



## **PLAY IS THE WAY – A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH IN SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

Play is the Way is a practical methodology for teaching social and emotional learning using guided play, classroom activities and an empowering language.

Through active class games students are supported to develop skills in responsible decision making, resilience and empathy.

The program's language is simple and specific to support the fostering of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management.

To begin our Play Is The Way Journey we are focusing on the Virtue of : Good Manners.

"The habit of speaking and acting in a way that makes people feel appreciated, valued and respected. The habit of using the words and actions of good manners with sincerity"

Good Manners are the lubricating oil of social machinery. When we are well mannered with each other it allows us to manage difficult situations more positively, it allows us to develop friendships more easily and it makes people feel appreciated, valued and respected creating a positive community.

As adults it is so very important that we are role modelling what we want from our children. 'Role modelling good manners takes commitment and self-appraisal. Good manners don't suddenly disappear. They slowly slip away and are eroded by the stresses of daily living' Wilson McCaskil.

Parents who are aware of good manners;

- tend to make sure they are well mannered to their children , spouse or partner.
- expect good manners from their children
- spend time to develop this necessary habit
- role model good manners in the community - shop assistants, fellow road users and people in general

At Pingelly Primary School, we see BESM (Behaviour Education and Self-Management) as a responsibility of the entire school community. Students, parents and teachers need to

have a clear understanding of what is expected, in regards to how we treat each other, to ensure a welcoming learning environment that is supportive and safe.

***“Behaviour education is most effective when built into, not onto curriculum.”***

Our belief is that PLAY IS THE WAY™ program is the most effective way to achieve our objective of socially and emotionally competent children.

***“Behaviour is shaped by the sum total of regular and frequent lessons that create small but meaningful changes over a long and sustained period of time.”***

-Wilson McCaskill (Founder – PLAY IS THE WAY™)

Training students to be in control of their thoughts, feelings and actions allows them to harness their many and varied abilities and skills to pursue the abundant pathways to success in life.

The PLAY IS THE WAY™ program of physically interactive games with its philosophy and supporting language achieves the following outcomes:

- Develops positive social behaviour.
- Creates a shared body of experience that is used to build relationships.
- Highlights the benefits of managing emotions and working together.
- Develops optimism and the ability to bounce back.
- Encourages self-motivation and the capacity to persevere.
- Initiates a process of self-awareness and discovery.
- Creates a positive tone and safe school culture.
- Fun, excitement and challenge.

## **PLAY IS THE WAY™ AT PINGELLY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Each teacher selects a game to be implemented during the whole school morning games program that runs three times a week. Teachers take their own class for a game in week one. Then they take the same game with another class the following week. Teachers implement the same game with every class in their block. By doing this they get to know all the students in the block and it can give the classroom teacher a different perspective on how the students interact. The rotation system also means that teachers only need to know one or two games per term. Students change activities weekly. In wet weather teachers implement “In Rhythm” or “SEL” pack activities in the classroom. Teachers are to schedule a minimum of one games session a week with their own class.



## USE OF THE SUPPORTING LANGUAGE

We believe that the language we use, when correcting children on their behaviour, is key to creating opportunities for students to accept responsibility for their actions, make correct choices and develop resilience. This language is firmly embedded throughout our school.

When dealing with children, it's important to maintain your composure and speak in a calm manner whilst utilising the 6 key questions of the PLAY IS THE WAY™ Self-Control Checklist (reflective language). Every teacher uses a common language approach as part of our BESM policy.

Teachers must talk in a way that allows students to reflect – *not react*, and should behave in a way that allows students to accept – *not defend*. Teachers use language prompts and language that encourages self-control. They also take the time to use language prompts to re-direct behaviour both in front of the class and individually.

### Reflective Language

- *“Right thing or wrong thing to do?”*
- *“Strong decision or weak moment decision?”*
- *“Feelings or thinking in charge?”*
- *Am I trying to hurt you or help you?”*
- *“Are you running away from the problem or dealing with it?”*
- *“Being your own boss or asking me to be the boss?”*

### Observations

As teachers, we must make perceptive observations that will lead students to awareness. During all games sessions teachers are asked to make at least one observation that makes students reflect about how the game is going. By implementing careful questioning and respectful suggestions we encourage more meaningful conversations around students' behaviour.

## Evaluation

We implement a vigorous and comprehensive assessment regime to effectively measure the impact of our BESM policy.

### “Are You Ready?”

This “Play is the Way” strategy has a clear focus on teaching students the importance of “code switching” and setting clear goals.

1. Students set a personal goal for the day/week (determined by the classroom teacher).
2. Discuss goal with the class/student.

Student: “I’m ready to ....(states goal)”.

3. Students know that when they enter the classroom there is an expectation that they are ready to pursue their goal, to switch onto learning.
4. Throughout the day the teacher will ask class/students to restate their goals.
5. The class/student respond if they are working to achieve the goal.

### GPS (Growing Personally and Socially)

Some classrooms prefer to run GPS. GPS is a time when the whole class comes together, sits in a circle as a group and concentrates on building a ‘safe classroom community’ through reflections, discussion and sharing.

GPS develops the students’ ownership over the classroom. It helps develop an understanding of the behaviours that occur on a daily basis and assists students to understand the behaviour self-management process. GPS provides a forum for enacting our key virtues and raises empathy levels through learning more about their peers.

#### Guidelines:

- **Ensure that students are not comfort sitting-see process**
- **Focus on current issues** → What is the solution (student created and all students in class must agree to solution)
- **Focus on individual students and their issues** → develop a goal that the student concerned is aiming to achieve, and a goal that the rest of the class can have input into to aid that individual.
- **Tackle one or two issues per session**-no more than three.
- **Teacher- after every comment respond to student talking** (“ I acknowledge your comment”).
- **Teacher must remain impartial**-not a session to yell or growl. Teacher speaks in a calm tone, register and encourages the students to do the same.



## Process:

- Students are seated in a circle-all inclusive
- “Comfort sitting” –students are asked if they are comfort sitting whereby they are seated next to friends, people they always work with or boys all seated together and girls all seated together. Students are encouraged to sit next to different people each time GPS occurs.
- Begin with a general question for student s to think about and respond to (note-an object is used to signal who’s turn it is to talk and no one can speak or respond unless they have the object-including the teacher. Students may opt to pass and not speak.
- Teacher asks students are there any issues, problems that need to be discussed. Students raise hands, and wait for the object to be given to them before they speak. After each comment, the teacher (with the talking object) responds with “I acknowledge your comment”.
- When discussing a problem, students are allowed to use names of those involved/causing the issue. Every student has the opportunity to respond.
- Students are asked what a possible solution could be-discuss in pairs, or share ideas within whole circle. Whole class agrees upon a solution and share responsibility for.
- Clarify what the solution is and that the students targeted understand.
- Close GPs session with another question, similar to the beginning.
- In future GPS sessions, it is **highly important** that the group feedback on a previous issue and whether the current solution is effective or requires altering.

## 3Rs METHOD (Play is the Way)

An intervention to develop student self-management, empathy, decency and strength of character as the means to reduce damaging and anti-social behaviour in primary schools.

The process requires specific teaching around the elements of the method. These include: writing letters of apology. Students are given conflict situations that they need to read and discuss. An example would be the scenario of Neil taunting Dale about his friendship with Elise. Sandra is mocking the way Anthea walks and talks etc. Students write letters of apology using the framework provided which focuses on what they are saying sorry for, what they were feeling and why, and stating what it would have been better to do in that situation.

Students also need to be given access to a “virtues word list” and “feelings word list” and engaged in discussion around these words as an element of class meetings/GPS. We assist students to develop a bank of words to draw from in this area.

## **REFLECTION, REPAIR & RESTITUTION (3Rs METHOD)**

### **Making things better, paying back and moving on.**

The intent of the 3Rs Method is to raise empathy, build self-awareness, encourage self-respect and encourage self-control. The student can then reconnect with the community.

It's holistic because the method involves all stakeholders (active involvement). The method is done **with** the student and not **to** the student.

Teachers have the option of taking a student through the Full 3Rs Method. Admin will look after the rest of the class if a teacher chooses to complete the method with the student. Alternatively, a member of Admin will complete the method.

Parents are contacted and informed about the incident and encouraged to discuss it with their child and sign the documentation. The documentation is returned to school and the student carries out the final part of the process, e.g. Gardening.

### Re-entry Procedure

The teacher must initiate a GPS or class meeting when the student returns to class. The student must read his or her apology letter and discuss the strong decision he/she must make in order to rejoin the class community.

The student receives feedback from his peers on how his/her action affected the class community and how they will assist the student in making strong decisions.