

Relationship Support Policy at Hadrian School

1. Policy rationale

Hadrian School values and respects the unique characteristics, personalities and abilities of all our pupils. We foster a community where all pupils are treated with dignity in a fair appropriate and equitable manner. At Hadrian School we strive to demonstrate a relational approach to supporting social and emotional development and behaviour. We understand behaviour communicates unmet needs. We establish clear boundaries whilst at the same time showing that we understand and care about the feelings which sit behind a child's behaviour. We look into the emotional need being communicated and use this as an opportunity to support the child's emotional learning, the development of their self-awareness and the widening of their window of tolerance. We understand that each developmental stage has a range of typical behaviours which provide opportunities for adults to role-model and explicitly teach appropriate behaviours. We provide consistency, predictability and routine to build a sense of safety in the emotional and physical environment. We seek to restore relationships and adapt behaviours rather than punish the actions a child may have taken. We seek the most appropriate way of supporting children to develop robust stress-regulation systems and therefore the skills of emotional management.

We are a Thrive School and apply a Trauma-informed approach which permeates all of our work and relationship support ethos. This means that we support behaviour relationally. We currently have achieved the Attachment and Trauma Sensitive Schools Silver Award. At Hadrian School we recognise that the adult-child relationship is vital when developing the child's social and emotional skills essential for life and learning. We ensure that all children have the experience of an adult providing them with a secure base and calming them when they are physiologically dysregulated. When an incident occurs, we understand that this will cause a rupture in relationships and we seek to repair this rupture. We describe this as 'distressed behaviour' rather than 'challenging behaviour' because we understand that the behaviour is communicating a level of need within the child/young person.

We provide a collaborative, solution-focused environment, which is positive, safe, and secure and in which children can develop their confidence and self-esteem. At Hadrian School, children are empowered to communicate their emotions and explore their world.

2. The Relate Rupture Repair Cycle

At Hadrian School we understand that it is necessary to repair ruptures in order to return to the relationship. The repair not only rewires patterns of behaviour; it also establishes trust. This is known as the relate-rupture-repair cycle.

Relate: The adult is present and can contain the child's emotional experience for them. The connection between the two is reciprocal.

Rupture: The 'rupture' phase refers to those times in a relationship where there is a misunderstanding or misattunement. When a rupture happens, it is likely that we will see the child's behaviour change. It is important that ruptures in the relationship are noticed so they can be repaired.

Repair: The 'repair' phase of the cycle involves correcting the misunderstanding or misattunement of the rupture by trying to share understanding of intentions, feelings, thoughts and actions in order to come back into relationship. The adult is able to reach out to the child and repair the rupture in their relationship. At Hadrian School we understand that it is the adult's role to repair the relationship, not the child's.

3. PACE and Key Relational Skills

To support the rhythm of this cycle we use the stance of PACE and the communication skills of the Key Relational Skills. PACE is the acronym used in Thrive to describe the optimal adult stance when working with children to reduce stress, enhance connection, and promote learning:

Playfulness: We are playful in our interactions. Sensitive and appropriate playfulness helps the child feel safe and promotes positivity

Acceptance: We are always accepting of thoughts and feelings without criticism. We are accepting of the feelings that may trigger their behaviour

Curiosity: We demonstrate an active interest in the child's experience

Empathy: We demonstrate compassion for the child and their feelings to support the child's sense of self-worth

The Key Relational Skills represent the key techniques that we consciously apply in relationships.

Attunement: matching the energy of the child with non-verbal and behavioural communication

Validation: acknowledging the validity of the feelings the child is experiencing

Containment: providing consistency, predictability, routine and experiencing safety and security both relationally and environmentally

Regulation: transforms distress into an experience that can be tolerated together

4. Curriculum and Thrive Plans

We recognise that we are in a continuum of educational provision and endeavour to prepare and equip our pupils with the necessary skills, emotional wellbeing and strategies for lifelong learning as active members of a cohesive community.

Regardless of their curriculum pathway and developmental stage, all children will have an individual SEMH outcome(s). These outcomes are addressed and reinforced throughout their individual curriculum (as seen in children's Personalised Learning Plans and Teacher Planning, and evidenced termly). Children may have Thrive assessments and Thrive plans. These will link to their individual SEMH learning outcomes. At Hadrian School we adopt a Total Communication approach which includes the personalised use of objects of reference, photographs, symbols, Makaton signs, on-body signs and auditory cues. This helps to ensure that children are able demonstrate their preferences, make choices and anticipate their day. We are committed to having a well-planned transition process for when our children leave Hadrian School. We ensure that all Thrive Plans, Relationship Support Plans and learning outcomes are discussed and shared with the child's new school.

5. Relationship Support Plans

If children are regularly demonstrating distressed behaviours they will also have a Relationship Support Plan. Relationship Support Plans will be consistent with the child's Thrive plan and will aim to identify triggers, relationship ruptures,

communication signals and provide support to avoid the escalation of distressed behaviours and repair the relationship. Relationship Support Plans will be shared and discussed with parents / carers and signed off by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

6. Partnership with parents and carers

At Hadrian School we work as a team to support the children as they grow and develop socially and emotionally. We actively promote a partnership with Parents / Carers and other agencies, such as CYPS where appropriate. We recognise our duties to share and network good practice with other stakeholders through adult training, parental partnerships and good communication systems. We have a history of running Confident Parenting workshops in which we share and discuss our relational approach to behaviour support with parents. Confident Parenting workshops are run by staff who are licenced Thrive practitioners. We host and facilitate parents groups such as Pass it on Parents and Parents 4 Parents.

7. Positive reinforcement, Rewards and Consequences

Rewards and consequences are used to support emotional learning rather than to punish the actions of the child.

Positive reinforcement and rewards include:

- Specific positive praise and reinforcement given ‘in the moment’
- Celebration assemblies involving parents
- Certificates and treats
- Class Dojo points
- Communication with parents / cares
- Sharing with the whole school through our Good News and Thrive boards
- Individualised reward charts

Consequences

- will be designed to support children/young people to be aware of and accountable for their actions and to develop skills to adapt their behaviour rather than to punish the actions taken by the child
- will not deny children access to any part of their curriculum
- aim to resolve rather than escalate a situation whilst preserving the dignity of all involved.
- must be applied compassionately and in a fair and consistent way
- will be detailed in the child’s Relationship Support Plan where applicable

9. Physical Intervention

Many of our children require positive physical support to help them develop their independence and physical skills and stay regulated. A Physical Intervention however is defined as a physical act carried out with the purpose of influencing, modifying or preventing the actions of a child or young person.

Physical intervention will only be used if necessary to keep a child safe, prevent a child injuring themselves or others, and to prevent serious damage to property. Staff may

redirect, guide and support children to safety. This includes being led by the hand and guiding using a flat palm. Staff will not use a Physical Intervention for longer than is necessary

8. Exclusions

Exclusions are the sole responsibility of the Head Teacher in discussions with the Chair of Governors following Local Authority guidelines and procedures. It is our aim never to exclude a child either temporarily or permanently from Hadrian School, so far in our 25 year history we have never excluded one child.

9. Supporting Staff

All new staff have an induction that covers relationship support. Staff receive annual training on our relational approach to supporting social and emotional development and behaviour. This includes whole-staff training sessions as well as training for specific staff. We currently have seven members of staff who are licensed Thrive practitioners and aim to train a further two each year through Pupil Premium Funding. Supporting a child demonstrating distressed behaviour can be upsetting. It is okay for staff to feel upset. If staff feel that they are getting upset or angry when dealing with an incident, they should withdraw, give themselves space and time, and seek support during and afterwards. Supporting distressed behaviour when you feel angry can escalate the situation. If staff become triggered by a child's behaviour, they are encouraged to seek support from the Senior Leadership Team and Thrive Practitioners. They will be offered time away from the situation before returning to lead the repair of the rupture in relationship. We also encourage staff to seek support from the Mental Health Team who can advocate and provide support for their well-being. The Senior Leadership Team and Thrive team can provide help including:

- Writing and reviewing Relationship Support Plans.
- Writing and reviewing Thrive assessments
- Writing and reviewing Thrive plans
- Opportunity for joint planning and teaching
- Time to talk and reflect
- Remit for seeking further advice and support from other professionals
- Signposting the Education Support Helpline 08000 562 561

10. Monitoring Recording and Reporting

All serious behaviour incidents must be logged electronically using the CPOMS recording system. As soon as an incident is logged, an automatic email is sent to the Senior Leadership Team, alerting them to the fact that an incident has taken place. Information regarding incidents is confidential and stored in accordance with GDPR regulations (2018). The Senior Leadership Team will use CPOMS to monitor, add and record actions

11. Review and Monitoring of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis or earlier if legislation should change. The policy will be shared with all staff and will be sensitively reviewed in discussion

with the pupils and the School Council/Forum. The policy will be communicated to Parents/Carers via the School Website and key information made available on request.

12. Further and Related Information

- Complaints Policy
- Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Single Equity Plan
- E-Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- SEN Policy
- Site Security
- Safer Recruitment Policy (Recruitment, Baring and Vetting Policy)
- British Values
- Pupil Premium Strategy

References

SEND Code of Practice – Updated April 2020

Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2024

Working Together to Safeguard Children – December 2023

The Children Act 2004

DfE Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools – November 2018

DfE Behaviour in Schools: Guidance for Head Teachers and Staff – February 2024

Confirmation that the Relationship Support Policy in respect of Hadrian School has been discussed by the Governing Body:

Signed by:

Chair of Governors: _____ Date: _____

Head Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Agreed at the Governing Body Meeting on: _____

Minute Reference: _____