



City of Birmingham School Relationship Policy

Our relationship policy is based not on punishment or sanctions, but on resolution and interactive repair that supports the emotional management and well-being of our pupils. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school behaviour policy.

Our school is invested in supporting the very best possible relational health between;

- ☐ Parent and pupil
- ☐ Pupil and pupil
- ☐ Pupil and school staff
- ☐ Parent and school staff
- ☐ School staff
- ☐ School staff and senior leaders
- ☐ School staff and external agencies.

To this end our school is committed to educational practices which Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect;

Protect

- ☐ Increased 'safety cues' in all aspects of the school day; 'meet and greet' all pupils upon arrival at school and an open door policy for informal discussions with parents/ carers.
- ☐ Staff are trained in Thrive Approach; being playful, accepting, curious and emphatic 'PACE' (proven to shift children out of flight/fright/freeze positions).
- ☐ Staff ensure that interactions with children are socially engaging and not socially defensive, to decrease likelihood of children relating defensively (flight/fright/freeze).
- ☐ A whole school commitment to cease all use of harsh voices, shouting, put downs, criticism and shaming (proven to be damaging psychologically and neurologically).
- ☐ Staff 'interactively repair' occasions when they themselves move into defensiveness.
- ☐ Pedagogic interventions that help staff to get to know children better on an individual basis. This is achieved through pupil passports, 3 houses, tutor time and pupil well-being sessions (what matters to them, who matters to them, their dreams, hopes). This is key to enabling children to feel safe enough to talk, if they wish, about painful life experiences, which are interfering with their ability to learn and their quality of life.
- ☐ Pupils have daily access to emotionally available adults. If a pupil does not wish to connect with a specific adult, an alternative adult is found.
- ☐ School staff adjust expectations around pupils to correspond with their developmental capabilities and experience of traumatic stress. This includes guiding pupils in a kind and non-judgmental way from situations they are not managing well (e.g. pupils who are continually triggered into alarm states whilst in school, can access a calmer, smaller area with emotionally regulating adults – Thrive and calm rooms).
- ☐ The nurturing of staff in such a way that they feel truly valued and emotionally-regulated and in so doing to support them to interact throughout the school day with positive social engagement rather than defensiveness.

Relate

- ☑ A whole-school commitment to enabling pupils to see themselves, their relationships and the world positively, rather than through a lens of threat, danger or self-blame.
- ☑ Pupils are provided with repeated relational opportunities through the use of Thrive's VRFs (with emotionally available adults) to make the shift from 'blocked trust' (not feeling psychologically safe with anyone) to trust, and from self-help to 'help seeking'.

Regulate

- ☑ Relational interventions specifically designed to bring down stress hormone levels (e.g. from toxic to tolerable) in pupils, enabling them to feel calm, soothed and safe. This is to support learning, quality of life and protect against stress-induced physical and mental illness, now and in later life (ACES – Adverse Childhood Experiences).
- ☑ Evidence-based interventions that aim to repair psychological damage caused by traumatic life experiences (ACES), through emotionally regulating, playful, enriched adult-pupil interactions.

Reflect

- ☑ Staff training in Thrive Approach, develops the art of good listening, dialogue, empathy and understanding (instead of asking a series of questions/ giving lectures).
 - ☑ Provision of skills and resources to support parents and staff in meaningful empathetic conversations with pupils who want to talk about their lives. This is to empower pupils to better manage their home situations and life in general.
 - ☑ Within the context of an established and trusted relationship with a Thrive practitioner, pupils are given the means and opportunity to work through painful life experiences using arts, crafts, sand trays and role play activities.
 - ☑ PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) curriculum is used as a preventative input, which enables pupils to make informed choices about how they relate to others, how they live their lives, and how they treat their brains, bodies and minds.
 - ☑ Staff development and Thrive training to help pupils who display distressing behaviours due to their trauma/painful life experiences, is used to support pupils to reflect on those experiences. Staff learn to do this through empathetic conversation, addressing pupils negative self-referencing and helping them develop positive, coherent narratives about their lives.
- Behaviours are recorded on Progresso as a way of reflecting on pupil's well-being and to inform appropriate interventions.
- Parents and pupils can access the 'Pupil reward system' to reflect on the positive progress being made, throughout the year.
- ☑ This relationship policy is used to support pupils, parents/carers and staff's emotional development and well-being. This will create a more informed understanding of how best to support pupils who have suffered trauma and negative life experiences, by ensuring the best outcomes, creating better learning opportunities and ultimately leading to better futures for all.