



# Non-Verbal De-Escalation Policy

Central Hub Brighton

The Connected Hub and Brighton and Hove Pupil Referral Units

<b>Approved by:</b>	Headteacher	<b>Date:</b> December 2023
<b>Policy finalised :</b>	December 2023	
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At Central Hub Brighton staff are skilled in de-escalating heightened pupils using non-verbal cues and body language to gently reassure and redirect challenging situations.

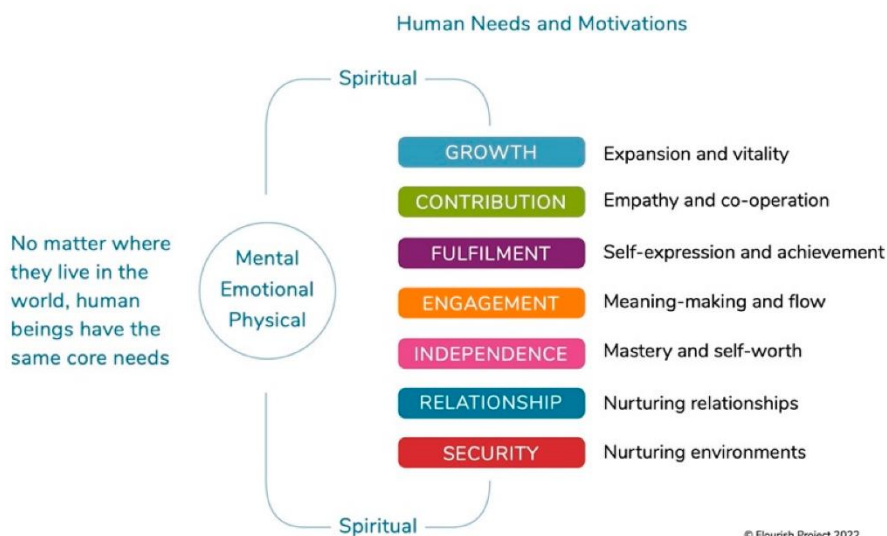
We spend much of our time thinking about how we position ourselves in our young people's space (proxemics). As staff, we look to one another to read what we are doing — which is not always what we are saying. We read the pupils to understand what they are feeling and thinking which is not always what they are saying. And we consciously control what we are doing and showing which is not always what we are saying, if indeed we are saying anything at all. The nonverbal is always much louder than the verbal.

If a student is expressing anger, we are aware that it could be based on frustration, hurt or pain. Mirroring the anger can escalate the situation — a response that many of our pupils will be familiar with. At Central Hub Brighton, we talk extensively about 'A Different Kind of Learning', but this itself is dependent upon us using a different kind of approach to behaviour management than those which many pupils will be used to from their previous and often negative experiences with mainstream schooling. A silent and supportive approach towards a student in distress communicates patience, understanding and care. Modelling this behaviour helps the student to self-regulate and move towards calm and conscious thought.

We believe that 'all behaviour is communication'; this principle is also expressed in Ofsted's latest guidance for '**positive environments where children can flourish**', which states that "those who care for children have a duty to understand what the children's behaviour communicates." Even 'negative', disruptive behaviours are a student's way of expressing what they are feeling. By holding space for a student to express these difficult and at times uncomfortable feelings (and the manifestations of these) we are helping them to process the emotions behind the behaviours.

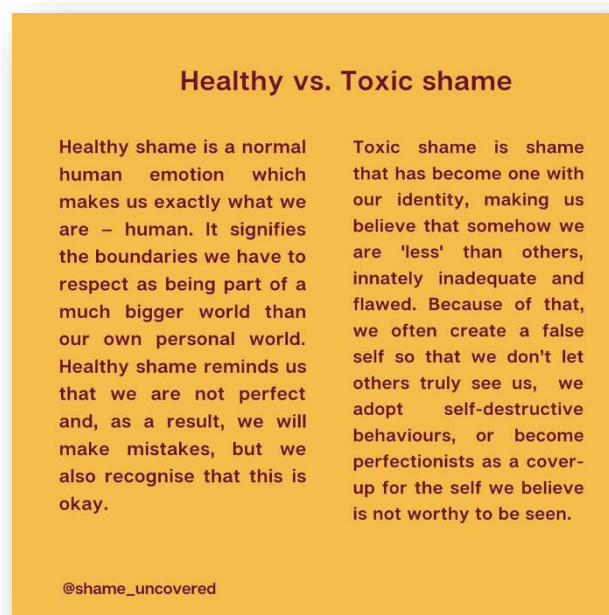


## Flourishing consists of...



When pupils present with challenging behaviour, we do not shout or react angrily, but instead provide a quiet, steady, watchful presence, keeping the safety of pupils and staff in mind at all times while also being vigilant for any danger the student may pose to themselves or others.

Continuing to reflect the framework laid out in **'positive environments where children can flourish'**, we *"help (our pupils) develop the skills they need to understand and respond constructively to their own feelings and behaviour"*. We allow pupils to fully feel and express — within safe boundaries — the extent of their emotions and in this way, we seek to detach difficult emotions and challenging behaviour from toxic shame.



We want to show our pupils that we understand that their behaviour is not a personal attack on us, that we see it comes from a place of self-doubt, trauma, frustration or fear, and give them bounded choices. This too is reflective of the Ofsted guidance for schools, which expects staff *"to respond in ways that help everyone to stay safe and value and respect each child"*, and cites the importance of staff building relationships of trust, of understanding triggers, finding solutions and using *'positive behaviour support techniques.'* We want to show pupils a respectful, calm way to resolve conflict. We want to make connections with them and build up their — often fragile — self-confidence and belief. We want each pupil to leave their time at any of our provisions having felt individually heard, seen and appreciated. It may be their first positive experience of education. The ripples of this approach can often have a far-reaching effect.

### **Positive Environments where Children can Flourish (Ofsted)**

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/positive-environments-where-children-can-flourish/positive-environments-where-children-can-flourish>