



Knights Templar Community Church School and Nursery

Work at it with all your heart

Head Teacher: Mrs Laura Weaver, BA Hons QTS

Relationships Policy

'Always remember you matter, you're important and you are loved, and you bring to this world things no one else can.'
Charlie Mackesy

Date Approved by the Headteacher	Review Period	Date to be reviewed
January 2026	Bi-Annually	January 2028

Aims

At Knights Templar Community Church School, we know that developing and sustaining positive, trusting and caring relationships between all members of the school community is central to the success of our school. Our school is invested in supporting the best possible relational health between:

- Parent/carer and child
- Child and child
- Child and school staff
- Parent/carer and school staff
- School staff and senior leaders
- School staff and external partners

Everyone at Knights Templar Community Church School understands that they have a responsibility to support the growth of positive relationships, that constant maintenance is required to sustain them and that there will be times when relationships rupture but that we all have a duty to help make repair.

The relationship policy provides the foundations for the behaviour policy. All adults know that behaviour is a form of communication and that poor behaviour is because of an unmet need. Our approach to relationships is based on the teachings of the Trauma Informed Schools UK (TISUK). It is underpinned by educational practices which promote the key themes of: Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect.

Protect

Our priority is to ensure that children are safe. This means not only physical safety but also within the relational environment. We reduce the impact of stress on our children by creating a warm and calm environment that is consistent, accepting and optimises social engagement. We do not place children in situations that they cannot manage and focus on creating both physical and psychological safety.

This is achieved through:

- Increased 'safety cues' through meet and greet at the school gates by Senior Leaders
- Teaching staff to meet and greet at the classroom door daily
- Training for all school staff about the impact of toxic stress on learning, well-being and behaviour
- Training for all school staff in 'PACE' (Hughes 2015) and Panksepp's Emotional Systems (Panksepp 2012)
- Training for all school staff in understanding the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Ensuring there are emotionally available adults in school and that children know who they are and where to find them
- A whole school commitment to cease using harsh voices, shouting, put-downs, criticisms and shaming which are proven to be damaging psychologically and neurologically
- School staff ensuring that interactions with children are socially engaging not socially defensive

- School staff being aware of facial expressions and other non-verbal communication and presenting as open, warm and engaged at all times
- School staff being consistent and adjusting their expectations around vulnerable children to meet their needs
- School staff repairing relationships when they recognise they have moved into defensiveness
- Implementing pedagogical interventions that help staff to get to know children better on an individual basis such as 'I wish my teacher knew' boxes in each class
- Providing adult only spaces to allow time to reflect

Relate

Our understanding of relate is underpinned by the knowledge that the ability to form meaningful relationships is fundamental to positive mental health. We understand that relationships are crucial in promoting the optimal development of the frontal lobes of the brain associated with the executive functions key to emotional regulation, emotional intelligence, planning, problem solving and ultimately learning. There will be children in our school who, for many reasons, have not benefitted from these positive relational experiences. Our approach is founded in the research, which indicates that the brain retains plasticity and repeated, positive, relational experiences can repair and reverse this cycle. This is achieved through:

- Staff training in key relational skills (affect attunement, empathy, soothing and containment)
- Staff being attachment aware
- pACE being embedded in all interactions
- Helping adults and children to express their emotions and not feel shamed or undermined when acknowledging their anxieties
- Ensuring that children have daily positive relational experiences that help them to become trusting, help-seeking individuals
- A whole-school commitment to enabling children to see themselves, their relationships and the world more positively, rather than through a lens of threat, danger or self-blame
- Providing daily opportunities for school staff to engage with each other in environments that are supportive and pleasant
- Supporting children to develop spirituality, alongside a growing awareness of self-worth and self-esteem

Regulate

We know that leaving adults and children in a state of toxic stress can result in physical ill health as well as making it impossible to engage positively in learning opportunities around them. We know that one of the most powerful ways to reduce toxic stress is through talk and empathic listening. We have a duty to support children and adults in school to ensure that they are not left in a state of toxic stress. This is achieved through:

- Providing children with time-in with a trusted adult to help them to calm down, ready to reflect

- Teaching children strategies to support them with self-regulation
- Ensuring that interactions are emotionally regulating, playful and enriched
- Ensuring that school staff do not engage in socially defensive behaviour with children, especially when correcting behaviour
- Providing a range of evidence-based nurturing and regulatory interventions that aim to repair psychological and brain damage caused by traumatic life experiences
- Providing staff only spaces designed to promote regulation and reflection

Reflect

At Knights Templar Community Church School, we believe that children and adults need to be able to reflect on their feelings in order to fully understand them and their behaviour. Without the opportunity to do this, we are far more likely to act out our feelings. Reflection enables us to make sense of our life, develop language for our emotions and have a coherent narrative that makes sense of what we are feeling and what has happened to us. There are times following troubling incidents that children and adults need to be helped to reflect in order to make sense of them and if necessary, to repair ruptures in relationships that may have resulted. Such reflection takes place only once the child is calm and regulated, with a trusted and emotionally available adult who is able to offer non-judgemental support. We recognise this as being 'connection before correction' (Hughes 2017). This is achieved through:

- Staff training in the art of good listening with a particular focus on empathy and acceptance of the feeling if not the behaviour
- Providing opportunities for children to work with trusted adults to make sense of painful experiences through creative, therapeutic approaches such as Big Emotional Drawings, Sand Play, Attachment Play and art activities
- Behaviour being understood as a form of communication and adults responding to poor behaviour by asking not 'why did you do that or what did you do' but 'what has happened to you?'
- Restorative conversations taking place when children are ready and able to think about what has happened and providing support so they can make repair
- PSHE being informed by current research which teaches children about mental health, emotions, relationships and how to live well
- Staff training in helping children to move from 'behaving' their trauma/painful life experiences, to reflecting on those experiences
- A behaviour policy which is not based on punishment, sanctions and isolation, but models enquiry, resolution and interactive repair

Roles and Responsibilities

Every adult that works at Knights Templar Community Church School, whether employed or voluntary, is required to conduct himself or herself in keeping with this policy.

It is the responsibility of all adults in the school to model the behaviours described and ensure that they are supporting the promotion of positive behaviour. New staff, visitors and volunteers will be expected to read the policy and training will be given to enable them to understand the principles upon which the practice is based.

It is the responsibility of all staff to bring to the attention of the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head incidents where staff exchanges with children or other adults is socially defensive.

Other related policies:

- Supporting Positive Behaviour Policy*
- SRE Policy*