

CAMBRIAN

Nurturing Growth - Inspiring Minds



Relationships Model

V2

This document applies to all academies and operations of Cambrian Learning Trust.

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Introduction

“The feeling of being connected to others makes us feel safe in ourselves”.

Human beings function best in the context of relationships. Dr. Stephen Porges’ Polyvagal Theory helps us to understand that in order to attend to mental and cognitive tasks, we need to feel safe and connected inside our environments, experiences and relationships. The aim of our relationships model is to enable all people within our trust to thrive, and we know that in order to do this they need to feel safe, cared for and that they belong. Through this model we will continually reflect upon how we are providing a safe base and connection for the whole trust community: within staff teams, for students and for families, stakeholders and the wider school community.

Key principles

Our relationships model is rooted in knowledge and understanding of child development, attachment and the impact of trauma. The experiences and relationships that a child encounters in their early years creates a ‘blueprint’ for the future. We know that we can look at a person’s relational experiences and where these may have been disrupted to better understand what is driving behaviour and need.

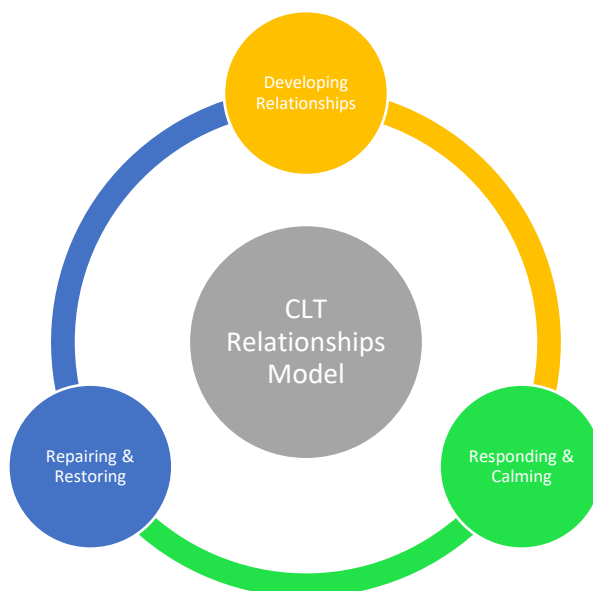
‘Every interaction is an intervention’ (Dr. Karen Treisman)

In order for our relationships model to be as impactful as possible then we need the connections that are established to be genuine and meaningful. Every adult needs to be aware of the power of what they do and what they say (including non-verbal communication and body language).

Underpinning our relational approach is a shared commitment by the trust to:

- Establish consistent thinking, understanding, beliefs and values across all staff, parents/ carers and partner agencies in order to embed a whole trust relational approach
- Provide staff training, continual professional development, and induction for new staff in relational theory and practice. Provide ongoing staff support through regular meetings and individual supervision and coaching to support the development and maintenance of skills.
- The consistent implementation of relational practice by all staff which is supported through clear systems and processes as well as active support and modelling by line managers and senior leaders

- Establish systems and provision to support clear graduated responses to supporting children's needs which is child centred and involves parents and external agencies



Trust principles for developing relationship policies to support regulated behaviour

A relational approach to supporting behaviour is underpinned by attachment theory and a belief that humans function best within the context of relationships. Meaningful relationships are built upon trust, security and safety: this is how attachment develops. Within our trust schools we will use our relationships model to shape how we support those pupils who are displaying distressed behaviour and to support the development of self-regulation skills in order to provide pupils with the skills, language and relational tools that they need in order to succeed in their school journey and into adulthood. Each school in the trust will develop their own policy which is bespoke to their context and responsive to the needs of their students.

The key principles of our approach

- The behaviour we see is a symptom created by memories, experiences, feelings and emotions
- The human brain develops in response to experiences and relationships, particularly from those that happen in the early years of life. As a result of these experiences and relationships, the brain will be either wired for

connection or wired for protection. We recognise that this wiring of the brain will influence the behaviour that we see in school, and we will use this understanding to influence how we respond and the support that we provide

- They will support students' behaviour with a 'connection before correction' approach, knowing that in order to engage in discussions around repairing harm and supporting change, both the adult and student need to first feel safe (regulate) and connected with (relate). Restorative conversations can then take place (reason)
- Self-regulation evolves from many experiences of co-regulation, which evolves from many experiences of attunement which is present within positive, secure and consistent relationships
- Where students are showing difficulties with their self-regulation, we will provide positive, consistent co-regulation experiences in order to develop the skills that they need
- A successful behaviour policy must work for all students, not just for some. Recognising that the experiences of some children can make it more difficult for them to build and sustain relationships and regulate their behaviour, school staff will have a shared understanding of an attachment aware, trauma informed approach and how these students may require individualised support. Staff will be supported to respond to behaviour with flexible consistency, allowing for personalisation and reasonable adjustments
- The school environment will be calm and supportive to staff so that their own wellbeing is prioritised

Our commitment

- We will provide staff with the knowledge and understanding that they need to develop relationships; to respond to and calm dysregulation; and to repair and restore relationships when they have been damaged.
- We will view all behaviour as communication, and in doing so we will be curious about what is driving the behaviour and how we can support that need
- School environments will provide a safe base for students and staff, providing kindness, predictability and consistency around routines, transitions, classroom organisation and interactions
- We will not use shame as a tool for managing behaviour, nor will we use the removal of a relationship as a sanction for dysregulated behaviour.