

MERE SCHOOL

Guidelines for Circle Time

What is circle time?

Circle time is a programme of activities, which “most effectively challenge and motivate the class group to share in the aim of promoting more positive behaviour”.

Why we believe Circle Time is beneficial:-

RATIONALE

Circle Time affords the opportunity for the teacher and class to communicate with each other about issues, which promote self-esteem and positive behaviour.

Circle Time aims to develop:-

- the value and self-confidence of each child.
- specific behaviours, which show caring and respect towards each other (eg “do be kind when others make mistakes”).
- the establishment of classroom routines, which are necessary for quality teaching and learning, and these routines can be established in an enjoyable and constructive way.
- a climate of good relationships between teacher and children and child to child.
- a way of meeting children’s needs with regard to improving their behaviour, rather than saying “What they deserve is”.
- talking and listening skills in a way, which helps such skills, transfer across the Curriculum.
- a sense of responsibility for one’s own behaviour and actions.
- an environment which is non-threatening where teachers and pupils can express themselves and listen to each other.
- safe environment for everyone.

Essential Pre-requisites for Successful Circle Time

- Sitting in a circle – eye contact.
- Listening to each other
- Establishing ground rules eg hands up etc.
- Taking turns.
- Allowing to “pass”.
- Making it relevant to children’s daily experiences
- Valuing **all** contributions – no put-downs.
- Always praising – very positive.
- Low teacher profile (to be developed).
- Always ending session on a positive.
- Making it fun – light hearted.

Preparation

- Have class sitting in a circle (preferably on chairs and in their own classroom environment).
- Teacher is a participating member of the ‘circle’ and, although directing activities, abides by the ‘rules’ of the circle.
- Ensure Circle Time is not interrupted, as it should be quality time with the group.
- Have resources at the ready.
- Try to have Circle Time as a regular part of your classroom activity ie at a regular and set time so that children see it as an important part of their school week.

A Full Circle Time Meeting:-

1. Meeting up game. (to mix children up and encourage socialisation)
2. Around activity. (to develop listening skills/ encourage children to speak in a relaxed way)
3. Open Forum. (to discuss a relevant issue)
4. Celebrate success.
5. Quiet Game.

A circle meeting should last between 30 and 60 minutes according to pupils' age and ability to concentrate, which is gradually phased in from the FS to year 6.

An example of a circle meeting.

1. Meeting up game

Oranges and lemons

Go around the circle and label children oranges or lemons.

Call out oranges or lemons- these children swap places.

Repeat.

Several fruits could be used and fruit basket means everyone swaps!

The result is that everyone is sat next to someone different.

2. Around activity

Talking Ted – Teacher talks about 'personality traits' then begins the round e.g. Children choose description of themselves – I am a quiet girl, I am good and I like people to be happy pass ted on. Begin with just one sentence and develop.

3. Open Forum

Is there anybody here who needs help with playtime, lunchtime, finding a partner, etc.

Child outlines their problem.

Children offer advice, begin by saying

Would it help if

Child says, Thank you for saying that.

Revisit next circle time.

4. Celebrate

Who has had a successful week?

Any child.

Children can volunteer people.

I am/was really pleased when

5. Quiet game

Class close eyes and think of something happy/Class teacher outlines a 'happy' place, beach maybe and then describes it. (use a 'rainmaker' to help).

Remember – "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."