



# Relationships Policy

St Botolph's Church of England Primary School

Approved by	Governing Body	Date: 6th February 2024
Last reviewed on:	February 2024	
Next review due by:	February 2027	

Relationships are at the heart of everything that takes place in a school, and the quality of our interactions has a major impact on wellbeing and readiness to learn or work. Positive relationships are underpinned by the Christian values of Compassion, Friendship, Truthfulness, Thankfulness, Perseverance and Respect. By following these values and the principles of relational practice, all members of our community can both develop and experience positive interactions throughout their time in school. To ensure that this is the case, St Botolph's is committed to promoting and supporting the best relational interactions between all stakeholders, including:

- Child and school staff
- Child and child
- Parent and child
- Parent and school staff
- Parent and parent
- All school staff
- School staff and senior leadership/governors
- School staff and external agencies

As stated in our Mental Health and Wellbeing Vision, through our practice we aim to Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect (see appendix 1 for further explanation). We will achieve this in the following ways:

## PROTECT

- Staff are trained in and use the principles of PACE during interactions – playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy.
- Safety cues are employed in all aspects of the school day – such as meet and greet in the morning – and staff are aware of the impact and how to increase safety cues if needed.
- Teaching staff regularly create opportunities to get to know their children better as individuals, in order to allow children to feel safe enough to share their difficulties should they wish to.
- Those children who are identified as vulnerable have easy access to at least one emotionally available adult, and know how to access them.
- Staff are flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals, whilst still maintaining the highest expectations for all.
- Staff maintain high levels of self-awareness and are able to identify when they are moving into defensiveness or are unable to be an Emotionally Available Adult (EEA). Staff ensure that interactions with children are not socially defensive, thereby decreasing the likelihood of the child relating defensively e.g. fight/flight/freeze.
- Staff are nurtured, valued and supported to be emotionally regulated, to enable them to interact with others in a positive, relational manner.

## RELATE

- Throughout the school, children are encouraged to see themselves and their relationships with others in a positive light. This is modelled to them by all adults and through all interactions they see.
- Vulnerable children are provided with relational opportunities with emotionally available adults, enabling them to move away from blocked trust to be more able to trust others.

## REGULATE

- The school provides regular opportunities to learn about emotional regulation whilst in a calm state, through practices including Wellbeing Wednesday and at appropriate opportunities throughout the school day. Children are encouraged to explore different methods of regulation and create their own 'toolkit' for times of need. We also teach and utilise our five school wide regulation strategies which ensures that any adult meeting any child in a moment of need has a common language to provide initial support.

- There are designated quiet places throughout school and in the playground, which include visual reminders of regulation techniques and other aids such as sensory toys.
- Vulnerable children can access evidence-based relational interventions with emotionally regulated and available adults to support the reduction of stress levels to a tolerable level. Interventions are chosen that aim to repair brain damage caused by traumatic experiences, through relational, emotionally regulating interactions with adults.
- Staff emotional wellbeing is a priority, and opportunities for staff to regulate (such as a protected space, access to emotionally available adults) are provided in order to prevent stress and burnout. The staff-only spaces in school are designed to encourage regulation and calm.

## REFLECT

- Staff are trained in good listening – dialogue, unconditional positive regard, empathy and understanding - and restorative conversations for those vulnerable children who want to talk about their lives.
- Children are provided with opportunities to process painful experiences with a trusted and emotionally available adult. These opportunities are delivered flexibly and include chances to work through using a range of media, including art, music, drama and play.
- Staff are confident to use these skills to support children to reflect on these experiences, and through empathic conversation can support children to edit inaccurate, negative narratives and create positive ones.
- Children access psychoeducation as a preventative measure to ensure that they have an understanding of their brain and bodies, mental health and mental ill-health, relationships and emotions. It provides them with enough understanding so that they can make informed choices about how they live their lives and how they treat themselves and others.