St Levan Primary School



 where all children SHINE…for life

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| **Relationship Policy** |
|  School |  St Levan Primary School |
|  Date Written  |  September 2019 |
|  Reviewed on |   |
|  Next Review Due |  September 2021 |
|  I confirm that this policy has been reviewed and adopted by the Governing Body of St Levan Primary School. Chair of Governors: Sharon Brolly Date: 7th October 2019 |



**Relationship Policy**

**St Levan Primary School**

**where all children SHINE-for life**

**Monitoring and review**

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and for seeking the views of staff, children and parents. The Headteacher will report to the governing body on the effectiveness of this policy.

This policy was approved by the full governing body in October 2019. It is due for review by September 2021.

**Rationale**

At St Levan Primary School we have the highest expectations and aspirations for our children. We believe that children deserve to learn in an environment in which the highest standards of conduct are met by all children and adults. We believe that children will achieve their potential and become successful members of our community in an atmosphere in which they feel safe and respected, where they are inspired to learn and are clear of the expectations we have of them.

We believe that consistency and fairness are crucial to creating an environment in which people feel valued and empowered and are treated with honesty and respect. We believe that if a person behaves in an inappropriate way, it is their behaviour that is of concern and is challenged and not them as a person.

**Aims**

* To ensure that all members of our school community are responsible citizens.
* To foster a positive ethos in our school community, solving problems in a restorative way.

**Our school community**

Our school community is everyone that is involved in, or works with, the school. This is pupils, parents, staff and visitors. Every member of our school community has a part to play so that we can:

* maintain a happy and co-operative atmosphere;
* encourage a truly caring environment;
* take pride in our school and community;
* be truthful, honest and tolerant and to know the difference between right and wrong;
* work together to celebrate success and overcome problems.

**Our expectations**

Our school community shall:

* expect high standards of behaviour and conduct;
* encourage and acknowledge good manners;
* respond to one another in a positive manner;
* enhance our pupils’ self-esteem by highlighting their successes;
* solve our problems using restorative practices.

Our school is invested in supporting the very best possible relationships between:

* Parent and child
* Child and child
* Child and school staff
* Parent and school staff
* School staff
* School staff and senior leaders
* School staff and external agencies.

To this end our school is committed to educational practices which Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect;

**Protect**

* Increased ‘safety cues’ in all aspects of the school day; ‘meet and greet’ at the classroom door and an open door policy for informal discussions with parents/ carers.
* Staff trained in ‘PACE’ modes of interaction (Hughes 2015); being warm empathetic, playful and curious (proven to shift children out of flight/fright/freeze positions).
* Staff ensure that interactions with children are socially engaging and not socially defensive, to decrease likelihood of children responding defensively (flight/fright/freeze).
* A whole school commitment to cease all use of harsh voices, shouting, put downs, criticism and shaming (proven to be damaging psychologically and neurologically).
* Staff ‘interactively repair’ occasions when they themselves move into defensiveness.
* Pedagogic interventions that help staff to 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, hopes). This is key to enabling children to feel safe enough to talk, if they wish, about painful life experiences, which are interfering with their ability to learn and their quality of life.
* Vulnerable children 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.
* School 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 and non-judgmental way from situations they are not managing well (e.g. children who are continually triggered into alarm states in the main playground can access a calmer, smaller area with emotionally regulating adults).
* Provision of a clear, confidential and non-shaming system of self-referral for children’s help/talk time e.g. use of a worry box or worry monster. The nurturing of staff in such a way that they feel truly valued and emotionally-regulated and in so doing to support them 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 in later 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 and, or leaving the profession through stress-related illness, secondary trauma and/or feeling undervalued, blamed or shamed.

**Reflect**

* Staff training and development in the art of good listening, dialogue, empathy and understanding (instead of asking a series of questions/ giving lectures).
* Provision of skills and resources to support parents and staff in meaning 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 (working alliance), children are given the methods 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. These include the provision of different modes of expression, e.g. art/play/drama/ music/sand/emotion worksheets/emotion cards.
* PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and psycho education as preventative input, informed by current research psychological and neuroscience on mental health, mental ill-health, relationships, emotions, social media and tools for how to ‘do life well’. Curricular content enables children to make informed choices about how they relate to others, how they live their life, and how they treat their brains, bodies and minds.
* Staff development and training to help children move 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.

**Promoting positive relationships in class**

* Employing a variety of techniques and strategies to engage pupils. Differentiated, engaging and stimulating learning experiences are proven to lead to pupil engagement.
* Circle time and Health and Well-being activities help to have a positive impact on pupils. Circle time allows all children the chance to share their thoughts and concerns in a non-judgmental and secure environment. Daily emotional check-ins helps staff to gauge pupils’ feelings. Knowing what is likely to upset a child can de-escalate problems before they arise.
* Every child is encouraged to talk to any member of the school team if they have worries. The school team will help the child with their worries.

**Celebration of positive relationships and achievements**

* Positive relationships are intimately connected to pupil engagement and achievement.
* Weekly celebration assemblies provide a forum through which positive relationships and achievements can be shared and celebrated.
* Teachers may also use verbal praise, stickers, points, notes to parents or telephone calls to celebrate a pupil’s achievements or conduct throughout the week.

**Procedures for dealing with non-positive relationships**

* In all cases, staff will listen before making judgments and aim to treat the children fairly and appropriately. Staff will always try to de-escalate behaviour.
* Minor, and one-off incidents, will usually be dealt with by the class teacher.
* In more serious incidents, the Head Teacher/ Principal Teacher (when the HT is off site) will immediately be informed.
* The class teacher or Head Teacher may contact the parents to discuss the matter.

**Outside Agencies**

We have strong links with many external agencies who we use to support our children and families. These include CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), Cornwall Children’s Services, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologist and Family Support Workers. Our aim is to provide “early help” through “Team Around a Child” meetings which can be extremely successful in supporting families to manage challenging behaviour at home and in school. We inform parents and carers of courses to support in the development of positive behaviour strategies. Our Educational Psychologist visits regularly and is keen to support with any concerns we may have with all children not just those that are being assessed for EHCP support.