



## Relationship Policy

*Our school is invested in supporting the very best possible relational health between:*

*Parent and child*

*Child and child*

*Child and school staff*

*Parent and school staff*

*School staff*

*School staff and external agencies*

*Therefore, our school is committed to educational practices which Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect.*

### *Protect*

- Increased 'safety cues' in all aspects of the school day e.g. meet and greet at the school entrance, playground and classroom door.*
- All staff will use modes of interaction that are playful, accepting, curious and empathic. This relational warmth is proven to shift children out of flight/fright/freeze positions.*
- All staff will ensure that interactions with children are socially engaging not socially defensive.*
- A whole school commitment to not using harsh voices, shouting, put-downs, criticisms, shaming.*
- All staff will 'interactively repair' the occasions when they themselves move into defensiveness.*
- All staff will implement interventions to get to know children better on an individual basis.*
- All vulnerable children will have easy access on a daily basis to at least one named emotionally available adult, and these children will know when and where to find the adult. If the child does not wish to connect with this adult, an alternative person will be found.*
- All staff will adjust expectations around vulnerable children to correspond with their developmental capabilities and experience of traumatic stress. This will include removing vulnerable and traumatised children in a kind and non-judgmental way from situations they are not managing well.*

- There will be provision for children of a clear, confidential and non-shaming system of self-referral for help/talk time.
- Staff will be nurtured in such a way that they feel truly valued and emotionally regulated enough to be able to interact throughout the school day with social engagement rather than defensiveness.

### *Relate*

- All school staff will be trained in affect attunement, empathy, soothing and containment.
- There will be a whole school commitment to enabling children to see themselves, their relationships and the world more positively rather than through the lens of threat, danger or self-blame.
- Relational opportunities will be provided for vulnerable children with emotionally available adults at school to enable them to make the shift from 'blocked trust' to trust.

### *Regulate*

- There will be the implementation of interventions designed to bring down stress hormone levels within the school community, enabling everyone to feel calm, soothed and safe.
- Nurturing and regulatory interventions will be used which are designed to support good mental health.
- The emotional wellbeing and regulating of staff will be treated as high priority.

### *Reflect*

- Staff will be educated in the art of good listening, dialogue, empathy and understanding (instead of asking lots of questions).
- There will be the provision of skills and resources to support parents and staff to have meaningful empathic conversations with children about their lives.
- There will be provision of different modes of expression for children e.g. art/play/drama/music/sand play/emotion worksheets.
- Curriculum content will enable children to make informed choices about how they relate to others and how they choose to treat their brains, bodies and minds now and in the future.
- Staff will support children to move from 'behaving' their trauma/painful life experiences, to reflecting on those experiences through empathic conversation.