



# VENERABLE EDWARD MORGAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## TRAUMA INFORMED RELATIONSHIPS & BEHAVIOUR POLICY

This Document is a statement of intent within Venerable Edward Morgan. It was developed through a process of consultation with Key stakeholders and in correspondence with the School's planning and review schedule.

This sets out a framework by which to work.

Approved On:	Autumn 2024
Next Review:	Autumn 2025
Signed:	Cllr D L Mackie

*Learn, believe, achieve together*  
*Dysgwch, credwch, cyflawnwch gyda'ch gilydd*

## **Trauma Informed Relationships and Behaviour Policy**

### **Introduction**

This policy is designed to promote a positive ethos of good behaviour in which children can work and play well together with other people. At Venerable Edward Morgan School there is a high expectation of behaviour in all aspects of the school day which places the needs of the child at its centre. Our school will support all children including those displaying social, emotional and mental health difficulties and those with additional learning needs including those physical and medical. We maintain the belief that pupils' behaviour should be understood and can be modified, managed and enhanced in order to enable them to access learning.

Venerable Edward Morgan School is invested in supporting the very best possible relational health between :

- Parent and child
- Child and school staff
- Parent and school staff
- School staff
- School staff and senior leads
- School staff and external agencies

### **Aims & Objectives**

Our school aims to provide a caring, calm and secure environment in which tolerance, understanding and respect for others is fostered. We provide an environment founded upon the sound social and moral values the Church teaches. Within this environment and through our liturgies, assemblies and acts of worship our children grow intellectually, spiritually and morally as young Christians. We aim to promote a positive culture and to encourage in all pupils a sense of responsibility to themselves, to our school and to the wider community. Guided by the Gospel and our Catholic traditions, we follow our beliefs by putting the Jesuit values as the foundation for our experiences, expectations and how to foster positive relationships with each other on a daily basis. This is achieved through governors, staff, pupils, parents/carers and working in partnership.

We aim to:

- Encourage a calm, purposeful and happy atmosphere conducive to good learning.
- Foster positive attitudes towards themselves and others which recognises and values achievements at all levels.
- Enable pupils to recognise and appreciate appropriate behaviour.
- Encourage increasing independence and self-discipline so each child learns to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and choices.
- Provide a consistent approach to behaviour management across the school.

- Make boundaries of acceptable behaviour clear and understand the relationship between actions and consequences.
- Enable pupils to feel safe in our school.
- Provide an interesting, well-planned curriculum that motivates children to learn alongside developing the social, emotional and behavioural skills.
- Implement mental health and trauma-informed approach to behaviour in our school.

This Behaviour and Relationships Policy seeks to inform, guide and support staff, parents/carers, and pupils to achieve these aims through actively promoting positive behaviour by reflecting on ten key aspects of school practice

1. Consistent trauma-informed approach to behaviour management
2. Strong school leadership
3. Classroom management
4. Rewards and consequences
5. Behaviour strategies & the teaching of good behaviour
6. Staff development and support
7. Pupil support systems (AQP, Nurture room)
8. Liaison with parents/carers and other agencies
9. Managing pupil transition
10. Organisation and facilities

Venerable Edward Morgan School is committed to educational practices which Protect, Relate, Regulate and Reflect;

**Protect :** Increased 'safety cues' in all aspects of the school day; 'meet and greet' at the classroom door and an open-door policy for informal discussions with parents/ carers. Staff trained in 'PACE' modes of interaction (Hughes 2015); being warm emphatic, playful and curious (proven to shift children out of flight/fright/freeze positions). Staff ensure that interactions with children are socially engaging and not socially defensive, to decrease likelihood of children relating defensively (flight/fright/freeze). A whole school commitment to cease all use of harsh voices, shouting, put downs, criticism and shaming (proven to be damaging psychologically and neurologically). Staff 'interactively repair' occasions when they themselves move into defensiveness. Pedagogic interventions that help staff to get to know children better on an individual basis e.g. 'I wish my teacher knew'. (What matters to them, who matters to them, their dreams, hopes). This is key to enabling children to feel safe enough to talk, if they wish, about painful life experiences, which are interfering with their ability to learn and their quality of life.

Vulnerable children have easy and daily access to at least one named, emotionally available adult, and know when and where to find that adult. If the child does not wish to connect with the allocated adult, an alternative adult is found. School staff adjust expectations around vulnerable children to correspond with their developmental capabilities and experience of traumatic stress. This includes removing

vulnerable and traumatised children in a kind and non-judgmental way from situations they are not managing well (e.g. children who are continually triggered into alarm states can access calmer, smaller areas with emotionally regulating adults). There is a clear, confidential and non-shaming system of self-referral for children's help/talk time with an emotional regulating adult. The nurturing of staff in such a way that they feel truly valued and emotionally-regulated and in so doing to support them to interact throughout the school day with positive social engagement rather than defensiveness.

## **Relate**

A whole-school commitment to enabling children to see themselves, their relationships and the world positively, rather than through a lens of threat, danger or self-blame. Vulnerable children provided with repeated relational opportunities (with emotionally available adults) to make the shift from 'blocked trust' (not feeling psychologically safe with anyone) to trust, and from self-help to 'help seeking'.

## **Regulate**

Relational interventions specifically designed to bring down stress hormone levels (e.g. from toxic to tolerable) in vulnerable children, enabling them to feel calm, soothed and safe. This is to support learning, quality of life and protect against stress-induced physical and mental illness, now and in later life. Evidence-based interventions that aim to repair psychological damage and brain damage caused by traumatic life experiences, through emotionally regulating, playful, enriched adult-child interactions. The emotional well-being and regulating of staff are treated as a priority to prevent burnt out, stress-related absence, or leaving the profession through stress-related illness, secondary trauma and/or feeling undervalued, blamed or shamed.

## **Reflect**

Staff training and development in the art of good listening, dialogue, empathy and understanding (instead of asking a series of questions/ giving lectures). Provision of skills and resources to support parents and staff in meaning empathetic conversations with vulnerable children who want to talk about their lives. This is to empower children to better manage their home situations and life in general. Within the context of an established and trusted relationship with a member of staff (working alliance), children are given the means and opportunity to symbolise painful life experiences through images as well as words, as a key part of 'working through' these experiences and memory re-consolidation. Means include the provision of different modes of expression, e.g. art/play/drama/ music/sand/emotion worksheets/emotion cards.

PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education), informed by current research psychological and neuroscience on mental health, mental ill-health (full range of specific conditions), relationships (including parenting) emotions, social media and tools for how to 'do life well'. Curricular content enables children to make informed choices about how they relate to others, how they live their lives, and how they treat their brains, bodies and minds. Staff development and training to help children move from 'behaving' their trauma/painful life experiences, to reflecting on those experiences. Staff learn to do this through empathetic conversation, addressing children's negative self-referencing and helping them develop positive, coherent narratives about their lives

## **Consistency & Leadership**

Consistent yet flexible implementation of this policy by all is vital, to consider the varied and complex needs of the pupils who attend our school. The policy should also promote regular attendance, a good work ethic, self-discipline and respect for others.

To help us achieve our aims we will:

- provide a clear set of rules, rewards and consequences through consultation with staff, children, parents and management committee members;
- publicise the above so that everyone is clear about what is expected and approaches to behaviour management are consistent across the school;
- ensure that there are consistent nurturing practices across the school;
- ensure a trauma-informed approach is embedded across the school so that the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff is a priority;
- ensure that children understand the meaning of inappropriate and unsafe behaviour and bullying and know how the school will deal with it.

## **Classroom Management**

We encourage good behaviour through the communication of high expectations, clear policies and an ethos that fosters a mutual respect between staff and pupils. Expectations and routines are explicitly taught to the children to ensure consistency of approach. In our school, all pupils are expected to:

- Respect themselves and others
- Listen to and follow instructions
- Be kind, fair and polite
- Ignore distractions
- Behave safely

These expectations are clearly displayed in every classroom and around the building in communal spaces. Staff reinforce these displays by drawing attention to them daily as part of their classroom management strategies. Everyone within our school has the right to feel safe and secure, and all incidents will be dealt with bearing this in mind. Physical and verbal aggression, and bullying is unacceptable and will be challenged and managed. All reported incidents of bullying whether they are observed by staff or reported by a pupil or parent will be dealt with rapidly and from the premise that bullying is unacceptable. Parents/carers will always be informed if their child has been physically aggressive towards other pupils or staff, or if they have been the perpetrator or victim of bullying behaviour (see Anti-Bullying Policy).

## **Rewards and Consequences**

We regularly celebrate the success of all pupils in a variety of ways as we recognise that focussing on success and positive outcomes is essential in developing a positive culture and ethos.

We celebrate these successes in many ways including;

- Multiple opportunities during the day for a fresh start
- Verbal praise/feedback
- Certificates in celebration assemblies – Merit awards
- Dojo points/certificates/stickers awarded for good behaviours

Although our school aims to focus on positives at all times, there are unfortunately occasions when some pupils may display unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour. All of our staff will undergo regular Trauma Informed training and key information including known ACES and external factors will be shared promptly with relevant staff. All of our staff understand that presented behaviour are often an outcome or a response to ACES and will adopt and implement trauma-informed strategies that pre-empt unacceptable behaviour. We want pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and pupils will be encouraged to reflect upon their behaviour and to make amends. This process does not, however, replace consequences.

At Venerable Edward Morgan School we know that consistent management of behaviour is essential for pupils to understand what is expected of them and to avoid mixed messages. It is vital that pupils learn early on in life that there are always consequences for poor and unacceptable behaviour which undermine the positive atmosphere of our school community. The consequences of not keeping to the expectations are clearly taught to the children. The consequences are short, clear and progressive. Pupils are taught to understand that it is their choice to break a rule and they must take responsibility for making that choice. Our school's expectations about behaviour also apply to all off-site activities, educational visits and whilst children are being transported. Consequences across our school may include but are not exclusive to the following list:

- Verbal rule reminders
- Verbal warning given and inappropriate behaviour explained; expectation for improvement given
- A loss of a privilege
- Extra work/repeating work which is unsatisfactory
- Missing a break time
- Time with Headteacher or senior leader
  - Internal seclusion – removal from class and placed in another or nurture room to work for a period of time
- Fixed term exclusion

Internal seclusions are given with the agreement of the Senior Leadership Team and recorded appropriately. A fixed term exclusion is the decision of the Headteacher following an investigation.

Internal seclusions and fixed term exclusions are usually consequences of behaviours which have caused significant health and safety risks or have had a significant impact upon the safety and learning of others. Consequences should always be reinforced by telephone calls, letters to parents and recorded on our school's system. Seclusions or exclusions will be shared with parent and any supporting agencies.

### Behaviour Strategies and the Teaching of Good Behaviour

It is recognised that good behaviour needs to be modelled and taught. We embed the PACE (Play, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) approach originated by Hughes in order to support a child's social engagement system. The development of positive pupil/staff relationships along with effective teaching which recognises individual needs encourages children to behave in appropriate and less challenging ways. Staff use a range of strategies which allow pupils to learn how to manage their emotions more effectively without disrupting the learning of others.

These strategies may include:

- Time alone in another part of the classroom
- Time out of class with a known adult supporting
- Behaviour Mentor or teaching Assistant intervention
- Use of a calm/sensory box
- Use of time away
- AQP

In order to model appropriate behaviour in the playground, teachers and support staff and MDSA's will play games and encourage the children to play appropriately with their peers. Staff will supervise children during lunch and breaks at all times. At Venerable Edward Morgan School we encourage and work at establishing strong relationships between pupils and staff, providing secure attachments and key adult figures. We understand that periods of transition (from class to class, from school to school) can be triggering for some pupils and staff ensure check in opportunities are made to ensure pupils still feel contacted and validated by key supporting adults.

### Staff Development & Support

The induction of new staff will include an introduction to our Relationships and Behaviour Policy. Staff have regular opportunities to discuss difficulties within an open and non-judgemental framework. This may include informal and private conversations with colleagues, staff team meetings, pupil progress meetings, performance management and staff meetings. Senior leaders ensure key information regarding pupils and their families is shared with the appropriate adults in timely manner.

Regular and on-going training is provided to ensure all staff are skilled professionals and are able to manage challenging behaviour in a consistent and professional manner.

### Liaison with parents/carers and other agencies

Parental support for our Relationships and Behaviour Policy is key to its success. Parents are supported in encouraging their child to adhere to the policy and it is made clear that this is an important part of making positive changes in their child's attitudes and behaviour. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact our school whenever they need help with any concerns they may have, and are encouraged to be proactive in sharing and solving problems as they arise.

### Managing pupil transition

Changing school is often a time of increased anxiety for pupils and may result in behaviours escalating. We aim to support pupil and parents/carers wherever possible to ease the transition of both coming into and leaving our school.

### Organisation and facilities

Teachers establish strong routines both in their classrooms and across our school which help greatly to establish the smooth running of the school. Due to individual needs of the pupils there may be times when a pupil may not be managing within a group and require a period of reflection or calm down time. This may be done using a quiet space or room, within the school building or school grounds. In these situations, children are monitored at all times by an adult and used for no longer than is necessary. This time should be used as constructively as possible and children are supported the main aim being to returning the pupil back into class.

### Links to other policies

This policy does not stand alone and should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child protection & Safeguarding
- Anti-Bullying
- E-safety & Acceptable Use
- Home-school agreement
- Staff code of conduct
- Physical Intervention
- Equality, Diversity & Cohesion
- Attendance
- Health and Safety

### **Monitoring & Review**

It is the responsibility of all staff to incorporate, reinforce and model these expectations in their everyday work, their teaching of lessons and their interactions with pupils. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership Team to lead, support and monitor the consistent implementation of this policy. The Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership team are expected to



monitor the implementation of the policy ensuring equality for all and that the school's defining principles are upheld.

This policy is subject to annual review by the governing body.