# Relational Behaviour Policy

Francis Askew Primary School

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## 1. Introduction and Rationale

At Francis Askew Primary School, we believe that positive relationships form the foundation of a thriving learning environment. This Relational Policy outlines our commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and emotionally intelligent school culture where connection, regulation, and repair are prioritised over punishment. Our approach is rooted in empathy and understanding, and aligns with statutory duties under the Children Act, Equality Act, and SEND Code of Practice.

This policy is closely aligned with our school's REACH drivers.

- We aim to build **Resilience** by helping children develop emotional strength through consistent, caring relationships.
- We encourage **Expression** by creating safe spaces for pupils to share their thoughts and feelings.
- We promote **Aspiration** by inspiring children to grow socially, emotionally, and academically.
- Through **Citizenship**, we nurture respect, responsibility, and inclusion.
- And we prioritise **Health** by embedding emotional wellbeing into every aspect of school life.

**Relational policies draw on:**

- Attachment theory (Bowlby): Secure relationships foster emotional regulation and resilience.
- Trauma-informed practice: Recognises behaviour as communication of unmet needs.
- Restorative justice: Focuses on repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than punishment.

**What does the research tell us?**

- The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF, 2019) found that behaviourist approaches, when used in isolation, are limited in effectiveness. Relational and restorative models offer a more holistic and sustainable framework for behaviour support.
- Large-scale surveys and case studies showed that relational approaches improved academic outcomes, reduced bullying, and enhanced wellbeing in disadvantaged communities. (Relational Schools Foundation, validated by NfER.)
- Emotion Coaching and relational support improved attendance and emotional regulation. Staff reported stronger relationships and deeper understanding of barriers to learning. (McCluskey, G., & Smith, M. 2025).
- Emotions and relationships drive learning and are a fundamental part of how our brains develop… emotionally safe and cognitively stimulating environments contribute to brain development that supports learning. (Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, D. 2019).

## 2. Policy Aims and Objectives

Our aims are to:

- Promote emotional wellbeing and mental health (Health)
- Build strong, trusting relationships across the school community (Citizenship)
- Support behaviour through empathy, understanding, and connection (Expression)
- Foster resilience in pupils through relational support (Resilience)
- Encourage aspiration by celebrating growth in emotional and social development (Aspiration)

## 3. Core Values and Principles

Our relational approach is guided by values of empathy, respect, inclusion, and kindness. These principles are not confined to the classroom—they are modelled and reinforced throughout the school day by all staff. We adopt a whole-school approach that is trauma-informed and attachment-aware, recognising that every child's experience is unique. We hold high expectations for behaviour and personal development, and we support children in meeting these expectations through emotionally attuned relationships and consistent guidance.

## 4. Understanding Behaviour

We understand behaviour as a form of communication. Challenging behaviour often reflects unmet needs, emotional distress, or developmental differences. Staff are trained to respond with curiosity and compassion, recognising the impact of trauma, neurodiversity, and individual circumstances. This understanding helps us support pupils in building resilience, expressing their emotions safely, and aspiring to positive change.

## 5. Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour

Positive behaviour is taught and modelled through relational routines, emotional literacy lessons, and consistent expectations. We use the Thrive Approach to assess and support children's social and emotional development, ensuring that interventions are developmentally appropriate and tailored to individual needs. Thrive helps us identify gaps in emotional resilience and respond proactively with targeted strategies.

Classrooms are structured to promote calm and predictability, and pupils are supported in developing self-regulation skills. We celebrate prosocial behaviour and encourage collaboration, peer support, and kindness. These practices reinforce our REACH values by helping children become resilient, expressive, aspirational, responsible, and emotionally healthy individuals.

**Celebrating Success**

We believe that recognising and celebrating positive behaviour, effort, and achievement is essential to building a thriving school culture. Our celebration systems are designed to reinforce our REACH Drivers—Resilience, Expression, Aspiration, Citizenship, and Health—and to motivate pupils to contribute positively to school life.

- Green Points: Awarded throughout the school day for demonstrating positive behaviours such as kindness, responsibility, and cooperation. At the end of each term, the pupil with the highest number of Green Points in each class receives a certificate to acknowledge their consistent efforts.
- Friday Merits: Each week, pupils are nominated for Friday Merits based on their embodiment of one or more REACH Drivers. These are celebrated in Friday assemblies, where pupils receive verbal recognition and a certificate.
- REACH Display Boards: Every classroom features a REACH Display Board showcasing examples of excellent work and behaviour linked to the REACH Drivers. These boards are updated regularly and serve as visual reminders of the values we promote.

- End of Year Awards Ceremony: At the end of the academic year, we host a special ceremony to celebrate exceptional achievements across all areas of school life. Awards are presented for academic excellence, personal growth, creativity, leadership, and consistent demonstration of REACH values. Families are invited to attend, making it a joyful and affirming event for our whole community.

These celebration systems help foster a sense of pride, belonging, and motivation among pupils, reinforcing the importance of effort, kindness, and personal development in everyday school life.

## 6. Relational Practices in Action

Relational practice is embedded in everyday school life. Staff greet pupils warmly, use check-ins to build connection, and facilitate restorative circles to strengthen community bonds. The Thrive Approach informs our daily interactions, helping staff tune into children's emotional states and respond with attuned, supportive strategies.

We also incorporate Commando Joe's character curriculum, which promotes teamwork, leadership, and resilience through mission-based learning. These sessions provide opportunities for pupils to develop key relational skills such as empathy, perseverance, and collaboration in a dynamic and engaging way.

Natural consequences and positive reinforcement are used to guide behaviour, and staff model respectful, emotionally attuned interactions. These routines help children feel safe, valued, and connected, supporting their development across all five REACH domains.

## 7. Response to Dysregulated Behaviour

When pupils become dysregulated, our response is calm, consistent, and supportive. We use de-escalation strategies and provide access to safe spaces and sensory tools to help children regain control. Staff are trained in the PACE approach—Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy—which guides our interactions during moments of distress. PACE helps us remain emotionally available and non-judgmental, allowing children to feel safe enough to co-regulate and reflect.

Individualised behaviour support plans are co-created with pupils and families, ensuring that responses are tailored and respectful. These approaches promote resilience, encourage expression, and support emotional recovery, while maintaining dignity and reinforcing community values.

## 8. Restrictive Interventions, Reasonable Force and Positive Handling

At Francis Askew Primary School, our relational approach seeks to prevent and minimise the need for restrictive interventions through positive relationships, early support, appropriate adjustments, co-regulation and de-escalation. Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force and seclusion, are safety measures and are not a form of punishment.

This section should be read alongside the school's individual Positive Handling Plans, risk assessments, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, SEND Policy and other relevant school procedures. It reflects the Department for Education guidance 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools' (April 2026), which replaced the 2013 'Use of reasonable force in schools' guidance from 1 April 2026.

### 8.1 What are restrictive interventions?

Restrictive intervention is the umbrella term used by the Department for Education for actions that prevent, restrict or subdue a pupil's movement or part of their body. This includes physical and non-physical interventions. Reasonable force is a term used in legislation and includes physical restrictive interventions.

The school recognises that appropriate physical contact, such as first aid, comforting a distressed pupil, guiding or escorting a pupil, or supporting a pupil to access a space they have chosen to use for self-regulation, is not a restrictive intervention.

## 8.2 When may reasonable force be used?

All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable force may be used to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others.
- Committing a criminal offence.
- Damaging property.
- Causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

The decision to use a restrictive intervention must be based on the circumstances at the time. Staff should consider whether it is necessary, whether there is a less restrictive alternative, whether the intervention is likely to reduce the risk or escalate the situation, and the pupil's welfare.

Where restrictive intervention is necessary, staff must use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risk. Staff should continually assess whether the intervention should be reduced or stopped.

## 8.3 Prevention and de-escalation

Prevention and de-escalation are central to our approach. Staff use the relational strategies already set out in this policy, including PACE, co-regulation, calm and predictable communication, safe spaces, sensory strategies, appropriate choices, time and space to regulate, and restorative approaches.

Staff consider the environment and the individual pupil's needs, including potential triggers, communication needs, sensory needs, medical needs, trauma, anxiety and other vulnerabilities. Staff use appropriate adjustments to reduce the likelihood of escalation.

Where a pupil presents an identified risk of requiring restrictive intervention, staff work with the pupil, parents/carers and relevant professionals, where appropriate, to develop an individual Positive Handling Plan and risk assessment. These plans identify triggers, early warning signs, preventative strategies, de-escalation approaches, reasonable adjustments and, where necessary, parameters for increased physical contact.

## 8.4 Positive Handling Plans and risk assessment

A Positive Handling Plan is an individualised plan designed to reduce the likelihood of restrictive intervention and provide staff with a consistent, safe and proportionate response where there is an identified risk of harm. The plan does not give automatic permission for restrictive intervention. Staff must make a fresh, situation-specific assessment of necessity, proportionality, welfare and safety.

Where there is an identified risk that reasonable force or another restrictive intervention may be required, an appropriate positive handling plan must be in place. Plans should be reviewed periodically and following any significant incident, using evidence about what has worked and what has not worked.

## 8.5 Pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities

We recognise that pupils with SEND or other vulnerabilities may be disproportionately subject to restrictive interventions. Staff should seek to understand underlying triggers, including pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations, communication difficulties, fear or anxiety, and consider how the school environment and its policies may be experienced by individual pupils.

Reasonable adjustments are considered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Where appropriate, Positive Handling Plans are co-produced with the pupil and their parents/carers and informed by relevant professionals. Communication strategies are adapted so that pupils have adequate time and appropriate means to understand and respond.

## 8.6 Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and preventing them from leaving, including by physically obstructing the pupil's way of leaving or securing the place they are in.

Seclusion should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. It is never used as a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour and is never implemented through the threat of punishment.

Any place used for seclusion is safe and not threatening or intimidating. The pupil is supervised throughout and, as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil is allowed to leave. Any incident involving seclusion is recorded and reported in accordance with the school's procedures.

## 8.7 Staff training and safety

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions are appropriately trained in safe and lawful use and in preventative and de-escalation strategies. Training reflects the principles of the Department for Education guidance and the needs of the school.

Only staff who have received appropriate training should use any planned restrictive intervention identified within an individual Positive Handling Plan, although the legal power to use reasonable force is not limited to trained staff where an immediate situation requires action.

## 8.8 Recording and reporting incidents

The school maintains procedures for recording and reporting restrictive intervention incidents in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 93A, and the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025, which came into force on 1 April 2026.

Each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force must be recorded in writing as soon as practicable after the incident. Staff involved endeavour to complete the record no later than the same day. The record includes, as a minimum:

- The names of the pupil and staff directly involved.
- Relevant needs or circumstances, including whether the pupil has SEND and their SEN status code.
- The date, time, location and approximate duration.
- What led up to the incident, known or potential triggers and preventative/de-escalation strategies used.
- Where relevant, the type and degree of force and any physical injuries.
- Why the use of force was assessed as necessary.
- Post-incident support, including medical treatment or other adverse impacts.

Each significant use of force must be reported to the pupil's parent(s)/carer(s) as soon as practicable, and staff should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

There are safeguarding exceptions to parent reporting where informing a parent would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil. In such circumstances, the incident must be reported to a parent where this can be done safely or, where there is no parent to whom it can be safely reported, to the local authority within whose area the pupil ordinarily resides.

The school also records and reports seclusion and non-force-related restraint incidents in accordance with the 2025 Regulations.

## 8.9 Post-incident support and repair

Following a restrictive intervention, the school will evaluate the incident as soon as practicable to understand why it occurred, the impact on the pupil and staff, any patterns or triggers, and how the likelihood of future restrictive intervention can be reduced.

Where appropriate, the pupil and staff member involved should receive medical assessment and treatment for injuries. Staff and pupils are offered appropriate follow-up support and an opportunity to reflect. Follow-up conversations support learning, wellbeing and the repair and rebuilding of relationships and, where possible, are facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident.

Pupils who witness a restrictive intervention and may have been distressed also receive appropriate support.

### 8.10 Monitoring, evaluation and governance

The school monitors and analyses restrictive intervention data to identify patterns and triggers, evaluate the effectiveness of prevention and de-escalation strategies, identify staff development needs and inform improvement planning. Governors and school leaders also review this information appropriately.

Monitoring includes consideration of whether restrictive interventions are used disproportionately in relation to pupils with SEND, protected characteristics or other vulnerabilities. Where patterns are identified, the school will consider changes to policy, practice, individual support plans, risk assessments, training or other preventative measures.

### 8.11 Complaints and allegations

Complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be dealt with in accordance with the school's normal complaints procedure. Where an allegation is made against a member of staff concerning inappropriate use of force or another restrictive intervention, the procedures in Keeping Children Safe in Education will be followed, including the relevant safeguarding and allegations procedures.

## 9. Sanctions and Logical Consequences

While our primary focus is on promoting positive behaviour through connection, regulation, and repair, we recognise that clear boundaries and consistent responses are essential for maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment. Sanctions within our relational framework are not punitive, but rather restorative and educational in nature. They are designed to help pupils understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility, and make amends.

We categorise behaviours into two broad levels to guide our responses:

**Amber Behaviours (Minor)**

Amber behaviours are low-level disruptions or relational missteps that may interfere with learning or social harmony. These include:

- Calling out or interrupting
- Not following instructions
- Mild disrespect or unkindness
- Refusal to engage in learning tasks
- Minor playground disagreements

These behaviours are typically addressed through relational strategies such as gentle reminders, emotion coaching, and restorative conversations. Logical consequences may include:

- Time to reflect in a calm space
- Reparation tasks (e.g. helping tidy up after disruption)

- Restorative dialogue with affected peers or adults
- Support with emotional regulation using Thrive tools

**Red Behaviours (Significant)**

Red behaviours are more serious incidents that may cause harm, distress, or significant disruption. These include:

- Physical aggression or threatening behaviour
- Bullying or targeted unkindness
- Persistent defiance or refusal to follow adult direction
- Damage to property
- Unsafe behaviour that endangers self or others

These behaviours require a more structured response, often involving senior staff and parents/carers. Logical consequences are applied with empathy and consistency, and may include:

- Restorative meetings with staff and peers
- Temporary removal from a situation to regulate and reflect
- Reparation activities that promote accountability
- Review or update of individual support plans
- In rare cases, internal or fixed-term exclusion, in line with statutory guidance

All sanctions are framed within our relational and restorative ethos. We avoid shaming or punitive measures and instead focus on helping children learn from their mistakes, rebuild trust, and re-engage with the school community. Staff use the **PACE approach**—Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy—to guide their responses, ensuring that even in moments of challenge, pupils feel safe, understood, and supported.

## 10. Repair and Restoration

We prioritise repair over punishment. Restorative conversations provide opportunities for reflection, accountability, and reconnection. Pupils are supported in making amends and rebuilding trust with peers and adults. These moments are framed as opportunities for growth, helping children learn from their experiences and strengthen their emotional wellbeing. Through this process, we reinforce the values of citizenship, aspiration, and health.

**Relate–Rupture–Repair: Building Strong Relationships in Our School**

At our school, we believe that strong relationships are the foundation of a happy, safe, and successful learning environment. The Relate–Rupture–Repair approach helps children and adults understand how to build, maintain, and mend relationships when things go wrong.

**Relate**: Connecting with Care

- We take time to build trust and connection with each other.
- Adults model kindness, respect, and empathy in every interaction.

- We listen carefully, speak kindly, and show interest in each other's thoughts and feelings.
- Relationships are nurtured through play, shared experiences, and positive communication.

**Rupture**: When Things Go Wrong

- Sometimes, relationships are disrupted—this might be through a disagreement, hurt feelings, or misunderstanding.
- Ruptures are a normal part of human interaction and not something to fear.
- We help children recognise when a rupture has happened and understand how it affects others.

**Repair**: Making Things Right

- Repairing a rupture means taking responsibility, showing empathy, and working to rebuild trust.
- Adults guide children through reflection, apology, and reconciliation.
- We encourage children to express their feelings, listen to others, and find ways to move forward together.
- Repair is not about punishment—it's about learning, healing, and growing stronger together.

This approach supports emotional development, resilience, and a culture of respect. It helps children learn that relationships can be repaired and that everyone deserves a chance to make things right.

## 11. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Governors**: Monitor the implementation and impact of the relational policy, uphold accountability for inclusive and emotionally-informed practice, and advocate for relational values in governance decisions.
- **School Leaders**: Champion relational approaches across the school, ensure policies and practices reflect the REACH ethos, and provide strategic oversight and support for staff development and wellbeing.
- **Staff:** Model relational values, respond with empathy, and uphold consistency (Citizenship & Health)
- **Pupils**: Engage respectfully, take responsibility, and support peers (Expression & Aspiration)
- **Parents/Carers:** Collaborate with staff, reinforce relational values at home, and contribute to support plans (Resilience & Citizenship)

## 12. Training and Professional Development

We invest in ongoing professional development to ensure staff are equipped to implement relational practices effectively. Training includes trauma-informed approaches, emotional literacy, restorative communication, and inclusive strategies. Staff are supported through supervision and reflective practice, and external expertise is sought when needed. This commitment to growth reflects our aspiration to be a learning community that prioritises wellbeing and inclusion.

## 13. Inclusion and Equity

We are committed to equity and inclusion for all pupils. Support is tailored for children with SEND and additional needs, and communication strategies are differentiated to meet diverse learning profiles. We maintain high expectations for every child, providing scaffolding where necessary to help them succeed. Our practices are culturally competent and anti-discriminatory, ensuring that every pupil feels seen, heard, and valued.

## 14. Monitoring and Evaluation

The impact of this policy is regularly reviewed through wellbeing indicators, behaviour data, and feedback from pupils, staff, and families. We monitor progress in emotional regulation, relational development, and community cohesion. Pupil voice is central to our evaluation process, and we use these insights to refine our approach and ensure it continues to meet the needs of our school community.

## 15. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies:

- Exclusions policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- SEND policy
- Accessibility plan
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, April 2026)