Foxfield School

Relationships Policy

Approved by: Governors **Date:** June 2025
Link Governor: Steve Williams

Last reviewed on: Sep 2026
Next review due by: Sep 2027

This policy is based on the following values and beliefs.

- All children wish to belong, achieve and contribute to their school, family and community.
- All behaviour is a form of communication and the expression of underlying needs. It is not possible to support a child without addressing these needs.
- Behaviours can be a below conscious reaction that is held within the nervous system of the child as a result of their previous experiences.
- Children need personalised responses to support their personal development and well-being Relational approaches are effective in supporting the development of internal control and regulation.
- Consistency does not mean always responding in the same way to each child or behaviour. Whilst each individual child benefits from a consistent approach, being consistent and fair is not about everyone getting the same, but everyone getting what they need.
- Whilst punitive approaches may lead to short term results (behaviours ceasing through fear or shame) they do not lead to improved self-regulation that allows young people to choose positive behaviours for themselves.
- Punitive approaches may re-traumatise children and further embed the behaviours causing concern

The Foxfield School Relationship Policy works alongside, and may reference to the following policies;

- Calming Areas Policy
- Communication Policy
- Moving and Handling Policy
- Rewards Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Sensory Policy
- Aromatherapy and Massage Policy
- Child Protection and Safe Guarding
- Health and Safety Policy
- Incidents and Accidents
- Staff wellbeing

Contents

Introduction

1. Aims and expectations
2. Legal framework
3. Policy statement
4. Rational / Educational approach
5. Expectations
6. Developing relationships
7. Responding and Regulating
8. Restrictive Physical intervention
9. Repairing and Restoring
10. Additional information (use of vehicle restraints and calm rooms)

Appendix

11. Relationship plan
12. Support Ideas
13. Glossary of terms
14. Disclaimer (working realities)

AIMS AND EXPECTATIONS

All the issues outlined in this document must be seen in the context of the pupils individuals needs and the relationships that they have with those and the world around them. Any situations should be approached with the School Aims and Mission Statement in mind.

Vision of Foxfield School

To nurture happy, healthy, safe and independent young adults who are social communicators

Aims of Foxfield School

AIM 1
To enable all young people to achieve their full potential in all areas of their development.

AIM 2
To provide a happy, caring, stimulating, supportive, respectful and safe environment.

AIM 3
To work with everyone involved so that each young person in our school can become increasingly independent and integrate more successfully into the community.

AIM 4
To provide a broad and balanced curriculum relevant to the needs of every individual young person.

Underpinned by Foxfield School Mission Statement

"Together we L.E.A.R.N"

L - Life skills

E - Enjoyment

A - Achievement

R - Respect

N - New Experience

Legal Framework

This section should list any relevant legislation or official guidance that the policy addresses

Scope

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

• Behaviour and discipline in schools

• Searching, screening and confiscation at school

• The Equality Act 2010

• Use of reasonable force in schools

• Supporting students with medical conditions at school

It is also based on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice.

In addition, this policy is based on:

• Schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014`; paragraph 7 outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, paragraph 9 requires the school to have a written behaviour policy and paragraph 10 requires the school to have an anti-bullying strategy

At Foxfield we follow a three-part model as a graduated response, to guide staff in their support of our young people:

1. Developing Relationships

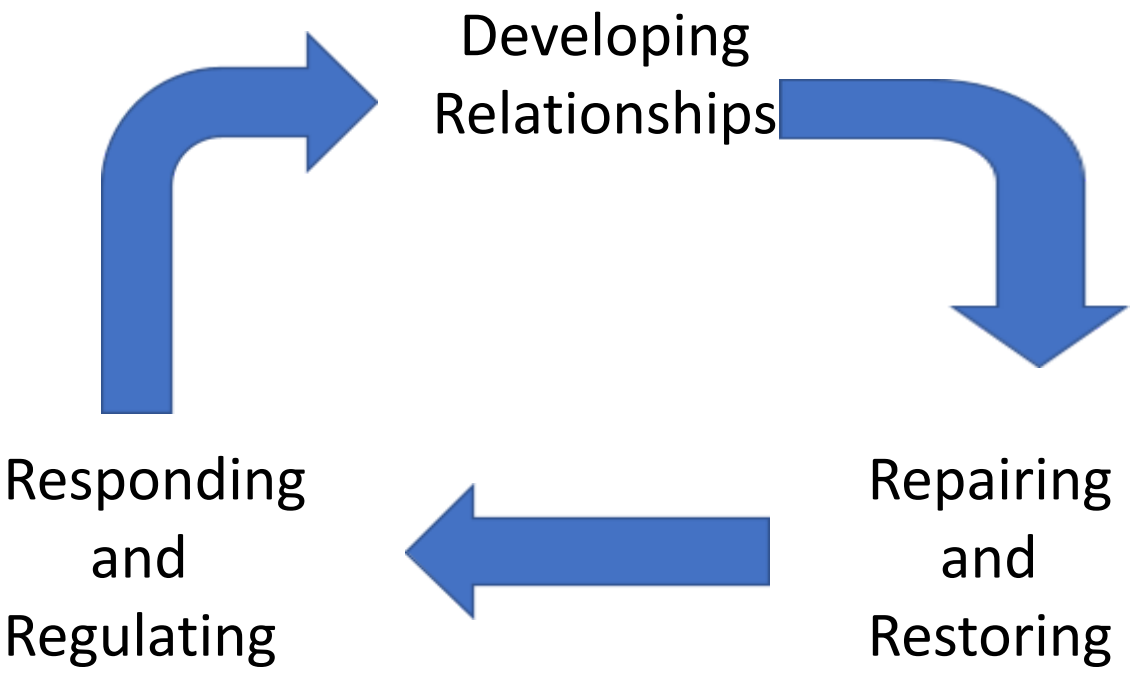
This part of our model is the universal element of our graduated response. It is through relationships that children learn to feel safe, belong, understand themselves, others and the world. Our overriding influence of how we are in a relationship is the PACE approach (Dan Hughes); to be Playful, Accepting, Curious and Empathetic.

2. Responding and Regulating

We understand that due to the prior experiences, additional needs and environmental triggers, some of our children will, on occasion, communicate their needs through distressed behaviours that can challenge those around them. In order to support them we need to be able to ensure their safety, to attune and validate. When the child is ready, we can soothe and regulate. This involves being able to empathise with their feelings and understand their thinking. We use our knowledge of brain development and the response of the body to interpret what we need to do to meet their needs.

3. Repairing and Restoring

This part of our model can only take place once the child is calm and ready to reflect and should not be initiated too early. In order to support them, we help our children to recognise what happened, why it happened, who was impacted and how they can learn different behaviours to meet their needs and move forward positively. We remember that punitive responses and shame can lead to feelings of worthlessness and helplessness and do not help our children to repair and restore, or learn new more helpful behaviours to meet their needs.



Relational Approach / Educational Approach

Whilst this policy describes our relational approach in a discrete and separate way. It is essential that it is understood that it should be read and understood in conjunction with our other school policies. In our school, our relationship approach is not a bolt-on, is not separate, and is instead integrated into our culture. There is a strong alignment between our educational approach, outlined within our curriculum policy, and the approach detailed in this policy. They support and complement each other and are best considered as a whole.

Our Relational Approach and Safeguarding

Our relationship approach has safeguarding at its core. The way that we build and maintain relationships with our children means we are able to know them, to notice small changes, to develop trust which allows them to feel safe to communicate about their experiences, thoughts and feelings, and for us to contain and support them when they do. There are likely to be occasions when working in a relationship with young people that staff will feel concerned about elements of their life, either currently or when discussing the past / future. All staff are trained in safeguarding, have read the school Safeguarding Policy, as well as the

relevant sections from the most current version of *Keeping Children Safe In Education*. Staff know how to report their concerns and the school has strong procedures to ensure that any concerns are robustly responded to.

Section 1: Developing Relationships

In order to be successful at school, children need to develop secure relationships which enable them to feel safe, secure and to experience success. In order for this to happen, relationships and kindness are at the heart of school life. For many children the development of these trusting relationships will need to be explicit, meaningful and very clearly perceived. Children who have additional barriers to building positive relationships may need additional time and support to achieve this.

Through these secure relationships, children allow adults to support them in understanding their feelings and emotions through co-regulation. Over time, they develop their understanding of social situations and develop healthy and positive feelings about themselves and develop emotional intelligence. Our approach to developing relationships is based on providing:

- **Time**
- **Protection**
- **Connection**
- **Understanding**
- **Care**

Time

In order for children to feel safe and secure positive relationships have to be developed. Positive relationships develop from shared positive experiences. Time must be given to shared experiences.

Protection

All children need to feel safe and secure. Without a sense of safety and security children cannot explore, play, learn or interact effectively with others. Children who do not feel safe

tend to be hyper vigilant and have difficulty regulating their emotions. Children get their sense of safety primarily from being in secure relationships with others. Children need to experience positive relationships with adults in school who are able to make them feel safe through being consistent, predictable, reliable and trustworthy as well as providing containment through structure, routines and boundaries. Our way of interacting with the child is vital in securing a sense of safety. Safety cues are key to enabling the child to feel safe. Attuned friendly and warm facial expressions, careful modulation and frequency of the voice and non-threatening body movements indicate safety. A lack of safety cues can be interpreted as a threat.

Helping children to feel safe:

- **Be predictable, reliable and trustworthy.** Telling a child that you are those things will not be enough. They need to be shown by what you do. If things change and you are not able to do what you have said that you will do, explain why this has happened, acknowledge and validate the potentially difficult emotions that this may have evoked and put in place an alternative plan.
- **Provide safety cues.** Being aware of the cues you are giving is very important, particularly through your facial expression and frequency and modulation of your voice. Consider other safety cues such as movements which could make them feel safe. Take care to ensure open and friendly body language. Be aware that your intended communication of safety may not appear as such to some children; for example, a smile may be interpreted as a grimace.
- **Provide structure and routine.** This will provide containment for many children by providing external structures that help them to feel safe. These need to match the child's needs and be communicated to them in a way that they understand and which is meaningful.
- **Pre-empting changing needs.** By knowing the individual preferences, likes and dislikes, triggers or early signals that indicate changing needs, we can adapt our practice.
- **Managing change and transitions.** Unfamiliar sounds in the environment, unfamiliar people or situations, change in routine, unfamiliar physical contact or sudden movement can all trigger feelings of fear. Sometimes just a lack of safety cues can trigger a defensive response. Changes can be large and small, even transitions such as moving from activity to activity or even a simple change in the environment may need to be supported.
- **Be understanding.** Have some understanding that the origin of the feelings being communicated will affect the effectiveness of your responses.

Connection

We are biologically social creatures. To optimise our mental health and success we need to be able to socially engage. Connection can be considered on several levels; to the place, the curriculum, the adults and the children. Developing a sense of connection and belonging is vital in terms of the development of social skills and understanding, a positive sense of self and agency. We need to take care that we are truly connecting with children at their level and in a way that is meaningful to them. It is about them feeling a connection that they associate with emotional significance. Authenticity is key. Children want to know that you are being you and that you genuinely want to connect with them. They may feel anxious if they feel you are trying to be something you are not. Verbal and non-verbal communication needs to match.

Helping to connect with children (PACE):

- **Playfulness –** is about creating a feeling of lightness and interest when you communicate. An open, ready, calm, relaxed and engaged approach. Playfulness allows children to cope with positive feelings. Being playful isn't about being funny all the time. It's about helping children be more open to and experience what is positive in their life, one step at a time. It also gives hope. If you can help the child discover their own emerging sense of humour, this can help them wonder a little more about their life and how come they behave in the ways that they do.
- **Acceptance –** is about actively communicating to the child that you accept the feelings, thoughts, urges, motives and perceptions that are underneath their presentation. Unconditionally accepting a child makes them feel secure, safe and loved. A fresh start is always offered. The child's inner life simply is; it is not right or wrong. Accepting the child's intentions does not imply accepting behaviour, which may be hurtful or harmful to another person or to self. The child does not feel judged nor criticised.
- **Curiosity –** is showing the child that you are interested in what is going on for them and are willing to do something about it. It is important to use a quiet, accepting tone that conveys a simple desire to understand the child: this is not the same as agreeing with their perception of the event but shows your interest in understanding it and accepting the feelings that were involved. Adults should try to avoid asking "Why?" and instead might ask:
    a) "Is it ok if I share my idea of what is going on for you?
    b) "What do you think was going on?",
    c) "What do you think that was about?"
    d) "I wonder what…?"
    e) "I imagine that…"
    f) "I noticed that…."

- **Empathy –** is when you are showing the child that their feelings are important to you, and that you are alongside them in their experience. You are showing that you can cope with the strong emotions with them and you are trying hard to understand how it feels. Understanding and expressing your own feelings about the child's experience can often be more effective than reassurance.

Understanding

Children who have had interruptions in their emotional development that have impacted on their ability to develop and maintain trusting relationships can have difficulty understanding and processing their emotions in order to regulate themselves. Difficulties with relationships are often associated with literacy difficulties and / or language impairment and so it is important to assess language and literacy needs alongside a child's relational needs. Executive functioning difficulties can have a significant impact on the child's capacity to learn and may go unrecognised. Children may also have a difficulty with social skills which has arisen due to a lack of social learning opportunities. Sensory needs can have a significant impact on all areas of life and can most definitely influence behaviours and presentation. Children with sensory needs can be hyper (over) or hypo (under) sensitive. We understand that each of our children will experience challenges that are unique to them and we will adjust our responses accordingly. At Foxfield we are committed to research based approaches and our training and induction processes ensure that staff have the tools to understand the children they support.

Care

Repeated experiences of being cared for, loved and soothed enables the child to feel good about who they are over time, effective, worthy of attention and able to calm themselves. Helping to care:

- Showing them that you care. Notice things about them (a new coat, new shoes, haircut etc) and remember details about them including birthdays, interests, favourite sporting teams or bands. Let them know that you are thinking about their basic needs. Keep them warm, sheltered and if appropriate provide them with food and drink.
- Holding them in mind. Let them know that you think about them even when they are not with you. Finding regular opportunities to let them know they were in your thoughts is important in enabling the child to understand that relationships can be secure.
- Seeing every interaction as a possible intervention. Letting them feel that we care so much that we want to take every opportunity to let them grow and develop.

Section 2: Responding and Regulating

"I have come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous…. I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanised or de-humanised."

Haim Ginott, Teacher and Child. (1972)

It is normal for children of all ages to be playful, challenge authority and to test boundaries. Most children will at some point overstep a boundary and will need reminding in a way that is appropriate to the individual about agreements and expectations. Our relationships, and the relational skills we utilise should be our first port of call at these times. It is important to be mindful of the additional barriers that many of our children have and the impact this has on their stress regulation system. They may have a narrower window of tolerance than is typical and so the frequency with which they enter a state of fight / flight / freeze may be higher. It is at these points that our children will need repeated experiences of safe adults alongside them, supporting them to feel secure in order to support the development of their own regulation systems and expand their window of tolerance over time.

Sometimes, when a child is experiencing strong emotions the resulting behaviours may not be safe. In these circumstances, making the situation safe should be the primary objective. The approach described in 'Section 1- Developing Relationships' continues to be the essential foundation of 'Responding and Regulating.'

When responding and regulating to the needs of a child whilst they are experiencing strong emotions, we must remain steady within our own self; to be aware of our own feelings, hooks and triggers, which may bring about emotional responses that might impact upon the effectiveness of our support. Learning to put our own ego aside and focusing on the needs of the child is helpful in the moment. As we begin to respond and regulate, it is important to go in with an open mind. Our initial response and role is to learn about the child's perspective, to de-escalate and to help them to become regulated and safe. If you go in with an intention in mind, it may not transpire to be aligned with the needs that you are about to learn about.

The strategies laid out below are based on latest research. It is suggested that the order is the most ideal flow in helping a child to become regulated but there are situations where using the strategies 'out of order' is appropriate if the individual circumstances make this an appropriate response.

Although the approach can assist the development of new trusting relationships, it is often most effective when it is carried out by adults who already have strong and positive relationships in place. Strategies to support:

- **Attunement (to bring harmony)-** Meeting the child's emotional intensity at their level, mirroring and matching to connect with them in their pain or their joy. We do not rush to calm and instead understand that calming can only come after attunement. We are assessing, listening, observing and making sure that the child knows we are there, that we understand them and their state through our reflection of their emotions. We listen and assess before we respond.
- **Accepting and Validating -** Validating how the child is experiencing an event, even if it is very different to how you have / would experience it. We try to understand their story through their lens. We do not try to distract or persuade the child out of having the feelings they are experiencing, rather affirming, understanding and recognising those feelings. It is important to be open and curious. It can be helpful to retell the story back to a child; explaining what you have heard and letting them know that their feelings and emotions have been heard. <u>This is not the time where we try to correct or reframe their view of the experience</u>, which comes later.
    - *Child:* "I am rubbish at Maths"…
    - *Instinctive Reassuring Response:* "That's not true. You are good at Maths."

  An example of accepting and validating is:
    - *Child:* "I am rubbish at Maths"…
    - *Accepting and Validating Response:* "I hear that you feel that you are not good
    - at Maths at the moment; that must be hard for you."
- **Containment of feelings -** Being able to stay in a relationship alongside a child, whilst they are experiencing intense feelings and emotions. Some behaviours that may be displayed could be aimed at pushing adults away. By demonstrating that we can bear these strong feelings will deepen the trust between the child and the adult. Some describe this as the child consciously / unconsciously confirming whether the adult will continue to be there for them and will continue to like them, even after they have shared their strong feelings with them, "I care enough about you to not let you be out of control".
- **Soothing -** Soothing in conjunction with addressing the other relational needs above, can develop stress regulating systems in the brain which control the body's defence pathways. This is where we demonstrate emotional co-regulation by soothing their distress and allowing them to decompress. For each child this may look different and will take different amounts of time but <u>all young people need repeated experience of being soothed</u> with and alongside others before they can learn how to self soothe:
    - Physiological regulation; movement, walking, breathing (e.g. four/seven breathing).

- Co-relational regulation; to be able to spend time with an individual with whom they have a close relationship with.
- Cognitive regulation; the adult thinking out loud and supporting the child to see the sequence of solution focussed thinking; e.g. offering a sorting / making activity might engage their thinking brain so that emotions and feelings can begin to be processed.

A Personalised Approach

There is no universal script or approach that will work with all young people. How we develop relationships and learn about preferences, interests, and successful strategies is critical to ensure our responses are the right ones for the individual we are supporting. As we learn about the elements that make the support of each individual successful, we record these using the Relationship Plan. These plans contain a bank of strategies to be built and shared so that our responses can be personalised in order to prepare and learn about what practice will be most effective prior to being in the moment.

Restrictive Physical Intervention

Restrictive Physical Intervention is a last resort and should only be used when there is no practicable alternative and when it is wholly necessary to prevent a greater or more significant harm.

Restrictive Physical Intervention must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and must never be used as a punishment: It should only be used if there is an immediate and significant danger to children, staff or school property.

The decision to use restrictive physical intervention must take account of:

- In the best interests of the pupil – taking into account all the relevant circumstances
- Must only employ a reasonable amount of force
- Must be proportionate to the circumstance
- Must be necessary - based on an assessment of risks associated with intervention compared with the risks of not employing physical intervention.
- Medication/illness
- Physical disabilities
- Sensory impairments

Legal justification;

- To prevent injury to self or others,
- To prevent damage to property,
- If a crime is being committed.

Restrictive Physical Intervention must only be used if all other strategies have failed. It must neither be threatened nor employed in a punitive manner, nor to force compliance with staff

instructions and should never use more force or last longer than the minimum that is required.

It is vital to understand the impact of using Restrictive Physical Intervention can have on the stability of relationships and on the emotional state and development of the child. The decision to use RPI is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always be dependent on the individual circumstances. Types of incident where the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention may be necessary fall into 2 broad categories:

1) Action due to imminent risk of injury

2) Action due to developing risk of injury or significant damage to property

Restrictive Physical Intervention may be used where a student is on school premises or elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of a staff member and must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary to the circumstances.

Permissible physical interventions must be in line with our Team Teach training, the following strategies may be employed:

- Guides – Used when there is minimal resistance from the pupil.
- Controls –Used when there is moderate resistance from the pupil.
- Restraints – Used when there is rigorous resistance from the pupil

(please referrer to the glossary of terms for names of techniques)

Guidance and training are essential in this area. We adopt the best possible practice in Foxfield School and provide training for all staff at several levels including: -

- Team Teach Training Level 1 - all staff (every 24 months)
- Team Teach level 2 – All staff directly working with pupils who can pose a risk (every 12 months)
- Thrive Training – all Staff
- Emotional well-being and trauma informed practices - all staff
- Managing conflict in difficult situations - all staff

Training and development play a crucial role in promoting positive behaviour and supporting those whose poor emotional wellbeing has the risk of becoming difficult or dangerous. Settings have a statutory responsibility to enable staff to develop the understanding and skills to support learners and help parents/carers to secure consistent approaches.

At Foxfield School all teachers and teaching assistants are authorised, provided they have been trained in Team Teach methods. This applies to all staff, but should there be new staff in post who have not yet received training, they would not be allowed to physically

intervene. The SLT will ensure that all staff are aware of the guidance and understand what is involved. SLT will review this list of users regularly to ensure that it is up- to-date. Supply staff will not be authorised to use Restrictive Physical Interventions except if they have been specifically authorised by the SLT and they can provide evidence of recent training in the method. Parents and any volunteers in the school are not given authorisation to use RPI. Staff from the local education authority may have their own policies about the care and control of pupils but, whilst on the premises, they will be expected to be aware of, and operate within, the policy of this school.

Section 3 - Repairing and Restoring

"Too often we forget that discipline really means to teach, not to punish. A disciple is a student, not a recipient of behavioural consequences."

Daniel Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson - The Whole-Brain Child. (2012)

Whilst our relational approach leads us not to challenge many behaviours in more traditional ways in the moment, its effectiveness is reliant upon us having high quality restorative conversations to Repair and Restore after the event. If this component is not present, positive change is unlikely to occur. These conversations, which are designed to help our students to understand the impact of their behaviours and what they might do differently in the future are essential. We acknowledge that by removing some of the more traditional sanctions / consequences, we must 'fill the space' with a high-quality alternative. To not do so risks our children failing to feel the containment that is so critical to their regulation and progress.

When you have had to 'Respond and Regulate,' it is important to ensure that there is an effective follow up of 'Repair and Restore.' The timing of this part of the process is sensitive. It is important that enough time has passed to ensure that the child is soothed and regulated, however we don't want too much time that the young person struggles to remember the event. This time will depend on the individual needs.

For children with additional communication needs, attachment insecurities or other barriers, the support they receive to repair relationships is vital to their success. We are providing a learning experience which has the power to challenge the perception that relationships do not last or are not worth having.

We must work to 'Repair and Restore' using empathy and compassion. We should expect that the child may expect the experience to be a negative one and so may put in place barriers or defence mechanisms to protect themselves. We want to break the cycle that they have experienced previously but this can take time and must be done in a way and at a pace that they can manage.

Our relational approaches acknowledge that all behaviour is a form of communication and is often an indication of an unmet need. Instead of spending time investigating incidents in order to then attribute sanctions, they seek to explore thoughts and feelings in order to gain understanding and promote repair and restoration.

We should remember that some of the incidents and behaviours that are likely to be discussed have their basis below consciousness / have not been chosen by the child and are linked to prior life experiences and / or neurodiversity.

We want to support reflection, deepen understanding and provide support to develop alternative responses that are able to meet need in a more positive way next time without causing a sense of toxic shame that is so often the consequence of an incident for children who have struggled in school.

Staff engaging in a strong 'Repair and Restore' interaction:

- Are mindful of their relational skills (safety cues, curiosity, empathy, containment, soothing etc.) as described in the earlier sections of this policy.
- Believes and shows that every individual, regardless of their behaviour, is a worthwhile person who has a right to be listened to and taken seriously.
- Knows there is no one truth about a given situation and is curious about how others see the same situation, inviting them to tell their story and acknowledging their right to their point of view.
- Acknowledges and accepts feelings – does not judge feelings as right or wrong.
- Attunes to, validates and contains feelings with care and compassion.
- Is reflective about how thoughts, feelings, needs and behaviour are influencing each other, both in terms of themselves and then others. Is able to hear and express feelings and needs within the stories they hear and tell.
- Has the intention of listening and talking in a way that builds, maintains or repair relationships in order to support participants in finding a mutually acceptable outcome or at least a way to cope with the situation as it is.
- Consider where the child is in their development of understanding physical sensations, feelings and emotions.

Children must feel that they can trust the process to make the situation better and that they will be safe throughout. With a trusted adult alongside them exploring, the 'Repair and Restore' approach invites and supports the child to consider:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking?
- How were you feeling?
- Who else has been affected by this?

- What do you need, and what needs to happen now, so that we can 'Repair and Restore'

For many of our children, accessing these questions in a meaningful way is challenging and requires a variety of personalised approaches.

Personalised Approaches

There are a number of strategies that can help children to access a 'Repair and Restore' interaction. In these cases, the following can be helpful:

- Change the environment; it is important to consider the location of the communication; meetings in offices, particularly with professionals in authority may have considerable associations with previous traumatic interactions and could cause fear and anxiety.
- Consideration of the adult letting the child choose where they would like to meet, or meeting somewhere neutral can be helpful. Often a 'walk and talk' or meeting off site can feel less intimidating.
- There can be a preconception that the 'Repair and Restore' conversation has to be with certain people; perhaps with the adult who was most involved in the incident or the most senior member of staff. In fact, it might be appropriate to allow the adult who has the best relationship with the child to lead on the process. Although it is important that some sort of restoration with person[s] involved in any incident takes place.
- It can be helpful to work through others. For example, communicating with parents / carers and allowing them to scaffold the conversation at home can be helpful if the child does not yet have a strong enough relationship to feel able to engage with staff in school.
- Preparation and pre-warning can help. If a child knows ahead of time what will be discussed, what the potential outcomes might be, where it will be held, how long they need to be there and who will support them, they will feel empowered to engage more readily.
- Changing the format can help. A conversation is a complex interaction and may be too difficult. An exchange of notes or letters, or reflections through visuals creative processes such as art / crafts, role play or comic strips can make an interaction more accessible for some. PILS App is available on all ipads to support this.
- Group meetings and conversations can help some children. Whilst this may need support, it can be incredibly powerful in assisting them to own and be accountable for their own responses.

Learning for the Adults

It is critical that the 'Repair and Restore' process is not solely about reflection on the part of the child. There will almost always be learning on the part of the school and of individual staff. Staff should model humility and where appropriate, share what they feel they might do differently next time as part of the process. This policy sets out the support that will be afforded to our children when they experience difficulties. It is acknowledged that staff may also need support as part of their own 'Repair and Restore' processes. The school takes this responsibility seriously and has invested significantly in structures and processes that offer the support that they need.

Sanctions / Consequences

We do not believe in punitive sanctions or punishments. Research shows that they do not change behaviours and can reinforce the feelings that a child is not good enough, is not worthy and should feel shame. These feelings and emotions are not helpful in promoting meaningful learning over time and do not support the development of skills. There are times where it is appropriate however, to consider natural consequences. A natural consequence is where a child is helped to understand the natural consequences to them in terms of the effect a particular behaviour has on themselves or others.

Examples of natural consequences, applied through the approaches detailed within 'Repairing and Restoring' include:

- If something is broken, it is no longer available for use.
- Where damage or disruption to the school environment has been caused by a child, then assisting to put this right is a useful consequence that could aid learning.
- If a child's behaviour causes harm to someone else, an attempt to restore and repair may be an appropriate natural consequence but it is important to ensure this is genuine and not forced. A child being encouraged to apologise when they do not understand or agree with doing so has little value.
- If a child's presentation whilst learning in a particular context was judged to be unsafe, the school may make adjustments to their timetable to ensure that they can be more safe; e.g. if a child needs to go to the pool at lunch.
- If a child is misusing school equipment (e.g. craft scissors, kitchen knives, IT equipment) and the result is that there is risk or harm or of disruption to learning, a temporary period whereby they do not have access to the equipment might be considered (whilst understanding the importance of always prioritising learning how to use equipment safely in the longer term).
- If a behaviour causes concern, staff may choose to call parents / carers to inform them of the behaviour. This is not to punish or humiliate the child but to facilitate good communication and a consistent approach to support the child to develop their skills

Post Incident Process

1. Incident Recording

It is critical to record incidents promptly and accurately to ensure that there is sufficient reflection and learning in the period afterwards. It is by observing and recording carefully that we start to see patterns over time, can start to understand the thoughts and feelings that are behind some of the behaviours that we see and can work to offer the appropriate support in response. Using CPOMS, staff record their observations and according to the nature of the incident. The phrases listed below allow for analysis depending on the nature of the incident and to allow staff to differentiate and respond according to the level of need that is being communicated.

Distress - challenges that are very real for the child themselves but do not significantly impact on others.
Disruption- Behaviours develop that begin to interrupt the learning of others (may include lower level damage).
Damage - Significant disruption to learning and safety caused by damage to property.
Dangerous - Significant disruption to safety caused by risk (or actual harm) to children, staff or others.
A Threat To Life (TTL) - Incidents that are actually or potentially critical (potentially life ending / potential for life-long impact).

All incident reports must be written on the day that the incident occurred either directly on to CPOMS or an approved temporary alternative. The temporary report should then be written up in full on CPOMS with the next 24 hours.

PAWS

PAWs refers to Progress, Attendance, and Welfare. Each week staff are asked to update any pupils to the 'pupil tracker' for a group consisting of Family Liaison, Leadership and Social and Emotional Health lead to discuss and offer support to pupils and families of concerns. These updates can also be in response to a write up from an incident on CPOMs, that a Senior Leader is referring staff to seek more advice to support pupils. Some referrals come from conversations with parents who need more support for home for their child.

When the panel meet, each pupil is discussed on an individual basis, information from past history, attendance concerns, welfare in school/home/respite, as well as any concerns for the progress in the classroom. As a team a plan is made as to the appropriate supports to help the individual. The current support offered can be Family Liaison team, Nurture supports, Behaviour, Communication, Sensory, Therapists, Nursing, OT, Physiotherapy team, as well as sitting with the Headteacher for any concerns they need to support with.

These supports and interventions are reviewed and any updates added to the pupil tracker in which more support can be offered, or an exit plan of addition support is drawn up.

2. Post Incident Review

After an incident, there are a number of processes which must take place in order to ensure that the appropriate responses have been made, that sufficient support has been provided to the children and the team around them so that everyone can learn and move forward towards improved outcomes. The amount of follow up work is dependent on the level of incident.

Follow up support might include

A visual debrief board with symbols and questions,

Drawings of the incident, what happened before, during and after, and what can we do next time to drawn and added to the images,

Playdough so show visual representation of feelings,

Quiet check in playing a game, or massage,

Shared games with staff,

Time together.

3. Monitoring over time

As well as the learning and reflection that occurs after each individual incident, it is also important to analyse over time, so that patterns can be explored and further adjustments for support and provision can be arranged. To this end, each child is assessed according to their individual need and presentation and is reviewed proportionately by the school as part of their graduated response.

Incident data is reviewed as part of the school's half termly data analysis routine. Early warning signs are reviewed so that early intervention can be put in place pro-actively. Base teams lead appropriate. Information from incident report data is compered on an individual bases and reviewed considering other information from PAWS.

4. Graduated Response

The principles of how we respond to individual incidents is outlined above within the 'Repairing and Restoring' and 'Post Incident Review' sections above. However, as part of the wider monitoring over time of incidents, a graduated response may be needed in order to make modifications to the provision we offer our children.

It is important that these modifications are proportional to the individual context and that when they are required, they are actioned as promptly as is practicable. Responses include:

- Making changes to the peer group, staffing ratios or staffing personnel that are involved in supporting the child.
- Adjusting the timetable, learning approach or planned activities to further maximise chances of success.
- Providing additional 1:1 or small group time to work on the skills needed to manage learning time effectively.
- Offering enhanced leadership oversight or more time with staff who know them best (my safe person).
- Accessing additional / specialist advice with regard to understanding needs. For example, drawing and talking, discussion and planning with a Clinical Psychologist or other relevant professionals.
- Additional staff training to improve the quality of the support provided.
- Increased partnership working with parents / carers via the schools family liaison team to increase the effectiveness and alignment of the chosen approaches.
- Increased multi-agency involvement to increase the support provided to the child and the adults around them. For example, support from children's social care, mental health professionals or the police.
- Partnerships with specialist external providers (suitably safeguarded) to offer approaches and support that the school cannot offer in house - e.g. off site therapeutic youth work, specialist forest school activities or particular learning activities that will engage and regulate.
- Outreach from staff to offer intervention and support in the community which may, in some cases, reduce the triggers that may be present within the school environment.
- Emergency Annual Review to allow for multi-professional review and planning.
- Offering alternative provision.

5. Involvement of Governors

It is governors responsibility to approve this policy and monitor its application within the school. Governors at Foxfield school also monitor incidents and the use of RPI regular.

Additional Information

The Use of Reins, Handling Belts and Vehicle Harnesses

At Foxfield School the use of reins and vehicle harnesses are required at times. Some of this equipment can be used in supporting pupils that can demonstrate challenging behaviour. There are strict guidelines to the use of this equipment. Please refer to Foxfield School Manual Handling Policy for further details.

Calming spaces

Foxfield has a number of spaces on the school grounds (inside and outside) that can be used with the purpose of calming a pupil/pupils. These are not designated areas, however, if spaces are used for such purpose then it should be recorded using the correct procedures stating which environment was used. Some areas are more effective than others for calming pupils. Staff should also take into account other constraints e.g. the weather when using outside spaces, the times of day when using the playground as school transport could be moving. Calming spaces should be safe, quiet areas where pupils can relax and de-stress when needed, while being supervised from a safe distance by staff.

Every classroom in Foxfield has an additional two rooms inside. One of which is built for the purpose of being a store cupboard for staff to use and the other is built to be flexible depending on the needs to the pupils whose classroom it is and will be decorated and furnished accordingly. E.g. small work room, library, sensory room, physiotherapy room, calming room etc. This provides facilities for pupils and staff to use when required that are in close proximity and can make incidents more manageable. These rooms all have windows to both outside and the classroom and one door to the classroom. It is the class teacher and team who decide how to use this small room that best suits the pupils' needs. However, this can be overridden by the head teacher at any point.

For some pupils, particularly when they are upset, agitated or displaying aggressive and dangerous behaviours, close proximity to such a calming room is an advantage. Pupils can be directed to a room or escorted there by staff. On occasions this may require some form of restrictive physical intervention. Once the pupil is in the calming room however, they will be encouraged to relax, calm and stop any behaviours that may cause injury to themselves or others through appropriate de escalation strategies according to their Positive Behaviour Management Plan.

Pupils who are taken to a calming room will always be constantly and closely supervised by one or more staff. The staff will use de escalation techniques and effective communication to try to defuse the situation and bring the incident to a close. Their aim will be to get the pupil to behave calmly and safely as soon as possible so that they may re-join their peers and participate in normal school activities.

Any pupil who behaves in such a manner as to need to spend time in a calming room would have a Behaviour Management Plan. The circumstances that required the room to be used and the reasons for this would be considered when the plan was devised, reviewed and updated. The plan must be shared with the parents or carers. Where use of a calming room was built into a pupil's plan it should specify what staff will do in the room, why the pupil would be taken there, how long a pupil should spend there and the exit strategy (including positive listening and learning).

In instances where the small room is used, at any point with the purpose of being a calming room, staff must try to ensure that the room is free from materials, fittings and finishes that could cause self-harm where possible.

If pupils choose to use the calming room and take themselves there, they have the option to close the door or leave it open. They are unable to lock it and staff must observe them and support them until they are ready to resume.

Foxfield School currently has one room that is built with the sole purpose of a 'calming room' and is located just inside the pupils' entrance to the school building to the right, opposite the hall. If staff take the pupils into a calming room then staff should do one or more of the following;

- The door is open with no staff in the room but staff are in the main classroom to offer support and observed the pupil at all times.
- One or more staff in the room with no physical intervention is being used, with the door being open or closed.
- Two or more staff present in the room while restrictive physical intervention is being used, with the door being open or closed.
- No staff are in the calming room, the door is open and the pupil is being observed at all times by one or more members of staff.
- No staff are in the calming room, the door is closed by a member of staff but not held shut and the pupil is observed at all times. Pupil can leave or be supported if needed.
- If the pupil attempts to exit the calming room and it is not in their best interests or safe to do so in a current situation, then staff will need to use Restrictive Physical Intervention to take the pupil back into the calming room and remain in restrictive physical intervention a reasonable and proportionate time depending on the pupils needs. Staff must follow the for pupil's behaviour management plan.

Roles & Responsibilities

Implementation

All staff will be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Appendix 1

The Individual relationship plans

Given that it is important to ensure that the school maintains the health and safety of its environment and its staff and children, all children have an Individual Relationship Plan (IRP) (some pupils are still on individual behaviour management plans, these pupils will transfer to IRP as plans are updated).

Where it is known that the child may require additional help and support to manage their feelings and emotions, details of how staff should work when they 'Respond and Regulate' to incidents of distress and dysregulation are detailed here.

Based on our strategy of providing personalised responses, these documents detail the individual strategies that support the individual needs and support the team in providing the responses that are most appropriate in any given situation. These might include what restrictive physical intervention might be needed. IRPs are considered to be live and can be updated at any time. The processes in place post incident will often suggest or direct a staff member to review planning documents to ensure that they remain current as circumstances change.

Relationship Plan

Child's Name:

Date of Plan:

Review Date of Plan:

How do I communicate:
Sign ☐ Core Board ☐ Eyegaze ☐ Podd ☐ PECS ☐ switches ☐ Ipad ☐ Verbal ☐

Primary strategies

When I feel Regulated and "ready to learn"
The sensations that I am feeling: *I feel like my head is hot.* *My cheeks have gone red*
What is the function of my behaviour: *I am trying to control my environment because I don't feel safe*
How my feelings present themselves:
What sensory input can I have to support these feelings:
How can staff support / validate my feelings:

Interventions		Dates started
OT Sensory Profile	YES/NO	
Draw and talk	YES/NO	
Art therapy	YES/NO	
Physiotherapy	YES/NO	
SALT	YES/NO	
MOVE	YES/NO	
CAMHS	YES/NO	

My safe people are

Thrive Target	Date set	Date achieved

Timing day...	Any additional information (medical conditions e.g. Deafness, asthma etc, notes on background????).
Transition ☐ Lesson ☐ Lunch ☐ Arrival at school ☐ Pool ☐ Community ☐	

Secondary Strategies	Tertiary Strategies	
When I feel Dysregulated	When I feel in Crisis	Rupture and Repair
The sensations that I am feeling;	The sensations that I am feeling;	**Method of Debriefing / Rebuilding Relationships;**
What is the function of my behaviour;	What is the function of my behaviour;	**The sensations that I am feeling;**
How my feelings present themselves	How my feelings present themselves	
When I am Dysregulated staff should present from my feelings	What sensory input can I have to support these feelings	
How can staff support / validate my feelings:	How can staff support / validate my feelings:	Factors to consider ; *(e.g. Communication methods/routines etc)*

Appendix 2

Practical Strategies / Top Tips

- Some situations that we support can provoke feelings of anxiety or stress within ourselves. As adults, we set the tone. If we feel as if our own emotions and feelings are building to a point where we are unable to effectively offer the support that a child needs in that moment. Equally, a child may have a preference to be supported by someone different. It is important that we, without ego, recognise this and make arrangements to 'change face' with someone else.
- There are occasions when responding to a situation where you will need additional support. It is often helpful to have support and guidance from a colleague with more experience or who has a deeper relationship with the child. In more challenging situations staff might need to use the FISH system to call for assistance.
- In managing some situations, through the adults wanting to support and help each other, you can reach the situation where you have 'too many cooks.' It is important to have clarity about who is leading and who is there to support and to not have more adults involved than are required, the phrase 'one voice'. The person taking the lead could, in a conversational manner, let other adults know what is needed from them... which could be asking them to leave.
- It's okay not to get things right every time. On occasions, well intended efforts to support an individual may not have the desired effect. Staff may misread a situation or misatune. This is okay. It is important to demonstrate humility and model that when things go wrong, you sometimes need to try again.
- Removing the audience can have a massive impact on the success of supporting an individual when they are distressed or dysregulated. Being around others whilst you are not in control can bring about feelings of shame, embarrassment, and anxiety. Providing privacy, dignity and a sense of safety is critically important. The 'audience' could be considered as other young people or the number of adults who are present.
- It can be tempting to feel like you could only be effective if you are doing something. It is important to remember that sometimes what you don't do is just as important. Providing space and time for messages and communication to be absorbed and understood often requires periods of purposeful inaction; sometimes less is more.
- When supporting a child, it is often helpful to start by reviewing whether their basic needs are met. Often early signs of distress and dysregulation can be rooted in unmet needs in areas such as tiredness and fatigue, pain, feelings of hunger or thirst, feeling too hot / too cold or experiencing sensory overload. If through your relationship and knowledge of them, you are able to adjust the environment by opening a window, providing a drink or snack, turning down the volume on a device or intervening in any other way to meet their sensory needs, it can be very impactful.
- Communication is key. Whenever anxiety is high and a child is in a distressed state, their ability to socially communicate will be reduced in comparison to what is typical

for them and will often misinterpret social cues. We should not expect them to be able to engage or process our communication intentions. Visual or written prompts, in line with their communication needs may help.

Glossary of Terms

Calming room: A separate space (maybe a smaller room) where the pupil can either choose to go or be taken to with the sole purpose to calm without the presence of other pupils. Pupils who are taken to a calm room must be observed and supported at all times until they are ready to resume. (See section 7)

Controls: The positive application of force to overcome moderate resistance, guiding and directing a person's free movement. The purpose of the application should be to safeguard the pupil, other pupils and staff, to prevent significant damage to property and maintain an appropriate learning situation for all pupils.

Emergency: A one off event that is unforeseen. Once happened once any similar recurring incidents must be planned for.

Guides: The positive application of force to overcome minimal resistance promoting and encouraging a person's free movement. The purpose of its application should be to safeguard the pupil, other pupils and staff, to prevent significant damage to property and maintain an appropriate learning situation for all pupils.

Last Resort: When other less intrusive options have been considered and judged to be ineffective or inappropriate.

Positive Handling: The full range of Team Teach strategies used to de-escalate, defuse and divert in order to prevent violence and reduce the risk of injury to pupils and staff, reduce damage to property and maintain an appropriate learning situation.

Reasonable: Proportionate to the circumstances it was intended to prevent in relation to the context in which the action was applied.

Restraints: The positive application of force by staff, in order to overcome rigorous resistance; completely directing, deciding and controlling a person's free movement. The purpose of its application should be to safeguard the pupil, other pupils and staff, to prevent

significant damage to property and maintain an appropriate learning situation for all pupils. The proper use of which requires knowledge, understanding, skill and judgement. All restraints should be recorded, monitored and reviewed.

Restrictive Physical Intervention: The use of force to control a person behaviour. It is used to restrict movement, restrict mobility and/or to disengage from dangerous or harmful physical contact and/or removing dangerous objects.

Seclusion: Forced to spend time alone against own will. (This requires statutory powers other than in an emergency)

Significant: A measure of degree or extent used to designate a cut-off point in judging seriousness of harm, physical intervention or restriction of liberty.

Timeout: Restricting positive reinforcement as part of a planned behavioural programme

(Requires written agreed plan)

Withdrawal: Removed from the situation but observed and supported until they are ready to resume

Violence: Any incident involving physical or verbal abuse of a threatening and/or racial nature, threat, fear or the application of force arising out of the course of their work.

Examples of de-escalation and diversion strategies

De-escalation strategies at Foxfield School may include;

- Change of environment (pupils may ‘go on a job’)
- Change of face (a different/new member of staff deals with the situation but remains in line with the pupil’s Behaviour Management Plan)
- Change in tone of voice
- Change in body language, calm stance and posture
- Humour • Model desired behaviour
- Build in routines
- Doing something unusual
- Give freedom
- Remind of consequences
- Remind of rules and responsibilities
- Give empathy (not patronise)
- Engineer success / praise
- Change noise / light / scent levels
- Change activity
- Remove the audience
- Use private, understood signals
- Use powerful pauses / silence
- Take up time • Use help scripts
- Photos / happy book/ Toys / Objects
- Count down or up (use timers if needed)
- Communicating with pupil using careful use of language
- Physical support (being held in this instance is not RPI)
- Sensory Diet (see Michelle)
- Intensive interaction
- Massage (refer to Aromatherapy and Massage Policy)
- Mirrors • Drink / food
- Medication
- Body position of pupil
- Make a deal cards/Working for cards/ waiting for cards

Disclaimer in the light of working realities

Disclaimer – Team Teach

- In an effort to safeguard everyone involved in a violent incident where physical interventions are necessary: the skills and techniques taught have been included as a result of an ongoing risk assessed review. The results are reported at the steering group meetings at Team Teach.
- Whilst some physical injury potential can be reduced, there always remains some risk when two or more people engage and force is used to protect, release or restrain.

Working realities

Some students at Foxfield school can have issues around expressing emotions which can be expressed occasionally without warning or perceivable antecedents, in a physical and destructive manner, making the possibility of physical intervention higher than in other establishments. Although we only use RPI as a last resort, to protect other students and/or staff, it does sometimes happen and a student or member of staff may sustain a minor injury. In response to advice from Team Teach, we include in our policy the following statement that reflects the working realities and likely consequences when individuals are involved in an incident involving use of force: …

'Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the service user remains safe.' (Teamteach)

References

This policy its based upon extracts from and acknowledges the Relational Support Policy of Spaghetti Bridge, London.