SPRINGFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Relationship Policy (summary version)*

School Vision

"Springfield is a caring, supportive, and innovative school where everyone is recognised and appreciated as an individual. The golden thread running through our vision is the mental health and wellbeing of our school community. By creating a safe, supportive, and relational environment for all, we enable our children to be ambitious and to reach their full potential, so that they can take their place in their community and in the wider world."

**A copy of the full document can be requested from the office.*

At Springfield Community Primary School, we believe that positive relationships are the foundation of successful learning, wellbeing and personal development. This policy summary outlines how we create a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where every child feels valued, respected and understood.

This policy is designed so that teachers* can make their own judgement, based on their cohort, to implement strategies where they feel it is appropriate. There are key elements to this policy that are non-negotiable to provide social, emotional, and mental health development for our children. This policy is in line with up-to-date research which supports a trauma and attachment aware, sensory informed, restorative and relational approach.

* Teachers refers to all staff working with children.

Why is this approach most suitable for our school community?

At Springfield, we have a number of children who have experienced ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) that, in some cases, have led to the child experiencing trauma and/or have a background of attachment needs. In line with research and studies, we use The Relational Approach to support the development of our school community.

The Relational Approach explicitly supports this thinking and will maintain relationships in our community as well as nurturing children's social, emotional and mental health needs: '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.' (Guidance For Developing Relational Practice and Policy. Babcock & Devon County Council.)



At Springfield we are committed to supporting relationships between:

- Parent/carer and child
- Child and child
- Child and LSAs, welfare support, teachers
- Families and LSAs, welfare support, teachers
- LSAs, welfare support, teachers, and senior leaders/governors
- School staff and external agencies

By ensuring relationships are established, nurtured, and embedded, the trust within our school community will allow for all stakeholders to be honest, vulnerable, and open with a safe and secure environment invested in positive wellbeing for all. For all children, it is important that they have sense of security with the adults around them to engage socially, emotionally and to learn. It is crucial that as a school we understand how a child develops and how this impacts on their behaviour.

Behaviour is communication of an unmet need and is a stress response. From further research and training it is important to address the misconception that areas of the brain work against each other and that there is an upstairs and downstairs brain. This is an inaccurate representation of how the brain works.

Creating a Sense of Security

A child's ability to learn is closely linked to their sense of security.

At Springfield we create this through:

- Positive relationships.
- Consistent routines.
- Predictable responses from adults.
- Clear boundaries.
- Emotional literacy.
- Inclusive classroom environments.
- A strong sense of belonging.

We understand that some children may have experienced adversity, trauma, anxiety or difficulties which affect how safe they feel within school. For this reason, our adults focus on connection, consistency and predictability as foundations for learning and behaviour

What are our expectations and responsibilities?

Whole School Expectations

1. Insist on Respect and Show Respect.
2. Choose to Make the Right Choices.
3. Empower Yourself and be a Challenger.

Class expectations

Teachers will start the year creating class expectations and an agreement together with the children. Teachers will link this with the relational approach, thinking about how expectations can be linked to a nurturing and supportive environment whilst also considering how this supports children who are neurodivergent, attachment seeking and/or experiencing trauma. These expectations should be revisited and taught using the Recognition Board or Positive Pathway approach.

Children’s responsibilities

- To move around school safely.
- To follow instructions from an adult to keep us and others safe.
- To treat our equipment, environment, children and adults with respect and care.
- To engage with others politely and respectfully using our manners.
- To engage with co-regulation strategies and reflect upon actions we have taken.
- To be a good role model to others and support our peers.
- To do our very best so that we allow ourselves and others throughout the school day to feel safe and happy.
- To always demonstrate positive behaviour for learning.
- To contribute positively towards everyone’s mental health and physical wellbeing.

Staff Responsibilities

- To operate within statutory guidance
- To be an excellent role model. This includes sharing our emotions and strategies we could use to regulate.
- To form positive relationships with every child.
- To treat all children fairly and with respect.
- To raise children's self-esteem so that they can develop their full potential.
- To fully adopt The Relational Approach and the strategies outlined in this policy.
- All children are to be heard and to be allowed to share their thoughts, feelings and viewpoints of situations that may arise.
- To form good relationships with parents/carers to ensure that everyone works together in the child's best interests.
- To provide a challenging, interesting, and relevant curriculum.
- To create a safe and pleasant environment which embraces Emotional Literacy.
- To recognise that each of us is an individual and that we focus on equity in our school so that all are treated fairly.

Families' responsibilities

- To be an excellent role model in and around school.
- To foster good relationships with the school community.
- To support the school in the implementation of this policy.
- To be aware of the school rules and expectations.
- To make children aware of appropriate behaviour in all situations.
- To demonstrate an interest in all that their child does in school.
- To encourage and support children to regulate, engage and focus whilst at school.

What is behind the behaviours presented?

To help us understand behaviour and provide appropriate support, we use the Six Ds™ framework by TGMC.

Dysregulation

"I can't manage my body."

A child experiencing dysregulation may be overwhelmed by emotions, stress, sensory experiences or perceived threats.

This may present as:

- Shouting
- Running away
- Hiding
- Aggression
- Crying
- Freezing
- Withdrawal
- Increased movement

Support strategies include:

- Co-regulation with a trusted adult.
- Regulation breaks.
- Calm spaces.
- Emotional literacy support.
- Sensory tools.
- Predictable routines.

Disengagement

"I'm not invested."

A child may struggle to engage with learning, the task or the learning environment.

This may present as:

- Daydreaming.
- Task avoidance.
- Lack of participation.
- Off-task behaviours.
- Frequent distractions.

Support strategies include:

- Engaging learning experiences.
- Adaptive teaching.
- Learning pathways.
- Movement opportunities.
- Increased connection with adults.
- Appropriate challenge and support.

Disconnection

"I don't feel safe or understood."

Children require connection and belonging.

When this need is unmet, behaviour may become a way of seeking attention, reassurance or security.

This may present as:

- Following adults.
- Interrupting.
- Repeatedly seeking attention.
- Emotional escalation.
- Difficulty working independently.

Support strategies include:

- Relationship building.
- Regular check-ins.
- Positive greetings.
- Home-school collaboration.
- Opportunities for connection throughout the day.

Development

"I don't know how to do this yet."

Sometimes behaviour occurs because a child lacks the skill required.

This may relate to:

- Emotional regulation.
- Social interaction.
- Organisation.
- Learning behaviours.
- Routines.

Support strategies include:

- Explicit teaching.
- Modelling.
- Practice opportunities.
- Visual support.
- Repetition and reinforcement.
- Emotional literacy teaching.

Disorganisation

"I can't manage the steps."

Executive functioning skills include:

- Organisation.
- Working memory.
- Flexible thinking.
- Time management.
- Inhibitory control.
- Self-regulation.

Children may struggle with:

- Starting tasks.
- Following instructions.
- Managing materials.
- Remembering routines.
- Completing multi-step activities.

Support strategies include:

- Learning pathways.
- Visual timetables.
- Now-next-after boards.
- Checklists.
- Chunked instructions.
- Additional adult support where needed.

Direction

"I don't know what is expected."

Some behaviours occur because expectations or boundaries are unclear.

This may present as:

- Calling out.
- Testing limits.
- Ignoring instructions.
- Repeated mistakes.

Support strategies include:

- Explicit teaching of routines.
- Modelling.
- Consistency.
- Clear expectations.
- Predictable boundaries.
- Calm reminders.

Our Behaviour Support Strategies

Our behaviour support focuses on prevention, support and skill development.

- Key approaches include:
- Building Relationships
- Positive daily greetings.
- Regular check-ins.
- Strong home-school communication.
- Knowing every child well.
- Teaching Routines
- Routines are explicitly taught.
- Expectations are revisited regularly and boundaries are held.
- Consistency is maintained across school.
- Regulation Support

Children may access:

- Movement breaks.
- Sensory tools.
- Calm spaces.
- Co-regulation with adults.
- Individual regulation strategies.
- Emotional Literacy

Children are taught:

- Emotional vocabulary.
- Problem solving.
- Self-awareness.
- Empathy.
- Resilience.
- Restorative Practice

Following incidents, children are supported to:

- Reflect on what happened.
- Consider the impact on others.
- Repair relationships.
- Learn alternative responses for the future.

Neuroinclusive Practice

Springfield is committed to being a neuroinclusive school.

We recognise that children learn, communicate and regulate in different ways.

Elements of our neuroinclusive offer are:

- Flexible seating.
- Visual supports.
- Alternative methods of recording.
- Sensory resources.
- Structured routines.
- Calm spaces.
- Makaton and total communication approaches.
- Emotional check-ins.

Where necessary, additional personalised support will be implemented in collaboration with families and external agencies.

Recognition and Celebration

We believe that positive recognition strengthens relationships and supports self-esteem.

We recognise:

- Effort.
- Resilience.
- Kindness.
- Progress.
- Responsibility.
- Creativity.
- Determination.
- Contribution to the school community.

Recognition may include:

- Verbal feedback.
- Positive communication with families.
- Class celebrations.
- Springfield Showcase
- Opportunities for self-reflection and self-recognition.

- Proud Posts

Suspension

There may be times when school suspends a child for a fixed period. This will only be used for a one-off serious incident or when there have been persistent breaches of the school's Relationship Policy. In this instance, this will come as no surprise to parents/carers as they will have been fully informed of their child's difficulties in regulating and accessing learning. Where a suspension is necessary, the HT will:

- Confirm the length of the suspension.
- The reason for the suspension.
- How to challenge the suspension.
- Ensure learning is provided for the child to complete.

On return to school the child and parent/carers will meet with the Headteacher and the Pastoral Manager to discuss collaboratively a way forward to successfully reintegrate the child with consideration of protecting relationships with families, staff, and children.

Off Site Direction

For any child that is at risk of permanent exclusion, school will consider two preventative measures. The first strategy will be to seek Off-site Direction. This will involve a child attending somewhere off-site (such as another setting) to receive education that is intended to improve their behaviour. This could be a part time or a full-time arrangement for a set period of time. The period of time will be largely dependent upon what best supports the child's needs and potential improvement in behaviour. As such, the child will be dual registered. Regular review meetings will also be conducted, and parents kept updated.

The second strategy that school may use is a Managed Move. A managed move will only be offered as a permanent transfer, and only when the child has been attending the proposed new school under an off-site direction and a review of the direction has established that the child has settled well into the school and should remain there on a permanent basis. As a school this will only be considered if it has been agreed by all parties involved, including parents. Where a child has an EHC plan, the relevant statutory duties on the new school and local authority will apply. As a school if we are contemplating a managed move, we will contact the authority at an early stage. If the local authority, both schools and parents are in agreement that there should indeed be a managed move, the local authority will need to follow the statutory procedures for amending a plan.

Permanent Term Exclusion

As a school the HT may be forced to exclude permanently. This decision will only be taken:

- In response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's relationship policy; and
- Where allowing the child to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the children or staff in the school.

Where a child has an EHC plan, school will contact the local authority about any behavioural concerns at an early stage and consider requesting both involvement from the IEST and an early annual review prior to making the decision to suspend or permanently exclude.

Where a child has a social worker, e.g., because they are the subject of a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan, and they are at risk of a permanent exclusion, school will inform their social worker, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the child's parents to involve them all as early as possible in relevant conversations.

Where a looked-after child (LAC) is likely to be subject to a permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher (DT) will contact the local authority's Virtual School Head (VSH) as soon as possible. The VSH, working with the DT and others, will consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to help school address the factors affecting the child's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion. Where relevant, school will also engage with the child's social worker, foster carers, or children's home workers.

For any permanent exclusion, the school will take reasonable steps to ensure that work is set and marked for a child/children during the first five school days where the child will not be attending alternative provision. Any appropriate referrals to support services or notifying key workers (such as a child's social worker) will also be considered.

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