Elm Tree Primary Academy

Relationships and Regulation Policy

Approved by_____**Whitney Plant**_____ **Date**17/10/2025_____

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Elm Tree Primary Relationships and Regulation Policy

Elm Tree Primary Academy believes in a trauma informed relational approach to supporting emotional wellbeing, mutual and self-regulation and personal development. This policy embodies our culture and ethos, developed through a trauma informed lens where relationships are at the heart of every interaction.

We believe in providing every child with the opportunity to experience high quality education academically, emotionally and socially. We aim to provide an inspiring and relevant curriculum that considers the whole child and enables every individual to fulfil their potential.

We are committed to ensuring our school develops a trauma and mental health informed approach, encompassing Low Arousal, Emotion Coaching and SCERTS techniques to ensure that our pupils develop positive mental health, resilience and self-regulation, enabling them to fully engage in learning and life.

Through understanding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on long-term outcomes we aim to maximise the protective factors of school by creating an environment where children feel safe, secure, seen and soothed. Our priority is to provide psychological and environmental safety where children can relate and learn.

This approach requires Consistent, Calm Adult Behaviour, adults who can provide calm support when children are overwhelmed. We aim not to put children in situations that may cause them distress and our response to distress is supportive co-regulation, to enable children to relate to the world and each other in a healthier way. We recognise that distressed behaviours represent an unmet need

Whole School Approach

We recognise a wider definition of trauma to encompass any event that is experienced as frightening, painful or out of control and that this can present in many different ways. For our children, this may relate to sensory experiences, change, communication differences, anxiety, transitions and many other things that are experienced as traumatic. Providing an environment that has safety, connection and compassion at the heart, ensures our school environment will maximise protective factors.

All adults in school will be aware of how to create an environment that provides physical and psychological safety and will have the skills to respond appropriately and effectively. Our policies reflect a trauma informed approach and we do not operate a ‘one size fits all’ approach to distressed behaviour or dysregulation. We have high expectations for all and support is given to those who are struggling to regulate.

Our aim is to support children to make sense of their experience, find ways to manage their emotions and ensure they remain in a calm and alert state, enabling them to learn.

All staff are responsible for adhering to positive practice that promotes mental health and access to learning. We care committed to working in partnership with parents to identify the best way to support our children and to develop positive, non-judgemental supportive relationships with parents.

We aim to encourage and enable our pupils to their authentic autistic selves.

Our community adopts relational and educational practices which promote mutual regulation and self-regulation.

Elm Tree aim to increase 'safety cues' in all aspects of the school day, creating opportunities for emotionally available adults. These include:

- Open door policy for informal discussions with parents/carers
- Adults with an understanding of Low Arousal, Emotion Coaching and SCERTS approaches to enable children to move out of fight, flight or freeze and into relationships and trust
- Punitive approaches are not used in any circumstances in response to pupil distress or dysregulation.
- Staff adopt ways of developing relationships and understanding of our pupils, parents/carers and each other, understanding that relationships are the key to personal, social and emotional development as well as academic achievement.
- Staff adjust expectations for our pupils, families and carers in accordance with their developmental phase and experience
- Debriefing opportunities will be available to assist staff and pupils in managing situations and these will have a restorative practice focus.
- Our approach promotes inclusiveness, relationship-building and problem solving giving the people involved a chance to talk about what happened, how people felt, who was affected, identifying stress reactions and how to problem solve including both proactive and reactive solutions.
- Our whole school approach is committed to enabling pupils, families and staff to see themselves, their relationships and the community positively.
- We will provide everyone with repeated relational experiences alongside emotionally available adults to enable trust.
- Our school will use evidence-based interventions such as SCERTS, emotion coaching and low arousal approaches to support pupils to mutually regulate and self-regulate.
- Emotional wellbeing and regulation of colleagues is of high importance, as is time for colleagues to reflect and regulate in safe spaces when needed.

Emotion Coaching

As a school, staff have received training in the use of Emotion Coaching which is a technique that helps children to understand and regulate their feelings and actions. It allows children to learn how their emotions work and how to adapt these feelings in healthy ways.

H..E..L..P strategy

We encourage staff to use emotion coaching language to support children to understand their feelings and identify alternative actions and choices next time:

H – Highlight their emotions and label it…. I can see you are….

E- Empathise to let them know the feeling is okay It's okay that you feel…

L – Limit setting to remember the rules But we have rules to keep everyone safe…

P- Problem solve and give advice for next time Next time you feel…. You could…. Strategies for promoting mutual and self-regulation

Ready, Respectful, Safe

Positive expectations

Adults will-

- Reinforce expected behaviour through a total communication environment, through the use of modelling, signs, symbols and verbal cues.
- Acknowledge feelings when dysregulated and regulated–. Using emotion coaching techniques will support this
- Providing choice – being given choices increases a child's a sense of independence which will increase their self-esteem
- Being consistent – Children need the environment and expectations to be as consistent as possible, this makes the child feel safer and therefore less anxious, this includes consistent routines and strategies such as visual timetables and transition cues
- Model regulation strategies– model– respect, fairness, kindness, how to apologise and resolve difficulties fairly and amicably.
- Listen to children- Listen to children and make them feel significant. Make children aware that you recognise their feelings (emotion coaching) and ensure you follow up concerns or complaints, even if you need to say you will follow it up later

Children will have plans in place that support their individual needs. These may be in the form of Safety Support Plans. Individual plans will take account of the individual child's-

- Preferred communication method
- Receptive and expressive language stage
- Current cognitive attainment
- Individual sensory needs
- Known anxiety triggers
- Successful strategies

Each child will have certain resources or activities which support them to regulate and these should be known to all colleagues who support them during the day.

Colleagues will identify key points in the day when distress can escalate and aim to prevent this for example, transitions between parts of the day e.g., going out or coming in from play,

walking to and from lessons/ different areas of school or home times. These times need to be calm and ordered with set clear routines, expectations and boundaries.

Adults will-

- Be aware of the volume and tone of their voice (no shouting, no intimidation)
- Give appropriate processing and uptake time – for staff and the child.
- De-escalate natural tension using Low, Low Slow- Low tone of voice, low volume and slowing down your speech. Use less language and allow processing time.
- Ensure you always engage in repairing and rebuilding a relationship with the child at a later stage that day (or first thing the following day if this is not possible). It is crucial that the staff directly involved in the incident(s) take the initiative at this point – with support from senior staff where necessary.
- Support communication with symbols
- Adapt strategies according to individual need

Low Arousal Approach

The Low Arousal Approach is based on:

- Prevention- Recognising triggers and pre-empting stressful situations
- De-escalation- Preventing situations for escalating and helping children to mutually-regulate
- Person centred- based in individual needs and profiles
- Non-confrontational and non-judgemental

The 4 key elements to a low arousal approach are:

- Decreasing demands
- Avoidance of potentially arousing triggers (e.g., touch)
- Avoidance of non-verbal behaviours that may lead to conflict
- Challenging our beliefs about short term management of stress/distress responses

Colleagues will manage Environmental Triggers by:

- Reducing sensory stimulation
- Safe space- providing planned escape
- Appearing calm- remember emotional contagion
- Avoiding direct eye contact
- Being cautious of physical touch
- Slowing movements
- Understanding that gestures can be misinterpreted
- Not having too many staff around
- Removing other people
- Keeping distance
- Being aware of power messages
- Tactically withdrawing

Safety Support Plans

- Safety Support Plans may be developed for pupils by the class teacher in collaboration with parent/carers and the class team.

- Where necessary, outside agencies such as Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Sensory Occupational Therapist and the Complex Communication and Autism Team may be asked to contribute to the development of support plans.

- Plans will be reviewed at least yearly, at the time of annual review but are also working documents that can be amended throughout the year as children develop and circumstances change.

- Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring every child has a Safety Support Plan and that these are updated at least yearly.

CPI Safety Intervention

Sandwell LA Guidance is that only those who are trained using an accredited training programme should use restrictive physical intervention.

Restricted physical interventions should only be implemented under 'the supervision of an identified member of staff who has undertaken appropriate training provided by Inclusion Support.

The school adopted the CPI Safety Intervention approach to maximise safety and minimise harm.

CPI Safety Intervention trains staff to:

- Identify signs that indicate an increase in dysregulation that may pose a risk of harm and take appropriate measures to avoid, decelerate and/or de-escalate crisis situations
- Assess the level of risk associated with crisis and make appropriate decisions related to the management of such risk.
- Use suitable and acceptable interventions to maximise safety and minimise harm
- Identify the impact of crisis events and describe post-crisis responses which can be used for personal and organisational support and learning

CPI is a member of the Restrain reduction Network which aims to reduce the reliance on restrictive practice when supporting vulnerable people in distress

Please see the Safety Intervention policy for more information.

Positive approaches

Colleagues will use consistent positive praise and encouragement and unconditional positive regard when supporting expected behaviour and co-regulation.

Colleagues will take into account individual motivators and interest and utilise these to encourage engagement and regulation. It is important that colleagues recognise what is motivating for the individual child

Colleagues will use strategies such as praise certificates and messages home to celebrate and share achievement with parents/carers and families.

Verbal language will be accompanied by pictures, signs and symbols to develop understanding of safe, healthy strategies.

Role and Responsibilities of Staff and Academy Councillors

Academy Councillors are responsible for approving the policy and approach and for monitoring the implementation of these

The Head Teacher along with Senior Leaders, is responsible for development and implementation of policy and approach at a whole school level. This includes monitoring of recording systems and Safety Support Plans.

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring implementation of policy and approach within their classrooms at all times and supporting their class team to do the same.

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring their classrooms are conducive to the approach and they apply strategies and use resources appropriately.

Class teachers must ensure tracking, recording and reporting systems are kept up-to-date and for developing Safety Support Plans in conjunction with parents, pupils and the class team.

All colleagues are responsible for implementing the policy and approach at all times and supporting class teacher to ensuring their classrooms are conducive to the approach and they apply the strategies and use resources appropriately. All education colleagues will contribute to the development and implementation of Safety Support Plans.

Classroom Strategies

- All classes will have a calming space within them that children can chose to access.
- All classes will have a bank of sensory resources to aid sensory integration and regulation
- All classrooms will provide a total communication environment including pictures, signs, symbols and words.
- Pictures, signs and symbols will be used to reinforce safety, and communication.
- Unsafe presentation or presentation that may cause distress will be supported through instructions reinforced with signs, symbols or pictures and words.
- All classes will have consistent structure and routine in place including consistent cues for transition, individual and class visual schedules and clear designated areas for resources and activities

The focus within Elm Tree is to provide pupils with safe and effective ways of communicating their wants, needs and feelings. A problem-solving approach means that staff will analyse the possible reasons behind dysregulation and aim to develop strategies that the child and their support network, can effectively use to manage emotions safely and prevent escalation

Pupils will be explicitly taught how to recognise the physiological signs of emotions, how to label and recognise feelings, safe and unsafe behaviours and co and self-regulation strategies.

Training and Development

Every effort will be made to ensure that all colleagues:

• Understand their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care to keep children and adults safe.

• Understand that the paramount consideration is the welfare of the individual child

• Understand that ‘reasonable’ force means that it is necessary, proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances.

• Are provided with appropriate training to support children and to manage risk and this training is maintained at an appropriate level, including but not limited to

- Safeguarding
- Emotion Coaching
- Low arousal Approaches
- Specific Communication strategies
- Sensory Integration
- Safety Intervention

Child on Child Abuse

We recognise that sometimes children can abuse other children. This may occur inside and outside of school/college.

Child on child abuse involves someone who abuses a ‘vulnerability’ or power imbalance to harm another, and have the opportunity or be in an environment where this possible. This may include:

- Bullying (including cyber bullying);
- Physical harm;
- Sexual violence;
- Sexual harassment
- Discrimination
- Up skirting
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (teenage relationship abuse)
- Sexting;
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

We recognize that child on child abuse can occur between and across different age ranges.

We accept that whilst perpetrators of child-on-child abuse pose a risk to others they are often victims of abuse themselves. We will work closely with alleged perpetrators to halt and prevent further occurrences.
We will explain to children that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them.

All children should be able to attend school and learn in a safe environment.
Prevention is a fundamental method of minimising risks and we will do this by:

- Ensuring all staff have training on child-on-child abuse

- Adopting a ‘whole school approach’ to tackling sexism and any form of discrimination.

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours between children

- Providing developmentally appropriate PSHE syllabus which develops students understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe

- Having systems in place for any student to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, believed and valued

- Delivering targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe to those pupils identified at risk developing robust risk assessments & providing targeted work for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils

We follow both national (Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges) and local guidance and policies to support any children/young people subject to child-on-child abuse to enable provision of effective support

We fully understand that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school it may be happening. Equally whilst we are aware that female students are the predominant victims, we will take all reports seriously. As such all our staff and children/young people are supported to:

• be alert to child-on-child abuse (including sexual harassment);
• understand how the school views and responds to child-on-child abuse
• stay safe and be confident that reports of such abuse will be taken seriously.

We will not tolerate instances of child-on-child abuse and will not pass it off as “banter”, or “part of growing up”.

Sometimes allegations are made of a specific safeguarding nature. These may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. Some of the features of these could include:

• Allegations against an older pupil’s behaviour towards a younger child
• Severe Bullying
• Is of a serious nature possibly related to a criminal offence
• Indicates that other pupils have been affected by this pupil
• Taking part in sexting
• Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts
• Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Procedure

All complaints and incident will be taken seriously with a record of incidents and action taken.

An assessment of an incident between peers will be completed to consider:
- Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?
- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person’s motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

It is important to deal with a situation of abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. It is equally important to think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a ‘blame’ culture and leave a child labelled.

Taking Action – What we do:
• Always take complaints seriously

• Gain a statement of facts from the pupil(s)
• Assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator
• Put appropriate support in place
• Consider referral to Police or Children's Social Care
• Contribute to multi-agency assessments
• Convene a risk management meeting
• Record all incidents and all action taken

Consideration will be given to whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern and then report to the designated safeguarding person.

• A factual record should be made but no attempt should be made to investigate at this stage,

• The DSL can discuss the case with advisory personnel such as the Single point of contact (SPOC), COG or the Education safeguarding officer to determine if a referral to MASH is required. If there is an indication that a criminal offence has been committed then the police may become involved. School may be advised to refer this case to the police or advise parents to do so.

• The DSL will speak to parents of the victim(S) and the alleged perpetrator to inform them of the referral as long as it does not put either party at risk of further harm.

• Records of action and advise will be kept on both children's file

• Consideration will be given to whether the alleged perpetrator should be excluded from school according to the school's behaviour policy

• If children services decide there will be no further action a thorough investigation will be carried out in school using the school's usual disciplinary procedure

• If the school consider a safeguarding risk is still present then a full risk assessment will be carried out with a date set for follow up review.

Banned Items

The following items are not allowed on the school site.

- Smoking paraphernalia
- Energy drinks
- Alcohol or illegal drugs
- Weapons of any kind
- Stolen items
- Illegal images or recordings on electronic devices
- anything else perceived to pose a threat to pupils at the school

Exclusions

It can only be the Headteacher that can make the decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

Incidents of extreme behaviour and severe breaches of the behaviour policy can lead to a suspension or permanent exclusion.

Examples of include:

- Intended assault (verbal or physical) on an adult
- Intended assault (verbal or physical) on a child.

- Discrimination, especially on the grounds of race, sexual orientation or disability
- Stolen Items
- Bringing banned items into school (drugs, knives or weapons, alcohol, tobacco items, fireworks, indecent images or any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the pupil). *
- Intended serious damage to property
- Bullying inside and outside of school
- Online bullying inside and outside of school

*Headteachers and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may
have a prohibited item listed in banned items without consent.

There are three types of exclusion that the school can sanction:

- Lunchtime exclusion
- Suspension
- Permanent exclusion

Lunchtime Exclusion: Pupils whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be excluded from the school site for the duration of the lunchtime period for a fixed length of time. They should be collected, supervised at returned to school for the afternoon session by an adult.

Suspension: For continued disruptive behaviour, or a serious breach of policy (which are not serious enough to warrant a permanent exclusion), an exclusion of a fixed number of days, for the shortest time necessary will be given.

Permanent Exclusion: This decision can only be taken by the Headteacher.

A decision to permanently exclude will only be taken:

(i) In response to a serious breach of the school behaviour policy and

(ii) If allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of pupils or others in the school

A reduced timetable can be negotiated with parents to try to avoid a permanent exclusion. It may also be necessary to involve out of school professionals, such as the Educational Psychologist, Community Paediatrician and the Pupil Referral Service throughout the above processes.

In the case of a suspension or permanent exclusion parents, local authority, academy council and relevant agencies such as social worker, virtual school head would be notified immediately and given relevant information.

Reintegration

Following a suspension, the parent will be asked to attend a re-integration meeting where a plan will be shared with the parents and child detailing strategies and approach to successfully integrate the child back into the school environment and routines. The reintegration plan will be decided on an individual basis to meet the needs of the individual child and their family.

Facilities

Pupils and staff at Elm Tree will have access to a range of facilities that may help with regulation and wellbeing.

Breakout spaces between classrooms will provide a safe space that children can choose to access or may be directed to if staff pre-empt overload. Breakout spaces will be low arousal spaces with reduced sensory input and will include a limited number of calming resources. These resources will vary depending on the needs of the group.

All classes will have direct access to outside areas that children can use to regulate when needed. This can be chosen by the child or directed by the adult if they assess the needs for specific sensory input or reduced sensory input.
Outdoor provision and cardio exercise will also constitute part of the children's educational provision.

Sensory integration spaces will be used for the implementation of specific sensory input as outlined by the sensory specialist Occupational Therapist.

The Rebound Room again will be used for the implementation of specific programs as outlined by the Colleagues trained to deliver Rebound Therapy or the sensory specialist Occupational Therapist. This area will have a timetable of use.

Neither the Sensory Integration Room or the Rebound Room will be used by children who have not been assessed and provided with a specific programme of sensory integration nor by staff who have not been trained in these approaches. These are not rooms to be used as rewards but constitute part of the child's educational provision.

The Soft Play spaces will also be used as part of the children's sensory and occupational therapy provision.

Supporting Regulation and Emotional Development

The aim of the ethos and approach described is to encourage emotional literacy, mutual and self-regulation, empathy and awareness of self and others, so that children are able to manage difficult situations or situations that cause distress, in safe and constructive ways.

We want our children to be able to recognise, understand and safely manage their own emotions and to develop independent regulation strategies that are transferable to the community.

We acknowledge Elm Tree Primary's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 in respect to pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

Elm Tree Primary Relationships and Regulation Policy V1.5

Final Audit Report 2025-09-17

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