

Introduction



At Lance Holt School we actively foster a culture that prioritises Child Safety and Wellbeing. In 2020, we reviewed our Child Protection Policy “Children’s Right to be Safe” and committed to adopting the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The National Principles collectively show that a child safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

The ten principles have been integrated into our Child Protection Policy and are visible in practices across our school. Of particular focus has been our commitment to a school culture that supports children to speak out when they have complaints or concerns. Child friendly complaints processes have been created across the school adding to an environment already strong in traditions of promoting and upholding the rights of children to have a voice in decisions that affect them.

This booklet documents the creation and implementation of child friendly complaints processes and classroom codes of conduct by the children and educators in each class across the school.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and your people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and well-being values in practice.
6. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focussed.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environment promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.



Classroom Codes of conduct and Child Friendly Complaints Processes - a whole school approach

Educators worked with their classes to create age appropriate, child friendly complaints processes which:

- Are clear and easy to follow
- Are visible in the classroom
- Support children to know what to do and who to talk to if they have a problem or complaint
- Includes what to expect will happen when a complaint is made
- Supports children to know what to do if a complaint is not listened to.
- Is made visible to the School Community.

Classroom Codes of conduct are created at the beginning of each school year with the goal to develop a classroom culture where everyone belongs and feels safe.



Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, Educator Juliet Lewer introduced the idea of a class code of conduct with the children within the framework of the positive behaviours, "Safe, Kind and Responsible. Each behaviour was unpacked in depth with the children to help them identify instances of each from their own experiences, and also, how they would specifically look at school.

- ✦ The concept of being **safe** guides children's physical behaviour in the world within the context of keeping ourselves and those round us safe from harm.
- ✦ The concept of **kindness**: -guides our own social behaviour towards others and to know what behaviour to accept from others.
- ✦ The concept of being **responsible**: -guides us to care for our environment and the resources in it.

A simple poster was created using the combination of activities and images the children had sorted into each category, remaining visible in the classroom and regularly referred to to guide children's behaviour. The process was shared with families via the school's online communication platform "Educa" to enable all parties to share a common language.



Image: The "Code of Conduct" poster in the Kindergarten class to guide children's behaviour and development of pro-social skills.

Pre-Primary

In Pre-primary, Educator Annabelle Williams began the school year establishing a "Code of Conduct" in her class to support children in their social and emotional development, their journey to becoming effective group members and to create a guide for children's behaviour. Annabelle valued the process being consultative and democratic to ensure all parties were invested and keen to work together to find common ground around the following questions;

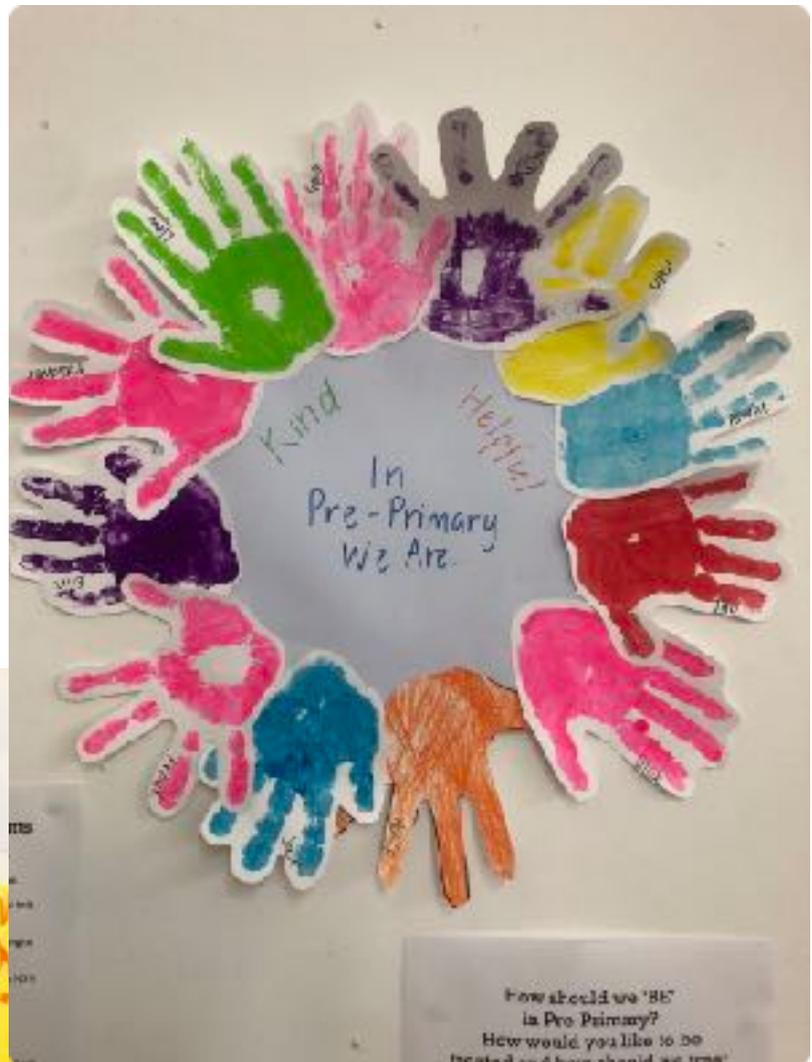


Image above, and Left: Children's Code of Conduct, describing desired behaviours (above) with real life examples (left).

- How would you like to be treated?, and
- How should we treat others?

Together the children responded to these questions with the words "kind" and "helpful" as they became the "tool" to guide appropriate behaviour in the class.

Over several weeks, Annabelle and the Pre-Primary class discussed 'complaints' in the form of problems.

"I felt the language of 'problems' rather than complaints more appropriate to these early years of schooling and helps children to recognise when they have a problem, and understand that they have a right to seek help and feel heard."

In class we considered what problems look like and feel like, and pondered the different sizes they can range from; a teeny, tiny glitch to a great big scary emergency. We represented problems we have had in our own lives through drawing and discussion and we thought about who we could turn to for help. We also wondered what help would be appropriate for each sized problem.

Real life examples came up in the class which beautifully demonstrated the purpose of our child friendly complaints procedure and reinforced that if a child makes a complaint (says they have a problem) someone will listen and help them find a solution.

Whilst problems can occur around little things like losing a hat or spilling something, they can also be bigger or scarier such as a grown up (teacher or parent) saying or doing something that a child feels is not okay. We encouraged children to seek help by going to a trusted adult so that the problem can be resolved and any necessary actions taken.

Below is a poster that was created as a result of our conversations and work around problems.

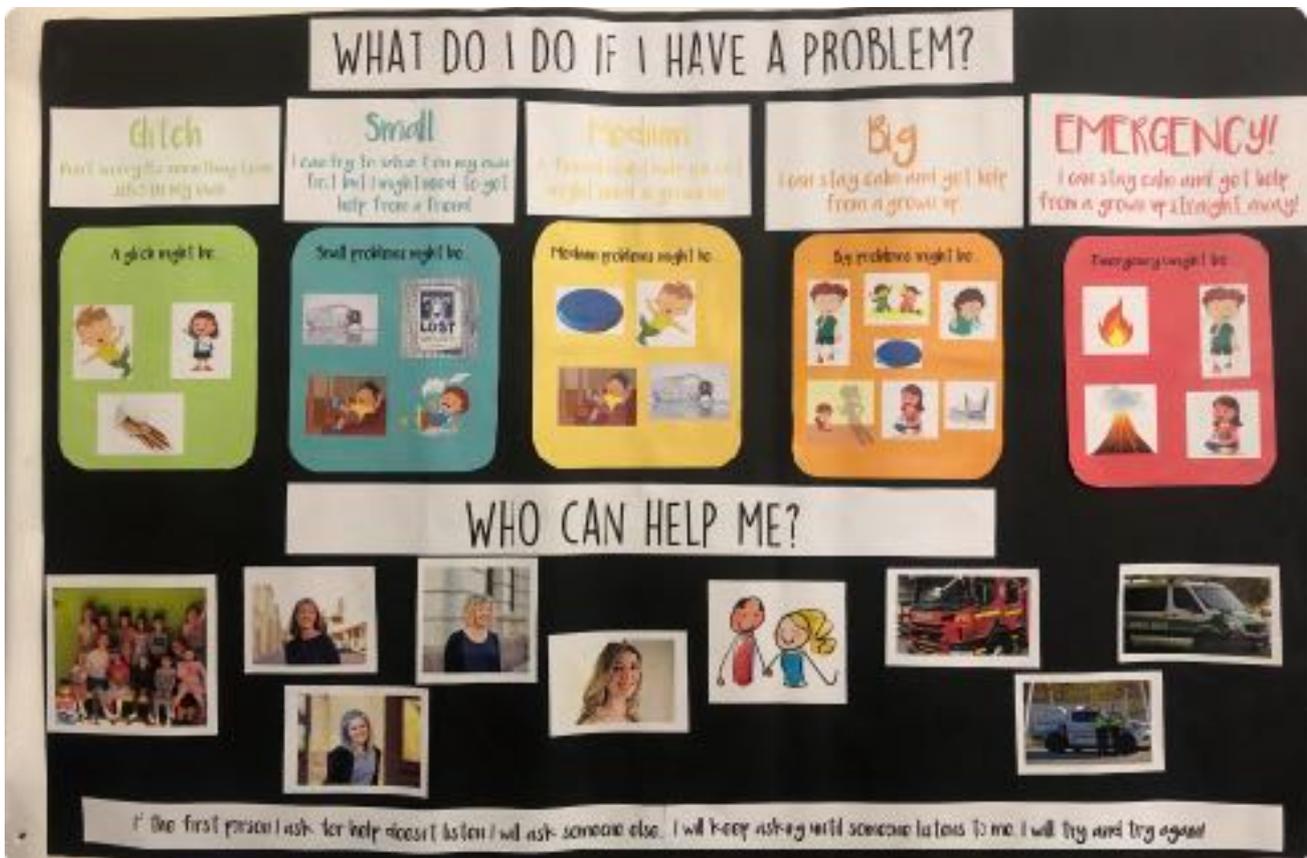


Image above, The Pre-Primary class's "Complaints System" which guides children to identify the size or urgency of their problem, followed by suggestions of a range of known people from whom to seek assistance. This poster is displayed in the classroom for easy reference.

Year One

In Year One, Meredith Korczynskj began the process of creating a class Code of Conduct with a discussion with the children about what it looks and feels like to be in Year One.

"We decided that we wanted to have a classroom where everyone could feel safe, supported and ready to learn, and so we would need to come up with a few words to guide us in how we should all try to be. Children suggested a range of words from which we took a vote to select the four we thought most suitable: kind, thoughtful, caring and considerate. After further discussion the children decided that 'nice' should also be added. These five words have become our simple Code of Conduct which we refer to when problems or difficulties arise, to check if the behaviours we may be exhibiting are in keeping with our class beliefs. Often this process of reflection has been enough to help children change desirable behaviours and consider others."



Image above: The Year One class's Code of Conduct, based on their chosen words; kind, thoughtful caring, considerate and nice, with real life examples from the children to support understanding..

"The next stage in our work was a discussion on identifying problems and assigning a size to them, discussing whether all problems have the same level of urgency. The children enjoyed role playing responses to various problem scenarios and were quick to ascertain that different situations required different actions. This then lead onto the development of our class flow chart "Think-how big is my problem?" (see photo).

"The children are able to use the beginning stages of the system very effectively if guided to ask "How big is my problem?" As a first step when problems arise. Most often they are able to reply, "It's a glitch" before calming themselves enough to verbalise what is not working for them or why they are distressed. The simple cue of "How big is this problem?" as a tool for self-reflection in a moment of distress is proving very powerful."

"We are now working towards guiding children to follow this process independently to begin to solve prelims on their own. It has been heartening to have heard children asking each other 'how big if your problem' when attempting to resolve conflict or emotional upsets."

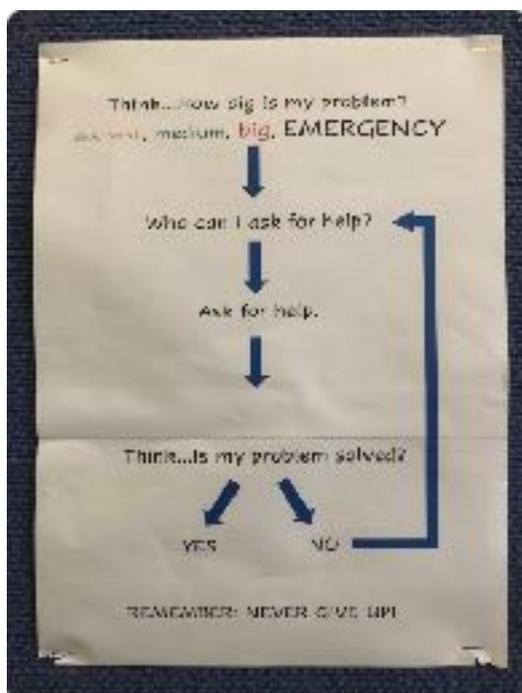


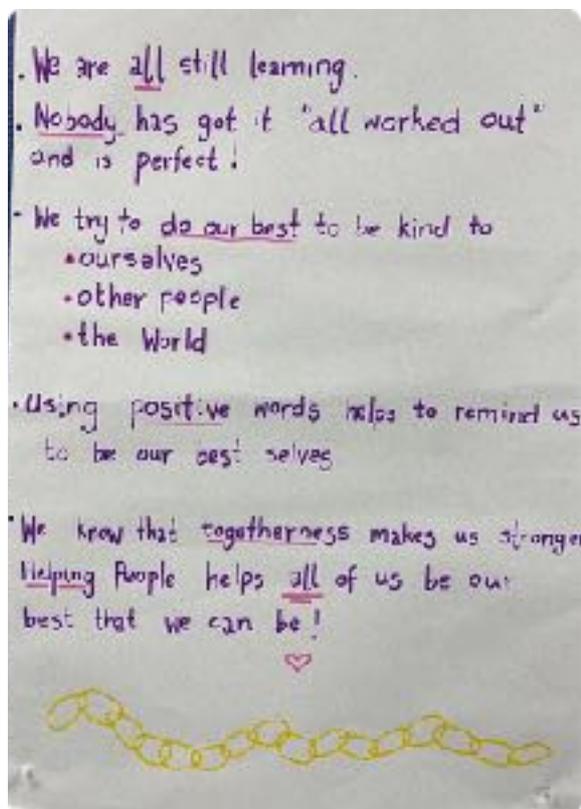
Image left: The Year One class's guide for seeking help with problems in the form of a flowchart which steps the children through the process, with the reminder to "never give up".

Year Two

Year Two Educator Debra Salahudeen explained that creating a Code of Conduct has “been a democratic process in which we set out to determine a means to hear, document and synthesise a guide for how we - as a group of people working together for a year - will behave”.

The final document in this process reflects the children's initial set of 'kid problems' that over the course of the term, have been reworked into positive language. Some of the points have been framed in the language of 'we try' to acknowledge that learning to be fair and reasonable takes time and practice.

The second document is one that we have also discussed and workshopped in order to determine how best the children can have a voice in their learning and social development.



Images show some of the many steps the Year Two class undertook to create their Code of Conduct; working together with visible thinking tools and in different groupings to determine an “agreed upon” guide for behaviour.

Child Friendly Complaints Process

Debra scaffolded conversations with the class to clarify what a “complaint” is. The children demonstrated that they were cognisant of connotations associated around different words describing complaints, and so agreed to use the term they felt most comfortable with; ‘Concerns’.

These conversations enabled the children to come up with a range of strategies to suit a range of concerns;

Talk About It Box

A box where children can “post” concerns that they would like help with offers one solution. By selecting a piece of green paper on which to write their concern, children indicate that they would like the issue to be brought to the class for discussion, or a piece of orange paper indicates that this is an issue the children would like support with the teacher privately.

Weekly Class Meeting

There is a weekly class meeting where new concerns are discussed, and old ones revisited to ensure previous issues have been resolved. This provides another tier to address concerns.

The presence of the box and the weekly meetings has supported children to feel safe to speak out

when they have complaints or concerns that they are worried about.. These processes are both reinforced by the principle that if you feel your complaint hasn't been heard, you should take it to another person until you feel it has been resolved.

Our Concerns Process

We know that if we have worries, or complaints or concerns, all we have to do is ask for some help or advice from other people.



Here's what we can do in Year 2!

- 1**
WE TRY TALKING TO THE OTHER PEOPLE INVOLVED IN AN HONEST WAY.
- 2**
IF THAT DOESN'T HELP WITH THE PROBLEM WE CAN ASK OUR TEACHER OR ANOTHER ADULT TO HELP US SORT THINGS OUT.
- 3**
IF WE FIND IT TRICKY TO TALK ABOUT, OR WE THINK OUR CLASS NEEDS TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE, WE WRITE A NOTE AND POP IT INTO OUR 'TALK-ABOUT-IT' BOX
- 4**
WE USE GREEN PAPER FOR THINGS WE'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AND ORANGE PAPER FOR THINGS WE WOULD JUST LIKE TO CHAT ABOUT PRIVATELY WITH OUR TEACHER.
- 5**
ON WEDNESDAY MORNINGS WE HAVE A CLASS MEETING TO DISCUSS ANYTHING THAT IS WRITTEN ON THE GREEN NOTES. WE NEED TO RECORD OUR PLAN FOR ACTION.
- 6**
EVERY WEEK WE REVIEW OUR PAST NOTES TO SEE HOW THINGS ARE GOING AND TO MAKE NEW PLANS IF WE NEED TO.

Sometimes things don't go quite right between friends.

Sometimes we worry about things that we don't quite understand.

Sometimes things at home aren't how we would like them to be.

And sometimes we don't feel as if we have been treated fairly.

We must always remember that if we feel unsafe or if something is urgent, we get help from an adult straight away!

Year Three / Four Class

Christine McInnes began the school year by working with her class to formulate an agreed-upon Code of Conduct using the framework of:

- ✦ Rights
- ✦ Responsibilities
- ✦ Privileges

In defining each of these concepts, children were able to reflect on the bigger picture- that of being members of a community. 'Discussion around Rights' acknowledges the United Nations Declaration that all human beings - including children - have rights. Rights within the classroom environment concerns 'freedoms' to 'be yourself' have agency to be self determining. 'Responsibilities' supports children to understand that having rights are counterbalanced with ensuring the rights of others - including the functioning of the classroom and the wider school community as safe welcoming spaces are also considered. Last of all, when children unpack 'Privileges' they recognise "their" school as one underpinned by a set of values and principles based on a 'whole child approach', wellbeing and democracy.

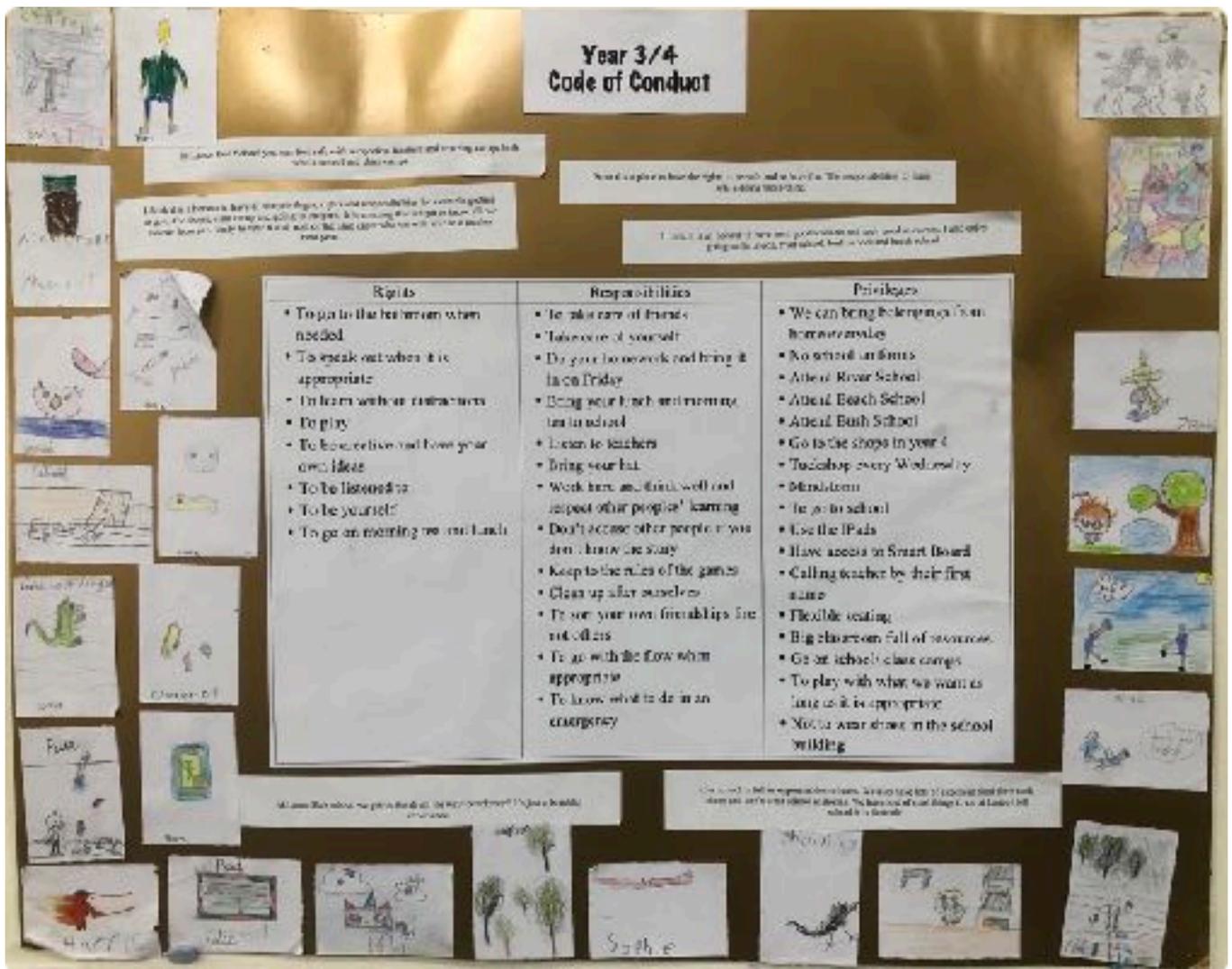


Image above: The principles of Rights, Responsibilities and Privileges as unpacked, understood and agreed upon by the Year 3/4 class.

Creating an Issues/ Problem Process for our class

When the Year 3/4 class began to explore the creation of a process for raising concerns, they quickly became aware of the many different kinds of problems that occur, which justified many different possibilities for how to deal with them. Rather than creating a one size fits all process, this class has instead developed a series of strategies to use for a wide range of problems, in the process creating a classroom culture where dealing with problems is encouraged and out in the open.

"Issues, problems and worries come to me in many different forms. Each one needs different ways of being dealt with." Christine -Year 3/4 teacher

Therefore, the final "complaints process" assists children to understand and select from a range of strategies which have each been unpacked and discussed in depth. The suggestions range from ways to manage concerns independently (strategies for calming, addressing unwanted behaviour, seeking help from a friend), to more formal processes such as seeking help from a teacher or even the School Coordinator. For concerns which affect a group of children, issues are encouraged to be brought to a dedicated class meeting, or upper school meeting.

An Issue/Worry/Problem box has been created so that children can write problems down as an alternative to having to verbalise them.

Some issues from the problem box are for a class discussion and some need to be worked on with the child/ren quietly.

The final document has been turned into a class handbook for the children in which their Code of Conduct and Problems Processes have been detailed. Booklets have been shared with families so that they too can support their children to know how to address concerns.

**Year 3/4
Class Code of
Conduct
2021**



Issues/ Problem Process for our class

1. Try to solve it yourself by:
 - Getting a reality check/Hexagon breathing/moving away/do something calming
 - STOP- say firmly (may not use just the word stop)
2. Issue/worry/problem box
3. Ask a friend for help
4. Ask your own teacher/ or another teacher for help
5. Ask a parent or a trusted adult
6. Talk to Kathryn or a parent might talk to Kathryn for you

Class issues can be brought to our class meeting in the mornings. School issues can be brought to the Years 3-6 meeting ie. hall/game problems

Year 5/6 Class

Educator Seth Yeoman and the children in the Year 5/6 Class also created their Code of Conduct through a lens of "rights and responsibilities", working specifically on the premise that:

- ✦ Everyone in our class has rights
- ✦ Everyone has a right to feel safe
- ✦ Children have a right to Learn
- ✦ Teacher has a right to teach

Seth scaffolded the children to develop a list of guidelines to support each of the premises above, supported by the responsibilities needed to ensure the rights of all are upheld.

The children worked together to turn their ideas into a series of positively phrased guidelines which became the final version of the class Code of Conduct, printed and distributed to all class members, and displayed in the class.

Year 5/6

Code of Conduct.

2021



Rights and Responsibilities in our Class.

Everyone in our class has rights,

Everyone in our class has the right to feel safe. We treat each other with respect.

No put-downs. Remember to treat people the way that you would like to be treated.

- . We work together cooperatively and share ideas.
- . We support and encourage each other.
- . If you feel unsafe or if there is something that's troubling you and you can't deal with it yourself, we can feel safe to discuss the problem with a teacher.
- . We use manners and are polite to each other.
- . We are proud to represent our school.
- . If someone is doing something you don't like, you can give them a stop message.

Everyone has a right to learn - The teacher has a right to teach.

Remember to:

- . Raise our hands and wait for our turn to speak.
- . Not disturbing others while they are working by talking or doing things that distract them.
- . We have the right to sit where we can do our best work. However, if you are finding it hard to work quietly, you may be asked to move to another place.
- . Doing our best to complete all our work in class.
- . We put our best effort into our work.

We respect the school's and each other's property.

- . We ask before borrowing.
- . We look after and care for all property and make sure things go back where they belong.
- . We take responsibility for keeping our areas and classroom clean.
- . We use equipment properly and safely.

Learning about Children's Right to make a Complaint in the Upper School

Complaints, problems, issues

In the upper school the Year 5/6 Class explored resources from the Commissioner for Children and Young People and did research about children's right to make a complaint.

The children worked together to identify:

- What a 'complaint' is and reasons why people may complain.
- When you should make a complaint
- What should happen when you make a complaint.
- Why it is important to be able to have the right to complain.

Children also brainstormed important behaviours for people receiving complaints:

- Being understanding
- Believe what the person is saying
- Being helpful
- Someone who will take action
- Someone who will keep you informed.

Network of trust

The next step in the process involved defining 'Trust' and the qualities of someone we can trust:

- Someone who's got your back.
- Someone you can share thoughts with.
- Someone who will help you.
- Someone who won't let you down.
- Someone who's always there for you.
- Someone you can rely on.
- Someone you feel safe with.

The children identified five people they trust to talk to if they had a problem or complaint and then created their own trust network by tracing around their hands and adding their trust people's names.



How to make a complaint.

Finally, in small groups the class revisited the concepts learnt in order to come up with a process for making a complaint. As the children shared their ideas with their peers, the class used the visible thinking tool PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) as a framework to consider each idea.

At the end of the process the class group agreed on the following steps for making a complaint:

- ◆ If more than one person has a complaint about the same issue, it should be identified by means of a 'Concerns Box' whereby complaints could be posted anonymously but discussed and acted upon together in class on a regular basis.
- ◆ For more personal issues, you should confide in a friend first to work on a plan of action and then approach someone from your trust network for support to make the complaint.

This final outcome encompassed many of the concepts learnt in class and helped children to develop a sense of confidence in knowing what to do when faced with a concern, whether it be a group or a personal issue.

Ways of Making a Complaint	Plus	Minus	Interesting
* personal issue Tell a friend and complain together - to share your feelings	"they'll support you"	Friends might get the blame.	Choose friend who is neutral
Tell them directly	Saved quicker	They could get angry at you. No privacy	get a mediator
Review	Good exposure	- Some people may not agree with reasons	
Suggest on Box	Discuss at school Private - for safe reasons	Some may not see the point	→ talk to the class
Letter	Can be anonymous This is personal stuff	Letter on complaint could be copied by school	→ make sure all are read → put in box
Complaints Board	Everyone can see	Not personal - if you don't want to reveal	