

Relationship Policy

Therapeutic Teaching is invested in supporting the very best possible relational health between:

- Parent and child*
- Child and child
- Child and teaching staff
- Child and other school staff
- Child and external agency staff

*the term child/children refers to both children and teenagers/young people

To this end we are committed to educational practices which support healing of trauma and development of resilience – we do this through an evidence-based model advocated by [Trauma Informed Schools UK](https://traumainformedschools.org/).

This model comprises four components: **Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect.**

Protect

We use and promote the use of 'safety cues' in every communication.

We are trained in PACE models of interaction (Hughes, 2015): being warm, empathic, playful and curious, which are proven to shift children out of 'alarm' states.

We aim for all interactions to be socially engaging and not socially defensive, to decrease the likelihood of children relating defensively (moving to 'alarm' states).

Language used in interactions will always aim to be supportive, encouraging, truthful and helpful.

We will always seek to interactively repair relationships where any misunderstandings or errors of judgement occur.

Coaching interventions that support school staff and parents in understanding the child's strengths and needs better to enable the child to feel more comfortable and confident when expressing and managing feelings.

We support by acting as an emotionally available adult for the child within the session time, acting as a trusted 'bridge' to school staff and as a coach to parents/carers/staff during liaison times.

Expectations are adjusted to support the child based on their developmental capabilities and experience of traumatic stress.

Relate

We aim to enable the child to see themselves, their relationships, their learning and the world positively, rather than through a lens of threat, danger or self-blame.

We aim to provide repeated relational opportunities through the learning /coaching sessions to support the mental shifts that move from a position of distrust or blocked trust to willingness to trust and from self-help to 'help seeking'.

We aim to support the integration of relational skills with self-regulation skills for the child through carefully managed programmes to develop emotional and social literacy.

Regulate

We use and promote the use of relational interventions and strategies designed to bring down stress hormone levels (from toxic to tolerable) in the child and activate the social engagement system (Porges, 2011).

We use and promote the use of evidence-based interventions that aim to reduce the gap in psychological and neurological development caused by traumatic life experiences. These interventions include the six R's: relational; repetitive; rhythmic; rewarding (fun); relevant (developmentally matched to the individual) and respectful.

We make every effort to create safe spaces in the learning environment, with the support of the parent, school and others.

Reflect

We use and promote the use of whole-hearted listening and language through dialogue that communicates unconditional positive regard.

We coach the child directly and their parents/carers and school staff using resources that support the child to reflect and learn new ways of relating to others and ways of understanding themselves that help them to better manage home/school and life in general.

Through the use of arts, play and different modes of expression incorporated into learning, children are given the means and opportunity to understand their feelings and life experiences through images as well as words.

Personal, Social and Health education (PSHE) and psycho-education is worked into learning opportunities with the child to support their reflection and learning about how to 'do life well'. Materials approved by the PSHE Association will be used.

Training materials are designed to support school staff with greater understanding and resources that support a child to move from 'behaving' their feelings and life experiences to reflecting on those experiences.

We use and promote the use of reflective and restorative conversations to support social engagement that in turn enables social learning and academic learning to take place.

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