# What is a school or college relational or relationship policy and why should I have one?

MH Network meeting 12th May 2022

# Latest news

- The Department for Education has announced new funding for schools to costs of training for Senior Mental Health Leads in England. Grants of £1,200 are available now to eligible schools.

- The training is assured by the Department for Education and you can receive a grant of £1,200 to cover the cost of the course. Visit annafreud.org/smhl to find out more and book.

- It's Mental Health Awareness week! Anyone got any experiences or resources they've discovered as a result of this week that they'd quickly like to share? Please use the chat bar!

- Mental Health Awareness Week 2022 toolkit of resources : Mentally Healthy Schools

## Link to Keys to Inclusion:

## Relationships Key

Relationship policy
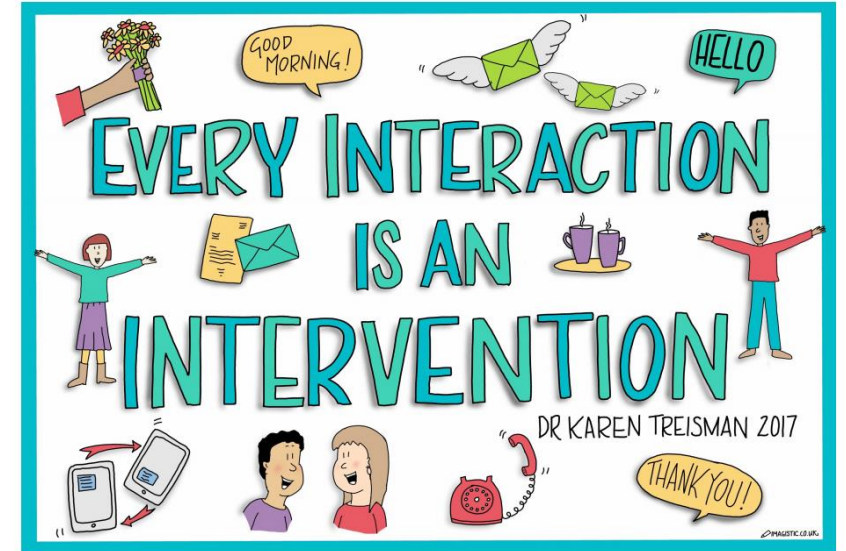
Restorative Practice

Peer mediation

**www.menti.com**

**Code: 8158 0886**

- Do you have a relational or relationship policy?

- Are you planning to develop a relationship policy?

"Every interaction can be an intervention" video by Dr Karen Treisman - YouTube

"Positive relationships in schools are central to the wellbeing of both students and teachers and underpin an effective learning environment. There is now a wealth of research on the importance of connectedness in schools and on the specific qualities of in-school relationships that promote effective education..."

Emotions and relationships exist all day every day in the classroom, staffroom and throughout the school....  The active promotion of positive feelings – enjoyment, achievement, optimism, safety and a sense of belonging - alongside positive and healthy relationships facilitate an environment is which everyone is able to flourish and learn (Fredrickson, 2009; Roffey, 2011a).
(PDF) Developing Positive Relationships in Schools (researchgate.net)

RELATIONAL SCHOOLS PROJECT
At the Relational Schools, we are developing a sound and robust database of evidence that shows the vital importance of good relationships in the achievement of great student outcomes. This is, of course, something that all great teachers know instinctively. Our research has uncovered robust evidence showing the impact of relational teachers in the classroom
The Relational Teacher - Relational Schools

The Ideal Worker
https://youtu.be/Q-RxnCuy6ps
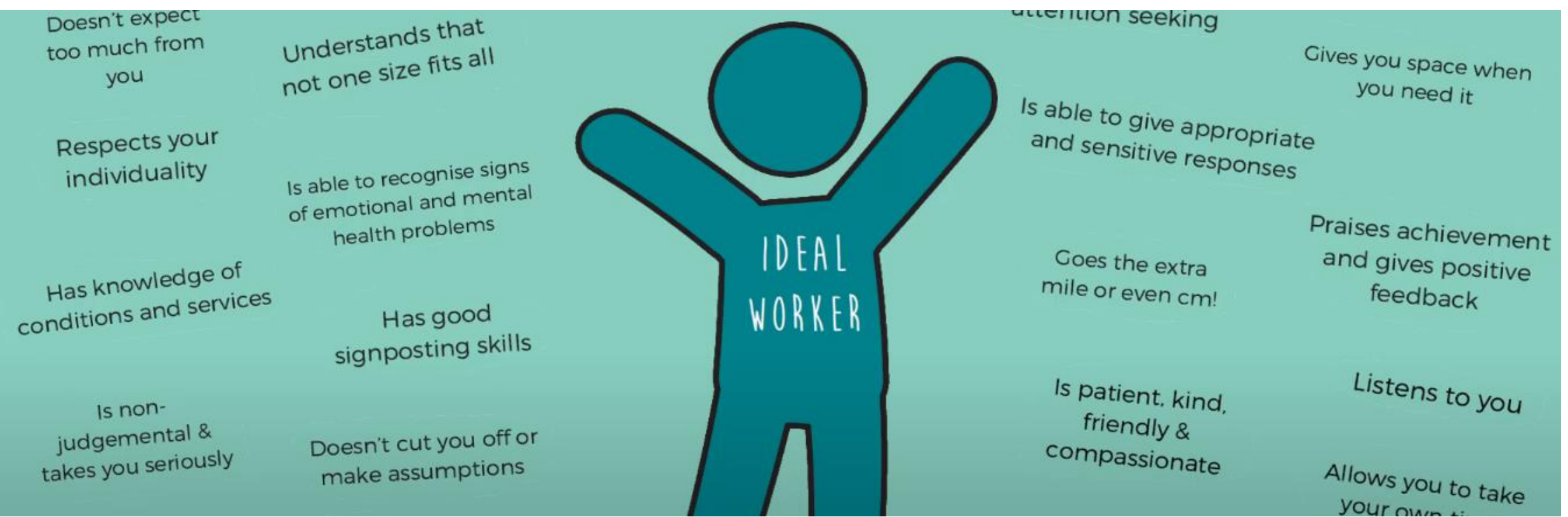
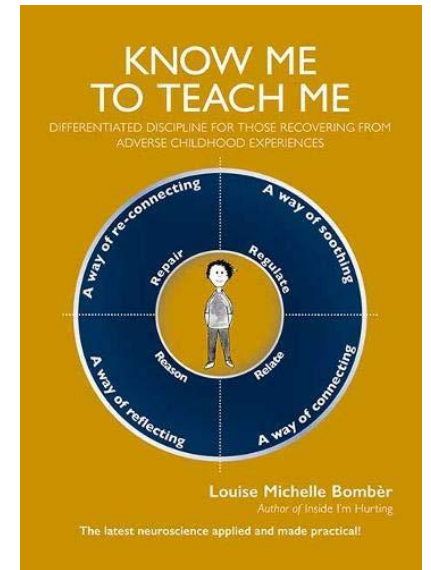**Following the guidance of Louise Bomber**

**'Know Me to Teach Me'…**

- What we believe in this school / setting
- Our aims include supporting all pupils to…..
- How we will work with our pupils who have experienced relational trauma and loss
- How we provide and enable relational repair
- How we will support and manage transitions
- How we will measure effectiveness

# Jamboard

How would you finish off this sentence:

"In our setting, we want to support ALL pupils to…"

- *function well at home, at school / college and when out and about in their communities*

- *experience safety, security and stability with us*

- *strengthen their sense of self*

- *strengthen their resilience*

- *increase their internal controls / self efficacy*

- *feel confident and secure enough to explore, experiment, be curious and open to learning.*

- *integrate their body and mind.*

How would you finish off this sentence?

In our setting we want to support all pupils to ....................................

Trust adults will hear them and want the best for them.

Respond not react

Have effective communication skills (but we recognise staff have role to play here in helping children develop skills).

Feel wanted and welcome within the school community.

Regulate, relate, reason and repair.

Respond and reflect

Feel safe and supported

Feel valued

To value themselves as individuals

Interact positively.

To support pupils to develop their independence and resilience for their adult life

To equip them with the skills they need for their adult life

# What do you think of these beliefs listed?

*Reflections with your staff in your setting*

**In this school or setting we….**

- remember that everyone is doing the best they can, with what they have lived through to date;

- will do all we can to ensure that we stay connected to our family, friends & colleagues so that we can experience the relational buffering we need to do our work well;

- see it as our responsibility to remain regulated through the school day, taking regular, quality breaks & pressing the pause button occasionally to re-resource ourselves;

- try hard to not take personal insults & rejections personally or to get triggered, as we know that some pupils have experienced intimacy betrayal & do not trust adults in the moment;

- will be wise with our words, ensuring that we do not label any of the pupils in our care;

- know that rich, relational interventions can bring about recovery;

- view ourselves as an important part of any pupils' journey.  We believe in recovery within a community;

- will not discriminate how we relate to the pupils in our care; we will differentiate according to need; and

- have compassion for those who have muddles, are hurting or grieving for whatever reason.

# Providing relational repair means….

- Never leaving a pupil on their own after a difficult incident or a relationship rupture

- Doing all we can to resolve any difficulty between ourselves and our pupils so that we can be at peace with one another

- Taking time out to self regulate if an interaction with a pupil becomes very difficult, before re-engaging.

- Apologising directly to the pupil if we mis-attune to them

- Matching the intensity of the pupil's affect so that the pupil feels heard and validated

- Checking in with pupils if there is a tension build-up in the classroom and giving reassurance 'It's going to be OK'

- Communicating curiosity and seeking understanding from pupils rather than making assumptions

# Working with pupils who have experienced relational trauma and loss

We will…..

- Know their story

- Trace back to what a child or young person has lived through, taking special note of any relational disruptions

- Find out whether there were any others around the child at the time of difficulty, who were physically and emotionally present, attentive and attuned

- Allocate a key adult to all those who have experienced disruption in their early relationships and a formalised team of 4 or 5 significant adults will be created around them in school

- Prioritise spending quality time with our assigned pupils, being physically and emotionally present and responsive

- Prioritise maintaining positive relationships with our pupils whatever other demands are going on

- Intentionally use warm and open faces and body language, humour and playfulness in order to support felt safety

- Not take ourselves too seriously

- Be curious about why pupils do what they do, wondering aloud so that our pupils have the opportunity to be curious too

# Another good source of advice to reference for writing your own relational policy

Guidance-for-Developing-Relational-Practice-and-Policy.pdf (babcockldp.co.uk)
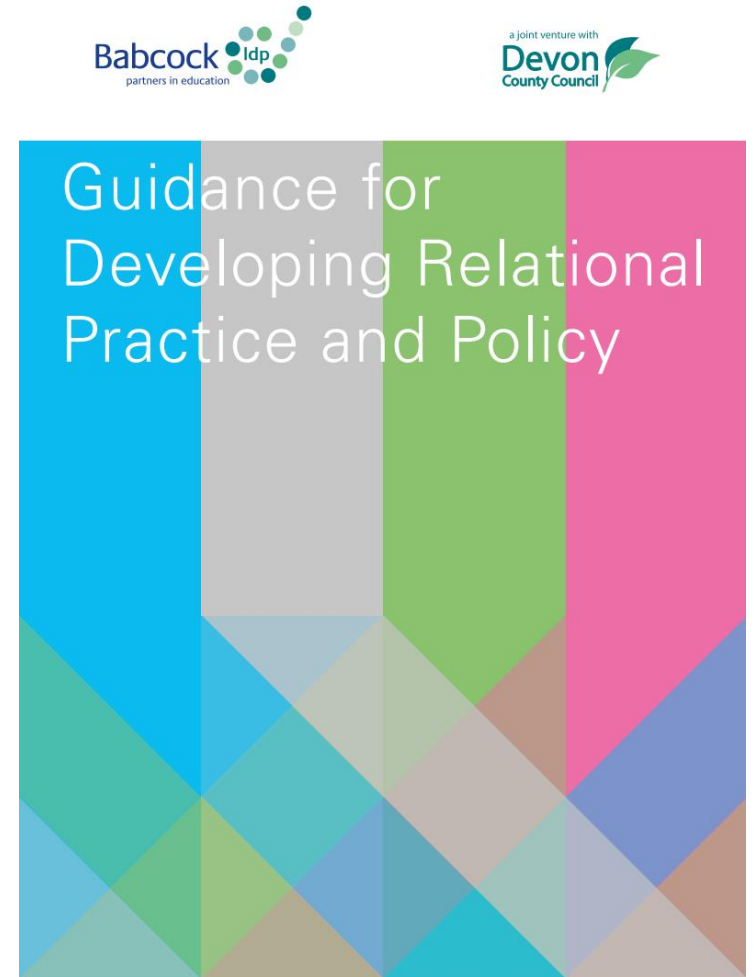
# Core relational beliefs….

- An ethos based around **inclusive** & **compassionate** principles is beneficial to the well-being of all children.

- All children wish to belong, achieve & contribute to their school, family & community. **Child centred approaches**, where their voices are central & where plans utilise their strengths, resources & qualities are integral to success.

- High levels of **nurture & empathy**, with **containment & structure**, support children to feel safe. Children need clear boundaries, predictable routines, expectations & regulated responses to behaviour.

- Natural consequences that can follow certain behaviours should be made explicit, without the need to enforce sanctions that can shame & ostracise children from their peers, school community & family, leading to potentially more negative behaviour. Responses to behaviour should ensure that **children feel safe** & that **all needs are met**.

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- Behaviour is often a form of **communication** & the expression of **underlying needs**. It is not possible to support a child's behaviour without addressing these needs.

- Children need personalised responses to supporting their personal development & well-being. Consistency does not mean always responding in the same way to each child or behaviour, it means **responding in a way which is consistent to our values and beliefs**. Whilst each individual child benefits from a consistent approach, being consistent & fair is not about everyone getting the same, but everyone getting what they need.

- Relational, regulatory & restorative approaches are more effective in supporting the development of **internal control & regulation**. Not all behaviours are a matter of choice & therefore external control will not be effective in changing behaviour.

- Punitive approaches & exclusion may re-traumatise children & further embed the behaviours causing concern. **Theory & research on attachment, neuroscience & adverse childhood experiences advocate the use of relational & restorative approaches** rather than those that are behaviourist & punitive.

# Helping to define a 'Relational Approach'

## Developing Relationships

**Building Relationships:**
Developing safety, security and trust through protection, connection, understanding and care

**Supporting Inclusion:**
Facilitating access to learning, ensuring social inclusion and developing individual skills

**Setting Boundaries:**
Reaching agreements and building a shared understanding of expectations. Establishing clear processes for resolving difficulties

## Repairing & Restoring

**Resolving Conflict:**
Everyday restorative interactions to resolve minor conflict and disagreements and create a shared understanding

**Repairing Harm:**
Restorative encounters to discuss the breaking of agreements, the impact (consequences) on others and to restore relationships

**Supporting Change:**
What additional support / action is needed?

## Responding & Calming

**Keeping Calm:**
Using everyday interactions to maintain relationships and agreements and promote a calm and supportive learning environment

**Regulating Emotions:**
Using key relational skills to regulate strong emotions and calm behaviour

**Managing Crisis:**
Having clear plans to ensure safety and support

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# Graduated Response

## Relational Approaches to the Assess, Plan, Do, Review Cycle



**ASSESS**
- Consider and assess the child's relational needs
- Carry out a strengths analysis to identify skills, resources and strategies to build upon
- Identify barriers to inclusion: learning, language and social skills assessment
- Listen to the child and elicit their views
- Work with parents/carers: collect views and information
- Get beneath the behaviour: hypothesise as to the unmet needs

**PLAN**
- Develop a shared understanding of priorities, outcomes and vision of success
- Include children, parents and staff in the planning process
- Establish a team of support around the child
- Plan support for developing relationships, responding and calming and repairing relationships
- Plan support/intervention for ensuring access to learning and social inclusion
- Identify training and support needed for staff and parents/carers

**DO**
- Relational support and intervention for inclusion: universal and targeted
- Feedback for the child: engaging the child through coaching/mentoring/reports
- Support for staff: reflection, supervision, coaching, training input
- Daily monitoring, discussion, responding and adapting
- Using restorative discussions and processes to maintain and repair relationships
- Regular two way communication with parents/carers

**REVIEW**
- Revisit the priorities, outcomes and vision
- Analyse what has worked well and needs to continue/increase
- Analyse what needs to change/ what needs to be done differently
- Consider if additional information, assessment or training is needed
- Establish next steps and revise plan
- Involve the child, parents/carers in review process

# Relational Audit Tool for Reflection and planning

[Guidance-for-Developing-Relational-Practice-and-Policy.pdf (babcockldp.co.uk)](#) page 68 – Appendix 11

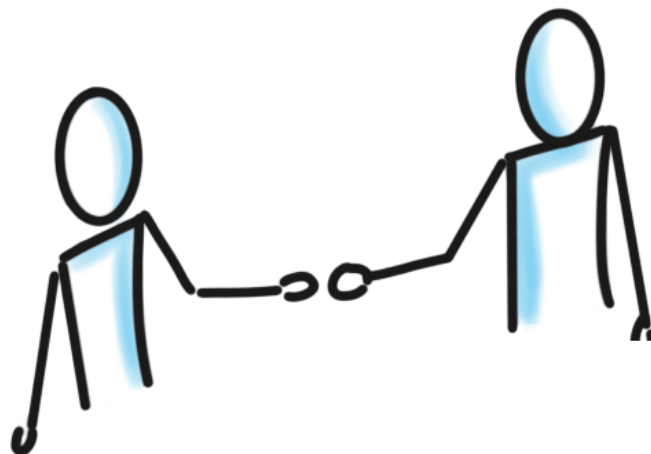| Area of Practice | Challenge Questions |
|---|---|
| Whole school ethos/ beliefs and values | To what extent are beliefs and values integral to the school ethos? <br><br>Consider: <br><br>Are beliefs and values established through a collaborative process involving children, school staff, governors and the wider community? <br><br>Does the school have clear statements expressing their beliefs and values with regard to behaviour and relationships? <br><br>Are the beliefs and values shared with all members of the community and celebrated through activities and displays? <br><br>Are the beliefs and values expressed through everyday interactions, teaching practice, systems and processes? <br><br>Are the beliefs and values modelled, promoted and facilitated by school leadership? |

| Notes: | |
|---|---|
| | |

| Priorities for change | Next steps |
|---|---|
| | |

| Area of Practice | Challenge Questions |
|---|---|
| Staff development/ knowledge and understanding | To what extent are all staff trained in the theory and practice relating to behaviour, relational needs, restorative practice and the impact of trauma, adverse experience and interruptions in attachment? <br><br>Consider: <br><br>Do all staff have an understanding of how research and theory relates to their practice? <br><br>Do newly qualified staff and those who are new to the school have opportunities to be trained in relational approaches? <br><br>Are there opportunities for some staff to develop an expertise in this area, to lead on developments and to support others? <br><br>Do all staff have ongoing development opportunities such as working alongside those who have more experience, mentoring coaching and supervision? <br><br>Do school processes support knowledge and understanding to be maintained in practice? |

# Examples of relational / relationship policies.

Please note we are not suggesting that these exemplify good practice. They are simply examples to read.

- Relationship-Policy-March-2021.pdf (briarwood.bristol.sch.uk)
- Draft Policy for Relational Schooling (chantryacademy.org)
- Relationship-Policy-2019.pdf (springfieldprimaryschool.org.uk)
- Understanding Behaviour in Schools Toolkit.pdf

Thank you everyone

@SuffolkPTS