THE WAY

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & WELLBEING - JUNIOR SCHOOL

Teaching children about asking for and giving permission

Consent is simply about **asking for and giving permission**. It's an important life skill that helps children build respectful relationships, set healthy boundaries, and understand that their choices matter.

When children learn that they have the right to say "yes" or "no" in safe, everyday situations, they also learn to respect the choices of others.

How Can We Explain Consent to Children?

Children already practice consent in their daily lives. For example:

- - **Sharing toys**: "Can I play with your truck?" If the other child says "yes," that's consent. If they say "no," the answer needs to be respected.
- - **Physical affection:** "Can I give you a hug?" This teaches children that it's okay to ask and okay to say no.
- - **Borrowing belongings:** "Can I use your textas?" Waiting for a "yes" before taking them shows respect.
- **- Games and play:** "Do you want to play tag with me?" Both children agreeing makes the game fun and safe.

Why Is Consent Important?

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- - It helps children learn that their voice matters and their choices should be respected.
- - It teaches them to listen to others and respect boundaries.
- - It builds a sense of trust and fairness in friendships and family relationships.

How Parents Can Support This Learning

- - **Model consent at home:** Ask, “Can I sit next to you?” or “Would you like a high-five?”
- - **Praise children for asking permission:** Acknowledge when they check in with others before acting.
- - **Talk about feelings:** Discuss how it feels when someone listens to your “no” or ignores it.
- - **Set family rules around permission:** For example, “We ask before borrowing things.”

By teaching consent as permission in everyday moments, children learn respect, empathy, and the importance of boundaries. These are skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

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