



# SPAGHETTI BRIDGE

## Relational Support Policy (Behaviour Support Policy)

<b>Policy Owner</b>	Group Safeguarding Lead
<b>Applies to</b>	This applies to all services
<b>Associated Documents</b>	Other related policies:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• student Protection &amp; Safeguarding Policy</li><li>• Safe Touch (inc RPI) Policy</li><li>• Attendance</li><li>• Equality</li><li>• Curriculum</li><li>• Ending Student Placement Policy</li><li>• Exclusion Policy</li></ul>
<b>Review Frequency</b>	This Policy is to be reviewed annually
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<b>New Review date</b>	October 2025
<b>Approved by Chief Executive Officer</b>	<p><i>Dan Alpez</i></p> <hr/> <p>Dan Alpez (Oct 24, 2024, 9:04am)</p>
<b>Approved by the Chair of the Board</b>	<p><i>Stephen Bradshaw</i></p> <hr/> <p>Stephen Bradshaw (Oct 29, 2024, 3:53pm)</p>

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## 1. Introduction

**Relational Support** is the term we use to describe our approach to building meaningful relationships with students. This method emphasises treating each student as an individual, actively listening, engaging in dialogue, creating shared experiences, and fostering trust, belonging, and safety in every interaction—all crucial for student engagement and learning.

Our approach is inspired by the work of Dan Hughes, who highlights the importance of interactions characterised by **PACE** (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy). In addition, we incorporate strategies for deepening relationships through conversations and reciprocal, progressively deeper questioning, based on the work of Nicholas Epley.

Our three-part model—**Developing Relationships, Responding and Regulating, and Repairing and Restoring**—is centred around understanding and meeting students' needs, helping them regulate emotions, and supporting positive behavioural changes.

This policy integrates seamlessly with our educational practices, promoting a supportive and inclusive school culture. With a strong emphasis on safeguarding, our relational approach ensures that staff are well-equipped to notice changes, build trust, and provide effective support to students while also offering a therapeutic inspired designed curriculum and biophilic environment, whereby direct therapeutic interventions are not required.

### Our Relational Values

- All students have a desire to belong, achieve, and contribute to their school, family, and community.
- Provide a safe environment for all students and staff
- All behaviour is a form of communication, expressing underlying needs. To effectively support a student, we aim to address these needs.
- Behaviours can sometimes stem from unconscious reactions held in the nervous system due to past experiences.
- Students require personalised responses to foster their personal development and well-being.
- Relational approaches are effective in promoting the development of internal control and emotional regulation.
- Consistency does not mean treating every student or behaviour the same way. While students benefit from a consistent approach, fairness means giving each individual what they need, not giving everyone the same thing.
- Punitive approaches may result in short-term behavioural changes driven by fear or shame, but they do not lead to improved self-regulation or the ability for young people to make positive behavioural choices independently

- Relational approaches prioritise empathy, ensuring that we listen, understand, and respond to the emotional experiences of others. This promotes trust and a deeper connection between individuals..

This policy aims to articulate how each student's relational support plan is seamlessly integrated into their wider curriculum, ensuring a holistic approach to learning and development. By aligning relational interventions with educational goals, we ensure that each student's emotional, social, and academic needs are addressed in a comprehensive and cohesive manner.

## Legal Framework

This policy relates to:

- Children and Families Act (2014)
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Children Act (1989)
- Mental Health Act (1983)

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all students and staff at Spaghetti Bridge schools, as well as their families, carers, and external professionals.

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- [Behaviour and discipline in schools](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)
- [Supporting students with medical conditions at school](#)

It is also based on the [special educational needs and disability \(SEND\) code of practice](#).

In addition, this policy is based on:

- Schedule 1 of the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#); paragraph 7 outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, paragraph 9 requires the school to have a written behaviour policy and paragraph 10 requires the school to have an anti-bullying strategy

## 3. Policy Statement

At Spaghetti Bridge, we believe that the best way to support our students is through our therapeutically informed relational approach, which is an integral part of our 'core offer'. Our approach is built on a unique pedagogical curriculum, a well-structured staffing system, relational support methodologies and comprehensive staff training packages. These elements enable us to address the needs of the majority of our students effectively.

<b>We think <i>Differently</i></b>	<b>We are <i>Brave</i> and create an education approach that <i>works</i></b>	<b>We create <i>nurturing</i> environments</b>
<p>Why do we traditionally prepare our children for a future using environments and ways of working which they will never use again?</p> <p>We have moved away from a typical educational approach by introducing a real world working environment, preparing our students for their 21st century futures, and arming them with the skills and knowledge necessary, this means less sitting at desks listening to one teacher and much more collaboration with peers, working on topics of interest and using real world technologies.</p>	<p>We use a project and topic-based curriculum where our students work individually or in small groups to accomplish an output from concept to completion.</p> <p>In reality, this means lessons look and feel different. Students have a voice – where their enquiries about the world enable them to make real choices about their learning; they become the architects of their future.</p>	<p>Central to our approach is offering our students the opportunity to redefine what school means to them. Offering them an environment that looks warm, inviting, and safe and that looks wholly different to traditional schools that they may have attended before, allows them to truly experience a ‘fresh start’.</p>

We ensure that our students' wellbeing is seamlessly integrated into their daily timetables through meticulous planning as our curriculum is structured by the Three Phase Process, which allows us to adapt each student's programme to their current level of need and sequence all future learning. This programme is delivered by all staff members who interact with the students, ensuring consistency and continuity in support.

Overcoming Barriers – students develop their sense of trust, belonging, self-image as a student, and sense of their own potential.

21st Century Skills – each student's curriculum broadens to focus more on the skills, knowledge and understandings that will enable them to thrive in the 21st century.

Community Ready – the student's curriculum prioritises more the steps that need to be taken in order to successfully transition to their life beyond school.

In essence, we aim to contextualise our approach to identified relational needs by utilising tools from accredited professionals. In a majority of cases, this method is more effective than isolated 1:1 therapeutic interventions. However, if a student's therapeutic needs are not fully met through

our integrated approach, we have a procedure in place (outlined in section X below) that allows staff to implement the necessary interventions and internal referrals for additional support and training.

At Spaghetti Bridge, we adhere to a social model meeting students' relational needs, focusing on differences rather than deficits. We do not define therapy as interventions as we incorporate student's physical, emotional, and mental health, into our Core Offer.

This approach ensures that the identified needs of our students are addressed by all staff members. Our staff are trained to deliver a wellbeing programme tailored to the individual needs of each student, as well as addressing broader special needs. The distinctive nature of our Enterprise Learning approach to curriculum and pedagogy enhances this integrated, therapeutically informed approach, maximising its impact on the development of each student. In addition to our core offer we identify the relational needs of our students and work within a 3 part cycle.

### **Overview**

We have developed a three part cycle as a graduated response, to guide staff in their support of our students:

#### **1. Developing Relationships**

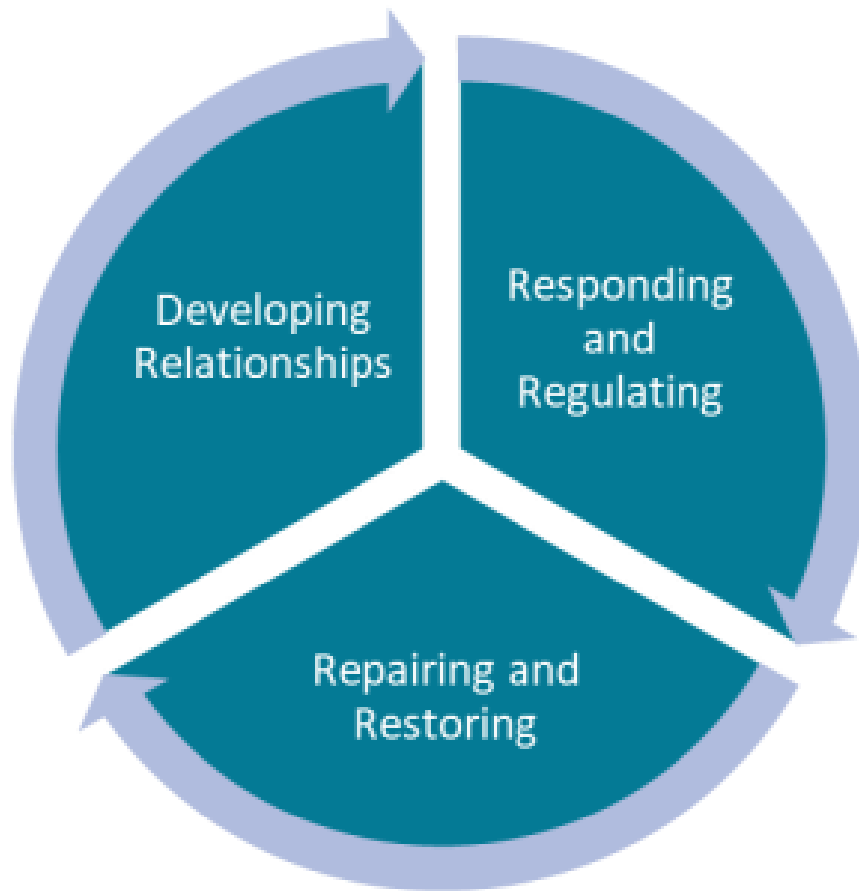
This first stage of this cycle is the universal element of our graduated response. It is through relationships that students learn to feel safe, belong, understand themselves, others and the world. Our overriding influence of how we are in a relationship is the PACE approach (Dan Hughes); to be Playful, Accepting, Curious and Empathetic.

#### **2. Responding and Regulating**

We understand that due to prior experiences, additional needs and environmental triggers, some of our students will, on occasion, communicate their needs through distressed behaviours that can challenge those around them. In order to support them we move to the second phase of this cycle where we can ensure their safety, as well as attune and validate. When the student is ready, we can soothe and regulate. This involves being able to empathise with their feelings and understand their thinking. We use our knowledge of brain development and the response of the body to interpret what we need to do to meet their needs.

#### **3. Repairing and Restoring**

The final part of this cycle can only take place once the student is calm and ready to reflect and should not be initiated too early. In order to support them, we help our students to recognise what happened, why it happened, who was impacted and how they can learn different behaviours to meet their needs and move forward positively. We remember that punitive responses and shame can lead to feelings of worthlessness and helplessness and do not help our students to repair and restore, or learn new more helpful behaviours to meet their needs.



### Relational Approach / Educational Approach

Whilst this policy describes our relational approach and core offer of a therapeutically inspired approach in a discrete and separate way it is essential that it should be read and understood in conjunction with our other school policies. In our school, our relational approach is not a bolt-on, it is not separate, and is instead integrated into our culture and curriculum and core offer which is described at the point of admissions.

For some students, this may mean that whilst we are reviewing the needs of the student within our core offer, we are not initially delivering specific therapies outlined in the EHCP deemed necessary in a previous setting without the relational approach we deliver.

When targeted intervention beyond our core offer and relational approach is required for a student with higher levels of need, specific program adjustments are necessary. This might entail more comprehensive staff training to deliver the required intervention effectively within the specific area of need and will step up to our Wave 2 of interventions.

When a student requires specialised therapeutic intervention, this will be identified during student-focused meetings. If a severe or priority level of need is recognized and targeted support is deemed insufficient, specialist intervention can also be requested through this process

### Relational Support Across Waves of Intervention

Our intervention framework is designed to meet the needs of students at varying levels of support through a tiered approach, ensuring that relational and interventions are tailored to the individual and evolve with the student's progress.

- **Wave 1 (Universal Core offer):**  
All students benefit from universal relational strategies embedded in the school's ethos. These strategies focus on building trust, fostering emotional regulation, and creating a sense of belonging for every student.
- **Wave 2 (Targeted Support):**  
For students who need more focused support, Wave 2 interventions provide additional resources, typically through small group work or individual sessions. These targeted interventions address specific relational and emotional needs while remaining integrated with the student's overall curriculum.
- **Wave 3 (Specialist Support):**  
Is tailored to address deep-rooted challenges and is integrated into the student's overall education plan. This level of intervention is designed to promote emotional regulation, resilience, and long-term positive behavioural change, while ensuring the student remains engaged in their academic development, this may be delivered through an agreed external professional service.

These measurable outcomes will be tracked through individual student relational and enterprise learning plans, as well as progress reports, ensuring the effectiveness of interventions and the student's continued progress.

The metrics we use to assess whether additional support from professional practitioners is needed are aligned with our Student Focused Meetings and help identify potential interventions to support individual students.

**Attendance/Belonging:** Attendance is declining without substantive reason or under 70% as a total.

**Communication:** A breakdown in relationships between family and school is affecting the student's learning progress and attendance. Rule (learning progress and attendance progress, one form -negative communication with parents in logs)

**Learning:** The student is making less than expected progress over 2 terms



**Engagement:** Student engagement is declining or consistent non engagement.

**Safety:** Student safety is compromised despite being managed through risk assessment and or the students' persistent behaviours are significantly disrupting the learning of others. Rule (PI and safety logs)

**Safeguarding:** The student poses a risk to themselves and others despite staff efforts to mitigate these risks or

### Our Relational Approach and Safeguarding

Our relational approach has safeguarding at its core. The way that we build and maintain relationships with our students means we are able to know them, to notice small changes, to develop trust which allows them to feel safe to communicate about their experiences, thoughts and feelings, and for us to contain and support them when they do.

There are likely to be occasions when working in a relationship with young people that staff will feel concerned about elements of their life, either currently or when discussing the past / future. All staff are trained in safeguarding, have read the school Safeguarding Policy, as well as the relevant sections from the most current version of Keeping children Safe In Education.

Staff know how to report their concerns and the school has strong procedures to ensure that any concerns are robustly responded to.

### Our Expectations

Our relational approach is underpinned by our school expectations, which are designed to be few in number, simple to understand and aim to allow everyone the opportunity to thrive within our school community.

#### Our School Expectations

1. Be Ready (*be ready to learn, be ready to let others learn*)
2. Be Respectful (*respect yourself, respect others, respect your environment*)
3. Be Safe (*keep yourself safe, keep others safe*)

### Prohibited Items

Students are prohibited from bringing the following items into school buildings.

- Weapons including but not limited to knives, blades, guns
- Any item that could be used as a weapon, including tools
- Drugs or drugs paraphernalia
- Alcohol
- Tobacco products, cigarettes, lighters or matches
- Vapes
- High Caffeine based energy drinks
- Aerosols
- Any “gang-related” clothing, symbols, or colours

If any of the above items are brought to school premises, the items must be handed in by the student to a member of staff at the start of the school day and will be given back at the end of the school day. The exception to this is anything that is illegal for the student to have or if staff have reason to believe that the student is planning to use an item for illegal activity. In these cases, the staff will confiscate the item and decide whether to call in parents/carers to collect the item or, in extreme circumstances, call the police and hand them the confiscated item(s).

In ‘Developing Relationships,’ we use our expectations to support students to understand the framework that they are going to work within so that they can keep themselves safe, understand how they can be successful themselves and contribute towards the success of others.

When ‘Responding and Regulating,’ we may refer to the expectations to explain why we are responding; to remind them of our expectations.

In ‘Repairing and Restoring,’ we remind our students of the rationale behind our expectations and use them as a framework to aid reflection and learning.

### A Personalised Approach

There is no universal script or approach that will work with all young people. How we develop relationships and learn about preferences, interests, and successful strategies is critical to ensure our responses are the right ones for the individual we are supporting. As we learn about the elements that make the support of each individual successful, we record these using the Relational Support Plan .

Restrictive Physical Intervention ( please refer to Safe Touch Policy for further detail) is a last resort and should only be used when there is no practicable alternative and when it is wholly necessary to prevent a greater or more significant harm. Restrictive Physical Intervention must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and must never be used as a punishment: It should only be used if there is an immediate and significant danger to student, staff .

Restrictive Physical Intervention must only be used if all other strategies have failed. It must neither be threatened nor employed in a punitive manner, nor to force compliance with staff instructions and should never use more force or last longer than the minimum that is required. It is important to understand the impact of using Restrictive Physical Intervention can have on the stability of relationships and on the emotional state and development of the student. The decision to use RPI is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always be dependent on the individual circumstances. Types of incident where the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention may be necessary fall into 2 broad categories:

- 1) Action due to imminent risk of injury to self or others
- 2) Action due to developing risk of injury to self or others

Restrictive Physical Intervention may be used where a student is on school premises or elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of a staff member and must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary to the circumstances. Permissible physical interventions (*please refer to our Safe Touch Policy*).

In line with our Team Teach training, the following strategies may be employed:

- standing or seated holding or guiding techniques to prevent a student from carrying out an attack to people
- guiding a student away (one or two staff standing to the student's side to escort away from a volatile situation).
- In extreme circumstances more restrictive holds may be used

### **Involvement of Police**

There may be occasions when an incident is / has been significant and that staff consider whether to contact the police for support. There are occasions when this is absolutely appropriate and necessary but equally, careful thought should always be given to the decision. When viewed through the context of the significant barriers that many of our young people already have to achieving a happy, safe and fulfilled adulthood, we should be mindful of the additional barrier that criminalisation and involvement with the criminal justice system can become.

### **Staff reflections**

It is critical that the 'Repair and Restore' process is not solely about reflection on the part of the student. There will almost always be learning on the part of the school and of individual staff. Staff should model humility and where appropriate, share what they feel they might do differently next time as part of the process. Staff reflective practice is embedded within the process of incident reviews.

This policy sets out the support that will be afforded to our students when they experience difficulties. It is acknowledged that staff may also need support as part of their own 'Repair and Restore' processes. The school takes this responsibility seriously and has invested significantly in structures and processes that offer the support that they need.

### Sanctions / Consequences

We do not believe in punitive sanctions or punishments. Research shows that they do not change behaviours and can reinforce the feelings that a student is not good enough, is not worthy and should feel shame. These feelings and emotions are not helpful in promoting meaningful learning over time and do not support the development of skills.

There are times where it is appropriate however, to consider natural consequences. A natural consequence is where a student is helped to understand the natural consequences to them in terms of the effect a particular behaviour has on themselves or others.

Examples of natural consequences, applied through the approaches detailed within 'Repairing and Restoring' include:

- If something is broken, it is no longer available for use.
- Where damage or disruption to the school environment has been caused by a student, then assisting to put this right is a useful consequence that could aid learning.
- If a student's behaviour causes harm to someone else, an attempt to restore and repair may be an appropriate natural consequence but it is important to ensure this is genuine and not forced. A student being encouraged to apologise when they do not understand or agree with doing so has little value.
- If a student's presentation whilst learning in a particular context was judged to be unsafe, the school may make adjustments to their timetable to ensure that they can be more safe; e.g. if a student is not safe whilst in school transport, the risk assessment and relational support plan is updated to allow for a period of time where they do not travel in school transport and instead focus on developing skills so that they can do this again later.
- If a student is misusing school equipment (e.g. craft scissors, kitchen knives, IT equipment) and the result is that there is risk or harm or of disruption to learning, a temporary period whereby they do not have access to the equipment might be considered (whilst understanding the importance of always prioritising learning how to use equipment safely in the longer term).
- If a behaviour causes concern, staff may choose to call parents / carers to inform them of the behaviour. This is not to punish or humiliate the student but to facilitate good communication and a consistent approach to support the student to develop their skills.

It is important to recognise that saying "no" is acceptable and sometimes necessary where there is a concern of safety to the student or others. This provides students with a clearer understanding of the boundaries that they will experience in

education, employment and their community.

### **Relational Support Plan**

The school's Relational Support Plan is a critical tool for managing and planning for different aspects of support, ensuring that everyone is working consistently and predictably together and that the support given throughout the student's day at school is joined up, these plans are held within the school's system Bridge Link.

Our Relational Support Plans include:

- The students' strengths, qualities and interests.
- Strategies that will aid the development and maintenance of strong trusting relationships.
- Strategies of how we work in relationship with the student to keep them safe
- Strategies of how we work in relationship with the student to support them to engage with their learning experiences

### **Incident Recording**

It is critical to record incidents promptly and accurately to ensure that there is sufficient reflection and learning in the period afterwards. It is by observing and recording carefully that we start to see patterns over time, can start to understand the thoughts and feelings that are behind some of the behaviours that we see and can work to offer the appropriate support in response.

Using BridgeLink, staff record their observations and according to the nature of the incident, it is considered as one of the following categories. The categories allow for analysis depending on the nature of the incident and to allow for staff to differentiate and respond according to the level of need that is being communicated.

<b>Level One - Distress</b>	Challenges that are very real for the child themselves but do not significantly impact on others.
<b>Level Two - Disruption</b>	Behaviours develop that begin to interrupt the learning of others (may include lower level damage).
<b>Level Three - Damage</b>	Significant disruption to learning and safety caused by damage to property.
<b>Level Four - Dangerous</b>	Significant disruption to safety caused by risk (or actual harm) to children, staff or others.
<b>Level Five - Crisis</b>	Incidents that are actually or potentially critical (potentially life ending / potential for life-long impact).

### **Our Graduated Response**

The principles of how we respond to individual incidents is outlined above within the 'Repairing and Restoring' and 'Post Incident Review' sections above. However, as part of the wider monitoring over time of incidents, a graduated response may be needed in order to make modifications to the provision we offer our students.

It is important that these modifications are proportional to the individual context and that when they are required, they are actioned as promptly as is practicable via the

### **Exclusion/Suspension**

Spaghetti Bridge has a robust exclusions policy.

### **Termination of Placement/Contract**

The termination of a placement will normally only be considered for serious breaches of school discipline inside or outside the base room after all other strategies and sanctions have been exercised without success. Each situation will be assessed on its own circumstances; each student's individual reactions and needs will be considered. Where we have concerns about the behaviour, or risk of exclusion of a student we will consider that additional support or alternative placement may be required. This will involve assessing the suitability of our provision against a student's special educational needs. We will request a Student Focused Meeting and/or an annual review or interim/emergency review. For further detail please see Ending Student Placement Policy

## **3. Roles & Responsibilities**

### **Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that this policy is included early in the admissions process so that families, students, and external stakeholders are aware of the Spaghetti Bridge approach to therapeutic interventions.

### **Group Safeguarding Lead:**

The Group Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities

### **All staff:**

Staff are responsible for ensuring they have read and understood and complicit with student's relational support plans.

### Support, Advice and Communication

Any questions or concerns about this policy should be communicated to the Group Safeguarding Lead.

#### Appendix 1 - Practical Strategies / Top Tips

- Some situations that we support can provoke feelings of anxiety or stress within ourselves. As adults, we set the tone. If we feel as if our own emotions and feelings are building to a point where we are unable to effectively offer the support that a student needs in that moment. Equally, a student may have a preference to be supported by someone different. It is important that we, without ego, recognise this and make arrangements to swap with someone else.
- There are occasions when responding to a situation where you will need additional support. It is often helpful to have support and guidance from a colleague with more experience or who has a deeper relationship with the student.
- In managing some situations, through the adults wanting to support and help each other, you can reach the situation where you have 'too many cooks.' It is important to have clarity about who is leading and who is there to support and to not have more adults involved than are required. The person taking the lead could, in a conversational manner, let other adults know what is needed from them... which could be asking them to leave.
- It's okay not to get things right every time. On occasions, your well intended efforts to support an individual may not have the desired effect. You may misread a situation or may not be attuned. This is okay. It is important to demonstrate humility and model that when things go wrong, you sometimes need to try again.
- Removing the audience can have a massive impact on the success of supporting an individual when they are distressed or dysregulated. Being around others whilst you are not in control can bring about feelings of shame, embarrassment, and anxiety. Providing privacy, dignity and a sense of safety is critically important. The 'audience' could be considered as other young people or the number of adults who are present.
- It can be tempting to feel like you could only be effective if you are doing something. It is important to remember that sometimes what you don't do is just as important. Providing space and time for messages and communication to be absorbed and understood often requires periods of purposeful inaction; sometimes less is more.
- When supporting a student, it is often helpful to start by reviewing whether their basic needs are met. Often early signs of distress and dysregulation can be rooted in unmet needs in areas such as tiredness and fatigue, pain, feelings of hunger or thirst, feeling too hot / too cold or experiencing sensory overload. If through your relationship and knowledge of them, you are able to adjust the environment by opening a window, providing a drink or snack, turning down the volume on a device or intervening in any other way to meet their sensory needs, it can be very impactful.
- Communication is key. Whenever anxiety is high and a student is in a distressed state,



their ability to socially communicate will be reduced in comparison to what is typical for them and will often misinterpret social cues. We should not expect them to be able to engage or process our communication intentions. Visual or written prompts, in line with their communication needs may help.

- It is important to allow students to communicate. Whilst it is important to reassure them that you are actively listening and engaged with them, care should be taken not to interrupt their flow. It is often unhelpful to interrupt or to 'argue back' when they are expressing their feelings. Even when you might feel you want to correct or reframe some of the comments through attunement and regulation, it is important to choose the moment for this carefully.
- It can be helpful to refer back to our school expectations when supporting a student who is becoming distressed or dysregulated. It helps them to feel a sense of containment by reminding them that there is a structure and there are boundaries. It should be remembered that all of our relational responses to young people should relate back to our expectations. Many other schools choose to 'challenge' young people on a huge number of fronts, including on matters around what they wear, how they style their hair, how they sit in lessons etc. Our expectations are few in number and are very simple and clear; care should be taken not to deviate or create 'new rules' in the moment, in an unpredictable way.
- Distraction and humour can be useful in the moment but we must remember that our intention is always to help our students to learn the skills to regulate and process their thoughts and feelings. Distraction or humour might help in the short term that can lead to thoughts and feelings remaining unprocessed.
- When responding to an incident, the primary behaviour can be followed by secondary behaviours. To understand the function of the behaviour, it is useful to revisit the primary behaviour. For example, if a student leaves a classroom and then progresses to pace around the school causing damage, it is most helpful to understand why they left the classroom first, before addressing the others subsequent behaviours.
- Whilst there might be occasions when we need to become louder to attune to young people, this should not be confused with shouting. Many of our young people will have had previous negative experiences of shouting and there are likely to be associations with significant life events that are likely to have been negative. Shouting is likely to threaten the relationship and bring an end to the trust and safety that is present between the student and the adult.



### Appendix 2 - “Repair and Restore” Framework

This proforma acts as a prompt for staff to enable the student to learn about themselves and others after an incident has occurred.

#### What happened?

Allow the student to tell their story, listening with genuine curiosity and without judgement by:

- Mirroring – facial expression, body language, tone of voice, attuning to mood.
- Accepting and validating the student’s experience and feelings.
- Reflecting back what you hear in manageable chunks and with a structure which aids understanding.
- Soothing. Using soothing (not cross) tones.

#### What were you thinking and how were you feeling?

Some students will find it hard to answer these questions and will need support to help them to integrate their feelings, emotions and thinking through:

- Listening and responding empathically, wondering aloud.
- Starting where the student is at developmentally. Explore physical sensations and name possible emotions.
- Letting the student know that you ‘get it’ (big behaviour usually means big feelings) by accepting their feelings and letting them know that they are valid.

#### Who else has been affected by this?

Explore what effect this might have had on other people. If appropriate, use activities to help the student to see things from other people’s perspectives: upon your own experience or experiences you’ve heard about from others.

- Stories and role play can support empathy. Wonder aloud to aid understanding.
- Pictures and photographs, drawings and cartoons can help the student see other perspectives.

#### What do you need, and what needs to happen now so that the harm can be repaired?

To reinforce the collaborative nature of the process it can be helpful to ask: “how can we put right the harm caused?” or “what have we learnt from this experience?”

This is about reparation in its widest sense. Apologies and restorative actions can be a part of this and can help students to move on, but they are not the goal and are not always appropriate at that time. What does the student need in order to move forward?:

- Short term intervention to help to keep them safe, particularly in managing specific situations / transitions that they may find tricky.
- Support, mediation and a structure to enable the repairing of relationships.
- Reassurance that school provides a structure in which they can feel safe, and that everyone is working to try to ensure that the same thing won’t happen again.

### Appendix 3 - Screening and Searching of Students

Although rarely required, the school has provision for responding to risks that may require the screening and searching of students. In order to keep all students or young people safe we will as schools sometimes be put in the position of having to conduct a search on a student or young person. In these situations we will ensure that at all times we are upholding the dignity of the student or young person involved and are communicating closely with parents / carers . We will have exhausted all other strategies and will only be instigating this line of action to ensure the safety of the student or young person or the safety of others.

The Education Act 1996 covers schools' right to search, and teachers must follow guidance from the Department for Education to ensure that their searches comply with the law.

*“Searching can play a critical role in ensuring that schools are safe environments for all students and staff. It is a vital measure to safeguard and promote staff and student welfare, and to maintain high standards of behaviour through which students can learn and thrive.”*  
( page 7 of the 2022 guidance )

*The following guidelines have been taken from ‘Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools July 2022*

It is a criminal offence to bring a knife or other weapon to school and the DES announced in October 2006 that a school has power, without any new legislation, to require students to undergo screening, when the school does not have reasonable grounds for suspicion.

Legislation enabling searches on suspicion came into force in May 2007.

The main ways to keep knives out of schools continue to be educating young people in better behaviour and in the dangers of illegally carrying a knife, but in addition, school staff are permitted to search a student, with consent, as part of their authority to discipline.

#### **Searching without consent – what the law says:**

Only the Headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the Headteacher, can carry out a search. The Headteacher can authorise individual members of staff to search for specific items that are outlined in the Relational Approach Policy as prohibited items can be searched for.

The list of prohibited items are:

- knives and weapons;
- alcohol or illegal drugs
- stolen items
- 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 student).
- tobacco and cigarette papers;
- fireworks

- pornographic images

Under common law, school staff have the power to search a student for any item if the student agrees. The member of staff should ensure the student understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted so that their agreement is informed.

When exercising these powers the school will take into account the students' age and individual needs. We will make reasonable adjustments if the student or young person has a disability.

We need to be mindful of the reasons that may lead to a student or young person to refuse a search:

- are in possession of a prohibited item;
- do not understand the instruction;
- are unaware of what a search may involve; or
- have had a previous distressing experience of being searched.

It is essential in these situations that we refer to our relational approach and deescalate a situation, support the student or young person to feel safe and understand the need for a search to take place. Staff should follow procedures in recording and reporting all incidents on BridgeLink.

### **When can I search?**

If you have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student is in possession of a prohibited item. Also note:

- The law also says what must be done with prohibited items which are seized following a search.
- The requirement that the searcher be the same sex as the student and that a witness is present will continue to apply in nearly all searches. Where it is practicable to summon a staff member of the same sex as the student and a witness then the teachers wishing to conduct a search must do so.

### **Authorising members of staff**

- Head Teachers should decide who to authorise to use these powers. There is no requirement to provide authorisation in writing.
- Staff, other than security staff, can refuse to undertake a search. The law states that Head Teachers may not require anyone other than a member of the school security staff to undertake a search.
- Staff can be authorised to search for some items but not others; for example, a member of staff could be authorised to search for stolen property, but not for weapons or knives.
- A Head Teacher can require a member of the school's security staff to undertake a search.
- If a security guard, who is not a member of the school staff, searches a student, the person witnessing the search should ideally be a permanent member of the school staff, as they are more likely to know the student.

### **Establishing grounds for a search**

Teachers can only undertake a search without consent if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student may have in his or her possession a prohibited item. The teacher must decide in each particular case what constitutes reasonable grounds for suspicion. For example, they may have heard other students talking about the item or they might notice a student behaving in a way that causes them to be suspicious.

In the exceptional circumstances when it is necessary to conduct a search of a student of the opposite sex or in the absence of a witness, the member of staff conducting the search should bear in mind that a student's expectation of privacy increases as they get older.

The powers allow school staff to search regardless of whether the student is found after the search to have that item. This includes circumstances where staff suspect a student of having items such as illegal drugs or stolen property which are later found not to be illegal or stolen.

### **Searches for items banned by the school rules**

- Any item banned by the school rules may only be searched for under these powers if it has been identified in the school rules as an item that can be searched for.
- The school rules must be determined and published by the Head Teacher in accordance with section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 in maintained schools. In the case of academy schools and alternative provision academies, the school rules must be determined in accordance with the School Behaviour (Determination and Publicising of Measures in Academies) Regulations 2012. Separate advice on school rules is available in 'Behaviour and Discipline – advice for Head Teachers and school staff'.
- Under section 89 and the School Behaviour (Determination and Publicising of Measures in Academies) Regulations 2012 the Head Teacher must publicise the school behaviour policy, in writing, to staff, parents and students at least once a year.

### **Location of a search**

- Searches without consent can only be carried out on the school premises or, if elsewhere, where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the student, for example on school trips in England or in training settings.
- The powers only apply in England.

### **Record keeping**

It is essential that clear and accurate records are kept following any search. All such incidents should follow our procedures and record on BridgeLink on the same day as the incident or if not possible within **24 hours** of the incident taking place.

Schools are encouraged to include in the record of each search:

- the date, time and location of the search;

- which student was searched;
- who conducted the search and any other adults or students present;
- what was being searched for;
- the reason for searching;
- what items, if any, were found; and
- what follow-up action was taken as a consequence of the search

### **Informing parents**

We believe that the best educational experiences come for students or young people when we work openly and transparently with parents and carers. Schools should reinforce the whole-school approach by building and maintaining positive relationships with parents. Parents should always be informed of any search for a prohibited item...and the outcome of the search as soon as is practicable.

*“A member of staff should inform the parents of what, if anything, has been confiscated and the resulting action the school has taken, including any sanctions applied.”*

### **Strip Searches**

*“While the decision to undertake the strip search itself and its conduct are police matters, school staff retain a duty of care to the student(s) involved and should advocate for student wellbeing at all times.”*

Before calling police into school, staff should assess and balance the risk of a potential strip search on the student’s mental and physical wellbeing and the risk of not recovering the suspected item.

### **The role of an appropriate adult**

“Examples of an appropriate adult include, but are not limited to, a parent, relative, social worker, teacher or, if the person is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation.”

[PACE Code C 2019](#) details the role a person undertakes when acting as the “appropriate adult” (usually a parent, guardian or social worker) while a student is being questioned or detained by the police.

It includes an expectation that the appropriate adult will “support, advise and assist” the young person, and also “observe whether the police are acting properly and fairly to respect [the young person’s] rights and entitlements, and inform an officer of the rank of inspector or above if they consider that they are not”.

**The need for staff to understand the student's rights**

"[I]t is vital that all staff understand their rights and the rights of the student who is being searched."