

Connor Downs C.P. School

Emotional Health and Well being – Criterion 5.

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Healthy School Validation 2003

School details and context

Connor Down is a medium sized school with 170 pupils approximately on roll, set in a small village between Hayle and Camborne, catering for a mixed catchment area, pupils access school by walking or by private car.

How the Need was identified.

As part of our Healthy School curriculum last term we decided that we would like to give all the children and adults in the school an opportunity to RELAX. This would involve not only bodies but minds as well! We knew that we wanted to create a “special place” for this relaxation to happen.

Chosen Criteria.

Although we chose Criterion 3 Sex and Relationships Education we decided that we needed to concentrate on improving the Emotional Health and well being of pupils.

Steps taken to meet the criteria.

We knew that we wanted to create a “special place” for this relaxation to happen and with the help of lots of cushions and fabric, we converted the Junior library into a comfortable and secure Quiet Zone for the day.

The children from Reception to Year 6, were divided into groups of approximately 6 – 8 and spent between 15 and 20 minutes in the zone. Any adults that worked in the school were invited to an after school session.

Once settled, they were taken on a “journey of the mind” by one of our very capable and able ancillaries, Michaela Smith. The children had to take off their shoes and were told they were going through a magic door and once through it they would remain silent. They were told to make themselves comfortable either lying down or sitting but they were told not to touch another person. If they did

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not obey the rules they would be touched on the shoulder and would have to leave.

Some soothing violin music was played and then a story was read. This was a simple visualisation where the children were asked to imagine themselves on a local beach where they found a hot air balloon. The balloon would take them up into the air above the clouds and whilst up there they let their worries go and enjoyed the freedom of being able to let their mind “float”. After this brief visualisation the children were given paper and pencils to write or draw their experiences and feelings. These responses varied from simple pictures to quite profound statements. The children left the room when they had finished and felt ready. Out of 170 children only two were fidgety but none were asked to leave.

Speaking from experience, some of the adults that took part found it to be a very moving experience giving us an opportunity to talk to each other on a very deep level.

The idea for the “Quiet Zone” came from a project based in Swindon run in conjunction with Social Services and members of the Bahai faith who run “Tranquillity Zones” for disaffected young people in youth empowerment schemes and rehabilitation programmes.

The day involved a lot of organisation and the loan of Michaela from a classroom for the day. However, the positive results and feedback were definitely worth the inconvenience and everybody is looking forward to the next session.

Who was involved in the process

The whole school community were aware of the scheme and adults and young people worked together.

Outcomes/Impact on pupils and the wider community.

Some comments were:-

“I felt peaceful, calm, relaxed and like I was in a land with nothing bad about it or in it. Like you had floated away”.

“I felt happy and sad. I felt younger and new again”.

“I liked it because it was quiet and peaceful. I wish the quiet zone would stay there! I like to imagine stuff”.