**Pendoylan Church in Wales Primary**

**Relationship Policy 2020-22**

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

Parent and child

Child and child

Child and school staff

Parent and school staff

School staff

School staff and Senior Leads

School staff and external agencies

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

**Protect**

* A whole school commitment to improving the quality of life for all pupils. Staff ensure that pupils wellbeing and progress are at the centre of all strategies and decisions made with them or on their behalf.
* Increased ‘safety cues’ in all aspects of the school day, e.g. in primary schools, ‘meet and greet’ at the school entrance or at the classroom door.
* Staff trained in ‘PACE’ (play, acceptance, curiosity, empathy) modes of interaction (Hughes, 2015): being warm, empathic, playful and curious (proven to shift pupils out of fight/flight/freeze positions).
* Staff ensure that interactions with pupils are socially engaging and not socially defensive, to decrease likelihood of pupils relating defensively (fight/flight/freeze).
* A whole school commitment to cease all use of harsh voices, shouting, put-downs, criticisms and shaming (proven to be damaging psychologically and neurologically)
* Staff focus on using proactive behaviour to promote a cycle of improving relationships between pupils and staff.

Staff ‘interactively repair’ occasions when they themselves move into defensiveness.

* Pedagogic interventions that help staff to get to know pupils better on an individual basis, e.g. “I wish my teacher knew” (what matters to them, who matters to their, their dreams, hopes). This is key to enabling pupils 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.
* Pupils have easy and daily access to at least one emotionally-available adult, and know when and where to find the adult. If the child does not wish to connect with an adult, an alternative person can be found.
* School staff adjust expectations around pupils to correspond with their developmental capabilities and experience of traumatic stress. This includes removing vulnerable and traumatised pupils in a kind and non-judgmental way from situations they are not managing well (e.g. pupils who are continually triggered into alarm states in the main playground can access a calmer, smaller playground with an emotionally regulating adult).
* 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 pupils to see themselves, their relationships, future events and the world positively, rather than through a lens of threat, danger or self-blame.
* A whole school commitment towards recognising and praising the use of adaptive behaviours by pupils throughout the school day.
* Pupils 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 (What are they?) specifically designed to bring down stress hormone levels (e.g. from toxic to tolerable) in vulnerable pupils, 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 wellbeing and regulating of staff is treated as a priority to prevent burn-out, stress-related absence, or leaving the profession through stress-related illness, secondary trauma and/or feeling undervalued, blamed or shamed.
* Designated staff-only spaces, which are specifically designed to support the release of natural anti-stress, pro-social neurochemicals (opioids and oxytocin). Time for staff to use these spaces.

**Reflect**

* Staff development and training 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 meaningful empathic conversations with vulnerable pupils who want to talk about their lives. This is to empower pupils 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’), pupils 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-play/emotion worksheets/emotion cards.
* PSE (Personal and Social Education) and psycho-education as a preventative input, informed by current research (psychology and neuroscience) on mental health, mental ill-health (full range of specific conditions), relationships (including parenting) emotions, social media and tools for how to make informed choices about how they relate to others, how they live their lives and how they treat their brains, bodies and minds.
* Staff development and training to help all pupils, and support those who need to move from ‘behaving’ their trauma/painful life experiences, to reflecting on those experiences. Staff learn to do this through empathic conversation, addressing pupils’ negative self-referencing and helping them develop positive, coherent narratives about their lives.
* A Behaviour Policy based not on punishment, sanctions and isolation, but one that models enquiry, reflection, proactivity, resolution, proactive questioning and interactive report (e.g. restorative conversations).

Signed:



Headteacher:

Chair of Governors:

Date: Spring 2020

Review Date: Spring 2022