Butler's Hill Infant and Nursery School

Growth Mindset and Metacognition Policy

School Motto: **Dream Big, Aim High**

School aims:

We are caring

We are confident

We are creative

Contents

Date: September 2021

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Aims of this policy:

This policy aims to ensure a consistent approach across school in order to promote a Growth Mindset culture by using language, by modelling, by managing behaviour and by organising teaching and learning.

What is a Growth Mindset

At Butler's Hill Infant School we value the whole child and strive to develop the self-esteem, perseverance, independence and ambition of our children. With our core aim of Dream Big Aim High, we aim to instil our pupils with the self-belief that with effort they can achieve and meet their ambitions. Consequently, as a school we are using the theory of Growth Mindset (Carol Dweck, 2012) to support children's understanding that intelligence and ability is not fixed and when they persevere they can and will achieve more.

Characteristics of a Fixed Mindset	Characteristics of a Growth Mindset
• Believes intelligence and talent are fixed	• Believes intelligence and talents can be developed
• Believes effort is fruitless	• Believes effort is the path to mastery
• Believes failures define who they are	• Believes mistakes are part of learning
• Hides flaws	• Views failure as an opportunity
• Avoids challenges	• Believes failures are temporary
• Ignores feedback	• Embraces challenges
• Views feedback as personal criticism	• Welcomes feedback
• Feels threatened by other's success	• Views other's success as inspirational

How we promote a Growth Mindset at Butler's Hill

As a school we want to promote our children's Growth Mindsets so they have the skills to support them when faced with challenges either at school or beyond. As a result, we dedicate direct and specific teaching time embed the value of a Growth Mindset. Research suggests that when time is spent teaching children about their brains and mindsets it gives them a purpose and belief that they are "getting better" the more they try. We embrace the idea that a mistake is what helps us learn and how we are always learning from the past in everyday life. We use a variety of resources to support our teaching of this such as videos, displays, pictures and stories. We reward this positive attitude through affirmation stickers and certificates.

As in all areas of our curriculum we are keen to use and promote the language of the Growth Mindset, as studies propose that the praise we provide children has a significant impact of their own mindset (Dweck, 2012).

All staff will model, and encourage the children to use, key vocabulary and phrases which focuses on the process of the children's attitude towards a challenge, which in turn helps develop them as continuous learners who will persevere in the face of challenge throughout their lives.

Growth Mindset Talk — What can I say to myself?

1. I'm not good at this.............................I can't do this yet.
2. I give up..I'll use some of the strategies I have learnt.
3. It's good enough.....................................Is this my best work yet?
4. I made a mistake...................................This was my first attempt in learning.
5. This is too hard.....................................If something is hard, it means I'm learning!
6. I'm really good at maths.......................I understand this because I have been practising.
7. I will never be as clever as them..........I'm going to find out how they do that.
8. I can't do this.......................................This is going to take time and effort to master.
9. I can't make this any better...................Improvements can always be made.
10. They can't do it....................................How can I help them to understand this?

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Positive praise for effort not just ability

Being specific with praise enables children to know what they have done well and potentially what their next steps will be. We encourage praise through this specific dialogue.

- ✓ Fantastic **effort**, you must have worked really hard on that
- ✓ You have really **practiced** that and your **improvement** shows.
- ✓ You tried all sorts of **strategies** on that maths problem until you finally got it!
- ✓ You avoided all **distratcions**, kept your **concentration** and **kept going**.
- ✓ You didn't **give up** when it was **hard.**
- ✓ You really **persevered** with that and now you have a really good **understanding** of that.

Alongside general rewards we also praise a growth mindset through positive affirmation stickers and certificates.

Vocabulary Spine

At Butler's Hill we strive to engage a range of ways in which to develop our children's language and vocabulary and the use of specific vocabulary is also important when developing a Growth Mindset. These words are not subject specific, therefore can be used in all contexts and across the whole curriculum.

Therefore, a vocabulary spine has been created to use across all phases of school depending on children's capability – developing a deep understanding of these words is vital.

Basic words			
Brain	Grow	Try	Learn
Question	Keep Going	Goal / Aim	Effort
Positive	Mistake	Difficult	Improve
More advanced			
Feedback	Strategies	Obstacle	Determination
Perseverance	Achieve	Challenge	Investigate
Develop	Embrace	Inspire	Success

Displays in classrooms should refelct the key messages of the Growth Mindset and how mistakes and challenges should be acknowledged as positve aspects of our learning.

The learning pit demonstrates what meaningful learning feels like. If activities are too easy, children will not learn anything new.
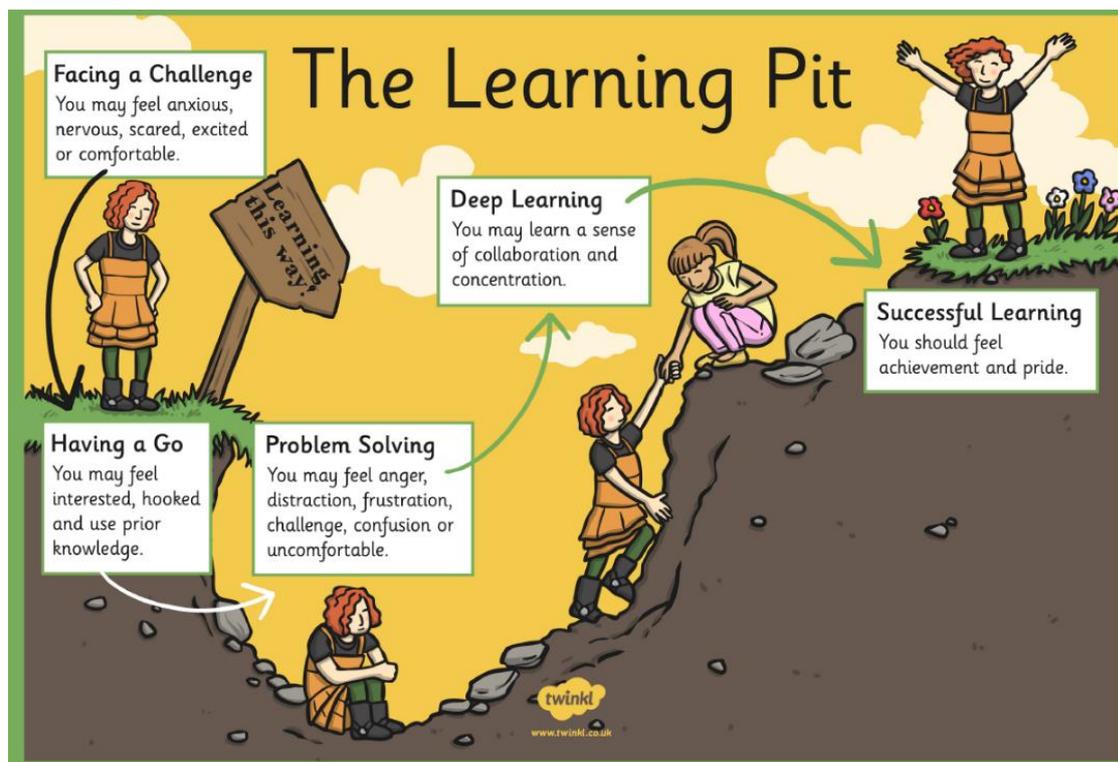
Monitoring

Pupil interviews and questionaires will be conducted over the year to establish the general mindset of the children to establish the impact of this policy across all phases in school. This will be shared with staff to identify where there may be gaps in pupils attitudes to learning.

Metacognition and Executive Functioning Skills.

At Butlers Hill Infant and Nursery School, all staff have undertaken training in the value of promoting and improving our children's Executive Functioning Skills and the importance of taking a Metacognitive approach in our classrooms and our teaching.

What is Executive Functioning?

Executive function and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. Executive function and self-regulation skills depend on three types of brain function: working memory, mental flexibility, and self-control. Children aren't born with these skills—they are born with the potential to develop them. Some children may need more support than others to develop these skills.

When children have opportunities to develop executive function and self-regulation skills, individuals and society experience lifelong benefits. These skills are crucial for learning and development. They also enable positive behaviour and allow us to make healthy choices for ourselves and our families.

(Harvard University - https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function/)

What is Metacognition?

Metacognition is something most of us do every day without even noticing. Reflecting on our own thoughts is how we gain insight into our feelings, needs, and behaviours — and how we learn, manage, and adapt to new experiences, challenges, and emotional setbacks. In simple terms it's the process of thinking about our own thinking and learning. Whilst children's metacognitive abilities don't fully engage until they are about 12 years old we can support our children at a much earlier age to understand their own learning and build their confidence to become independent and resilient lifelong learners, understanding mistakes and failure is all part of the learning process.

## How is this supported at school?

Staff have been trained to identify those children who display behaviours that suggest they may need some additional support in their Executive Functioning Skills. Teachers can then implement individualised action plans, supported by specific strategies to support identified behaviours that children are portraying. It is the hope that through targeted and environmental support children are able to function at a higher level more independently.   Within the classroom teachers a have been trained to take a metacognitive approach to directly teaching children to plan, evaluate and reflect on their own learning, especially in problem solving situations across the whole curriculum.

Also see for reference:

➢ Notts County Council Educational Psychology Service Observable Behaviours document
➢ Notts County Council Educational Psychology Service Strategies and Intervention document
➢ Executive Functioning: Personalised Pupil Support Strategies Pro-forma
➢ Education Endowment Foundation Summary of recommendations for Metacognition and Self-Regulation

Mediated Learning

Taking a mediated approach enables children to be guided to their own learning through carefully crafted questioning.
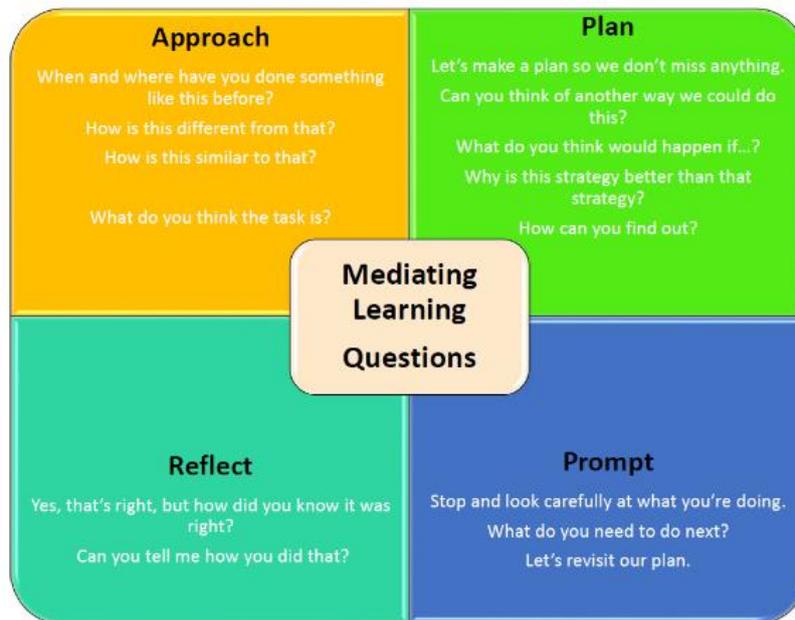
How parents can support Executive Functioning at home

There are many things parents can do to support their child's executive functioning and metacognitive skills. The following are just a few simple ideas.

✓ Simple memory games (Simon Says, Grandma went to market)
✓ Hiding toys (which one is missing?)
✓ Card games (snap, Uno)
✓ Clapping and copying games
✓ Drawing and colouring activities
✓ Singing and action songs
✓ Puzzles
✓ Animated films
✓ Storytelling
✓ Science activities at home
✓ Word games and word searches

There are many educational games on the market that also provide these essential skills.