



TEAM Relational Approach to Behaviour Policy

Date: July 2026

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1. Values, Beliefs and Aims

1.1 Values

- Optimistic: Our schools are places where we are relentlessly positive and hopeful.
- Ambitious: We believe in great things for all.
- Principled: We do what we believe is right.
- Brave: We show courage on behalf of our children and communities.
- Generous: We share without reservation

At TEAM Multi-Academy Trust, our relational approach is rooted in our commitment to ensuring that every child, regardless of their starting point, has the opportunity to thrive and experience life in all its fullness. These values reflect our Trust ethos and our ambition that every pupil should experience joyful, meaningful learning within a caring and connected community, as articulated across TEAM schools and in our strategic vision.

We believe that children thrive when they feel safe, understood and valued, and when relationships form the foundation of every aspect of school life. We are committed to creating learning communities where everyone belongs, everyone is known, and every child has the opportunity to flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

1.2 Beliefs

Drawing on Devon's *'Guidance for Developing Relational Practice'* and current research, our approach is based on the following shared beliefs:

- Relationships are central to learning, well-being and behaviour
- Behaviour can be a form of communication
- Children want to belong, achieve and contribute
- A relational, inclusive approach benefits everyone
- Consistency does not mean sameness
- Children learn through connection, not disconnection
- Adults set the emotional tone
- Inclusion and equity are moral imperatives

1.3 Aims

The purpose of this Relational Approach to Behaviour Policy is to set out a clear, consistent framework for how TEAM Multi-Academy Trust schools understand, promote and respond to behaviour through a relational, inclusive and trauma-informed approach. In line with Devon's *'Guidance for Developing Relational Practice'* and our existing Trust practice, the policy aims to:

- Promote a positive, relational whole-school culture

- Ensure children feel safe, connected and supported
- Provide a consistent, compassionate approach to behaviour
- Support the development of emotional regulation
- Reduce the need for punitive or exclusionary practices
- Establish clear, fair and understood boundaries
- Provide systems for relational repair and restoration
- Ensure inclusion and equity in all behavioural responses
- Strengthen communication and partnership with parents and carers
- Provide clear processes for targeted support and graduated response

2. Theory and Research

This policy is grounded in a substantial body of national and international research. The evidence consistently demonstrates that secure relationships, emotional safety, inclusion and attuned adult responses improve behaviour, learning and long-term outcomes for children. The following principles form the theoretical foundation for our practice:

- Neuroscience, developmental psychology and emotional regulation
- Attachment Theory
- Trauma-informed practices
- Restorative practice
- Current evidence regarding inclusion and belonging

These approaches recognise that children learn and develop best when they experience safety, connection, understanding and care, and when adults respond to behaviour with curiosity, empathy and consistency.

3. Developing Relationships

Developing strong, attuned and trusting relationships is the foundation of all relational practice across TEAM Multi-Academy Trust. Research and local guidance highlight that positive, consistent relationships are the greatest protective factor for children's well-being, engagement and life chances. They create the conditions in which children feel safe, connected, ready to learn, are able to thrive as individuals, build skills and take opportunities

Within TEAM, we recognise that every interaction is an opportunity to strengthen relationships and build a culture of belonging. We intentionally use relational approaches that promote safety, connection and mutual respect.

A secure relationship involves adults providing:

- **Protection:** All children need to feel safe and secure. Our need for safety trumps everything and without a sense of safety and security children cannot explore, play, learn or interact effectively with others. People get their sense of safety primarily from others. All children will need to experience relationships with adults in school who are able to make them feel safe.
- **Connection:** Children need to connect and to socially engage. Being and feeling connected is a right for all children. Children need to feel connected to the adults in school. They also need to feel connected to their peers, their class and school as a whole. Developing a sense of connection and belonging is vital in terms of the development of social skills and understanding, a positive sense of self and agency.
- **Understanding:** Understanding is a key part of a relationship. By understanding we mean being curious about the child and trying to understand what is happening for them and what their behaviour might be telling us about what they need. We also mean showing the child that we accept them, that we are trying to understand and helping them to understand themselves.
- **Care:** Children need to experience a relationship within which they feel special, loved and held in mind. Experiencing adults being interested, caring and showing that they like them and are there for them enables the child to feel good about who they are, worthy of attention and effectively able to form relationships.

3.1. Creating a Safe, Nurturing Climate

Our schools strive to ensure that every child feels welcomed, valued and emotionally safe. Adults are explicitly responsible for setting the tone through warm, predictable and attuned interactions. Staff use Dan Hughes' PACE approach (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) to communicate safety and understanding.

3.2. Knowing Our Children Well

Relationships grow when children feel noticed, understood and valued as individuals. Staff across the Trust make deliberate efforts to get to know each child personally; their interests, strengths, communication styles, cultural background and what helps them feel safe.

3.3. Promoting Trust, Connection and Belonging

Belonging is at the heart of TEAM's ethos. We believe that every child must feel part of a community in which they are known, accepted and cared for.

3.4. Ensuring Inclusion for All Children

We actively support the inclusion of all pupils, including those with SEND, those who have experienced adversity, and those who may require additional relational or regulatory support. We recognise that behaviour can be communication and that some children need higher levels of nurture, structure, support and relational safety.

3.5. Building Emotional Literacy and Wellbeing

Relational schools help children understand their emotions and build strong social and emotional foundations.

3.6. Clear, Compassionate Boundaries

Relational practice includes clear, consistent boundaries that help children feel safe. Boundaries are communicated calmly, kindly and predictably. Staff help children understand both expectations and the reasons behind them, without shaming or punitive responses.

Staff will use their professional judgement to provide timely reminders of behaviour expectations and to support children in making positive choices. Where appropriate, this may include a short period of time in another classroom, or using part of a break or lunchtime to reflect, regulate and reset. These approaches will always be used purposefully, proportionately and with the child's best interests in mind, supporting learning, relationships and personal responsibility. They will never be used as a punitive measure, but as an opportunity for reflection, restoration and successful reintegration into the school community.

3.7. Working in Partnership with Families

Relationships with families are a vital part of developing relationships with children. We welcome parents and carers as partners, maintaining open communication, celebrating successes, and sharing concerns with empathy and respect.

4. Responding & Calming

Our approach to responding to behaviour is grounded in the understanding that children's emotional states drive their actions. When a child is dysregulated, distressed or overwhelmed, our responsibility is to support them to feel safe, regain control and return to a place of calm connection. Responses must not escalate stress, shame or fear, but instead promote regulation, dignity and relational safety.

Across TEAM Multi-Academy Trust, adults respond to children with compassion, curiosity and consistency, modelling the calm they wish the child to find. Our aim is always to protect, connect, understand and care, ensuring children feel emotionally held throughout difficulty.

4.1. Creating Emotionally Safe, Predictable Learning Environments

Predictability helps children feel safe, reduces uncertainty and supports self-regulation. Staff establish and sustain:

- **Consistent daily routines**, communicated clearly and reinforced visually where helpful
- **Calm, organised learning environments** that minimise sensory overload
- **Clear, co-constructed expectations** taught explicitly and revisited regularly
- **Warm, positive starts to each day**, with staff greeting each child personally on arrival
- **Promote positive relationships and appropriate behaviour**, through explicit teaching, clear expectations and consistent adult modelling.

4.2. Adult Regulation: Setting the Emotional Tone

Children rely on emotionally available adults who can remain calm, attuned and steady. Adults across the Trust commit to:

- Maintaining an even tone and supportive body language
- Keeping instructions short, simple and grounded
- Regulating their own emotions before responding
- Using PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) to reduce threat and increase connection
- Providing reassurance while avoiding over-talking or escalating emotional intensity

4.3. Co-Regulation: Supporting Children to Regulate

Adults guide children back to a regulated state by offering calm presence, connection and emotional containment. This includes:

- Acknowledging and naming emotions (“I can see you’re feeling really overwhelmed right now”)
- Using slow, quiet, predictable speech
- Maintaining an open, supportive stance
- Providing reassurance through relational proximity (not crowding)
- Offering simple choices or safety signals
- Supporting movement to a safe space if helpful, always accompanied by or near an emotionally available adult

4.4. Responding to Dysregulation

When children experience distress or dysregulation, are unable to control their behaviour or at risk of harm adults prioritise safety while minimising trauma and shame. Adults will:

- Protect all children present through calm, clear direction
- Keep their own behaviour low-arousal
- Avoid raised voices, threats or punitive consequences

- Offer simple, compassionate statements of understanding (“You’re not in trouble—you’re overwhelmed, and I’m here to help you stay safe”)
- Remove the child from the space only when essential for safety, never as a punishment
- Ensure the child is accompanied by an emotionally available adult who can help them regulate
- Reassure other children, offering calm and containing language

Where risk cannot be managed through relational approaches alone, a Relational Support Plan or Co-Regulation Plan will be created to support consistent, individualised strategies. (Appendix 1 & 2) It may also be appropriate to implement an Individual Risk Assessment (Appendix 5) to reduce the risk of harm.

4.5. Maintaining Clear, Compassionate Boundaries

Relational classrooms combine warmth with clarity. Staff:

- Teach expectations explicitly rather than assuming knowledge
- Keep boundaries consistent and predictable
- Explain the purpose of rules in terms of safety, rights and community
- Avoid punitive responses, public corrections or shame-based strategies
- Use calm, private redirection when behaviour needs to change
- Reinforce belonging even during moments of difficulty (“You’re safe. I’m here. Let’s sort this together.”)

5. Restoring and Repairing

At TEAM Multi-Academy Trust, we recognise that even within a strong relational culture, mistakes, conflict and harm are a natural part of school life. Restorative and reparative processes are therefore essential for helping children learn from difficulty, rebuild relationships, and remain connected to their school community.

This section sets out how staff will support children after incidents to understand feelings, repair harm and restore relationships, ensuring that every child is reintegrated with dignity, compassion and belonging.

5.1. Everyday Restorative Interactions

Restorative practice is not reserved for serious incidents; instead, it is embedded daily in our conversations, classroom routines and relationships to prevent escalation and strengthen community.

These informal conversations are supported by the relational skills of safety-giving, attunement, validation, curiosity and soothing, as outlined in the Devon model of co-regulation. (Appendix 3)

Examples include:

- checking in with children to understand worries or frustrations
- noticing and naming emotions using calm, attuned language
- coaching children to repair small ruptures (“How might we fix this together?”)
- using circle time, class meetings and PSHE to practise listening, turn-taking and problem-solving.

5.2. The Restorative Exploration Process

Following incidents of conflict, harm or distressed behaviour, once the child is calm and regulated, staff use a structured Restorative Exploration to facilitate understanding, accountability and change. This framework is drawn directly from the Devon Restorative Guidance. (Appendix 4)

This framework is adapted, simplified or supported with visual symbols as necessary to suit those with SEND, particularly those with speech, language and communication needs. This is to ensure they are able to understand the questions being asked and express themselves using alternative methods if necessary.

6. Working in Relationship Together

Strong, respectful and collaborative relationships between children, families, staff and external professionals are essential to an effective relational approach. This section sets out how we will listen to children, work in partnership with parents and carers, and collaborate with external agencies to ensure every child receives the relational, emotional and educational support they need.

6.1. Listening to the Child

Children’s voices are central to relational practice. It is essential that children feel respected, valued and listened to, and ongoing, purposeful dialogue with trusted adults is important for emotional well-being and effective support.

Our commitments to children:

- We listen with curiosity, empathy and respect.
- We ensure children feel emotionally safe to share their views.
- We use developmentally appropriate approaches.
- We recognise that some children cannot articulate needs directly.
- We involve children meaningfully in their own support.
- We provide trusted adults for regular, predictable check-ins.

6.2. Working with Families

Parents and carers are valued as partners in relational support. Their knowledge and perspective are essential in understanding the child's experiences, needs and context. Trusting, open relationships with families, are important and the active involvement of parents at every stage of a graduated approach is essential.

How we work with parents following incidents:

- Staff make contact on the same day wherever possible for incidents requiring restorative follow-up.
- Conversations focus on support, safety and understanding, not blame.
- Parents are invited to contribute to understanding triggers, regulation needs and next steps.

6.3. Working with External Agencies

Some children require additional expertise or support beyond what school can provide. Relational Practice includes recognising when a child needs multidisciplinary input and working collaboratively with external professionals to meet relational, emotional, learning and mental health needs. Educational Psychologists, Inclusion Partners, CAMHS, Speech & Language Therapists, Family Intervention Team Workers and others are key partners in deepening assessment, planning and intervention.

7. Supporting Staff Wellbeing and Professional Development

A relational approach can only thrive when the adults who care for children feel valued, supported, listened to and professionally equipped. Staff wellbeing and professional growth are integral to sustaining safe, attuned and consistent relational practice. This section outlines how TEAM Multi-Academy Trust commits to supporting all staff, teaching and non-teaching, so that they can, in turn, support children effectively.

7.1. Staff Well-Being

We recognise that relational work is emotionally demanding. Staff wellbeing is essential for sustaining the warm, attuned and regulated adult presence that children require. Workplace stress can be linked to lack of agency, lack of voice and insufficient emotional support, and we recognise that adults need relational support just as children do. Staff wellbeing is viewed as a collective responsibility of all leaders across the Trust.

Our commitment to staff wellbeing includes:

- Creating a culture of belonging and respect
- Ensuring staff feel safe and supported
- Prioritising manageable workloads and clear expectations

- Providing regular opportunities for connection
- Recognising signs of secondary stress or “empathy fatigue” that can arise from supporting highly vulnerable or dysregulated children, and offering support accordingly.

7.2. Continued Professional Development (CPD)

High-quality relational practice requires shared understanding, shared language and skilled application. Therefore, whole-school training, ongoing professional development, induction for new staff and opportunities to deepen knowledge over time are important.

Our approach to CPD includes:

- Induction training in relational, regulatory and restorative practice for all new staff, including support staff, MTAs, office staff and leaders.
- Regular whole-staff training on attachment, trauma, neuroscience, PACE, emotional regulation, restorative approaches and relational pedagogy.
- Specialist training for key adults supporting children with high levels of need, including co-regulation planning, restorative facilitation and safe, relational approaches to crisis management.
- Opportunities to learn from external experts, including Educational Psychologists, Inclusion Partners and Speech and Language specialists.
- Ongoing professional dialogue, with relational approaches embedded into staff meetings, briefings and professional learning communities.

7.3. Reflection, Supervision, Coaching and Mentoring

Relational practice requires adults to think deeply about their own emotional responses, attunement and interactions with children. Therefore, it is recommended that schools plan regular protected time for facilitated reflection, supervision and coaching to sustain effective relational work.

7.4. Ensuring Staff Have Their Voice Heard

Relational cultures thrive when staff feel they can influence practice and contribute their insights. At TEAM Multi-Academy Trust, we recognise the importance of respectful relationships within the workplace, systems for capturing staff voice, and opportunities for shared decision-making, all of which promote agency and reduce workplace stress.

8. A Graduated Approach

TEAM Multi-Academy Trust is committed to early identification, timely intervention and coordinated support for children whose relational, social, emotional or behavioural needs require more than universal provision. Consistent with the SEND Code of Practice, the Trust’s SEND Policy, and Devon’s expectations for Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision (OAIP), we

follow a clear graduated approach to ensure that children receive the right support at the right time.

This graduated approach is underpinned by the Assess – Plan – Do – Review (APDR) cycle and is fully aligned with the relational, regulatory and restorative practices described in the *Devon Guidance for Developing Relational Practice*.

8.1. Principles of the Graduated Approach

The graduated approach is:

- **Child-centred:** focusing on the child's lived experience, voice and relational needs.
- **Holistic:** integrating relational, social, emotional, cognitive, communication and sensory needs.
- **Collaborative:** involving class staff, parents/carers, SENDCos, external professionals and the child.
- **Strengths-based:** recognising and building upon the child's strengths, interests and capabilities.
- **Preventative:** aiming to reduce escalation, distress and the need for exclusion.

The graduated approach is used not only for children with SEND but for all pupils who may require additional relational or regulatory support.

8.2. Assess

Assessment begins with curiosity: What is the child's behaviour communicating? What unmet needs may be present? We also need to assess the child's relational needs, emotional regulation, communication/language needs and learning needs, recognising these as common underlying contributors to distressed behaviour.

8.3. Plan

Following assessment, staff, along with parents, the child and relevant professionals, agree a small number of clear, achievable and meaningful outcomes.

Planning should include a dual focus:

1. **Removing barriers** that block access to learning or social inclusion.
2. **Developing skills** in identified areas of difficulty (e.g., emotional literacy, executive functioning, social communication).

Planning could involve:

- A **Relational Support Plan** setting out how the child's needs will be met through Protection, Connection, Understanding and Care. (Appendix 1)

- A **Co-Regulation Plan** describing how adults will respond to the child across states of regulation (calm → stress → dysregulation → crisis). (Appendix 2)
- Clear identification of the key adults supporting the child.
- Agreement of strategies to be used consistently across the day (relational, regulatory, sensory, environmental, communication-based).
- Consideration of adjustments to the curriculum, timetable, routines or environment, in line with OAIP expectations for ordinarily available provision in mainstream settings.
- Arranging additional interventions where appropriate (e.g., emotional literacy groups, mentoring, social skills support).

8.4. Do

This stage involves implementing the plan consistently and relationally. Change occurs through everyday interactions, relational safety, co-regulation, predictable routines and attuned responses.

8.5. Review

The review stage ensures that support remains responsive and effective. The APDR cycle should be ongoing, reflective and collaborative, analysing both progress and unmet needs.

A review will:

- Celebrate successes and identify what is working well.
- Reflect on what needs to change or be intensified.
- Reconsider assessment information in light of new learning.
- Update outcomes and strategies in the Relational Support Plan or Co-Regulation Plan.
- Include the child's voice and parental perspective.
- Determine if external professional involvement is required (e.g., EP, CAMHS, SEMH advisory teachers).

9. Special and Exceptional Circumstances

While our relational, preventative and inclusive framework meets the needs of the vast majority of pupils, we recognise that a very small number of children may, at times, require additional, adapted or exceptional arrangements to ensure their safety, the safety of others, and their continued engagement in education. This section sets out the processes the Trust follows when needs escalate beyond ordinarily available provision, including the use of part-time timetables, alternative provision, or, in rare cases, a move to a more specialist setting. It also outlines the relationship between this policy and the Trust's Suspension & Exclusion Policy.

These processes reflect the expectations detailed in the Devon *Guidance for Developing Relational Practice* and reinforce the principle that children must remain connected to supportive adults and learning wherever possible

9.1. Guiding Principles

The following principles underpin all decisions made in exceptional circumstances:

- **Safety is paramount.** Where a child's behaviour means they or others are unsafe, immediate action must be taken to reduce risk.
- **Belonging must be preserved.** Even where provision changes, children must remain held in mind and connected to their school relationships.
- **Fixed-term Suspension and Permanent Exclusion are a last resort.** In line with the Department for Education's Suspension and Exclusion Guidance, fixed-term suspensions and permanent exclusions should be rare, used only when all other approaches have been exhausted or when there is a serious and immediate risk.
- **Responses must remain relational, restorative and non-shaming.**
- **Decision-making must be collaborative** and involve parents/carers, the child, the SENDCo, senior leaders and relevant external agencies.

9.2. Part-Time Timetables

A part-time timetable may be considered only in exceptional circumstances and never as a long-term solution. It must be:

- **Carefully planned**, time-limited and reviewed frequently.
- **Used for therapeutic, regulatory or reintegration purposes**, not as a sanction.
- **Developed in partnership with parents/carers**, with the child's voice sought and included.
- **Aligned with Devon's statutory expectations**, which require part-time timetables to be exceptional, purposeful and subject to a clear plan for increasing time in school.

Modified timetables should only be used when the usual curriculum creates too much stress or dysregulation, and when children require opportunities for targeted emotional, relational or regulatory work before fully re-engaging.

9.3. Alternative Provision (AP)

In some cases, children may require short-term or part-time access to alternative provision to meet needs that cannot be met solely through the mainstream environment.

Alternative provision may be used to:

- Provide additional support for emotional regulation.
- Offer therapeutic or specialised interventions.
- Reduce stress associated with large or busy environments.
- Build confidence and relational safety before reintegration.

9.4. Moving to a More Specialist Setting

A very small number of children may require a move to a school with more specialist provision. This is considered only when:

- The child's needs cannot be met safely or effectively within mainstream school despite sustained, high-quality, relational intervention,
- Extensive graduated response cycles have been completed and reviewed,
- External agencies have been consulted, and
- It is felt that a specialist setting is more able to meet the child's needs, rather than offering a 'fresh start'—which research shows is often counter to what children with relational needs require.

9.5. When Behaviour Becomes Dangerous or Extreme

In rare situations where behaviour escalates to a level that poses immediate danger to the child, staff or other pupils, staff must follow:

- The school's risk assessment (Appendix 5) and crisis management procedures
- The child's Regulation and/or Co-Regulation Plan, where one exists
- The Trust's Suspension & Exclusion Policy (for both fixed-term suspensions and permanent exclusions)

Dangerous behaviour will still be responded to calmly and in a trauma-informed manner, prioritising de-escalation.

Physical restraint is used only as a last resort when failing to act would result in harm.

Fixed-term suspensions and permanent exclusion may be used only when serious or persistent breaches of behaviour expectations place others at risk, or when all other attempts to support the child have been exhausted.

In some circumstances, where mitigating factors have been identified or where the school believes that a fixed-term suspension can be avoided whilst still addressing the seriousness of the behaviour, an internal suspension may be considered. An internal suspension is a temporary period of removal from the child's usual class and peer group, during which they will complete their learning in a designated supervised area of the school. This approach provides an opportunity for reflection, regulation and restoration while ensuring that there remains a clear consequence for behaviour that has breached the school's expectations. Parents and carers will always be informed when an internal suspension is used, including the reasons for the decision and the arrangements put in place. All internal suspensions will be recorded on the school's Management Information System (MIS) and monitored by school leaders to ensure that they are used fairly, consistently and proportionately.

9.6. Reintegration After Exceptional Arrangements

Whether a child has been on a reduced timetable, in alternative provision or has experienced a fixed-term suspension, reintegration must:

- Be carefully planned, relational and welcoming.
- Involve a reconnection meeting with a trusted adult.
- Include clear, supportive adjustments and monitoring.
- Reinforce belonging (“You are welcome here, and we are here to help you succeed”).

Please see Section 9 of the Trust’s Suspension & Exclusion Policy for more details.

10. Links to Other Policies and Documents

This policy links to the following policies and documents:

- Devon County Council’s *‘Guidance for Developing Relational Practice and Policy’*
[Guidance for developing relational practice and policy - Support for schools and settings](#)
- TEAM Multi-Academy Trust SEND Policy
- TEAM Multi-Academy Trust Suspension & Exclusion Policy
- TEAM Multi-Academy Trust Physical Contact & Restraint Policy
- TEAM Multi-Academy Trust Parent & Carer Code of Conduct
- Devon County Council’s *‘Reduced Timetable Guidance for Schools’*
[Reduced timetable guidance for schools in Devon - Support for schools and settings](#)
- Devon County Council’s *‘Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision’* Framework
[Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision - Support for schools and settings](#)
- Devon County Council’s *‘Ordinarily Available Targeted Support’* Framework
[Devon’s Ordinarily Available Targeted Support Framework for schools - Support for schools and settings](#)

Appendix 1: Relational Support Plan

A Relational Support Plan

Name of Pupil:	
School:	Date:

Consider the key prompts for discussion and note down actions under the 4 headings: Protection, Connection, Understanding and Care.

The significant adult/adults – Team around the child
Who is best placed to be the significant adult/adults? Who will be part of the wider team of adults supporting the child? Does the child need someone to be available to the throughout the day? It is helpful for the team to be composed of adults from each tier of the school organisation. Parents/ carers can also be part of the team.

Strengths/Qualities/Interests/Resources
What are the child's strengths, skills and qualities? What are the child's coping strategies and signs of resilience? What does the child enjoy and what interests them? When are they at their best? What helps them? When have they been successful in the past and what is working well now?

Protection	
This explains the need for safety and security. Some children may not automatically feel safe. They can find school threatening and require relationships, support and structure to develop feelings of security and safety, which are essential to effective learning and behaviour.	
Key Question Prompts: How will the child be helped to feel safe by the significant adults? What safety cues will be helpful? How will other adults in the team help the child to feel safe? How will you support the child to develop trust? How will predictable and reliable support be provided? Are there times in the day when the child feels particularly unsafe: beginnings, endings, transition? How can these times be managed? How can the environment be adapted to help the child feel safe? How can the day be structured to help the child feel safe? What does the child need to know in order to feel safe? How will this be communicated so that the child understands?	Actions:

Connection

Meaningful connections with others promote feelings of safety, trust and belonging. Experiences of connection are important in developing the cortex and higher level thinking. For some children there is a need for a high level of connection within school.

Key Question prompts:

How will the significant adults provide meaningful connection with the child?

What needs to happen to ensure that the child experiences attuned and responsive connection?

How will other adults in the team connect with the child?

How will the development of positive peer relationships be promoted?

What activities may help the child to develop their sense of belonging in school?

Actions:

Understanding

Children need adults to understand them and communicate this understanding in an empathetic way, whilst also maintaining clear rules, boundaries and expectations. Understanding and co-regulation from an adult will support children to develop their ability to regulate themselves.

Key Question prompts:

What does the child's behaviour tell us about how they are feeling?

What is our understanding of the child's feelings?

If the student is finding something hard or displaying challenging behaviour, how will adults respond and show understanding?

How will the child be co-regulated and calmed?

What empathic responses might be helpful?

How will the understanding of other adults in school be supported / developed? How will they respond to incidents?

Does the child need a responsive co-regulation plan?

What will happen to ensure that relationships are repaired?

Actions:

Care

Some children will need adults in school to be particularly mindful of providing a high level of care. This includes meeting the child's basic needs, enabling them to experience comfort and joy and showing them that they are liked.

Key Question prompts:

Does the child have unmet needs in terms of basic care? If so how can these be addressed?

How will adults communicate care to the child/young person?

How will the child know that they are liked?

What activities may foster shared enjoyment?

How can we ensure the child knows they are being held in mind?

How will the child be soothed?

Actions:

Supporting Inclusion

Are there difficulties that are blocking the child's access to learning or social inclusion? What skills are we going to support the child to develop in their areas of need? How are we going to support access and inclusion?

Prompts:

Control-related - e.g. accepting an adult lead, co-operative working, turn-taking, requesting help.

Social skills - e.g. explicit teaching of listening skills, eye-contact, starting conversations, proximity.

Identity-based - e.g. ability to take risks in learning, accept challenges, make mistakes.

Self-regulation and sensory regulation - e.g. emotional literacy, self-soothing, managing sensory input.

Behaviours for learning - e.g. Planning, organisation, managing transitions.

Literacy skills - e.g. developing phonic skills, reading comprehension, recording skills.

Language skills - e.g. understanding instructions, expressing opinions.

Communication and Interaction - e.g. Understanding social situations.

Building on strengths - How can we enable the pupil to build on their strengths?

Actions:

Appendix 2: Co-Regulation Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

My regulating adults are:

(Remember support staff, cover and break times.)

Stage of Regulation	Potential Displayed Behaviour(s)	How the adults need to “Be” Protection, Connection, Understanding and Care	
		Verbal	Non-verbal
<i>Adult as detective, modelling for child</i>	<i>What does this look/ sound like.</i>	<i>What are you going to say at each stage to support?</i>	<i>What will you be doing at each stage to support?</i>
5 Crisis Unsafe			
4 Dysregulated Mobilised / Immobilised			
3 Mild Stress Alert / Aroused / Agitated			
2 OK Distracted / Disengaged			
1 Calm Safe / Socially engaged			

Appendix 3: Co-Regulation Model

De-escalation and calming through Co-regulation

Attunement, validation, containment and soothing are the central skills needed when supporting children to regulate their feelings and behaviour. Margot Sunderland describes how together these skills enable the child to experience co-regulation. Repeated co-regulation with an adult supports the child's ability to self-regulate through an integration and understanding of physical sensations, emotions, and higher-level thinking.

Attunement. Meeting the child's emotional intensity (positive / negative) on an energetic level, so as to connect with the child in their pain or their joy, reflecting the same emotional energy. The child will experience this as connection with the other. It will help them to understand how they feel and will show them that you 'get it'.

Accepting and validating. Validating how the child is experiencing the event, even if it is very different to how you are experiencing it. Not trying to persuade the child out of having the feelings they are experiencing, rather affirming, understanding and recognising that the child is feeling what they are feeling. Not just empathy, but finding the right words/ language of feeling/ tone of voice to convey that empathy. Accepting and validating can help to stop unhelpful behaviour as when the child understands that you understand their behaviour and that their feelings are accepted and valid so there is not a need to go on showing the feelings through behaviour.

Containment of feelings. Being able to stay thinking and feeling about a child's intense feelings (e.g. rage, power plays, anxiety, distress) without deflecting into your emotional response or action. At times this will mean being able to bear their unbearable pain – being a container for it. Containment is also achieved through clear structures, boundaries and clear and understandable consequences, which are explained and understood.

Soothing. Soothing and calming the child's emotionally dysregulated states. Soothing in conjunction with addressing the other relational needs above, can develop stress regulating systems in the brain which control the body's defence pathways. Some children spend the majority of their time in a stressed state. We need to soothe them in order to calm their defence pathways. This will make it less likely that their defence pathway will trigger and also more likely that they will be able to self soothe when they are feeling stressed.

Appendix 4: Restorative Approaches Exploration

The Restorative Approaches Exploration

This conversation is an opportunity to enable the child to learn about themselves and others after an incident has occurred. It is helpful to communicate explicit safety cues and have the PLACE framework at the forefront of your mind at any stage of this process. The more the process feels like a collaborative conversation and curious exploration that the child is able to reflect and contribute to, the more they will be able to learn from the experience.

What happened?

Allow the child 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.
- Soothing. Using soothing (not cross) tones.

What were you thinking and how were you feeling?

Some children will 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 experiences 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 child need in order to move forward?:

- 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.

Appendix 5: Individual Risk Assessment

	School Name:		Challenging Behaviour – Individual Risk Assessment	
	Pupil Name:	Year group:	Class name:	
Additional needs or vulnerabilities:			Date of assessment:	
	✓ or X		✓ or X	
SEND		Safeguarding		Date to be reviewed:
EAL		Trauma		
PP/PP+		Other		Assessor(s) :
Other:				

Further details of behaviours and strategies used can be found in this child's Relational Behaviour Plan/Co-regulation Plan.

BEHAVIOUR Choose 1	RISK	ASSESSMENT OF RISK	RISK REDUCTION
Verbal Aggression	What risk does the behaviour pose?	Where:	Actions to pre-empt and prevent:
Physical Aggression		When:	
	Who is affected?	Why:	Early intervention actions:
Destructiveness		Likelihood of occurrence (1-3):	
		Likely seriousness (1-3):	Reactive interventions to manage risk:
		Overall risk (1-9):	

BEHAVIOUR Choose 1	RISK	ASSESSMENT OF RISK	RISK REDUCTION
Verbal Aggression	What risk does the behaviour pose?	Where:	Actions to pre-empt and prevent:
Physical Aggression		When:	
	Who is affected?	Why:	Early intervention actions:
Destructiveness		Likelihood of occurrence (1-3):	
		Likely seriousness (1-3):	Reactive interventions to manage risk:
		Overall risk (1-9):	

BEHAVIOUR Choose 1	RISK	ASSESSMENT OF RISK	RISK REDUCTION
Verbal Aggression	What risk does the behaviour pose?	Where:	Actions to pre-empt and prevent:
Physical Aggression		When:	
	Who is affected?	Why:	Early intervention actions:
Destructiveness		Likelihood of occurrence (1-3):	
		Likely seriousness (1-3):	Reactive interventions to manage risk:
		Overall risk (1-9):	

Risk Descriptors

Likelihood (L)		Seriousness (S)	
1	LOW: The behaviour is unlikely to occur and has been observed rarely or only in exceptional circumstances.	1	LOW: Behaviour may cause minor disruption, distress, or low-level harm to the child, peers, staff, or property. Any injury would be minor and not require medical treatment.
2	MEDIUM: The behaviour may occur and has been observed on occasions or in response to identifiable triggers.	2	MEDIUM: Behaviour may result in significant disruption, emotional distress, damage to property, or injury requiring first aid and/or external medical assessment.
3	HIGH: The behaviour is likely to occur and happens frequently, consistently, or in response to common situations.	3	HIGH: Behaviour presents a significant risk of serious injury to the child or others, serious property damage, or actions that could result in life-changing injury, long-term harm, or a safeguarding concern.

Risk Matrix

Likelihood (L)	3	3	6	9
	2	2	4	6
	1	1	2	3
	1	2	3	
	Seriousness (S)			

Use the descriptors above to help assess the level of Likelihood (1-3) and Seriousness (1-3). Multiply the two elements together to identify the overall Risk (1-9). For example:

Likelihood 2 x Severity 3 = Risk 6

Once the risk level is identified, use the follow up response table below as a guide for what to do next.

Follow Up Response

1	No additional action required beyond usual classroom practice.
2	Continue activities using existing support strategies and agreed safe working practices.
3	Monitor closely and ensure consistent implementation of agreed support and risk-reduction measures.
4	Review and strengthen support strategies within a reasonable timeframe. Consider whether additional interventions or staff guidance are required.
6	Immediate action required to reduce risk. Review the risk assessment, support plan and staffing arrangements. Inform relevant leaders and parents/carers as appropriate.
9	Cease the activity or situation where safe to do so and implement immediate risk-reduction measures. Senior leaders must review the provision and determine any additional safeguards required before the activity resumes.

