



ST MARY'S CATHOLIC FIRST SCHOOL

ATTACHMENT AWARE RELATIONSHIP POLICY

'Too often we forget that discipline really means to teach, not to punish. A disciple is a student, not a recipient of behavioural consequences.' Dr. Dan J. Siegel

July 2022



Trauma Informed Schools

Attachment Aware Relationship Policy Philosophy and Approach:

Our intention is to provide a framework policy that is helpful to **our school community** and which will align with our current CAST Code of Conduct, our school behaviour policy, processes and practice, and to ensure our 'way of being' is consistent with an attachment aware approach. It supports the idea that every human being has rights, but that with those rights come responsibilities. This policy is one for the **whole school community, pupils, teachers, support staff, parish and parents**. It relates to **how we all** speak to and communicate with each other, adult to adult, adult to child and vice-versa.

This policy promotes certain approaches, e.g. taking a non-judgemental, curious and holistic stance when trying to make sense of behaviour and relationships; ensuring opportunities for reparation. This policy also raises awareness of certain practices that can be emotionally harmful e.g. public shaming - both verbal and non-verbal.

A Whole School Approach to achieve Authentic Inclusion, Positive Relationships & Wholehearted Learning:

A Whole School Approach starts with ethos, creating an inclusive and positive school ethos around relationships is something that must be driven by the Headteacher and school's SLT in order to be endorsed by, and embedded across, the whole school community. Our behaviour choices are guided by the Gospel Values we follow:

Kindness

Peace

Compassion

Justice

Forgiveness

Courage

Integrity

At St Mary's Catholic First School we strongly believe that responding to the Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs of each other (adult and child alike) **is everyone's responsibility**. This complements the characteristics of effective learning which help to build resilient, persevering, creative and considerate learners.

This policy also supports our commitment to Laudato Si (Care for our Common home and environmental and social responsibility) by all members of our community. We aim to listen and live in harmony. Care for nature, society and each precious individual we encounter.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, our Exclusions Policy and our CAST Code of Conduct.

This policy aims to:

- Ensure all our pupils and staff are given the right to learn and work with and alongside each other in a safe, secure and kind environment
- Develop the children's understanding of the value and the need for a code of harmonious living and promote that with all adults associated with our school
- Encourage our children (and adults) to exercise self-discipline and self-regulation and to treat individuals with respect

We are a rights respecting school and believe:

Children and adults have the right...	...and the responsibility
To be protected from conflict, cruelty, exploitation and neglect...	... not to bully or harm each other.
To a clean environment, at home, at school or wherever they are...	... to do what they can to look after their environment.
To be educated...	...to learn as much as they can and help others to learn.
To experience the freedom of thought and religion...	...to respect other people's thoughts and religions.
To be heard...	...to listen to others.
To proper care...	...to take care of themselves.
To be loved and respected...	...to show love and respect to others
To special care for special needs...	...to be the best they can be.
To make mistakes...	...to learn from mistakes.
To be adequately fed...	...not to waste food.
To relax, play and join in a wide range of activities...	...to include everyone in their games and activities.

PROMOTING, REINFORCING and MAINTAINING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Key premises of our approach

- Being 'fair' is not about everyone getting the same (equality) but about **everyone getting what they need (equity)**.
- Behaviour is a form of communication. 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.
- Taking a ***non-judgmental, curious and empathic attitude*** towards behaviour and relationship with each other. We encourage all adults in schools to respond in a way that focuses on the feelings and emotions that *might* drive certain behaviour, rather than the behaviour itself. Children with behavioural difficulties need to be regarded as vulnerable rather than troublesome, and we all have a duty to explore this vulnerability and provide appropriate support.
- ***Putting relationships first***. This requires a ***school ethos that promotes strong relationships between staff, Children and their parents/carers***. It also relies on creating a positive school culture and climate that fosters connection, inclusion, respect and value for ***all*** members of the school community.

- Maintaining **clear boundaries and expectations** around behaviour and relationship. Changing how we respond to behaviour does not mean having no expectations, routines or structure. In order to help everyone feel safe, our educational environment needs to be high in both **nurture and structure**. We need predictable routines, expectations and responses to behaviour.
- Not all behaviours are a matter of 'choice' and not all factors linked to the behaviour of CYP are within their control. Therefore, the language of choice (e.g. 'good choice/bad choice') is not always helpful if a child is in a highly dysregulated state.
- Behaviour must always be viewed systemically and within the context of important relationships (i.e. a relational communication pattern rather than an internal problem).
- **Encouraging parental engagement** and involvement is **absolutely crucial** when addressing and planning support for a child or young person's SEMH needs.

"The parent-child connection is the most powerful mental health intervention known to mankind" (Bessel van der Kolk)

We all agree to recognise our responsibility to support children, their parents/carers, school staff and the wider community, to focus on positive interactions and develop positive relationships that shape behaviour.

Five key dimensions of caregiving are recognised- **availability, sensitivity, acceptance, co-operation and family membership** - that can be associated with a particular development benefit for CYP.

- Another approach that has its roots in Attachment and we will try to apply to everyday interactions (especially with CYP) is summarised by the acronym PACE (Dan Hughes):

PACE/PLACE PLAYFULNESS is about creating an atmosphere of lightness and interest when you communicate; an open, ready, calm, relaxed and engaged attitude.

ACCEPTANCE is about actively communicating to the child that you accept the wishes, feelings, thoughts, urges, motives and perceptions that are underneath the outward behaviour. Unconditionally accepting a child/adult makes them feel secure, safe and loved.

CURIOSITY is wondering about the meaning behind the behaviour/communication for the child. Curiosity lets the child know that the adults understand. Without judgement, children become aware of their inner life.

EMPATHY is the adult demonstrating that he or she knows how difficult an experience is for the child. The adult is telling the child that she will not have to deal with the distress alone. Empathy gives a sense of compassion for the child and their feelings.

More recently, the acronym PLACE has been used, to include a fifth element: **LOVE**. **LOVE** is about creating loving relationships - all of us need love.

Celebrating Positive Behaviour award

Gospel Values Reward, a child in each class is chosen by a member of the staff team to receive this award weekly in each class.

The child receives a certificate and has their photo placed on the “Branches of love” display in our hall.

Characteristics of Effective Learning award, a child in each class is voted for by their peers on a weekly basis to celebrate their commitment, resilience and effort with their learning. The child receives a certificate and their photo is placed on display in their classroom.

Both rewards are celebrated on our school website and both groups of children have a Hot Chocolate celebration with the Head teacher.

Half termly Postcards, these are sent home to celebrate the **Characteristic of Effective Behaviour that the child has displayed in school. All children WILL have at least 3 postcards per school year.**

Final notes:

INCLUSION

We acknowledge our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, and those in respect of safeguarding and supporting pupils with special educational needs. It is recognised that some pupils require a more sensitive and differentiated approach. This may include an Individual Support Plan, for a given period of time.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Plymouth CAST and the Local Governing Body

Are responsible for monitoring this Attachment Aware Relationship Policy’s effectiveness and holding the Head Teacher to account for its implementation.

The Head teacher

The Head teacher is responsible for reviewing and approving this Attachment Aware Relationship Policy.

The Head teacher will ensure that the school environment encourages positive relationships and will monitor how staff implement this policy.

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Working towards Implementing the Attachment Aware Relationship Policy alongside the Positive Pupil Welfare Policy
- Modelling positive behaviour and positive body language
- Providing a personalised approach to the specific behavioural/relational needs of particular pupils
- Following the “Trick Box” script, attached to the back of the lanyard

Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Supporting their child – recognising the five key dimensions of caregiving-
availability, sensitivity, acceptance, co-operation and family membership
- Supporting school staff to work through any areas of difficulty concerning their child
- Inform the school of any changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s behaviour
- Discuss any social, emotional or mental health concerns with the class teacher promptly

Signed: Paula Fearn (Head Teacher)

Date: 13.7.2022

Review date: July 2023