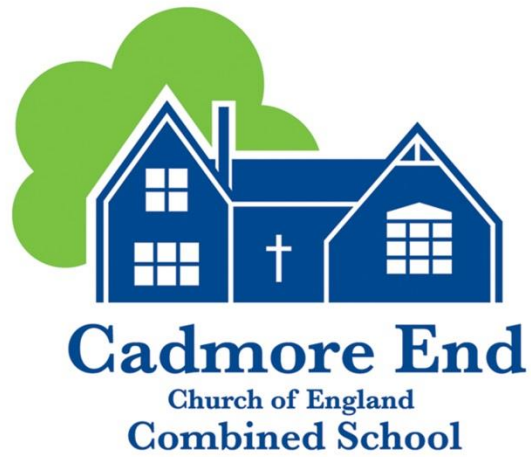




Relational Policy

Date: July 2025

Review Date:

Headteacher: Mrs Debbie Groom

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Cadmore End
Church of England | Combined School

Relational Policy

School Year 2025-2026

From Small beginnings come great things.

The parable of The Mustard Seed. Matthew 13:31-32

We will apply our Christian and British values, complemented by our small-school benefits; balancing each child's educational, pastoral and emotional needs delivering an exceptional, personalized journey, enabling them to flourish in our family, our community and in the future.

1. Introduction

At Cadmore End Church of England Combined School and Nursery, we believe that positive relationships are at the heart of effective education. Our Relational Policy reflects our commitment to a trauma-informed, attachment-aware, and inclusive approach to behaviour and wellbeing.

This policy sits alongside and underpins our Behaviour, Mental Health and Wellbeing and SEND policies, ensuring consistency in how we support all pupils to thrive emotionally, socially and academically.

Our Christian values of kindness, respect, compassion and forgiveness underpin our relational approach. We believe that all behaviour is a form of communication, and that strong relationships are the foundation of meaningful support and high expectations.

2. Aims

- To create a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where all children feel valued and understood.
- To promote emotional regulation, resilience and healthy relationships.
- To support children in developing prosocial behaviour through relational connection and co-regulation.
- To respond to behaviours with empathy, curiosity and consistency.
- To ensure staff have a shared understanding of trauma-informed and relational practice.

3. Guiding Principles

Our relational practice is guided by:

- The 5Rs: Recognise, Regulate, Reflect, Repair, Reconnect (based on Louise Bomber's work).
- PACE: Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy.
- Restorative approaches to conflict and harm.
- Recognition that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma affect behaviour and learning.
- A belief in unconditional positive regard.

4. The 5Rs Explained

Our relational approach is rooted in Louise Bomber's 5Rs, which offer a framework for responding to emotional and behavioural needs in a supportive and regulated way:

1. Recognise

We pay close attention to early signs of emotional distress and dysregulation. Staff are trained to notice behavioural cues and shifts in mood or engagement. By recognising these signs early, we can respond proactively.

2. Regulate

We co-regulate with pupils, providing calm, consistent, and attuned adult support. We use strategies such as grounding activities, safe spaces, breathing techniques, and movement breaks to help children return to a state of emotional safety.

3. Reflect

Once a child is regulated, we help them reflect on their feelings and behaviour. This reflection is not about blame but about helping the child understand what happened and how their feelings influenced their actions.

4. Repair

We support pupils to repair relationships or trust that may have been affected. This may involve a restorative conversation, a written apology, or an act of kindness. Repair helps restore connection and builds accountability.

5. Reconnect

After a rupture or incident, we ensure that the child is welcomed back into relationship and community. Reconnection reaffirms that they are still safe, valued, and accepted—an essential step in building trust and resilience.

5. Building Relationships

Strong relationships are the foundation of our school community. We:

- Prioritise connection before correction
- Invest in getting to know each child and their story
- Create safe, predictable environments with consistent routines
- Provide key adults for pupils who need secure attachment figures in school
- Use emotion coaching and attuned listening in our daily interactions

6. Co-Regulation and Emotional Support

We understand that some pupils need support to regulate their emotions. Staff:

- Recognise the early signs of dysregulation
- Provide co-regulation through calm presence and emotional containment
- Use grounding and sensory strategies (e.g. calm corners, movement breaks)
- Offer time-in, not time-out, to help pupils feel safe and supported
- Narrate emotional experiences to build emotional literacy

7. Behaviour as Communication

We do not view behaviour in isolation. Instead, we:

- Seek to understand the underlying need behind behaviour
- Use curiosity rather than judgement to interpret actions
- Avoid punitive measures that shame or exclude
- Respond with logical, relational consequences and restorative conversations

8. Repair and Restore

When relationships or expectations break down, we:

- Support pupils to repair the harm through guided reflection
- Facilitate restorative conversations that focus on impact and empathy
- Ensure pupils are reintegrated with care and dignity

Example structure for a restorative conversation:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking/feeling?
- Who has been affected?
- What do you need to put things right?
- What will you do differently next time?

9. Whole School Approaches

Our relational approach is embedded through:

- Staff training in trauma-informed and relational practice
- Use of Zones of Regulation and visual supports
- Nurture provision and wellbeing check-ins
- Strong home-school partnerships
- Inclusion of pupil voice in shaping support

10. Staff CPD on Trauma-Informed Practice

At Cadmore End Church of England Combined School and Nursery, we are committed to ensuring that all staff are confident and skilled in relational, trauma-informed practice. Continuous professional development (CPD) is central to embedding our relational culture across the school.

- **Training delivery:** Ongoing training will be led by the Headteacher and the SEMH Lead, with additional expertise and support from Buckinghamshire Virtual School.
- **Core areas of CPD:**
 - Impact of trauma, attachment and ACEs on behaviour and learning.
 - Applying the PACE approach in daily practice.
 - Embedding Louise Bomber's 5Rs as the framework for responding to behaviour.

- Staff awareness of nervous system regulation and adult co-regulation.
- Creating safe, predictable, and nurturing classroom environments.
- Restorative approaches to repair and rebuild relationships.
- **Approach to learning:** Training will be practical, reflective, and ongoing, using real scenarios, role-play and collaborative reflection.
- **Sustained practice:** Trauma-informed practice will be part of staff induction, and revisited regularly in INSET, staff meetings, and supervision sessions.
- **Evaluation:** Training impact will be monitored through staff feedback, pupil voice, learning walks, and behaviour data.

By investing in staff CPD, we ensure every adult is equipped to understand behaviour as communication, respond with empathy and consistency, and build strong relationships that enable all children to feel safe, valued and ready to learn.

11. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Trauma-Informed Practice Statement
- Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- EBSNA Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in statutory guidance or the needs of our school community.