



Overview

At Woodlands we are committed and invested in supporting the very best possible relational health between:

Child and Child
Child and School Staff
Parent and School Staff
School Staff
School Staff and Senior Leads
School Staff and External Agencies

Relational Practice

At Woodlands Academy we ensure all our staff use relational practice to best support all pupils.

We understand that relationships are powerful, and they are central to the learning process, creating optimal conditions for learning. Trusting relationships encourage health attachments which are built in safe environment. When trusting relationships are built, they provide a safe environment where risk-taking learning can be fostered as well as exploration to drive learning. Research states that when pupils feel safe and supported, they are more likely to perform better socially, emotionally and academically. To ensure a relational approach in line with our school values we ensure all staff listen with purpose, understand and respond to behaviour in a developmentally friendly and holistic way, show unconditional positive regard, embrace kindness, open-mindedness, perseverance and empathy. As staff we model the behaviour we wish to see from others as well as ensuring we are emotionally available as adults to best support the pupils.

Emotion Coaching

At Woodlands Academy we ensure all our staff use emotion coaching when supporting pupils.

Childhood is a time when we learn about what emotions are, how they make us and others feel, how to express them and what to do when emotions/feeling are overwhelming or unpleasant. Emotion Coaching with your child when they are feeling stressed works with the physiology of the social engagement system (pre-frontal cortex) and stress response system (Amygdala...) to help them to calm, problem solve and develop more positive social behaviours. Using empathetic role modelling, co-regulation can help them to feel calm and provides opportunities to learn to self-regulate. Children and young people learn to understand, manage, and problem solve the stresses in their lives. Through this process your child will learn the skills of self-regulation.

At Woodlands Academy we are committed to using educational practices to best support relationships with all which we refer to as the C.A.R.E.

C – Connect

A – Accept

R – Reflect and limit set

E – End and problem solve

Connect

Step one of this approach is to recognise and empathise. This gives us the opportunity to be attuned and observe and notice what is going on for the child. Empathy is joining the child in their feeling and feeling it with them. This develops a sense of connectedness and is one of the strongest ways to validate a feeling and soothe. Empathy has a powerful impact on emotional regulation and mental health. We learn how to empathise from experiencing empathy. This approach helps us to empathise with a feeling and is not the same as agreeing with the behaviour.

Accept

Step two of this approach is to validate feelings and label them. Children can often struggle to recognise the emotion they are feeling. We use words to reflect on the child's emotions and help the child to label the emotion. As staff we ensure we observe what we see rather than asking probing questions to which the child might not know the answer.

We use specific and a wide range of emotional words to help support the child to name the emotion they are feeling. Naming the emotion helps to soothe and regulate the child and their brain so they can recover quickly from their upsets. We ensure we don't tell them how they should feel, dismiss their emotion, minimise it or try to distract them away from it. Staff will help and support the child to understand that their emotion is real and valid and that we recognise that.

Reflect and limit set

Step three of this approach is to reflect and set limits. We recognise and support children to name and label their own emotions but also support them to understand all emotions are OK, but not all behaviours. While we validated the emotions in step 1 and 2, in step 3, we are clear that we are not validating the behaviour.

End and problem solve

Step four of this approach is focused on problem solving. We only move onto this when all feelings have been acknowledged and when regulated. We work together to explore the feelings that gave rise in the incident/behaviour. We ensure we scaffold a conversation about exploring alternative solutions that could lead to more appropriate outcomes. We ensure we empower the child to feel like they can manage their own emotions, however we continue to support them to understand.

The Six Principles of Nurture

Research practices showed that a nurturing approach helps pupils develop vital social skills, confidence and self-esteem, ensuring they can learn. It encourages pupils to take pride in achieving – addressing the social and emotional needs that can hamper learning (www.nurtureuk.org).

The six principles of nurture, support all children to be able to learn and enable staff to identify, understand and address pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. A nurturing approach helps to develop behaviour as well as ensuing regulated classroom and school environments to best meet the pupils' needs at Woodlands Academy. We ensure we use the six principles of nurture at Woodlands Academy to best support our pupils to make effective progress both socially, emotionally and academically to ensure all are prepared for life after Woodlands.

The Six Principles of Nurture		
Safety <i>The classroom offers a safe base</i>	Wellbeing <i>The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing</i>	Language <i>Language is a vital means of communication</i>
Transitions <i>The importance of transitions in children's lives</i>	Learning <i>Children's learning is understood developmentally</i>	Behaviour <i>All behaviour is communication</i>

Restorative Practice

Effective Restorative Practices foster awareness of how others have been affected by different types and levels of behaviour. This is done by actively engaging pupils in a process which separates the deed from the doer and rejects the act not the actor, allowing participants to make amends for the harm caused. Restorative Practices acknowledges the intrinsic worth of the person and their potential contribution to the school community.

Restorative practice will be used to help pupils to understand how their actions may have made others feel. This is used daily by all staff to support post incident learning and at the heart of how we support and encourage positive behaviour.

At Woodlands Academy, wherever possible we should try to work in the 'with box', offering high support, nurturing and encouragement in conjunction with consistently setting clear boundaries and expectations. Staff should always, within their professional conduct, be positive and respectful role models to our pupils.

Woodlands Academy **Relationship Policy**

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When using the restorative approach in school, staff will use restorative questions such as:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Policy Review

Woodlands considers the relationship policy document to be important, and the policy will be reviewed annually by Woodlands Academy.