BROCKSWOOD PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

LEARNING TOGETHER - ACHIEVING TOGETHER

Trauma Informed School's Relationship Policy

Date: September 2024

Review Date: September 2026

Brockswood Primary and Nursery School is invested in supporting the very best relational health between all stakeholders: children, staff, parents and external agencies. To this end, our school is committed to educational practises that include Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect as set out by Trauma Informed Schools.

Protect

- Increase 'safety cues' throughout the school. Meet and greet policy at the school gate and classroom door for all children. Open door policy for informal discussions with parents/carers.
- Staff trained in 'PACE' modes of interaction: being warm, empathetic, playful and curious.
- Vulnerable children to have easy and daily access to at least one named, emotionally available adult, and know when and where to find that adult. If the child does not wish to connect with the allocated adult, an alternative adult is found.
- Staff adjust expectations around vulnerable children to correspond with their developmental capabilities and experience of traumatic stress. This includes removing vulnerable and traumatised children in a kind, non-judgemental way from the situation they are not managing well and may find stressful (creating regulation spaces).
- Interventions that help staff get to know children better on an individual basis e.g. 'I wish my teacher knew..' (what matters to them, who matters to them, their dreams and hopes, painful experiences which interfere with the quality of life at school and/or at home, what help, if any, they would like with these) following up with conversational and quality time.
- By using the guidance set out in this policy, staff will try to ensure that interactions with children are socially engaging and not socially defensive: not using harsh voices, shouting, sarcasm, criticisms or shaming. Staff 'interactively repair' occasions when they themselves move into defensiveness.
- Provision of a clear, confidential and non-shaming system of self-referral for children's help/talk time.
- The nurturing of staff in such a way that they feel truly valued and emotionally regulated and in doing so to support the children to interact throughout the school day with positive social engagement rather than defensiveness.

Relate

- A whole-school commitment to enabling children to see themselves, their relationships and the world positively, rather than through a lens of threat, danger or self-blame.
- Vulnerable children provided with repeated relational opportunities (with emotionally-available adults) to make the shift from 'blocked trust' (not feeling psychologically safe with anyone) to trust and from self-help to 'help seeking'.

Regulate

- Relational interventions specifically designed to bring down stress hormone levels (e.g. from toxic to tolerable) in vulnerable children, enabling them to feel calm, soothed and safe. This is to support learning, quality of life and protect against stress-induced physical and mental illness, now and later in life.
- Evidence-based interventions that aim to repair psychological damage and brain damage caused by traumatic life experiences, through emotionally regulating, playful, enriched adult-child interactions.
- The emotional well-being and regulating of staff is treated as a priority to prevent burn-out, stress related absence or leaving the profession through stress-related illness, secondary trauma and/or feeling undervalued, blamed or shamed.

Reflect

- Staff development and training in the art of good listening, dialogue, empathy and understanding (instead of asking lots of questions/giving lectures).
- Provision of skills and resources to parents and staff in having empathetic conversations with vulnerable children who want to talk about their lives. This is to empower children to better manage their home situations and life in general.
- Within the context of an established and trusted relationship with a member of staff, children are given the means and opportunity to symbolise painful life experiences through images as well as

word, as a key part of ‘working through’ these experiences and memory re-consolidation. This includes the provision of different modes of expression e.g. art/play/drama/music/sand/emotion worksheets/emotion cards.

- PSHE to include teaching on key aspects of mental health and mental ill-health so children can make informed decisions about how to treat their brains, bodies, minds and relationships. Providing them with a range of healthy options. Teaching on how to do relationships well including how to manage conflict.
- Staff development and training to help children move on from ‘behaving’ their trauma/painful life experiences, to reflecting on those experiences. Staff learn to do this through empathetic conversation, addressing children’s negative self-referencing and helping them develop positive, coherent narratives about their lives.
- A behaviour policy that is based not on punishment and sanctions but resolution and interactive repair.

In addition to the above training and support for pupils and staff, Brockswood Primary and Nursery School is committed to ensuring children have access to external agencies for therapeutic support when appropriate. The school funds the use of external professionals as part of our offer to children and families at our school. This support includes: art therapy, counselling and play therapy amongst others. Additionally, we are always open to and seeking the best possible therapeutic interventions for our children.