

Resist

Even as adults, when we are angry or upset, it's hard to think logically and to keep intense emotions from influencing our decision-making. This is even harder for children, who may have not yet developed the skills they need to calm themselves down in the heat of the moment. When your child is in the red zone (see the scale below), there are some things you can do to help them get back into the amber zone and eventually back to green. Equally, your child may also need space to calm down on their own.

During this moment, it's important to think about controlling your own response, as you may also find yourself getting close to the red zone. If you're able to stay calm, doing so can help take away your child's need to control (e.g. through aggressive behaviour) what they may feel is an unpredictable environment. Through resisting, your child can rely on you to be a strong, dependable adult at a time when they may be overwhelmed by big emotions.



Strike While the Iron is Cold

Although our instinct might be to talk about the problem as it's happening (e.g. telling your child off for punching or biting), when your child is in the red zone, they're less able to think logically and to take in what's being said. Research has shown that it's better to wait until they're calm (in the green zone) before speaking to them about their behaviour. This is called "striking while the iron is cold". At this stage, it's also important to let your child know that you love them and that they're safe to explore their feelings with you. This is called connection before correction and can be a good time to reinforce that you're not angry at your child but upset at their decision to behave as they did.

Resist: when your child is distressed, recognise that you may also be in the red zone and try to stay calm to keep things predictable

Strike While the Iron is Cold: wait until you and your child are calm to discuss what happened, as children are less able to listen and process when in the red zone

Connection Before Correction: separate the behaviour from the child, let them know you love them and that they're safe to talk about their feelings with you before discussing what happened

Autopilot statements (NVR)

- Have mini-scripts/ one- liners prepared – don't rely on the ability to improvise.
- You look upset but we don't shout in class
- I know writing is not your favourite, but I have noticed that once you get started you can do great work
- Also buys time
- I will think about what happens next but for now we need to get on with the planned activity
- That does sound unfair, and I will listen, but I need you to wait quietly for 5 minutes
- Do not enter into debate/explanation etc.: 30 second interventions (Paul Dix)
- It is good for pupils to know you are using scripts and shared scripts increase network presence
- Self talk mini-scripts (can also be taught to children): ☒ I am not going to get pulled into this
- This can be sorted
- Breathing!

Autopilot statements: Offer a safe way out:

'Let's both calm down and come back to it in 5 minutes'

'OK, I am worried you are going to find it hard to concentrate sitting there but I will give it a ten minute try out'

Something that gives you thinking space. They are scripted responses that allow adult to say the 'right' thing even when escalated. They give thinking time and help to avoid escalation and arguments.

Lanyards – 'You don't have to win you just have to persist'

NVR is all about the strategies approach – having pre-pared one liners/auto pilot statements really helps. We plan these with parents so they therefore have ones they can go home and use. You can plan them too. You will know the situations by now for particular pupils and having these prepared helps to 'strike while the iron is cold' which in turn de-escalates the situation.