

A Trauma Informed School's Relationship Policy

Christ the King RC Primary School



Our school is devoted to supporting the very best possible relational health between children, teachers and parents.

At Christ The King we are committed to educational practices that include Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect as set out by Trauma Informed Schools.

Protect

- Increase 'safety cues' throughout school. Meet and greet policy at the school gate and classroom door for all children. Open door policy for parents to meet with teachers as and when needed.
- Ensure that all vulnerable children have easy access to at least one named, emotionally-available adult, and know when and where to find them.
- School staff adjust expectations of vulnerable children to correspond to their developmental capabilities and experience of traumatic stress.
- Children will be removed from situations they are not managing and those they may find stressful (creating a regulation space).
- 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 not operate from their social defence system: not using harsh voices, shouting, sarcasm, criticisms or commands. Interactive repair is in evidence on the occasions when a member of staff momentarily 'loses it'.

Relate

- Develop a whole school approach for ways of relating to vulnerable children to enable them to see themselves, their relationships and the world more positively, rather than through a lens of threat or danger (Affect Attunement, Empathy, Containment and Soothing/Emotional Regulation).
- Vulnerable children to be helped shift from 'blocked trust' to trust, and from self-help to help-seeking. This will be provided through new correctional relational experiences (E.G. accompanied drumming). Providing sufficient repeated positive experiences to enable vulnerable children to gain enduring felt knowledge of relationships as nurturing rather than threatening.

Regulate

- A variety of interventions implemented to bring down stress hormone levels in vulnerable children (from toxic to tolerable) enabling them to feel calm, soothed and safe. This is to support learning and protect against stress-induced physical and mental illness, now and in later life (listening, affect labelling, mental state talk, empathy).
- Help vulnerable children to develop effective stress regulatory systems in brain and body (good vagal tone) through mental state talk, empathy, containment and soothing.

Reflect

- Key staff trained in the art of good listening (instead of asking lots of questions/giving lectures) mental state talk, empathy and understanding in order to engage in meaningful conversations with vulnerable children.
- Empower adults in school to feel confident to develop their relationships with children and to have conversations about their lives.
- 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 words, as a key part of 'working through' these experiences and memory re-consolidation. Means include the provision of different modes of expression, e.g. art/play/drama/ music/sand/emotion worksheets/emotion cards. Help children to form coherent narratives about what has happened to them in their lives and build up self-esteem and stop negative self-referencing, re-victimisation of self or others.
- Help vulnerable children grieve and express empowered anger – key to the process of positive change.
- Staff training and development on supporting children to move from 'behaving' their trauma/painful life experiences to reflecting on their trauma/painful life experiences through empathetic conversations.
- PSHE to include teaching on the 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.