



**INSPIRE NURTURE BELIEVE ACHIEVE**  
Working **together** to be the **best** that we can be.

Happiness

Perserverance

Resilience

Kindness

Friendship

Respect

9.12.22

Dear Families,

We are pleased to announce that we now have the NYCC Attachment and Trauma Aware Schools Status for **Goldsborough C of E Primary School and Sicklinghall Community Primary school** following the successful completion of a two-year Action Research Project. You will now see this logo on our letterhead and website. **The next step is for us to become Emotion Coaching UK verified.**

North Yorkshire County Council



Attachment Aware School

**What does it mean to be an Attachment Aware setting?**

We understand that all children face trauma in their lifetime, from separation, serious illnesses, bereavement and other complicating factors. These Adverse Childhood Experiences can impact on a child's development, impacting their self-esteem and window of tolerance.

You can find out more about ACES by watching the following video by clicking [here](#).

**An attachment aware school is one where the whole staff:**

- *Have a good understanding of the impact of significant relational traumas and losses upon pupils*
- *Have attachment principles firmly embedded within all their policies*
- *Use an attachment framework to understand behaviours*
- *Know the pupils as individuals and tailor their support based on Equity*
- *Prioritise employing and supporting key adults to build special relationships with pupils*
- *Ensure consistency of approach*
- *Engage in quality staff care to optimise care giving capacities and ensure stability and retention of staff*
- *Research the starting point of pupils in their care, tracing back over their lives from pregnancy onwards to reflect upon the possible impact of relational traumas and losses experienced*
- *Know the developmental age of the pupils in their care differentiating emotional and social tasks and expectations.*
- *Engage in relentless care for all pupils.*
- *Engage in a careful balance of both nurture and gentle challenge to support pupils*
- *Work closely with the family to develop a shared understanding of the pupil reflecting on possible stressors and calmers.*

**And** *are addressing the developmental vulnerabilities of all pupils.*

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Attachment Aware School



Our Relational Behaviour Policy is rooted in the fundamental understanding of Trauma and Attachment – it can be read in the policies section of the website by clicking [here](#).

As part of the Attachment Research Community, our staff have developed a deep understanding of all behaviour behind a tool for communication, and our understanding of the brain allows us to support them individually.

We normalise experiencing all emotions and talk about the Upstairs and Downstairs part of the brain with children. This helps to understand themselves and others and to manage their emotions and reactions do different stress factors that they encounter every day – a fall out with a friend, the desire to use a toy someone else is playing with, a reaction to a test etc.

You can find out more about it [here](#).

In school, we talk about it in a child friendly way using the following language, which may be useful to refer to at home.

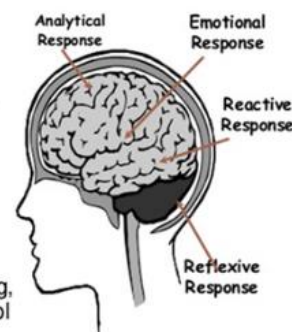
## UPSTAIRS/DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN

### × Downstairs brain:

- Brain stem and limbic region
- Basic bodily functions, emotional reactivity, attachment, fight/flight/freeze

### × Upstairs brain:

- Cerebral cortex
- Decision making, planning, self-understanding, control over emotions and body, empathy, morality, executive functioning



The Upstairs Brain is the Wise Owl Brain and that helps us to access our Elephant Brain where our memories and knowledge are. Our Downstairs Brain is the Meerkat Brain.

### Owl (PFC -Pre-Frontal Cortex)

- My **Thinking** part of my brain - creating, organising, problem solving, imagination and language.
- This part of my brain is not fully developed until I am about **25!!** (Wow that is old.)
- My Meerkat (Amygdala) must be **calm** if I want to use my Owl brain.
- If I am stressed, upset, and feel threatened I cannot access this part of my brain and learning and listening might be hard for me.

### Meerkat (Amygdala)

- My **Internal Alarm** system!
- It keeps me safe, tells me when there is danger, known as **FIGHT (stay and fight), FLIGHT (run away) or FREEZE (stop completely)**.
- **BUT!** it also reacts to imagined threat or our worries even though we may not actually be in danger. Got butterflies in your tummy? that's Meerkat!
- When I am in Meerkat brain, I cannot think clearly, I am only thinking of survival.

### Elephant (Hippocampus)

- My **Memories** and information are stored here.
- I remember how things made me feel. Good things **AND** bad things.
- It helps me learn about everything in my life such as, smells, sounds, places, people and so on.
- If I remember something that scared me, my Meerkat will wake up!

With continued thanks for your support and understanding.

Mrs Ellis and the whole Federation team.