



Transforming
Futures
TRUST



Relationships Policy

Policy Information	
Policy Owner	Headteacher
Issue Version	1.0
Approving Committee	Safeguarding & Wellbeing Committee
Adopted Date	June 2021
Review Cycle	Annual
Last Review Date	March 2023
Next Review Date	March 2024

Adoption of the Policy

This Policy has been adopted and reviewed by the Trustees of Transforming Futures Trust

Signed
(Chair of Trust)

Date: 01.07.21

1. Introduction

1.1 Courtlands Schools is invested in supporting the very best possible relational health between:

- i. Parent and child.
- ii. Child and child.
- iii. Child and school staff.
- iv. Parent and school staff.
- v. School staff.
- vi. School staff and senior leads.
- vii. School staff and external agencies.

1.2 To this end, our school is committed to educational practices which **Protect, Relate, Regulate** and **Reflect**.

2. Protect

2.1 Increased 'safety cues' in all aspects of the school day, e.g., meet and greet at the school entrance.

2.2 School staff trained in PACE modes of interaction (Hughes 2015); being warm, empathic, playful, and curious (proven to shift children out of flight/ fight/freeze/ defensive rage positions).

2.3 School staff to ensure that interactions with children are socially engaging not socially defensive, to decrease the chances of children relating defensively (flight/ fight/freeze/defensive rage).

2.4 A whole school commitment to cease using harsh voices, shouting, put downs, criticisms, shaming (proven to be damaging psychologically and neurologically).

2.5 School staff will 'interactively repair' the occasions when they themselves move into defensiveness.

2.6 Commitment to interventions and interactions which help staff to get to know children deeply on an individual basis. This is key to enabling children to feel safe enough to want to talk, if they so wish, about painful life experiences, which are interfering with their ability to learn and quality of life. Examples include regular 'I wish my teacher knew' activities, emotional support plans, sensory support plans and the starting point that all behaviour is communication.

2.7 All vulnerable children to have easy access daily to at least one emotionally available adult and these children know how and when to access that adult.

2.8 School staff adjusting expectations around vulnerable children to correspond with their developmental capabilities, emotional not chronological age, SEN's and experience of traumatic stress. This will include removing vulnerable children in a kind and non-judgemental way from situations they are not managing well. (e.g., lunch clubs for children who keep triggering into alarm states in the main playground).

2.9 Provision for children of a clear, confidential, and non-shaming system of self-referral for talk/help time.

2.10 The nurturing of school staff in such a way that feel truly valued and emotional regulated enough to be able to interact throughout the school day with social engagement rather than social defensiveness and provision for self-regulation breaks and 'swap outs' when needed.

3. Relate

3.1 All school staff trained and competent at using emotional coaching strategies; being aware of emotions; connecting with the child; listening to the child; naming emotions; encouraging problem solving skills through natural and logical consequences.

3.2 A whole school commitment to enabling children to see themselves, their relationships, and the words more positively, rather than through a lens of threat, danger, or self-blame.

3.3 Relational opportunities for vulnerable child with emotionally available adults at school to enable them to make the shift from 'blocked trust' to trust and from self-help to help-seeking.

4. Regulate

4.1 The implementation of interventions designed to bring down stress hormone levels from toxic to tolerable in vulnerable children, enabling them to feel calm, soothed, and safe. This is to support learning, quality of life and to protect against induced physical and mental illness now and in later life.

4.2 Evidence-based nurturing and regulatory intervention that aim to repair psychological damage and brain damage caused by traumatic life experiences, through emotionally regulating and playful, enriched adult-child interactions.

4.3 The emotional wellbeing and regulation of staff is treated as a high priority to prevent burn out, stress related absence, secondary trauma and /or feeling undervalued, shamed, or blamed.

4.4 Designated staff only spaces, which are specifically designed to support the release of natural anti-stress, pro-social neuro chemicals.

5. Reflect

5.1 Staff educated in the art of good listening, dialogue, empathy and understanding (instead of asking lots of questions/giving lectures).

5.2 The provision of skills and resources to support parents and staff to have meaningful empathic conversations with vulnerable children who want to talk about their lives to empower children to better manage their home situations in general.

5.3 Within the context of an established and trusted relationship with a member of staff, children are to be provided with the means to symbolise painful life-experiences through images rather than solely everyday words, should they wish to do so, as a key part of the 'working through' and

memory re-consolidation. To this end, there is the provision of different modes of expression for children e.g., art/play/drama/music/sand-play/emotional worksheets).

5.4 Wellbeing curriculum informed by current research on mental health, specific teaching about conditions which impact on good mental health and relationship health and resilience. Wellbeing curriculum content to enable children to make informed choices about how they relate to others and how they choose to treat, look after and value their brains, bodies, and minds now and in the future.

5.5 Staff trained and wider agency partnership working to help children to move from 'behaving' their trauma and painful life experiences, to reflecting on these experiences through empathic conversation to address negative self-referencing and help them to develop coherent narratives about their lives.

5.6 A behaviour policy, which is based not on punishment, sanctions, and isolation, but one that models enquiry, resolution, and interactive repair: using natural and logical consequences and restorative conversations.