

2024



Ysgol Gyfun Bryntirion |   
Bryntirion Comprehensive

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP POLICY

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Date:	NOV 2024
Approved by Governing body	

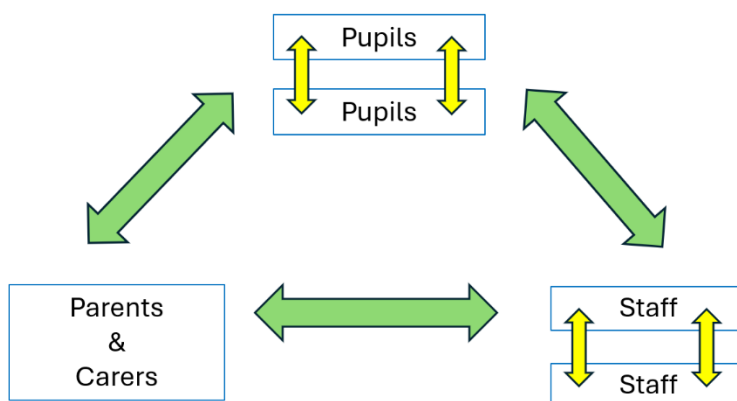
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Positive Relationship Policy

1.1 Rationale

- A positive school relationship policy integrates trauma-informed approaches, restorative practices, and emotional intelligence to create a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment. By prioritising understanding students' emotional needs, fostering empathy, and resolving conflicts through dialogue rather than just the use of sanctions, the policy promotes student well-being, strengthens community bonds, and supports academic success.



- The school relationship policy plays a pivotal role in fostering and sustaining strong connections among pupils, staff, and parents/carers within the educational community. By establishing clear guidelines and expectations for interactions, the policy ensures that all members understand their roles and responsibilities in nurturing positive relationships. This not only creates a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected but also enhances communication and collaboration between all stakeholders. Ultimately, a well-implemented relationship policy lays the foundation for a cohesive school community where trust, empathy, and mutual understanding thrive, leading to improved academic outcomes and overall well-being for all involved.

1.2 Aims

- Foster a positive, calm, and purposeful learning environment
- Cultivate relationships built on mutual respect and clear boundaries.
- Develop a consistent approach to managing the learning environment with a focus on de-escalation of situations.
- Encourage pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and impacts of it, through the use of restorative practices.
- Consider the impact of each student's life experiences, including trauma, when addressing their behaviour, demonstrating empathy and understanding.
- Encourage students to reflect on their life experiences, including trauma, promoting self-awareness and resilience.
- Prioritise the well-being and emotional regulation of both students and staff.

- Ensure that everyone understands that behaviours can change with the correct responses and support.

1.3 Expectations of all Pupils

- At Bryntirion, we hold all pupils to the highest standard of our school ethos: "Be Bryntirion." This ethos encompasses a set of expectations that every student is expected to embody, shaping their behaviour, attitudes, character and contributions to our community.
- **"Be Bryntirion,"** comprises of four key pillars:
 1. **Be Respectable:** *We expect all pupils to demonstrate respect towards each other and staff through their words and actions. Mutual respect forms the foundation of our community, fostering positive relationships and a supportive environment for all.*
 2. **Be Ready:** *Punctuality and preparedness are essential for success. We expect all pupils to arrive on time and fully equipped for learning, maximising their opportunities to engage and achieve in school.*
 3. **Be Safe:** *Safety is paramount in our school community. We expect all pupils to conduct themselves in a manner that prioritises the well-being of themselves and others and to respect the school environment, ensuring a secure and nurturing environment for all.*
 4. **Be Successful:** *Beyond academic achievement, success encompasses resilience, confidence, perseverance, accountability, ethics, and overall well-being. We nurture these qualities in our pupils, equipping them with the tools they need to thrive and excel in all aspects of life.*
- Any breaches of the above will be dealt with through the school's 'Behaviour for Learning' and 'Anti-bullying' policy. Pupils are made aware of these expectations through form time, assemblies (reset assemblies) and posters around the school.

1.4 Managing the learning environment (Staff)

- When managing the learning environment, Bryntirion staff are required to consistently and fairly implement the school's 'Behaviour for Learning' policy. Below are five principles for staff to help adopt a proactive approach to managing the learning environment;
 1. **Relentless Routines:** Consistent routines provide structure and predictability for students, which can be especially comforting for those who may struggle with uncertainty. By starting each class with familiar routines like a Meet & Greet or a Do Now activity, students know what to expect, which helps them transition into learning mode more smoothly. Additionally, using effective questioning techniques and consistent language of learning not only encourages student engagement but also helps them stay focused on the task at hand. These routines create a safe and stable environment where students can thrive academically and emotionally.
 2. **Be Positive:** Positivity is contagious, and by maintaining a positive attitude, teachers can create a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning. When students receive praise and positive reinforcement for their efforts, they are more likely to feel motivated and confident in their abilities. Moreover, by being mindful of their tone of voice and body

language, teachers can convey safety and approachability, which encourages students to feel comfortable expressing themselves and participating in class discussions.

3. **Connect before Correct:** This principle emphasises the importance of building rapport and establishing trust with students before addressing any behavioural issues. By showing genuine interest in students' lives and emotions, teachers can create a supportive classroom environment where students feel valued and understood. When students know that their teachers care about them as individuals, they are more likely to be receptive to feedback and guidance. Taking the time to listen actively and validate students' feelings helps strengthen the teacher-student relationship and fosters a sense of belonging in the classroom.
4. **Condemn the Behaviour, not the Pupil:** It's essential for teachers to separate a student's behaviour from their identity. By focusing on the behaviour itself rather than labelling the student, teachers can avoid damaging the student's self-esteem and instead help them see that they have the power to change their actions. Engaging in restorative conversations allows teachers to address behavioural issues in a constructive and empathetic manner, fostering a sense of accountability and personal responsibility in students. This approach encourages students to reflect on their choices and consider the impact of their actions on themselves and others.
5. **Emotional awareness:** Teachers who possess emotional awareness are adept at recognising and managing their own emotions, as well as understanding and empathising with the emotions of others. When faced with challenging situations in the classroom, emotionally intelligent teachers remain calm and composed, which helps de-escalate tensions and create a sense of stability. By modelling emotional regulation and demonstrating empathy towards students, teachers can create a supportive learning environment where students feel safe and valued. This enables students to focus on their learning and academic growth without being hindered by emotional distractions.

1.5 Dealing with dysregulated pupils

- Dysregulation, or emotional dysregulation, poses significant challenges for both students and staff in the learning environment. Understanding the causes of pupil dysregulation is essential for effectively managing these situations and providing appropriate support. Dysregulation can arise from various factors, including high levels of anxiety, sensory overload, past trauma, fear or difficulty coping with stressors. When students experience dysregulation, they may struggle to regulate their emotions and behaviours, leading to disruptions in the classroom. It is in these situations when the pupil has 'flipped their lid' that we need to de-escalate the situation using the following approaches.

In the moment, when faced with a dysregulated student, it's crucial to employ effective de-escalation techniques to restore calm and promote a positive learning environment:

- **Offer/create time and space** - for everyone to regain their composure and re-engage their "thinking brain."
- **Practice mirroring** - as the student may mirror your response. Maintain non-threatening body language, such as positioning and maintaining eye contact, to convey safety cues.

- **Encourage slow breathing exercises** - like inhaling through the nose for four counts, holding for two counts, and exhaling through the mouth for six counts, to promote relaxation.
- **Use a lower, slower, and calmer tone of voice** - to convey reassurance and calmness.
- **Choose language carefully**, avoiding sarcasm, judgment, humiliation, or confrontation.
- **Use positive and specific requests** - instead of negative commands.("Do" "Please can you..." rather than "Don't" "Get out")
- **Employ self-talk** - to maintain perspective, reminding yourself that the behaviour is not personal and that you are the adult in the situation.
- **Use following strategies to help re-regulate the student,**
 1. walk and talk,
 2. engaging in breathing exercises,
 3. distracting with conversation on a different topic
 4. providing physical outlets like pushing against something secure.
 5. Introduce humour cautiously to diffuse tension, without trivialising the situation.
 6. Ensure the presence of an emotionally available adult who the student trusts.

Afterwards or when possible, it's essential we address the behaviour and its impact:

- **Deal with the behaviour**, including applying appropriate sanctions as necessary.
- **Implement restorative approaches/conversation**, engaging in discussions about the behaviour's (See 2.4) impact on the student and others, fostering accountability and empathy.
- **Re-regulate self (staff)** through self-care practices, offloading emotions, and discussing the incident with colleagues or support networks. Taking care of our own well-being is crucial for maintaining a supportive learning environment.

1.6 Restorative Conversations

- Restorative conversations play a pivotal role in transforming behaviours by fostering accountability, empathy, and understanding. These conversations provide a structured framework for pupils to reflect on the impact of their actions, take responsibility for their behaviour, and repair harm caused to others. Restorative conversations should ideally occur promptly after an incident or behaviour, allowing individuals to address the issue while it is still fresh in their minds. By engaging in restorative conversations early on, individuals have the opportunity to gain insights into their actions, understand the perspectives of others, and work towards resolution and reconciliation. This process promotes personal growth, strengthens relationships, and cultivates a sense of community within the learning environment. Ultimately, restorative conversations empower individuals to make positive changes in their behaviour, contributing to a more harmonious and respectful school culture.
- Below is a example structure for a restorative conversation;



1.7 Dealing with pupils who have experienced significant trauma.

- Trauma is not the event itself, but an emotional response to a painful and shocking event, which affects children's emotional responses and reduces their ability to regulate emotions effectively. This often results in more frequent dysregulated behaviours such as difficulty concentrating, impulsivity, aggression, or withdrawal. These behaviours disrupt the learning environment and hinder academic engagement and social relationships. Also, trauma can significantly impact academic attainment. Persistent dysregulation interferes with cognitive functioning, memory, and information processing, leading to academic underachievement and struggles to meet expectations.

Implementing trauma-informed approaches is crucial for addressing these challenges effectively. By recognising the impact of trauma on behaviour and academic performance, staff can create supportive and nurturing environments that promote healing and resilience. Trauma-informed approaches prioritise safety, trust, collaboration, and empowerment, fostering a sense of belonging and well-being for all students.

- Trauma is the outcome of a pupil experiencing **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**, these include;
 - domestic violence
 - parental abandonment through separation or divorce
 - a parent with a mental health condition
 - being the victim of abuse (physical, sexual and/or emotional)
 - being the victim of neglect (physical and emotional)
 - a member of the household being in prison

- growing up in a household in which there are adults experiencing alcohol and drug use problems.
 - Poverty
 - Lockdown/COVID-19
- To support pupils with their trauma, staff will adopt the **PACE** -Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy (Hughes, 2015) approach when dealing with these pupils. This approach is explained below;
 1. **Playfulness:** Using a light-hearted, reassuring tone - similar to parent-infant interactions - to creating an atmosphere of safety and reassurance where no one feels judged and the pupil feels able to cope with positive feelings
 2. **Acceptance:** Unconditional acceptance is fundamental to a child's sense of safety because it shows that you have connected with their feelings without judgement. Accepting the child or young person's feelings and emotions does not mean accepting unwanted behaviour and it does not mean agreeing with the child's viewpoint, but for true acceptance to take place, it is important that the child also knows you can see them beyond their behaviour. **Curiosity:** It's important to be curious about the child's thoughts, feelings, wishes and intentions: they may still be learning that other people can think about them in this way or that they can be held in mind by an adult without judgement and accusation at all.
 3. **Curiosity** is also important for discipline to be effective: connect with the emotion before you engage in discussion. Showing the child that you are interested in what is going on for them and willing to do something about it is a very powerful experience.
 4. **Empathy:** When you show empathy you are showing the child that their feelings are important to you, and that you are alongside them in their difficulty. You are showing that you can cope with the hard times with them and you are trying hard to understand how it feels. Understanding and expressing your own feelings about the child's experience can often be more effective than reassurance
 - Pupils who have experienced trauma will receive further support through structured well-being intervention program within the school. Additionally, pupil information will be shared with staff empathetically during weekly safeguarding meetings, and any necessary adjustments to their learning/provision will be documented on safety plans, one-page profiles, IDPs, and PSPs.

1.8 Staff Wellbeing

- Staff given time to re-regulate following significant behaviour incident: Staff have time to recalibrate after significant behaviour incidents, ensuring they can continue their duties effectively and supportively.
- Staff given the opportunity for debriefing sessions with Safeguarding/Senior Lead: Staff engage in debriefing sessions facilitated by designated personnel to reflect on incidents, express concerns, and receive guidance, fostering cohesion and resilience.

- Staff-only spaces made available for staff to re-regulate and destress: Dedicated spaces provide staff with a supportive environment to decompress and seek solace or support, prioritizing their mental and emotional well-being.
- Staff provided with sufficient support to deal with pupil behaviour: Comprehensive support and resources equip staff to effectively manage behaviour challenges, promoting a positive learning environment.
- Staff supported with the implementation of the Behaviour for Learning policy: Leadership at all levels supports staff in implementing behaviour policies, fostering accountability and collaboration.
- Staff well-being - promoting a calmer approach to behaviour management, reducing the stress and emotional strain on staff.

1.9 Staff to Staff working

- At Bryntirion, the foundation of success is built upon the principles of effective collaboration and respect among all staff members. This collective effort fosters innovation and ensures that we achieve our collective goals efficiently. Respectful interactions among all staff are paramount, as they create a positive and inclusive work environment where everyone feels valued and heard. Being a team player is crucial, as it involves actively supporting colleagues, sharing knowledge, and contributing to a cohesive team culture. This approach not only enhances job satisfaction and morale but also reduces conflicts and misunderstandings. By prioritising these principles for all staff, we cultivate a culture of mutual support, trust, and teamwork.

1.10 Staff to Parent/Carer working

- In our school, maintaining positive relationships between staff and parents/carers is of utmost importance. We believe that fostering strong, respectful partnerships with parents and carers enhances the educational experience and well-being of our students. Open, honest, and timely communication is key to building trust and understanding. We encourage staff to actively listen to the concerns and suggestions of parents and carers, valuing their insights as crucial contributions to our school community. By working collaboratively and respectfully with parents and carers, we create a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes the academic and personal growth of every student. This partnership is essential in ensuring that our students receive the comprehensive support they need to succeed both inside and outside the classroom. (This is explained further in the school's Communication policy).