



Relationship Policy



Glossary of Key Terms



Behaviour as Communication

Behaviour expresses feelings, needs or experiences.



Calm

Feeling safe, settled and able to think clearly.



Community

Belonging together with kindness, respect and inclusion.



Co-regulation

Adults support children to manage emotions with care.



Dysregulation

Emotions are overwhelming and hard to manage.



Emotion Coaching

Helping children understand and manage their feelings.



Empathy

Understanding how others feel and responding with care.



Equality

All children are respected, valued and treated with dignity.



Equity

Different support for different needs to help everyone succeed.



Kindness

Words and actions that show care, patience and compassion.



Logical Response (Consequence)

Responses that support learning repair and



Reflect

Thinking about actions, feelings and choices to grow.



Relational Practice

Prioritising relationships, understanding and emotional safety.



Repair

Restoring relationships after harm or conflict.



Respect

Treating others with fairness, dignity and care.



Regulation

Managing emotions and behaviour to feel calm and ready to learn.



Psychological Safety

A safe space to express feelings without fear or judgement.



Our guiding Principles

"All behaviour is communication. All communication is an expression of need"

This principle sits at the heart of our relational approach.

We recognise that when pupils / children experience distress or dysregulation, their behaviour is often communicating an unmet need. Our role as adults is to understand what a pupil / child might be communicating and provide the support needed to help them feel safe, regulated and able to learn. We believe that Connection, Communication and Community are important anchor points in our practice, these work together to enable our pupils / children to feel safe, valued, and secure.

Introduction

Our schools and registered children's home are specialist settings. We recognise that differences in communication, emotional regulation, sensory processing and social understanding may influence how pupils experience the world and how they express their needs.

Our approach to behaviour is therefore relational, inclusive and supportive. Rather than focusing solely on managing behaviour, we focus on understanding what behaviour might be communicating and supporting pupils / children to develop the skills they need to feel safe, regulated and able to learn. We know that relationships are central to learning, wellbeing and belonging.

We take a strengths-based approach recognising and valuing each pupil's / child's abilities, interests and potential. We aim to meet pupils / children at their point of need, adapting our responses to ensure that support is developmentally appropriate and inclusive. We remain mindful of the impact of trauma.

While this policy provides a clear framework for supporting behaviour, we recognise that flexibility is essential in a specialist setting. We are consistent in our relational approach to behaviour while remaining flexible in how this approach is applied. This principle of flexible consistency allows us to respond to individual needs while maintaining shared values and expectations across the school/setting.

Supporting pupils / children effectively requires strong collaboration, we therefore adopt a 'one Team' approach, working closely with colleagues across the school / setting and with families to understand each pupil's / child's need and identify the most supportive way forward. Through open communication, solution focused thinking and partnership with families and professionals, we aim to provide consistent and meaningful support for every pupil / child.



Our Shared Expectations and Routines

To ensure our expectations and routines are fair, simple and easy to remember, we have agreed three core expectations:

Ready • Respect • Safe

These expectations guide what we do across the school/setting day and help create consistency for all members of the school/setting community. They provide a shared understanding of how we work together to create a safe, respectful and supportive environment.

Clear and concise expectations of behaviour (Ready, Respect and Safe) will be described, modelled and encouraged through in class, assemblies, circle times, lunchtimes and in learning time, to ensure that all pupils / children understand what is acceptable and safe. This provides the opportunity to reinforce expectations of behaviour and respect throughout the school / setting. Staff must challenge inappropriate behaviour; however, it must be fair, reasonable and necessary. Regular reminders of 'ready, respect, safe' are to be used as a non-confrontational approach to addressing behaviours that challenge.

Many of our students / children require visual reminders to support positive behaviour for learning. We will display 'ready, respect, safe' in our classrooms and in shared spaces. Staff teams will support modelling and exploration of these behaviours and produce visuals to support understanding e.g., written word, symbols, pictures, post it notes, tick sheets.

Meeting our expectations and following our routines benefits everyone. It helps to:

- create a safe and secure environment
- support a calm and positive learning environment
- develop positive relationships and respect for others
- understand our emotions and how our behaviour affects others (where possible)
- explore how to solve problems and repair relationships.

Adult expectations:

Adults shape the emotional climate of the school setting.

Adults in our school / setting will:

- Build positive relationships with pupils / children
- Remain calm and regulated and seek support if this is not possible
- Use respectful and supportive language
- Respond with curiosity rather than judgement
- Support regulation before addressing behaviour
- Guide reflection and learning (where appropriate)



- Help repair relationships (In a developmentally appropriate way)
- Maintain consistent expectations
- Work in partnership through a One Team Approach.

Children learn behaviour through the behaviour they experience from adults.

The Leadership Team will:

- Be a visible presence in the school / setting and encourage appropriate conduct referring to 'Ready, respect, safe'.
- Support staff in returning pupils / children to learning by being part of restorative conversations and supporting staff in these conversations where required.
- Regularly celebrate staff and pupils / children
- Encourage use of postcards home, positive phone calls, emails.
- Ensure staff training needs are identified and targeted.
- Use behaviour data, policy and practice to target and assess interventions.
- Regularly review the provision for pupils / children that fall beyond the range of written policies.
- Support all staff in managing pupils / children with complex behaviours challenges. E.g., One Team Approach, debrief following incidents.

The leadership team are not expected to deal with behaviour incidents in isolation. They support, guide, model *to* and learn *from* colleagues, through a 'One Team Approach' showing a united consistent response.

Pupils / Children will:

Be Ready, Respect and Safe– we will explore and make explicit what these behaviours look like and what the expectations around them are.

Parents and carers:

- are expected to work in partnership with the school / setting to promote positive behaviour and seek solutions where required.
- Sign the home school agreement which sets out the expectations.

Positive Recognition

We encourage all staff to actively notice and celebrate positive effort in academic, social and emotional development.

Positive recognition helps pupils to:

- feel proud of their achievements
- develop confidence and self-belief
- feel valued within the school/setting community



- build motivation for learning and positive behaviour.

Because every pupil / child is different, positive recognition may look different for each child. Adults will adapt their approach depending on the pupil's / child's needs, communication style and emotional wellbeing. Our aim is for pupils / children to feel seen, valued and encouraged, supporting them to develop confidence and positive relationships with others.

Our Relational Practice Framework

Our relational Practice Framework guides staff to prioritise connection and regulation before supporting pupils / children to understand, reflect on and repair situations, strengthening their sense of belonging within the school community.



Understanding Behaviour and Dysregulation

Behaviour is a form of communication.

Pupils / children in our settings may experience challenges related to:



- emotional regulation
- communication differences
- sensory processing
- anxiety
- attention and executive functioning.

When pupils / children experience dysregulation, their nervous system becomes overwhelmed and they may struggle to manage behaviour.

Dysregulation may appear as:

- withdrawal or shutdown
- refusal or avoidance
- distress or anxiety
- physical behaviour.

In these moments pupils / children require co-regulation and support.

Preventative Practice

Positive behaviour is supported through Ready Respect Safe:

- predictable routines
- emotionally safe classrooms
- strong relationships with adults
- clear expectations
- sensory and regulation strategies
- communication supports
- recognition of effort and kindness.

These approaches help pupils / children feel safe and reduce the likelihood of escalation.

Responding to Behaviour

When behaviour becomes challenging adults prioritise:

1. Staying calm
2. Ensuring safety
3. Supporting regulation
4. Reducing demands if needed
5. Providing reassurance.

Reflection and learning take place once the pupil is calm.

Logical Responses (Consequences)



When consequences need to be applied these will be logical, connected to the behaviour, support learning and avoid shame or punishment. The logical response will be reasonable, fair and necessary. Working in this way allows a logical response to a conflict incident which is fair and delivered with a restorative emphasis, so that relationships remain intact.

A logical response:

- is connected to the behaviour
- supports learning and responsibility
- helps repair harm
- maintains dignity and belonging.

Examples include:

- helping tidy a disrupted space
- repairing damaged work
- reflecting with a trusted adult
- practising a different strategy.

Supporting Pupils / Children Experiencing Dysregulation or Crisis

We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication. Moments of significant dysregulation often indicate that a pupil's / child's emotional, sensory or communication needs have exceeded their current capacity to cope.

As a specialist setting, we recognise that differences in communication, emotional regulation, sensory processing, attention and social understanding can influence how pupils / children experience the world and express distress.

When dysregulation occurs regularly, or significantly affects wellbeing or learning, we work collaboratively to understand what the pupil / child may be communicating. In these situations, we will develop an Individual Behaviour Support Plan. These plans are developed in partnership with the pupil / child, parents or carers and staff who know the pupil / child best.

Plans include:

- triggers or situations linked to dysregulation
- early signs that a pupil / child needs support
- strategies that help regulation
- agreed adult responses
- identified key adults
- adjustments to routines or environments.

The aim is to help pupils feel safe, understood and able to engage successfully in school / setting life.



In rare circumstances, and in line with statutory guidance, a pupil / child may require a temporary suspension from school to ensure safety and allow additional planning of support (For further information please refer to our Suspension and Exclusions Policy).

Suspension is not used as a punishment. It acts as a 'reset' and provides time for staff and families to review support and plan next steps.

During this period a member of staff known to the individual will remain in contact with the pupil / child to maintain connection and reassurance. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will remain in contact with the family.

Before returning to school, the pupil / child and family will be supported through a Relational Reintegration Plan, which may include:

- adjustments to routines
- additional regulation support
- identified trusted adults
- gradual reconnection with learning and peers
- collaboration with external professionals.

Our aim is always to maintain connection, support regulation and ensure every pupil / child continues to feel valued within our community.

Physical Intervention

We recognise that at times we may need to intervene physically to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the pupil / child, others within the school/setting community or to protect the fabric of the building from serious damage which could cause a risk. Any physical intervention will be the last resort after de-escalation and diffusion options have been exhausted.

All physical interventions will be carried out by specifically trained staff and are recorded in line with statutory guidance, using the school or setting's incident recording system. Additionally, parents/carers will always be informed of any restrictive practice in writing. Please refer to the Restrictive Practice, Use of Reasonable Force and Seclusion Policy for further information.

Partnership with Families

Families are essential partners in supporting pupils.

We work collaboratively with parents and carers to:

- understand pupils' / children's needs
- share strategies that support regulation
- maintain consistent approaches



- celebrate progress and achievements.

Open communication helps ensure that pupils / children feel supported both at home and in our settings.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed through:

- behaviour monitoring
- pupil / child voice
- staff reflection
- family feedback
- safeguarding and wellbeing considerations.

The policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it continues to reflect best practice in relational and inclusive education.



Appendices

Consistency

We will achieve consistency through adult behaviours:

- Consistent language, consistent response/ referring to the agreement/contracting between staff and pupils / children. Simple and clear expectations reflected in all conversations about behaviour.
- Consistent 'follow up' Staff to seek support with this where required but retaining ownership of repair and reintegration.
- Consistent positive reinforcement: Routine procedures for reinforcing, encouraging and celebrating appropriate behaviour.
- Consistent logical responses: clear and agreed.
- Consistent simple agreements/expectations referencing appropriate behaviour, icons, symbols and visual cues. 'Ready, respect, safe'.
- Consistent respect from adults even in the face of disrespect from a student.
- Consistent models of emotional control - Emotional restraint modelled as well as taught, staff team as role models for learners, learning alongside their students.
- Consistently reinforced rituals and routines for behaviour around the site.
- Consistent environment – consistent visual messages and core values.

Staged approach

We will help support pupils / children who may be showing unsafe behaviour through a staged approach. This is a **guide (remember flexible consistency)** to make explicit the expectations to pupils / children who are beginning to show unsafe behaviour. This should be done with the expectation that this is a personalised approach, as detailed specifically within the individual's Positive behaviour Support Plan. Visual support should be used to support communication and understanding.

Redirection – gentle encouragement. Could be use of eye contact, proximity or gesture.

Verbal reminders

This stage makes explicit the expectation. Examples are...

Remember our agreement about... thanks

"That doesn't look (Ready, respect, safe) how about we...."

"This behaviour is stopping learning. What do you need to behave safely?"

Second verbal reminder

"I can see you are still finding it hard to.../ not to.... I am not going to give up on you, how can I help?" How about we... Let's...



Signposting

A clear verbal/visual signpost delivered privately wherever possible making the pupil / child aware of their behaviour, the impact, reminding them of previous success.

This stage makes explicit the expectation followed by a logical response where appropriate. Examples are... if you kick the football over the fence, we can't play football.

Space to reflect - Give the pupil / child a chance to reflect away from others. Speak to the student privately and give them another opportunity to engage. Offer a positive choice to do so.

If behaviour was repeated again.

Move to another space – support from pastoral/another staff member with pupil / child, maintain connection. This is a re set opportunity; the aim is regulation.

Repair conversation - using a restorative approach explore what was happening, what someone was thinking/feeling, what they could do differently next time... Be mindful this conversation may have to be sometime later.

One Team Approach - work collaboratively with colleagues, the pupil / child and family to find a positive way forward.

If you need further clarification about any of these strategies then please contact your Headteacher.



Relationships Policy

Connection • Communication • Community



All behaviour is communication.
All communication is an expression of need.

We believe children learn best when they feel **safe**, **understood** and **connected**.
Behaviour is seen as **communication**, and our responses focus on support, reflection and repair.

Our Core Principles



Connection

Trusting Relationships



Communication

Behaviour as Communication



Community

Belonging for All

Our Relational Practice Framework



Dysregulation



Emotional Distress

- ✓ Communication Difficulties
- ✓ Sensory Overload
- ✓ Anxiety or Uncertainty
- ✓ Unmet Needs

Behaviour as Communication

- ✓ Emotional Distress
- ✓ Communication Difficulties
- ✓ Sensory Overload
- ✓ Anxiety or Uncertainty
- ✓ Unmet Needs



What might this child need right now, and how can we support them?

Logical Responses (Consequence)



Connected to the Behaviour



Build Positive Relationships



Guide Reflection & Responsibility



Maintain Clear Expectations



Expectations