

## Attachment - Quick Guide for Secondary Schools

### 4 Main Attachment Styles

<p><b>Avoidant attachment</b> Parent is rejecting and sometimes controlling.</p> <p>Child minimises attachment behaviour, seeks little affection and comfort and becomes self-reliant.</p> <p>Child will control friendships or avoid them</p>	<p><b>Ambivalent/anxious attachment</b> Parent is inconsistent in their care of their child.</p> <p>Child learns to display heightened attention needing behaviour as a way to get parent's attention.</p> <p>Child becomes clingy in relationships but also rejecting and angry as does not trust in</p>
<p><b>Secure attachment</b> Parent is consistent, loving, warm and responsive to child's needs.</p> <p>Child learns that they are a lovable person and starts to believe others are trustworthy, reliable and will begin to develop friendships with children.</p>	<p><b>Disorganised attachment</b> Parent is frightening and abusive.</p> <p>Children is dysregulated, has increased anxiety and fear and will display excessive controlling behaviour. Child can become very violent, aggressive, and at times self-harming behaviour.</p>

## Teaching Staff Support

Attachment Style	Possible Child Behaviours	Positive Teacher Responses
Avoidant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unable to ask for help when needed</li> <li>• May refuse to accept help when offered</li> <li>• May not participate in class</li> <li>• Needs can be missed as quiet in class and can be overlooked</li> <li>• May feel stupid in comparison to others</li> <li>• May not trust in friendships</li> <li>• May be socially isolated</li> <li>• May not finish work but keen to get it right</li> <li>• Avoids eye contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give small elements of control where possible e.g. choice over which task to complete first or where to sit</li> <li>• Subtly involve them in group work e.g. give them a specific role or choice of two roles</li> <li>• Ensure all staff are consistent</li> <li>• Involve in tasks around the class where they can help and be successful</li> <li>• Break things down into manageable pieces</li> <li>• Instil that mistakes are good for everyone</li> <li>• Avoid winning games</li> <li>• Focus and praise all positives explaining why they have done well</li> <li>• Try and connect with whatever their interest is and use conversation as a source of distraction from possible triggers</li> </ul>
Disorganised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defiance</li> <li>• Argumentative</li> <li>• Hating losing</li> <li>• Difficulty turn taking and sharing</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Lying</li> <li>• Stealing</li> <li>• Refusal to work</li> <li>• Walking out</li> <li>• Aggressive</li> <li>• Struggle at unstructured times</li> <li>• Likely to underachieve</li> <li>• May self-harm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a clear structure and routine to class</li> <li>• Have set phrases and ways of stopping and refocusing the class</li> <li>• Give child warnings for transitions and changes</li> <li>• Show empathy (see below)</li> <li>• Dedicated 'safe' places to go</li> <li>• Dedicated 'trusted' adults for support</li> <li>• Offer positive comments but low key</li> <li>• Have clear classroom boundaries and apply these consistently</li> <li>• Have personalised expectations for the child</li> <li>• During moments of deregulation have set phrases such as "I can see you are feeling XX right now. You are safe and I am here if you need me" Then provide space and stop talking. Ensure calming toys / activities are within reach. Then wait. Show empathy not disappointment or frustration</li> <li>• Think outside the box when triggers are identified to prevent repeat instances</li> </ul>
Ambivalent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention seeking</li> <li>• Show off</li> <li>• Always requests help</li> <li>• Oversteps boundaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be reliable and consistent in your approach</li> <li>• Have clear boundaries and apply these consistently</li> <li>• Have set phrases and ways of stopping and refocusing the class</li> <li>• Give child warnings for transitions and changes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overly dependent on staff</li> <li>• Crying</li> <li>• Whinging</li> <li>• Eager to please</li> <li>• Overly sensitive</li> <li>• Hard to maintain friendships</li> <li>• Can't work without support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage attention span and success with very short tasks</li> <li>• Be clear on your availability to support them e.g. I will work with you now for 5 minutes and then I will be XXX</li> <li>• Praise them for all small steps of work completed</li> </ul>
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## Empathy

By showing empathy towards a child for their emotions and perceptions, you will be better able to support behaviour change in them. Remember that acceptance and empathy is not about excusing a behaviour, it is just about understanding the emotions behind a behaviour.

How to communicate empathy:

- Maintain eye contact (be thoughtful about what this conveys to the child)
- Allow the child to finish speaking before responding
- Do not interrupt with questions, criticisms or advice.
- Listen to both the content and the feelings of the child
- Be curious by asking questions or commenting.
- Let the child know that their point of view is a valid one.
- Reflect your own experience of what a child is feeling
- Empathy needs to be genuine so always try to understand what the child is feeling.
- Match the intensity of the emotion through communication (facial expression, gesture and posture, tone and words)