SPAGHETTI BRIDGE

Relational Approach Policy

(Behaviour Support Policy)

Policy Owner	Head of Learning and Research
Applies to	This applies to all services
Associated Documents	Other related policies:- • Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy • Safe Touch (including RPI) Policy • Attendance • Equality • Curriculum • Ending Student Placement Policy • Exclusion Policy • Online Safety Policy (including Filtering and Monitoring) • Therapy and AP Policy • Anti-Bullying policy
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1. Aims, Scope, Legal Framework and Definitions

a. Aims

The aim of this policy is to establish a consistent, inclusive and therapeutically informed Relational Approach across all Spaghetti Bridge schools.

Our Relational Approach is an integral part of Enterprise Learning and supports our mission to enable students to *Become Themselves and Change the World*. It recognises that meaningful relationships, trust, safety, connection and belonging are essential foundations for learning, development and wellbeing.

Through this policy, we aim to:

- Establish a positive relational culture in which all members of the school community feel safe, respected, valued and included.
- Ensure that all staff understand their responsibility to build and maintain meaningful, trusting relationships with students and each other.
- Promote a consistent, strengths-based approach that recognises each student's individuality, experiences, abilities and needs.
- Support students to develop emotional awareness, regulation, independence and positive relationships through intentional relational practice.
- Establish shared expectations for responding to distress, maintaining boundaries, repairing relationships and learning from challenging experiences.
- Ensure that relational practice promotes student dignity, safety, participation and safeguarding, while maintaining high expectations for learning and development.
- Promote continuous reflection, professional learning and improvement in relational practice across our schools.

b. Legal Framework

This policy has been developed with reference to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, where applicable
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff

- Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools
- Current Department for Education guidance on reasonable force and restrictive interventions

This policy should be read alongside the Spaghetti Bridge Enterprise Learning Playbook and relevant Group policies, particularly the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Safe Touch (Including RPI) Policy, Equality Policy, Attendance Policy, and Suspensions, Exclusions and Ending Student Placement policies.

c. Scope

This policy applies to all Spaghetti Bridge schools and to all staff, leaders, volunteers and other adults working with students, including those delivering education and support beyond the school site.

The principles of our Relational Approach extend to all members of our school communities, including students, families, carers and external professionals.

Our Relational Approach is universal and applies to every student, regardless of age, individual needs, abilities, experiences or circumstances. It is embedded throughout the school day, across learning environments, during off-site activities and in interactions between members of the school community.

All staff are responsible for implementing the approach consistently, while recognising that the relational practices and support provided must be personalised to the individual student.

d. Definitions

Relational Approach: Our universal, therapeutically informed approach to developing and maintaining meaningful relationships, creating a sense of safety, belonging, and connection, and responding to distress and supporting learning and growth. It is embedded throughout Enterprise Learning and is based on trust, connection, empathy, safety, belonging and high support and high expectations.

Relational Practices: The intentional strategies, interactions and routines used by staff to develop relationships and connection, support emotional regulation, respond to individual needs and create opportunities for reflection, repair, growth, and learning.

Three-Part Relational Cycle: The framework underpinning our Relational Approach, consisting of Developing Relationships; Responding and Regulating; and Repairing, Restoring, Learning and Growing.

Co-Regulation: The process through which a supportive relationship and responsive interactions help an individual to manage emotional and physiological states, particularly during periods of distress.

Relational Rupture, Repair, Growth and Learning: A rupture is a disruption or difficulty within a relationship and, while it can be difficult, is a normal part of human experience. Rupture can be a powerful opportunity for learning and growth. Repair is the process of rebuilding connection, understanding and trust, recognising the experiences and responsibilities of those involved. Through reflection, dialogue and shared understanding, individuals can learn from these experiences, develop greater emotional awareness, empathy and responsibility, and strengthen their capacity to build and maintain positive relationships.

Relational Support Plan: A personalised, strengths-based plan identifying the relationships, approaches and strategies that support an individual student's safety, emotional regulation, communication, engagement, wellbeing and learning.

2. Our Relational Values

Our Relational Values are as follows:

- All students deserve to belong, achieve, and contribute to their school, family, and community.
- Meaningful and trusting relationships between all members of a school community are essential for learning, development and wellbeing.
- Human connection, feeling seen, heard, valued, and safe must be at the centre of each student's experience of education.
- All behaviour is a form of communication and rupture is a necessary part of the way we learn and grow.
- Expectations for behaviour should be based on shared values and aspirations, not systems of punishment and control.
- A focus on relationships instead of behaviour management and control leads to increased self-awareness, identity development and emotional intelligence.
- All relationships should be built on a model of difference and individual uniqueness, not deficit.

3. Our Relational Approach and the Three-Phase Process

Our Relational Approach is embedded throughout the Three-Phase Process that underpins Enterprise Learning. The three phases - Overcoming Barriers, 21st Century Skills and Becoming

Community Ready - provide a framework for understanding students' needs, identifying priorities for their learning and development, and personalising the relational practices that support them.

The phases are not fixed categories or a linear progression that all students follow in the same way. Instead, they provide a lens through which we understand each student's current circumstances, strengths, needs and aspirations. Students may demonstrate characteristics of different phases at different times and in different areas of their development.

Our Relational Approach supports students across all three phases, with the focus and application of relational practices evolving according to their individual needs.

Overcoming Barriers

During this phase, our relational priority is to establish the foundations of safety, trust, connection and belonging that enable students to engage positively with their education.

Relational practices focus on developing meaningful relationships with trusted adults, understanding students' individual experiences and needs, supporting emotional regulation, and creating predictable, responsive and supportive learning environments. Through these experiences, students begin to develop a positive sense of themselves as learners, build confidence in their relationships with others and recognise their own potential.

21st Century Skills

During this phase, our relational priority broadens to support students in developing the emotional, social and interpersonal skills that enable them to participate increasingly independently and confidently in learning and relationships.

Relational practices focus on developing self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, communication, collaboration, resilience and personal responsibility. Students are supported to navigate increasingly complex relationships, manage challenges and disagreements, reflect on their experiences and take greater ownership of their learning and behaviour.

Through intentional relational practice, students develop the skills and confidence to engage with others, respond to challenges and contribute positively to their school community.

Becoming Community Ready

During this phase, our relational priority is to support students in applying their relational understanding and skills with increasing independence across a wider range of relationships, environments and experiences.

Relational practices focus on developing independence, agency, self-advocacy, personal responsibility and the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships beyond school.

Students are supported to navigate social expectations, recognise and maintain healthy boundaries, manage challenges and disagreements, and seek support when needed.

Through meaningful experiences within the wider community, students develop the confidence, understanding and relational skills that will support their successful transition into adulthood.

A Personalised and Integrated Approach

Across all three phases, relational practice is personalised to each student's strengths, experiences, needs and aspirations. Staff use their understanding of individual students, alongside Relational Support Plans and other relevant assessments, to identify and consistently implement the practices that will best support their development.

Our Relational Approach is therapeutically informed and integrated throughout Enterprise Learning, rather than delivered as a separate intervention. Where students require additional support, targeted or specialist provision is identified through our Therapeutic Education framework, alongside the provision required by their EHCP.

The purpose of our Relational Approach remains consistent across all three phases: to develop meaningful relationships, support emotional regulation, foster personal growth and enable students to become increasingly confident, connected and independent members of their communities.

1. The Three–Part Relational Cycle

Our Relational Approach model is not a behaviour management approach - instead, it is a way of ensuring that students feel a sense of belonging and connection, that they work through any moments of dysregulation and rupture, and that they learn from these experiences and develop their ability to respond and regulate their own emotions.

Part 1. Developing Relationships
The first and most important part of this cycle is how we develop relationships with each student and each other, creating a community based in a sense of trust, safety, and connection.

Part 2. Responding and Regulating
We all have moments of distress and have learned to recognise and respond to these moments in various ways. We understand that due to prior experiences and additional needs, some of our students will communicate their needs through distressed behaviours that can create a sense of rupture with those around them. We respond to these behaviours with empathy and attunement, using practices to help these students regulate their emotions and behaviour, keep them safe, and reengage with others.

Part 3. Repairing, Restoring, Learning, and Growing

The final part of this cycle can only take place once the student is calm and ready to reflect and learn from their experiences. In order to support this, we help our students to recognise what happened, why it happened, who was impacted and how they can learn different behaviours to meet their needs and move forward positively. We remember that punitive responses and shame can lead to feelings of worthlessness and helplessness and do not help our students to repair and restore, or learn new more helpful behaviours to meet their needs.

2. Our Expectations and Aspirations

Our relational approach is underpinned by our school expectations based on shared aspirations. These aspirations are defined as “values in practice” and we have purposefully chosen the term aspiration to capture the sense that we are all working towards continuously deepening how we bring our values into practice in our everyday lives. While there are times when we all struggle to engage in behaviour that aligns with our aspirations, this framework gives all members of our school community a common framework of expectations for behaviour, enables reflection, growth and learning, and avoids punitive and shame-based models through a focus on shared aspirations.

Our aspirations are as follows:

Prioritise **safety**	The importance of physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing, both of ourselves and others and the creation of a secure and supportive space for everyone
Build **communities**	The way in which we treat ourselves and others with care, empathy, respect, and compassion and have fun in the process.
Stay **curious**	How we explore, ask questions, have an open mind, act with humility about what we don’t know and are eager to learn.
Think **creatively**	The power of using our imaginations to solve problems, take chances, express ourselves, see possibilities, think outside the box, and come up with new and meaningful ideas and ways of doing things.
Chase **ambition**	How we look to challenge ourselves to achieve our full potential, set high standards, work hard, take responsibility and believe in our ability to grow, learn, overcome challenges, and change the world.
Reflect often	Taking the time to think about our experiences, actions, thoughts, and learning and developing self-awareness, learn from our mistakes, empathise with others and adopt numerous perspectives.
Collaborate boldly	Working respectfully with others through sharing ideas, listening, working towards shared goals, valuing their contribution, building positive relationships and trust, and understanding that we can achieve

	more together than we can alone.

3. Relational Approach Across Three Waves

Our relational framework is designed to meet the needs of students at three levels of support through a tiered approach, ensuring that relational practices are tailored to the individual and evolve with the student's progress.

Each of these waves are founded in specific relational “practices”, which are specific strategies and tools our staff use to build connection, maintain relationships and foster growth.

- **Wave 1 (Universal offer)**:
  All students benefit from universal relational practices embedded in the way that all staff interact with students and each other. These strategies focus on building trust, fostering emotional regulation, and creating a sense of belonging and connection for every student.
- **Wave 2 (Targeted Support)**:
  For students who need more focused support based on their specific needs, Wave 2 practices enable staff to tailor their approach to the needs of a specific student. These targeted interventions address specific needs in the areas of cognition and learning, communication and interaction, social, emotional and mental health, and sensory motor and physical.
- **Wave 3 (Specialist Support)**:
  The needs of some students are such that they require intervention for a qualified specialist, such as a therapist or alternative provider. These needs are met through our Wave 3 specialist tier in a time bound and outcome focused manner. Any Wave 3 provision put in place is agreed upon by the entire team around the student, including families and external professionals.

Due to the nature of our Relational Approach, the environment of our schools, and our unique curriculum and pedagogy, students who previously required specialist support in other settings often do not need this within our schools. This means that some students will start without specific specialised provision as outlined in their EHCP. This will be decided upon as part of the admissions process, agreed by all stakeholders and parents and carers, and reviewed throughout the student’s journey at Spaghetti Bridge.

Our Relational Approach and Safeguarding

Safeguarding is fundamental to our Relational Approach. We recognise that meaningful, trusting relationships are essential to creating a school environment in which students feel safe, valued, understood and able to communicate their experiences, thoughts and feelings. By knowing our

students well, understanding their individual needs and experiences, and maintaining consistent, supportive relationships, staff are better able to recognise changes in behaviour, presentation or wellbeing that may indicate a safeguarding concern.

Our Relational Approach is founded on curiosity, empathy and a commitment to understanding the individual. Staff recognise that behaviour may communicate distress, unmet needs or experiences of harm, and that students may communicate concerns in different ways, including through their behaviour, emotional responses or non-verbal communication. This is particularly important for students who experience barriers to communicating their experiences or recognising and reporting abuse.

While we seek to understand behaviour within the context of each student's individual needs and experiences, our Relational Approach must never prevent, delay or minimise the identification, reporting or appropriate escalation of safeguarding concerns. Known patterns of behaviour, existing diagnoses or identified needs must not lead staff to overlook possible indicators of abuse, neglect or harm. Staff should maintain professional curiosity and recognise that safeguarding concerns can arise even where behaviour is familiar or anticipated.

Our commitment to relational practice and safeguarding is therefore inseparable: we build relationships that help students feel safe and enable them to communicate their needs and concerns, we remain professionally curious about their experiences, and we take appropriate action whenever their safety or wellbeing may be at risk.

4. Prohibited Items

To maintain a safe and supportive learning environment, students are not permitted to bring items onto school premises that may present an unacceptable risk to themselves or others.

The following items are prohibited:

- Weapons, including knives, blades, firearms and other offensive weapons.
- Items intended or likely to be used to cause injury or threaten others.
- Illegal drugs and associated paraphernalia.
- Alcohol.
- Tobacco products, cigarettes, cigarette papers, lighters and matches.
- Vapes and vaping products.
- Fireworks and other explosive or incendiary items.
- High-caffeine energy drinks.
- Aerosols and other substances that present an identified safety risk.

Other items may be restricted where a specific risk has been identified through an individual student's risk assessment or the school's wider health and safety arrangements.

Where a student brings a prohibited item into school, staff will prioritise the immediate safety and

wellbeing of everyone involved. Any response, including the removal or confiscation of an item, will be proportionate to the circumstances, consistent with the school's legal powers and procedures, and informed by relevant safeguarding and relational considerations.

5. A Personalised Approach

Relational Support Plan

Each student at a Spaghetti Bridge school has a Relational Support Plan in place, outlining key information about the student, such as preferences, interests, strengths, aspirations, needs and signs of distress, and any specific Wave 2 practices that will help to support that student.

This plan is regularly reviewed and updated with input from, where appropriate, all members of the student's support network, including families, external stakeholders and the student themselves.

Positive Handling Plan

Physical intervention is a last resort and should only be used when it is necessary, proportionate, and reasonable to keep the student and/or others safe. All physical interventions must align with our Safe Touch (Including RPI) Policy.

Any student for whom it is likely that a physical intervention will need to be implemented will have a Positive Handling Plan, in which the specific interventions and circumstances in which the intervention might be used will be clearly outlined. This plan will be drafted with input from and agreed upon by all members of the team around the student.

All staff members are trained in appropriate use of physical interventions and physical intervention techniques through taking part in Team Teach/Relational Approach training on an annual and ongoing basis. Each school has a Team Teach Lead who reviews all physical interventions to ensure that they are necessary, reasonable and proportionate and that any interventions follow all relevant guidelines.

Student Focused Intervention Plan

The level of need of some students means that they need an increased level of focus on their programme in order to ensure that they are consistently supported to keep themselves and others safe, engage with learning, and achieve their potential. These students, in addition to their Relational Support Plan, have a Student Focused Intervention Plan in place. This plan is drafted with input from all members of the team around the student and is regularly reviewed to assess impact and progress.

Further Support Planning

Personalised relational planning is supported by other relevant student documentation, including student risk assessments, personal emergency evacuation plans, missing person plans, and situational risk assessments, as needed.

6. Involvement of Police

There may be occasions when an incident is significant and that staff consider whether to contact the police for support. There are occasions when this is absolutely appropriate and necessary but equally, careful thought should always be given to the decision.

When viewed through the context of the significant barriers that many of our young people already have to achieving a happy, safe and fulfilled adulthood, we should be mindful of the additional barrier that criminalisation and involvement with the criminal justice system can become.

7. Staff Reflections

It is critical that the 'Repair, Restore, Learn and Grow' process is not solely about reflection on the part of the student. There will almost always be learning on the part of the school and of individual staff. Staff should model self-reflection and learning, including what they feel they might do differently next time as part of the process. Staff reflective practice is embedded within the process of incident reviews.

8. Sanctions / Consequences

We do not believe in the effectiveness of punitive sanctions or punishments. Research shows that they do not change behaviours and can reinforce the feelings that a student is not good enough, is not worthy and should feel shame. These feelings and emotions are not helpful in promoting meaningful learning over time and do not support the development of skills.

There are times where it is appropriate however, to consider natural consequences. A natural consequence is where a student is helped to understand the natural consequences to them in terms of the effect a particular behaviour has on themselves or others.

Examples of natural consequences are:

- If something is broken, it is no longer available for use.
- Our behaviour might damage our relationship with others, to our own and their deficit.
- Our schools are beautiful and damage to property might make them less so.
- Some behaviours are unsafe and therefore require an immediate and potentially restrictive response.

It is important to recognise that saying "no" is acceptable and sometimes necessary where there is a concern of safety to the student or others or a behaviour is not in line with the aspirations of Spaghetti Bridge. This provides students with a clearer understanding of the expectations and boundaries that they will experience in education,

employment and their community.

9. Incident Recording

It is critical to record incidents promptly and accurately to ensure that there is sufficient reflection and learning in the period afterwards. It is by observing and recording carefully that we start to see patterns over time, can start to understand the thoughts and feelings that are behind some of the behaviours that we see and can work to offer the appropriate support in response.

Incidents are recorded using BridgeLink and are reviewed daily, with further strategies and practices put in place to mitigate the likelihood of the incident recurring and support student and staff learning and reflection.

10. Suspensions and Exclusions

A decision to suspend a student for a short period of time will only be taken if:

- Remaining in school would be therapeutically unhealthy for the student.
- Allowing the student to remain in the school would seriously harm the education and/or welfare of the student or others in the school.

The decision to exclude a student, whether suspension or permanent, is a serious one.

Spaghetti Bridge schools do not use informal or unofficial exclusions, including sending students home, asking parents or carers to keep students at home, or otherwise preventing attendance as a means of managing behaviour outside the school's formal procedures.

Part-time timetables will not be used as a disciplinary measure or as an alternative to formal exclusion. Where a temporary reduction in attendance is considered necessary to support a student's individual needs and successful engagement in education, this must be exceptional, agreed through an appropriate planning process, time-limited, regularly reviewed and supported by a clear plan for returning to full-time education, in accordance with the Attendance Policy and relevant statutory duties.

The termination of a placement will normally only be considered for serious breaches of school discipline inside or outside the base room after all other strategies and sanctions have been exercised without success. Each situation will be assessed on its own circumstances; each student’s individual reactions and needs will be considered. Where we have concerns about the behaviour, or risk of exclusion of a student we will consider that additional support or alternative placement may be required. This will involve assessing the suitability of our provision against a student’s special educational needs. We will request a Student Focused Meeting and/or an annual review or interim/emergency review. For further detail please see Ending Student Placement Policy.

11. Specific Behaviours and Concerns

Our Relational Approach applies to all behaviours and interactions across the school community. We recognise that some behaviours require additional consideration, specific safeguarding responses or the application of other school policies and procedures.

In all circumstances, staff will respond with curiosity, empathy and high expectations, building strong connections, and seeking to understand the individual student's experiences, needs and circumstances.

Bullying and Child-on-Child Abuse

Bullying, including discriminatory and online bullying, and all forms of child-on-child abuse are taken seriously and will not be tolerated or normalised. Staff will respond promptly to concerns, ensuring that those affected are supported, risks are assessed and appropriate action is taken.

Our approach to preventing, identifying, reporting and responding to bullying, harmful sexual behaviour and other forms of child-on-child abuse is outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, and associated anti-bullying procedures.

Discriminatory Behaviour and Language

Discriminatory language, harassment and behaviour relating to protected characteristics or individual differences will be challenged and addressed consistently and plans put in place to support individual students or groups of students as necessary and appropriate.

Responses will prioritise the safety and dignity of those affected, while providing appropriate opportunities for education, reflection, accountability and restorative learning. Staff will consider the student's developmental understanding, communication needs and individual circumstances without minimising the impact of the behaviour.

Further expectations and procedures are outlined in the Equality and Diversity Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Sexualised Behaviour

Staff recognise that sexualised behaviour must be understood in the context of a student's age, developmental stage, individual needs and circumstances. Behaviour that is inappropriate, concerning or potentially harmful will be assessed and responded to in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, including procedures relating to harmful sexual behaviour and child-on-child abuse.

Online Behaviour, Mobile Phones and Personal Devices

Students are expected to use technology, mobile phones and personal devices safely, responsibly and in accordance with school expectations.

The use of mobile phones and other personal devices during the school day is governed by the school's Mobile Phone Policy and Procedure, which includes expectations for the storage of mobile phones during the school day and planning for students who find it difficult to store their phones.

Concerns involving online bullying, harmful content, inappropriate communication or other online safety risks will be addressed in accordance with the Online Safety Policy (including Filtering and Monitoring), Artificial Intelligence Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Vaping, Smoking and Tobacco Use

Spaghetti Bridge schools are committed to supporting students to make positive, informed and healthy decisions about smoking, vaping and tobacco use. We recognise that students may engage in these behaviours for a range of reasons, including social influences, emotional regulation, established habits or nicotine dependence.

Smoking and vaping are not permitted on school premises or during school activities. Students must not use, share or distribute tobacco or vaping products at school.

Where concerns arise, staff will respond through a relational, supportive and non-punitive approach. Our priority is to understand the circumstances contributing to the behaviour, promote awareness of associated health risks and support students to develop healthier choices and strategies.

12. MP3 Player and Music Listening

Students may bring their own MP3 players to school, subject to the following expectations:

- Devices must not have the capability to access the internet through school Wi-Fi or mobile data.
- Music must be listened to through headphones at a safe volume. Music must not be played through speakers built into or connected to the device.
- Music and other audio content must be appropriate for a school environment and obtained legally.
- Devices must be stored securely when not in use, in accordance with the school's arrangements.
- Students must follow agreed arrangements regarding when and where devices may be used, taking account of individual regulation needs.

- Whilst using MP3 players, students are requested to be considerate of the needs of others and ensure the learning environments of their peers are not disrupted.
- Students must not use mobile phones to listen to music during the school day, in accordance with the school's Mobile Phone procedure.

Students and their parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that personal devices and their content comply with this policy. Schools will not routinely check music libraries or playlists unless a specific concern is raised.

Where a student is unable to use their MP3 player safely or responsibly, the school may temporarily restrict its use. A plan will be developed collaboratively with the student and their parents/carers to address any concerns and support the safe and responsible use of the device going forward.

School-Provided MP3 Players

Where listening to music is specified as special educational provision in Section F of a student's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), students or their parents/carers may request a school-provided MP3 player.

School-provided devices will be made available where required to deliver the provision specified in the EHCP. Appropriate arrangements for their use and storage will be agreed with students and parents/carers.

Students may take school-provided devices home to download and manage music, subject to the following conditions:

- Music must be downloaded and managed at home by students and their parents/carers, not through the school's network.
- Students and parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that downloaded content is appropriate and legally obtained.
- The expectations outlined in Section 2 apply equally to school-provided devices.

School-provided devices remain the property of Spaghetti Bridge and must be returned when the student leaves the school or no longer requires the device.

Safeguarding and Responsibilities for MP3 players

Schools will not routinely monitor playlists or downloaded content. Where concerns arise about inappropriate content, unsafe use or breaches of this policy, these will be addressed proportionately through the school's relational and safeguarding procedures.

Any checks of devices or content must be justified, proportionate and undertaken in accordance with the school's relevant policies and legal responsibilities.

Schools will consider students' individual communication, sensory, emotional and educational needs when implementing this policy, ensuring that reasonable adjustments and agreed EHCP provision are maintained.

13. Roles & Responsibilities

Group Leadership and Governance

Group Leadership and Governance are responsible for ensuring that the Relational Approach is embedded across Spaghetti Bridge schools and is consistent with our organisational culture, Enterprise Learning model and statutory responsibilities.

This includes ensuring that appropriate resources, training and oversight are in place, and that the quality and impact of relational practice are regularly evaluated to inform continuous improvement.

Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that the Relational Approach is consistently understood, implemented and monitored within their school.

This includes:

- Establishing and modelling a positive relational culture across the school community.
- Ensuring that students, families, staff and relevant external stakeholders understand the school's Relational Approach, including during admissions and transition.
- Ensuring that every student has an appropriate Relational Support Plan and that personalised relational support is consistently implemented and reviewed.
- Providing staff with appropriate learning, guidance, coaching and opportunities for reflection.
- Monitoring relational practice, reviewing significant incidents and ensuring that learning informs improvements to individual relational support and whole-school practice.
- Ensure that this policy is shared with staff, parents/carers, and students in accessible formats and evaluate the extent to which it is understood and followed.

Regional Safeguarding and Relational Support Lead

Regional Safeguarding and Relational Support Leads are responsible for supporting schools to implement relational practices that promote student safety, wellbeing and positive relationships.

This includes providing guidance and professional support to school leaders and staff, contributing to the review of significant incidents and restrictive interventions, and supporting schools to learn from their experience and identify opportunities for improvement.

Regional Safeguarding and Relational Support Leads also support alignment between the Relational Approach and the Group's safeguarding policies and procedures.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for understanding and consistently implementing the principles and practices outlined in this policy.

This includes:

- Building positive, trusting and respectful relationships with students, colleagues and families.
- Modelling the school's relational culture, expectations and aspirations.
- Understanding and implementing students' Relational Support Plans and other relevant individual support arrangements, such as Student Focused Intervention Plans and Student Risk Assessments.
- Responding to distress and challenging situations through relational, preventative and proportionate approaches that prioritise safety and wellbeing and align with the three step model.
- Supporting students to reflect, repair relationships, learn and grow following difficulties or relational ruptures.
- Recording and reporting incidents and safeguarding concerns in accordance with relevant school policies and procedures.
- Engaging in professional learning, reflection and development to continually improve relational practice.

Support, Advice and Communication

Any questions or concerns about this policy should be communicated to their Regional Safeguarding and Relational Support Lead.

Appendix 1 - Screening and Searching of Students

Although rarely required, the school has provision for responding to risks that may require the screening and searching of students. In order to keep all students or young people safe we will as schools sometimes be put in the position of having to conduct a search on a student or young person. In these situations we will ensure that at all times we are upholding the dignity of the student or young person involved and are communicating closely with parents / carers . We will

have exhausted all other strategies and will only be instigating this line of action to ensure the safety of the student or young person or the safety of others.

The Education Act 1996 covers schools' right to search, and teachers must follow guidance from the Department for Education to ensure that their searches comply with the law.

"Searching can play a critical role in ensuring that schools are safe environments for all students and staff. It is a vital measure to safeguard and promote staff and student welfare, and to maintain high standards of behaviour through which students can learn and thrive."
(page 7 of the 2022 guidance)

The following guidelines have been taken from 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools July 2022.

It is a criminal offence to bring a knife or other weapon to school and the DES announced in October 2006 that a school has power, without any new legislation, to require students to undergo screening, when the school does not have reasonable grounds for suspicion.

The main ways to keep knives out of schools continue to be educating young people in better behaviour and in the dangers of illegally carrying a knife, but in addition, school staff are permitted to search a student, with consent, as part of their authority to discipline.

Searching Without Consent – What The Law Says:
Only the Headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the Headteacher, can carry out a search. The Headteacher can authorise individual members of staff to search for specific items that are outlined in the Relational Approach Policy as prohibited items can be searched for.

The list of prohibited items are:

- Knives and weapons.
- Alcohol.
- Illegal drugs.
- Stolen items.
- Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used:
    - To commit an offence.
    - Or to cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the student).
- Tobacco and cigarette papers.
- Fireworks.
- Pornographic images.

Under common law, school staff have the power to search a student for any item if the student agrees. The member of staff should ensure the student understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted so that their agreement is informed.

When exercising these powers the school will take into account the students' age and individual needs. We will make reasonable adjustments if the student or young person has a disability.

We need to be mindful of the reasons that may lead to a student or young person to refuse a search, for example if they:

- Are in possession of a prohibited item.
- Do not understand the instruction.
- Are unaware of what a search may involve.
- Have had a previous distressing experience of being searched.

It is essential that we refer to our relational approach and deescalate a situation, support the student or young person to feel safe and understand the need for a search to take place. Staff should follow procedures in recording and reporting all incidents on BridgeLink.

When Can I Search?

If you have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student is in possession of a prohibited item. Also note:

- The law also says what must be done with prohibited items which are seized following a search.
- The requirement that the searcher be the same sex as the student and that a witness is present will continue to apply in nearly all searches. Where it is practicable to summon a staff member of the same sex as the student and a witness then the teachers wishing to conduct a search must do so.

Authorising Members of Staff

- Headteachers should decide who to authorise to use these powers. There is no requirement to provide authorisation in writing.
- Staff, other than security staff, can refuse to undertake a search. The law states that Headteachers may not require anyone other than a member of the school security staff to undertake a search.
- Staff can be authorised to search for some items but not others; for example, a member of staff could be authorised to search for stolen property, but not for weapons or knives.
- A Headteacher can require a member of the school's security staff to undertake a search.
- If a security guard, who is not a member of the school staff, searches a student, the person witnessing the search should ideally be a permanent member of the school staff, as they are more likely to know the student.

Establishing Grounds for a Search

Teachers can only undertake a search without consent if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student may have in his or her possession a prohibited item. The teacher must decide in each particular case what constitutes reasonable grounds for suspicion. For example, they may have heard other students talking about the item or they might notice a student behaving in a way that causes them to be suspicious.

In the exceptional circumstances when it is necessary to conduct a search of a student of the opposite sex or in the absence of a witness, the member of staff conducting the search should bear in mind that a student's expectation of privacy increases as they get older.

The powers allow school staff to search regardless of whether the student is found after the search to have that item. This includes circumstances where staff suspect a student of having items such as illegal drugs or stolen property which are later found not to be illegal or stolen.

Searches for Items Banned by the School Rules

- Any item banned by the school rules may only be searched for under these powers if it has been identified in the school rules as an item that can be searched for.
- The school rules must be determined and published by the Headteacher in accordance with section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 in maintained schools. In the case of academy schools and alternative provision academies, the school rules must be determined in accordance with the School Behaviour (Determination and Publicising of Measures in Academies) Regulations 2012. Separate advice on school rules is available in 'Behaviour and Discipline – advice for Headteachers and school staff'.
- Under section 89 and the School Behaviour (Determination and Publicising of Measures in Academies) Regulations 2012 the Headteacher must publicise the school behaviour policy, in writing, to staff, parents and students at least once a year.

Location of a Search

- Searches without consent can only be carried out on the school premises or, if elsewhere, where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the student, for example on school trips in England or in training settings.
- The powers only apply in England.

Record Keeping

It is essential that clear and accurate records are kept following any search. All such incidents should follow our procedures and record on BridgeLink on the same day as the incident or if not possible within **24 hours** of the incident taking place.

Schools are encouraged to include in the record of each search:

- The date, time and location of the search.
- Which student was searched.

- Who conducted the search and any other adults or students present.
- What was being searched for.
- The reason for searching.
- What items, if any, were found.
- What follow-up action was taken as a consequence of the search.

Informing Parents
We believe that the best educational experiences come for students or young people when we work openly and transparently with parents and carers. Schools should reinforce the whole-school approach by building and maintaining positive relationships with parents. Parents should always be informed of any search for a prohibited item…and the outcome of the search as soon as is practicable.

"A member of staff should inform the parents of what, if anything, has been confiscated and the resulting action the school has taken, including any sanctions applied."

Strip Searches
"While the decision to undertake the strip search itself and its conduct are police matters, school staff retain a duty of care to the student(s) involved and should advocate for student wellbeing at all times."

Before calling police into school, staff should assess and balance the risk of a potential strip search on the student's mental and physical wellbeing and the risk of not recovering the suspected item.

The Role of an Appropriate Adult
"Examples of an appropriate adult include, but are not limited to, a parent, relative, social worker, teacher or, if the person is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation."

PACE Code C 2019 details the role a person undertakes when acting as the "appropriate adult" (usually a parent, guardian or social worker) while a student is being questioned or detained by the police.

It includes an expectation that the appropriate adult will "support, advise and assist" the young person, and also "observe whether the police are acting properly and fairly to respect [the young person's] rights and entitlements, and inform an officer of the rank of inspector or above if they consider that they are not".

The need for staff to understand the student's rights

"It is vital that all staff understand their rights and the rights of the student who is being searched."

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