potential to develop positive long-term habits and character traits which will support pupils well into adulthood.

Simple rules to promote positive habits and good order

We expect our pupils to exemplify the Jordanhill School values in the following ways:

- Look out for others, treat others with respect and avoid anti-social, harmful and selfish behaviour.
- Care for the environment and property.
- Avoid disrupting the learning of others.
- Always walk quietly on the left in corridors and on stairs, leaving room for those coming in the opposite direction
- Chewing gum, fizzy drinks or high energy drinks should not be consumed in school.
- Wear full school uniform when travelling to and from school and arrive in good time.
- Mobile phones and smart watches are never seen or heard during the school day.

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Examples of recent work to promote our ethos

Litter (2023): The Primary department explored the issues raised from the Primary pupil feedback survey where pupils commented on the problem of litter in the playground. Through focus group discussion and assemblies, groups of children agreed to help us improve our communication of the impact of litter and our collective responsibility to take care of our environment. Groups of community litter picks were established by the pupils which demonstrated their desire to work with the school to achieve a positive outcome. As a result, great improvements have been made through both awareness raising and by pupils taking ownership of the problem.

Mobile phones (2024): After an extensive review involving pupils, parents and staff, we introduced the 'phone free school day' in August 2024. This new policy was prompted by community concern about the distracting effect of mobiles and the negative impact of social media, highlighting our commitment to enhancing young people's learning and wellbeing.

Punctuality (2023). By re-introducing Pd 1 and Pd 5 bells in secondary, re-vamping letters home and re-introducing sanctions, we have significantly reduced late-coming to lessons. We continue to highlight that late-coming negatively impacts classmates and staff, and that being on time shows respect for others.

Prizegiving and Celebrating Success (2023): As a result of our prizegiving review, we have changed our approach to include greater recognition of pupil efforts and achievements which we celebrate throughout the year on social media, in our Journal, through praise postcards, and in our new end of year ceremonies. This work is on-going to help us use praise effectively to encourage and celebrate but not to devalue its power through excessive use.

School uniform (2022). Our goal is to create simplicity and uniformity for young people so they can focus on learning. Our unform policy can be found on the website .

The wearing of uniform has been strongly endorsed by the pupil and parent body. We are not unusual in endorsing school uniform: a 2021 review of uniform in Scottish schools showed that 96% of schools required pupils to wear a uniform. There are many reasons for this with the main ones summarised below.

✓ Uniforms keep the focus on learning, not clothing
✓ Uniforms create a feeling of oneness and belonging to a school
✓ Uniforms create a positive team spirit
✓ Uniforms take the competition out of dress
✓ Uniforms ensure that no person feels isolated because they are "different"
✓ Easy mornings for families and pupils
✓ Encourages responsibility in the community.
✓ Uniforms bring an image of success to pupils and teachers
✓ Safety – 'intruders' are easily identifiable
✓ Give the public a positive impression

While there are costs for parents, the wearing of uniform reduces wear and tear on other clothing, and items such as blazers can be used by more than one child. Uniform moderates the commercial pressures that many young people can face through purchasing designer brands or feeling compelled to follow expensive trends in jewellery, make-up or hairstyles. A lack of uniform in a school accentuates social and economic differences.

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Sanctions

We believe that sanctions contribute to our purposeful ethos and help pupils to understand when their actions are being taken seriously. The school's policy is to take the appropriate action required to be effective in promoting positive behaviour. This approach has the support of pupils, parents and staff. As exemplified in this table of actions, emphasis is placed upon informing parents of issues at an early stage.

In addition to sanctions, we use reflective and restorative approaches that are age appropriate and relevant to the issue we are dealing with.

Sanction	**Primary / Secondary**	**Parental Information**
Verbal Reprimand/Reflective and restorative conversation	P and S	Parent informed as appropriate.
Yellow Referral and Yellow Homework Alert	P6/7 and S	Parental signature required.
Red Referral and Red Homework Alert	S only	Parental signature required.
Reflection	S only	Advance notice given in an email to parents. Reflection could be before or after school, or lunchtime.
Behaviour or Latecoming Card	P and S	Discussed with parent Signed by parent on daily or weekly basis Pupil reports to either PT PC or DHT
Restorative work e.g. working with Janitors or Cleaners	P or S	Parents informed. Usually applied when pupils have vandalised property
Letter of concern	P or S	We sometimes write individual or group letters to signal our concern about actions or behaviours.
Internal Exclusion	P and S	Phonecall to parents from the DHT or letter home.
Exclusion	P and S	Parents informed by letter or phone call. Discussion with parent upon return to school: Assurance of Future Cooperation signed by pupil Parent informed of right of appeal to Board of Managers
Removal from the Register	P and S	Discussion with Parent Confirmed by recorded letter Parent informed of right of appeal to Board of Managers

Adaptations

Whilst consistency is key to a successful behaviour management programme (see Appendix 2, EEF) we do, of course, make adaptations where required and are sympathetic to individual circumstances. This may include a pupil experiencing difficult home circumstances or an Additional Support Need requiring a different approach. We do not, however, have a blanket approach to making such adaptations. They are done on a case-by-case basis taking into account the needs of the child and balancing with the needs of the community. This means that we make bespoke adaptations as required.

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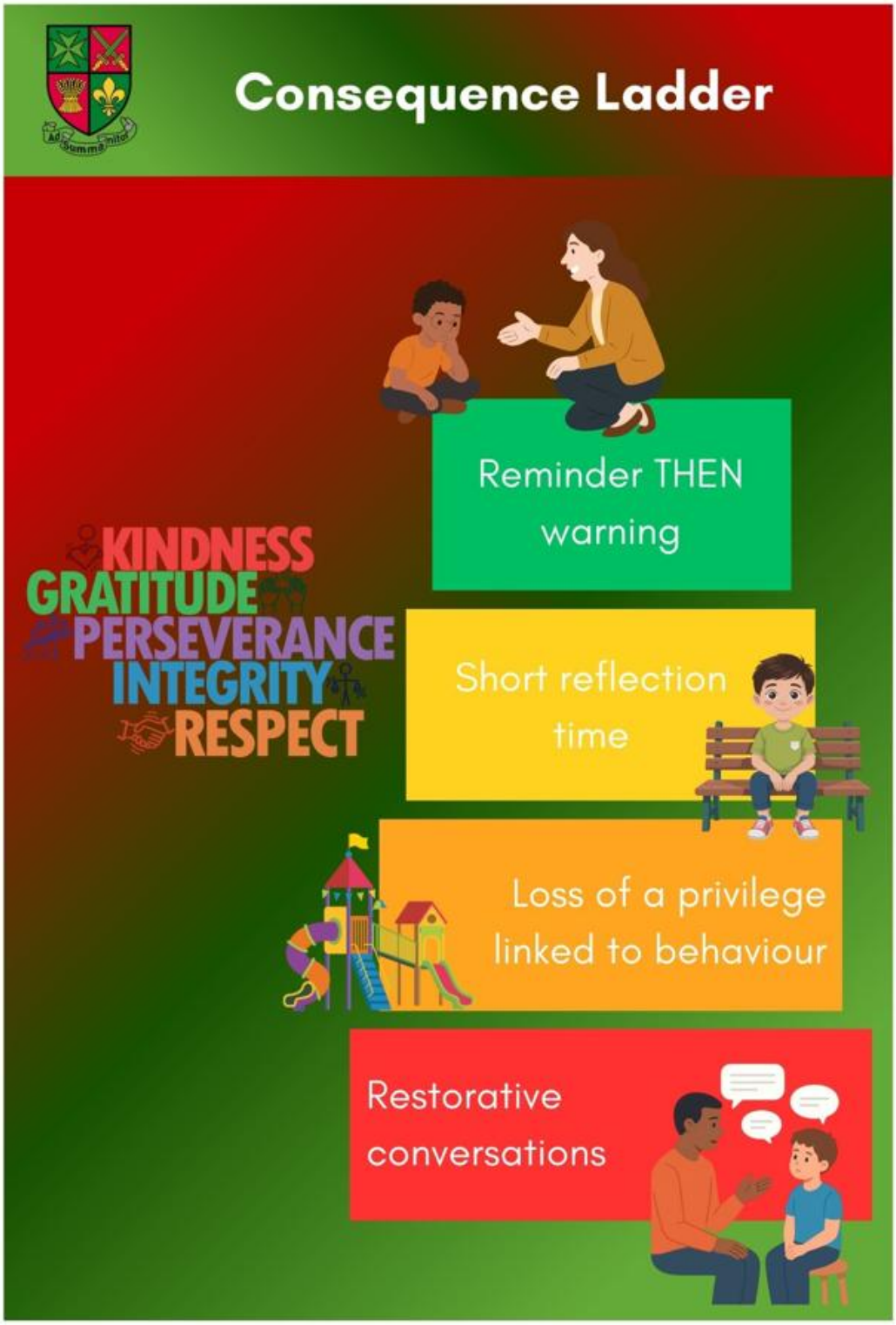
Primary



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Working with parents

Parents have the most significant influence on a child's life and act as powerful role models to help young people grow, learn and develop. Inevitably, it's not always a smooth ride as children navigate through life and there are times when difficulties at home can spill over into school and difficulties in school can spill over into family life. Peer fallouts, dislike of a school activity or a disagreement with a teacher can all cause upset in a child's life. Such issues can have an impact on the quality of the relationship between home and school.

What to do

If in doubt, please contact us at the school. Sometimes discussing an issue can alleviate anxiety and often it will alert us to practical ways that we can help. Sometimes parents will want to solve their child's problems for them. However, depending on the age of the child and nature of the problem being faced, there is often merit in the child navigating and attempting to solve problems without adult intervention. Such an approach can help develop resilience and add to a child's life toolkit for dealing with tricky relationships or issues. However, not all problems are the same and not all children have the same abilities for their age and stage. Part of our work is knowing when it is best to intervene and when to monitor from a distance. So, please get in touch if you are concerned and we can work together to come up with an agreed approach that is best suited to the issue your child is experiencing.

When we disagree

If you do disagree with a decision or approach we have taken, please try to work with us to seek a resolution. This may involve speaking to someone else in the school who may offer a different insight or offer some new ideas. If, however, you feel that you have exhausted informal approaches or the issue merits more attention than it is currently receiving, you can use the school's formal complaints policy which you will find here.

What not to do

Parents are asked to work constructively with us, with their children and with other parents. Whilst parent WhatsApp groups and social media can be great for parents helping each other, they are often unhelpful if used to vent frustrations about the school or to post negative comments about the school and its members. For this reason, parents should always proceed with caution if responding to social media or communications about the school. The school is within its rights to act against a parent who causes harm to the school or others in the community. In such cases, we would apply our unacceptable actions policy.

Who to contact if you need to speak to someone in the school

Primary and Secondary contacts are on our website: Contacts and Pupil Support – Jordanhill School

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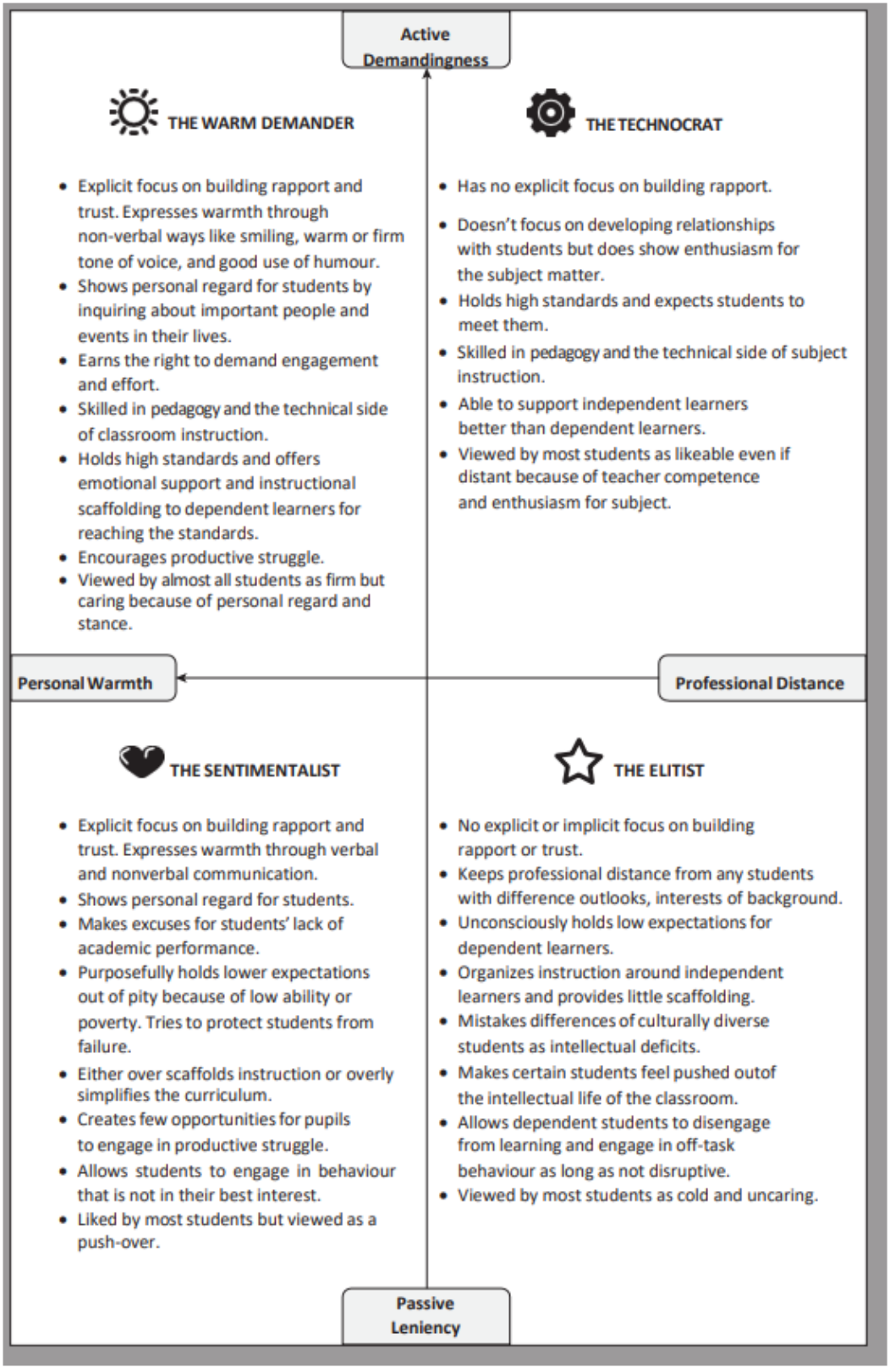
Appendix 1 **Being a warm demander**



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Appendix 2: EEF Improving Behaviour In Schools Recommendations