



Our relational practice policy

Aims:

To support all children's social and emotional development so that they become happy, confident learners able to express their own feelings, thoughts and ideas and to contribute to the group.

We aim for all children to

- learn to form positive and appropriate relationships with adults and other children,
- enjoy being part of a group
- begin to understand their own feelings and how to express them appropriately,
- recognise the consequences of their actions,
- learn how and when to regulate their own behaviour
- understand the need for rules so that everyone stays safe
- recognise that by co-operating and sharing everyone can benefit
- learn to empathise with others

Our relational practice policy is based around the six principles of nurture

1. Our children's learning is understood developmentally

We understand that children do not develop at the same rate and need different things at different times that are individual to them.

2. Our school environment offers a safe base for children

Our nursery school should be a **calm, safe environment** for everyone with spaces to rest, relax, be active, be creative and most importantly feel safe and secure in the fact that your needs are being met.

3. We understand the importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing

We try to look after everyone in our school community, which in turn makes us feel good in mind and body. We have a theme of **showing kindness** running through our school. When we are kind to others, it makes them feel happy. It is good for our health too.

We aim to **celebrate achievements**, of everyone in our school community, no matter how small they might seem. When someone tells us we've done a good job, that makes us feel positive about ourselves. That's what nurture is all about.

4. Language is a vital means of communication

What we say **tells others a lot about us** and **how we're feeling**. We work hard to ensure that we support everyone in our community to communicate with us. There are many ways in which adults and children can communicate effectively and we celebrate and embrace all the different ways that we do this, verbally and non-verbally. We support and promote all the different ways in which children can communicate.

5. All behaviour is communication

We understand that it's not always easy to express how we feel in words. The way we behave towards other people says a lot about how we're feeling. We try to understand how people might be feeling and why a child might be behaving in a certain way. We use a range of visuals and objects to support communication where we need to.

6. We understand the importance of transition in our lives

We understand that change happens all the time. It can be exciting but it can also be scary, for adults and children. We plan transition times carefully for children and support them to feel safe and secure within a familiar routine. We support those transitions times with visuals and objects if children need them to understand what is happening and when. We allow as much flexibility and time in our routines as we possible can so that children can engage with them happily. We work closely with parents in our everyday work, but especially at times of transition.

We ask our staff to

- ... treat children and other adults with respect, providing a model of appropriate language and behaviour
- ... promote positive behaviour and give clear simple directions or invitations so that children know what they are being asked to do
- ... praise appropriate behaviour, acts of kindness or consideration and encourage children to value the help and support of others
- ... apply consistent boundaries and expectations based on safety, "fairness", and the need to recognise and take responsibility for the consequences of actions
- ... support children experiencing distress or anger and act to ensure the safety of everyone. This may involve physical restraint to prevent another child from being hurt.
- support parents in developing positive strategies to manage aspects of their children's behaviour

We will ask our staff working in the role of key person to....

- ... develop a relationship with children and their parents and carers and gain understanding of each child as an individual.
- ... observe and discuss children's social and emotional development and plan strategies, activities and experiences to promote appropriate behaviour and further understanding of themselves and others.
- ... share observations with parents and carers and involve them in discussion about children's social and emotional learning.
- ... support parents in developing positive strategies to manage aspects of their children's behaviour

We will help children, when they are ready to.....

- ... follow simple rules and routines
- ... negotiate, share ideas and work alongside their peers
- ... take part in group activities, take turns, listen to the views of others
- ... have fun as part of a group and learn to enjoy being by themselves
- ... resolve conflicts fairly and appropriately
- ... take care of their environment

Parents and carers

- ...will be involved in discussions about their child's social and emotional development.
- ...will be offered support if they are dealing with aspects of their child's behaviour, or experiencing difficulty with an aspect of their child's social and emotional development. (E.g. the arrival of a new baby could lead to some insecurity)
- ...will be sign-posted to other agencies where appropriate.
- ...will be encouraged to celebrate their child's achievements and developing confidence

When things go wrong.....

Developmentally we understand that children are learning to be with others and take turns or even share things. When things break down in children's play, we aim to use an Emotion Coaching model to resolve any conflict and support children who are emotionally dysregulated.

Emotion Coaching is based on the principle that nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships provide optimal contexts for the promotion of children's outcomes and resilience.

Emotion Coached children and young people:

- Achieve more academically in school
- Are more popular
- Have fewer behavioural problems
- Have fewer infectious illnesses
- Are more emotionally stable
- Are more resilient

(Gottman 1997)

Emotion Coaching uses moments of heightened emotion and resulting behaviour to guide and teach the child and young person about more effective responses. Through empathetic engagement, the child's emotional state is verbally acknowledged and validated, promoting a sense of security and feeling 'felt'. This activates changes in the child's neurological system and allows the child to calm down, physiologically and psychologically.

Are aiming to;

- Become aware of the child's emotions
- Recognise the emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching
- Listen empathetically, validating the child's feelings
- Help the child find words to label the emotion
- Set limits and explore strategies to solve the problem at hand.

We do this in a four step model;

Step 1: Recognise and empathise with the feelings

- This takes place before you say anything to the child
- Pay attention to emotions, from happiness to sadness to anger.
- Observe, listen, and watch for changes in facial expressions, body language, posture, and tone of voice.
- Show the child that you understand what he or she is feeling.

Step 2: Label and validate the feelings.

- Identify and help to name the emotions the child is experiencing. For example, "You have gone all quiet. I wonder whether you are worried about something...."
- Telling him/her that you understand the situation and that the feelings are OK.
- If possible get in there sooner rather than later i.e. before levels have escalated to a crisis.

Step 3: Set limits on behaviour (if needed)

- Carry this out when the child is calmer – it does not have to be immediately
- Find somewhere else to go if appropriate e.g. let's sit over there to discuss this.

- Keep the feelings and behaviour separate. For example, “I know you are feeling angry because you wanted to finish the game you were playing. Throwing the game was not okay because it has to be tidied up and it’s time to go out.”

Step 4: Explore and agree solutions for the problem

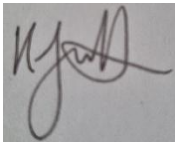
- What did he/she want at the time things went wrong?
- Helping children think through possible solutions to this.
- If they are stuck, be ready to offer them some suggestions
- Talking ideas through with questions such as “will it work?”, “how will you feel?”, “how will it make others feel?” Help the child to feel positive about the outcome.
- When appropriate, reviewing alternative ways of handling a similar situation next time.

Occasionally, where repeated breakdowns have happened, staff will reduce the choices available to the child for a short period of time. For example, this might mean making a choice within a room where their key person is so that the child can continue to receive support in their own choices.

Our goal is to celebrate a choice that **the child themselves** has made.

Therefore, we try NOT to

- Make choices for children (E.g. you will have to do ** now)
- Tell children what NOT to do (E.g Don’t run, don’t put that there)



Signed:

Headteacher



Chair of Governors

Date: September 25

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