

Bedford Nursery Schools Federation



Wellbeing

Reviewed by: Suzie Hoefkens
Reviewed in: March 2026
Next Review: March 2027

Children's Wellbeing

What we believe

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation we believe that children's behaviour (the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others/the way in which an animal/person behaves in response to a particular situation or stimulus) is reflective of their wellbeing & emotional state of mind.

Wellbeing is defined as the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy. We aim to provide an environment where children are encouraged to consider and take responsibility for their own behaviour and where the wellbeing of children is considered a priority by all adults. We know that high levels of wellbeing contribute directly to children's learning and that high wellbeing can present as high levels of involvement and nurture a life-long love of learning, (please see our settling policy).

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation, we use the Leuven Scales to assess children's levels of Wellbeing and Involvement (please see appendix1) and ensure that our provision encourages children to be the best they can be. We use the guidance and advice set out in ECERS regarding the environment and adult interactions (see appendix 2).

We believe that a well ordered, positive environment supports and encourages children to respect the needs and feelings of others and enables them to celebrate their own and others' successes.

We believe that behaviours we observe in nursery can also be linked to the children's Characteristics of Effective Learning (COEL) and Schemas. (Appendix 3).

The positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviours by adults around them helps children learn to manage their own behaviour and to respect their environment. They learn to value each other as individuals regardless of race, colour, culture, belief, ability, age or gender.

By working in partnership with parents to identify triggers we can ensure that children learn to manage their behaviour and feelings in the most appropriate way and learn strategies to help them cope when they may not fully understand why they are acting in a certain way.

Bedford Nursery Schools' ethos is embedded in evidence-based practice for all areas of development and learning.

Our school values underpin our ethos and support wellbeing too; they are **Kindness, Helpfulness, Respect, Independence, Resilience, Belonging** and **Compassion**.

What we use to support practice:

We follow a range of guidance and advice to support children's wellbeing and personal, social and emotional development.

The following frameworks and practice inform all our decision-making, policies and practice when it comes to supporting wellbeing and behaviour:

- 1) *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Development Matters, Birth to Five Matters and our Curricular Intentions:*

The statutory and non-statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education is used to support all areas of child development, with the understanding that each child is unique. Our curricular intentions form the basis of our teaching, learning and practice and fully incorporate how we develop children's wellbeing and personal and social skills.

We promote the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning and provide a rich, safe, well organised, positive environment. Please see the curriculum policy and curricular intentions for more information.

Staff are trained and supported in understanding the importance of Schemas in children's wider development and how these serve to support their play choices, agency in learning and emotional development. Repetitive play behaviours such as throwing will always be considered by staff as a lens into their schematic play preferences and re-directing this play preference to a safe option will be sought. Sharing our insight and knowledge with parents on their child's schematic play happens during informal parent discussions and through parent meetings.

2) The 5 ways to wellbeing:

CONNECT – with friends and family; develop the relationships you already have.

BE ACTIVE - go for a walk or run; dance or cycle; be outside; exercising makes you feel good.

TAKE NOTICE - Be curious; notice the changing seasons; be aware of the world around you; enjoy the here and now; savour the moment.

KEEP LEARNING - try something new; set yourself a challenge; learn an instrument; learn to cook; be inquisitive.

GIVE - a smile; a hug; a "Thank You"; your time to your friends or someone in need.

3) Five to Thrive

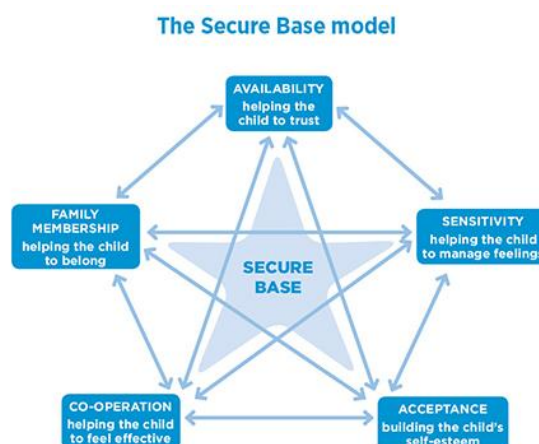
'a way of understanding how connected relationships are fundamental to human wellbeing and help us to build resilient communities' – to develop our practice and ensure it is trauma-informed.

The 5 to Thrive building blocks describe five crucial stages necessary to create strong relationships and so build healthy brains in young children. They are: **Respond; Engage; Relax; Play; Talk.** (Appendix 4).

4) The Secure Base Model

The University of East Anglia created a secure-base model to support professionals in understanding the nature of wellbeing and attachment: 'Secure base promotes security, confidence, competence and resilience'. Our settling process and the way we plan our provision and interactions with children supports and develops all areas of the secure-base model.

Attention is paid to their wellbeing and involvement scores and what area of the secure model may need more support. Interventions that support 'nurture' will include support in these areas.



5) The Shaping Us Framework

The Royal Foundation and Centre of Early Childhood's 'The Shaping Us Framework' (2025) offers a guide to the social and emotional skills that matter most for children. These include:

- Know ourselves
- Manage our Emotions
- Focus our thoughts
- Communicate with others
- Nurture our relationships
- Explore the world

(Appendix 5)

Through developing core social and emotional skills with children we aim to instil a positive mindset and provide children with the internal tools and dialogue that will help them understand themselves, others and the world around them.

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation children learn to

- manage their own behaviour
- articulate their needs and feelings, both verbally and non-verbally
- care for their environment, their peers, and all living things
- respect themselves and others regardless of need, race, colour, culture, belief, ability, age or gender.
- be independent and take responsibility for their own actions
- develop strategies to manage conflict
- be part of a community
- be part of a group
- negotiate
- understand rules may be different within different environments
- understand what is and is not acceptable behaviour within the school
- understand the reasons for rules within the school environment

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation adults support children's learning by:

- acting as positive role models
- listening to children when they talk and acknowledging what they are saying to us
- acknowledging and respecting children's feelings
- respecting a child's perspective of a problem
- treating children as individuals
- celebrating specific achievements to raise children's self confidence
- challenging specific inappropriate behaviour, language and attitudes (see appendix 6)
- offering children strategies to deal with difficult and inappropriate situations (see appendix 6)

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation, we believe that children learn by example and adults model the language and behaviour that we expect from our children. We achieve this through:

- sensitive, timely and appropriate interventions
- acknowledgement of the different levels of development in different age ranges. (Appendix 6)
- developing positive relationships with parents
- sharing information with parents
- working together as a whole school team

- taking into account the relationship between children and parents with particular regard to attachment
- respecting parents' views and wishes
- the use of a wellbeing log as a tool to identify triggers
- making clear what the school regards as unacceptable behaviours which include but are not limited to:
 - Snatching
 - Swearing
 - Biting
 - Name-calling
 - Aggressive play
 - Damaging school resources
 - Damaging other children's property
 - Hitting/smacking other children or adults

Management of unacceptable behaviours

Where a child has displayed socially undesirable behaviours to another child the adult will attempt restorative behaviour techniques. This includes talking to both children and helping them to understand the effects of their behaviour and showing empathy where appropriate.

Children will be spoken to about the way their actions impact on the other child's/adult's feelings, and adults will be sensitive in their approach, using words such as:

"when you (state action) it made (other person's name) feel (explain how the other person felt e.g. angry, upset, sad)"

Explain "you didn't make a good/the right choice when you (state action) because it made (other person's name) (state effect of action: hurt them/upset them/hurt their feelings)

"What will you do next time instead?"

"What can we do to make (person's name) feel better?"

Encourage child to ask "are you ok now?"

Positive Handling

Physical punishment is never an acceptable practice and will never be used. We follow all safeguarding policies and procedures of our own, and of the local safeguarding board (LSCB), and we support parents and families to understand that physical punishment is not an acceptable form of behaviour management.

In cases where there could be a risk to a child, adult or increased threat of danger, all staff have had local authority guidance and training on understanding what would be a reasonable and proportionate physical intervention. Consideration will always be given to whether supporting a child physically is **necessary**.

In many cases there are other means of supporting situations that arise without the need for physical intervention, such as moving other children to a place of safety and removing

resources and furniture where possible to prevent damage or injury.

In the event that physical intervention has been deemed necessary, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Extended Senior Leadership Team will be notified. Parents will be informed of the situation on the day of the event, including what steps were taken and plans to manage future events.

All play areas in the Nursery are also risk-assessed, and staff will follow the guidelines in these assessments to support the safety of all children.

For some children, the risk to themselves or to another happens more frequently. In these cases, the school's SENDCo will meet with the family and devise an Emotional Regulation plan, where steps for prevention, action, regulation and calming are discussed and agreed. (Appendix 7).

Consistent support and reflective practice

When there are ongoing, persistent behaviours, further support and monitoring may be needed. Through discussion with a senior member of staff, usually the SENDCo, a use a wellbeing log will be put in place with the consent of parents /carers. (Appendix 8).

The aim of the wellbeing log is to identify patterns of behaviour and introduce strategies to help children manage their behaviours. This document will be considered a joint working document between school and parents and any external agencies we feel can support both. It will be maintained and kept in a safe location and feedback will be shared with parents and through the key person weekly or fortnightly depending on the frequency of incidents.

The wellbeing log will continue until staff and parents/ the family, feel that there are clear strategies in place that support the child. If the wellbeing log continues for extended periods of time the school SENDCo and family worker will engage with the family for further discussions to support the child.

Children who have delayed communication, social communication, neurodevelopmental differences, identified Social and Emotional needs (including children experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences - ACEs) and/or have an Education, Health and Care Plan:

We acknowledge for some children we need to adapt our approach to meet their specific needs. We will continue to ensure boundaries and expectations are consistent for all our children. Possible adaptations include:

- Implement the advice from external agencies , such as the 0-19 team, Early Years Support Team, , Family Hubs, educational psychology and social care.
- Use visual cards to convey the expectations, such as a red cross for no entry, a red cross over a 'hitting' symbol along with re-direction and short phrases such as 'hands down' or 'hands up' if a child is hitting.
- Use clear one-word instructions such as 'Stop' or 'Finished' accompanied with a visual to support the expectations.
- Use Makaton signs to support communication for emotions such as 'sad'.
- Re-direct children's play to a safe version ; for example if throwing sand, divert their play to a resource they can safely.

- For children who have an EHCP the provision set out in their plan to support wellbeing, behaviour and social/emotional needs will be followed through the support and oversight of the SENDCo.
- In some cases, we may suggest early help support with our family worker, Clare Oliver, to support the child and family.
- Continue to employ the 5 to Thrive approach, working closely with parents /family to help understand what helps their child at each stage.

The school's SENDCo will work closely with children that need adapted practice and provision, guiding both the family and key people to support the child.

The Leuven Scale for wellbeing

The Leuven Scale for involvement

Level	Well-being	Signals
1	Extremely low	The child clearly shows signs of discomfort such as crying or screaming. They may look dejected, sad, frightened or angry. The child does not respond to the environment, avoids contact and is withdrawn. The child may behave aggressively, hurting him/herself or others.
2	Low	The posture, facial expression and actions indicate that the child does not feel at ease. However, the signals are less explicit than under level 1 or the sense of discomfort is not expressed the whole time.
3	Moderate	The child has a neutral posture. Facial expression and posture show little or no emotion. There are no signs indicating sadness or pleasure, comfort or discomfort.
4	High	The child shows obvious signs of satisfaction (as listed under level 5). However, these signals are not constantly present with the same intensity.
5	Extremely High	The child looks happy and cheerful, smiles, cries out with pleasure. They may be lively and full of energy. Actions can be spontaneous and expressive. The child may talk to him/herself, play with sounds, hum, sing. The child appears relaxed and does not show any signs of stress or tension. He/she is open and accessible to the environment. The child expresses self-confidence and self-assurance.
Level	Well-being	Signals
1	Extremely Low	Activity is simple, repetitive and passive. The child seems absent and displays no energy. They may stare into space or look around to see what others are doing.
2	Low	Frequently interrupted activity. The child will be engaged in the activity for some of the time they are observed, but there will be moments of non-activity when they will stare into space, or be distracted by what is going on around.
3	Moderate	Mainly continuous activity. The child is busy with the activity but at a fairly routine level and there are a few signs of real involvement. They make some progress with what they are doing but don't show much energy and concentration and can be easily distracted.
4	High	Continuous activity with intense moments. The child's activity has intense moments and at all times they seem involved. They are not easily distracted.
5	Extremely High	The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest involvement. They are concentrated, creative, energetic and persistent throughout nearly the observed period.

APPENDIX 1

ITERS and ECERS

Ensuring a safe, rich, positive environment, with high wellbeing and involvement:

Space and Furnishings Subscale (items 1-7)
Personal Care Routines Subscale (items 8-11)
Language and Literacy Subscale (items 12-16)
Learning Activities Subscale (items 17-27)

Ensuring adult interaction and the structure of the day promotes high wellbeing and involvement

Interaction subscale (Items 28-32)
Program Structure (Items 33-35)
Interaction Subscale (ITERS 3: Items 25-20)

Some key points for staff to bear in mind:

- Staff math talk is never observed being used in a threatening or punitive manner with children, e.g. 'I'm going to count to three, and if you do not do it....' (Item 24)
- Staff should always actively seek out children's positive social behaviours towards one another (item 31)
- Staff supervision and awareness ensures that any negative peer interactions are quickly intervened (Item 31)
- In all cases, staff should call attention to children's feelings and the relationship between the child's action and other's response (Item 32)
- Staff are never observed responding with anger or negatively towards children's inappropriate behaviour (Item 32)
- Staff actively involve children in solving their conflicts and problems without telling them what to do (Item 32)

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating,
- Keeping trying,
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Having their own ideas,
- Making links,
- Choosing ways to do things

Schemas

'Schemas are patterns of repeated behaviour in children. Children often have a very strong drive to repeat actions such as moving things from one place to another, covering things up and putting things into containers, or moving in circles or throwing things. These patterns can often be observed running through their play and may vary between one child and another. If practitioners build on these interests, powerful learning can take place.'

These schemas need to be understood in relation to children's behaviour and adult responses to certain behaviours should also be well considered with schemas in mind.

Trajectory

Dropping / throwing objects
Playing with running water in the bathroom
Climbing, jumping, sliding, swinging, sweeping
Bouncing, kicking and throwing balls
Building and knocking down towers
Lining items up
Making arcs in spilt food

Connecting

Joining things together
Attaching ropes, string, wool round chair legs, door handles ...
Fascination with using string, tape, split pins, treasury tags, nails, elastic bands...
Building dens
Using construction toys
Sharing out objects/toys - 'giving and receiving'

Transporting

Interested in containers - boxes, pockets, purses and bags
Filling, packing and moving!
Taking 'passengers' on bikes/trolleys/buggies
Moving sand with dumper truck

On top

Putting objects on top of each other
Lying on backs of sofas
Climbing

APPENDIX 3

Rotation

Fascination with objects that turn
Running in circles, rolling, spinning

Enclosure

Building boundaries (pillows, cushions, blocks, bricks...)
Cardboard box play

Drawing circles
Stirring, whisking, mixing ...

Scattering/Disconnecting

Taking things apart
Emptying
Splashing

Enveloping

Covering, burying, wrapping up objects
Putting things inside bags, boxes or containers
Dressing up
Wrapping, covering self with scarves, sheets, sleeping bags, blankets...
Covering over a painting or drawing
Posting objects in or under something else

Filling and emptying

Positioning

Preferring their food not to be mixed together?
Interested in making patterns or rows
Lining up objects
Positioning objects in front, behind, around each other

Transforming

Adding milk to the water or snack
Putting sand into the water tray/vice versa
Making mixtures – dough, mud, cooking

The adult role – interaction is the key!

Communicating and modelling language, introducing and explaining new vocabulary, showing, explaining, demonstrating with resources.

Exploring ideas, 'I wonder ...'

Encouraging - 'You kept trying even though that was really difficult to...' 'I like the way you ...'

Questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing.

Facilitating and setting challenges – providing additional/different resources/opportunities.

The 5 to Thrive model used in Nursery School to support children through a co-regulated response.

TALK read, sing, talk; all supports language development
- **add the narrative**

PLAY Be playful, you are the best toy – **communicating care non-verbally**

RELAX keep calm and be in tune with each other –
regulating the stress you pick up from connecting

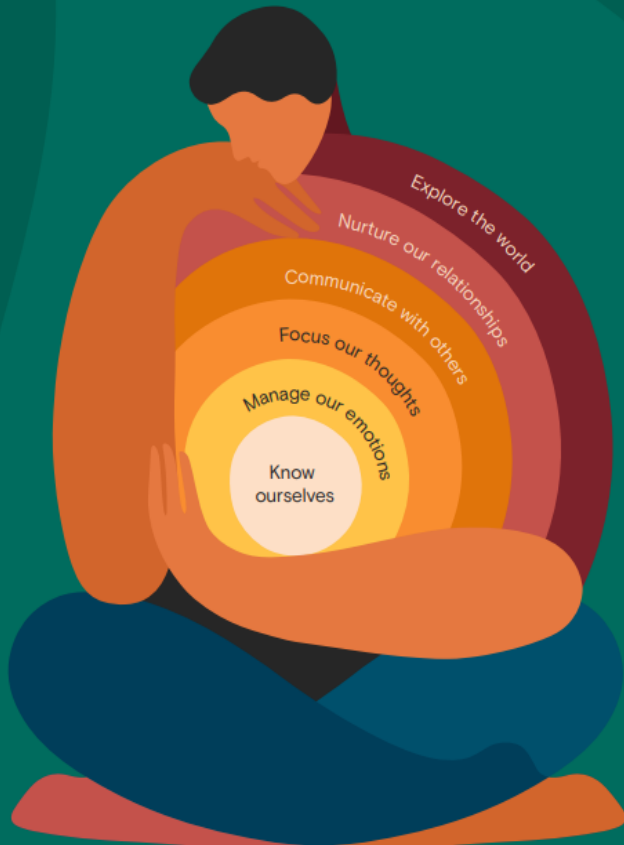
CUDDLE/ENGAGE feel safe with cuddles and closeness
– **enabling the other person to connect with you**

RESPOND make eye contact, find a soothing voice, and
be close – **switching on to meet needs**



The Shaping Us Framework

Understanding the social and emotional skills that matter most



Know ourselves

Who we are as individuals

- [Understand our own thoughts, feelings and beliefs](#)
- [Take charge of our life](#)
- [Have hopes for our future](#)

Manage our emotions

How we understand, process and manage our emotions

- [Understand our own and others' emotions](#)
- [Have ways to manage our emotions](#)

Focus our thoughts

How we effectively learn, work and manage in life

- [Focus our attention](#)
- [Be aware of and direct our thoughts](#)
- [Weigh up information](#)
- [Make decisions that are right for ourselves and for others](#)
- [Solve problems](#)
- [Pause before we act](#)
- [Be flexible](#)
- [Keep going](#)
- [Bounce back](#)

Communicate with others

How we receive and share feelings, thoughts and information

- [Listen to and understand others](#)
- [Express ourselves](#)

Nurture our relationships

How we get along and build relationships with others

- [Accept others for who they are](#)
- [Understand and feel someone else's emotions](#)
- [Understand what someone might be thinking](#)
- [Be kind](#)
- [Give freely](#)
- [Get on with others](#)
- [Build positive relationships](#)
- [Love and be loved](#)
- [Work well with others](#)
- [Set and respect boundaries](#)
- [Manage conflict](#)

Explore the world

How we explore and discover the world around us

- [Be creative](#)
- [Be curious](#)
- [Feel joy](#)

Appendix 6

Suggested guidance/strategies for dealing with incidents of socially undesirable behaviour

Practitioners should use their experience and knowledge to deal with situations in the most appropriate manner, according to the child/children involved.

Action/Behaviour	2yr old	3 – 5yr old
Snatching	Ensure there are enough resources for the number of children within the provision. Hand the toy back to the child and support them, model how to ask for the toy. Talk about both children's feelings. Model turn-taking games	Give child opportunity to give toy back. Explain how it made the other child feel when they snatched the toys away. Ask what they could do instead. Model turn taking games Ensure that there are systems in place for turn taking with popular resources
Swearing	Initially ignore and do not make a fuss. If repeated incidents tell them it was a bad choice of word. Model appropriate words.	Tell them it was a bad choice of word. Give them alternative words that are socially more acceptable. Model appropriate words.
Biting	Monitor for a pattern. Show the injury sustained by the other child with the consent of the other child. Talk to both sets of parents, a phone call may be needed before collection.	Monitor for a pattern. Show the injury sustained by the other child with the consent of the other child. Talk to both sets of parents, a phone call may be needed before collection.
Spitting	Explain not allowed, explain dirty and about germs	Explain not allowed, explain dirty and about germs Child to stand with adult whilst it is cleaned up and adult explains what they are doing.
Name Calling	Encourage empathy from the child: say something like 'Look at (name child) face, he/she is upset now because	Encourage empathy from the child: say something like 'Look at (name child) face he/she is upset now because
Aggressive play	Stop the play. Establish if both children are happy with play and redirect to a more appropriate area such as the Jabadao mats. If one child does not want to continue encourage them to use the "STOP" strategy. Support child to explain that they do not like the play.	Stop the play. Establish if both children are happy with play and redirect to a more appropriate area such as the Jabadao mats. If one child does not want to continue encourage them to use the "STOP" strategy. Support child to explain that they do not like the play.
Damaging school resources	Explain we won't have toys to play with if toys are damaged/broken, Share with parent	Explain we won't have toys to play with if toys are damaged/broken, Share with parent

	Support child to help with repairing/cleaning	Encourage child to help with repairing/cleaning
Damaging other children's property or work	Support child to look and see the effect on the other child when they damaged their work. Support the child to offer to help repair/rebuild etc.	Encourage child to look and see the effect on the other child when they damaged their work. Encourage the child to offer to help repair/rebuild etc.

Hitting other children	Explain clearly that we don't hit other children. Move them away to a different area. Hold an adult's hand. Encourage child to think of what they could do to make the other child feel better. Model language to apologise with accompanying explanation. Show child appropriate things to do with our hands	Explain clearly that we don't hit other children. Move them away to a different area. Hold an adult's hand. Encourage child to think of what they could do to make the other child feel better. Model language to apologise with accompanying explanation. Show child appropriate things to do with our hands.
Hitting adults	Explain clearly that we do not hit each other. Eg. 'Hitting hurts, we can't hit in our group' Move child to a clear space or provide space around the child to calm down. As for hitting other children.	Explain clearly that we do not hit each other. Eg. 'Hitting hurts, we can't hit in our group' Move child to a clear space or provide space around the child to calm down. As for hitting other children.
Throwing sand	Explain that it hurts people's eyes It feels bad in your hair. Model how to use sand resources and toys.	Explain that it hurts people's eyes It feels bad in your hair. Model how to use sand resources and toys.
Throwing toys	Explain we won't have toys to play with if they are thrown, as they will get broken. Model how to play with toys correctly. Put resources/toys away if continually mistreated.	Explain we won't have toys to play with if they are thrown as they will get broken. Model how to play with toys correctly. Put resources/toys away if continually mistreated.

Children's behaviours and wellbeing should be discussed with parents as they happen and monitored by key people. If necessary, involvement should be sought from the SENDCO, Health Visitor, Family Support Worker or a member of the SLT.

We assess the severity, circumstances and frequency of each incident when considering whether to telephone a parent to provide support within the school or to collect their child.

We do NOT use stickers or other similar reward systems -We believe that children need to be intrinsically motivated to follow the rules and boundaries within school. We support children to aspire to meet these expectations.

Where appropriate we use group times as a way to address behaviour. We talk about making good choices and how our behaviour impacts on others.

We are mindful of the language we use with the children and to describe the children, For example, we never use the word 'naughty' when talking about or to children.

We try to always use positive language. For example rather than 'don't run we will ask children to 'please walk inside' or ask 'where do we go when we want to run?'.

Dependent on a child's developmental stage or if they are learning English as an additional language, we will simplify our language and/or use visual resources to support their understanding.

Adults will model quiet voices when inside and will not shout or raise our voices to children,

If necessary, we will provide time and space for children to calm, think and reflect following incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

Example of an emotional regulation plan

	What you will see/ hear – my behaviours	Things you can do to support me	Who can support me, who I can spend time with, people I need to help me	What my support person might need
Proactive strategies These are my <u>every day</u> wellbeing strategies, the things I need to do to look after myself and the things that you need to know to support me at this stage				

Wellbeing Log

Here is an example of our wellbeing log that will be used to identify and support behaviour. This will be completed by the person who has supported the child on the date and time. Changes should be considered to support the child alongside what strategies are and are not working. In some cases the Antecedents may be updated with the parent if there is more information gathered when discussing incidents with them.

Well being Log

Child's Name



Date & Time	Antecedents What was happening before?	Behaviour What did.....do?	Consequences and changes What happened next? What can we change?	Staff Signature	Parent signature