Guidance for Developing Relational Practice and Policy

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Rationale

"All of us need to feel safe and cared for and enjoy a sense of belonging. Schools play a vital part in developing both relationships and the sense of belonging for all children.

Schools where children achieve well and enjoy their learning are those where relationships are at the centre of all they do. In these schools we see teachers who are able to create an atmosphere where all feel valued, where the life chances of all children are improved and where children take with them the ability to form meaningful and caring relationships into their adult life."

Ian Hemelik, Virtual School Headteacher, Devon County Council

The purpose of this guidance is to support schools to keep all children and young people fully included, engaged with learning and participating in their school communities. The guidance aims to support schools to improve outcomes for all children and young people with a particular focus on those who are vulnerable to and at risk of exclusion.

The guidance was written in response to well documented concerns regarding young people's mental health and well-being, long standing national trends which show the disproportionate exclusion of children from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and the negative impact of exclusion, both in the short and long term.

Research has demonstrated that investing time and resources into improving relationships in schools leads to positive outcomes around inclusion, engagement, attainment and achievement in the short term and community safety and cohesion in the longer term. (Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research BISSR). In addition positive teacher student relationships have been shown to be central to the well-being of both students and teachers (Sue Roffey University of Exeter).

The guidance seeks to support schools to develop Relational Practice and Policy which is aligned with current research and theory from the fields of attachment and trauma, behaviour management and on effective support for personal development. It emphasises the need for schools to place a greater importance on inclusion and belonging through promoting positive relationships and behaviour, effective teaching and preventative responses. In addition the guidance draws on a range of evidence based approaches that have been shown to prevent the need for exclusion. These approaches are based around the principle that all behaviour is a form of communication.

The guidance explores the practice that constitutes a relational approach; the teaching skills which underpin the approach and the systems, processes and provision necessary to support the implementation. Relational policies describe practice and replace behaviour management policies which rely on the use of behaviourist principles.

There are three main components to the relational model, Developing Relationships, Responding and Calming and Repairing and Restoring as well as guidance on working in relationship in the classroom and through a graduated response. The approaches should be used universally as good quality first teaching and in a planned and timely fashion to target early intervention for children and young people who may be at risk of exclusion.

The focus is on creating a positive whole school ethos and policy that promotes positive relationships and behaviour and reduces the need to consider exclusion.

Following guidance for schools and local authorities to refresh policy on exclusion with a focus on relational approaches, exclusions in Scotland have reduced dramatically.

The figures for 2018-19 show that in Scotland just three pupils were permanently excluded from their school, although this does represent a rise on 2016-17, when just one pupil was permanently excluded in Scotland. When it came to temporary exclusions there were 21.6 per 1,000 pupils last year, down from 40 per 1000 pupils in 2010-11.

"We don't have any fancy-nancy initiative where I can say, 'There's £1 million here that I spent on that and wow, look, it reduced exclusions. What we have done is we made the decision to work in a more child-centred way. The whole agenda in Scotland around adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed practice has had a big impact. Teachers are much more knowledgeable now about the context of children's lives and behaviour is no longer looked at in isolation. One of the biggest achievements in Glasgow is that teachers don't see it as bad behaviour but as distressed behaviour. That all behaviour is communication is one of our big training focuses. Now they are seeing behaviour in a different light."

Maureen McKenna Glasgow Director of Education

Developing a policy and establishing and maintaining good practice.

Relational practice and policy replaces behaviourist approaches and behaviour policies by providing guidance as well as clear structures and processes which support the development and maintenance of a calm and inclusive learning community.

Policy should function as a guide to practice and should be clear as to how all children will be kept safe, cared for, belong, included and supported to learn. A relational framework should outline high expectations for behaviour and clear pathways for resolving difficulties.

It should outline the school's vision, values and beliefs regarding inclusion and the underpinning theoretical frameworks they are adopting as well as their processes and systems for supporting children and young people in their social and emotional development. The goal should be to support the inclusion and well-being of all children and to avoid the use of practices which exclude children.

Your policy should include links to other school policies such as the policy on safeguarding, safe handling, SEND so that all policies work together to support holistic practice which works towards a common aim and within a consistent value system.

Geddes 2014 and Bomber 2011 suggest that a successful whole school approach involves commitment from the whole school community. Whole school training, ongoing staff development and staff support will be vital to ensure a shared understanding, the consistent application of relational and restorative practices and that staff are supported to be skilled practitioners.

Systems will need to be developed to support and sustain practice. This will involve identifying leads, champions, and key adults as well as establishing processes and networks in school to enable staff to meet to share good practice, provide support and supervision, plan, review and problem solve.

Schools will need to be able to provide high quality relational provision such as; nurture groups, small group intervention on emotional literacy, opportunities to develop stress management techniques and develop spaces for children to access interventions and alternative provision.

Schools will need to identify the support they need from partner agencies and utilise knowledge and expertise in order to train and support staff, assess need, plan, implement and review.

From Practice to Policy

An example framework for a relational policy can be found in appendix 1.

Details of how practice informs policy is found in each section.
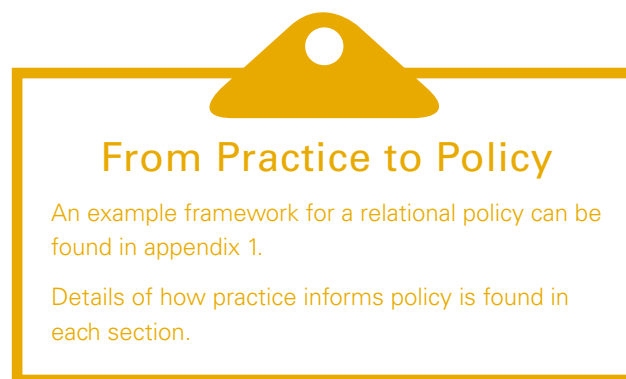
Hope School in Liverpool, a special school for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties (SEMH) has a non-exclusion policy and has replaced the school's Behaviour Management policy with a Relational Support for Personal Development policy. Hope School now focuses on attachment friendly practice and is focused on developing the pupils' intrinsic motivation. The schools April 2019 OFSTED report states:

"Based on academic research you have developed a school that is sensitive to supporting pupils with attachment and complex trauma histories. This new approach removed reliance on external sanctions and rewards to control behaviour. The emphasis changed to understanding the internal reasons for behaviour. …The impact of this new approach has been the creation of a school focused on understanding why pupils struggle to control their behaviour….Behaviour in school is exemplary and pupils make outstanding progress in their learning."

Developing whole school relational practice

Establishing and maintaining systems and practice in line with the policy will involve whole school approaches and ongoing commitment. This will involve:

- Active support and modelling from senior leaders and school governors.

- Promoting consistent thinking and practice across all school staff, parents and partner agencies.

- Whole staff training, continual professional development and induction for new staff in relational, regulatory and restorative theory and practice.

- Using evidence-informed approaches to meet the spectrum of needs of all children to:
  > Support the emotional well-being, development and learning of all pupils through secure relationships
  > Manage behaviour, regulate emotions and build children's capacity for self-regulation
  > Respond to the needs of those children and young people who have unmet attachment needs, have experienced trauma and loss and have had adverse childhood experiences
  > Promote learning and repair through the use of restorative approaches

- The consistent implementation of relational, regulatory and restorative strategies by all staff, especially Key Adults who support targeted children.

- A lead at a senior level and a network of skilled staff to continue leading the school's training and development of relational, regulatory and restorative practices and to support staff to develop the approach.

- High quality Relational intervention and provision.

- Involvement of parents and the wider community.

- Continual monitoring, evaluation and development of approaches.

- The use of partner agencies to support training, supervision, assessment, development and review.

- Support for all staff through regular meetings and individual supervision and coaching.

Values and Beliefs

It is helpful to consider and establish what beliefs underpin the school ethos and what values inform practice. School staff, governors, parents and children should have a clear joint vision as to what they want for their school community.

This guidance is based on the following values and beliefs.

- An ethos based around inclusive and compassionate principles is beneficial to the well-being of all children.

- All children wish to belong, achieve and contribute to their school, family and community. Child centred approaches, where their voices are central and where plans utilise their strengths, resources and qualities are integral to success.

- High levels of nurture and empathy, with containment and structure, support children to feel safe. Children need clear boundaries, predictable routines, expectations and regulated responses to behaviour.

- Natural consequences that can follow certain behaviours should be made explicit, without the need to enforce sanctions that can shame and ostracize children from their peers, school community and family, leading to potentially more negative behaviour. Responses to behaviour should ensure that children feel safe and that all needs are met.

- Behaviour is often a form of communication and the expression of underlying needs. It is not possible to support a child's behaviour without addressing these needs.

- Children need personalised responses to supporting their personal development and well-being. Consistency does not mean always responding in the same way to each child or behaviour, it means responding in a way which is consistent to our values and beliefs. 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.

- Relational, regulatory and restorative approaches are more effective in supporting the development of internal control and regulation. Not all behaviours are a matter of choice and therefore external control will not be effective in changing behaviour.

- Punitive approaches and exclusion may re-traumatise children and further embed the behaviours causing concern. Theory and research on attachment, neuroscience and adverse childhood experiences advocate the use of relational and restorative approaches rather than those that are behaviourist and punitive.

From Practice to Policy

The policy needs to state the values and beliefs which underpin the school's ethos, practice and vision.

Parklands primary school in Leeds, once a school where there were 150 fixed term exclusions in a year and children were regularly sent to isolation has been transformed. The school now has "no place for zero tolerance. Instead the focus is on positivity, respect and love" Chris Dyson Head Teacher Parklands School. Only one child has been permanently excluded in 5 years, the school has one of the highest scores in KS2 in the country and has an outstanding rating from OFSTED.

Theory and Research

Relational practice and policy should be firmly grounded in theory, research and evidenced based practice.

This guidance draws on theory and research from the fields of Neuroscience, Attachment, Trauma, Adverse Childhood Experience, Intersubjectivity and Restorative Approaches. There is information throughout this guidance on these subjects and also in Appendix 3 and 4 (key research and theory which underpins the relational approach).

There are also a range of evidence based approaches that have been shown to prevent the need for exclusion. These approaches are based around the principle that all behaviour is a form of communication. These include:

- Whole school relational approaches based on nurturing principles, including effective learning and teaching which contributes to developing and maintaining good relationships and positive behaviour and which supports inclusion.

- Targeted relational approaches for some children which provide additional focused support and intervention, such as the provision of safe bases, significant adults and nurture groups to avoid exclusion.

- Skilled teaching approaches which endeavour to understand behaviour in terms of the underlying needs that may lead to a child or young person to act in a challenging and distressed way and which aim to regulate the child's stress.

- Restorative approaches based on a philosophy which places relationships, respect and responsibility at the heart of effective practice which have been shown to be more effective in addressing issues of discipline and conflict than traditional approaches which use rewards and sanctions.

- Solution focused approaches to support both staff and children to identify the skills, strengths and resources that they already possess, build individual capacity and effective problem solving skills.

- Child centred approaches which are based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and which seeks to develop adults' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of children's rights and dignity, and how this can impact on their work with children and young people.

Research also highlights the importance of leadership in prioritising, establishing and modelling relational principles, beliefs and values in order to develop a whole school culture and to empower others. In addition building links with partner agencies and supporting parental engagement is an important factor in meeting student needs and enhancing well-being.

From Practice to Policy

The policy needs to include details of the theory and research which informs policy, with clear links made between theory and practice.

A number of schools are now using restorative practices to structure their day and shape how staff and children communicate with each other. Circle and group discussions help students to share their feelings, build relationships, problem solve and play an active role in challenging and supporting one another.

Monmouth Comprehensive is an example of a restorative school. Research has shown that since introducing restorative practice throughout the school, exclusions are down, staff absence is down, and attainment has improved. Similar positive outcomes have been achieved by other restorative schools, such as Childs Hill Primary School and Carr Manor Community School in Leeds.

Restorative justice council. Restorativejustice.org.uk

2. The Relational Approach

- Overview (including diagram)
- Developing Relationships
  - > Building Relationships
  - > Supporting Inclusion
  - > Setting Boundaries
  - > The Relational Support Plan
- Responding and Calming
  - > Keeping Calm
  - > Regulating Emotions
  - > Managing Crisis
  - > Responsive Co-Regulation Plan
- Repairing and Restoring
  - > Resolving conflict
  - > Repairing Harm
  - > Supporting Change
  - > Restorative Exploration Plan

"Quality relationships provide the necessary vehicles for adaption and recovery… every relationship has the power to confirm or challenge everything that has gone before".

Dan Hughes and Louise Bomber - Settling to Learn. (2013)

Overview

Relationships are vital for all children in school. It is through relationships that children learn to feel safe, belong, understand themselves, others and the world.

It is our way of being together that is most important.

The relational approach is a universal approach to teaching and learning which influences whole school ethos, systems and policy as well as everyday practice. It is also a targeted approach to support those children who are most in need.

The Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce in September 2014 produced a final report 'Future in Mind - promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and well-being' - published by the government in March 2015. It recognises that attachment relationships have a direct bearing on children's capacity to succeed in school. It emphasises that relationships and a sense of belonging, are key to good mental health for all, but are essential for children who have experienced multiple relational losses and trauma.

Children who have experienced trauma, have insecure attachments or who have had adverse experiences may present with complex behaviours. Some of these behaviours will be adaptive responses to their past experience or current situation, some will be related to difficulties with stress regulation. Their behaviour will be an expression of an emotional or an unmet need and in order to support them we need to be able to read their behaviour. This involves being able to empathise with their feelings and understand their thinking. We need to be able to use our knowledge of brain development, trauma and attachment to work out what we need to do to meet their needs.

Studying the features of secure relationships helps us to understand how we need to be in order to build relationships. In order to be effective it is necessary to be personally reflective about how we are in relationships: what we feel and think and how this affects our way of being.

In addition, there is clear research which identifies those children most at risk of developing social and emotional difficulties. Children with SEN, those who have been supported by social care or come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and children from certain ethnic groups (Irish and Black Caribbean pupils, Gypsy and Roma children and Travellers of Irish heritage) are more likely to experience fixed and/or permanent school exclusion. Children who have been excluded are more likely to have literacy and language difficulties than other children.

It is therefore vital to ensure that children's needs with regard to learning, literacy and language are assessed alongside assessments of their needs with regard to their social and emotional development. Intervention for learning, literacy and language needs to sit within our relational framework.

Schools must be inclusive to children of all ethnic backgrounds, gender and economic status. Some children will need additional provision to ensure that they are fully included and able to access the social and learning environment.

For many children their needs will be best met through our relationships with them. There is a growing body of evidence indicating that relational approaches are vital in supporting children's well-being, enabling them to settle to learning and be fully included in school. As with all support we need to think about relationships in terms of our universal whole school and whole class approaches as well as targeted provision. A small minority of students may need to access specialist intervention.

When developing relationship based provision we need to think in terms of:

Developing Relationships – This involves building relationships, supporting inclusion and setting and maintaining boundaries with empathy.

Responding and Calming – Using relational skills to keep things calm, using co-regulation skills in order to regulate strong emotions and developing skills and plans to manage crisis.

Repairing and Restoring – using restorative conversations as part of our daily interactions to support a harmonious environment, facilitating restorative encounters to resolve conflict and harm and to support change.

The Relational Approach

Developing Relationships

Building Relationships:
Developing safety, security and trust through protection, connection, understanding and care

Supporting Inclusion:
Facilitating access to learning, ensuring social inclusion and developing individual skills

Setting Boundaries:
Reaching agreements and building a shared understanding of expectations. Establishing clear processes for resolving difficulties

Repairing & Restoring

Resolving Conflict:
Everyday restorative interactions to resolve minor conflict and disagreements and create a shared understanding

Repairing Harm:
Restorative encounters to discuss the breaking of agreements, the impact (consequences) on others and to restore relationships

Supporting Change:
What additional support / action is needed?

Responding & Calming

Keeping Calm:
Using everyday interactions to maintain relationships and agreements and promote a calm and supportive learning environment

Regulating Emotions:
Using key relational skills to regulate strong emotions and calm behaviour

Managing Crisis:
Having clear plans to ensure safety and support

Targetted to the individual

Relational Support Plan: outlines support needed for individual children by the team that supports them

Responsive Co-regulation Plan: outlines agreed response for de-escalation and regulation

Restorative Exploration Plan: outlines a process for shared understanding, learning and change

Developing Relationships

"Positive school relationships can make a significant difference on many levels, in many areas and to all stakeholders. It therefore makes sense for all schools to focus on the development of relational quality school-wide, for both educational excellence and authentic well-being."

Sue Roffey Developing Positive Relationships in Schools. University of Exeter.

In order to be successful at school all children need to develop secure relationships which enable them to feel safe, secure and good about who they are. In order for this to happen, relationships need to be at the heart of school life. For many children the development of these relationships will need to be explicit, meaningful and very clearly perceived. Children who are showing signs of insecure attachments and a lack of well-being need a significant adult or small team of adults in school who can provide them with a secure relationship within which they feel a sense of safety, trust, belonging and being listened to. Through this relationship the child will also develop their ability to regulate their feelings and behaviour, develop their understanding of social situations and develop healthy and positive feelings about themselves and their abilities. Building these relationships, supporting inclusion and establishing strong and caring boundaries are integral to making this happen.

Building relationships: Developing safety, security and trust through protection, connection, understanding and care.

Developing relationships is all about the building of security. A secure relationship involves adults providing:

Protection

All children need to feel safe and secure. Our need for safety trumps everything and 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. This can lead to defensive behaviours which can be difficult to manage.

People get their sense of safety primarily from others. All children will need to experience relationships with adults in school who are able to make them feel safe. Some children will need significant relationships with one adult, or a small group of adults who become a safe base for the child in school. Children need to feel that they can trust and depend on adults. Some children have not experienced being dependent on others and until they experience dependency they will not be able to be independent. Allowing a child to practice dependency is a key role for a significant adult.

In order to provide protection for children we need to be a source of safety through the relationships we provide. This involves being consistent, predictable, reliable and trustworthy as well as providing structure, routines, boundaries and containment. Change, novelty, uncertainty and challenge will threaten the child's sense of security and these things will need to be carefully managed.

Our way of interacting with the child will be vital in securing a sense of safety. Porges describes 'safety cues' as being the key to enabling the child to feel safe. Safety cues are specific sounds or vocalisations, facial expressions and movements which let us know that we are safe.

Friendly, warm and attuning facial expressions, modulation and frequency of the voice, which mimics the singsong or story telling nature of early caregiver - infant interaction, and unthreatening body movements which are in sympathy with our own, indicate safety. A lack of safety cues can be interpreted as threat.

Angry, fearful or blank expressions, low frequencies and cross tones, unpredictable body movements and unfamiliar sounds and voices can all trigger feelings of danger and fear. These cues are interpreted by the brain at a subconscious level and trigger adaptive behaviours and defence responses.

For example, the blank or stern faces of adults in assembly, trying to convey a sense of order and quiet, may for some children, be picked up as a threat. This may well trigger mobilisation in the child, which is difficult for the adults to understand when they know that the environment is safe. Often adults talk about the extreme reaction of some children in the absence of a trigger but it is helpful to remember that this behaviour is not a thought out response to a situation. There is no element of choice, the child is reacting at the subconscious level and triggers may not be known to either the child or those supporting them.

This presents a challenge to adults working with children in school. It is important that adults are reflective about how they are with children and particularly how our faces, voices and movement may be affecting how children feel. The skill here is to be able to be firm without being cross and clear whilst still maintaining warmth and attunement through our faces and voices. Consideration needs to be given as to how the school's behaviour management responses impact on the child's sense of safety and security.

We also need to consider how the environment can help children to feel safe. In particular children who have highly developed defence pathways are often triggered by sensory input and for many children managing the sensory demands of the environment will be helpful.

Protection

Children need to feel safe and secure in order to engage socially, explore, play and learn. Children look first to the adults around them to gain a sense of safety. It is important that you let the child know that they are safe through your 'way of being' with the child and the way you manage the environment.

Being predictable, reliable and trustworthy. Telling a child that you are those things will not be enough they need to be shown that you are by what you do. If things change and you are not able to do what you have said that you will do make sure that you explain why that this has happened, acknowledge and validate the difficult emotions that this may have evoked and put in place an alternative plan.

Providing 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. Interact using a sing song / story telling voice with no trace of crossness. Consider other safety cues such as movements which could make them feel safe. Take care to ensure open and friendly body language.

Containing their emotions. Let them know that you have 'got it'. Let them know that you can bear their emotions and hold on to them so that they do not escalate. Don't deflect into your own emotional responses. It can be useful to help them to organise their thinking and emotions by listening and then feeding their thoughts back to them in bite-size, manageable chunks.

Providing structure and boundaries. These need to match the child's needs and be communicated to them in a way that they understand and which is meaningful to them. Visuals and timers can be helpful in establishing structure and boundaries.

Anticipating things that may be picked up as threat or danger. 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. Managing transitions, both large and small will be particularly important, even transitions such as moving from activity to activity within the classroom may need to be supported.

Connection

Children need to connect and to socially engage. Children who do not easily connect can become isolated. This can be because their interaction, speech and language skills are delayed or because they emotionally withdraw or react defensively to social approaches. Being and feeling connected is a right for all children.

Connection can be considered on several levels. Children need to feel connected to the adults in school. Some children will need to feel connected to a significant adult or small group of adults. Children also need to feel connected to their peers, their class and school as a whole, the place and the curriculum. 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. Sometimes interaction and communication can become functional rather than social - connection is about children engaging in truly reciprocal and social interaction. It is about them feeling a connection that they imbue with emotional significance.

In order to connect with adults, children need to experience attunement (meeting the child where they are emotionally, using attuning tones, facial expressions and body language, helping the child know that you get-it) , mutuality (doing things together, alongside, experiencing another person with them so they feel they are not alone) and reciprocity (responding to and influencing each other).

We need to ensure that we are connecting with children at their developmental level and in a way which takes into account their stress level.

Children who have had limited experience of connection will not be able to cope with activities which require reciprocity. They will need high levels of connection through being alongside others matching them in time and rhythm and the gentle introduction of turn taking.

Children who may ordinarily be able to engage in higher level connection involving reciprocity will not be able to do so when stressed. At times of stress children need connection through attunement – voices, facial expressions, rhythmic movement matching their own in time and rhythm.

When children are developmentally ready and in a state of calm they need lots of opportunities to practise reciprocity. Songs and games and then joint projects involving shared enjoyment and anticipation are particularly beneficial. Projects involving shared thinking and responsiveness to others are in important in developing higher level reciprocity.

The same principles of mutuality, attunement and reciprocity are also true when supporting connection between children and developing connection to the school, curriculum and place. Children need to experience doing things together, sharing emotions, thoughts, knowledge, skills, anticipation and vision.

Whilst some children will benefit from targeted interventions to support connection, activities which support connection should be built into everyday life and routines and can be incorporated into the approach for learning.

Choirs, music groups, joint art projects, positions of responsibility, sports activities or drama activities all offer opportunities for connection. Games in lessons, shared jokes, providing additional attention, regular check ins, special handshakes can all forge connections between adults and young people and can facilitate connection between peers. Whole class or whole school activities like singing together can be built into everyday routine and can be very powerful in terms of developing a sense of connection, belonging and well-being.

Activities which enable children to have a sense of purpose, ownership in school or to make a contribution are also very helpful. For example, having a special job or responsibility, being on the school council, having an input into an aspect of school such as school dinners or the environment.

Circle time, school councils, class meetings, class activities/outings can support group connection and establish an ethos of togetherness. Such activities can also support the development of skills needed for positive relationships such as valuing one another, acknowledgement, encouragement, listening, sharing ideas, acceptance, tolerance and compassion.

When considering connection we need to be particularly mindful and pro-active in supporting children who may feel isolated or excluded due to their social identity, ethnicity, gender or sexuality.

Some children will benefit from additional support to ensure that they develop a sense of connection and belonging. Adult mentoring, providing role models, establishing peer support/friendship groups, peer mentoring and encouraging/providing extracurricular activities to build on strengths and interests are all helpful.

Connection

We all need opportunities for connection at all levels in order to feel connected to others and to develop a sense of belonging. Children need to experience connection in order to develop their ability to interact and form relationships.

Being physically and emotionally available. Give them your time and opportunities for them to experience undivided attention.

Attuning to the child by mirroring their tone and mood. Seeing themselves reflected in you lets them know that you 'get it' and enables them to 'see' how they feel.

Being responsive, expressive and interactive. Encourage expressive interaction using facial expressions, voice modulation and movement. Opportunities to do things in time and rhythm, to experience turn taking, activities with joint focus, enjoyment and anticipation will all be helpful.

Being playful in your interactions. Have fun, stimulate shared joy and joint laughter. Play games and sing songs, especially games which encourage shared anticipation and response. Children enjoy the security of repetition and being able to anticipate events.

Showing them you like them and are interested in them. Do things together. Explore, make things and learn about things together.

Support wider connection. Provide opportunities for connection with peers and to develop connection with the school community and place. Doing and experiencing together, opportunities for contribution and responsibility will support connection. Support the development of skills needed for positive relationships such as valuing one another, acknowledgement, encouragement, listening, sharing ideas, acceptance, tolerance and compassion.

Understanding

Understanding is a key part of a relationship. By understanding we mean being curious about the child and trying to understand what is happening for them and what their behaviour might be telling us about what they need. We also mean showing the child that we accept them, that we are trying to understand and helping them to understand themselves.

Children who have had interruptions in their relationships or who have experienced trauma tend to have difficulty understanding and processing their emotions in order to regulate themselves. A lack of self-regulation is a significant problem for many children.

In order to learn to self-regulate children need to experience being co-regulated by an adult. Repeated experiences of co-regulation will support the child to be able to regulate themselves.

All children benefit from being shown understanding and our everyday interactions with children need to show acceptance, curiosity and empathy. We need to use our understanding of situations to maintain calm and support students to remain regulated when things get tricky.

Some children need additional intervention to support them to develop the ability to understand and process emotions as well as clear plans shared and understood by all members of staff regarding regulating their behaviour and keeping them safe. This is discussed in more detail in the Responding and Regulating Section.

Understanding

Children need to know that they are accepted and understood. Children will learn to understand themselves by being shown understanding. Understanding supports the development of the cortex and higher level thinking skills. It enables us to engage at a cognitive level with our emotions.

Being curious about their feelings, thoughts and behaviour. It is important that we understand the thoughts and feelings that are driving the behaviour so that we address these unmet needs. Managing behaviour alone is unlikely to bring about sustainable change.

Accepting their feelings and experience. Accept without action, judgement, contradiction or persuasion. Resist the urge to minimise their feelings, distract or cheer them up.

Thinking for them - try to work it out. Big behaviours are caused by big feelings but children are not always aware of the feelings they are experiencing. Thinking from their perspective will help to raise their self-awareness and will also support the understanding and empathy of others working with the child.

Expressing Empathy. Wonder aloud, validate, and show them you 'get it'. Respond empathically; imagine how it is for them, empathise and then express it
"I can see that this situation is very hard…"
"That sounds as though you were really worried…"
"When that happens I wonder if it is very frightening for you..."

Helping them to process their feelings. Help them to link their physical sensations to emotions. Children at an early stage of emotional development are not able to distinguish between basic physical sensations and emotions and will initially need your help to do this. Model and provide an emotional vocabulary for them to describe how they feel. Be creative in your approach. Allow them to make up their own words, use metaphors, stories, pictures, models, real life examples etc to enable the child to express, understand and process their feelings.

Make sure that all adults working with the child understand the child's needs and how to support them. Co-regulation plans (see page 22 for a guide to this) should be shared so that there is a consistent approach. Approaches such as 'circle of adults' or 'solution circles' can be helpful in supporting an understanding approach agreed by all.

Care

Dan Hughes describes the qualities that adults need to demonstrate in order to form good relationships as PLACE (Playful, Loving, Accepting, Curious, Empathic). Using this framework enables the adult to show unconditional regard, where the child feels warmth, nurture and connection.

Children need to experience a relationship within which they feel special, loved and held in mind. Some children may have not experienced their basic needs being met and for these children your care can be shown through ensuring that they not hungry or thirsty, are warm enough and know that someone is looking out for them.

Experiencing adults being interested, caring and showing that they like them and are there for them enables the child to feel good about who they are, worthy of attention and effective and able to form relationships.

Care

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

Being loving and compassionate. Let them know that you like them and that they are special to you. Think about how your facial expression, body language and tone of voice reflects this. Regularly checking in with simple smiles, eye contact, thumbs up etc. can make the child feel they are cared for.

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.

Using transitional objects. This can help them know that you are thinking about them. This can be as simple as lending them a 'special' pen that they need to bring back to you at the end of the day, to creating something together that symbolises the relationship that you both keep part of (painted pebbles, friendship bracelets and key rings are all examples).

Showing them that you care. Notice things about them (a new coat, haircut or pencil case) and remember details about them including birthdays, interests, favourite sporting teams or bands. Do special things for them, support and nurture them. Let them know that you thinking about their basic needs. Keep them warm, sheltered and if appropriate provide them with food and drink. Small things that show you care can make a significant difference. Children need to know that their needs will be met and that they are effective in gaining what they need, including both their basic survival needs and social and emotional needs.

Soothing and comforting them. Soothing enables the child to calm their physiological response to danger and fear. Children need to be repeatedly soothed in order to be able to self soothe.

Protection, Connection, Understanding and Care

These are the cornerstones of the relationship. They should be a part of all interactions at all times with children as a universal approach at a whole school, classroom and individual level.

The children who require targeted support will need a relationship with one or more significant adults in school who will provide secure relationships. It is through regular and repeated opportunities for the child to feel protected, connected with, understood and cared for that we will then begin to see significant development in their ability to feel safe and secure, to trust and form secure relationships, regulate their feelings and settle to learn.

Supporting Inclusion: Facilitating access to learning, ensuring social inclusion and developing individual skills.

Children with SEN are more likely to be excluded, both for a fixed period and permanently, than those who do not have SEN.

There is evidence to suggest that behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and resulting school exclusions are associated with both literacy difficulties and language impairment. It is therefore vital to assess language and literacy needs alongside a child's relational needs. For some children, their difficulties with language and literacy may be significantly impacting on their ability to access the learning and social environment and this may be impacting on their social and emotional development and well-being.

Research has also shown that children with attachment difficulties or those who have experienced trauma in addition to having social and emotional needs are also more likely to have difficulties with executive functioning. Executive functioning difficulties can have a significant impact on the child's capacity to learn and may go unrecognised. It is therefore helpful to explore whether these difficulties may be affecting the child's inclusion as well as impacting on their emotional development. Children may also have a difficulty with social skills which has arisen due to a lack of social learning opportunities.

As well as access to learning we also need to consider social inclusion and to ensure that schools are equally accessible to all children regardless of social identity, ethnicity, gender or sexuality. Schools should constructively challenge oppression and prejudice.

Children from some ethnic groups are excluded at a higher rate than others, including Irish and Black Caribbean children, Gypsy and Roma children and travellers of Irish heritage. Schools need to be actively anti-racist and should have anti-racist policies, systems and established practice which reflect this. Anti-racism should be prevalent in the practice of all staff, the curriculum and whole school ethos. All staff should be aware of and knowledgeable about the diversity and differences in history, experience and culture of the children they teach. All diversity should be respected, valued and celebrated and this should be made clear by the actions of all members of staff, curriculum content, whole school initiatives, celebrations and the school environment.

The latest statistics show that children eligible for free school meals, an indicator used for economic disadvantage, are around four times more likely to be excluded permanently or for a fixed period than children who are not eligible for free school meals. There are also notable trends in the exclusion of children who have received support from social care who overall are more likely to receive both fixed term and permanent exclusions than other children.

Schools need to take great care to ensure equal opportunities for all and that their practices are not excluding children due to economic, social and cultural diversity.

As mentioned previously, some children will benefit from additional support to ensure that they develop a sense of connection and belonging and that they and their families are fully included in all aspects of the school life and community. Adult mentoring, providing role models, establishing peer support/friendship groups, peer mentoring and encouraging/providing extracurricular activities to build on strengths and interests have all been proven to make a difference. Community projects, support to strengthen families and support for some parents will also be helpful. Furthermore schools should provide an ethos, environment and opportunities for children to connect and belong as a whole school community.

Children who do not have an adult in their life who is able to speak for them, ask questions on their behalf and provide challenge when necessary can benefit greatly from having an adult who takes on this role in school. A strong advocate who understands the needs of the child and who is invested in their development in the same way as a parent is, can significantly affect outcomes for that child. This can be in a formal sense with the advocate taking a role at meetings to capture the views of the child. It can also be more informal in which they provide a perspective on what the child may be experiencing and feeling, so supporting other adults in school to understand them.

Where there is a need for intervention to support inclusion, support should always have two strands. Firstly providing support to ensure that the child's difficulties are not blocking their access to the learning or the social environment and secondly ensuring that the child is receiving support to develop their skills in their area of difficulty.

Interventions should also be considered within the relational framework. As well as considering the content of an intervention, the approach to learning and teaching also needs to be considered to ensure that the child's relational needs are being met.

Interventions that support the development of emotional literacy, social skills, stress management, developing

behaviours for learning and learning about how the brain works should be available. Schools should consider special places that can become safe spaces for children who need them.

Progress should be regularly reviewed and intervention adapted to ensure that it is effective, meeting the child's needs and supporting inclusion.

Supporting Inclusion

- It is vital to assess literacy, language, communication and interaction needs and any other learning needs, alongside a child's relational needs, as children with SEN are more likely to be excluded than those who do not have SEN.

- Many vulnerable children need additional support to enable them to access the learning and social environment. Children with attachment difficulties can struggle with some cognitive (particularly executive functioning skills) and social skills and this can block their access to learning.

- Children require practical support to ensure that their difficulties do not block access to the curriculum and opportunities to develop these skills.

- Schools need to ensure equal opportunities for all children, this will mean providing additional support/ opportunities for groups of children who are vulnerable to exclusion.

- Children benefit from opportunities to develop peer relationships and be socially included.

- A strong advocate, who understands the needs of the child and who is able to represent their views, ask questions and provide challenge can significantly affect outcomes for the child.

Setting Boundaries: Reaching agreements and building a shared understanding of expectations. Establishing clear processes for resolving difficulties.

In order to be together we need to have a shared understanding of our rights, roles and responsibilities and how these manifest themselves as expectations around behaviour, agreements and rules.

A shared understanding, ownership and personal responsibility is best achieved through working with children through a process to develop a clear picture of what is needed in order to establish a calm and harmonious environment where there are positive relationships and children feel safe, included and able to learn.

Children benefit from a clarity around boundaries and expectations. Agreements about behaviour should be meaningful, clearly communicated and regularly discussed. Adults in school should provide clear modelling, guidance and instruction as to how to behave.

Children also need to be able to trust that when agreements are broken there are processes in place to repair harm, ensure that those harmed feel safe and able to learn and support those who have broken agreements to ensure that there are not ongoing difficulties.

Bill Rogers describes a collaborative process for establishing classroom and whole school rules and expectations around behaviour which is based around discussions of rights leading to responsibilities and responsibilities leading to rules.

He focuses on the basic non-negotiable, fundamental rights all children should expect to enjoy at school; the right to respect and fair treatment, the right to learn without being hassled by others and the right to feel safe and be safe. It may be helpful for schools to refer to The United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child.

Rights and responsibilities go together. If we have rights then we also have a responsibility to uphold the rights of others. Children are therefore encouraged to take responsibility to engage in thinking about their behaviour as a member of a community and as an active participant in establishing agreements.

It might also be helpful to consider the rights of other key stakeholders in the school community such as teachers, teaching assistants, parents etc. This can be used to develop wider agreements and processes in school.

Rules are therefore agreements which are introduced as a formal protection of one's rights. Agreements are seen as being good and fair and serving a purpose. They are not

seen as an imposition nor do they encourage compliance for compliance's sake, nor are they intended to meet the adults' need for control.

Children will need to be actively involved in this process: agreements work best when established by children with the support of adults.

Agreements should be few in number and as simple as possible. They should encompass whole school values and ethos and be phrased in a positive way using inclusive language. Agreements should be clearly communicated and displayed.

Agreements made in this way should be regularly revisited with the children so that discussions can take place as to whether they are working or need amending. They should be continually referred to and utilised during teaching to ensure that they are useful and are present in the minds of both adults and children. When agreements are broken they can be referred to in order to re-establish calm, support thinking, discuss the impact on others and decide what needs to happen next.

Clear processes should also be established and communicated to the children as to what happens when agreements are broken. This needs to include; how children can let someone know if an agreement has been broken, how children's thoughts and feelings can be expressed and how they will be heard, what the adults will do in the moment to keep situations calm and safe, what might need to happen afterwards to keep things safe and to ensure that learning takes place following the incident.

Children and parents need to be reassured that harmful behaviour is not accepted. Processes for responding to incidents should be clearly communicated and consistently followed. Action taken to repair harm, make and keep things safe and support future learning will however be different according to the situation and needs of the individuals involved.

We recommend that relational, regulatory and restorative processes are most likely to sustain calm and harmonious learning environments and to support children to develop their understanding of behaviour, its impact on others and to develop the ability to control their behaviour.

See the section on *'Relational Approaches in the Classroom'* for more detail.

There needs to be whole school approaches to establishing agreements and processes for repairing harm and maintaining boundaries. There needs to be an acknowledgment that mistakes happen, that we learn from mistakes and that the feelings, needs and rights of individuals matter.

In order to establish this adults need to show respect, acceptance, empathy and compassion and need to model

good co-operation, communication and emotional literacy skills. All children need to have opportunities to learn and practice these skills. Children need to be taught now to listen empathically to others, express their thoughts and feelings, communicate their needs and resolve conflict peacefully. They need to experience the repairing of relationships and learning from mistakes.

Assemblies, school council meetings, circle time, class meetings, small group and individual discussions can all be utilised to establish and maintain agreements. They are also important in establishing an ethos of co-operation, empathy and restoration and provide opportunities for children to see good skills modelled and to develop their own skills. Working in this way supports all children to develop peer relationships and builds their capacity to form and maintain relationships in the future.

See the section on *'Repairing and Restoring'* for more detail.

Setting Boundaries

- Agreements are best established through a collaborative process with adults and children.

- Seeing agreements as the protection of children's fundamental human rights supports children to develop a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities.

- Agreements should be few in number, as simple as possible, phrased positively and clearly communicated and displayed.

- Agreements should be regularly referred to, revisited and amended accordingly.

Targeted to the individual: The Relational Support Plan

A Relational Support Plan can be helpful in managing and planning for different aspects of support, ensuring that everyone is working consistently and predictably together and that the support given throughout the child's day at school is joined up.

A relational support plan should ensure that the child receives the consistency and intensity of support needed through well thought out and planned relational intervention. The plan should include details of any specific interaction needed as it is these repeated interactions that will make the difference.

A Relational Support Plan should include:

- Details of a team of people who will be supporting the child. Who will provide the support and when? Who will make up the team for the child? This should include not only the child's significant adult/adults but also teachers, teaching assistants, mealtime assistants and other adults who may be part of the child's day as well as members of senior leadership, SENDCos, and designated teachers. It may also be helpful to have members of the child's family as part of the team.

- The plan describes how the relationship needs of the child will be met through experiencing Protection, Connection, Understanding and Care. It is important to be clear about the adult-child interactions (the way of being together) that are needed as well as activities, adaptations to the curriculum and environment and any additional resources needed.

- It is helpful to consider the child's strengths, qualities and interests, what the child enjoys and when they are at their best. This information can be helpful in thinking about the support that will be most beneficial. Sometimes we need to do more of the things that are working well, as well as developing new strategies.

- Some children need a team where there is someone available to them that they can depend / rely on, knowing who it is at any given moment of the school day. Some children benefit from a team which includes adults from different levels in the school's hierarchy.

- *Appendix 5 provides a template for a relational support plan.*

From Practice to Policy: Developing Relationships

The policy needs to describe:

- How relationships will be developed to ensure that all children feel safe, secure, connected, understood and cared for. This needs to include the expectations and responsibilities of all adults in the school community.

- How all children will be included in the learning and social environment, ensuring that barriers to inclusion are removed.

- How children will be kept safe, able to learn and have their voice heard through the establishment of high expectations and clear agreements about how all members of the learning community will behave.

- How individual children will be supported through a targeted Relational Support Plan and graduated response.

Responding and Calming

"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 be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. 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)

The art and skill of teaching lies in the use of everyday interactions which actively maintain relationships in the classroom and promote a calm, harmonious and supportive learning environment.

It is normal for children of all ages to be playful, challenge authority (to mess about) and to test boundaries. Most children will at some point overstep a boundary and will need reminding about agreements and expectations. Our relationships, and the relational skills we utilise should be our first port of call at these times. Skilled interactions can successfully resolve low level disruption without the need to escalate.

Every child will face challenges and at times experience strong emotions which block their access to learning and good social interaction. Catching these emotions and regulating the child so that these emotions do not become overwhelming is integral to keeping the child and classroom calm.

Behaviour which impacts on the child, another child's, or our own safety should be managed as part of our relational plans. How we respond in a crisis should be clear, coordinated and communicated to ensure safety.

Keeping Calm: Using relational skills to maintain agreements

When we notice that a child is overstepping a boundary we need to first ensure that we continue to present with a warm, friendly and open manner. This can be difficult if we ourselves are irritated or frustrated. If we approach the child with cold or cross tones we run the risk of pushing them into higher levels of stress which will trigger their defence response. It is helpful to think about how our faces, voices and body language continue to provide a sense of safety and warmth to the child. It is possible to be firm without being cross and such an approach is more likely to get the child back on track. Using a storytelling tone of voice, an attuning facial expression and coming alongside them, mirroring their body language will help to keep a sense of calm and safety.

It is helpful to be curious about what is beneath behaviour rather than assuming motives. Most children will have good reason for behaving as they do and we need to help them with this. Asking with genuine curiosity about what is happening will make the child feel listened to. It will also help you to work out what is going on and what is needed to get them back on track. It is important to accept what the child has said and to respond empathically. For example "I see it's hard and I know that you've been trying". Louise Bomber uses the phrase 'name to tame'. Naming the feelings helps to let the child know that you get it, you've thought about it and you care. Often, a child knowing that someone has listened to and accepted what they feel and think can be enough. The child has no further need to express themselves through their behaviour because they have been heard.

Sometimes it will not be possible to be curious straight away and that discussion may have to wait until a later moment. It will still be helpful to show warmth and provide a sense of a safety. For example when a child comes late to a lesson a helpful response would be "Good to see you, I was just wondering where you were and if you were okay, if you sit down quickly I'll come and chat in a minute".

It may be necessary for you to take some action to resolve the situation. At this level it should be possible to work with the child to come to a solution together. Following some joint problem solving it will be helpful to remind the child of the agreement (what they should be doing/what is expected) or in some cases it will be helpful to re-set agreements to ensure that what the child is being asked to do is realistic and achievable and therefore fair.

It is important to avoid the use of threatening tones of voice, facial expressions and body language which convey relationships of power and control. Children who have sensitive defence pathways or who have experienced trauma will be triggered to respond defensively, or experience re-traumatisation if they perceive threat, disapproval or rejection. Some children will find it very difficult to have a teacher standing over them whilst waiting for them to comply. Entering into a battle that you feel you have to win will affect your ability to be empathic, flexible and find a solution that works. We need to be mindful of always helping children to find a way out of the situation, rather than feeling that we have won. All children will respond to and benefit from this approach.

At times it may be appropriate to be playful and use humour thoughtfully to attune to the child. This would not be appropriate if it resulted in mis-attunement, makes fun of the child or results in the child feeling humiliated.

It can also be appropriate to be very 'low key' in our responses to some behaviour. Many children will respond well to a warm and curious look or a simple reminding/refocusing followed by a thank you which shows that you expect compliance. At times it can be helpful to move away after reminding them of an agreement to show that you are leaving it up to them, rather than needing to wait for compliance.

Keeping Things Calm : SEA

SEA is a helpful acronym for adults to have in mind for responding to students to help them to remain calm, feel understood/listened to and refocused on what they should be doing.

S – Safety cues – think face, tone of voice, body language.

E – Empathy – be curious and understanding. Respond empathically.

A – Agreements – remind or re-set.

Regulating Emotions: Using key relational skills responsive to the emotional need.

Unhelpful, harmful or challenging behaviour is usually the result of strong emotions which have been triggered in the moment or which underpin adaptive behaviours. In order to maintain a calm learning environment and also to support children to process their feelings and emotions in order to regulate their behaviour, we need to be able to regulate them in the moment and provide them with experiences which will support the development of regulation.

When children experience strong emotions they need to be co-regulated to support them to calm. Children will need repeated experiences of being co-regulated in order to be able to regulate themselves. Children who have not experienced enough co-regulation are likely to have difficulties with self-regulation. Children who have experienced trauma may experience high levels of dysregulation which needs understanding and attuned responsive co-regulation.

In order to be able to regulate, children need to integrate their physical sensations, emotions and thinking. Attuning and validating enables children to understand their feelings and emotions, to know they are accepted and valid and to connect them to an emotional vocabulary through which they can express and learn to think about those feelings and emotions.

De-escalation and calming through Co-regulation

Attunement, validation, containment and soothing are the central skills needed when supporting children to regulate their feelings and behaviour. Margot Sunderland describes how together these skills enable the child to experience co-regulation. Repeated co-regulation with an adult supports the child's ability to self-regulate through an integration and understanding of physical sensations, emotions, and higher-level thinking.

Attunement. Meeting the child's emotional intensity (positive / negative) on an energetic level, so as to connect with the child in their pain or their joy, reflecting the same emotional energy. The child will experience this as connection with the other. It will help them to understand how they feel and will show them that you 'get it'.

Accepting and validating. Validating how the child is experiencing the event, even if it is very different to how you are experiencing it. Not trying to persuade the child out of having the feelings they are experiencing, rather affirming, understanding and recognising that the child is feeling what they are feeling. Not just empathy, but finding the right words/ language of feeling/tone of voice to convey that empathy. Accepting and validating can help to stop unhelpful behaviour as when the child understands that you understand their behaviour and that their feelings are accepted and valid so there is not a need to go on showing the feelings through behaviour.

Containment of feelings. Being able to stay thinking and feeling about a child's intense feelings (e.g. rage, power plays, anxiety, distress) without deflecting into your emotional response or action. At times this will mean being able to bear their unbearable pain – being a container for it. Containment is also achieved through clear structures, boundaries and clear and understandable consequences, which are explained and understood.

Soothing. Soothing and calming the child's emotionally dysregulated states. 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. Some children spend the majority of their time in a stressed state. We need to soothe them in order to calm their defence pathways. This will make it less likely that their defence pathway will trigger and also more likely that they will be able to self soothe when they are feeling stressed.

At different stages of regulation children will benefit from different responses from those around them.

Calm

Much of the work done to enable the child to be able to regulate needs to be done when they are calm. At these times the child has access to their social engagement systems and higher level thinking. At these times we need to be interacting with them and developing their ability to interact using their faces, voice modulation and listening skills. The better they get at this the more able they will be to read other people and situations and the more accurate their neuroception will become.

At these times the child can also be encouraged to reflect on their feelings and to link these to emotions. Encouraging the child to reflect, to be able to monitor their feelings and be able to express them, helps to develop their stress regulation system. For some children it will be necessary to start with recognising physical sensations before moving on to basic and then more complex emotions.

When the child is calm there is also an opportunity to introduce gentle challenge through play. Play is a vehicle through which children can practice emotions in a safe environment. Lots of play based activity involves the child moving into mild stress. During play activities we have an opportunity to set up situations where the child experiences mild stress and is then regulated by an adult. Repeated experiences of co-regulation will enable the child to learn that they can bear their feelings and that they are able to regulate their emotions.

Mild Stress

We need to recognise when children are becoming stressed and intervene at this stage whilst the child still has access to their social engagement system. There will often be signs that children are becoming stressed, for example, becoming fidgety, not listening, losing their sense of humour/playfulness, less expressive voice, not easily complying with direction. It may still be possible at this stage to use expressive co-regulation to bring them back into feelings of safety. How the adults respond to the child at this time is all important. The type of interactions at this stage will dictate whether the child goes into dysregulation (mobilisation/immobilisation) or whether they become calm. Detecting when children are becoming alert and then co-regulating them is an important skill to learn.

Dysregulation

Once a child is dysregulated (mobilisation or immobilisation) their social engagement system has shut down and attempts at social interaction will be met with a defence response. It is therefore important that at this time social demand is reduced. The adult should remain present and provide the child with attunement and safety cues through their expression, movement, and tone. The adult should reduce language demand and should not ask questions or give lots of choices. Any direction given should be clear and not overly wordy. It is helpful to use routine as well as regulating and soothing activity at these times.

Managing Crisis: Having clear plans to ensure safety and support.

If a child is behaving in a way which means that they or others are not safe then making the situation safe is the primary need. Children who experience such crises need to have plans in place to keep them safe which should be agreed with all adults who care for the child as well as the child themselves. Having plans can help to support the adults to provide containment in difficult situations.

Schools need to have plans in place to ensure that all adults in school are clear as to how to respond to crisis situations (situations where the child or other children and adults are not safe).

Some crisis situations arise unexpectedly and there may not be a specific plan in place, however there should be general guidelines in place as to how to make the situation safe in the moment and what needs to happen following the incident. This is important, as all adults need to know how to respond in crisis situations and children need to know and trust that they will be kept safe. Some policies outline general plans such as what will happen if a child attempts to leave the school premises or if a child is violent towards another child.

If a situation has arisen unexpectedly then adults have a duty of care to make the situation safe. Once a situation has arisen involving a particular child or situation then there is a foreseeable risk and schools must then have specific plans in place for that child or situation.

In these cases there needs to be an understanding of the child's needs, particularly with reference to their needs relating to regulation. Consideration should be given to how best to ensure that the child feels safe in terms of not just what to do but how the adults need to be in their interaction with the child. Plans should also include what will happen following an incident and these should include support for the child and the adults involved.

Adults in school will need training to enable them to make plans and to regulate children who experience high levels of stress and dysregulation. Physical intervention should be a last resort but should be used if to not do so would result in harm. Staff should have training in the use of de-escalation and physical intervention if there is a foreseeable risk of behaviour which is harmful to the child or others.

A guide to supporting regulation through responsive co-regulation plans. *A Responsive Co-Regulation Plan can be found in Appendix 6.*

State of Regulation	Potential displayed behaviours	Responsive co-regulation
Calm Safe/socially engaged	Steady heart/breathing rate. Calm state of arousal. Open to social engagement. Expressive facial expression and voice prosody. Able to listen, process language and engage in thinking to learn.	Maximise expressive social engagement. Fully engage and connect using the face, voice, movement. Encourage listening and expressive responses. Engage thinking skills to reflect and make connections. Introduce gentle challenge through play/activity.
Mild Stress Alert/Agitated/Withdrawn	Slightly raised heart/breathing rate. Signs of agitation, frustration, anxiety. Raised hypervigilance. Lack of focus, easily distracted. Increased mobilisation. Early signs of needing to take control or helplessness.	Connect through eye contact, movement and facial expression. Express calmness through storytelling prosody and open facial expression. Attune to mood, intensity and energy of the child. Respond by being more animated to attune to agitation, increase intensity to attune to anger, be gentle and delicate to attune to sadness. Respond empathically and validate feelings. Use calming, soothing and regulatory activities.
Dysregulated Mobilised	High levels of arousal/ distress. Hyper vigilant. Difficulty listening and focusing. Mobilised – fidgeting, jumping, running, climbing etc. Raised voice with lack of prosody. Decreased expressivity. Threatening behaviour. Oppositional behaviour.	Reduce social demands whilst remaining present. Provide individual attention. Convey adult containment. Let them know you are able to 'hold' their dysregulation by remaining regulated. Convey your calm and regulated state by being confident and contained. Use quiet, calm sounds and tones which are expressive and confident. Reduce language, give short clear directions. Avoid questions and choices. Use predictable routine. Reduce sensory input, lights, noise. Use sensory soothing.
Dysregulated Immobilised	Lowered heart/breathing rate. Reduced energy. Shuts off from surroundings/ dissociates. Depressed state. Immobile/frozen. May feel faint.	Gentle, soft and delicate manner of coming close, making them aware of your presence and support. Use comforting and predictable voice. Use invited touch to soothe. Singing, humming, music. Use sensory soothing. Calm and gentle reassurance.
Crisis	The child's behaviour means that they or other people are not safe.	An individualised plan of action which outlines action to be taken in the event of unsafe behaviour. This may include advice from outside agencies. The plan should be shared with the child and include their views as to what helps and with all staff working with the child. Roles and responsibilities should be clear. If the plan includes physical intervention staff should have had the appropriate training. Devon LA recommend PIPS training. Adults need to provide high levels of containment through their way of being – having a plan can help.

Targeted to the Individual: The responsive co-regulation plan

For children who are specifically struggling with regulation, it is a good idea to have a consistent response as to how we best co-regulate the child. They will need different relational and empathic responses at different stages of regulation. A personalised co-responsive regulation plan is a good system for agreeing this shared response so that all adults working with the child have a good understanding of their needs and that there is a consistent response to their behaviour. This is helpful both to the child and adults working with them as having clear plans that are jointly agreed and understood can support the adults to provide containment at challenging times so helping the child to feel safe and regulated.

The responsive co-regulation plan is about how to respond in the moment to ensure de-escalation and also ensures that the child experiences co-regulation (repeated experiences of being regulated leads to increased self-regulation). The plan also outlines what needs to happen when the child is calm to enable them to develop their ability to regulate. As with the Relational Support Plan, this section may also outline interventions which would be helpful to support the development of emotional literacy and stress regulation.

It is important to be able to recognise when children are at different stages of regulation so that our responses are attuned and don't cause the child to dysregulate further. Adults should share their knowledge, understanding and experiences of the child so that there is a clear picture of the behaviours which might indicate that a child is calm, alert or mildly stressed, dysregulated (mobilised or immobilised) or at crisis point. It is important to recognise that dysregulated behaviours do not always result in a child presenting as being out of control. Dysregulation refers to an emotional dysregulation. At times emotional dysregulation can result in behaviours which appear controlled, purposeful or withdrawn.

For each stage of regulation the adults supporting the child should consider what the specific needs of the child are in terms of both how the adults should be and what they should do. Plans should detail child specific responses whilst following the guidance to supporting co-regulation.

The success of co-regulation lies in being able to respond to the child's level of regulation accurately and skillfully. Being able to identify when to use social interaction in order to engage thinking and when to reduce the social demand to maintain safety is particularly important. Remaining a source of safety through our presence, tone of voice, facial expressions and body language is a challenge when we ourselves may feel stressed or under threat.

Appendix 6 provides a template for a responsive co-regulation plan.

From Practice to Policy: Responding and Calming

The policy needs to describe:

- How adults in school will use skilled relational responses to keep classrooms calm and enable children to learn.
- How adults in school will use relational skills to regulate children who are experiencing strong emotions in order to support them to calm, learn how to self-regulate and settle to learning.
- How adults will support children in crisis situations in order to maintain safety and ensure that all children can learn.
- Schools should have specific plans for circumstances such as the use of physical intervention, when children abscond, searching pupils and serious incidents in the community. In these circumstances schools should have general guidelines and individual plans to ensure safety.

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)

Sometimes things will go wrong. Even with strong relationships, clear boundaries and good co-regulation there will still be times when conflict emerges or harm is caused. The demands of school mean that some children (and adults) will need support to repair and restore relationships and learn from the mistakes made.

For children with attachment insecurities, the repairing of relationships will be a vital. It can provide a learning experience which has the power to challenge their perception that relationships do not last or are not worth having, and that they are not worthy or deserving of lasting relationships themselves.

When supporting this learning process in the aftermath of a challenging event, children will need the security of our relationships in order to access the learning needed to repair harm and be supported to change. They will need our empathy, our understanding and our support in order to stay regulated whilst having such challenging conversations. This is very skilled relational work.

Applying a restorative framework, as described by Belinda Hopkins (Just Schools: A whole School Approach to Restorative Justice) following conflict or when difficult incidents have taken place can be far more successful in promoting understanding and learning than a punitive approach.

It supports children in developing an understanding of their feelings and the feelings of others and how feelings impact on behaviour as well as how behaviour impacts on other people. Using a restorative framework supports children to feel accepted and can help to mitigate the cycles of shame, rejection and exclusion. It acknowledges that all behaviour is a form of communication and adopts a 'no-blame' ethos. Instead of spending time investigating incidents in order to then attribute sanctions, it seeks to explore thoughts and feelings (of all affected parties) in order to gain understanding and promote repair and restoration.

Restorative frameworks used following conflict and harm need to be underpinned by a strong restorative ethos which is expressed through our everyday interactions. Adults need to be skilled and able to model good co-operation, communication and emotional literacy skills so that children are able to experience and learn these skills themselves.

Using a restorative framework for maintaining boundaries and working with behaviours which are not acceptable involves working with the child to consider the following: 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 the harm can be repaired? Our relational skills will be vital in ensuring the success of this collaborative learning process.

We have put together an accessible guide to support adults in working with children to repair harm. The **Restorative Exploration Plan** *is found in Appendix 6. It can be used at any stage of restorative work, from supporting conversations as part of everyday restorative interactions to reparation in the response to conflict where harm has been caused.*

Resolving conflict: Everyday restorative interactions to create a shared understanding.

When using a relational approach in school restorative conversations will be the norm when there is minor conflict or disagreement. There will be opportunities for restorative conversations daily whenever two people engage in conversation around a difficulty. This will support the development of a caring and restorative ethos and will support the resolution of worries and disagreements as and when they arise, rather than allowing them to build into bigger conflicts.

When we engage in restorative conversations we need to be mindful of our relational skills (safety cues, curiosity, empathy, containment, soothing etc.) as described in the 'Responding and Calming' section of this document.

All adults need to be able and skilled in taking part in restorative conversations. They will need to call upon their relational skills and need to be good restorative listeners and communicators. Belinda Hopkins describes a good restorative listener and communicator as someone who:

- Believes and shows that the speaker 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, invites them to tell their story and acknowledges their right to a different 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 repairs 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.

These are the key principles and skills needed for restorative work. Adults and children alike need to develop the skills needed to be good restorative listeners and communicators. It can be helpful to develop guidelines for restorative conversations to support the expression of perspectives, feelings and needs in ways which remove barriers and aid understanding.

Adults will need to be trained in restorative conversations and have ongoing opportunities to practice skills and reflect on practise.

Children will also need to be taught restorative skills, such as active empathic listening and expressing thoughts, feelings and needs as the skills needed to maintain and repair relationships.

The PSHE curriculum should reflect the school's relational and restorative ethos and provide opportunities for learning about the approach and developing skills. In addition some students may become restorative leaders and have more specialised training in peer mediation to enable them to support restorative conversations between children.

As well as during everyday interactions, restorative conversations will take place during regular circle time, school council sessions and class meetings. This will provide opportunities for students and adults to discuss disagreements, express their thoughts and feelings and come to an agreement which is helpful. It will lead to a greater understanding of each other and how we need to be together.

The more that this framework and these conversations are embedded in everyday classroom interactions and structures the greater capacity there is for empathic and harmonious classroom communities. There will be greater awareness of individual responsibilities as part of the whole class community and reductions in further conflicts and harm causing.

Repairing Harm: Restorative encounters to discuss the breaking of agreements, the impact (consequences) on others and to restore relationships.

Following an incident or when there is conflict between people, time needs to be spent sharing understanding and coming to an outcome which helps to repair relationships. This involves an encounter between all those involved where a restorative exploration of the problem, conflict or incident is used to support all people involved to share their story, thoughts and feelings, understand other peoples' stories, thoughts and feelings and come to a shared understanding of what needs to happen to meet the needs of all people involved. Restorative actions, ideally decided by those involved, can be explored as part of the process - be these letters of apology, agreements to support change or actions that show a willingness to repair the relationship.

The restorative exploration can be used with pairs of children, groups of children, children and adults and with parents in order to resolve conflict. In these cases an adult who is trained in restorative approaches facilitates the process. It is helpful to involve all relevant to the issue in acknowledging responsibilities, repairing harm, promoting respect and strengthening relationships.

There are a variety of structures for this type of restorative exploration. Belinda Hopkins in her book Just Schools outlines several structures: restorative mediation to resolve conflict/problems, problem solving circles, restorative mediation following harm and restorative conferencing. The restorative exploration provides the framework but different structures may be more appropriate for different situations and numbers of people involved.

- **Restorative mediation to resolve conflict/problems** is a process involving a neutral third party whose role is to support two people involved in conflict to come to a mutually acceptable resolution or at least find a way forward. Successful outcomes can sometimes be found if the problem is recognised as a shared one which the disputants can work together on resolving. Mediation can take place between 2 children, 2 adults or an adult and a child. The facilitator can be a trained adult or in some cases a trained child can act as a mediator between peers.

- **Problem solving circles** are useful when there is a problem to be discussed as a group, a conflict that needs addressing or an event that has caused distress to the whole group. Problem solving circles can be a valuable community building process. The process itself as well as the content can develop people's restorative skills and provide important relational experience.

- **Restorative mediation following harm** is different to the previous structures described: in this case, one person has accepted responsibility, at least to some extent, for the harm caused to the other. A key issue here is to ensure that the process does not re-victimise the person harmed. Children will need reassurance that meeting those who have hurt them will be safe and likely to make matters better and not worse. Facilitators also need to ensure that the process does not shame the child who has

Taking a Restorative Approach

Applying a restorative framework following conflict or when incidents have taken place can be far more successful in promoting understanding and learning, than a punitive approach. The approach supports children to develop greater understanding, empathy and responsibility.

Framework. Using a restorative framework for maintaining boundaries and working with behaviours which are not acceptable involves working with the child to consider the following: 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 the harm can be repaired?

Resolving Conflict: Everyday restorative interactions. This framework needs to be embedded in everyday interactions and classroom practice, from making time to talk, PSHE curriculum and circle time.

Repairing Harm: Restorative encounters. Following incidents where harm has been caused, time needs to be spent sharing understanding and coming to an outcome which helps to repair relationships. This involves an encounter between those involved where a restorative exploration is used. There are a variety of structures for this type of restorative work including; restorative mediation, problem solving circles and restorative conferencing.

Supporting Change. Following the use of a restorative exploration it can be helpful for the adults to reflect on; what was the behaviour communicating? How are the unmet needs being addressed? What skills does the child need to develop? What additional learning opportunities are in place to enable this? What suggestions do the children have to support the repairing of the relationship?

Targetted. When it is felt that an encounter between those harmed and those who have harmed is not deemed to be beneficial it can be helpful to use the restorative exploration with the child who has harmed individually. This needs careful support and judgement from the adult as they need to ensure the child feels safe and secure and does not experience shame. Children who have experienced trauma may find it hard to connect with their own feelings and think about the feelings of others. A helpful way forward will be to focus to supporting the child to repair the relationship, including restorative action.

Support for adults. Restorative leads can support other members of staff as well as leading on complex restorative encounters and individual restorative explorations. These staff would benefit from ongoing supervision and training.

caused harm. Shame would be detrimental to both the restorative process and the development of the child. Shame can lead to feelings of worthlessness and helplessness and does not help the child to learn from their mistakes and repair things. Guilt however can be a helpful feeling, supporting the child to think about their actions as a mistake that they have the potential to rectify. Children who have experienced attachment insecurity or trauma often experience shame and with these children it is helpful to think about how the restorative process can move them from shame to guilt through a greater understanding of their thoughts, feelings and behaviour and finding ways forward. Some aspects of restorative work can be unmanageable for traumatised children and if this is thought to be the case the process should focus solely on reparation.

It is vital that schools using this type of mediation are clear about the reasons for using it. Unless all sides are likely to benefit, then the process can be harmful. The process must be voluntary on all sides, otherwise the child who has been harmed may feel like a pawn in the process and the child who has harmed may feel coerced and the process will become unhelpful for all involved. Children must feel that they can trust the process to make the situation better and that they will be safe throughout. If a child is not happy to take part it may be possible to offer them support. All children will benefit from having time to work through the process with a trusted adult before the meeting. Shuttle mediation where the facilitator moves between the two children may be helpful.

Restorative practitioners in schools say that generally all sides experience huge relief to be given the opportunity to help resolve an issue which allows everyone to tell their story. The process appeals to the best in people and generally children want to behave well and will engage with a process that helps them to make things better.

Behaviour tends to be complex and often those who appear to harm others have been harmed themselves. This is often the case in incidents of bullying. This is in no way to excuse the impact of such behaviour on others. An impartial mediator, using empathy and treating everyone with respect, may be able to identify strategies which prevent the behaviour from reoccurring by meeting the needs of all parties. The needs of those who have been harmed and those who have harmed can be very similar.

• A restorative conference usually involves a group of people who have been harmed meeting with those who have harmed them. The purpose is to seek understanding of each other's perspectives and come to a mutual agreement which will repair the harm caused as much as possible.

Supporting Change: What additional support/action is needed

Following the use of a restorative exploration it can be helpful for the adults to reflect on:

• What was the behaviour communicating?

• How are the unmet needs being addressed?

• What skills does the child need to develop?

• What additional learning opportunities are in place to enable this?

• What suggestions do the children have to support the repairing of the relationship?

There will be learning for us as well as the child and as a result of a restorative exploration the Relational Support Plan and/or Responsive Co-regulation Plan may need to be reviewed.

This may involve further assessment of need, plans for relational support and intervention to develop skills and further opportunities to support the repair of relationships and ensure inclusion.

If, following an incident, there has been a response to keep everyone safe that has involved a child being removed from a situation, then there needs to be a plan as to how to support the child to enable them to gradually return, or an alternative should be found which everyone is happy with.

Targeted to the Individual: Using restorative exploration with individual children in order to support understanding and learning

When it is felt that an encounter between those harmed and those who have harmed is not deemed to be beneficial it can be helpful to use the restorative exploration with the child who has harmed individually. In this case a trusted adult has a restorative conversation with the child with the aim of enabling them to tell their story, develop a greater awareness and understanding of what may have led to their behaviour and how it might have affected others. This may support the child's ability to think and reflect on their behaviour so increasing their capacity for change. The child may also identify things that they could do to make the situation better and repair harm caused. Adults working with the child in this way need to be very aware of ensuring that this conversation is understanding of the child's needs and seeks to explore situations without inducing a sense of shame in the child.

The Restorative Exploration can be a powerful learning experience for the children, but is one that they can find challenging. It needs careful support and judgement from the adult mediator and they need to ensure the child is in a place where they are feeling safe and secure. Children who have experienced trauma may find it very difficult to connect with their feelings and think about the feelings of others. A helpful way forward may be to focus on supporting the child to repair the relationship. Through the process of repair, learning about thoughts, feelings and consequences is likely to occur.

It is helpful to highlight the fact that children are often in a heightened state of emotional regulation when it comes to having conversations after difficult incidents as they often believe they are about to get a telling off (which can fire their danger pathway and lead to an escalation). This means we must be aware of ensuring we communicate safety cues (faces and voices). Whilst having these challenging conversations, it is imperative – if we want the child to learn from these conversations – that we try to keep them in their cortex.

Allow the child to tell their story without judgement or persuasion. This is not a search for 'the truth' as it were – often there is no one truth to an incident, and even when it appears this way, it does not mean that the child consciously meant for things to escalate, but more likely they reacted to a situation with their amygdala firing.

Sometimes children's thinking about what has happened is very muddled. It can be helpful when listening to children to provide a framework for understanding what has happened. Using questions such as what happened first, next etc and then reflecting back the chronology can be helpful. It can also be helpful to make links between things to aid their understanding. Empathically reflecting back what they have said in little chunks can be very containing for the child and can help them to organise their thinking. Attempting to soothe the child through your way of being will be helpful in keeping them regulated.

During the restorative process we ask children to reflect on their thoughts and feelings. Not all children will be able to do this without support. It is helpful to consider where they are in their development of understanding feelings and emotions. Some children will not yet be able to understand even basic feelings so you may need to start by considering how they feel physically. These children will need opportunities to work on their ability to distinguish basic physical sensations.

Many people ask about consequences to challenging behaviour. We find that they are often using the word consequences (which occur naturally) when they mean sanctions – imposed on the situation. We think it is helpful to highlight how exploring (these natural) consequences to particular behaviours can be really helpful in terms of developing understanding. We find sanctions / punishments to be unhelpful in terms of promoting meaningful learning. This is discussed in more detail in the section 'Relational Approaches to Classroom Management'.

We highlight the natural consequences to the child in terms of the effect particular behaviour has on others (i.e. the child who is punched on the playground will be wary of you, the other children may be nervous around you in a game, people may not wish to play with you etc.). There will also be a school response to that behaviour in which, for example, the child will not be able to use the playground for a short time due to concerns around safety for the child and safety for other children. This is not punitive but an opportunity for 'time in' rather than time out - an opportunity for time spent with an adult, exploring and developing understanding.

Following a restorative exploration some children may wish to do something different, change something or do or say something which helps to repair the relationship.

These repairing actions, such as letters of apology, offering to help put things right or being particularly mindful of others needs can be empowering for the child and meaningful for those harmed.

All children need opportunities to learn from their mistakes and to repair the harm and relationships. For children who have attachment needs or who have experienced trauma this is vital as if this does not happen their perception that relationships are not safe and secure will be strengthened. Children who have experienced loss, rejection or abandonment often blame themselves rather than the adults and often perceive themselves as bad or worthless. They often experience toxic shame which can be further exaggerated when their mistakes are followed by ruptured relationships which are left unrepaired and unrestored.

For adults supporting targeted restorative work with an individual, it will be beneficial to ensure that they have some reflection time, supervision or professional dialogue to support their own practice, development and well-being.

It would be helpful for schools to identify and train staff as Restorative leads. Restorative leads can support other members of staff as well as leading on complex restorative encounters and individual restorative explorations.

See appendix 8 for a framework for a restorative exploration

From Practice to Policy: Repairing and Restoring

The policy needs to describe how restorative approaches and systems will work in school in order to:

- Resolve conflict through the use of everyday restorative interactions and discussions including classroom meetings, circle time, peer mediation.
- Repair harm through the use of facilitated restorative encounters.
- Support change by ensuring that all parties involved: learn from the incident, have their needs identified and supported and are enabled to repair and restore relationships.
- Support individual children to understand the consequences of behaviour and enable them to repair relationships through the use of individual restorative explorations. Schools may wish to outline specific restorative processes that will occur following incidents such as bullying, racism, homophobia.

3. Working in Relationship

- Relational Approaches in the Classroom .
  - > Managing low level disruption
  - > Supporting systems and processes
  - > Using praise and feedback effectively
  - > Responding to incidents
- Working Together
  - > Listening to the Child
  - > Working with Parents
  - > Working with External Professionals and Agencies
- Supporting Staff Well-being and Professional Development
- A Graduated Response – The Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle
  - > Overview (including diagram)
  - > Assessment
  - > Planning
  - > Implementation
  - > Reviewing and Revising
- Special and Exceptional Circumstances

Relational Approaches in the Classroom

Good 'quality first' teaching is vital in order to support children to manage their behaviour and working with children who have a high level of need is the responsibility of all adults in school. Adults in the classroom have a range of relational approaches to draw on in order to manage needs in the classroom. A teacher who is skilled in using these approaches and supported by wider systems in the school is likely to be able to manage the needs of the vast majority of students without the need to resort to exclusion. In particular being able to manage low level disruption through relational approaches and good quality inclusive teaching will lead to a calm and supportive environment where all children are able to learn.

Teachers and children will need to be supported by systems and processes which support the relational approach. Schools will develop different systems according to their size, cohort and staffing structure. In most schools SENDCos, Head of years (HOY), heads of department (HOD), pastoral leads and members of senior leadership will be involved in coordinating support for staff and students through doing staff development, early intervention and through a graduated response process. It will be helpful for all support and intervention to be detailed in a provision map.

The Relational Support Plan document will be useful for supporting the most vulnerable children, as will the Co-Responsive Regulation Plan and the Restorative Exploration process document. It will be helpful to follow the guidance on developing relational support plans (Appendix 7) in order to best meet the relational needs of the child and to implement a consistent approach across the team and whole school.

Managing low level disruption

The following approaches will support children to be able to feel safe, secure, and able to regulate their feelings in order to access learning:

- Be a source of safety and security. Be mindful of projecting a sense of safety through your voice, tone, facial expressions and body language. Be a source of security by providing regular, reliable and predictable attention for those most in need.

- Know your children. Make sure that you are aware of any additional learning and language needs, relational, social and emotional needs and any potential triggers for stress of the children you teach. Make an effort to get to know your children beyond how they are in the classroom. Find out what they are interested in, what their qualities and strengths are and when they are at

their best. Let them know that you are interested in them by listening to them, giving them attention and letting them know that you hold them in mind. Provide opportunities for connection within the classroom.

- Manage transitions. For many children transitions are a source of stress. Greet children at the door, use routine and structure to manage the start and end of lessons and any transitions within the lessons. Provide additional attention for those most in need at times of transition.

- Manage change. Change can be a stress trigger for many children. Pre-warn of change or novelty, such as a cover teacher taking the lesson or a special activity which involves a change in routine. Support children to be prepared and to be able to anticipate the change by the use of practical organisational strategies and for example visual timetables or social stories.

- Make language accessible. Not being able to understand what is expected is a major contributor to anxiety and stress in the classroom. Simplify and re-phrase language, supplement with visuals and show children what to do as well as telling them. Be very clear when giving guidance and instruction and always check understanding.

- Make learning accessible. Provide differentiated, alternative and personalised learning to meet specific need so that all children can be involved in learning. In particular support children's literacy needs. Support access to reading materials which are beyond their literacy level and when writing is a challenge, support children to record their learning though alternative methods. Some children will require a high level of structure, learning broken down in short tasks, learning/sensory breaks and adult attention to re-focus. Be mindful of the balance between support and challenge, challenge is helpful for learning, but not if it tips children into feeling overwhelmed.

- Manage peer relationships and support social inclusion. Consider how children are grouped in terms of where they sit and who they work with. Support children to develop peer relationships and to manage conflict through restorative conversations. Teach children how to learn together and provide opportunities for children to connect and learn how to work effectively with each other. Support children who may be vulnerable to social exclusion to connect with others. For those children who experience communication and interaction difficulties facilitate interaction and repair breakdowns in communication. At times some children will benefit from being in an environment where there is a low social demand.

- Manage the environment. Sensory sensitivities can trigger physical dysregulation for many students, particularly those who have experienced trauma or have a diagnosis of ASC. Where possible manage distractions, noise and crowding so as not to overwhelm the child. Provide a space with low sensory demand and opportunities and resources for sensory calming. Consider children's seating position to ensure they are in a position which means that they are able to focus their attention without distraction. Have a safe place to store belongings.

- Make clear agreements, provide feedback which is effective and give clear guidance and instruction. Children need to have a clear understanding of agreements and expectations and these need to be communicated and regularly referred to and reviewed. Children also need to know what these mean in terms of what they need to do. This needs to be taught, modelled and supported. Children will benefit from feedback which is clear about what they are doing well and what they need to do next and from opportunities for self-monitoring. An individual report or class report card may be helpful for some children and classes.

- Recognise when children are becoming stressed and regulate them. When children become anxious or stressed how the adults respond can make the difference between the stress escalating further or calming down. Use regulating responses to deal with low level anxiety or disruption (SEA – providing safety, empathy and making agreements) and have plans in place to recognise and respond to more increasing levels of dysregulation or disruption.

- Repair and restore relationships. Use restorative discussions, meetings and explorations in order to support understanding of needs, understanding of consequences and to ensure that following harm and conflict relationships are repaired. Ensure that learning takes place following conflict and make changes to support need.

- Involve parents. Establish relationships with parents with clear lines of communication. Feedback positives and let them know when there are difficulties. Listen to parents, involve them in supporting their child and offer them support when needed.

Supporting Systems and Processes

Support for the teacher may include:

- Training, coaching and mentoring to develop knowledge and skills.

- Supervision to support work with individual children or classes.

- Observation followed by discussion including feedback and guidance.

- Opportunities to share good practice with others.

- Support within the classroom to regulate the child or to take the class whilst the teacher regulates the child.

- Provision for the child to leave the class for a short period of time in order to calm down or work with another teacher for a period of time before returning.

- Facilitation of restorative meetings between the teacher and child or between children.

- Access to partner agencies who may be able to advise on the needs of the child, provision required and who could offer coaching and supervision.

- Support in meeting and communicating with parents.

Support for the child may include:

- An exit card and access to trusted adults who are skilled at regulation and a space to feel calm.

- Intervention for specific difficulties including additional support in class, small group or individual work which is timetabled and opportunities for alternative learning such as outdoor education.

- A report card which involves feedback, guidance and instruction, opportunities for self-monitoring and reflection and opportunities to provide regular, consistent and predictable check ins.

- Coaching and mentoring from a significant adult.

- Intervention to support the child to learn how to regulate themselves as well as the response needed to support the child to regulate.

For those children who are most in need there will need to be a coordinated assess, plan, do and review process involving relational and regulation support plans involving the class teachers, other adults who support the child, parents and partner agencies.

The diagrams overleaf identifies some key skills for working with both individual children and the whole class, as well as whole school systems and processes which will be helpful. It considers these in terms of level of disruption, beginning at lower level working up towards more persistent and concerning behaviours.

Persistent incidents of disruption

- Plan coordinated support and intervention with HOY/HOD/SENDCo as part of a graduated response.
- Use a restorative enquiry or an individual restorative exploration as appropriate to support understanding and change.
- Establish individualised agreements with the child. Use report cards/coaching/self-monitoring and provide effective feedback to support change.
- Take supportive action such as individualised start to lessons, adaptations to the curriculum, opportunities for breaks within the lesson, an exit card, an arrangement whereby a child can work with another member of staff for a limited period, a trusted adult to be able to be called to class to support the teacher to regulate the child.
- Implement relational support and regulation plans as well as targeted interventions following further assessments to establish additional needs, such as SEN / social inclusion.
- Involve parents/ carers to establish further joined up support.

- Plan coordinated action and support with HOD/HOY/SENDCo.
- Hold a class meeting to re-view and re-establish agreements. Make agreements as to how all members of the class will behave with specific and clear areas of focus identified.
- Use a restorative framework to enable the sharing of thoughts and feelings and to discuss action needed to support change
- Develop a relational support plan for the class.

- Discuss impact of behaviour, refer back to agreements. Provide guidance, instruction and teaching.
- Take action – consider managing the environment and relationships, supporting learning, providing focused attention, supporting transitions. Consider if targeted interventions are needed?
- Check in and connect regularly, give feedback, encourage reflection and self-monitoring. Consider introducing a report card.
- Take some time out of class to have a longer discussion using restorative approaches.
- Ask for advice and share good practice. Discuss the child and log concerns with tutor, other teachers HOD/HOY, SENDCo.
- Communicate and discuss concerns with parents.

- Hold a class meeting and facilitate discussion as to what is going well and what needs to change.
- Re-establish agreements.
- Consider whether there are adaptations to teaching that are needed, for example a change in seating, tasks broken down into small chunks, managed transitions?
- Discuss the class with HOD/HOY to gain advice and support.

Single incidents of low level disruption

- SEA – Safety, Empathy, Agreements. Be mindful of face, voice and body language.
- Get alongside – avoid power battles, ultimatums, give take up time and connect.
- Focus on primary behaviour – avoid getting caught up with secondary behaviour

- Revisit the class agreements with the whole class - briefly discuss the purpose of the agreements and the implications of not sticking to them.
- Provide feedback as to what is going well and remind the class as to what is needed from them.
- Give clear guidance and instruction, teach and model the behaviours you want to see.

Individual

Whole Class

Relational approach and response to managing disruption in the classroom

Persistent incidents
of disruption

- Systems for a graduated response coordinated by SENDCo, HOY or a member of senior leadership involving parents and partner agencies where appropriate.
- Assessment by SENDCo and/or advisory teachers/ educational psychologists to clarify needs.
- A provision map outlining support and intervention to meet any SEN need and needs relating to relationship, regulation or social inclusion.
- Systems for developing and implementing a relational support plan and regulation plan.
- Systems for facilitating restorative discussions, meetings and/or individual explorations with trained staff.
- Support and supervision for staff regarding individual children.

- Established processes and systems for logging and monitoring concerns with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention.
- Clear systems for initiating a graduated assess, plan, do, and review response for individual children.
- Support for teachers from SENDCo/HOY including; observations, coaching/mentoring and meetings of those who teach the child to offer guidance, share good practice and problem solve.
- Processes for involving and supporting parents/carers.

- Knowledge, beliefs and values embedded within practice - evident in school ethos and good quality first teaching.
- Staff training and new staff induction on relational approaches. Ongoing development opportunities including formalised regular discussion, supervision, coaching/mentoring and line management.
- Clear and shared understanding of the skills needed to form relationships, regulate and use restorative approaches.
- Relationships with parents are established.
- Information about the needs of specific children is clearly communicated.

Single incidents of low
level disruption

Processes and systems to support managing disruption in the classroom

Using praise and feedback effectively

Feedback has an important role in learning and development and it is important to support children to reflect on their behaviour in a way which will best support learning. Encouragement, positive feedback and genuine personal praise are important features of feedback. Research on what makes feedback effective when considering learning is helpful to consider when thinking about feedback for behaviour.

There is extensive research which suggests that the most effective feedback is:

- Specific -"You stayed really focused today even when it got tricky" rather than 'You were great today". This leads to greater understanding of exactly what they should be doing.

- Activity involving rather than ego involving – "It was kind and thoughtful of you to let others go first" rather than "You are kind". This leads to a belief that things are not fixed, everyone can behave well on some days and make mistakes on others. What you do makes the difference.

- Individual and does not allow comparisons between children - a quiet word giving feedback or a postcard home rather than a public announcement. This leads to children being reflective about their own behaviour without being influenced by the response of other children or the need to protect their ego.

- Identifies clear next steps. "You need to wait to take your turn when talking in a group" rather than "You need to be better next time". This supports children to understand expectations and focus on their actions.

In the relational approach it is more helpful to think of positive and effective feedback rather than rewards. Children who have experienced attachment insecurity or trauma have not yet developed internal control and therefore the external control systems of rewards are unlikely to impact positively on their behaviour.

Systems which use public displays of behaviour such as sticker charts, behaviour charts, red, amber, green cards publicly displayed are not helpful. Some children become stigmatised, see themselves as bad and not able to change, others can become complacent or not able to allow themselves to make mistakes. Public displays which highlight individual children who are struggling with behaviour can create a need to protect the ego: the child may start to communicate that they do not care through their behaviour.

Children need to have thoughtful feedback about their behaviour. We need to use feedback that is congruent with our relationship. Feedback which is not genuine will be dismissed and if feedback is seen to be manipulative it can damage the relationship. In a genuinely warm and empathic relationship there should be plenty of opportunity for meaningful and positive feedback. Being curious about behaviour, asking for example asking "That went really well, how did you manage to do that" will lead to more reflective and beneficial discussions about behaviour.

Some children will benefit from a more targeted approach to feedback. Report cards, regular check ins or review meetings may be helpful. Some children like these approaches as they benefit from receiving consistent and reliable attention from an adult which is focused positively on them. Report cards, check ins and reviews should involve effective feedback, curious questions to encourage the child to reflect on their behaviour and agreements as to what the next steps need to be.

Responding to incidents

Sanctions or punishment used as a response to incidents often exclude and ostracise children and can lead to children feeling humiliated and shamed. Sanctions often remove the very thing that children need in order to develop – relationships. We therefore do not advocate sanctions in response to incidents.

Following some incidents there will however need to be a response from the school in order to ensure that everyone is kept safe. If a child is violent on the playground on a Monday, it is unlikely they will be back out on the playground on the Tuesday. This is not as a punishment, but as an acknowledgement that we could well be setting them up to fail if they are back out tomorrow without any developmental input, and also that other children would not be safe. We need to take a relational approach to this, to ensure that the child understands that this is not rejection. We would advocate 'time in' rather than time out and so this is not an exclusion. The work that takes place with the child on the Tuesday lunchtime will seek to support them to be able to go back onto the playground not punish them.

Different children will have different needs and will be at different stages of their development. As with all good teaching, personalisation will be really helpful in enabling children to learn. This applies to social and emotional development as much as academic understanding. In order to be fair we need to responsive to need, this means not treating everyone as though they are the same. Equality does not mean everyone getting the same, it means everyone getting their needs met. Responses to incidents will therefore need to be specific to the needs of the children involved.

If a child is persistently disrupting the learning of others then we need to consider whether we are getting it right. The child's behaviour is telling us something about their underlying needs and we will benefit from working on these underlying needs. This should be our priority when deciding on any provision / intervention. Exclusion is rarely helpful in meeting the child's needs.

For some people this will be a shift in thinking. Some may see this as the children 'getting away' with things unless there is a sanction. In our experience children like to feel that there is support for things to get better and parents want to be reassured that there are processes in place to ensure that their children our safe, happy and learning in school. When these reassurances are in place sanctions are rarely seen as necessary.

From Practice to Policy: Relational Approaches in the classroom

The policy needs to describe:

- How low level disruptive behaviour will be managed within the classroom. Ranging from single incidents to more regular and persistent disruption.

- The systems and processes in place to support relational approaches in the classroom.

- How effective feedback will be provided for all children within the classroom context.

- The measures in place to ensure that children feel safe following incidents.

- Schools should clearly communicate through their policy what the processes will be in response to specific behaviours. Whilst the response will be different according to the needs of individual children, the process should be consistent.

Working in Relationship Together

Listening to the child: Ensuring a child centred approach

Children and young people should feel respected and valued within the school community and regarded as an equal part of it. They need to have ongoing opportunities for a purposeful dialogue with trusted adults, which influences all aspects of their school day. This should be embedded within a whole school approach, involving all staff and pupils and not simply be a one off activity. Time and care should be taken in listening to children with curiosity and empathy. From an emotional perspective, the opportunity to be supported to engage in meaningful self-expression can help the child to process their emotions as well as supporting the early identification of needs.

During an assess-plan-do-review process we need to listen to the views of the child at all stages. Feelings of empowerment, mastery and control have been found to be protective in stressful and challenging situations, increasing resilience. Children should be enabled to describe what is difficult for them, what is going well, establish a realistic and achievable vision of the future, identify small steps forward and be involved in planning for support.

Some children will find it hard to express their views: they may not yet have conscious awareness of their underlying feelings, may be avoidant, withdrawn or defensive or they may have language or communication needs which may impact on their ability to give their perspective.

In these cases we need to carefully elicit the child's views in a way which is accessible to them. External agencies, particularly Educational Psychologists have expertise and tools which enable them to elicit the views of the child and can be an advocate for the child.

Person centred planning approaches and solution focused conversations/coaching are particularly helpful in ensuring that the child is the centre of our work. These approaches are child centred, future focused, strengths based models for reflection and planning. Whilst much of the work done with vulnerable children can be problem focused, these approaches support the child to reframe their experiences so that signs of resilience, coping strategies, unique skills and talents are recognised and a preferred future is seen as possible.

Some children will benefit from some ongoing coaching. This can be a rare opportunity to place the child at the very centre of their development, capturing their voice and enabling them to have ownership of their development and raising their motivation to change. They can support the child to discover their strengths, skills and qualities and to work out what works for them. Helping the child to

identify small things that they can change for themselves in order to move forward is beneficial in supporting them to understand that their own efforts can make a difference. In time this can effectively shift the child's perception of themselves and their identity.

Working with parents and carers: Respecting and valuing parent's and carer's knowledge, experience and perspective on the child.

Throughout the assess-plan-do-review process it will be vital to include the parent's perspective. Parents will be able to give you an insight into the child's development, their experiences and what may be happening at the current time. Parents are the expert on their child and their knowledge, views and concerns will lead to greater understanding of unmet needs as well as supporting future planning. Parents will also be able to provide valuable support at the implementation stage.

Parents will need to be given time to tell theirs and the child's story. The knowledge, experience and views of the parent should be respected and valued. We need to be aware that some parents will not have had positive experiences of school and some may have negative feelings towards school themselves. We need to encourage parents to be a part of their child's life at school and work to develop trusting relationships. We need to be warm, welcoming and open in our relationships with parents. The school's universal approach to building relationships will be important in developing an ethos where parents feel that they can contribute safely. There should be very clear open channels of communication between parents and carers and the school.

Where parents may have needs themselves we need to be particularly mindful of ensuring that the school is accessible. We need to be aware of triggers for anxiety and the need to be very clear in our communication, ensuring that the parent is able to understand and to contribute.

We need to work with parents to ensure that they receive support and help if needed. Schools will be aware of the Early Help approach in giving young people and parents support from a range of services and teams who work together with the whole family to help improve the situation for everyone. Early Help can provide support for issues from parenting, employment and school attendance to emotional well-being or anti-social behaviour. Early Help is the initial response offered by all services in contact with children, young people and families. This builds an understanding to address extra needs and prevent situations from getting more difficult for children and young people. The aim of Early Help is to build on people's

capacity and resources to manage their own dilemmas, resolve their own difficulties and prevent further problems in the future. The Childrens and Families Partnership have put together an early help toolkit which supports Early Help in Devon. (See Appendix 12 Useful Links)

Working with External Professionals and Agencies

When children have significant needs or if the child is struggling to make progress despite several assess-plan-do-review cycles then external professionals should be consulted to support with the process.

In particular Educational Psychologists, SEMH Advisory teachers, Communication and Interaction Advisory teachers, Speech and Language Therapists, and Professionals from CAMHS will be able to help with assessment, planning intervention and review.

External professionals can also support at the 'doing' stage and are often underutilised during implementation. Educational Psychologists and Advisory teachers can provide small group and individual supervision and coaching for adults working with children and coaching or therapeutic intervention for children or groups of children. Through particular interventions, such as the 'Overcoming Project' Educational Psychologists may be able to provide support for parents.

From Practice to Policy: Working in Relationship Together

The policy needs to describe:

- Listening to the child – How children will be supported to express themselves and how their voices will be utilized and reflected in the ethos, systems and practice of the school as well as in individualized graduated support.
- Working with parents and carers – How parents and carers will be involved and informed and how they can access support. This should include clear systems for communication.
- Working with external agencies – When and how additional support services will be accessed through working with partner agencies.

Supporting Staff Well-being and Professional Development

All adults in school should be trained to enable them to have a good understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the relational approach and what this approach means in practical terms. All staff need to understand how they need to be in their relationships with children and why. They need to be able to read children's behaviour in terms of their relational needs and understand the needs of children who have attachment needs or who have experienced trauma. It is important that all adults in school receive training, not just teaching staff and teaching assistants. Other adults in school such as receptionists and meal time assistants make a significant contribution to the school ethos and often make a difference to the lives of children.

There should be regular opportunities for continued professional development. As well as ongoing training opportunities it is also helpful to have a standing item at staff meetings to ensure that there is always space and time for regular professional dialogue about the approach. Introducing a new and standard language for describing children's behaviour and needs as well as strategies for support will be particularly helpful.

The induction of new staff should be considered so that adults who are new to the school are adequately trained to understand and adopt the approach.

If the adults in school are to be able to provide support for the well-being of children through providing secure relationships they need to be supported in their own well-being and relationships in school.

Research has shown that stress in the workplace is related to a lack of agency and control. Like the children we work with, the adults in school need to feel that they are listened to and that their views will make a difference. Respectful relationships within the work place where all adults are valued is the key to this but it is also helpful to have systems and processes which ensure that staff are heard and that they are able to affect change.

Ensuring that all staff are equal partners also helps to bring about responsibility rather than accountability. All adults in school should be able to make a valuable contribution to provision and to have ownership of their work through opportunities to share and develop ideas and good practice.

Adults will need to have the time and space to reflect on their practice both individually and with others. It is helpful to focus on the identification of strengths, exploring things that are going well and coping strategies as well as problem solving activities. Peer supervision or peer coaching will be helpful to share ideas and problem solve and line management supervision will be additionally supportive in enabling development both at a personal and organisational level.

School leaders also need to be aware of the 'secondary stress' symptoms that can impact on staff who are working with children who have experienced trauma and loss. In these cases professional supervision meetings can provide an essential opportunity for staff to understand and manage intense feelings and projections that can lead to 'blocked care' and empathy fatigue.

"When working with disturbed children, one might find oneself feeling hurt, abused, angry, frustrated, intolerant, anxious, de-skilled and even frightened. One of the reasons that working with children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties is so disturbing is that such intense and painful feelings are somehow pushed [or projected] into the staff (as well as other children). Sometimes it might feel as if it is difficult to know where the feelings are coming from, and the intensity of them might lead one to question one's own competence and professional worth."

Greenhalgh (1994)

Professional supervision involves regular, protected time for facilitated, in-depth reflection on practice which is developmental, addresses issues relating to personal resources including the emotional impact and well-being and qualitative standards.

In addition whole school approaches to supporting relationships and connection, well-being and managing stress will be helpful. Opportunities for the adults in school to participate, learn together and share enjoyment will support positive relationships. Opportunities for activities such as mindfulness, yoga, exercise, relaxation techniques could be particularly beneficial in supporting well-being.
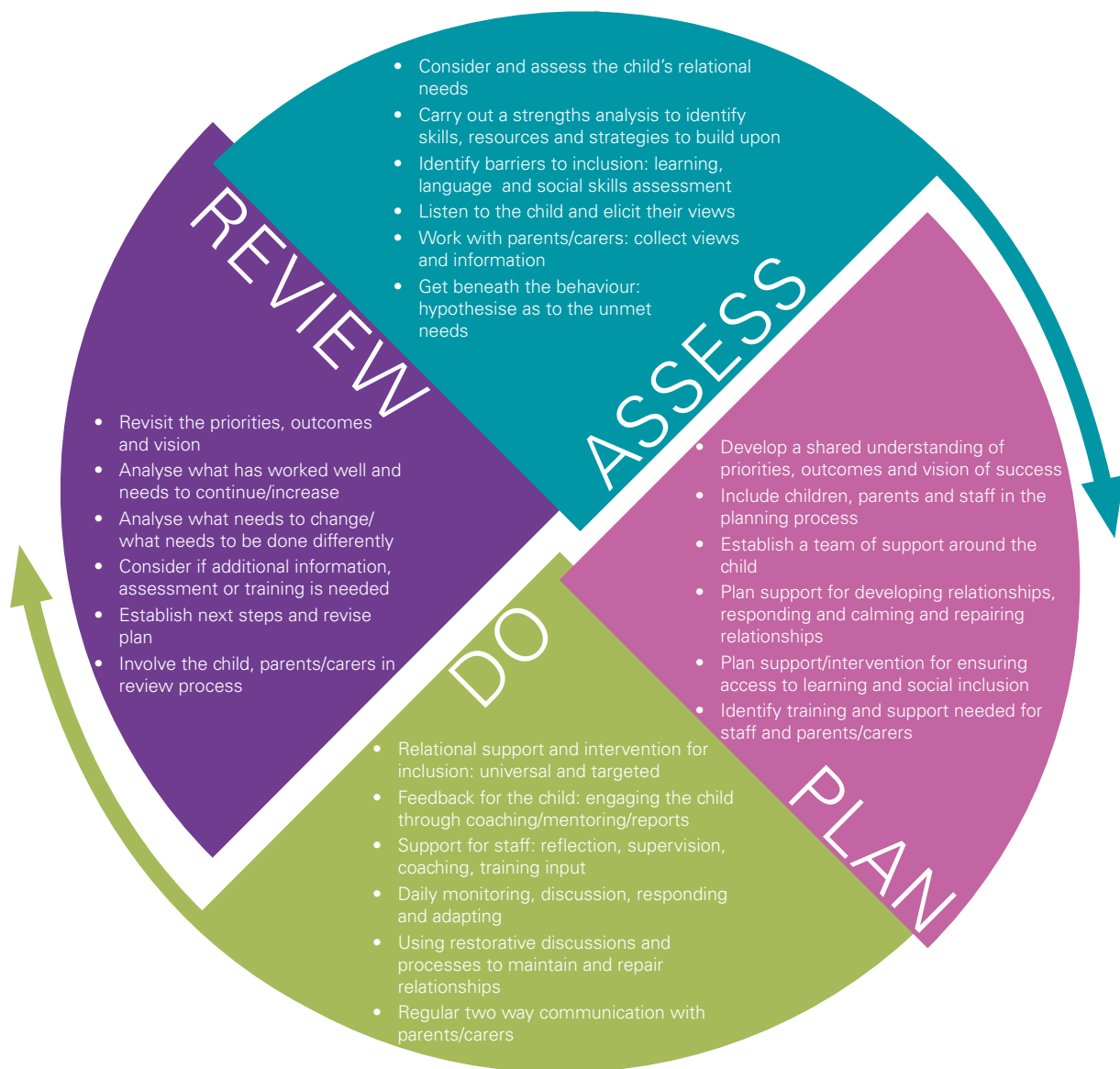
From Practice to Policy: Supporting Staff Well-being and Professional Development

The policy needs to describe how staff will be supported, valued and respected. This should include information on:

- Staff well-being
- Continued professional development
- Individual reflection opportunities – supervision, coaching, mentoring
- Having their voice heard

Working in Relationship Together: The Graduated Response

The diagram below shows Relational Approaches to the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle.

ASSESS

- Consider and assess the child's relational needs
- Carry out a strengths analysis to identify skills, resources and strategies to build upon
- Identify barriers to inclusion: learning, language and social skills assessment
- Listen to the child and elicit their views
- Work with parents/carers: collect views and information
- Get beneath the behaviour: hypothesise as to the unmet needs

PLAN

- Develop a shared understanding of priorities, outcomes and vision of success
- Include children, parents and staff in the planning process
- Establish a team of support around the child
- Plan support for developing relationships, responding and calming and repairing relationships
- Plan support/intervention for ensuring access to learning and social inclusion
- Identify training and support needed for staff and parents/carers

DO

- Relational support and intervention for inclusion: universal and targeted
- Feedback for the child: engaging the child through coaching/mentoring/reports
- Support for staff: reflection, supervision, coaching, training input
- Daily monitoring, discussion, responding and adapting
- Using restorative discussions and processes to maintain and repair relationships
- Regular two way communication with parents/carers

REVIEW

- Revisit the priorities, outcomes and vision
- Analyse what has worked well and needs to continue/increase
- Analyse what needs to change/ what needs to be done differently
- Consider if additional information, assessment or training is needed
- Establish next steps and revise plan
- Involve the child, parents/carers in review process

A Graduated Response – The Assess, Plan, Do, Review Cycle

Overview

Schools need systems in place to ensure that where children are having difficulties, underlying needs are identified early and interventions put in place to meet those needs. The effectiveness of interventions needs to be evaluated and, where appropriate, changes made to either increase the amount or intensity of support provided or involve external professionals in thinking about what the child requires.

This 'assess-plan-do-review' cycle is known as the graduated approach for children and pupils with special educational needs and is equally applicable to concerns about emotional health and well-being.

The Devon Graduated Response to SEND is an electronic tool to support teachers and SENDCOs to identify, assess and record the needs of children and young people requiring special educational provision. It supports the planning and recording of appropriate provision and provides guidance for reviewing progress.

It aims to ensure a graduated approach to meeting need through effective implementation of foundation levels of support before moving a child or young person onto higher levels of support by following the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycles.

In the relational approach, assessment and response to relational need is at the heart of the process. The process should be holistic, working with strengths as well as needs and include the perspectives of the parents and child. Curiosity, empathy and care should be shown throughout to ensure that the process is supportive to all concerned and is a process which strengthens relationships.

Assessment

We need to understand what a child's behaviour is telling us in terms of their underlying needs. Some children may be 'acting out', others may be withdrawn. Responding to the behaviour alone will not be helpful, we need to assess their relational needs and work with these rather than simply attempting to control or manage behaviour. Other factors which may be impacting on inclusion or contributing to a lack of well-being, particularly those which we know to be linked to difficulties with social and emotional development should also be assessed.

Our assessment of needs should involve listening to the parent and child and involve all adults working with the child. In some cases external agencies will be involved in the assessment process.

Assessment should involve the following analysis of needs:

Developing relationships: What are the child's relational needs?

Using the relational framework, adults working with the child should reflect on what the child's behaviour is telling us about what they need. Teaching assistants, class teachers and tutors are often best placed to notice patterns of behaviour and read this behaviour as an indicator of the child's needs.

Structured discussions which enable staff to analyse behaviour with curiosity and empathy will develop understanding of the potential underlying thoughts and feelings, and needs can then be identified. Using the framework for thinking about relationships; protection, connection, understanding and care will be helpful in developing a detailed picture of the child's needs.

It may also be helpful to use assessment tools to identify areas of social and emotional need. See appendix 2 for a list of assessments.

Where there is a high level of need it will be helpful to involve external professionals to support with assessment. Educational psychologists and SEMH advisory teachers are best placed to assess relational needs. Educational psychologists and SEMH advisory teachers may assess through gathering information via consultation with staff, discussion with parents and the child and analysing results from assessments. The REDS (Reducing Exclusions in Devon Schools) intervention is a process run by an Educational Psychologist or SEMH advisory teacher which includes a detailed needs analysis followed by an action plan.

Supporting Inclusion: Are there factors which are blocking inclusion?

Children with SEN are more likely to be excluded, both for a fixed period and permanently, than those who do not have SEN. There is evidence to suggest that behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and resulting school exclusions are associated with both literacy difficulties and language impairment and communication and interaction difficulties. It is therefore vital to assess language, communication and interaction and literacy needs alongside a child's relational needs.

Executive functioning difficulties can also have a significant impact on the child's capacity to learn and may go unrecognised. It is therefore helpful to assess whether these difficulties may be affecting the child's inclusion as well as impacting on their emotional development.

Whilst the child's overall development needs are mediated through relational experiences it can also be helpful to identify specific skills which could be assessed and supported through intervention. It would be helpful to assess skills relating to the following so that specific support within the relational framework can be identified:

- A need for control e.g. accepting an adult lead, co-operative working, turn-taking, requesting help

- Social skills e.g. listening skills, responding to others, starting conversations, proximity

- Identity e.g. ability to take risks in learning, accept challenges, make mistakes

- Self-regulation and sensory regulation e.g. emotional literacy, self-soothing, managing sensory input

- Behaviours for learning e.g. impulse control, managing transitions

As well as access to learning we also need to consider social inclusion and to ensure that the child is not experiencing exclusion due to economic, social or ethnic and cultural difference.

*Appendix 9 provides detail of tools that can be used for assessment*

Building on strengths: When is the child at their best?

Any assessment needs to identify strengths as well as weaknesses. Understanding what a child needs is not just about working out the problems but working out

what the strengths, skills, qualities and resources are. A holistic assessment of the child which includes strengths is likely to lead to more effective planning where strengths are utilised and developed. It is not always about doing something new, sometimes a need can be met by doing more of what is working well.

It is important when assessing strengths to identify when the child is at their best, what helps them, who helps them, how they cope with difficulties, what personal resources they have and what is interesting and important to them.

A solution focused analysis of strengths can be very helpful both in terms of moving forward but also supporting the child to recognise their strengths, skills and coping strategies.
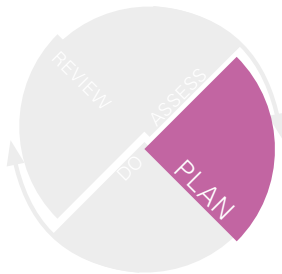
Planning

Following assessment an analysis of needs should identify key areas for support. Planning for support and intervention should always have two strands. Firstly providing support to ensure that the child's difficulties are not blocking their access to the learning or the social environment and secondly ensuring that the child is receiving support to develop their skills in their area of difficulty.

Within the relational approach, the relationship is central to all we do. All interventions should be adapted to meet the relational needs. How we need to be with a child, in terms of our relationship and interaction skills, should be outlined. How we are with a child is as important as what we do.

Planning should involve consideration of universal support and targeted intervention. Children will benefit from all adults being aware of their needs and using key relational approaches as well as having key adults and targeted interventions to support them.

Some children with significant needs may benefit from specialist interventions, such as play therapy or intervention from CAMHS. Some specialist interventions, such as Lego Therapy can be delivered by trained school staff. Other specialist interventions can be delivered by external professionals. Some special schools will also offer outreach to support the inclusion of children in mainstream schools.

The Relational Support Plan should be used as a framework to plan relational support, identify changes that need to be made to the environment, curriculum etc, and to plan intervention to develop specific skills.

The responsive co-regulation plan should be used to ensure that the child's needs are being met with regard to regulation. This is a plan to support all staff to be able to use appropriate and effective co-regulation in order to de-escalate and regulate the child as well as identifying the support needed to support the child's ability to regulate. Plans will also outline plans of action for crisis situations.

Both the relational support plan and responsive co-regulation plan involve establishing a team around the child responsible for assessing need, planning and implementation.

Guidance for completing Relational Support and Responsive Co-Regulation Plans is found in Appendix 7

REDS (Reducing Exclusions in Devon's Schools) is a needs analysis and planning process which is particularly helpful for children at risk of exclusion. The process is supported by an Educational Psychologist and involves working with a team of adults in school, parents/carers and the child.

Circles of adults can be used to support staff to develop hypotheses around a child's needs and to identify things that they can do to support. This approach is facilitated by an Educational Psychologist and can be helpful in developing an increased understanding of needs and joint thinking and consistency around support and intervention. This can be a particularly helpful approach in enabling teachers to share ideas, good practice and develop greater ownership and responsibility for support and intervention.

Person centred planning approaches can also be helpful in placing the child at the centre of the planning process, identifying strengths and establishing a clear outcome. Such processes also develop a team of support around the child. Plans emerging from these approaches can either feed into general relational support plans or be used independently. In all cases support needs to be co-ordinated within an overall aim.

Planning should also cover details of how setbacks will be dealt with to ensure that plans do not get derailed early on due to unforeseen problems.

For a list of helpful planning tools see appendix 9

These tools can be helpful in ensuring that planning is child centred, involves all key adults and develops a shared understanding of the needs and plan. Some planning tools will be helpful in identifying actions which may be incorporated into a Relational Support Plan.

Example of interventions which may support some students with SEMH are found in appendix 10

Planning for Transitions

Transitions can be difficult for children, particularly those with unmet attachment needs and may trigger painful feelings of loss or rejection, feelings of high anxiety and fear. This is true of small as well as more significant transitions. Endings and beginnings are difficult for children who have experienced relational loss or trauma. For many

children even a small transition can indicate the loss of relationship and as such can trigger painful feelings. For children who gain a sense of safety from routine and consistency, any change however small may provoke uncertainty and fear. When planning support for children transitions need to planned, managed and supported.

With significant transitions (e.g. starting school, changing school, moving up year groups, changes in key staff or attachment figures) children may feel both bereft at the loss of their relationships and simultaneously overwhelmed by the demands of their new setting and relationships. This is particularly the case at transition to secondary school, where the primary school has often provided a safe base for the child and the demands of the secondary school, both environmentally and socially are greatly increased.

If poorly managed, these changes may lead to a serious setback or trauma. When managed well, a positive experience of change provides a valuable opportunity for learning and recovery.

Louise Bomber suggests that the following should be part of planning for significant transition:

- Home-school partnership and views of the child

- Transition planning should take place 4-6 months prior to the transition event

- Introduce new staff in plenty of time before new beginnings

- Where possible the key adult should remain consistent through transitions

- If the key adults leave or change it is important to mark goodbyes and prepare the child for the change e.g. by creating a memory book, card or letter

- Maintain links after transitions so that the child knows they are 'held in mind'

- Ensure information is shared between staff to provide consistency and limit the number of changes

- When moving schools, create several opportunities for visits by the child and staff

(Bombèr 2007 and 2011)

Children will benefit from a relational support plan to support them through times of significant transition.
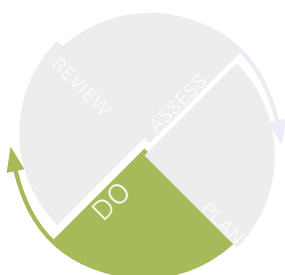
Implementing

Monitoring and recording should take place throughout the implementation phase. It is important to recognise that change often takes place slowly and in small steps.

Adults should be encouraged to notice small signs of progress and to record these.

Children will benefit from being encouraged to reflect and discuss how things are going. Focusing on things that have gone well and encouraging children to think about what they did well, how they did it, what skills they used and what that says, will be most helpful in supporting children to work out what they need to do. These discussions can take place informally or be formalised in coaching sessions.

Adults will also benefit from reflection time during the implementation phase. Supervision within school or with external professionals will be helpful. There should always be a focus on relational and interaction skills and not just details of intervention. Sometimes interventions are considered to be not working when the issue is not with what is being done but how it is being done.

Consistency over time is a vital feature of the relational approach and it is important that issues, practical or relational, causing difficulties are sorted out quickly.

Parents and carers should be active participants at this stage and engage in regular dialogue with the adults in school. Parents and carers will be able to provide helpful information to the school and support for the child. It is also helpful for the child to see the school and their parents/carers to be working co-operatively together, supporting each other and taking a consistent approach.

Reviewing and revising

The review meeting provides an opportunity to reflect on how well the provision is meeting the child's needs and whether any factors have changed and therefore may need consideration. It should also provide an opportunity to consider the forthcoming period of time and any known or likely potential difficulties so that these can be best minimised or avoided.

The review meeting will feed back into the 'Assess' part of the cycle and at this point further advice and support may be sought if the child's needs are still not being well met or if there has been a deterioration or identification of new needs.

A solution focused reflection, which focuses on what has gone well and builds on the skills and strengths of the child, adults and parents or carers will be helpful.

When is it felt that children are doing well it will be important not to reduce support too quickly. Allow children to develop secure relationships and then to experience adults as a secure base gradually over time.

Special and Exceptional Circumstances

There may be times when it is felt that a child is not able to be in their usual lessons. This may be because they or other children are not safe or their behaviour is stopping other children from learning.

When children behave in an unpredictable, challenging or distressed way there may be times when they need to leave a classroom. In these cases there should be planned options for the child to exit the room and this should be detailed in the responsive co-regulation plan. DFE guidance states that when children leave the classroom they should be withdrawn only for as long as is necessary and when they are not in the classroom they should be doing something which is developmental. Some children will benefit from having a safe place to go to, which can provide an environment with low social and sensory demand and regulatory activities. Other children will benefit from having a trusted adult with whom they feel safe and when they are ready and able can engage in some problem solving with whom they feel safe and and able to engage in some problem solving when they are ready.

If it is felt that the usual curriculum is providing too much of a challenge and children require additional support and intervention, an alternative and flexible timetable within school may be appropriate. In these cases children will benefit from a reduction in mainstream lessons to enable them to access a programme which focuses on their social and emotional development and well-being. This may include for example, access to a nurture provision, forest school or outdoor education intervention, small group intervention to support emotional literacy and intervention to support stress regulation such as mindfulness. This may also include more specialist intervention delivered by partner agencies on site such as counselling, play therapy or music therapy.

As a result of an appropriate assessment, schools may consider the use of individualised, creative, planned

packages of support that may include time in offsite support centres in order to prevent exclusion. These decisions need to be made in conjunction with child, family and partner agencies. In these cases it should be made clear what the purpose of alternative provision is. What needs are being met that cannot be met in school, what outcomes are being worked towards and how is the provision meeting these needs? There should be a clear plan in place as to how the child will remain connected to the school and how they will reintegrate into school. It is vital that adults from school maintain their relationship with the child and that when the child returns they will return to a setting which is able to meet their needs and welcomes them back.

A fixed term exclusion should only be used as a last resort. The cost of exclusion in terms of well-being, attainment and later offending behaviour is well documented. There is also the recognition that the negative impact of exclusion is cumulative. Children and young people can often become involved in a negative cycle of exclusion and non-attendance which are very likely to have a devastating effect on relationships and belonging and significantly impact on later life chances.

A fixed term exclusion should be a proportionate response where there is no alternative and it is important that the views of the child or young person and those of their parent or carer are taken into account. Schools should carefully consider the purpose of the exclusion and the impact on the child or young person should be taken into consideration, including the long term impact on life chances.

Where exclusion is used it should be a short term measure with the aim of improving outcomes. It should enable further planning and assessment and provide an opportunity for reflection for both the child or young person and staff involved. Relationship-based approaches, such as solution focused or restorative approaches, should be used to guide and support a child or young person's return to school.

All schools have a duty of care to all children and young people attending school in respect of the health, safety, well-being and welfare of the children and young people in their care. Risk and health and safety assessment processes should be applied to situations where unpredictable, challenging and distressed behaviour can arise to determine any potential concerns arising from the child or young person's behaviour, and should identify any steps deemed necessary to support the child or young person in preventing harm to themselves or others.

We do not advocate the use of permanent exclusion. However, we also recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances where a child or young person is not able

to have their needs met in their current school or where the school cannot guarantee the child's or other children's safety. There may be exceptional circumstances, where a child has been supported through a graduated response involving high levels of intervention, partner agencies, family support and where restorative work has been done to develop understanding and change behaviour, yet the school feels that they cannot continue to effectively meet the needs of the child. In such exceptional circumstances a school which can provide more specialist provision may be sought. This may be another mainstream school with access to more specialised intervention or a specialist setting.

Children should only be moved to a different school if it is felt that school is more able to meet their needs. Be wary of the idea of a fresh start, as these are often counter to the needs of the child: long term relationships are our goal.

There is a misconception amongst some school staff that permanent exclusion from school can be in the best interest of the child, securing future provision more suited to their needs. There is however only evidence to the contrary: school exclusion is related to a host of negative consequences and can significantly impact on a child's future life chances.

The overarching risk associated with children and young people permanently excluded from school was found to be social exclusion with associated risks including anti-social behaviour, crime, drug taking and suicide. (Rabie and Howard, 2013). Exclusion can be the first step to a life of social exclusion and addictions. (Sutherland, Monro and Wood, 2012).

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From Practice to Policy: Special and Exceptional Circumstances

The policy needs to describe the process for supporting children in exceptional circumstances, including through part time timetables, alternative provision and in a very small number of cases through a move to a provision where more specialist support can be provided.

4. Appendices

PDF and Word versions of the above are available to download at
https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/relational-learning

Appendix 1: Quick guide to Developing Relational Practice and Policy

Developing Relationships

Building Relationships:
Developing safety, security and trust through protection, connection, understanding and care

Supporting Inclusion:
Facilitating access to learning, ensuring social inclusion and developing individual skills

Setting Boundaries:
Reaching agreements and building a shared understanding of expectations. Establishing clear processes for resolving difficulties

Repairing & Restoring

Resolving Conflict:
Everyday restorative interactions to resolve minor conflict and disagreements and create a shared understanding

Repairing Harm:
Restorative encounters to discuss the breaking of agreements, the impact (consequences) on others and to restore relationships

Supporting Change:
What additional support / action is needed?

Responding & Calming

Keeping Calm:
Using everyday interactions to maintain relationships and agreements and promote a calm and supportive learning environment

Regulating Emotions:
Using key relational skills to regulate strong emotions and calm behaviour

Managing Crisis:
Having clear plans to ensure safety and support

The guidance describes a relational approach to teaching and learning which influences whole school ethos and systems as well as everyday teaching practice and targeted support.

It seeks to support schools to develop Relational Behaviour Policies where behaviour is seen as the communication of a need and which take into account current research and theory from the fields of attachment and trauma and on effective support for personal development.

The guidance was written in response to well documented concerns regarding young people's mental health and well-being and long standing national trends which show the disproportionate exclusion of children from vulnerable groups.

Establishing and maintaining systems and practice in line with Relational Policy will involve whole school approaches and ongoing commitment.

This will include:

- Establishing consistent thinking, understanding and beliefs and values across all school staff, parents/ carers and partner agencies.

- Whole staff training, continual professional development and induction for new staff in relational theory and practice. Ongoing staff support through regular meetings and individual supervision and coaching to support the development and maintenance of skills.

- The consistent implementation of relational practice by all staff which is supported through clear systems and processes as well as active support and modelling by line mangers and senior leaders.

- Systems and provision to support a clear graduated response to supporting children's needs which is child centred and involves parents and external agencies.

There are three main components to the model, Developing Relationships, Responding and Calming and Repairing and Restoring. For each of these the guidance explores implications for whole school universal support and also targeted support for those most in need.

Developing Relationships

Developing Relationships involves Building Relationships, Supporting Inclusion and Setting Boundaries.

In order to be successful at school all children need to build relationships which enable them to feel safe and secure and develop a sense of belonging in school. This is done though providing relational support in the form of Protection, Connection, Understanding and Care.

In order to be fully included some children need additional support to enable them to access learning and to be included in all aspects of school life. It is important to consider whether children's SEN and wider needs have been recognized and supported.

In order to learn together we need to have a shared understanding of our rights, roles and responsibilities and how these manifest themselves as expectations of behaviour, agreements and rules. Boundaries should be clearly communicated and regularly discussed.

Responding and Calming

Responding and Calming involves Keeping Calm, Regulating Emotions and Managing Crisis.

The art and skill of teaching lies in the use of everyday interactions which actively maintain relationships, manage low level disruption and promote a calm, harmonious and supportive learning environment.

Most children will at some point overstep a boundary and will need reminding about agreements and expectations.

We need to develop relational skills that enable us to maintain calm, show understanding, reset agreements and provide clear instruction and guidance around expectations. Supportive action and intervention within the classroom will enable most children to stay within boundaries.

Children who experience strong emotions that lead to harmful or challenging behaviour will need skillful co-regulation to enable them to be calm and develop their capacity for regulation. How we respond in a crisis should be coordinated, clear and communicated to ensure the safety of all students.

Repairing and Restoring

Repairing and Restoring involves Resolving Conflict, Repairing Harm and Supporting Change.

Sometimes things will go wrong. Even with strong relationships, clear boundaries and good co-regulation there will still be times when conflict emerges or harm is caused.

Applying a restorative framework following conflict or when incidents have taken place can be far more successful in supporting understanding and learning than a punitive approach.

Restorative frameworks need to be underpinned by a strong restorative ethos. Adults need to be skilled and able to use, model and teach good co-operation, communication and emotional literacy skills.

Restorative work involves regular conversations, class meetings, peer mediation, conflict resolution as well as more formal restorative meetings and enquiries.

Appendix 2: Framework for Policy

Framework for Policy

Values and Beliefs

The policy needs to state the values and beliefs which underpin the school's ethos, practice and vision.

Theory and Research

The policy needs to include details of the theory and research which informs policy, with clear links made between theory and practice.

Developing Relationships

The policy needs to describe:

- How relationships will be developed to ensure that all children feel safe, secure, connected, understood and cared for. This needs to include the expectations and responsibilities of all adults in the school community.
- How all children will be included in the learning and social environment, ensuring that barriers to inclusion are removed.
- How children will be kept safe, able to learn and have their voice heard through the establishment of high expectations and clear agreements about how all members of the learning community will behave.
- How individual children will be supported through a targeted Relational Support Plan and graduated response.

Responding and Calming

The policy needs to describe:

- How skilled adults in school will use relational responses to keep classrooms calm and enable children to learn.
- How adults in school will use relational sills to regulate children who are experiencing strong emotions in order to support them to calm, learn how to self-regulate and settle to learning.
- How adults will support children in crisis situations in order to maintain safety and ensure that all children can learn.
- Schools should have specific plans for circumstances such as the use of physical intervention, when children abscond, searching pupils and serious incidents in the community. In these circumstances schools should have general guidelines and individual plans to ensure the safety.

Repairing and Restoring

The policy needs to describe how restorative approaches and systems will work in school in order to:

- Resolve conflict through the use of everyday restorative interactions and discussions including classroom meetings, circle time, peer mediation.
- Repair harm through the use of facilitated restorative encounters.
- Support change by ensuring that all parties involved: learn from the incident, have their needs identified and supported and are enabled to repair and restore relationships.
- Support individual children to understand the consequences of behaviour and enable them to repair relationships through the use of individual restorative explorations. Schools may wish to outline specific restorative processes that will occur following incidents such as bullying, racism, homophobia.

Framework for Policy (cont'd)

Relational Approaches in the classroom

The policy needs to describe:

- How low level disruptive behaviour will be managed within the classroom. Ranging from single incidents to more regular and persistent disruption.
- How effective feedback will be provided for all children within the classroom context.
- The systems and processes that will be in place to ensure that feedback for children who are experiencing difficulties is meaningful in supporting them in their development.
- The measures in place to ensure that children feel safe following incidents.
- Schools should clearly communicate through their policy what the process will be in response to specific behaviours. Whilst the response will be different according to the needs of individual children, the process should be consistent

Working in Relationship Together

The policy needs to describe:

- Listening to the child – how children will be supported to express themselves and how their voices will be utilized and reflected in the ethos, systems and practice of the school as well as in individualized graduated support.
- Working with parents and carers – how parents and carers will be involved and informed and how they can access support. This should include clear systems for communication.
- Working with external agencies – when and how additional support services will be accessed through working with partner agencies.

Supporting Staff Well-being and Professional Development

The policy needs to describe how staff will be supported, valued and respected. This should include information on:

- Staff well-being
- Continued professional development
- Individual reflection opportunities – supervision, coaching, mentoring
- Having their voice heard

A Graduated Response

The policy needs to describe how a graduated response will be used to support children who are most in need, including details of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle.

Special and Exceptional Circumstances

The policy needs to describe the process for supporting children in exceptional circumstances, including through part time timetables, alternative provision and in a very small number of cases through a move to a provision where more specialist support can be provided.

Appendix 3: Research to inform best practice

1. Those most vulnerable to exclusion:

In order to inform assessment, provide early intervention and preventative support strategies it is essential to have a knowledge of pupils who may be most vulnerable to exclusion.

a) **A brief summary of the analysis produced for the Timpson Review of School Exclusion, May 2019.**

The analysis shows that 78% of permanent exclusions issued were to pupils who either had SEN, were classified as in need or were eligible for free school meals. 11% of permanent exclusions were to pupils who had all three characteristics. In addition the report identified the following trends:

- There are longstanding national trends, which show that particular groups of children are more likely to be excluded from school, both for a fixed period and permanently. This includes boys, children with SEN, those who have been supported by social care or come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and children from certain ethnic groups.

- Children with SEN are more likely to be excluded, both for a fixed period and permanently, than those who do not have SEN. In the most recent statistics, children with identified SEN accounted for 46.7% of all permanent exclusions and 44.9% of fixed period exclusions.

- Children from some ethnic groups are excluded less than their peers – Black African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian children all had lower exclusion rates than the national average in 2016/17. Children from other ethnic groups are excluded at a higher rate, including Irish and Black Caribbean pupils, and those of Gypsy and Roma children and Travellers of Irish heritage.

- There are also notable trends in the exclusion, both fixed period and permanent, of children who have received support from social care – by which we mean Children in Need of help or protection, including looked after children, as well as those who have left care through adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Orders. Within this group of children, the rate of exclusion varies between the social care classifications. As at 31 March 2017, looked after children were permanently excluded at around the same rate as all children, but Children in Need were over two times more likely to be permanently excluded.

- This contrasts with the trend for fixed period exclusion, where looked after children are more than five times more likely to have a fixed period exclusion than all children and around one and a half times more likely than Children in Need, who are about three and a half times more likely to be excluded for a fixed period. Statutory exclusion guidance sets out that head teachers should 'as far as possible' avoid permanently excluding a looked after child, but does not say the same for fixed period exclusion – potentially playing some part in this difference. Surveys by Adoption UK suggest that adopted children are also more likely to be excluded than their peers.

- Latest statistics show that children eligible for FSM – an indicator used for economic disadvantage – are around four times more likely to be excluded permanently or for a fixed period than children who are not eligible for FSM. The analysis confirms that children who are eligible for FSM are around 40% more likely to be permanently excluded than those who are not when controlling for other differences.

- In relation to age, although we know that older children are more likely to be excluded, it must be noted that the rates of exclusion are rising among very young children. The rate of permanent exclusion for five year olds, whilst it remains rare, has doubled in the last three years 77 and there were 5,286 pupils aged between 5 and 10 receiving some or all of their education in AP in January 2018.78

- With regard to gender, the latest statistics for 2016/17 show that the permanent exclusion rate for boys (0.15%) was over three times higher than that for girls (0.04%), and the fixed period exclusion rate was almost three times higher. This is a trend that has persisted for many years.

Timpson Review of School Exclusion May 2019

b) **Research highlighting the link between speech, language and communication difficulties and social and emotional needs.**

- There is some evidence to suggest that behaviour problems and resulting school exclusions

are associated with language impairment. In older children who are permanently excluded, expressive rather than receptive language impairment is more common and this is associated with increased rates of emotional problems (Ripley and Yuill, 2005).

- Lindsay and Dockerell (2012) found that children with SLCN needs are 35 – 50% more likely to have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

c) Research highlighting the link between literacy and school exclusion

- Pupils with poor literacy skills are much more likely to be excluded from school than their peers. Gross and McChrystal (2001) found that more than half of permanently excluded pupils in their sample had very significant learning difficulties (in the lowest 2% of the population for literacy and/or numeracy attainment),in addition to significant emotional and behavioural difficulties.

- An analysis by the DfES of all pupils permanently excluded in Year 9 in the 2004-5 academic year data showed that pupils who entered secondary school with very low literacy skills (below National Curriculum Level 3 in English) had an exclusion rate five times that of pupils entering Key Stage 3 at Level 4 or above (0.5% of those with severe literacy difficulties were excluded, compared to 0.1% of those with at least average literacy levels).

d) Research highlighting the link between trauma, attachment, adverse experiences on development and school exclusion.

- In a systematic review specifically examining school-related outcomes of traumatic event exposure, Perfect and colleagues (2016) identified 44 studies that examined cognitive functioning, 34 that examined academic functioning and 24 that examined social-emotional-behavioural functioning. Their findings suggest that youths who have experienced trauma are at significant risk for impairments across various cognitive functions, including IQ, memory, attention and language/verbal ability; poorer academic performance and school-related behaviours such as discipline, dropout and attendance; and higher rates of behavioural problems and internalizing symptoms.

- Other studies suggest that ACEs increase the risk of behaviour and learning problems in children (Burke et al. 2011; Freeman 2014; Hunt et al. 2017; Iachini et al. 2016), as well as physical and mental health outcomes in later life (Crouch et al. 2018

2. The Impact of Exclusion from School

Both permanent and fixed term exclusion is related to a host of negative consequences and can significantly impact on a child's future life chances. Below is a summary of recent research highlighting the impact of school exclusion on young people:

"Action to address the quiet social apartheid of school exclusions is well overdue. The relationship between pupil referral units and the criminal justice system has become symbiotic, and the rise of exclusions is creating a pipeline of young people into our prison system. There is no fiscal or moral case to go on like this."

Tottenham MP, David Lammy.

a) The Impact of Permanent Exclusion

- There were consistently high levels of psychological distress among those who had experienced exclusion at baseline and follow up. We detected a bi-directional association between psychological distress and exclusion. The relationship between exclusion from school and mental health: a secondary analysis of the British Child and Adolescent Mental Health Surveys 2004 and 2007. Ford, TJ; Parker, C; Salim, J; et al. Psychological Medicine.

- Exclusion from school is perhaps the most explicit form of rejection by a school of its pupils and for some excluded pupils increases the likelihood of wider social exclusion (Munn & Lloyd, 2005).

- As soon as a pupil is excluded from school, he/she has only limited chances of returning back to his/her school and re-joining his/her peers in mainstream education - statistics indicate this to be approximately 27% (Gordon, 2001).

- There is evidence that the time young people spend out of school does matter and has an impact upon their lives. For example, school exclusion has been associated with a significantly higher likelihood of becoming a teenage parent, being unemployed or homeless later in life, or even ending up in prison (Evangelical Alliance UK and Care for Education, 1999, cited in Gordon, 2001).

- Researchers have associated this situation (school exclusion) with additional poor outcomes later in life, for instance difficulties with relationships, unstable employment, crime involvement, social exclusion (Nuffield Foundation, 2004).

- It could be argued that school exclusion does not only exacerbate the obvious underachievement

of those pupils who are excluded, but, most crucially, it puts them at a disadvantage for the rest of their lives *Loizidou, 2009*

- School exclusion is related to a host of negative consequences: school drop-out, unemployment, delinquency *(Daniels & Cole, 2010)*

- Outcomes for permanently excluded pupils are poor. In one sample 63% had criminal convictions by the age of 24, with a particular risk of involvement in violent crime and a suicide rate 19 times the national rate for their age. *(Gross J 2006)*

b) The Impact of fixed term exclusion and isolation

- For most young people exclusions did not have a deterring effect. In contrast, many negative effects were reported. These effects seemed to be the result of continuous, almost daily, punishment. The view of most professionals interviewed was that exclusions are not helping young people and contribute to their academic gaps, mental health difficulties and disengagement from school. The negative effects of exclusion included: missing out academically, disengagement from school, mental health difficulties, increased absenteeism, additional strain on carers looking after the child while at home , frustration and anger over school ricocheting in foster home and destabilising it.

  The Exclusion of Looked After Children from English Secondary Schools. Rees Centre. University of Oxford. May 2019

- With regard to internal exclusion and placement in isolation, across the interviews the reactions and effects of isolations were considered to be by far the worst. There was a consensus that conditions in isolation rooms were not respectable, particularly considering children's past experiences of abuse and neglect. On the other hand isolation rooms did not provide real opportunities for learning and so were experienced as a waste of time. *The Exclusion of Looked After Children from English Secondary Schools. Rees Centre. University of Oxford. May 2019.*

- Repeated fixed period exclusion can represent a missed opportunity to successfully address poor behaviour. Indeed, repeat fixed period exclusion can be counterproductive and cause a child to become anxious or disengaged from their education. Parents of children repeatedly excluded described their children feeling "rejected", or in the case of a six year old with 44 days of exclusion, "anxious …[they] make him worse". One parent

described the impact of repeated exclusion (their child had 19 fixed period exclusions) as "destroy[ing] our child's self-esteem" and a permanent exclusion as "traumatic in terms of her welfare and mental health. She has lost all confidence in her ability to cope at school". Many parents of excluded children who spoke to Coram reported similar impacts. One mother set out how her son "developed an attachment to [her] and feels that he isn't wanted at school and so his behaviour gets worse so that they exclude him again".91 Repeated fixed period exclusion can also have a negative impact on academic progress, causing a child to spend time out of school and fall behind their peers. *Timpson Review of School Exclusion May 2019*

- 'Interventions such as isolation are not sufficient to enable behavioural changes amongst many secluded students, or to address or resolve the complex behavioural issues or specific learning needs that many of them possess. *Barker et al (2010)*

3. Relational Approaches

The change in terminology in the 2014 Code of Practice of Special Educational Needs (SEN) - which replaces the Behaviour and Social Difficulties (BESD) with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties – helps to promote a shift towards viewing behaviour as a communication of an emotional need (whether conscious or unconscious), and responding accordingly. Research on attachment and trauma strongly indicates that a relational rather than behavioural framework is more effective in supporting children's behaviour. *Bergin and Bergin (2009) Riley (2010), Cozolino (2013).*

Below is a summary of research relating to the impact and effectiveness of relational approaches:

- Close and supportive relationships with teachers have demonstrated the potential to mitigate the risk of negative outcomes for children who may otherwise have difficulty succeeding in school (Driscoll and Pianta 2010)

- The analysis of pupils' narratives highlights the prime importance of relationships in preventing school exclusion. In their narratives, the participants emphasised either the positive impact their good relationships with significant others, or the negative impact poor relations as well as lack of relationships, may have had on them. Indeed, one of the key components in preventing exclusion is relationships; relationships between all parties, i.e. teacher-pupil, parent-child, teacher-parent, pupil-peers, associated

with positive communication and good coordination among them. Pupils have emphasised the significance of relationships in studies conducted in the past, too. *(eg. Munn & Lloyd, 2005. Loizidou, 2009).*

- Research draws attention to the significance of the pupil-teacher relationship in order to develop a positive emotional climate and an effective learning environment. Children who can regulate their own emotions and responses are more popular, have fewer behavioural problems, are more emotionally stable, have fewer infectious illnesses and achieve more academically in schools *(Gottman et al 2007).*

- Attachment influences students' school success. This is true of students' attachment to their parents, as well as to their teachers. Secure attachment is associated with higher grades and standardised test scores compared to insecure attachment. Secure attachment is also associated with greater emotional regulation, social competence, and willingness to take on challenges, and with lower levels of ADHD and delinquency, each of which in turn is associated with higher achievement" *(Bergin and Bergin 2009).*

- It is important to create nurturing relationships to promote children's learning and behaviour and satisfy children's innate need to have a secure 'sense of belonging' and acknowledge adults' roles as a potential secondary attachment figure who can help to reshape insecure attachment behaviours and support the development of more secure ones. *(Geddes 2014)*

- When teachers think empathically, and not punitively, about misbehaving students, they cultivate better relationships and help reduce discipline problems. *(Okonofua et al, Stanford University, 2015)*

- Teachers, youth workers and significant adults in a child's life can provide important attachments for children. *(Bergin and Bergin 2009, Riley 2010)*

- Secure, nurturing environments and stimulating, engaging experiences support the development of neuronal networks – they help to build brains. Empathetic, supportive attachments and relationships are essential to optimize brain development as 'the attunement of emotional states is essential for the developing brain to acquire the capacity to organize itself more autonomously as the child matures'. *(Siegel 2012)*

4. Behaviour management strategies

a) General behaviour management

A new guidance report published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) in June 2019 - Improving Behaviour in Schools - finds good evidence

that personalised approaches, like daily report cards, can improve disruptive pupils' behaviour.

The report, which reviews the best available evidence suggests that universal systems are unlikely to work for all students and for those pupils who need more intensive support with their behaviour, a personalised approach is likely to be better.

The report also finds that there is currently a lack of evidence looking at the impact of 'zero tolerance' policies.

The Education Endowment Foundation carried out a meta-analysis of research relating to improving behaviour in school. The report made 6 recommendations. These are listed below.

Know and understand your pupils and their influences.

- Pupil behaviour has multiple influences, some of which teachers can manage directly.

- Understanding a pupil's context will inform effective responses to misbehaviour.

- Every pupil should have a supportive relationship with a member of school staff.

Teach learning behaviours alongside managing misbehaviour

- Teaching learning behaviours will reduce the need to manage misbehaviour.

- Teachers can provide the conditions for learning behaviour to develop by ensuring pupils can access the curriculum, engage with lesson content and participate in their learning.

- Teachers should encourage pupils to be self-reflective of their own behaviours.

Use classroom management strategies to support good classroom behaviour

- Effective classroom management can reduce challenging behaviour, pupil disengagement, bullying and aggression.

- Improving classroom management usually involves intensive training with teachers reflecting on their classroom management, trying a new approach and reviewing their progress over time.

- Reward systems based on pupils gaining rewards can be effective when part of a broader classroom management strategy.

Use simple approaches as part of your regular routine

- Some strategies that don't require complex pedagogical changes have been shown to be promising

- Breakfast clubs, use of specific behaviour-related praise and working with parents can all support good behaviour

- School leaders should ensure the school behaviour policy is clear and consistently applied

Tailor targeted approaches to meet the needs of individuals in your school

- Universal behaviour systems are unlikely to meet the needs of all your students

- For pupils with more challenging behaviour, the approach should be adapted to individual needs

- Teachers should be trained in specific strategies if supporting pupils with high behaviour needs

Whole School

- Consistency and coherence at a whole-school level are paramount

- Whole-school changes usually take longer to embed than individually tailored or single-classroom approaches

- However, behaviour programmes are more likely to have an impact on attainment outcomes if implemented at a whole-school level

Education Endowment Foundation – Improving Behaviour in Schools. June 2019

b) Restorative Approaches

The use and effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies in schools, a report by Goldsmiths, University of London, published by the Department for Education (April 2011) recommended that schools consider developing a restorative ethos and culture. (pp. 21-22, section 2.2.9 and pp. 93-112, section 4.3)

The report concluded that:

- Most whole-school restorative approaches used by the majority of schools were generally rated as having a positive effect in preventing bullying by embedding an anti-bullying ethos in the schools.

- PSHEE, assemblies and school councils were used by the vast majority of schools from all sectors to prevent bullying. However, developing a restorative ethos and culture that supports the development of social and emotional skills and the adult modelling of positive relationships and communication were given the highest rating of effectiveness." (pp. 34, section 2.5)

In October 2014, the Department for Education published 'Preventing and tackling bullying – Advice for school leaders, staff and governing bodies to help schools prevent and respond to bullying'.

- The guidance recognises the value of both proactive and responsive approaches to tackle bullying.

- The Preventing and tackling bullying advice says: "Schools which excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave."

- It continues, saying that in such schools "a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeates the whole school environment and is reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest."

- In line with current government policy to allow schools to choose their own approach to behaviour and bullying policy, the guidance does not mandate the use of restorative approaches, but refers readers to the Restorative Justice Council as a source for specialist advice.

- The advice follows research published by the Department for Education in April 2001 which found that two-thirds of schools use restorative approaches in response to bullying and 97% of teachers rated restorative approaches as effective.

The Children's Commissioner, Dr Maggie Atkinson, highlighted restorative approaches as good practice in managing pupils with challenging behaviour in her 2012 report into schools exclusions, 'They never give up on you'. The report was the result of the first year of an ongoing inquiry into school exclusions by the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

- The report brought attention to the illegal use of exclusions by schools, that the current school system of exclusions is not compliant with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the over-representation of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), from certain ethnic groups, boys and children from low income families.

- On the prevention of, and alternatives to, exclusions, the report found that there was currently no guidance for schools on good practice in managing or commissioning provision for pupils with challenging behaviour and highlights characteristics which sum up good practice, including:

- The child's underlying behavioural issues are dealt with, not simply 'parked'. In the best cases, interventions include counselling provided by trained staff, and the use of formally implemented restorative approaches, both to confront students with the consequences of their behaviour, and to demonstrate what things could be like if matters improve.

Restorative Approaches in Primary Schools: An Evaluation of the Project Co-ordinated by the Barnet Youth Offending Service.

- This 2008 evaluation of restorative approaches in the London Borough of Barnet found that schools that had received training in restorative approaches had reduced their numbers of fixed-term exclusions by half.

- In contrast schools that had not received restorative training had exclusions increase by over two-thirds.

- The training, delivered by Transforming Conflict, also reduced bullying within the schools while increasing calmness and safety.

- The evaluation revealed increased confidence and ability from staff, and the pupils themselves were more likely to take responsibility for their actions and behaviour and deal with problems themselves.

Appendix 4: Theory

The guidance draws on research from the fields of Neuroscience, Attachment theory, Trauma research, research into Adverse Childhood Experience, Intersubjectivity, Restorative Approaches and Classroom behaviour management.

In the areas of Developing Relationships and Responding and Calming we are particularly grateful to the work of Stephen Porges, Dan Hughes, Bruce Berry, Colwyn Trevarthan, Margot Sunderland, Heather Geddes, Louise Bomber and Bill Rogers. In the area of Repairing and Restoring we are particularly grateful to Belinda Hopkins, Luke Roberts and Saar Yaniv.

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We have also used evidence and guidance from a number of published publications, with particular reference to:

- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DfE, 2018)

- Timpson Exclusion Review (2019)

- Improving Behaviour in Schools (EEF, 2019).

Appendix 5: A Relational Support Plan

A Relational Support Plan

Name of Pupil:	
School:	Date:

Consider the key prompts for discussion and note down actions under the 4 headings: Protection, Connection, Understanding and Care.

The significant adult/adults – Team around the child

Who is best placed to be the significant adult/adults?

Who will be part of the wider team of adults supporting the child? Does the child need someone to be available to the throughout the day? It is helpful for the team to be composed of adults from each tier of the school organisation. Parents/carers can also be part of the team.

Strengths/Qualities/Interests/Resources

What are the child's strengths, skills and qualities? What are the child's coping strategies and signs of resilience? What does the child enjoy and what interests them? When are they at their best? What helps them? When have they been successful in the past and what is working well now?

Protection
This explains the need for safety and security. Some children may not automatically feel safe. They can find school threatening and require relationships, support and structure to develop feelings of security and safety, which are essential to effective learning and behaviour.

Key Question Prompts:	Actions:
How will the child be helped to feel safe by the significant adults? What safety cues will be helpful?	
How will other adults in the team help the child to feel safe?	
How will you support the child to develop trust? How will predictable and reliable support be provided?	
Are there times in the day when the child feels particularly unsafe: beginnings, endings, transition? How can these times be managed?	
How can the environment be adapted to help the child feel safe?	
How can the day be structured to help the child feel safe?	
What does the child need to know in order to feel safe? How will this be communicated so that the child understands?	

Connection
Meaningful connections with others promote feelings of safety, trust and belonging. Experiences of connection are important in developing the cortex and higher level thinking. For some children there is a need for a high level of connection within school.

Key Question prompts:	Actions:
How will the significant adults provide meaningful connection with the child? What needs to happen to ensure that the child experiences attuned and responsive connection? How will other adults in the team connect with the child? How will the development of positive peer relationships be promoted? What activities may help the child to develop their sense of belonging in school?	

Understanding
Children need adults to understand them and communicate this understanding in an empathetic way, whilst also maintaining clear rules, boundaries and expectations. Understanding and co-regulation from an adult will support children to develop their ability to regulate themselves.

Key Question prompts:	Actions:
What does the child's behaviour tell us about how they are feeling? What is our understanding of the child's feelings? If the student is finding something hard or displaying challenging behaviour, how will adults respond and show understanding? How will the child be co-regulated and calmed? What empathic responses might be helpful? How will the understanding of other adults in school be supported / developed? How will they respond to incidents? Does the child need a responsive co-regulation plan? What will happen to ensure that relationships are repaired?	

Care
Some children will need adults in school to be particularly mindful of providing a high level of care. This includes meeting the child's basic needs, enabling them to experience comfort and joy and showing them that they are liked.

Key Question prompts:	Actions:
Does the child have unmet needs in terms of basic care? If so how can these be addressed? How will adults communicate care to the child/young person? How will the child know that they are liked? What activities may foster shared enjoyment? How can we ensure the child knows they are being held in mind? How will the child be soothed?	

Supporting Inclusion Are there difficulties that are blocking the child's access to learning or social inclusion? What skills are we going to support the child to develop in their areas of need? How are we going to support access and inclusion?	
Prompts: Control-related e.g. accepting an adult lead, co-operative working, turn-taking, requesting help. Social skills e.g. explicit teaching of listening skills, eye-contact, starting conversations, proximity. Identity-based e.g. ability to take risks in learning, accept challenges, make mistakes. Self-regulation and sensory regulation e.g. emotional literacy, self-soothing, managing sensory input. Behaviours for learning e.g. Planning, organisation, managing transitions. Literacy skills e.g. developing phonic skills, reading comprehension, recording skills. Language skills e.g. understanding instructions, expressing opinions. Communication and Interaction e.g. Understanding social situations. Building on strengths How can we enable the pupil to build on their strengths?	Actions:

Appendix 6: A Responsive Co-regulation Plan

State of Regulation	Potential Displayed Behaviour	Agreed Response for Regulation
Calm Safe / Socially engaged		
Mild stress Alert / Aroused / Agitated		
Dysregulated Mobilised / Immobilised		
Crisis Unsafe		

A guide to completing Responsive Co-regulation Plans is on page 25

Appendix 7: Process for Creating Relational Support Plans

The Relational Support Plan is a working and evolving document. We recommend that the Core Team meets regularly (at least every 4 to 6 weeks) to revisit and update the plan in place, ensuring the views of the child continue to be captured during this process.

For further guidance on completing Relational Support Plans please see the document 'Guidance for Developing Relational Support Plans'.

Involving The Child

Eliciting the views of the child is the first part of creating a successful plan. It is useful to discover:

• *Where is the child with things at present?*

Use the scale / cards to explore their perception of school.

• *What helps them to be successful? What are they doing? What are others doing?*

  Who do they feel would be good to have on their team?

• *What are their interests / qualities / skills?*

  When are they at their best?

• *Encourage the child to consider what their best hopes might be in terms of having some relational support.*

  What do they hope changes / gets better as a result of this?

Being curious as to what this means in terms of Protection, Connection, Understanding and Care will be helpful for informing the plan.

Working with The Core Team

The Core Team is made up of adults who already have a strong relationship with the child, or whom it will be beneficial to develop one. The plan is created by this group of trusted adults. The key adult will:

• Share with the team the purpose of Relational work for this child.

• Share any insights from the meeting with the child and their views.

• Complete the team section and the 'strengths, interests, qualities' section of the plan.

• Invite the group to consider when they notice the child is at their best.

As a team complete the plan considering in depth how Protection, Connection, Understanding and Care can be provided through the relational experiences created with the child. If helpful complete the responsive co-regulation plan. As a team complete the plan using the prompting questions.

Invite each adult to consider (and highlight) what will be most helpful for them to be providing from the plan in terms of their role and relationship with the child.

Sharing The Plans

The Plans should be shared with any adults who are likely to come into contact with the child during the school day. The key adult will:

• Share with this wider team of adults the purpose of Relational work for this child.

• Share any insights from the meeting with the child and their views.

• Share any insights from the meeting with the Core Team.

• Invite the team to consider good relational practice that is already in place.

Talk the adults through the plans, sharing key knowledge of the child and understanding of their needs.

Invite all members of this wider team to consider (and highlight) what will be most helpful for them to be providing from the plan in terms of their role and relationship with the child.

Appendix 8: A Restorative Approaches Exploration

The Restorative Approaches Exploration

This conversation is an opportunity to enable the child to learn about themselves and others after an incident has occurred. It is helpful to communicate explicit safety cues and have the PLACE framework at the forefront of your mind at any stage of this process. The more the process feels like a collaborative conversation and curious exploration that the child is able to reflect and contribute to, the more they will be able to learn from the experience.

What happened?

Allow the child to tell their story, listening with genuine curiosity and without judgement by:

- Mirroring – facial expression, body language, tone of voice, attuning to mood.
- Accepting and validating the child's experience and feelings.
- Reflecting back what you hear in manageable chunks and with a structure which aids understanding.
- Soothing. Using soothing (not cross) tones.

What were you thinking and how were you feeling?

Some children will find it hard to answer these questions and will need support to help them to integrate their feelings, emotions and thinking through:

- Listening and responding empathically, wondering aloud.
- Starting where the child is at developmentally. Explore physical sensations and name possible emotions.
- Letting the child know that you 'get it' (big behaviour usually means big feelings) by accepting their feelings and letting them know that they are valid.

Who else has been affected by this?

Explore what effect this might have had on other people. If appropriate use activities to help the child to see things from other people's perspectives:

- Call upon your own experience or experiences you've heard about from others.
- Stories and role play can support empathy. Wonder aloud to aid understanding.
- Pictures and photographs, drawings and cartoons can help the child see other perspectives.

What do you need, and what needs to happen now so that the harm can be repaired?

To reinforce the collaborative nature of the process it can be helpful to ask: "how can we put right the harm caused?" or "what have we learnt from this experience?"

This is about reparation in its widest sense. Apologies and restorative actions can be a part of this and can help children to move on, but they are not the goal and are not always appropriate at that time. What does the child need in order to move forward?:

- Short term intervention to help to keep them safe, particularly in managing specific situations / transitions that they may find tricky.
- Support, mediation and a structure to enable the repairing of relationships.
- Reassurance that school provides a structure in which they can feel safe, and that everyone is working to try to ensure that the same thing won't happen again.

Appendix 9: Assessment and planning tools

a) Examples of assessment methods to clarify needs.

Assessment	Who is it for?	What is measured?	How is it measured	Who can administer it?	Strengths
Boxall Profile	Primary and secondary aged pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties	Social, emotional, behavioural development	Two part checklist each consisting of 34 descriptive items	A member of the school staff who knows the child well	Easy to use Indicator for nurture programmes
Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)	3-16 year olds	Psychological attributes	Questionnaires completed by parents or teacher Self completion form for adolescents	Professional in CAMHS and school staff	Suggests pathways for more specialist assessment Freely accessible on-line
B/G -Steem	Pupils aged 6-13 years old	Self-esteem	Questionnaire completed by the child with yes/no answers	Teachers, SENCOs, trained teaching assistants and learning mentors	Easy to administer and score Assists in the planning and evaluation of interventions
Emotional Literacy Assessment & Intervention	Primary and Secondary versions: 7-11 years and 11-16 years	Emotional literacy: Self-awareness Emotional regulation Motivation Empathy Social skills	Includes optional teacher, pupil and parent questionnaires	SENCOs, teachers, school based professionals	Reassessment allows monitoring of progress and impact evaluation Provides follow up activities for intervention programmes
Butler Self-image Profile	Children aged 7-11 years Adolescents aged 12-16 years	Self-image & Self-esteem	Short self-report scale	Specialist teachers CAMHS Professionals Psychologists	Quick and easy to administer Immediate visual profile
Pupil attitude to Self and School (PASS)	Pupils aged 7-15 years	Assessment of pupil views and attitudes about school, teachers, attendance, curriculum, themselves as learners	A software assessment tool	Teachers and school based professionals	School focus 20 minutes to administer Monitors, tracks and evaluates learner progress
The Communication Trust	All key stages	A one-stop-shop of information, tools and resources to support identification, quality referrals and timely support for speech, language and communication needs	A resource bank of materials	Teachers and school based professionals	Range of materials and threshold indicators Signposts to professional referral route

b) In addition to Relational Support Plans and Responsive Co-regulation plans, the table shows examples of planning tools useful for developing a shared understanding, vision of success and joint action. Information and action points coming from the processes below can be incorporated into the Relational Support Plan.

Planning tool	Who is it for?	Areas of support	Who can facilitate?	Strengths
Circles of Adults	Meeting for school staff supporting children from early years to post 16	Any area of need including SEMH Staff development and support	Educational Psychologist	Process to empower staff to problem solve and come up with/implement solutions. Anecdotal evidence that it improves staff confidence and capacity to support children with SEMH needs.
Solution Circles	Staff working with Early Years to Post 16	Any area of need including SEMH Staff development and support	Educational Psychologist	Supports staff to reflect on and develop their practice.
Person centred planning MAPs and PATH	Staff working with Early Years to Post 16	Any area of need including SEMH	Educational Psychologist	Person-centred planning process which identifies the CYP's dreams, wishes and goals and produces a plan to address these.
REDS (Reducing Exclusions in Devon's Schools)	Any child who is at risk of exclusion from school. Particularly appropriate for CIC and in need.	SEMH particularly those at risk of exclusion	The process is supported by an Educational Psychologist and involves working with a team of adults in school, parents/carers and the child.	A needs analysis and planning process which supports a shared understanding, empathy and a clear plan for support.

Appendix 10: Examples of Interventions

Intervention	Who is it for?	Areas of support	Who can provide the support
Attachment Based Mentoring	Foundation stage to secondary	SEMH Attachment difficulties	TAs Teachers
Coaching	Children of any age	Support for the child to develop a vision of success, identify strengths and steps forward,	Staff in school who have been trained
Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)	Foundation Stage to Secondary	Develops emotional literacy skills for all children	Teachers TAs
Motivational Interviewing	10 years plus	SEMH – particularly to support behavioural change	Educational Psychologist Trained teacher, TA, learning mentor
Nurture Groups	Early Years to Secondary	SEMH	Trained member of school staff
From Timid to Tiger	3 to 11 years	Anxiety	Mental health professionals Trained school staff
Lego Therapy	Primary and Secondary Child needs certain level of language	Autism Social communication difficulties	Communication & Interaction team Educational Psychologist
Overcoming Programme	Parents of CYP from Early Years to Post 16	Anxiety with or without ASC or ADHD	Educational Psychologist
THRIVE	Primary and Secondary	SEMH Attachment difficulties	Teachers TAs
Circle of Friends	Primary and Secondary	Social skills and friendships Social isolation	TAs Teachers
Emotion Coaching	Foundation Stage to Secondary	Emotional literacy Social problem solving	TAs Teachers Learning Mentors
Emotionally Literate Support Assistant (ELSA)	Early Years to Secondary	Difficulties with peer relationships Self-esteem and confidence	Teaching assistants Learning mentors
Free 2 Be Me	Primary	Supports children who have experience of domestic violence	Educational psychologists SEMH advisory teachers

Appendix 11: Relational Audit Tool for Reflection and Planning

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Whole school ethos/ beliefs and values	**To what extent are beliefs and values integral to the school ethos?**
	Consider:
	Are beliefs and values established through a collaborative process involving children, school staff, governors and the wider community?
	Does the school have clear statements expressing their beliefs and values with regard to behaviour and relationships?
	Are the beliefs and values shared with all members of the community and celebrated through activities and displays?
	Are the beliefs and values expressed through everyday interactions, teaching practice, systems and processes?
	Are the beliefs and values modelled, promoted and facilitated by school leadership?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Staff development/ knowledge and understanding	**To what extent are all staff trained in the theory and practice relating to behaviour, relational needs, restorative practice and the impact of trauma, adverse experience and interruptions in attachment?**
	Consider:
	Do all staff have an understanding of how research and theory relates to their practice?
	Do newly qualified staff and those who are new to the school have opportunities to be trained in relational approaches?
	Are there opportunities for some staff to develop an expertise in this area, to lead on developments and to support others?
	Do all staff have ongoing development opportunities such as working alongside those who have more experience, mentoring coaching and supervision?
	Do school processes support knowledge and understanding to be maintained in practice?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Developing relationships - protection, connection, understanding and care	**To what extent are all staff aware of the need for secure relationships and what the key components of the relationship are in terms of providing protection, connection, understanding and care?** Consider: Do all staff understand their role in developing relationships and what this means in terms of what they are doing and how they are being? Are all adults aware of the behaviour that may indicate a relational need and understand how they need to respond? Are there systems and processes in place to identify need, plan and implement relational support through a relational support plan? Does the provision mapping include support and interventions to meet relational need?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Supporting inclusion/ removing barriers	**How well does the school support inclusion and belonging and ensure equal opportunities for children from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups?** Consider: To what extent are all staff aware of the barriers to inclusion and those children who are most vulnerable to exclusion (this includes boys, children with SEN, those who have been supported by social care or come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and children from certain ethnic groups)? How well is data (attendance, exclusion, attainment, participation etc) pertaining to vulnerable groups collected, analysed and utilised to ensure inclusion and equal opportunities? To what extent are all teachers aware of their responsibility and have the expertise to meet additional needs through good quality first teaching? How well does the school actively challenge racism through anti-racist policies, systems, curriculum and practice? How knowledgeable are all members of the school staff about the diversity and differences in history, experience and culture of the children they teach? How well does the school respect, value and celebrate diversity of social identity, ethnicity, gender or sexuality and to what extent is this shown through the actions of all members of staff, curriculum content, whole school initiatives, celebrations and the school environment.

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Limit setting/making and maintaining agreements	To what extent are the making and maintaining of agreements an integral part of teaching?
	Consider:
	Are agreements made collaboratively with children, adults and the school community?
	Are agreements meaningful, clearly communicated, displayed and expressed positively?
	Are agreements referred to and used to support a harmonious learning environment and help children to understand the limits of behaviour?
	Are there clear processes for resolving difficulties when agreements are broken?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Keeping things calm/ Providing skilled regulation	To what extent are staff skilled at using relational practice to de-escalate and promote calm learning environments?
	Consider:
	Do staff manage stressful situations where there is a need for regulation and containment?
	Are there clear systems and plans for managing crisis situations?
	Are plans communicated to staff and followed by staff throughout the school?
	Are plans for individual children monitored and updated regularly by the core team?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Using restorative approaches/restorative exploration to repair harm	**To what extent do staff understand the concept, purpose and application of a restorative approach in school?** Consider: How embedded is the approach in everyday interactions and conversations? Are staff skilled in terms of restorative encounters and following the exploration plan? Are there staff who have an expertise in this area and are able to lead on developments, to support others with their practice and facilitate complex restorative explorations? How well is change facilitated following explorations? How well do these inform what happens next?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Relational approaches in the classroom	**To what extend are staff skilled in using relational approaches to manage disruption in the classroom?** Consider: Do staff consistently and skilfully respond to single incidents of low level disruption in order to minimise disruption and avoid escalation? How well do staff use relational practice such as providing positive feedback, coaching, using report cards for reflection, liaising with parents as a response to regular or persistent low level disruption? How well do staff adapt their teaching in order to meet the specific needs of individual children? How well do school systems support staff to respond to children who are regularly or persistently disruptive in a way which supports development and inclusion?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Targeted support for those most in need/graduated assess.plan.do and review	**To what extent are there robust systems for targeted support through a graduated plan-do-review approach?** Consider: To what extent are there robust systems and processes in place to identify and assess need in each area of SEN as well as needs relating to relationships, social inclusion, disadvantage and identity? To what extent are parents involved in the assess, plan, do, review process? To what extent are children involved in the plan-do –review process. To what extend are person centred and solution focused processes used in order to problem solve, plan and identify shared outcomes, skills and strengths? How well does your provision map outline universal support and support which is additional to or different from good quality first teaching including; individual support, curriculum adaptations, small group intervention and personalised/alternative provision?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Managing the environment	**To what extend does the school environment support a relational approach?** Consider: Does the school environment support all children to feel safe? Does the school environment have areas where students can connect in a variety of ways? Does the school have dedicated spaces for children who require a safe base or who may need a place to calm down when they are distressed? Does the school have spaces, facilities and resources for children who have physical and sensory needs and those who have needs relating to sensory processing? Does the school have dedicated spaces for adults to work with children individually or as part of a small groups? Do displays in the school reflect the schools beliefs and values and the diversity and inclusivity of the school? Do children have ownership of their environment? For example are they involved in the design and organisation of the playground, dining hall or classroom?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Working with parents	To what extent are parents involved within the school community? Consider: To what extend do parents feel welcome, valued and listened to? Do school systems support open communication between the school and parents? Do parents contribute to the everyday life of the school? How well are parents utilised and valued with regard to their child's experience of school?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Involving the child	To what extend are child centred approaches integral to practice? Consider: Are staff skilled in eliciting the voice of the child? Does the school provide regular opportunities for children to express their views and feel listened to? Does the school support children through solution focused coaching techniques? How well does feedback support reflection and development?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Supporting staff well-being	**To what extend are there opportunities for staff to access support for well-being?** Consider: Are there opportunities for staff to connect with colleagues, such as exercise, well-being or relaxation groups? Do staff feel able to express their views and feelings about their work? Do staff have control over their working practices? How well are relationships between staff developed and supported? How well do systems and processes support staff to feel valued and respected? Do staff have opportunities for development, both personal and professional? How well are staff supported in their work through supervision, line management, coaching and mentoring?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Area of Practice	Challenge Questions
Working with partner agencies and professionals	**To what extend are partner agencies involved in establishing and maintaining a relational ethos and approach?** Consider: How well are partner agencies involved in the assess-plan-do-review process? Are partner agencies utilised in training, on-going staff development and complex case work?

Notes:

Priorities for change	Next steps

Appendix 12: Useful Links and Information

Adverse Childhood Experiences in England: http://www.aces.me.uk/in-england/

Attachment based mentoring: https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/campaigns/attachment-based-mentoring

Babcock LDP's website: https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/

Babcock LDP Educational Psychology:
https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/disadvantaged-vulnerable-learners/ educational-psychology/resources/

Babcock LDP SEND Communication and Interaction:
https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/disadvantaged- vulnerable-learners/send/communication-and-interaction

Babcock LDP SLCN Primary Checklist:
https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/babcock_l_d_p/SEND/C-and-I/ Documents/SLCN-primary-checklist.pdf

Babcock LDP SLCN Secondary Checklist:
https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/babcock_l_d_p/SEND/C-and-I/ Documents/SLCN-secondary-checklist.doc

Circles of Adults and Solution Circles:
https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/cms/articles/send-file/04b79b1b- adb6-410a-aed8-07bddf6a8343/1

The Communication Trust: https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/

Devon Integrated Children's Services: http://devon.integratedchildrensservices.co.uk/

Devon County Council Education Inclusion Service:
https://new.devon.gov.uk/supportforschools/services- and-contacts/education-inclusion-service

Devon Enhanced Language Programme (DELP):
https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/disadvantaged-vulnerable- learners/send/communication-and-interaction/devon-enhanced-language-programme

Devon Graduated Response to SEND support profile:
https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/disadvantaged- vulnerable-learners/send/devon-graduated-response

DfE publication - Mental health and behaviour in schools:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2

Early Help: https://www.devonchildrenandfamiliespartnership.org.uk/workers-volunteers/early-help/

Education Inspection framework: Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman sets out vision for new Education Inspection Framework:
https://www.gov. uk/government/news/chief-inspector-sets-out-vision-for-new-education-inspection-framework

Every School a Good School The Governors' Role – Education NI:
https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/ default/files/publications/de/Guide-executive-summary_1.pdf

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):
https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/child-protection/ making-a-mash-enquiry

Person Centreed planning Inclusive Solutions: https://inclusive-solutions.com

Restorative Justice 4 schools http://www.restorativejustice4schools.co.uk

Restorative Justice Council https://restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-schools

Restorative Thinking http://www.restorativethinking.co.uk/

Staff Group Supervision in Schools:
https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/babcock_l_d_p/Educational- Psychology/Downloads/Resources/Staff-Group-Supervision-in-Schools-flyer-April-2018.pdf

Safe guarding: Concerned About a Child: https://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org