



Newbridge Educate Together National School

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Positive Language Policy

At Newbridge Educate Together we speak with the children about appropriate behaviour and inappropriate behaviour. Students are asked to consider their behaviour and change it if necessary. Students must know what is expected of them if they are to practice appropriate behaviour. Therefore, common negative language such as "Don't swing on the chair" or "Don't forget your pencil" should be translated into explicit positive language as in "Is there a safer way to sit on your chair" or "Be prepared". Always talk with the children in positive language instead of negatives - Enable the student to make the appropriate choice.

This will be taught formally through the Learn Together Programme and SPHE curriculum. Informally it will be shown through teacher modelling and the day to day interaction between all partners of the school.

Positive language gets a good response from children. Subconsciously it helps children develop a positive mind set so that when he/she runs into problems he/she is more likely to think positively about what to do instead of negatively about what he/she can't do.

Inform the students of exactly what you want them to do;
Our choice of words and tone can have a huge impact on our students. As teachers we know that the way we talk to the children is crucial to helping them learn to see themselves as capable individuals and to build successful communication skills of their own. We also know that it's not easy to say the right thing on the spur of the moment.

The following are some suggested phrases that could be used to help children gain confidence and learn responsibility.

❖ **Translate negative language into the positive.**

Instead of "Don't throw that stone" try "Put the stone on the ground".
Instead of "Don't slam the door!" try "Shut the door quietly".

❖ **"Check yourself"**

'It seems noisy to me. Please check yourself to see if you are using your indoor voice.'

"We are going to go outside please check yourself to see if you are standing safely in the line."

The message you are giving the children is 'I can see you as individuals who can check yourselves. Checking is your job. I believe you can handle it. Using "Check yourself" regularly with students encourages responsibility and autonomy. You'll be giving students the opportunity to be responsible for their own choices.

❖ "Next time"

"Next time please let me finish my sentence before you start talking".

"Next time please respect the safety rule for using scissors".

"Next time I'd like you to use words to communicate your feelings".

When you use "next time" as a positive alternative to the word "don't" you place a positive image in your students minds about what you want to see happen in future. "Next time" communicates to the child that any 'mistake' he/she made is over and you have moved on.

❖ "Please make a different choice"

"X, your talking is disturbing silent reading time, please make a different choice". "Y, crayons are not for throwing, please make a different choice".

This phrasing does not tell children what to do; it gives them information about their present behaviour and respectfully asks that they choose a different behaviour. Asking the children to make a different choice communicates respect. "Please make a different choice" may be exact words, but the real message is 'I see you as responsible for your actions. You choose your responses in life. I believe in your ability to find a response that is appropriate. I am leaving that choice to you.

❖ "I see"

"I see a pencil under the table", "I notice that some children aren't showing lámha soar".

An alternative to telling children what to do, you are describing the situation at hand and are leaving the 'what to do' part up to them. The children must stop and think 'What do I do next?' Instead of 'what does the teacher want me to do?' Giving fewer orders and commands reduces defiance. It communicates to your students that you think they are capable of creating the appropriate response once they understand the situation.

❖ "You decide"

Many times during the day students ask questions that place the teacher in the role of permission giver.

"Is it o.k. if I get X to help me?" "Can I get a book to read, I'm finished my work?" When you respond to these questions with a "yes" you assume the role of permission giver. If the request is clearly within the bounds of class rules, step out of permission giving role and empower your students with "You decide". This phrase along with similar language such as 'you choose', 'you think with your own brain', 'it's up to you' etc creates opportunities for children to practice being

decisive. It is one more chance for them to experience their own power and to exercise independence.

❖ **"I am really surprised"**

'X said you didn't listen, I'm really surprised at that'.

'I was surprised by your behaviour today'.

'X said you weren't playing safely, I'm really surprised at that".'

This phrase conveys much more than surprise. The real message is: I expect good things. I don't see you this way. This behaviour doesn't fit my picture of you. Surprise talk is a way to communicate positive expectations to your students. Conversely "well I'm not surprised" is language that announces to the child that the behaviour was expected. Surprise talk informs them that, in your mind, this particular behaviour is not who and what they really are.

Please think carefully about the following language before you use it:

- **'Don't'**
- **'Punish'**
- **'Bad'**
- **'Always' as in 'Your always in X's space'**
- **'Shouldn't'**

In Newbridge Educate Together the use of the following language is not permitted:

- **Bold**
- **Lazy**
- **Hate**
- **Kill**
- **Stupid**
- **Liar**

This is not an exclusive list.

Positive Body Language

At Newbridge Educate Together we speak with the children about appropriate and inappropriate body language. Children are asked to consider their body language and change it if necessary. Students must know what is expected of them if they are to practice appropriate body language. This will be taught formally through the Learn Together Programme and SPHE curriculum. Informally it will be shown through teacher modelling and the day to day interaction between all partners of the school. If necessary teachers will wait until the child(ren) self correct any inappropriate negative body language they are using. Teachers will further reinforce positive body language by praising children who are modelling it. School community members will always talk with the children using positive body language - showing the children what to do instead of what not to do.

Here are some examples of positive body language:

- **Maintaining eye contact/eye level**
- **Using appropriate, positive, responsive facial expressions**
- **Maintaining personal space**

Please think carefully about the following body language before you use it:

- **Pointing at someone**
- **Folding arms/closed body language**
- **Rolling eyes**
- **Tutting**
- **Dirty Looks/Negative Facial Expressions**

In Newbridge Educate Together the use of the following body language is not permitted:

- **Threatening body language ("squaring up")**
- **Excluding people through negative body language (ignoring)**
- **Inappropriate hand gestures**
- **Imitating and mocking others**

Whole School Involvement

The Staff of our school, conscious of the need for a positive working environment, will encourage the involvement of the wider school community in the achievement of these ends through a 'whole school' approach whereby every individual is involved in the development of a school environment where each person is respected and valued.

We would encourage parents/guardians to empower your child to continue this positive behaviour throughout all areas of his/her life.

