

*Relationships matter: the currency for systemic change is trust, and trust comes through forming healthy, working relationships.
People, not programs, change people.*

Bruce D. Perry



Understanding and Embedding Relational Approaches in School



**EDUCATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY
SERVICE**

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Relate to Educate

Introduction

Wakefield Educational Psychology Service has produced this guidance for school staff and other professionals to provide information and guidance on how to embed relational principles into policy and practice. Guidance draws on the current evidence base and information from the literature and from other Educational Psychology Services. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Devon County Council for allowing us to build on the guidance produced by their teams. *(Full references can be found at the end of this document.)*

The Principles of a Relational Approach

- Humans are wired to connect and to seek support in their social surroundings and relationships.
- Relationships are the central tenets through which to influence, shape and build wellbeing.
- All young people wish to, and have the right to, belong, achieve and contribute to their school community.
- Young people need nurture, and empathetic relationships alongside containment and structure in order to feel safe.
- All behaviours are understood to be communicative of an individual's needs. A curious approach to understanding behaviour is essential. Needs must be understood and met in a compassionate and informed way, rather than seeking to manage and contain behaviours alone.
- Respect for individual context, circumstances and needs means responding to individuals in a differentiated manner. Consistency is about consistent commitment to seeking a positive outcome for each individual, not about treating everyone the same.



WholeHearted School Counseling

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[WHAT'S BEHIND ANGER: Emotions Associated With Feeling Angry - WholeHearted School Counseling](#)

What are relational approaches?

Relational approaches are universal practices that value the essential nature of relationships in enabling individuals to develop, learn, adapt and thrive. Relational practice shapes all levels of a school setting, including ethos, policy, procedures and everyday interactions. It provides the power and the practical tools to schools to adapt to the emotional and developmental needs of all young people, including those who are most in need.

We increasingly understand the long-term importance of connectedness and positive, safe relationships in supporting emotional, social, and academic outcomes for young people. Relationships and interactions are a vehicle through which we can:

- Develop openness to trust
- Build a sense of security, belonging and connection
- Teach and embed skills to manage and regulate difficult emotions

- Develop awareness of ourselves and the emotional needs and perspective of others
- Resolve conflict
- Repair and restoring relationships following conflict

In general, the relational approach places emphasis on relationships, respect, responsibility and restoration, which have been shown to be more effective in addressing issues of discipline and conflict than traditional behavioural approaches, where systems rely on the use of rewards and sanctions to encourage compliance.

Such approaches are understood to garner short term compliance and have the potential to be shaming and to have adverse effects on young people, in particular those with vulnerabilities as a result of earlier / current life experience.

James McTaggart (EP) highlights the key differences in approaches, in the table below:

Behaviour Model	Punitive/ Rule-based	Behaviourist/ Consequence-based	Relational/ Developmental
<i>Main means of behaviour management</i>	Fear	Consequences	Relationship
<i>Children & young people are</i>	responsible for their actions	learning	developing, error-prone & highly responsive to environment
<i>Boundaries are to</i>	indicate right and wrong	make standards clear	try to meet everyone's needs
<i>Rules should be</i>	enforced without exception	clearly communicated	developed together and adapted where needed
<i>Behaviour is something to</i>	control	manage	listen to
<i>Consequences are</i>	sanctions & punishments	ways to shape behaviour	a last resort, only used within a process of rupture & repair
<i>"Inappropriate" behaviour is</i>	wrong-doing, deliberate	learned, not necessarily voluntary	a sign either of an unmet need, difficulty coping, or lack of knowledge
<i>The causes of difficulties are</i>	lack of compliance, insufficient discipline	learned poor responses, lack of appropriate reinforcement	mostly in the environment, felt relationships or developmentally appropriate
<i>Solutions lie in</i>	the child	adjusting consequences	understanding what the behaviour tells us about the child & their needs
<i>Children who don't manage should be</i>	excluded or fixed	helped and given intervention	understood & included
<i>Policy effectiveness is measured by</i>	compliance	behaviour change	well-being

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(Table reproduced with thanks to James McTaggart @JamesEdPsych)

The relational approach provides an emotionally safe way to support behaviour and development, rather than a system to manage it. It views behaviour as telling us something about the needs and regulatory systems of an individual, rather than viewing behaviour as choice and intention.

Trauma informed practice

Whilst relational approaches are effective in meeting the needs of all students, they hold additional value for children and young people who have been affected by adversity at some stage during their childhood, or who continue to experience difficulties of this nature. Relational approaches are at the heart of trauma informed practice, due to the emphasis placed on the importance of secure and trusting relationships in school and the sense of safety these provide.

The benefits of a relational approach

Increasingly we understand the power of relationships and the potential they cultivate. A relational approach is not just a more 'human approach,' but one we professionally advocate to be more effective for all involved. Research offers an optimistic perspective that focusing on relationships between teachers and pupils has wide reaching implications, offering the potential to:

- Support development of a positive emotional climate (Rucinski et al, 2018)
- Increase positive behaviours, as well as behaviour for learning (Driscoll and Pianta, 2010; Lei et al, 2016)
- Result in positive changes in emotional regulation, social competence and resilience to academic challenge, leading to increased academic achievement (Bergin and Bergin, 2009; Roorda et al, 2017)
- Enhance a pupil's sense of school belonging (Quinn, 2017; Allen et al, 2018)
- Increase wellbeing for teachers and staff involved (Split et al, 2011)

Spen Valley High School in Kirklees

During their OFSTED inspection in 2022, Inspectors noted pupils flourish and feel safe within the nurturing school environment whilst also noting the high ambitions set for all pupils.

Carr Manor Community School in Leeds

The CYP Mental Health Coalition report (2023) on 'Behaviour and Mental Health in Schools' highlighted the practice at Carr Manor in placing relationship at the centre of their approach to inclusion. Restorative and relational practices are used across the school to build a culture that promotes a sense of belonging and connectedness.

The school uses a coaching programme. Key to this is the school's coaching programme, which it believes is fundamental in developing strong relationships across the whole school community.

Relational Approach Overview

The following framework, produced by Devon and Babcock, provides a useful model for encompassing key aspects of a relational approach. An overview of each aspect of this model is provided on pages 7 to 17.

The Relational Approach



Developing Relationships

Building Relationships

- To succeed at school, children must develop relationships which enable them to feel safe, secure and good about who they are.
- Secure relationships between staff and students provide a sense of trust, belonging and enable students to feel valued and listened to.
- Over time, secure relationships enable students to develop the skills to regulate their feelings and behaviour, develop an understanding of social situations, and develop healthy and positive feelings about themselves and their abilities.
- Such relationships are built upon the cornerstones of **protection, connection, understanding** and **care**.

See Page 8

Supporting Inclusion

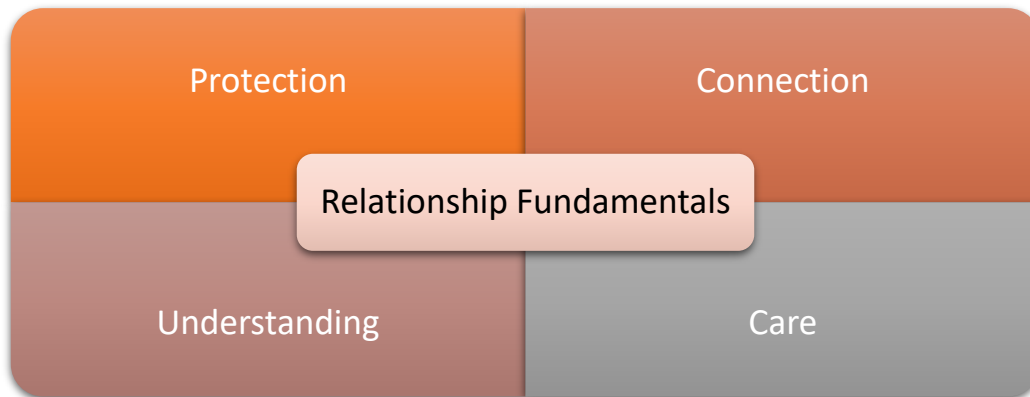
- Experiences of adversity and trauma are known to impact on many aspects of development and difficulties associated with this can impact on inclusion.
- Needs affecting learning (e.g. literacy, language and communication and executive functioning difficulties) should be assessed to gain an accurate picture of how needs can be met.
- School must ensure equal opportunities for all children, particularly those at increased risk of exclusion.

Setting Boundaries

- Children benefit from clear boundaries and expectations.
- Ownership and personal responsibility is best achieved by working with students to develop a shared understanding of rights, roles and responsibilities and how these manifest themselves as expectations for behaviour, agreements and rules.
- Agreements should be few in number, simple, positively phrased, clearly communicated and modelled by all adults in school.
- Children need to trust that processes are in place to repair harm, restore a sense of safety and learn from the experience when agreements are broken.

Developing Relationships

Putting it into Practice



Protection

- Show the child you are **predictable, reliable** and **trustworthy** – if things change and you are not able to do what you’ve said you’ll do, explain why this has happened, acknowledge and validate the difficult emotions this may have evoked and put in place an alternative plan.
- Provide safety cues. Be aware of your facial expression, body language, and frequency and modulation of your voice.
- Contain their emotions. Let them know that you can bear their emotions and hold on to them so that they do not escalate. 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.
- Provide **structure** and **boundaries**. These need to match the child’s needs and be communicated to them in a way that they understand. Visuals and timers can be helpful in establishing structure and boundaries.
- **Anticipate** ‘triggers’ that may be interpreted 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 moving from activity to activity within the classroom may need to be supported.

Connection

- Be physically and emotionally available - giving them your time and opportunities for undivided attention.
- Find time to build relationships, especially through activities that the individual enjoys or experiences success with. Show them you like them and are interested in them – explore, make and learn about things together.
- Attune 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.
- Be responsive, expressive and interactive - encouraging expressive interaction using facial expressions, opportunities to experience activities with joint focus, enjoyment and anticipation.
- Be playful in your interactions – have fun and share laughter.

- Support wider 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

- Seek to identify and then address unmet needs – not simply manage behaviour. Liaise with others within school such as the SENDCo, Pastoral and Mental Health Leads to ensure holistic understanding.
- Accept their feelings and experience without action, judgement, contradiction or persuasion – resist the urge to minimise their feelings, distract or cheer them up.
- Think for them – 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 and validate. Imagine how it is for them, empathise and then express it –

“I can see that this situation is very hard...”

“It sounds as though you were really worried...”

“When that happens I wonder if it is very frightening for you...”

Care

- Be loving and compassionate. Let them know that you like them and that they are special to you. Regularly checking in with simple smiles, eye contact, thumbs up etc. can make the child feel they are cared for.
- Hold them in mind. 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.
- Use transitional objects. This can help them know that you are thinking about them. Simple actions such as lending them a ‘special’ pen that they need to bring back to you at the end of the day, will let them know you are thinking of them.
- Show 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. Let them know that you thinking about their basic needs. Small things that show you care can make a significant difference.
- Soothe and comfort them. Soothing enables the child to calm their physiological response to danger and fear.

Responding and Calming

Regulating Emotion

- It is within the bounds of normal development for young people (and adults) to seek autonomy, test boundaries, and struggle with emotional control.
- Co-regulation is often required to prevent escalation to, as well as to disable, the stress response system and facilitate the return to a calm and focused state.
- This is particularly important for young people who are unlikely to have had the repeated, positive experiences of co-regulation that would enable them to reach a stage of emotional development where self-regulation is possible.

Keeping Calm

- For some young people, stress responses are easily triggered by the cues they pick up from those around them – loud voices, hostile expressions and body language can be interpreted as threats of danger, which whether real or perceived, trigger a survival response. Behaviours at this level are not a choice, but a coping strategy.
- The manner and emotional response of the teacher, and their relationship with a student, are key factors in how well a situation can be managed and de-escalated.
- Staying calm, softening your tone of voice and maintaining a relaxed posture and gentle facial expression provides a message to students that they are safe and enables students to mirror and resonate with the adult's emotional state.
- In some instances, you may not be the best person to respond and support the young person; seeking support from a colleague who is in a calmer state or less

See Page 11

Managing Crisis

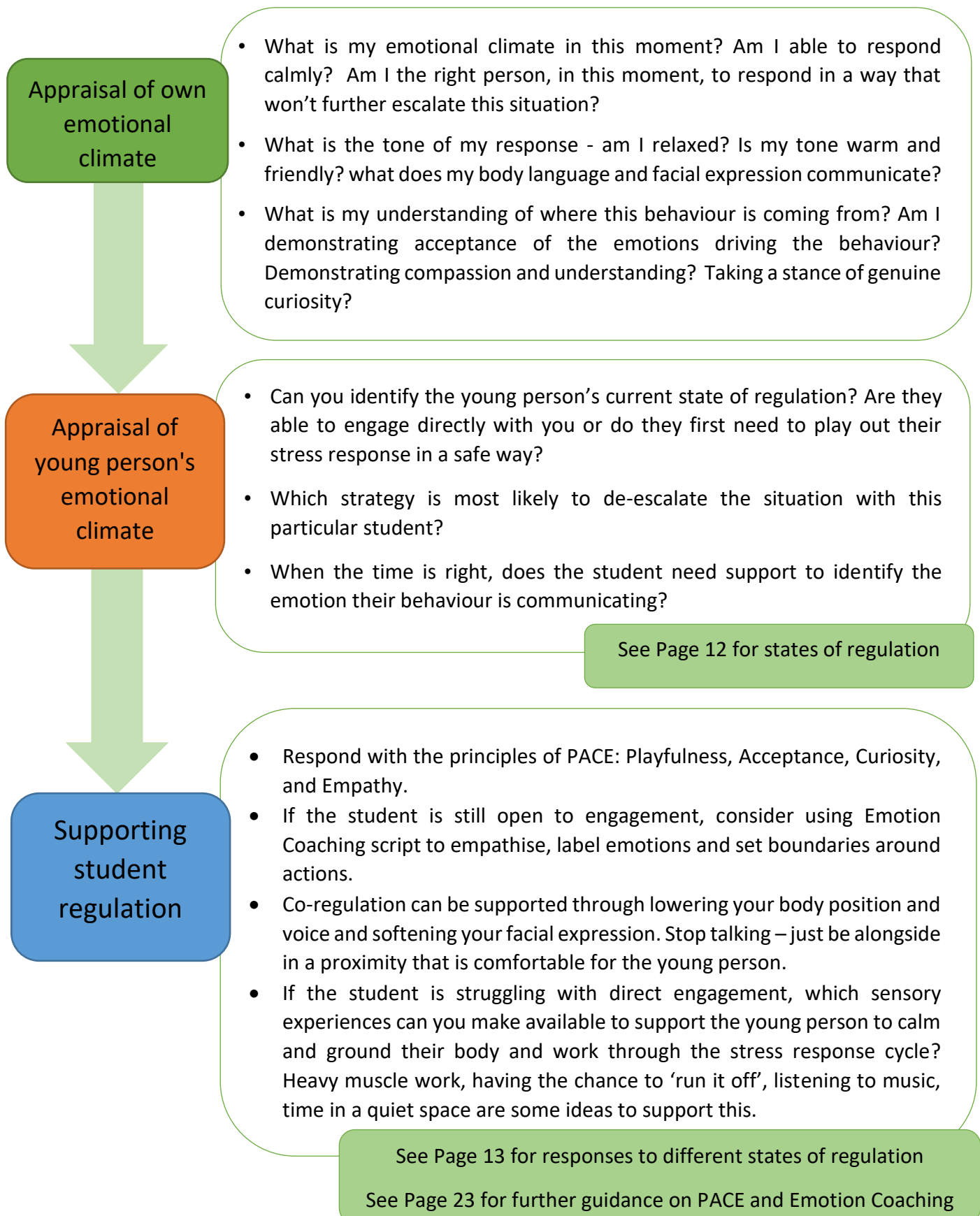
- Adults require an understanding of the level of dysregulation a student is experiencing, to inform the strategies that are most likely to be effective.
- Social Engagement is often the most effective way of managing heightened emotion, however activation of a stress/survival response can lead to a pattern of physiological arousal that cannot be halted. When triggered, the part of the brain that processes language can go 'offline' and a student will no longer respond to reasoning. This can be misinterpreted as rudeness or disobedience.
- In these instances, support is required to regulate from the 'bottom – up', integrating physical sensations with emotions and thinking.
- A plan for crisis situations should be agreed with the student and family, to ensure the safety of the young person and those around them.

See Page 23

Responding and Calming

Putting it into Practice

Steps for managing emotionally challenging situations:



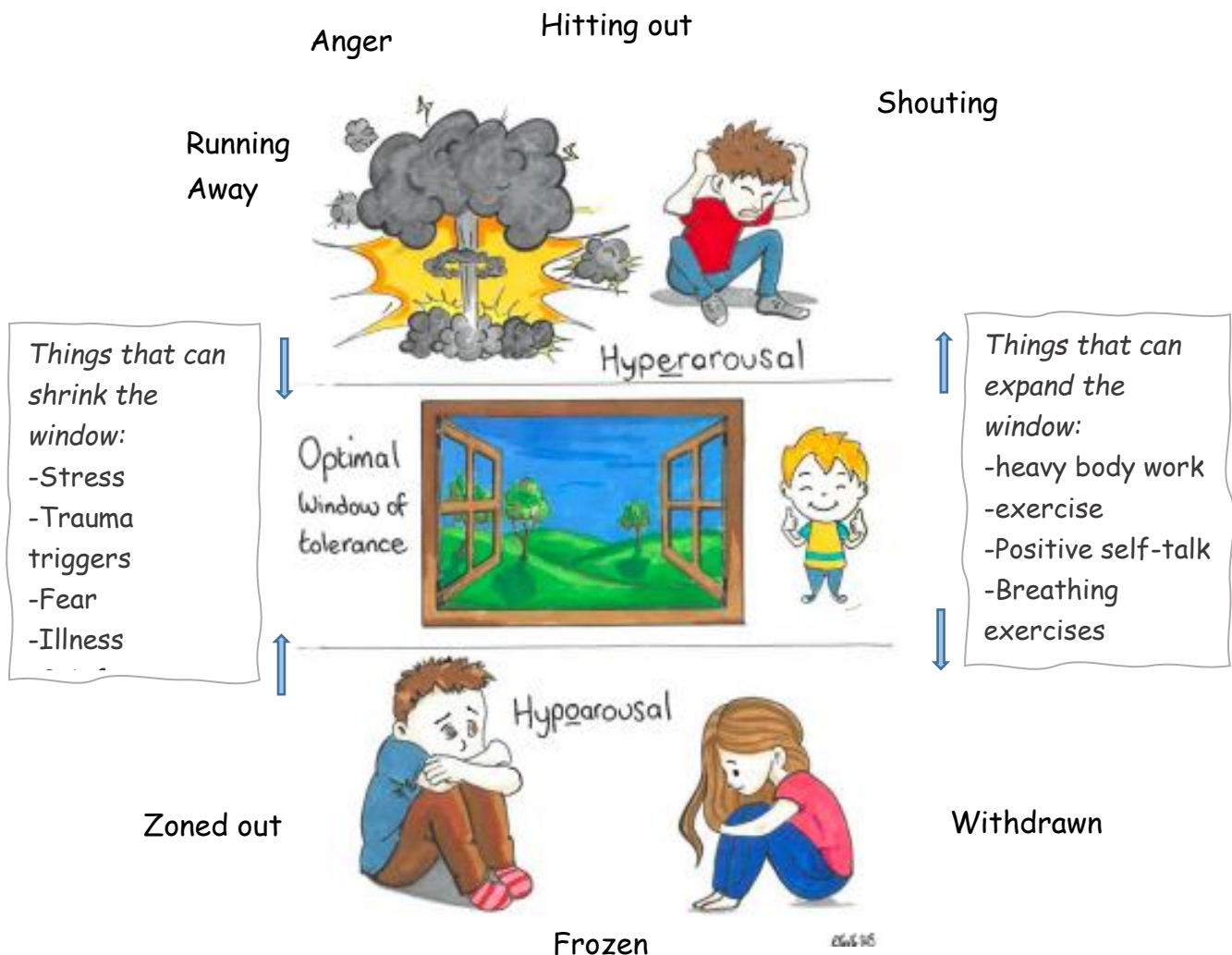
States of Regulation

An optimal level of regulation enables a student to remain calm, focused and engaged, and deal with challenge in a reasoned manner. When in this state, students can also make use of their connections with others to calm any rising feelings of stress or anxiety.

When stress is experienced or when threat is perceived, our nervous system works hard to help us maintain an even state of regulation.

This system is more finely tuned for some people than it is for others. For some students, this 'window of tolerance' is much smaller than it is for others, and therefore a state of dysregulation can occur much more easily. Triggers for this might not be easy to identify, or to understand, and may relate to past experiences.

Window of Tolerance



Supporting different states of regulation

State of regulation	Potential of 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. Adults need to provide high levels of containment.

Repairing and Restoring

Resolving Conflict

- Even with strong relationships, clear boundaries and good co-regulation, there will be conflict and times when support is needed for children, and sometimes adults, to repair relationships and learn from mistakes.
- 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. By engaging in restorative interactions, children learn that relationships can last and are worth having.
- 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. This helps children to develop co-operative skills, increase their awareness of emotions and understand how feelings impact on behaviour, as well as how behaviour impacts on others.

Repairing Harm

- When harm is caused, it is useful to spend time developing a shared understanding of what has happened and coming to an outcome which helps to repair relationships.
- Children and young people who have experienced trauma are particularly vulnerable to a sense of shame and sense of personal failure, which traditional systems of reward and punishment further reinforce.
- Restorative conversations, problem-solving circles, restorative mediation and restorative conferences are all structured approaches that can be used to work towards a shared resolution.

See Page 15 for restorative approaches

Supporting Change

- Following the use of restorative exploration, it can be helpful for 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?

Repairing and Restoring

Putting into Practice

Restorative Approaches

There are key differences between traditional/punitive approaches (those that seek 'do to') and restorative approaches (those that seek to 'do with'):

Traditional/punitive approach	Restorative approach
Harm caused is defined as misbehaviour - an individual choice to break school rules or to deviate from established expectations.	Harm takes place as a result of a breakdown in community relationships and/or an unconscious attempt to meet needs. Behaviour is complex and often those who appear to harm others have been harmed themselves.
Focus is on what happened, establishing blame, and fairly dispensing punishment to the wrongdoer(s).	Focus is on listening, understanding feelings, needs, and responsibilities of all impacted individuals and exploring ways to bring about harmony in the community.
Interventions are focused on making the misbehaviour stop, using increasingly restrictive and/or exclusionary consequences.	Interventions aim to understand root causes of the harm caused and offer relational support for positive changes in behaviour.
Interventions decided on by one or more authority figures.	Interventions emphasise collaboration between all individuals involved regarding how their needs can be met and a mutually acceptable outcome is defined. There is a shared understanding that there is no one truth about a given situation.
Accountability is defined in terms of receiving punishment.	Accountability is defined as understanding impact of actions, taking responsibility for choices, and finding ways to repair harm and prevent future harm.
Imposed punitive consequences have the effect of shaming students who have caused harm.	Restorative processes offer an opportunity for students who have caused harm to understand the source of their actions, take responsibility for their choices, and to learn and grow from the experience

How to repair harm through restorative encounters

Restorative approaches take place along a continuum, from whole school to targeted levels:



When harm is caused, it is useful to spend time developing a shared understanding of what has happened and coming to an outcome which helps to repair relationships. These encounters can be organised in a range of ways, depending on the specific situation.

Restorative conversations	A process involving a neutral third party whose role is to support two people involved in conflict to find a way forward. The facilitator can be a trained adult or, in some cases, a trained child.
Problem solving circle	When there is a problem to be discussed as a group, a conflict that needs addressing or an event that has caused distress.
Restorative mediation	In this case, one person has accepted responsibility, at least to some extent, for the harm caused to the other. Key issues here are to ensure the process does not re-victimise the person harmed or shame the person who caused the harm. The process can move children from shame to guilt through a greater understanding of their thoughts, feelings and behaviour and find ways forward. Unless all sides are likely to benefit from this approach, it can cause more harm, so schools need to have clear reasons for using it.
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.

Restorative Conversation Framework

Such frameworks can be used to enable the student to learn about themselves and others after an incident has occurred, at any stage of restorative work.

What happened?

Allow the young person 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.
- Using soothing (not cross) tones.

What were you thinking and how were you feeling?

Some young people 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 those 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 young person need to move forward? Consider:

- 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.

Planning for and implementing relational practice in your school

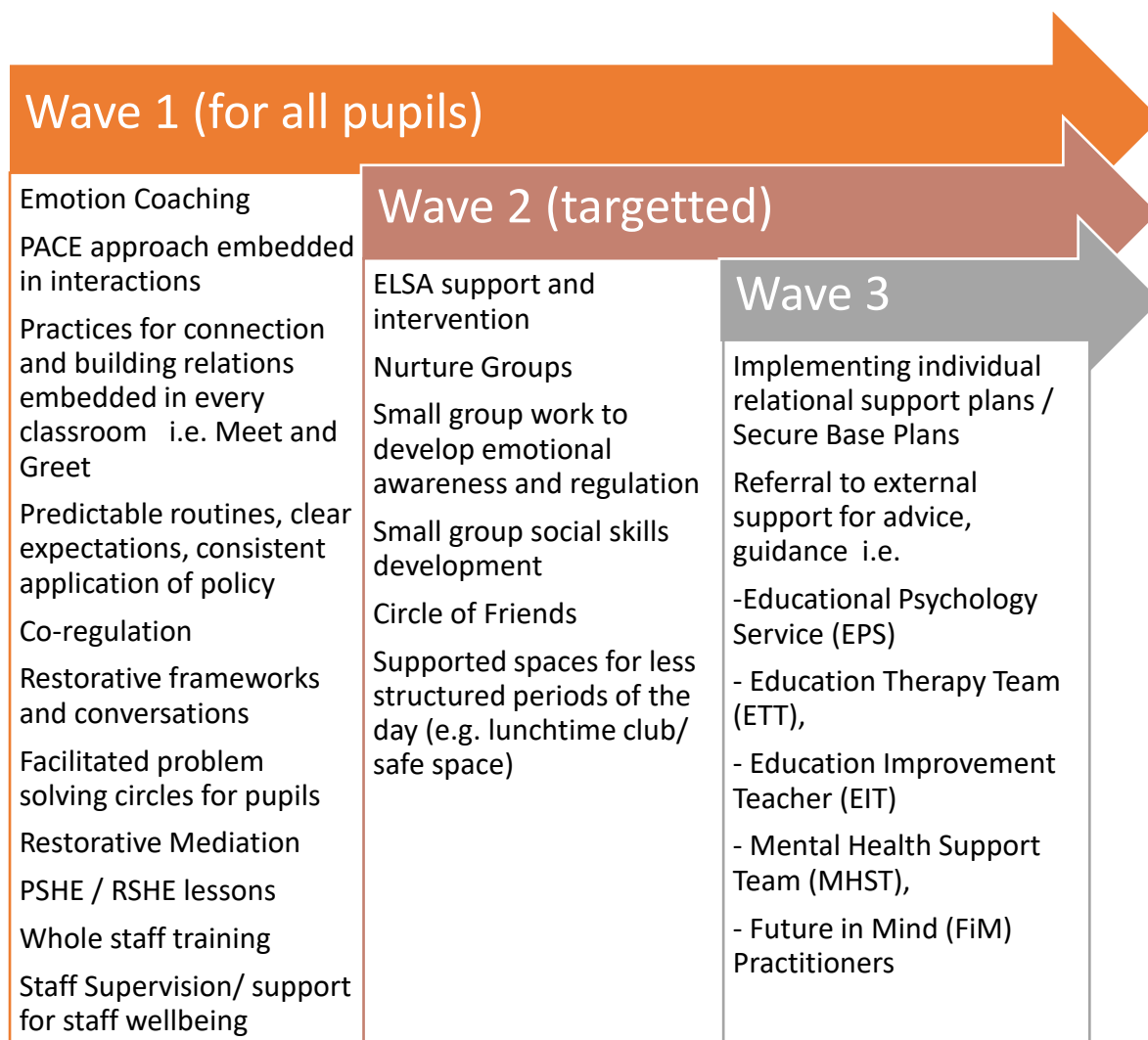
When planning how to begin implementing a relational approach and policy, a helpful starting point is to consider how each step described in the sections above will be implemented successfully and consistently by all staff. The following table provides prompts and examples for consideration. Also see examples from school policies on page 20 Writing a Relational Behaviour Policy:

Aspect of Relational Practice	Suggestions/ Examples
<p>Developing Relationships What strategies will be used to promote positive relationships, promote a sense of safety and connectedness?</p> <p>How will students contribute to decisions that are made around expectations and responsibilities?</p> <p>What processes and guidance are needed to ensure all staff are consistent in delivery?</p> <p>How will processes, expectations and delivery of curriculum be adapted to ensure inclusion?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent and predictable routines and expectations • Meet and greet at classroom doors • Verbal recognition/ positive noticing of effort relating to social behaviours and academic tasks, throughout the lesson • Staff training and supervision in relation to relational practices and formation of policy • Clear SEN provision mapping to include reference to enhanced relational provision for SEMH needs (see page on page 19).
<p>Responding and Calming What aspects of lesson delivery and relational practice should be evident in the classroom at all times to support students to maintain a calm and focused state of regulation?</p> <p>What is the agreed response to low level challenge?</p> <p>What are the agreed relational skills/ procedures that adults will use in response to strong emotion/ dysregulation/ crisis situations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff to maintain a calm, non-confrontational stance (seeking support if unable to implement this). • Tactile ignoring of some behaviours (e.g those that are not impacting on other students) and address at end of lesson. • Use of PACE/ emotion coaching script (<i>'I've noticed you are fidgeting, I wonder if you are feeling a bit unsure about this task? Let's have a look at it together'</i>) • Agree procedure for pastoral staff intervention/ removal from classroom • Personal relational support plan written for students who frequently demonstrate dysregulation, informed by the self/co-regulation strategies that are most effective.
<p>Repairing and Restoring What are the restorative practices that are implemented within the ethos of the school?</p> <p>What restorative processes will be followed following incidents of challenge/ dysregulation/ difficulty functioning in line with school rules and expectations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out student for restorative conversation prior to next lesson. • Reflection on factors that have contributed to student becoming dysregulated (e.g level of challenge presented by task) • Follow up with parents/ Head of Year/ Pastoral team/ SEN team etc if incidents occurring frequently • Use of restorative frameworks

Waves of Provision

Relational practices should be present at all levels of provision from the universal levels for all children (Wave 1), to the targeted approaches needed from within school resources for small group support (Wave 2), and finally to the implementation of individual support and inclusion of more 'specialist' involvement (Wave 3).

The diagram below gives examples (not exhaustive) of the approaches that might be implemented at Wave 1, 2 and 3.



Writing a Relational Behaviour Policy

The following links provide examples of how your policy might look in practice:

Primary:

- [Barons Court Infant School and Nursery \(primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com\)](https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com)
- [Microsoft Word - 16 Behaviour-Policy-Reviewed-Jan 2023pdf \(1\).docx \(st-hildascofe.n-yorks.sch.uk\)](https://st-hildascofe.n-yorks.sch.uk/Microsoft%20Word%20-%2016%20Behaviour-Policy-Reviewed-Jan%202023pdf%20(1).docx)

Secondary:

- [Relationship Policy Sept 2022.pdf \(spenvalleyhighschool.co.uk\)](https://spenvalleyhighschool.co.uk/Relationship%20Policy%20Sept%202022.pdf)

Specialist setting:

- [Behaviour-Policy-Jan-23-1.pdf \(mowbrayschool.co.uk\)](https://mowbrayschool.co.uk/Behaviour-Policy-Jan-23-1.pdf)

Core components :

1. Introduction to Policy

The first sections of your policy should:

- School name/logo
- Names of staff with key responsibilities (e.g. Head Teacher, SENCo, Governor responsible for SEN/PP/ Inclusion)
- Date the Policy was written and how often, and by whom, the policy will be reviewed.
- Summary of the **values, principles and beliefs** held by the school and the philosophy on which the policy has been written.

The principles underpinning relational practice should be highlighted here (pg. 3 of guidance).

2. Policy Statement

You may wish to reference the involvement of services, e.g. LA/EPs and the guidance on which it is based, e.g. Wakefield Relational Guidance, training, resources, support services.

3. Policy Scope

Identify who the policy is intended for, e.g. staff, students, parents/carers and visitors, and how it is intended to be used, e.g:

'...to provide guidelines and procedures for how the school supports and responds to behaviour.'

4. Policy Aims and Objectives

This section outlines the aims/ambitions of the school, in relation to how emotional wellbeing and behaviour is understood and supported, for example:

'To ensure that all children and adults have a sense of belonging, feeling safe, secure and valued.'

'To provide a clear, fair and consistent approach to behaviour.'

'Children will be encouraged to develop positive behaviour for learning in recognition of its importance as a lifelong skill.'

5. Policy Links

Relate to other relevant policies, e.g. De-escalation and positive handling policy, Equality Policy, PSHE Education Policy, relevant LA policies and guidance.

6. Legislation and Statutory requirements

Acknowledgment of statutory guidance for behaviour, equality, education and safeguarding.

7. Responsibilities

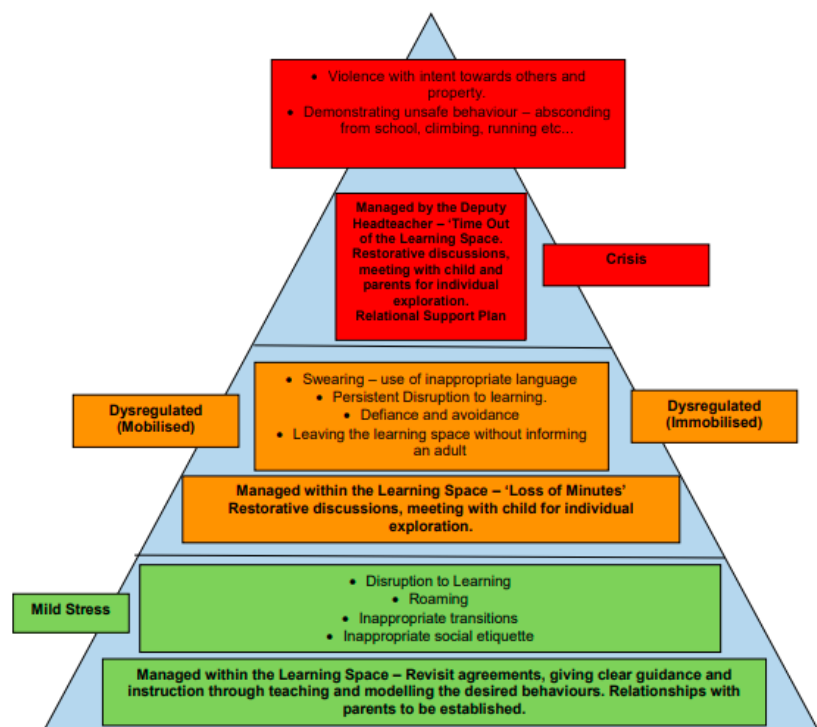
Name who the key responsibilities for users of the Policy, e.g. roles of the Senior leadership team, governing body and parents. Further roles might also be detailed, e.g. form tutors/class teachers, subject leaders, pastoral staff.

8. Approach

This section details the approaches taken to understanding and supporting behaviour/emotional wellbeing. It will describe underpinning philosophies and frameworks that have been referenced throughout this guidance as well as the processes/systems to be followed consistently by all staff in school, including but not limited to:

- Principles guiding interactions between staff and students, (e.g. Acceptance, empathy and establishing a sense of safety)
- Relational and restorative practice embedded throughout school (e.g. the principle of 'every interaction is an intervention')
- Understanding all behaviour as a form of communication
- Prioritising praise and positive feedback over discipline and punishment
- Responding calmly to conflict, including flexible responses depending on student needs/identified state of regulation
- Rights, roles and responsibilities
- What this looks like in practice.

Practical example:

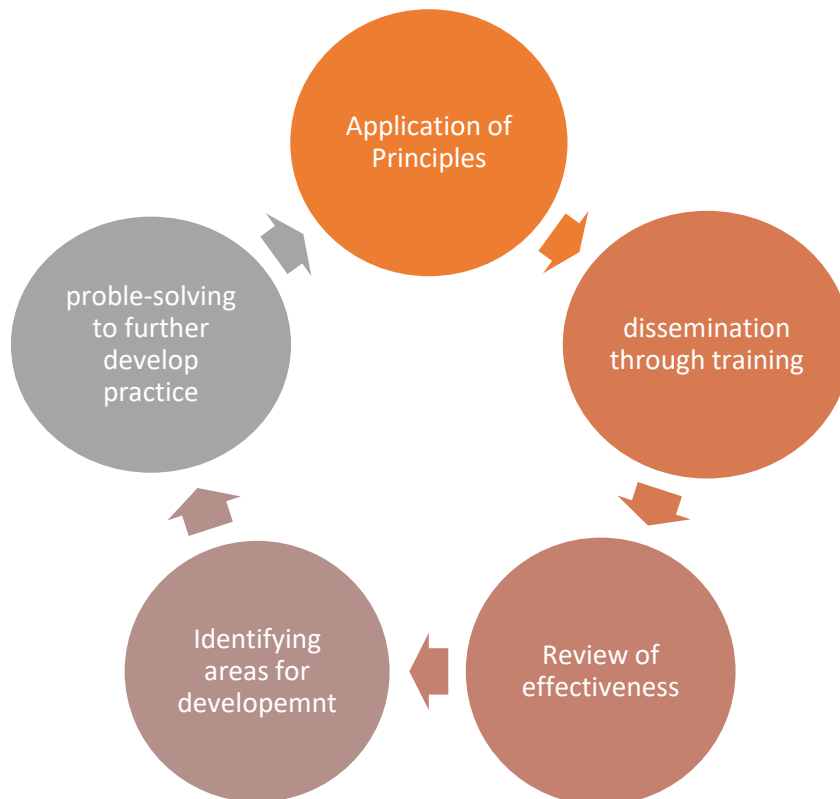


9. Staff well-being

Describe the schools' approach to encouraging self-care, and internal and external staff support systems. Acknowledge the need for support to manage stress and secondary trauma, to avoid staff burnout.

10. Practice and policy review process

School should outline the planned review process and the time frame (e.g. half termly/ annually). How this might look:



How can Wakefield EPS support your school in developing and embedding practice?

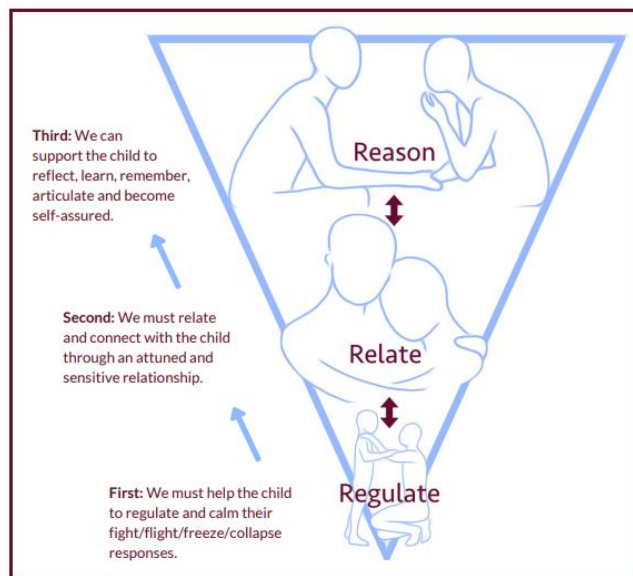
Wakefield EPS can support your school in reviewing your current practices and help you to plan for areas of development. The EPS can develop staff knowledge and understanding to enable implementation of practices across Waves 1 and 2, including whole school training on Emotion Coaching, Staff Wellbeing, PACE, ELSA training and supervision and Nurture Groups. We can facilitate consultation with the Leadership Team and / or whole staff team to assist in the development of a Relational Policy.

Please discuss your thoughts and aspirations on developing and embedding relational practices with your allocated EP to plan next steps for support.

Additional Information

The Neurosequential Model of Support and Intervention

Dr Bruce Perry (Psychiatrist, Clinician and Researcher) has pioneered a sequential approach to understanding how we can support a vulnerable young person to learn, think and reflect. This approach prioritises starting from the 'lowest' part of the brain and providing input and support using a bottom up approach. It promotes using calming stimulus to the brain stem first through the use of repetitive, rhythmic activity such as 'Brain Calmers' (see below). Once an individual is regulated, the presence of an attuned and sensitive relationship is essential in helping them to feel safe before they can engage with support available to reason, reflect on, and develop their skills and emotional resources.



(Image reproduced with thanks from Beaconhouse.org.uk)

For more information on this approach see the resources and links below:

[Brainstem Calmer Activities \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://beaconhouse.org.uk)

[The Three R's \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://beaconhouse.org.uk)

[Repair of Early Trauma \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://beaconhouse.org.uk)

[Stress, Trauma, and the Brain: Insights for Educators--Regulating Yourself and Your Classroom - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Regulate, Relate, Reason \(Sequence of Engagement\): Neurosequential Network Stress & Trauma Series - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Responding with PACE

PACE is an approach to interaction, developed by Dr. Dan Hughes (Clinical Psychologist). Whilst PACE was originally developed as a way of responding to children with experience of trauma, there is now a widespread understanding of the effectiveness of this approach in meeting the relational needs of all children and young people, providing co-regulation through an empathetic and attuned response to emotional arousal and challenge.

For detailed guidance to support implementation:

cavuhb.nhs.wales/files/resilience-project/resilience-project-logo-adjustments/pace-pdf/

Emotion Coaching

Emotion Coaching is a practical, evidence-based, relational approach grounded in neuroscience. It offers a scripted way of utilising the principles of PACE in everyday interactions to improve emotional vocabulary, empathise with the child's experience and set clear boundaries for less desirable behaviours whilst supporting the young person to develop alternatives. Further training can be provided by Wakefield Educational Psychology Service.

[What is Emotion Coaching? \(emotioncoachinguk.com\)](http://www.emotioncoachinguk.com)

FOUR STEPS TO EMOTION COACHING

WAKEFIELD EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

Recognise the
child's feelings
and empathise
with them

"I noticed your fists are clenched and I wonder if you are frustrated;. I am here to help you."

"I think you get angry when that happens. I would feel angry if that happened to me. It's normal to feel that."

Validate their
feelings and
label them

Set limits on
behaviour (if
needed)

"I can understand you're angry that I've taken your phone, but these are the rules everyone must follow. I will keep it safe for you."

"Let's decide what you will do next time you feel like this"

Problem-solve
with the child



Acknowledgements to



References

[Guidance for developing relational practice and policy - Support for schools and settings \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk)

[CYC Trauma Informed Behaviour Policy Guidance November 2019.pdf \(yor-ok.org.uk\)](https://www.yor-ok.org.uk)

[Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk)

"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)

Created by Wakefield Educational Psychology Service

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Key Contacts

Dr Angela Wright (Senior Educational Psychologist): angelawright@wakefield.gov.uk

Dr Lucy Hatton (Educational Psychologist): lhatton@wakefield.gov.uk

