

**Relationship Policy**

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

Parent and child

Child and child

Child and school staff

Parent and school staff

School staff

School staff and senior leads

School staff and external agencies

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

**Protect**

- We use safety cues in all aspects of the school day eg. meet and greet at the school entrances and at the classroom door.
- School staff are committed to using the PACE model (Hughes 2015) to interact with children. Being warm, empathic, playful and curious which is proven to move children out of Fight/Flight/Freeze positions.
- School staff to ensure that interactions with children are socially engaging and not socially defensive in order to decrease the chances of the children relating defensively (Fight/Flight/Freeze).
- We are committed to not using harsh voices, put-downs, criticism or shaming (proven to be damaging psychologically and neurologically).
- School will 'interactively repair' the occasions when they slip into defensiveness.
- We will implement interventions which help staff get to know the children better eg. One Page Profiles, I wish my teacher knew... etc. This is key in developing an ethos where a child feels safe enough to want to tell their story.
- All vulnerable children will have easy access to an emotionally available adult-these children know when and where to find that adult. If a child does not wish to interact with the designated adult then an alternative person will be found.
- School staff adjust their expectations around vulnerable children to correspond with their developmental capabilities and experience of traumatic stress. This includes removing pupils in a non-judgemental way from a situation that they are unable to cope with.

- The nurturing of school staff in such a way that they feel truly valued and emotionally regulated enough to be able to interact with social engagement rather than defensiveness.

### **Relate**

- Staff trained in emotional coaching and in relating to children in terms of the four key relational needs for Secure Attachment: affect, attunement, containment, empathy and soothing.
- A whole school commitment to enabling children to see themselves, their relationships and the world more positively.
- Relational opportunities for vulnerable children with emotionally available adults at school to enable them to make the shift from 'blocked trust' to 'trust' and from 'self-help' to 'help-seeking'.

### **Regulate**

- We implement interventions designed to bring down stress hormone levels (from toxic to tolerable) in vulnerable children enabling them to feel calm, soothed and safe.
- We use evidence based nurturing and regulatory interventions that aim to repair psychological damage caused by traumatic experiences through emotionally regulating and playful, enriched adult-child interactions.
- The emotional well-being and regulation of staff is treated as a high priority in order to prevent burnout or stress related absence.

### **Reflect**

- Staff are educated in the art of good listening, dialogue, empathy and understanding (instead of asking lots of questions/trying to fix things)
- The provision of skills and resources to support parents and staff to have meaningful empathic conversations with vulnerable children who want to talk about their lives.
- PSHE informed by current research is used to help children understand how to relate to others.
- Staff trained to help children move from behaving their trauma/painful life experiences to reflecting on those experiences through empathic conversations in order to address negative self-referencing.
- A behaviour for learning policy which is based not on punishment, sanctions and isolation, but one that models enquiry, resolution and interactive repair (restorative conversations).