



CONTEMPLATIVE TOOLKIT POLICY

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*"Small school, big hearts.
Wise, responsible, kind like the Good Samaritan."*

Our Mission Statement

We are a caring, village school which promotes Christian values, where each child receives a high standard of education that is broad, challenging, exciting and encourages creative thinking. We encourage every learner to be the best they can be, to reflect and plan the next steps in their learning journey, demonstrating a respect towards others and contributing to the communities of which they are a part.

Our Vision

Our vision is to nurture unique individuals who are outstanding learners, demonstrating wisdom, responsibility and kindness within their communities. Using the Good Samaritan as our role model, we know that loving others as we are loved is upmost for happy, healthy lives.

Values

Wise - we think wisely and are committed to learning. We relish and retain knowledge and value high standards. We have high expectations, high aspirations and enjoy challenge. Like the wise man who built his house upon the rocks (Matthew 7), we think creatively and use learning to make good decisions. We have firm foundations for our lives.

Responsible – we are responsible for ourselves – our well-being, our behaviour and our learning. We strive to be the best people we can be and the best person for others. We have a responsibility to others inside and out of school and at times need to be patient, tolerant and courageous in demonstrating this. As Noah had to step up when God asked him to, so must we. We are a school family whose strength is in our ability to work together. We know that perseverance and hard work will bring reward and that resilience is about coping with challenges positively.

Kind - we are kind. Through support, nurture and understanding we all flourish. Each one of us is unique – on the outside and inside. We value diversity and respect difference. There are hundreds and thousands, millions of us but God knows everyone and God knows me!

Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum is designed around our Christian values. Each term, we focus on 3 values across the school and develop a working understanding of them through our choice of texts and foundation subject learning, embedding reading and maths at the core. Our approach is to deliver learning which excites and inspires, provides opportunity for recap and challenge, raises questions for debate, develops learners' confidence and enables independent learning to flourish. High standards, collaboration and valuing individuals' well-being is at the heart of this process. We believe that how we teach is as important as what we teach and that enrichment experiences are an entitlement. We want our curriculum to enable our children to be wise, responsible and kind in line with our school core values.

Contemplative Toolkit - Space Makers

Time for contemplation is built into our busy life at Buckland School. We encourage children to be mindful, to look after their own well-being, to begin to understand what spiritual awareness feels like and what a difference it can make in their lives. We believe contemplation can help children flourish and to appreciate life in all its fullness. This is the heart of what we do.

From the beginning, we teach children about calm time and how it feels to be still and peaceful, to be yourself for a while. As children grow older this time begins to become more structured. We use meditation resources to calm the senses and allow children to just be. We teach them breathing exercises and calming techniques that they can use at any time.

Daily worship supports and builds on this calm, reflectiveness. It is a time for the community to be, reflect and wonder together.

We use 5 tools in our contemplation. Children learn them as they go through school and know what to expect from each one. Each starts with a smile, breath and welcome which values everyone in the group. They take around 5 minutes. Our routine per half term looks like this:

Week 1- Stilling

Week 2 Noticing

Week 3 – Dwelling

Week 4 – Mending

Week 5 – Blessing

1. Stilling

Awareness exercise – Stilling helps us connect with ourselves, others and God if we want to. It reduces stress. We are human beings not human doings. You are special and beautiful in a way that only you can be. Close eyes if you wish. Think about your sitting, posture and breathing. Listen outside and inside. Let the business settle (glitter / muddy jar). Be still. May ask God for his gift of the Holy Spirit.

2. Noticing

This helps us notice details in life. The things that boost us – consolation and the things that get us down (desolation). Sit well, relax, be ready. Using our fingers. Put the thumb up – what am I grateful for today? Say thank you. Put the pointing finger up – it asks where; where have I seen goodness today. Add the middle finger – it's the tallest. What stands out for you today (it might not be a good thing!) Add the ring finger – it's your weakest. Where have you been weak today? What do I wish I could do again because I got it wrong? Say sorry.

Lastly put the little finger up. It's the smallest but it helps you balance. What could you do that would balance you and make you a better person? How could you put something right and make a positive difference? Amen.

3. Dwelling

Enjoying a few words from the Bible. Focusing on each word and which bits you like that mean something to you. Christians believe this is how God communicates with people. Read the piece slowly. Let the children see it in large, well-spaced words. They may have a copy to write on but it may be on the board. Read it again. Let children reflect and choose what stands out for them. Share with a partner or the whole group.

4. Mending

Mending is about forgiveness. If we hold onto bad feelings, they damage us and make us unhappy. Forgiveness is about letting go. Sometimes it may be that we need longer to forgive and that's ok. Take a pebble and think about something that has hurt you. Squeeze the pebble and think about how you feel. Am I willing to forgive? Can I let this go now? If you are place the pebble in a pile / or the letting go basket. If not, hold on to it. Jesus forgave the people who crucified him. He understood that they didn't understand what God wanted. We rest in the space where we are forgiven and journeying where we are able into forgiving. Amen.

5. Blessing

Drop a stone in water and watch the ripples or look at the tree trunk slice. We are in the centre – our class, family, friends and people we don't like are in circles around us. We are in the middle. Bless yourself – May I be well and free, safe and happy. Bless your friends around you – May you be well and free, safe and happy. Bless your family in the same way and then the people you don't like at the moment. May we all experience God's grace, love and light and may we be blessed and beloved as children of God.

Each of the tools has a script with more detail which we adapt to make it age and class appropriate for our children. Each also has a longer 15 minute version which we use termly (3 x a year) as the need arises with our classes. Prayer experiences in church allow us to use the 30 minute tools once throughout the year.