

WOOKEY PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY



Relational Behaviour Policy

ADOPTED BY GOVERNORS: 16th September 2024

REVIEWED: September 2025

UPDATES:

Appendix G agreed by FGB in May 2025

Appendix H added and amendments made to 'What can children expect from staff' section - September 2025

Updated 'Decision Framework for Exclusion in January 2026

Updated Appendix E in February 2026 to clarify positive handling in light of the DfE Use of Reasonable Force guidance from April 1st 2026

This policy should be taken as part of the overall strategy of the school and operated within the context of our vision, aims and values

Rationale

"There is no more effective neurobiological intervention than a safe relationship, the relationship works to bring the brain back into regulation" (Bruce Perry)

Our behaviour policy at Wookey is underpinned by a relational approach. We understand that when children feel happy, safe, listened to and respected they make progress with their learning. We understand that all behaviour is communication. Our role as adults is to observe and respond to that communication with a consistent, compassionate and constructive response. This policy should be read and applied in conjunction with our Online Safety Policy and our Anti Bullying Policy.

There is a strong evidence base that teacher-pupil relationships can positively impact pupil effort, behaviour, wellbeing and academic achievement. Although behaviourist approaches can work for many children, they are not successful with all, particularly those who have had Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) or trauma. A relational approach to behaviour works for all. For more information on theory and research, please see Appendix A.

Our School Aims

Upholding the highest standards of positive behaviour, we aim to foster a supportive environment where children feel safe and cared for, where excellence is achieved, love for learning is nurtured, creativity is cultivated, and a sense of belonging is instilled.

Children at Wookey will:

- Be kept safe
- Be cared for
- Feel they belong
- Be included
- Be supported to learn
- Be heard

Staff will:

- Use a consistent approach to building and supporting relationships, providing a safe, comfortable and caring environment for optimal learning to take place
- Understand that behaviour is communication
- Use a common language for talking about relationships, boundaries and behaviours
- Know how to manage challenging incidents
- Be supported to use restorative approaches as part of managing incidents
- Feel safe, listened to and well-informed about the school's relational policy
- Be asked their views via an annual questionnaire

Parents will:

- Have access to the school's relational policy
- Be informed of the rationale and research underpinning the policy
- Feel safe and listened to in relation to the support in place for their child
- Be included in the writing and review of any behaviour plan created in support of their child
- Be asked their views via an annual questionnaire

To achieve this, all members of our Wookey School community must adhere to the simple rules of being:

‘Ready, Respectful and Safe.’

Wookey Primary School rules: Ready, Respectful and Safe

Children need rules, boundaries and predictability to feel safe. We have three simple rules at Wookey that all within the community must follow: Ready, Respectful and Safe. Our rules are easy to remember and will be referred to continually by all adults.

These three rules are based on the work of educator Paul Dix and his book, 'When the Adults Change, Everything Changes'. He writes: "Why crush behaviours with punishment when you can grow them with love? Visible consistency with visible kindness allows exceptional behaviour to flourish."

All classes will create class agreements at the start of the year, deciding on what these three rules mean in their class. Teachers will explicitly teach that the purpose of rules and agreements are to protect their rights as stated in the UN Convention on Rights of the child (UNCRC). The class agreements will be few in number, displayed in every classroom and communicated clearly.

Below are examples of what children being ready, respectful and safe might look like:

Ready	Respectful	Safe
Sit tall, face the speaker, listen and think.	Be polite to everyone.	Use kind words that make others feel safe.
Be prepared with the necessary equipment.	Take turns to speak and listen.	Gentle hands, gentle feet.
Follow instructions and track the teacher.	Consider how other people feel - be kind.	Follow adult instructions.
Keep your hands and feet in your own space.	Take care of the school and its equipment.	Stay in the classroom/playground as guided by adults.
Be ready to try your best.	Play and work co-operatively.	Use equipment gently and as intended.
Be ready to make mistakes.	Follow the rules of a game.	Report any damage noticed around the school.
	Value each other's work and contributions.	Take responsibility for your own behaviour and plan how to repair relationships when things have gone wrong.
	Tell the truth and listen to other people's perspectives.	
	Accept a solution or consequence without arguing.	

What can children expect from staff?

Building relationships – visible consistencies, visible kindness

Building positive relationships is essential. For many children, their needs will be met simply through staff developing positive relationships with them. Doing this involves all adults being consistent, predictable, reliable and trustworthy. All adults at Wookey understand the importance of showing a PACE approach (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy) (Appendix B). All adults at Wookey must strive to know the children extremely well and build genuine, meaningful relationships with those they teach and interact with. This requires deliberate engagement with children to ensure they feel valued. It enables adults to follow up on negative behaviour with genuine care.

Adults will be aware of the cues they give through their facial expressions, frequency and modulation of their voices and their body language. They will provide structure, routines, boundaries and containment. Change, novelty, uncertainty and challenge will make children feel less safe and lead them to communicate this through their behaviour.

It's important that families work together with school staff, reinforcing the same messages, and showing the same respect for our rules and staff.

Children will witness the following visible consistencies and kindness at Wookey:

- Greeting and welcoming children into a calm, ready school and classroom. We will be on time, ready and welcoming
- Consistent rules which are understood by all
- Playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy (PACE) approach towards behaviour
- Praising in public. Reminding in private
- Consistent language and behaviour script
- Deliberate attention and interest to build relationships

Teaching children to be ready, respectful and safe

At Wookey, we use the PSHE Association's programme of study to plan and implement a robust PSHE education across the entire school. Our curriculum prioritises teaching children strategies, expected behaviours, and values. We aim for children to be taught how to:

- respect other people, their differences, beliefs, feelings, and property.
- express their views and feelings confidently and assertively, but respectfully.
- have healthy friendships and resolve disagreements peacefully.

To help children label and recognise emotions, we use the Zones of Regulation framework. This system teaches them to identify their feelings using a simple colour-coded system (Blue, Green, Yellow, and Red Zones) and to understand that "all emotions are ok." We explicitly teach children how to use this framework to understand their emotional state and to use strategies to regulate strong emotions.

To support this, we will:

- Teach the Zones of Regulation curriculum to all children as part of our PSHE lessons.
- Use the Zones language consistently when talking about our own feelings, modelling healthy emotional regulation for students.
- Ensure the Zones of Regulation is prominently displayed in every classroom and referred to regularly throughout the school day.

This approach will help children to be resilient and have a growth mindset, allowing them to make progress and feel proud of their achievements, while living a happy and healthy life.

For more information on the Zones of Regulation and its implementation, please refer to Appendix H.

Celebrating positive behaviour – Excellence Recognition

Praise and positive encouragement is the best way to promote positive behaviour. Positive behaviour must be recognised sincerely and consistently by **all** members of staff. At Wookey, we will deliberately and persistently notice children doing the right thing and praise them for it publicly, in the moment, during our weekly celebration assemblies and publicised in our Wookey Weekly newsletter. These are the types of praise the children will see at Wookey:

Non-verbal, verbal or written praise	This could be a thumbs up, a smile, written feedback on a piece of work, or specific verbal praise. Children should always know why they are being praised. We won't say 'good boy/girl', we will praise the effort or behaviour shown e.g. 'I really liked the way you helped Susie when she fell over at break time. That was really kind of you' or 'You put so much effort into your writing today. I particularly liked the way you used ____'
Praise to parent or carer at pick-up	When appropriate, we may speak to a parent at pick-up about positive behaviour their child has shown in school.
Phone call or Seesaw message home	When appropriate, we may contact a parent by phone call or Seesaw message about positive behaviour their child has shown in school.
Show work	We will ask children who they'd like to show their work to in school. This could be any adult in school they'd feel proud to show their work to, or their class.

<p>House points and house point rewards</p>	<p>Children will be given house points by all members of staff when they show our school values. This may be for lining up quietly, starting their work independently, or being polite to others in school. Adults will keep house points on their person so they are able to praise in the moment. Children will physically put their house points into their house tubes. Once their tubes are full, they will be rewarded with a prize that they've decided on in advance. Rewards will be given promptly after filling their tubes and be communicated to parents via Seesaw and on the Wookey Weekly newsletter.</p>
<p>Class based rewards (marbles, stickers, raffle tickets etc.)</p>	<p>Some classes will have specific reward systems. This is normally to reward the class for working as a team as a way to promote a positive classroom environment.</p>
<p>Star of The Week certificates</p>	<p>Class teachers will award children with Star of The Weeks certificates during celebration assemblies. These will focus on our school values of respect, independence, engagement and resilience.</p>
<p>Headteacher's postcard</p>	<p>Each week, the headteacher will send a postcard home to a family of a child who has gone above and beyond in showing our school values. This will be celebrated in celebration assembly once the family have received the postcard.</p>
<p>Upstander certificates</p>	<p>Children will be explicitly taught to 'speak up, reach out and be kind' when witnessing unkind or bullying behaviour. When any adult notices a child being an upstander, they will award them with an upstander certificate in our celebration assemblies (as well as verbally praising in the moment)</p>
<p>Excellence Award stars</p>	<p>All support staff will give out excellence stars on a Friday during celebration assembly. These will be to reward behaviours above and beyond the expected.</p>
<p>OPAL Awards</p>	<p>Our OPAL play leads give weekly Golden Welly Awards and trophies which are for being resilient, safe and responsible in OPAL play. The Play Mentors also choose one person a week who is showing the values of a good friend during OPAL play (these will be given out in OPAL assemblies).</p>

Children who need more help to be ready, respectful and safe

Not all children feel automatically safe. Children who have experienced trauma and/or have SEND may need adaptations to support them feel safe and secure at school. Teachers in collaboration with parents and carers will create a relational support plan (Appendix C) to ensure consistent strategies are put in place. Ongoing strategies to support relationships may include: Daily Check ins, transitional objects between home and school, ELSA, Forest School, Talk About Social Communication, Block Therapy, Calm time in the Zen Den and sensory circuits.

How does Wookey respond to behaviour?

“Too often we forget that discipline really means to teach, not to punish. A disciple is a student, not a recipient of behavioural consequences.”

Daniel Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson - The Whole-Brain Child. (2012)

Adults in school have the responsibility to regulate their own emotions, body language and tone of voice. Adults' reactions to behaviour will be given discreetly wherever possible 'praise in public, remind in private'. Adults at Wookey recognise that all behaviour is communication. We will always look beyond the behaviour and identify what is happening 'below the surface'. What might we not be able to see which may explain the behaviour?



In order to ensure a consistent approach in what could be a challenging situation, we use emotion coaching prompts (Appendix D) in-line with the PACE approach. These consistent prompts support adults to redirect the behaviour and keep words to a purposeful minimum.

There must always be certainty that any member of staff will follow up on negative behaviour themselves with full support from their class team and senior leaders.

Reporting and recording behaviour

The language we use to describe behaviour must be to the point and factual. This is consistent when explaining to colleagues, parents and carers and in our Child Protection Online Monitoring logs (CPOMs). We will never use emotionally loaded or judgemental words to describe children's behaviour (e.g. terrible, manipulative, attacked). We will always be factual, fair and respectful and will never humiliate or shame children, families or school adults when describing behaviours.

We will use a secure system called CPOMs to record any concerns related to any child. This includes safeguarding concerns and instances of behaviour which isn't ready, respectful or safe. The adult who observed the incident has the responsibility to log it as soon as they are able to, unless a member of the senior leadership team says they have enough information to do so. Logging behaviour in this way enables us to identify patterns and provide additional support. All members of staff are trained in how to use the CPOMs system.

Stepped Boundaries

At Wookey, we use stepped boundaries to ensure consistency. Throughout the stepped boundaries, adults will remain calm and use emotion coaching steps which redirect behaviour to be positive and ready, respectful and safe to learn. The tone of voice and the way the adult structures redirection so that it is aimed at the behaviour, not the child, is essential. Adults will not describe the child's behaviour to another adult in front of the child as this promotes shame. Other adults will support quietly and calmly if necessary, for example, offering another seat at a table, coming to work alongside them or allowing them to have a movement break if appropriate.

The stepped boundary system is cumulative within a lesson/session but is important that everyone also has a fresh start each lesson. When children have a successful lesson or playtime, it will be recognised and praised.

If a child reaches the repair and restore stage (shown below), this must be recorded on CPOMs and parents should be informed at the end of the school day. As far as possible this will be communicated to parents discreetly. Language such as a 'bad day' should not be used; instead, be factual about needing to discuss a repair that took place. If a child is repeatedly reaching the reminder step, even if behaviour is subsequently improved for a short time, teachers will discuss this pattern of behaviour with parents and carers to work together to support the child's behaviour.

Stepped Boundaries Steps and Examples

Steps	Example
<p>Nudge – This is gentle encouragement and may be non-verbal</p>	<p>Gently handing them a book or pencil, placing your hand on the table in front of them, a nod, thumbs up or 'a look'. It may also be verbal. For example, 'Remember, Eyes on me'</p>
<p>Reminder – This is a short, polite reminder of the rules</p>	<p>I notice that you're talking when I'm talking. Remember, we need to be ready and respectful. Please remember it's your turn to listen whilst I'm talking. Thank you</p>
<p>Reset & Time to Choose – This is discreet 30 second intervention (max) to make a positive choice (always away from other children)</p>	<p>I notice that you've continued to talk during the lesson. Can I help you? Do you need a movement break/a drink? (where appropriate) You now need to choose. Remember how well you did yesterday in... If you break the rules by ____, you will need to stay with me for 2 minutes after the lesson</p>
<p>1:1 Conversation – 2 minutes with the adult after the lesson/at break/at lunch.</p>	<p>Have a mini restorative conversation and to provide time to finish work, or tidy up etc as a logical consequence. This might mean 2 minutes of missed play or 2 minutes accompanying an adult to break duty. 'Because you continued to break the rules, you will need to stay with me for two minutes of your breaktime'</p>
<p>Repair and Restore – 5 minute restorative conversation followed by 10 minute consequence</p>	<p>If a child continues with negative behaviour following a 1:1 conversation, a short restorative conversation of about 5 minutes with a consequence of about 10 minutes will be given to repair the situation during play or lunchtime. A 'repair task' or 'consequence' should be agreed/reached with the child at the end of the restorative conversation, such as tidying the classroom, making an apology or withdrawal from playtime football. This consequence will be as logical/natural as possible e.g. withdrawal from football if that was when negative behaviour occurred; tidying up a mess made by the child. A repair task might involve work that must be completed at home (Year 2 upwards) to repair lost learning. This should be returned first thing in the morning. Parents and carers will be informed that there are expectations which are not being met, and the child should understand the natural consequence. If a child refuses to engage with the repair talk or to agree to a consequence they will miss the remainder of that playtime. It may be appropriate for the adult to say they will follow up with this talk later that day or the next day</p>

How does Wookey respond to behaviour which causes harm?

Behaviours which are sufficiently serious will by-pass the stepped boundaries, and senior leaders should be informed straight away. If a child shows this behaviour, this must be recorded on CPOMs and parents should be informed at the end of the school day.

This behaviour includes:

- bullying, racism, sexism, homophobia or discriminatory language against other protected characteristics
- swearing or obscene language
- physical harm or intention to physically harm
- vandalism/stealing
- throwing objects with the intention of hurting others or damaging property
- serious challenge to authority of any member of staff/arguing with a member of staff/verbal abuse to staff
- refusing to follow instructions when the stepped boundary system has been followed. For example, refusing to go with a member of staff to have a repair talk.

Responding and Calming

A child who has shown this serious behaviour will often be dysregulated. Our first priority will always be to keep all children and adults safe. School staff will ask a child or positively handle a child in order to move them to a safe, calm space in order to regulate. We do not isolate or seclude children, but we do withdraw dysregulated children to support them in calming down. When needed, a member of SLT will assist with this.

If serious behaviour is witnessed e.g. someone has kicked another, the following script will be used:



STOP



I CAN HELP YOU



LET'S GO

(somewhere safe and calm)

At least 95% of managing negative behaviour does not require physical contact. In a small minority of cases it will be safest for everyone, including the child concerned, to use positive handling. In an even smaller minority of cases, reasonable force will be used in order to safeguard the child and others (see Appendix E for positive handling and reasonable force). All teaching and support staff were Team Teach trained in September 2024 and are able to handle children safely. Adults will use the phrase 'help needed' in a calm voice when needing support from senior leaders. Every class will have a walkie talkie. It is the responsibility of staff on duty to take a walkie talkie with them out to break duty and return it to the classroom afterwards.

A dysregulated adult cannot regulate a dysregulated child. All staff will remain calm and professional, and do their best to stay with the child, following through the process of calming and then ultimately using a restorative approach. Sometimes, a 'change of face' will be appropriate. When children have self or co-regulated, a restorative conversation will occur, followed by an agreement of a natural consequence.

Adults will use emotion coaching prompts to help the children calm. Different children will need different techniques. This could be deep breathing, squeezing or fiddling with a fiddle toy, listening to music, curling up in a blanket, colouring or reading a book or kicking a ball. Adults know the children well so will be able to decide what the best strategy is. There is frequently a misconception that children who have this time are being rewarded for 'bad behaviour'. However, some children need this additional support to get them to a place where they're able to reason and problem solve. With time, this then helps these children to self-regulate. This extra support for emotional regulation should be seen in the same way as extra maths or writing support for someone who's struggling.

When a child has shown serious negative behaviour three times in a half term, they will require a responsive co-regulation plan (Appendix F). This will be written in collaboration with parents and carers and where appropriate the child themselves. The responsive co-regulation plan will be added to CPOMs and shared with appropriate staff.

Repairing and Restoring

Using restorative conversations following conflict or when incidents have taken place are far more successful in promoting understanding and learning than a punitive approach. The approach supports children to develop greater understanding, empathy and responsibility. Restorative conversations are embedded throughout school life e.g. during minor disagreements in class and whole class circle time. We recognise that every interaction can be an intervention. When harm has been caused, it is essential that adequate time is given for children to repair their relationships with peers or adults. These conversations will be facilitated by a class teacher, ELSA or member of the senior leadership team. Children will need reassurance that meeting those who have hurt them will be safe and likely to make matters better and not worse. Facilitators also need to ensure that the process does not shame the child who has caused harm.

Restorative conversations aim for all parties involved to learn from the incident, have their needs identified, feelings listened to and valued, and supported to be able to repair and restore their relationships.

When it is felt that an encounter between those harmed and those who have harmed is not beneficial, it can be helpful to use the restorative exploration individually.

Following the use of a restorative exploration, adults will reflect on; what was the behaviour communicating? How are the unmet needs being addressed? What skills does the child need to develop? What additional learning opportunities are in place to enable this? What suggestions do the children have to support the repairing of the relationship?

Questions for restorative conversations:

(Adults will have these on their lanyards to refer to during conversations)

- **What happened?**
- **What were you thinking and feeling at the time?**
- **What have you thought about it since?**
- **Who has been affected and in what way?**
- **How could things have been done differently?**
- **What do you think needs to happen to make things right?**

Children and adults who have been harmed will be listened to, cared for and reassured. They will be informed that this behaviour isn't acceptable at Wookey and that there will be fair consequences for the child who harmed them. The parents and carers will always be told what has happened at the end of the school day in person, on the phone or via Seesaw.

Consequences

As within the stepped boundaries, consequences to behaviour which has caused harm will be logical and will help those who have caused harm to learn, reflect on and adapt their behaviour. It's important that children recognise their actions have consequences, but they can be learnt from and we can move forward. If it's decided that a child needs to stay off the playground at lunchtimes, they will work with the ELSA or member of the senior leadership team in order to support them to be ready, respectful and safe. This may include making an apology letter, identifying strategies to help them calm when they're experiencing big emotions or using the time to catch up on potential missed work. Unfair, severe consequences are often counterproductive. It's not the severity of the consequence that matters, rather its certainty.

Consequences may be:

- **Not being on the playground at the same time as other children for __ days/playtimes until we rebuild trust that they can be ready, respectful and safe**
- **Working in another classroom/ in another supervised room for a set time while we repair the trust that they can be ready, respectful and safe**

Special and Exceptional Circumstances

SEND

At Wookey, we use [Somerset's Graduated Response Tool](#) to help us identify and meet children's needs. If we have followed the relational policy and children are not making significant progress in regards to behaviour or they're needing high levels of support, they will be added to our SEND register. If we believe further support is required, we may seek support from other professionals in collaboration with parents and carers. Please see our [SEND policy](#) for more information about the Graduated Response at Wookey.

Some children may need further adaptations to help them have successful relationships with others, regulate their emotions and show they are ready, respectful and safe. These adaptations will always be agreed with parents, carers and appropriate professionals where appropriate. Strategies may include access to our on-site forest school, Block therapy, ELSA or social communication sessions. It may be necessary that a child has time away from their main classroom for calm time in our sensory room 'Zen Den' or other safe space with low social and sensory demand. This will always be detailed in their responsive co-regulation plan.

Exclusions

At Wookey, we do not want to exclude children. It is well known that exclusion affects wellbeing, attainment and can lead to offending behaviour in the future. Children who are excluded often end up stuck in a negative cycle of exclusion and non-attendance. Evidence suggests this can have devastating effects on relationships, belonging and later life chances.

The Decision Framework For Exclusion

The decision to exclude will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where significant harm has occurred. In making this decision, we will evaluate:

The Child's Capacity for Repair: We understand that remorse and the ability to take responsibility are skills that emerge only after a child has returned to a regulated state. We will look for a child's willingness to engage in the Repair and Restore process once they are calm and able to reason.

Intent vs. Dysregulation: We will distinguish between intentional harm and harm caused as an automatic response to high-level stress or physical restraint.

Ongoing Safety: Exclusion will only be pursued if, after reviewing all reasonable adjustments and co-regulation plans, the ongoing risk to the safety of others cannot be managed within our relational framework

Somerset County Council released [Preventing Exclusion guidance](#) and checklists in October 2023 for schools to ensure they have done everything reasonable to keep children in their settings. Exclusion must be a last resort. Before making the decision to exclude, the head teacher will have evidence that they have covered all advice in the guidance and there

isn't any other alternative.

Supporting Staff Well-being and Professional Development

All staff will be involved with the development and implementation of this policy. It's essential that we share the same values and ethos in order to fully embed a relational approach. This policy will be shared with staff so they can share their views, ask questions and suggest amendments.

Staff members will have opportunities to unwind and debrief if facing really challenging behaviour. Senior leaders will cover members of staff when necessary and will provide coaching and mentoring if they need support to manage behaviour.

We all want to learn and grow at Wookey. All adults had Team Teach training in September 2024. Training on restorative conversations and emotion coaching scripts will be delivered in early autumn 2024-25 to all members of staff.

Monitoring the Impact of this Policy

Senior leaders will regularly review serious or repetitive incidents and outcomes on CPOMs and through discussions in staff meetings. Teachers will be asked during staff meetings to briefly comment on low-level, limited negative behaviours in order to informally monitor and spot patterns in a timely manner.

For situations where there are repeated negative behaviours, relational plans and co-regulation plans will be reviewed at least termly to ensure appropriate strategies are being used successfully and consistently.

As well as constant professional dialogue around specific incidents and management of risk, we carry out an annual review of the outcomes of this approach.

The senior leadership team will gather pupil and parent voice through annual wellbeing questionnaires. We aim for pupils and parents to feel more confident about our approach to behaviour, to feel safe and happy in school.

We audit the skills of our whole staff to target modelling and training to ensure consistency of approach. We do this using 'The Wheel of Change' (Atkinson 2005), introduced to us by Educational Psychologists from the Somerset Relational Schools Network team. This audit forms part of our discussions in staff appraisals where training needs are identified and either external or in-house CPD put in place.

We nominate a member of staff to take responsibility for identifying CPD and keeping up to date with research and development in this area, including being part of the existing relational network. **This is Miss Ellie Furner (SENCO, SMHL, Willow Class Teacher).**

Appendix A – Theory and Research

Theory

“Positive school relationships can make a significant difference on many levels, in many areas and to all stakeholders. It therefore makes sense for all schools to focus on the development of relational quality school-wide, for both educational excellence and authentic well-being.”

Dan Hughes and Louise Bomber - Settling to Learn. (2013)

Relational practices are founded upon the principle of fostering meaningful connections between educators and children. This approach is rooted in the belief that positive relationships are pivotal in influencing children's behaviour and overall academic performance. Unlike behaviourist practices that often rely on extrinsic motivators and punishment, relational approaches emphasise on building strong, supportive relationships that cultivate trust, empathy, and a sense of belonging.

Relational practices are considered superior to behaviourist methods as they not only address surface-level behaviours but also delve into the underlying causes of such behaviours. By nurturing positive relationships, educators can better understand their students' needs, emotions, and motivations, leading to more profound and long-lasting behavioural change. This is especially true for those who have experienced ACEs or trauma (for more information about developmental trauma, please see Beacon House's fantastic article:<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Developmental-Trauma-Close-Up-Revised-Jan-2020.pdf>)

What are ACEs?

'Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are highly stressful and potentially traumatic events or situations that occur during childhood and/or adolescence' (Youngminds, 2024)

What kind of experiences are adverse?



Research

There has been a substantial amount of research into the effectiveness of building positive relationships with children. Findings have included that positive adult-child relationships in schools can improve:

- pupil effort
- academic results
- pupil and staff wellbeing
- school environments (calmer for all)
- persistent absences and absence in general
- pupil engagement, respect, behaviour and sense of belonging

Here are some studies specific to schools showing the above findings:

Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research (BISSR) (2023)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/behaviour-scottish-schools-research-report-2023/>

The Rees Centre Timpson Project (2022)

<https://www.aati-reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/projects/timpson-schools-programme/>

EEF – improving behaviour in schools (2019)

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/behaviour>

Appendix C – Relational Support Plan

Adapted from Devon County Council's 'Guidance for Developing Relational Practice and Policy'



Wookey Primary School Relational Support Plan

Name of Pupil:	Date:
Class:	Present at initial meeting:
Review date:	

The significant adult/adults – Team around the child

Who is best placed to be the significant adult/adults?

Who will be part of the wider team of adults supporting the child? Does the child need someone to be available to the throughout the day? It is helpful for the team to be composed of adults from each tier of the school organisation. Parents/carers can also be part of the team.

Strengths, qualities, interests, resources

What are the child's strengths, skills and qualities? What are the child's coping strategies and signs of resilience? What does the child enjoy and what interests them? When are they at their best? What helps them? When have they been successful in the past and what is working well now?

Protection

This explains the need for safety and security. Some children may not automatically feel safe. They can find school threatening and require relationships, support and structure to develop feelings of security and safety, which are essential to effective learning and behaviour.

Key Question Prompts:

How will the child be helped to feel safe by the significant adults? What safety cues will be helpful?

How will other adults in the team help the child to feel safe?

How will you support the child to develop trust? How will predictable and reliable support be provided?

Are there times in the day when the child feels particularly unsafe: beginnings, endings, transition? How can these times be managed?

How can the environment be adapted to help the child feel safe?

How can the day be structured to help the child feel safe?

What does the child need to know in order to feel safe? How will this be communicated so that the child understands?

Actions:

Connection

Meaningful connections with others promote feelings of safety, trust and belonging. Experiences of connection are important in developing the cortex and higher-level thinking. For some children there is a need for a high level of connection within school.

Key Question prompts:

How will the significant adults provide meaningful connection with the child?

What needs to happen to ensure that the child experiences attuned and responsive connection?

How will other adults in the team connect with the child?

How will the development of positive peer relationships be promoted?

What activities may help the child to develop their sense of belonging in school?

Actions:

Understanding

Children need adults to understand them and communicate this understanding in an empathetic way, whilst also maintaining clear rules, boundaries and expectations. Understanding and co-regulation from an adult will support children to develop their ability to regulate themselves.

Key Question prompts:

What does the child's behaviour tell us about how they are feeling?

What is our understanding of the child's feelings?

If the student is finding something hard or displaying challenging behaviour, how will adults respond and show understanding?

How will the child be co-regulated and calmed? What empathic responses might be helpful?

How will the understanding of other adults in school be supported / developed? How will they respond to incidents?

Does the child need a responsive co-regulation plan?

What will happen to ensure that relationships are repaired?

Actions:

Care

Some children will need adults in school to be particularly mindful of providing a high level of care. This includes meeting the child's basic needs, enabling them to experience comfort and joy and showing them that they are liked.

Key Question prompts:

Does the child have unmet needs in terms of basic care? If so how can these be addressed?

How will adults communicate care to the child/young person?

How will the child know that they are liked?

What activities may foster shared enjoyment?

How can we ensure the child knows they are being held in mind?

How will the child be soothed?

Actions:

Supporting Inclusion

Are there difficulties that are blocking the child's access to learning or social inclusion? What skills are we going to support the child to develop in their areas of need?

How are we going to support access and inclusion?

Prompts:

Control-related

e.g. accepting an adult lead, co-operative working, turn-taking, requesting help.

Social skills

e.g. explicit teaching of listening skills, eye-contact, starting conversations, proximity.

Identity-based

e.g. ability to take risks in learning, accept challenges, make mistakes.

Self-regulation and sensory regulation

e.g. emotional literacy, self-soothing, managing sensory input.

Behaviours for learning

e.g. Planning, organisation, managing transitions.

Literacy skills

e.g. developing phonic skills, reading comprehension, recording skills.

Language skills

e.g. understanding instructions, expressing opinions.

Communication and Interaction

e.g. Understanding social situations.

Building on strengths

How can we enable the pupil to build on their strengths?

Actions:

Appendix D – Emotion Coaching Steps

EMOTION COACHING STEPS

1 EMPATHY

I can see that you're finding things hard right now (soft tone of voice, open body language, on the child's level)

2

NAME IT TO TAME IT

I can see that your face is red and your fists are clenched. I wonder if you're feeling angry?

3

VALIDATE

It makes sense that you're feeling angry. It's ok to feel angry. All emotions are ok.

4

LIMIT SETTING

It is not ok to hit. Let's go somewhere safe until you're ready.

5

PROBLEM SOLVING

What can we do differently next time? What should we do to make things right?

Appendix E - Positive Handling and Reasonable force

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for any member of school staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control the movement of or restrain children.

- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between children or blocking a children's path, or active physical contact such as leading a child by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a child under control. It is only used in extreme circumstances and for a short time.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in very extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the children, for example, restraining a child could result in a bruise.

The use of reasonable force is an absolute last resort. All the strategies set out in this policy are used to try to prevent a situation where reasonable force or positive handling is needed. However, the safety of the child, other children and adults are the top priority.

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. Nearly everyone in our staff team is Team Teach trained to safely use positive handling.

Members of staff with this training know how to de-escalate situations, pre-empt behavioural incidents, guide and escort children away from situations that are becoming unsafe, or to positively handle them. Positive handling means physical contact with the child in order to safeguard them.

An example is an adult guiding a child by placing their hands on the child's upper arms firmly using 'Caring C shaped hands', and walking close beside the child. Positive handling is rarely used, is as gentle as possible and follows the rule of using no more force than needed in the circumstances.

In the unlikely event of a serious breach of behaviour the school can use reasonable force:

- **when behaviour severely disrupts the learning of others and the child has refused to leave the classroom;**
- **to prevent a children from physically harming a member of staff or other children, or to stop a fight in the playground; or**
- **when a child is at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.**

The school will record all attempts to positively handle or restrain a child on CPOMS. The parent will always be informed the same day.

The school cannot and will never use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

We reference and adhere to the [Department for Education Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance](#) in our policy and practice.

Appendix F – Responsive co-regulation plan and guide



Wookey Primary School Responsive Co-regulation Plan

Name of Pupil:	Date:
Class:	Present at initial meeting:
Review date:	

State of Regulation	Potential Displayed Behaviour	Agreed Response for Regulation
Calm Safe / Socially engaged		
Mild stress Alert / Aroused / Agitated		
Dysregulated Mobilised / Immobilised		
Crisis Unsafe		

Guide to supporting regulation through responsive co-regulation plans.

State of Regulation	Potential Displayed Behaviour	Agreed Response for Regulation
<p>Calm Safe/socially engaged</p>	<p>Steady heart/breathing rate. Calm state of arousal. Open to social engagement. Expressive facial expression and voice prosody. Able to listen, process language and engage in thinking to learn.</p>	<p>Maximise expressive social engagement. Fully engage and connect using the face, voice, movement. Encourage listening and expressive responses. Engage thinking skills to reflect and make connections. Introduce gentle challenge through play/activity.</p>
<p>Mild Stress Alert/Agitated/Withdrawn</p>	<p>Slightly raised heart/breathing rate. Signs of agitation, frustration, anxiety. Raised hypervigilance. Lack of focus, easily distracted. Increased mobilisation. Early signs of needing to take control or helplessness.</p>	<p>Connect through eye contact, movement and facial expression. Express calmness through storytelling prosody and open facial expression. Attune to mood, intensity and energy of the child. Respond by being more animated to attune to agitation, increase intensity to attune to anger, be gentle and delicate to attune to sadness. Respond empathically and validate feelings. Use calming, soothing and regulatory activities.</p>
<p>Dysregulated Mobilised</p>	<p>High levels of arousal/distress. Hyper vigilant. Difficulty listening and focusing. Mobilised – fidgeting, jumping, running, climbing etc. Raised voice with lack of prosody. Decreased expressivity. Threatening behaviour. Oppositional behaviour.</p>	<p>Reduce social demands whilst remaining present. Provide individual attention. Convey adult containment. Let them know you are able to 'hold' their dysregulation by remaining regulated. Convey your calm and regulated state by being confident and contained. Use quiet, calm sounds and tones which are expressive and confident. Reduce language, give short clear directions. Avoid questions and choices. Use predictable routine. Reduce sensory input, lights, noise. Use sensory soothing.</p>
<p>Dysregulated Immobilised</p>	<p>Lowered heart/breathing rate. Reduced energy. Shuts off from surroundings/dissociates. Depressed state. Immobile/frozen. May feel faint.</p>	<p>Gentle, soft and delicate manner of coming close, making them aware of your presence and support. Use comforting and predictable voice. Use invited touch to soothe. Singing, humming, music. Use sensory soothing. Calm and gentle reassurance.</p>
<p>Crisis</p>	<p>The child's behaviour means that they or other people are not safe.</p>	<p>An individualised plan of action which outlines action to be taken in the event of unsafe behaviour. This may include advice from outside agencies. The plan should be shared with the child and include their views as to what helps and with all staff working with the child. Roles and responsibilities should be clear. If the plan includes physical intervention staff should have had the appropriate training. Devon LA recommend PIPS training. Adults need to provide high levels of containment through their way of being – having a plan can help.</p>

Appendix G

Response to Incidents of Discrimination relating to any Protected Characteristic

In line with the Equality Act 2010 and we have a commitment to preventing and responding effectively to all types of bullying of or discrimination against protected groups including discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

	Action	Anticipated timeframe (Subject to circumstances)
1	Incident reported to SLT immediately	Within 10 minutes
2	Parties directly involved to be separated upon first reports and ideally kept apart until investigation is completed	Immediately – staff and space permitting
3	Investigation. All parties and witnesses are spoken to.	Before the end of the school day, or first thing the next day if the incident occurs after 2pm
4	Parents contacted by phone then followed up in writing. NB Information and actions shared dependant on stage of the investigation at this point.	Same day phone call will be attempted or Seesaw message if this is not possible by 4.30pm. Followed up in writing within 48 hours.
5	<p>If the investigation proves that the incident did occur:</p> <p>Support offered to the victim. This would be empowerment session using a text-based approach* which recognises the protected characteristic that was discriminated against, or a referral to SARI</p> <p>Child showing offensive behaviour sanctioned immediately. This would usually be an internal exclusion for half a day or removal of playtimes for a day. During this time, a trusted adult will run an activity to educate about why the incident was not acceptable*. The child should only be reintegrated once staff are confident the child has a good understanding.</p> <p><i>*Examples of texts used to support the child showing the offensive behaviour and the victim can be shared on request.</i></p>	<p>Upon conclusion of the investigation. Usually within 24 hours, circumstances permitting (e.g. attendance, external factors out of the school's control)</p>

6	Incident reported to the Chair of Governors and Local Authority; police will be contacted if appropriate.	Within 24 hours of the investigation, preferably same day
7	A restorative approach used to rebuild relationships between the children. Children involved will be kept apart until this can be facilitated, preferably with the ELSA, Senior Mental Health Lead and/or another trusted member of staff.	Day the investigation is concluded or the following day, guided primarily by ensuring the children are regulated and ready to talk and listen.
8	If this is a repeat incident or extreme case (e.g. assault motivated by hate), a fixed term exclusion will be considered.	Upon conclusion of investigation.
9	A follow-up meeting, phone call or letter offered to parents once these steps have been taken.	Within 3 days of the completion of the investigation.
10	Where available and appropriate, referral made on behalf of the child (with parental permission) to charities, counselling services and other support agencies (for example SARI). Advice sought from the Local Authority for available organisations.	Within a week of a confirmed incident occurring.

Appendix H: The Zones of Regulation Framework

Rationale: Why We Use the Zones




The Zones of Regulation is a simple, systematic approach for teaching children to identify and manage their feelings and states of alertness. By providing a common, non-judgmental language for emotions, it helps to:

- Promote Self-Awareness: Children learn to identify and label how their body and mind feel.
- Teach Self-Management: They are taught a range of strategies or "tools" to help them cope with different emotional states.
- Encourage Empathy: Children learn to recognise and respond appropriately to the emotional states of others.

The framework is based on the principle that "all feelings are okay," and our goal is not to eliminate certain emotions but to equip children with the skills to navigate them in a healthy way.

The Four Zones in Detail

The Zones of Regulation uses four distinct colours to represent different states of feeling and alertness.

Zone	Associated Feelings & States	What a Staff Member Might Do
Blue 	Low Energy / Down State Sad, bored, tired, sick, lonely, quiet. The body is moving slowly.	Offer a quiet space, a calming activity, a drink of water, or a chance to rest. Validate their feelings: "It looks like you're in the Blue Zone, feeling a bit tired. Is there anything that could help you feel better?"
Green 	Calm / Ready to Learn State Happy, calm, focused, content, proud, joyful. This is the optimal state for learning and social engagement.	Reinforce positive behaviours and encourage peer interaction. 'I can see you're in the green zone because you're focusing on your maths really well'
Yellow 	Heightened Alertness / Wobbly State Anxious, stressed, frustrated, silly, excited, nervous, worried. A	Help the child identify a strategy from their "Tool Box." Use a calm and reassuring tone: "It looks like you're getting into the Yellow Zone. What tool can you use to help your

	person in this zone is starting to lose some control.	body feel calmer?"
Red ●	<p>High Energy / Out of Control State</p> <p>Angry, enraged, terrified, ecstatic, overwhelmed. The body and mind have lost full control.</p>	<p>The priority is safety. Get to a safe space. Do not try to reason or teach in this moment. Use minimal, calming language. "You're in the Red Zone. Let's find a safe spot." Or "Stop. I can Help you. Let's Go"</p>

Classroom Implementation & The "Tool Box"

Every classroom will display a visual representation of the Zones of Regulation. The display will include the four colours and a list of emotions associated with each.

Most importantly, each classroom will have a visible "Tool Box". This is a collection of strategies that children can use to help themselves move into a more regulated state. These strategies might include:

- **Sensory Tools:** Fidget toys, stress balls, weighted lap pads, listening to music with headphones.
- **Physical Tools:** Taking a walk, stretching, stomping feet, doing push-ups against a wall.
- **Calming Tools:** Taking deep breaths, counting to ten, looking at a glitter jar, drinking water.
- **Social Tools:** Asking to talk to a trusted adult, working with a partner.

We will teach children to identify what zone they are in and then make an appropriate choice from their "Tool Box" to help themselves regulate.

Using the Zones Language with Children

We will model the language of the Zones consistently. This is a key part of our approach. Examples of appropriate language include:

- Instead of: "Why are you so angry?"
- Try: "It looks like your body is in the Red Zone right now. What can we do to help you feel safe?"
- Instead of: "Stop being so silly and get back to work."
- Try: "It looks like you're in the Yellow Zone and feeling a bit silly. Let's try some deep breaths to get you back to the Green Zone for learning."
- Instead of: "Are you sad?"
- Try: "It looks like you are in the Blue Zone. Would you like to tell me why?"