Respect. Communicate. Enjoy.

Relationship Policy

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Next Review date:	February 2029

Signed Date

Chairperson schools governing body, on behalf of the Governing Body

Signed Date

Headteacher

Distribution: Staff, governors, pupils, parents/carers and interested parties.

Introduction

Ysgol Ty Coch Special School is a Rights Respecting School. As a Rights Respecting School, we aim to embed children's human rights in our ethos and school culture. We base our practice on the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and

participation. Working within these principles not only empowers our children and young people, but also leads to enhanced learning, improved standards and better relationships.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the most complete statement of children's rights ever produced and is the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history. This policy relates to Articles 18, 19 and 39 of the UNCRC.

Article 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance)

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.

Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)

Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

At Ysgol Ty Coch Special School we are invested in promoting the best possible relational health between:

- Parent and child
- Child and child
- Child and school staff
- Parent and school staff
- All School staff

- School staff and external agencies

To achieve this, our school is committed to educational practices, which,

“Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect” (Trauma Informed Schools Approach)

Protect - this is promoted by:

1. increased safety cues such as school staff meet and greet at the school hall or classroom door at the start of the day in order to help the young people feel reassured and transition well into school
2. school staff having been trained in ‘PACE’ (Play, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) models of interaction (Hughes 2015). This model advocates being warm, empathetic, playful and curious and is proven to shift children out of flight/fight or freeze positions.
3. school staff ensuring that interactions with children are socially engaging, not socially defensive, in order to decrease the chance of children relating in a defensive manner by demonstrating a flight/fight or freeze response
4. continuing a whole school commitment to refraining from using methods, such as using harsh voices, shouting, put-downs, criticisms and shaming, which are psychologically and neurologically damaging.
5. school staff understanding that occasionally we ‘get it wrong’. When this occurs staff should take steps to repair the situation and not go into a defensive mode.
6. a whole school approach to enabling children to feel safe enough to want to talk (if they wish to) about painful life experiences. School staff can do this by implementing pedagogical interventions which will enable school staff to get to know the child better on an individual basis by allowing them the opportunity to impart what is on their mind. e.g. “I wish my teacher knew …” (what matters to them, who matters to them, their hopes and dreams).
7. ensuring that vulnerable children are aware of how and where to find an emotionally available adult who is available to them, should they want/need to speak to someone on any matter. If a child indicates that they do not want to

connect with a certain adult then an alternative person will be found – "change of face" (Team Teach) is of the utmost importance.

8. Tempering staff's expectations around vulnerable children. These expectations need to be adjusted to correspond with the child's developmental capabilities and their experience of traumatic stress. This includes children who are vulnerable, and/or traumatised, being removed from a situation in a kind and non-judgemental way. When, in certain situations, children are not managing their emotions they should be offered access to a separate space/calmer activity.
9. offering pupils a clear, confidential, non-shaming system of self-referral for help/talk time
10. the nurturing of school staff in such a way that they feel valued and emotionally regulated enough to be able to interact, throughout the school day, with social engagement rather than defensiveness.
    Senior leads will provide feedback on what staff are doing well with specific reference to how they are enhancing children's wellbeing.

Relate- this is promoted by

1. all school staff being trained in emotional coaching and in relating to children in terms of the four key relational needs for; secure attachment, affect attunement, empathy, soothing and containment.
2. a whole school commitment to enabling children to see themselves, their relationships and the world more positively, rather than through the lens of threat, danger or self blame.
3. providing relational opportunities for vulnerable children to connect with emotionally available adults at school, to enable them to make the shift from 'blocked trust' (not feeling psychologically safe with anyone) to trust, and from self help to 'help seeking'.

Regulate- this is promoted by;

1. applying interventions that are designed to bring down stress hormone levels from toxic to tolerable This will enable vulnerable children to feel calm, soothed and safe. These interventions will support learning, quality of life and protect against stress induced physical and mental illness, now and later in life.
2. engaging in adult and child interactions which should be enriched, playful and emotionally regulating. In doing so, providing nurturing and regulatory interventions that aim to repair psychological and brain damage, caused by traumatic life experiences.
3. treating staff emotional well-being being treated as a high priority, (the aim being) to prevent burn-out, stress related absence and discourage the feeling of being undervalued, blamed or shamed.
4. designated times for supervision and/or relaxation/mindfulness sessions for staff. These sessions need to be timetabled in a protected and calm environment (Wellbeing Centre) which is specifically designed to support the release of natural anti-stress, pro-social neurochemicals (opioids and oxytocin).

Reflect- this is promoted by;

1. staff being educated in the art of good listening, dialogue, empathy and understanding - instead of asking lots of questions and lecturing.
2. parents and staff making use of the provision, skills and resources available such as Emotional Literacy booklets and webinars which will enable them to have meaningful, empathetic conversations with children. This will assist vulnerable children to build positive relationships which will enable them to better manage their home life situations and life in general.
3. providing children with the means to express traumatic life experiences through images, rather than through words alone, as part of working through the memory and memory reconsolidation. Children should have different modes of expression available to them e.g. sand trays/play/music/art/emotion worksheets.
4. planning interventions/lessons which include learning about relationship health, family, parenting, intimate relationships (age appropriate) and tools for how to do well in life. Content should enable children to make informed choices

about how they relate to others and how they choose to treat their brains, bodies and minds now and in the future.

5. staff being trained to help children move from 'behaving' their traumatic life experiences, to reflecting on those experiences through empathetic conversations in order to address negative self-referencing and help them to develop coherent narratives about their lives.
6. the Senior Leadership Team providing staff with a forum to talk, in confidence, about their feelings and any particular stress triggers. Staff are able to access counselling through LA Occupational Health referrals, Vivup and Wellbeing support . They can also access health benefits through the School Wellbeing app.
7. a whole school approach which is not based on punishment, sanctions or isolation, but one that models enquiry, resolution and interactive repair.

Equal Opportunities

The school operates a policy of equality for all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs or culture. Pupils identified as Children Looked After (CLA), More Able and Talented (MAT) and those on the child protection register, are supported in line with their individual needs to afford them equal access to the curriculum.

All teachers at the school take account of all pupils' learning styles and their learning needs. They must demonstrate an understanding of how our pupils' development and wellbeing are affected by a range of social, religious, ethnic, gender, cultural and linguistic differences. All teachers take account of diversity and promote equality and inclusion in their teaching.

Safeguarding

The safeguarding of pupils is of paramount importance. The school understands its duty to keep learners safe and adheres to the PREVENT agenda and broader safeguarding guidelines. Regular and well planned lessons are taught in e-safety and Relationship Sexuality Education (RSE) to ensure our pupils are given the very best advice on how to keep themselves safe. Literacy skills are integral to this understanding.

Staff Development

Staff will have access to in-service training as and when appropriate. This is in accordance with the school's policy for staff development. In addition, the designated person for CLA will update staff annually. Any new developments regarding the relationship policy will be disseminated throughout the year. Learning will also take place through sharing documents on the staff drive and the G drive.

Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Relationships Sexuality Education Policy (RSE)
- Children Looked After Policy
- Equality and Anti Discrimination Policy
- Equality and Accessibility
- Equal Opportunities
- Safeguarding