

## Norfolk County Council's aims for Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) Bases:

- To enable children to return to mainstream education, better able to emotionally self-regulate and with improved emotional wellbeing.
- To work in partnership with home schools and families, supporting them to better understand the needs of children with complex Social, Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) needs; to enable them to flourish.
- To provide families of children with SEMH needs with access to appropriate support and increased knowledge how best to support their children.



### Term 4 - Extension, Reintegration, Next Steps

In **Term 4**, if our children have not already reintegrated fully into their home schools, we continue to support them in this transition. Motional assessments evidences continued growth of **pro-social skills** (shown by the green areas on this page) and **learning skills or executive functions** (shown by the blue area). Children are now better able to focus, problem solve and use specific strategies both in The Place and in their home school.

Knowledge gained during placement, together with professional's reports mean we have a greater understanding of the emotional, social and cognitive issues, which may influence our children's ability to self-regulate. We work with the home schools to ensure a consistency of approach.

We plan for every child to be fully reintegrated into their home school for the last two weeks of the placement, ensuring we can continue supporting them during this final transition time, if needed

Alternatively, we arrange for children's placements at The Place to be extended, if required, or prepare children for their specialist school transition, or the next steps of their educational journey.

### Term 1 - Stabilise, Assess, Plan, Engage

Children, aged 5-7 years are referred to The Place because they find elements of their mainstream environment and expectations overwhelming. They are often on the point of exclusion and/or may not be attending school full time.

Many of our children have a history of adverse childhood experiences, and have not always experienced warm and positive relationships with their parents or carers. Some of our children are neurodivergent - they feel, think and learn in different ways.

All of our children need support to understand and manage big emotions resulting from overactive rage, fear panic/grief stress responses. **These are the 'blocks' to self-regulation and learning skills, represented by the pink area on this page.**

In **Term 1**, the **'blocks'** are always significant. We use the evidenced based emotional wellbeing assessment tool **Motional**, to give a whole brain picture of each child's emotional and mental wellbeing. Motional provides a programme of strategies and interventions, which we incorporate in our weekly planning to stabilise and reduce blocks, by building psychological safety, connections and trust. This happens alongside an adult supported, play-based curriculum incorporating 'sneaky' learning opportunities too.

We build connections with our children's home-schools and very importantly, strive to build mutual trust with our children's families who very often, feel marginalised and disengaged with the education system.

### Unblocking Blocks

### Building Prosocial Skills

### Building Learning Skills



### Term 3 - Do, Review, Reintegrate, Further Support

In **Term 3**, children's 'blocks' to learning typically continue to reduce steadily. Updated Motional assessments evidence progress of growing levels of **pro-social skills** (shown by the green areas on this page) and **learning skills or executive functions** (shown by the blue area).

Our children are better able to understand and regulate their emotions, able to experience joy, have more confidence to get along with others and accept being corrected. Our curriculum is planned to reengage our children in academic learning, supporting specific gaps, changing fixed mind-sets, whilst boosting damaged self-esteem.

In **Term 3**, children begin their 3<sup>rd</sup> transition day back to their home-schools, we review the placement and start planning for eventual reintegration.

Where children are unable to transfer strategies to their home-schools on transition days, or where their progress is impacted by present life events, we ask for further assessments and advice from our SRB Advisor or dedicated Educational Psychologist, who are able to advise home-schools and families of possible next steps.

We support our families in professional meetings and guide them through processes if a diagnostic assessment or EHCP is required.

### Term 2 - Do, Review, Support

As children begin to feel safer, the 'blocks' reduce resulting in higher levels of the brain (the Neo-cortex and Prefrontal Cortex) coming on line. Our children are more tolerant to the uncomfortable feelings that often accompany any learning – *courage, making mistakes, persevering, praise* etc. Adults are therefore able to lead them more and gently challenge to ensure small steps of success.

In **Term 2**, we begin to make more detailed observations and assessments to establish children's strengths, also gaps, delays or difficulties causing barriers and fear around cognitive learning tasks.

Alongside **Motional**, our expert knowledge of child development and National Curriculum expectations, we use a range of in-house assessment tools (such as **PIVATS, Hemisphere Developmental Screening Motor Skills Assessment, Draw A Person, BPVS and TALC**) to establish next steps. These assessments will inform a strength-based curriculum, incorporating each child's interests, an individualised Self-regulation and Harm Reduction Plan.

In **Term 2**, children begin their 2<sup>nd</sup> transition day back to their home-schools and this is supported by carefully planned visits from key staff in both settings. We also work 'shoulder to shoulder' with our families supporting them to understand the needs of their child whilst our Family Learning Team support with strategies on positive parenting and any financial worries.

During their time at The PLACE, our primary focus is to support our children's emotional, social and self-regulation skills. We aim to support children:

- **To connect** – build relationships with The PLACE adults and other children so that they learn they can trust adults and they can develop the skills to make and maintain friendships
- **To be empowered** – know how to help their bodies and brains stay calm so that they can learn to manage their emotions, thoughts and responses.
- **To have a voice** – so that they know their opinions, feelings, emotions and needs are important and valued and that everyone may be different in this respect.



At The PLACE at Arden we practise:

**Playful Learning with Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy**

There is extensive evidence that all types of play in the early years influences the way children's brains develop on every level.

*'Through play, children develop language skills, their emotions and creativity, social and intellectual skills'*  
([Early Years Matter](#)).

Additionally, mutual fun and laughter reduces shame, builds attention and working memory skills, builds connections and relieves tension. For many of our children playfulness - brings together touch, eye contact, singing/rhythm, and mirroring, which are essential ingredients to heal attachment wounds.

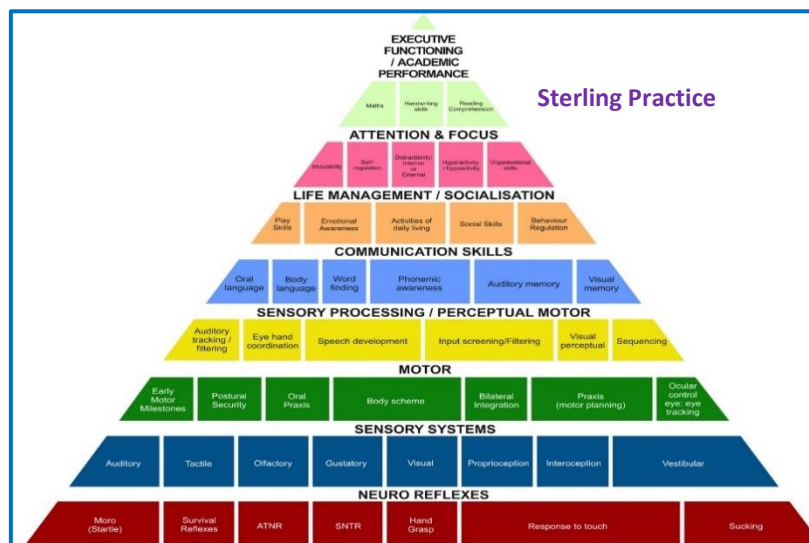
Our curriculum is a mixture of child led play, explorations and developmentally appropriate adult led learning. Always being mindful of our children's emotional regulation, we engage and gently challenge them in 'sneaky' and irresistible learning primarily planned around the Seasons of the Year, their strengths and current interests, whilst supporting children to grow mind-sets and new talents.

**"No brain is the same. No brain is the best. Each brain finds its own special way." - Edward Hallowell**

**This is what we do here!**



We know that in order to reduce the **Blocks** to self-regulation and learning our children first need to be well fed, sleeping well, feeling safe, loved, welcome and connected. [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#) theory reminds us how children become motivated to learn.



We also know that in order to self-regulate and progress through the stages of life, the earliest foundational reflexes; sensory, physical systems need to develop alongside an attentive, attuned carer. When identifying gaps and delays we are curious about each of our children and plan to fill or enhance these early foundational skills.  
<https://sterlingpractice.co.uk/foundational-skills/>

EYFS		→	KS1	What we do	
Personal, Social, Emotional Development		Relationships Education and Health Education		<p><b>We:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (<b>PACE</b>) is fundamental in all our interactions and that we continually <b>coach emotions</b></li><li>• Accept that building strong connections and mutual trust makes children feel psychologically safe. Planning is informed by <b>Motional</b> assessments and recommended activities</li><li>• Cultivate a culture of compassion and kindness towards all children and all adults</li><li>• Recognise emotions drive actions and responses and learn to identify our children’s very individual stress response and their specific triggers. We know the developmental stage of our children means that they cannot always interpret internal signals allowing them to independently calm.</li><li>• Use developmentally appropriate approaches, (<b>Alert Programme Just Right Engine, Colour Monster, Wise Owl</b>) and teach children about their brain, what happens when their stress response is activated and how to identify and express how they are feeling</li><li>• Know how specific early life experiences may have formed differences in children’s ability to emotionally regulate and in their <b>Internal Working Models</b> - how they may relate to adults</li><li>• Help children calm big emotions and work with them to find specific ways to help them calm themselves</li><li>• Teach our children about their brain and what happens when their stress response is activated,</li><li>• Provide consistent boundaries and predictable routines, supporting feelings of safety</li><li>• Teach and celebrate diversity through our <b>Parts Language</b> that everyone is different and that is okay. We build cohesion through play, games and <b>R-Time</b></li><li>• Scaffold opportunities to help children make friends, play and get along with each other and help them solve conflicts</li><li>• Explicitly model and teach leaning behaviours (executive functions) through our <b>Wise Owl Friends</b>, helping children understand when they have specific difficulties they need to focus on</li><li>• Identify gaps and difficulties (in independence skills or cognitive learning) which are building fear and barriers in the classroom, exacerbation emotional regulation</li></ul>	
<p><i>All of our children need support to understand and manage big emotions resulting from overactive rage, fear panic/grief stress responses. <b>These are the ‘blocks’ to self-regulation and learning skills. We first have to remove these blocks to find the real child within, before we can identify other delays and difficulties exacerbating learning</b></i></p> <p><i>Our children are scared of adults <u>and</u> other children too, because they do not have the skills to play. We have discovered not having friends or feeling valued and loved in school, is a major contributory factor in our children’s emotional overwhelm in their mainstream classrooms</i></p>					
Physical Development		Physical Education		<p><b>We:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand that early experiences may have resulted in gaps to foundational reflexes and sensory systems (vestibular, proprioception and tactile).</li><li>• Provide each child with targeted deep pressure, core and shoulder stability routines to support physical regulation</li><li>• Ensure tasks are planned to engage those children who need multi-sensory learning</li><li>• Play gross motor and coordination games at break and lunch times, regularly throughout the day in our <b>Squishy Room</b></li><li>• Use a variety of different materials and tools to encourage developmentally appropriate hand dominance, finger strength and bilateral integration</li><li>• Use programmes like <b>Squiggle while you Wiggle</b> and <b>Dough Disco</b> - using dance and large movements to help children develop the fine muscle control they need for writing</li></ul>	
<p><i>Our children have often missed or have delays in foundational reflexes, sensory systems, gross and fine motor skills, impacting their emotional regulation, balance, listening and attention skills, gross and fine motor skills.</i></p>					

Communication and Language	Spoken Language	<p><b>We also:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a play-based curriculum where adults model role-play, whilst scaffolding interactions and social skills.</li> <li>• Have a <b>communicative and philosophically rich environment</b> where all commentary, wonderings and discussion is welcome</li> <li>• Use <b>Bucket Time</b> to engage, practice delaying gratification, building attention and listening skills</li> <li>• Help children make choices, share their thoughts and ask questions</li> <li>• Help children see both sides of the argument and that other's opinions may be different – <b>Hand of Options</b></li> <li>• Practice activities which support flexible thinking such as: Problem Solving, Would you Rather?, Odd one Out, True or False, Jokes and Riddles</li> </ul>
Expressive Arts and Design	Art and Design Design and Technology Music	<p><b>We:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a play based curriculum where playful adults join children in <b>role play, small world, sand trays, puppets</b> etc</li> <li>• Encourage drawing and mark making opportunities across each day for brain calming. Adults join children at their desks and support them whilst connecting.</li> <li>• Have <b>Art Club</b> each week where we explore different artists and practice using their techniques</li> <li>• Plan weekly <b>Drawing Club</b> where children may be required to follow a <b>Draw with Rob</b> session. This session has supported our children to reduce anxiety around drawing, built attention, tracking, visual discrimination and fine motor skills, whilst also supporting feelings of disappointment, frustration and pride!</li> <li>• Challenge children to plan and create a specific project in <b>Construction Club</b>, working with the rest of the group and using social skills to share resources. We also support two children to work together in more structured <b>Brick Club</b></li> <li>• Use <b>Hotwire</b> Challenges to help children work safely together in pairs with electrical challenges.</li> <li>• Are planning a weekly <b>Woodworking Club</b></li> <li>• Explore different types of music and different musical artists and have daily opportunities to move in time to <b>DJ Raphi, Go Noodle, Sing Up SEN, Squiggle while you Wiggle</b></li> <li>• Welcome <b>Norfolk Music</b> who provided 10 weekly sessions using Djembe and Samba drumming</li> </ul>
Understanding the World	Science	<p><b>We:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look how the changing seasons, weather and plants and the environmental impact in our weekly outdoor learning sessions</li> <li>• Learn about food chains, life cycles, habitats and how we can care for all types of wildlife</li> <li>• Learn about different types of animals, insects and dinosaurs; how they can be sorted and classified</li> <li>• Teach our children about their brain and what happens when their stress response is activated</li> <li>• Learn about our bodies, our different sensory systems and how to keep our bodies regulated and healthy</li> <li>• Explore different types of materials and how these change when they are mixed with other substances – this includes exploring and making different daily <b>tactile sensory activities</b>, weekly <b>Bucket Time</b> activities and weekly <b>Cooking Club</b></li> </ul>



	<p><b>History</b> <b>Geography</b> <b>Computing</b> <b>RE</b></p>	<p><b>We:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at our own personal histories – our families, friends and communities</li> <li>• Have a child-friendly daily <b>Newsround</b> catching up with events around the world</li> <li>• Cover historic and topical current events such as; the Royal family, Jubilees, Coronations, the history of London, Tower of London, Guy Fawkes, Remembrance Day.</li> <li>• Learn about where we are in the world, where other countries and their capital cities are. We look at maps and co-ordinates</li> <li>• Look at different regions, their properties - mountains, beaches, hot and cold – Polar Regions and notable events</li> <li>• Discuss landmarks and monuments, space, NASA, sun and beach safety</li> <li>• Use iPads; to research in child led learning, in our topics, to record learning moments, for specific learning tasks – <b>Scratch, Clicker 8, Widgit</b></li> <li>• Learn about different types of religious events and how other people celebrate these</li> </ul>
<b>Literacy</b>	<b>English</b>	<p><b>We:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that initial <b>Blocks</b> may be preventing children's engagement and preventing them from showing us what they know. In addition, that literacy skills are dependent on foundational physical development, experiences and communication and language skills.</li> <li>• Use <b>PIVATS, Birth to Five Matters, National Curriculum Overview</b> to identify literacy gaps and plan early morning achievable, child specific targets which are supported by an adult</li> <li>• Use <b>Squiggle while you Wiggle</b> with termly <b>Draw a Person</b> assessments</li> <li>• Are rigorous but playful in teaching children their sounds, <b>Common Exception Words and other words by sight</b></li> <li>• Have selected <b>Twinkl's Rhino Readers Phonic Scheme</b>, which is DfE approved and compatible with all our home-schools different phonics schemes. We ask the home school to provide scheme reading books but our children enjoy reading Rhino Readers on our iPads too.</li> <li>• Use <b>Precision Teach</b> to help children learn phonic sounds and Common Exception Words</li> <li>• Have a <b>communicative and philosophically rich environment</b> where commentary and discussion is welcomed</li> <li>• Have irresistible whole group topics hooked by stories.</li> <li>• Use multisensory, inclusive approaches - <b>Tales Toolkit, Drawing Club, Message Centres, Play Projects</b> to engage all children in group sessions at their own developmental stage.</li> <li>• Have daily story time, recap nursery rhymes and revisit phonological awareness games, where needed</li> <li>• Provide choice of multi-sensory approaches to engage imaginative but fearful learners - <b>Sticky Sentence, Writing for Meaning, Cloze, Quizzes, Speech to type Widget, Clicker 8. <u>Being fearful around writing is not a barrier to literacy.</u></b></li> <li>• We liaise with home-schools to pre-learn topics for return days and share strategies which reduce fears around reading and writing</li> </ul>
	<p><i><b>Without exception, all of our children arrive at the Place disengaged and fearful around reading and/or writing activities. Many of them are just at younger developmental stages of writing or because they have working memory difficulties, have not yet experienced success in reading using systematic synthetic phonics teaching programmes (SSP). We identify each child's specific barrier to reading and writing (which can be both within transcription and written expression) and find multi-sensory creative ways to fill gaps, build skill deficits and engage fearful learners.</b></i></p> <p><a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PlrJn5nhcdCWufcwY4PTuy_9qMlB6SVW/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PlrJn5nhcdCWufcwY4PTuy_9qMlB6SVW/view?usp=sharing</a></p>	
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Maths</b>	<p><b>We:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that initial <b>Blocks</b> may be preventing children's engagement and preventing them from showing us what they know. In addition, that mathematical skills are dependent on foundational experiences and communication and language skills.</li> <li>• Use <b>PIVATS, Birth to Five Matters, National Curriculum Overview</b> to identify mathematical gaps and plan early morning achievable child specific targets which are supported by an adult</li> <li>• Use creative approaches such as games and cooking activities to help children subitise- matching counters/dice and numbers, count forwards and backwards, identify 2D and 3D shapes, weights and measures</li> </ul>
	<p><i><b>Many of our children arrive at the Place disengaged and fearful around mathematical activities. Often this is because they are working at younger developmental stages or because working memory difficulties mean they have gaps in their understanding of mathematical language and very early</b></i></p>	

<p><i>concepts. We identify each child's specific barrier to maths and build success through creative small-individualised steps.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use daily <b>Newsround</b> time to discuss days, weeks, months and years and other concepts relating to time</li> <li>• Use <b>Precision Teach</b> to help children recognise numbers and simple mathematical statements</li> <li>• Provide choice of multi-sensory approaches to engage fearful learners with a variety of manipulatives and recording methods - <u><i>Being fearful around writing is not a barrier to Mathematics</i></u></li> <li>• We liaise with home-schools to pre-learn Maths tasks for return days and share programmes such as <b>Rockstars Times table and Division</b> for iPad</li> </ul>
<p><b>Families and Home-Schools</b></p> <p><i>An essential part of our provision are our families and home-schools. We aim to work together in partnership to first, and foremost celebrate success, alongside providing empathetic encouragement and consistency of approach, preventing children behaving differently in different settings and with different adults. Unconditional Positive Regard is key to breaking down barriers, gaining trust and rebuilding positive relationships.</i></p>	<p><b>We:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a <b>Google Drive Log</b> where our home schools can regularly contact us for advice and updates</li> <li>• Visit our children on their home school weekly to support and advise and to let our children know how proud we are of them!</li> <li>• Attend termly placement meetings, EHCP review meetings, EHAPs, TACs, FSPs, CIN, CPs</li> <li>• Use home-school curriculums to inform planning for children helping them to pre-learn activities or topics for their return days</li> <li>• Use <b>Tapestry</b> to share wonderful moments of learning. Access to Tapestry is shared with our families and our home schools, who also share learning with us</li> <li>• Make weekly (or more frequent) call to our families to build relationships and identify support needed</li> <li>• Provide daily <b>Communication Diaries</b> for our families detailing what sort of day their child has had in the Place</li> </ul>
<p><b>Extra-Curricular</b></p> <p><i>We want our children to be encouraged to try new experiences and to be supported to change existing mind-sets; to discover new interests and talents - inspiring future careers and life skills.</i></p>	<p><b>For example, we:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have regular visits from <b>Rock Steady Charitable Foundation</b> who introduce our children to the fun of rock music!</li> <li>• See <b>PC Matt Hill</b> as one of the team! He visits the PLACE regularly, joining in with literacy sessions, construction club and teaching the children about safety</li> <li>• Have been visited by <b>Cuddly Cavies</b> to help our children empathetically learn about the needs of little animals</li> <li>• Have been visited by <b>Norfolk Owls</b> during our project about owls. The project was led by the children's interest in owls</li> <li>• Welcomed <b>Norfolk Music</b> who provided 10 weekly sessions using Djembe and Samba drumming</li> <li>• Planned a project day with <b>Lovell Builders</b> and <b>Ministry of Building Innovation and Education (MOBIE)</b> to design a bespoke project about future homes!</li> </ul>