Helping Children Handle Anger

> *Once we understand our own anger, we can use that learning to help our children express theirs safely.*

Agree family anger rules

All children need clear boundaries to feel safe. Agreeing family rules for handling anger helps everyone, including adults, know what is expected:

- Don't hurt others
- Don't hurt yourself
- Don't hurt things
- Do talk about it

Get children involved in creating your family's rules; they will almost certainly have opinions, and it opens up good conversations about anger.

Understand what is behind it

Children have very little control over many of the things that make them angry. Trying to see things from their point of view helps build understanding, even if we do not give in. Remember, it is okay to be angry, it is what we do with it that counts. Children often act out because they have not yet learned to put feelings into words, and sometimes they do not even know why they are angry.

Respond calmly

We can make things worse by how we react to an already angry child. Take time to empathise and try to understand, even if the issue seems small to us; it may be hugely important to them. Raising our voice or dismissing their feelings only escalates things, it takes two people to argue, and one of us needs to be the grown-up. Often, simply listening and naming their feelings is enough, without needing to “fix” anything.

Build a shared vocabulary

Ideas like the “Anger River” (getting swept along, close to the edge, going over the waterfall) or a shaken bottle of fizzy drink can help children picture and talk about their feelings, saying they feel “close to the edge” or “fizzy.”

Notice the warning signs

Help children spot their own physical signs of anger, like clenched fists or a racing heart, as a “red light” to pause and calm down before reacting. Encourage them to express anger with words, through drawing, by moving to a safe space to calm down, or through exercise like running around the garden.

If you would like more support with this, contact the school's pastoral team.