



Magdalen Court School

Relational Practice and Policy at Magdalen Court School

Rationale

This policy and practise replaces' the behaviourist approaches and policies previously in place at the Magdalen Court School.

Magdalen Court School's relational approach is a unique way to look at behaviour and understand what promotes satisfying and sustainable relationships especially in challenging situations.

Behaviour Management tries to *change* the behaviour of others through sanctions in conditions that often lack flexibility or creativity.

The *relational approach* seeks to enable students to find the independence and courage to change their own behaviour by developing the skills to communicate effectively to staff, parents and carers in an equal partnership.

This mutual partnership is what we strive to attain when attempting to meet the student's underlying needs that could be hindering their successful learning journey.

This policy is a working live document and forms part of an evidence based whole school strategy which is being implemented in response to a changing school cohort with a variety of complex and co-morbid needs alongside well documented concerns regarding young people's mental health and well-being, long standing national trends which show the disproportionate exclusion of children from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and the negative impact of exclusion, both in the short term and long term.

It is innovative, ground- breaking and based on the most recent research.

The school have engaged Graham Fisher (SEMH Team Advisory Teacher and Relationship Manager – Babcock LDP), Aimee Morgan (Educational Psychologist- Babcock LDP) and Chris West (Adoption Consultancy) to work alongside the Headteacher Sylvia Kerambrum, SENCO Becci Evan , Speech and Language therapist Lianna , Nurture Practitioner's Olivia Whitlock and Kim Mead to provide guidance to the school during this initial stage, in order to develop a bespoke approach to Relational Practice and Policy which is aligned with current research and theory from the fields of attachment and trauma, behaviour management and on effective support for personal development.

Emphasis will be placed on inclusion and belonging through promoting positive relationships and behaviour, effective teaching and preventative responses. Approaches are based around the principle that all behaviour is a form of communication.



During this planning stage we will explore and develop practice that constitutes a relational approach; the teaching skills which underpin the approach and the systems, processes and provision necessary to support the implementation.

There are three main components to the relational model, Developing Relationships, Responding and Calming and Repairing and Restoring as well as guidance on working in relationship in the classroom and through a graduated response. The approaches are used universally as good quality teaching and in a planned and timely fashion to target early intervention for children and young people who are at the risk of exclusion.

The CPD programme has been carefully devised specifically to support and embed this practise across the whole school, including programmes for parents, students' and key staff.

This will be alongside focused and strategically timed work revisiting and reviewing with the key stakeholders ; students, parents/carers and staff the Vision, Values and Beliefs of the school closely aligned with the school ethos and motto '**Belong, Believe, Achieve**'. The Trustees and School Leadership team are committed to investing resources to support this as a priority with the intent that all students at Magdalen Court School achieve their true potential.

Research has demonstrated that investing time and resources into improving relationships in schools leads to positive outcomes around inclusion, engagement, attainment and achievement in the short term and community safety and cohesion in the longer term. (Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research BISSR). In addition, positive teacher-student relationships have shown to be central wo the well-being of both students and teachers (Sue Roffey University of Exeter).

The focus is on creating a positive whole school ethos and policy that promotes positive relationships and behaviour.

Values and Beliefs –

The school mottos is : Belong, Believe, Achieve.

It is important to consider and establish what beliefs underpin the school ethos and what values inform practice. School staff, Trustees, Parents and Students should have a clear joint-vision as to what they want for their school community.

This guidance is based on the following values and beliefs.

- An ethos based around inclusive and compassionate principles to the well-being of all children.
- All children wish to belong, achieve and contribute to their school, family and community. Child centred approaches, where there voices are central and where plans utilise their strengths, resources and qualities are integral to success.
- High levels of nurture and empathy, with containment and structure, support children to feel safe. Children need clear boundaries, predictable routines, expectations and regulated responses to behaviour.



- Natural consequences that can follow certain behaviours should be made explicit, without the need to enforce sanctions that can shame and ostracize children from their peers, school community and family, leading to potentially more negative behaviour. Responses to behaviour should ensure that children feel safe and that all their needs are met.
- Behaviour is often a form of communication and the suppression of underlying needs. It is not possible to support a child's behaviour without addressing these needs.
- Children need **personalised responses** to supporting their personal development and well-being. Consistency does not mean always responding in the same way to each child or behaviour, it means responding in a way which is consistent to our values and beliefs. Whilst each individual child benefits from a consistent approach, being consistent and fair is not about everyone getting the same, but **everyone getting what they need**.

Theory and Research

Relational practice and policy is firmly grounded in theory, research and evidence based practice. This guidance draws on theory and research from the fields of Neuroscience, Attachment, Trauma, Adverse Childhood Experience, Intersubjectivity and Restorative Approaches.

There are also a range of relational based approaches that have been shown to prevent the need for exclusion. These approaches are based that all behaviour is a form of communication. These include:

- Whole school relational approaches based on nurturing approaches based on nurturing principles, including effective learning and teaching which contributes to developing and maintaining good relationships and positive behaviour which supports inclusion.
- Targeted relational approaches for some children which provides additional focused support and intervention, such as the provision of safe bases, significant adults and nurture groups to avoid exclusion. Magdalen Court School is developing Nurture bases with one in place and another after the October 2020 half term led by two Nurture Practitioners.
- Skilled teaching approaches which endeavour to understand behaviour in terms of the underlying needs that may lead to a child or young person to act in a challenging and distressed way and which aim to regulate the child's stress.
- Restorative approaches based on a philosophy which places relationships, respect and responsibility at the heart of effective practice which have been shown to be more effective in addressing issues of discipline and conflict than traditional approaches which use rewards and sanctions.
- Solution focused approaches to support both staff and children to identify the skills strengths and resources that they already possess, build individual capacity and effective problem solving skills.
- Child centred approaches which are based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and which seeks to develop adults' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of children's rights and dignity, and how this can impact on their work with children and young people.



Research also highlights the importance of leadership in prioritising, establishing and modelling relational principles, beliefs and values in order to develop a **whole school culture and to empower others**. In addition, building links with partner agencies and supporting **parental engagement** is an important factor in meeting student needs and enhancing well - being.

Developing Relationships Building relationships, Supporting Inclusion, Setting Boundaries. *Protection, Connection, Understanding, Care.*

The policy will describe how relationships will be developed in the school to ensure that all students feel safe, secure, connected, understood and cared for. How they will be included in the community. We are in the process of creating a Wordle and via assembly creating a culture of kindness, sharing the school motto as 25 new students currently in school. Also how the students will be able to have their voice heard – we are implementing the student council.

Responding and Calming Keeping Calm, Regulating Emotions, Managing Crisis. *SEA- Safety, Empathy. Agreement.*

This will describe how adults in school will use skilled relational responses to keep classrooms calm and enable children to learn, how they will use relational skills to regulate the children who are experiencing strong emotions, in order to calm' learn how to self regulate and settle to learning. Also how adults will support in crisis situations in order to maintain safety and ensure that all children can learn. The school will replace the current support plans with relational support plans for circumstances such as the use of physical interventions, when children abscond, searching pupils and serious incidents in the community. The school will use the PIP approach. Training has been booked since May 2020, but was moved to September 2020 however due to Covid 19 has been moved to after half term 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th November 2020. This will be alongside a comprehensive intra disciplinary CPD plan with Graham Fisher (PIP, Attachment), Chris West (Occupational Therapist specialising in Sensory Attachment) delivering self regulation training for staff during the school year 2020-2021.

The Headteacher is experienced in the above having been a trainer of Team Teach for 9 years and part of the working party in Croydon LA on SEMH approached across the Borough.

Repairing and Restoring Resolving Conflict, Repairing Harm, Supporting Change. Taking a Restorative Approach.

The school will be using restorative approaches and these are already in place. The aim being to resolve conflict through the use of everyday restorative interactions and discussions including classroom meetings, circle time and meditation, relaxation, restore harm through the use of facilitated restorative encounters. The team will support change by ensuring all parties learn from the incident, have their needs identified and supported and are enabled to restore and repair relationships, also to support individuals to understand the consequences of behaviour and enable them to repair relationships through the use of individual restorative explorations,



Relational approaches in the curriculum – Magdalen Court School’s approach, Working in Relationship Together.

When using the relational approach, we look for opportunities to create positive conditions allowing us to invite the student (without coercion or conditional statements) to do what we are asking them to do. The challenging situation provides a way to build stronger relationships through trust and understanding.

We want to be students to be safe, have fun and engage in their learning. Sometimes we will not be able to give students what they want but we work very hard to ensure that we give them what they need.

How does Magdalen Court School do this ?

1. **Using non-coercive techniques**
2. **Applying restorative justice approaches**
3. **Building relationships that encourage change and enable personal empowerment**
4. **Re-iterating the mantra – Be safe, Have Fun, Engage in your learning. BELIEVE, BELONG ACHIEVE.**

Magdalen Court School believe that this approach combined with our high staff to student ratio, small group settings and nurture ethos are what make Magdalen Court School unique amongst other schools working with young people who would otherwise be disengaged from the learning process.

Supporting Staff Well-being and Professional Development

This is a paramount importance and a very carefully well designed rolling designed CPD is in place at Magdalen Court School to support staff and ensure they have the skills to work with the students at the school. Staff well being is a key focus with reflective practise and 1:1 and group supervision in place led by experienced staff and therapists.

A Graduated response

A graduated response will be used to support the children who are most in need including details of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review, Cycle

Magdalen Court School

Belong Believe Achieve

