



Hindlip First School  
Tibberton First School



# Self-Esteem

This guidance has been written by our partners at  
Perryfields Primary PRU.



**Perryfields Primary PRU**

## Self – Esteem

Children with low self-esteem can also lack self-confidence often making it difficult for them manage school life effectively. They may also:

- Feel frustrated, angry, anxious or sad on a regular basis.
- Have little interest in learning.
- Lack social skills and have difficulty in making and maintaining friendships.
- Are more likely to be teased or bullied.
- Become withdrawn and hard to reach.
- Can submit to peer pressure.
- Use self - defeating strategies to tackle challenges, like quitting, avoidance and silliness.
- Have difficulty sticking up for themselves.

The most important thing when trying to develop a child's self - esteem is the relationship you have with them. A trusted positive relationship will be the foundation that enables you to help build both self- esteem and self-confidence in a child.



## Strategies to help develop self – esteem

- It is important to provide positive praise, but ensure when doing this, the child believes it to be genuine. Children with low self-esteem will often be very mistrusting of praise, feeling they are unworthy of it.
- When children have low self-esteem, thoughts about themselves can be very negative. They will usually focus on their weaknesses or mistakes. They will blame themselves for any difficulties that arise using language such as:

“I’m not good enough.”

“I’m stupid.”

“I’m worthless”

“My work is rubbish.”

It is important therefore to try and encourage them to find things that are positive about themselves, as they will find this difficult. Consider the types of responses you give to their negative comments. Don’t over-praise as this will be received with scepticism but give them some reassurance that there is some positive in what they do. Consider these responses:

*“I’m not good enough.”* - “I can see you found your making model tricky, but the structure is really sound. We can work on the painting together.”

*“I’m stupid.”* – “The maths you have just done is new to you so it will be difficult while you get used to it. Look you have got the first bit right though”



*“I’m worthless.”* – “You always make great contributions to our discussions – I love hearing your opinion.”

*“My work is rubbish.”* – “I know you got frustrated when writing your last paragraph but there are some really interesting ideas here. Let’s have a look at the sentences together.”

- Children with low self-esteem often have little resilience, resulting in them quickly giving up when things become challenging, or not even attempting activities or tasks. Try to develop their level of tolerance by teaching them that it is okay to have setbacks or failures, as these are chances to learn.
- Another way to develop their resilience is to encourage them to take healthy risks. When attempting new challenges, whether they fail or succeed is irrelevant; the fact they have tried something new will help build their confidence as long as a trusted adult supports them
- Instil in them try, try, try again. Assure them if things don’t go to plan initially it is fine to have another go.
- Let them make their own choices. This is really key as often children with low self-esteem are very reliant on others taking control as they feel they are not capable of it. Start by giving them the opportunity to build their decision making skills by allowing them to make some harmless choices throughout the day. As their confidence grows so can the level of choices.
- Encourage them to pursue their own interests as this then gives them the opportunity to make personal choices. Discuss with them the new experiences they are having, in order for them to start considering the impact their choices can have.
- Ensure they feel special. Help them to discover their own unique talents and qualities, and encourage them to celebrate these and ensure they recognise their strengths.



- **Give them opportunities to show off their achievements, this could be work on a display board, sharing experiences with their peers or showing pieces of work to key adults.**
- **Let them know that all children are valuable and should be celebrated. If they become upset about something another child is better at, acknowledge their emotions, and reassure them that everyone has different things they're great at.**
- **When giving feedback on their performance don't compare them to other children. Phrases such as "Look at how beautiful Mary's handwriting is." are not motivational and only highlight their own failings.**
- **Don't give consequences for failed tasks as this again just reinforces the negatives: instead identify and praise the positives.**
- **Keep communicating with them, by asking questions the child will feel you have a genuine interest in them and that their opinions matter.**
- **Do set realistic goals, as this encourages the child to work towards these and to have pride in their accomplishments. Make sure these are achievable however, and they are fully supported whilst working on them.**
- **Develop their self-advocacy skills as it is likely that they will lack the ability to be able to put their point across.**
- **Consider peer support. Positive role models can really help to encourage better self-esteem and self-confidence.**



- **Keep a check on the child's mental health, low self - esteem can lead to anxiety and depression. Set up a system where an emotional check-in can happen daily.**
- **Share with them positive affirmations.**
- **Encourage them to recognise their own positives.**
- **Use visual aids as a reminder of things that are good about them. Positive wrist bands are ideal for this. See some examples of these that they can colour and put around their wrists on the next page.**





I AM AWESOME



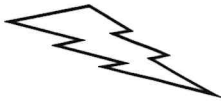
I HELP OTHERS



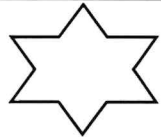
I AM KIND



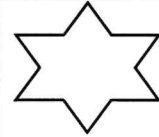
I AM A GOOD FRIEND



I AM BRAVE



I TRY MY BEST



I HAVE GREAT IDEAS

I AM ALWAYS SMILING



I AM UNIQUE

