Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Bath & North East Somerset Council
TRAUMA INFORMED GUIDANCE

Contents

Appendix

1. Guidance Overview & Aims

The purpose of this document is to provide educational settings in Bath & North East Somerset Local Authority with guidance on trauma informed approaches to behaviour. This guidance encourages more reflection on traditional behaviour management approaches, which place a significant emphasis on rewards and punishments linked to behaviour and to empower schools to consider a more relational approach, which is inclusive for all, and can benefit the whole school community. It is intended to encourage schools to develop their behaviour policies in line with trauma informed principles, and to ensure that their trauma informed policy translates into whole school practice.

This guidance aims to develop a more consistent approach to including children and young people (CYP) with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs within the changing context of Local Authority provision. It recognises the significant challenges that educational settings face in managing to include pupils with complex SEMH needs, and meet targets around attainment and governmental scrutiny, particularly within the current climate of funding pressures. It also acknowledges the responsibility held by headteachers for looking after the well-being of all members of the school community, particularly teaching staff, who are often under immense strain as a result of increased demands. Supporting CYP in schools who present with complex SEMH needs, including challenging behaviour, is not an easy task.

This guidance acknowledges that schools across Bath & North East Somerset have different values which are unique to them and potentially their multi-academy trusts (MAT). Schools across our Local Authority also face different challenges and are at various stages of developing their behaviour policies and practice. However, it is our goal to provide guidance and support to schools to develop an inclusive behaviour policy based on a model that can really work in practice. Furthermore, the evidence base on school exclusion helps to remind us that whilst exclusions may be considered the only option at times, it rarely leads to better outcomes for the child or young person. A key intended outcome of this guidance is therefore to see a reduction in school exclusions, in addition to an increase in positive behaviour regulation skills through trauma informed approaches in educational settings.

2. Trauma & Education

Children and young people may experience trauma through a number of different ways. Research into adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) consistently shows that a set of 10 adverse experiences in childhood are associated with an increased risk of mental health problems and other problems in later life (Early Intervention Foundation, February 2020). However, it must be noted that there are also several other experiences and factors that might contribute to poor outcomes, including economic disadvantage and discrimination.

However, we cannot assume that if an individual experiences ACEs as a child, negative health outcomes are inevitable. The likelihood of ACEs impacting future health is different in every individual and depends on a variety of factors, most particularly, levels of resilience. Research has also explored what the mitigatory benefits may be if interventions are implemented for those people who have experienced adverse childhood experiences – how might we build greater resilience? Protective and Compensatory Experiences (PACEs) are experiences which buffer trauma and stress. A number of protective and compensatory experiences have been identified through research that can reduce the harmful impact of ACEs.

These are:

- Unconditional love
- Connectedness
- Community engagement
- Security: order and predictability
- Mastery/self-efficacy

It is important to note that the wider community, school staff members, extended family and friends all play a part in the creating opportunities for compensatory experiences; they are vital in buffering the damaging effects of adversity and stress. As the human brain does not reach maturity until a person is 25-30 years of age, and throughout life, undergoes changes due to plasticity, there is time to create new networks of synapses based on positive experiences. These can change the brain and can increase resilience, the most important protective factor to adverse experience.

The 10 ACEs are:

1. Physical abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Psychological abuse
4. Physical neglect
5. Psychological neglect
6. Witnessing domestic violent
7. Having a close family member who misused drugs or alcohol
8. Have a close family member with mental health problems
9. Have a close family member who serviced time in prison
10. Parental separation or divorce on account of relationship breakdown

Early Intervention Foundation, 2020

It is also important to acknowledge the physical, neurological and behavioural impact of trauma. Trauma may be defined as repeated cycles of stressful events and the inefficient turning on or off of stress responses. When the human brain experiences a stressor, there is a decrease in blood flow to the pre-frontal cortex (PFC), the part of the brain responsible for decision making, planning, impulse control, moral reasoning and sense of self. Instead, the automatic fight or flight response takes over. Activating this state of heightened stress response is a survival strategy but for those who have experienced long-term or multiple trauma, it may become their way of being. This can clearly impact on behavioural functioning in academic settings.

Children and young people who have experienced trauma are also much more likely than others to experience 'toxic shame'. Toxic shame can be defined as an overwhelming and relentless sense of unworthiness, inadequacy, and self-disgust (Bomber, 2007; Taransaud, 2011). Children and young people who experience toxic shame are likely to find any form of discipline challenging, and may:

- Misinterpret well-intentioned or constructive feedback as being a personal attack against them
- Ruminate over/find it difficult to move on from discipline
- Find public discipline or praise difficult to tolerate (and demonstrate this through behaviour that challenges)
- Appear to 'hold a grudge' quickly
- Recreate the chaos they have experienced in their early life
- Need more time to calm down following an episode of distress, compared to children who do not experience toxic shame.

A trauma informed educational setting is one where all adults recognise and respond to those children and young people who have experienced trauma in a way that meets their social, emotional and mental health needs.

Research suggests that "when schools place a strong emphasis upon the emotional health and well-being of all members of the school community, and this ethos is driven by the school's senior leadership team and is evident in practice, this leads to better outcomes for all – e.g. staff retention, pupil attendance and attainment, positive home-school relationships" (Banerjee, Weare & Farr, 2014).

Additionally, "secure teacher–student relationships predict greater knowledge, higher test scores, greater academic motivation, and fewer retentions or special education referrals than insecure teacher–student relationships" (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

Research of this nature supports the use of trauma informed approaches to behaviour in schools and other educational settings, not only for children and young people who have experienced trauma but for the whole school cohort.

3. Behaviourist and Trauma Informed Models

Although behaviourist approaches (e.g. points systems, detentions, reward systems) can work for some children & young people, they are not successful with all. This is especially true for those who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – traumatic life experiences that occur before the age of 18. For CYP who have experienced trauma and loss, including vulnerable groups such as children in care (CiC), children at the edge of the care system, and children previously in care (PiC), behaviourist approaches can often re-traumatise them and do not teach them how to express their emotions in a more appropriate manner. The table below outlines the differences between behaviourist and trauma informed approaches within educational settings.

> " There is no more effective neurobiological intervention than a safe relationship, the relationship works to bring the brain back into regulation.
>
> (Bruce Perry, PhD, MD, researcher & child psychiatrist) "

Behaviourist Approaches:	Trauma Informed Approaches:
• Focus on using rewards and sanctions to increase or decrease the frequency of a behaviour	• Place relationships and a child or young person's sense of safety and security at the heart of classroom management
• See behaviour as being related to an immediate trigger (e.g. "the pupil started distracting others because he was bored")	• Encourage nurture, warmth and empathy, even when a child or young person is presenting with behaviours that feel challenging
• Focus on treating all children and young people equally, regardless of need or circumstances	• Promote a sense of community and belonging
• Are used repetitively and consistently until the behaviour is changed.	• Take individual circumstances into account (there is a need for differentiation in behaviour)

Research on attachment and trauma strongly indicates that a relational rather than behavioural framework is more effective in supporting children and young people's behaviour (Bergin and Bergin, 2009; Cozolino, 2013). Below is a summary of research relating to the impact and effectiveness of relational approaches:

- Close and supportive relationships with teachers have demonstrated the potential to mitigate the risk of negative outcomes for children who may otherwise have difficulty succeeding in school (Driscoll & Pianta, 2010).

- Children who can regulate their own emotions and responses are more popular, have fewer behavioural problems, are more emotionally stable, have fewer infectious illnesses and achieve more academically in schools (Gottman et al, 2007).

- Attachment influences students' school success. Secure attachment is associated with higher grades and standardised test scores compared to insecure attachment. Secure attachment is also associated with greater emotional regulation, social competence, and willingness to take on challenges, and with lower levels of ADHD, each of which in turn is associated with higher achievement (Bergin and Bergin 2009).

- When teachers think empathically, and not punitively, about misbehaving students, they cultivate better relationships and help reduce discipline problems (Okonofua et al., 2015).

- Secure, nurturing environments and stimulating, engaging experiences support the development of neuronal networks – they help to build brains. Empathetic, supportive attachments and relationships are essential to optimize brain development as 'the attunement of emotional states is essential for the developing brain to acquire the capacity to organize itself more autonomously as the child matures' (Siegel, 2012).

4. Exclusions

Practices aimed at excluding children or young people on a permanent or fixed term basis, through internal processes such as isolation, suspensions or permanent exclusions or through multiple managed moves, are seen as incompatible with a trauma informed approach to behaviour. These practices tend to be particularly punitive for children and young people who have experienced developmental trauma and can retrigger trauma that was experienced in the past. Any form of exclusion can have a significant detrimental impact on children's relationship with and trust of school staff, and their sense of safety.

Research has raised concerns about practices of exclusion and zero-tolerance approaches to behaviour management. The following research findings are of significant concern:

- School exclusion has been associated with a significantly higher likelihood of becoming a teenage parent, being unemployed or homeless later in life, or even ending up in prison (Gordon, 2001).
- Researchers have associated school exclusion with additional poor outcomes later in life, for instance difficulties with relationships, unstable employment, crime involvement, social exclusion (Nuffield Foundation, 2004).
- Exclusion from school is perhaps the most explicit form of rejection by a school of its pupils and for some excluded pupils increases the likelihood of wider social exclusion (Munn & Lloyd, 2005).

Given these concerns, it is important for educational settings to consider how they will prevent children and young people from being internally or externally excluded.

Some ideas include:

- **Identifying and meeting the need** being communicated through a behaviour at the earliest opportunity (rather than giving sanctions for behaviour)
- **Restorative conversations** between the child or young person and a key attachment figure within the setting, at a point where the child or young person is calm enough to reflect on triggers, thoughts, feelings and what might help in the future
- **Using a relational approach** to behaviour management. A relational approach is one in which staff "are aware of and explicitly focus on the quality of their interactions with students to develop classroom communities that promote academic, social, and emotional growth" (Reeves & Le Mare, 2017)
- **Using Emotion Coaching** to provide co-regulation and to support a child or young person to understand their emotions. (Gus, Rose & Gilbert, 2015)

Despite these concerns, this guidance recognises that **exclusion may be necessary on very rare occasions, as an absolute last resort**. On these occasions, the following strategies may help to repair and restore relationships:

- **Maintaining contact** with the child or young person and their family throughout the process (e.g. telephoning the child or young person at the beginning and end of each day, to check how they are doing and how the work they have been set is going)
- **Using Restorative Practice** to structure reintegration meetings and reduce blame. Holding a restorative group for staff involved in supporting the child or young person.
- Placing the child or young person's (and their family's) **voice at the heart of each step of the process**.
- If a child has a social worker **they must be contacted at the point of suspension** to ensure that a holistic plan can be developed to support the child
- Additionally, if the child or young person is looked after by B&NES, please **contact B&NES Virtual School Team** for support at the earliest opportunity, and before excluding the child.

5. A Trauma Informed Behavioural Approach

The following principles below have been developed by Bath & North East Somerset Virtual School & EPS team as suggestions for schools and settings to consider when applying a trauma informed approach to behaviour. These principles aim to compliment the OFSTED Education Inspection Framework (2019), in particular, the references to relationships among learners and staff reflecting a positive and respectful culture, and the importance of learners feeling safe.

- Recognising, validating and attuning to children and young people take precedent over other means of discipline – 'connection before correction'
- A relational approach to discipline should be prioritised – this will still include discussing consequences and using problem solving skills as opportunities for learning.
- Recognising the impact of an incident on your own feelings, behaviours and triggers before applying discipline approaches.
- Focusing on the function behind a behaviour rather than the behaviour itself.

Trauma informed behavioural approaches prioritise relationships, empathy and feeling safe above discipline and other behaviour management principles. The four steps of Emotion Coaching provide a useful outline for embedding principle within a relational approach.

Emotion Coaching Four Steps:

1 Notice Empathy → **2** Label, validate & attune → **3** Set Limits (If required) → **4** Problem Solve (If required)

Steps 1 & 2 of the Emotion Coaching Framework outlined above provide an opportunity to prioritise relationships, empathise, and support the child or young person to feel safe. Step 3 & 4 of the Emotion Coaching Framework provides opportunities for behaviour reflection, behaviour change, discussion around consequences and opportunities for problem solving. For further information about and/or training on Emotion Coaching, please contact the BANES Virtual School Team for Training.

A note on Discipline & Consequences:

It is important to remember that discipline within an educational setting should represent an opportunity to teach, nurture, provide boundaries and problem solve. It is important to reflect on the function behind the behaviour, the lesson that should be taught and the best way to teach that lesson (Siegel & Bryson, 2018). Trauma informed approaches to behaviour aim to understand what a child or young person might be trying to say to us through their behaviour. Behaviour that challenges is not seen as a choice, but as being a communication of an unmet need. Staff using a trauma informed approach strive to understand the function behind a behaviour, rather than using rewards and consequences to promote/discourage behaviour that is desirable/undesirable to the member of staff.

Consequences are not seen as a central element of trauma informed approaches to behaviour. However, some children and young people benefit from having the opportunity to co-construct ideas for repairing a situation, alongside an adult. An emphasis should be placed on restoration, not punishment or blame, and should aim to reduce feelings of guilt in the child or young person.

Whilst consistency of approach is important for children and young people to feel safe and secure, it is also important to differentiate expectations and approach according to a child or young person's abilities, needs and experiences. Whilst the majority of children and young people will thrive when a whole school approach to behaviour is applied, some will need further support and intervention, and a few will require more intensive, individualised support. As such, behaviour policies should outline the different levels of support available dependent on the child or young person's level of need. There is an example of a framework for documenting levels of support, available in the Sample Behaviour Policy. It is important to be mindful of the following quote when considering behaviourist versus relational approaches to behaviour:

> " Being 'fair' is not about everyone getting the same (equality) but about everyone getting what they need (equity).
>
> (Brighton and Hove Council, 2018).
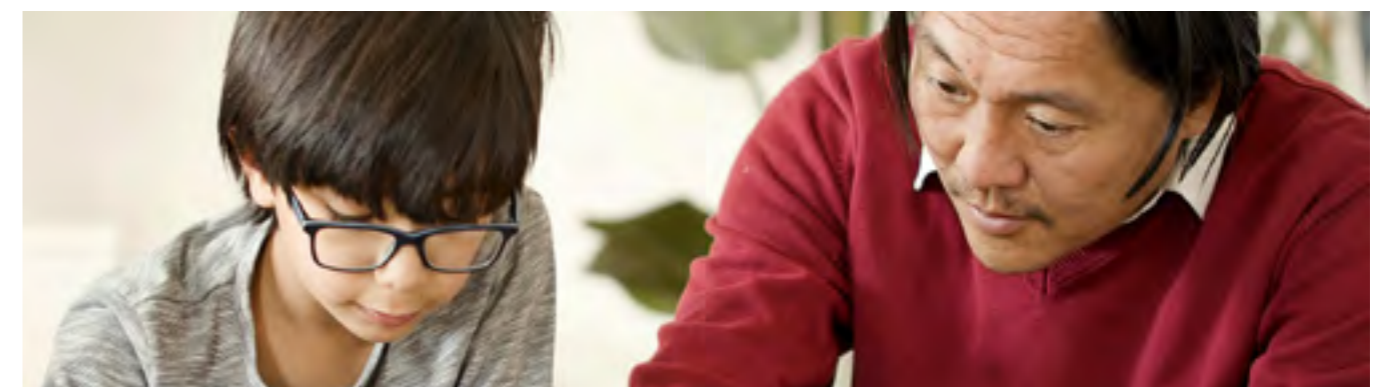
6. Trauma Informed Language

Words are important. The language we use and the stories we tell have great significance to all involved. They carry a sense of hope and possibility or can be associated with a sense of pessimism and low expectations, both of which can influence personal outcomes. In particular, the language we use to describe children/young people and their behaviour can have a significant impact on classroom environments (Orsati et al., 2013).

The section below provides some examples of language to avoid, and language that can be particularly helpful:

Language to avoid:

- Language that reinforces staff control, for example 'enforce', 'punishment', 'isolation', 'naughty corner', 'removal', 'rule', 'power', 'control', 'confiscate', and 'impose'

- Language that places negative judgement on a child or young person or their behaviour, including 'attention seeking', 'malicious', 'choice', 'poor behaviour', 'misbehaviour', 'manipulative', 'naughty', 'immoral'

- Language that reinforces negative gender stereotypes, such as 'naughty boy', or 'bossy girl'.

Language that can be particularly helpful:

- Language that promotes trauma informed approaches and acknowledges the need behind a behaviour, for example 'emotionally dysregulated', 'what is the function behind this behaviour?', 'attention needing', 'feeling unsafe', 'presenting as distressed', 'requiring co-regulation support'

Approaches that draw on trauma and attachment theory tend to advocate separating the child or young person from any behaviour that challenges. This can be achieved through the language used to describe the child and their behaviour, for example:

- 'Attention seeking' could be considered to describe the surface-level behaviour, but not the underlying need. Instead, 'attachment needing' might reframe the behaviour as being the function of an unmet need

- 'Manipulative' is another word that describes the surface-level behaviour and has negative connotations within society. Instead, phrases such as 'trying to find a way to have their needs met' or 'feeling insecure in their relationships with others' might be more appropriate.

- Using externalising language around behaviour that challenges and separating the child from their behaviour, e.g. 'The expectations are that we…, so we need to…' (rather than saying 'you need to').

- Using internalising language around behaviour that meets school expectations or can be celebrated, and showing warmth towards the child or young person, e.g. 'You were very thoughtful when you… so you did brilliantly at showing me our 'be kind' expectation'.

- Often, children and young people who have received regular feedback on their behaviour can develop negative reputations amongst staff and other children/young people. These reputations often relate entirely to their perceived behaviour, and are often powerful, pervasive and dominating. As staff, we can work to challenge these narratives by:

  - Talking to other staff about exceptions, e.g. 'Jay was so kind today when she…' (N.B. it is important to talk about exceptions in a way that avoids isolating other staff members/avoids a 'she behaves fine for me' discussion)

  - Reinforcing an alternative identity, e.g. 'Zak, you're my ICT expert, can you help me…'

  - Seeking opportunities to reinforce exceptions in the classroom, e.g. 'Sami, it was really kind of you to get a pencil for Jack as well as yourself'.

7. Trauma Informed Classroom Strategies

Write scripts for responding to behaviour that feels particularly challenging (e.g. using emotion coaching script templates)

Use 'being kept in mind' resources if required (please refer to BANES Virtual School Website)

Redirect unfocused behaviour towards being helpful in class, taking responsibility for tasks, not people

Use sorting, classifying, ordering activities to help the student to co-regulate/self-regulate

Holding a special (transitional) object can take the place of the teacher for short periods of time 'please look after this for me for a while'

Use restorative conversations that avoid blame and use visual prompts. Ensure public blame or discipline is avoided.

Use humour or personal interests as a way to diffuse tension and de-escalate situations

In addition to the above 'top tips' it is also encouraged that a 'responsive co-regulation plan' is completed for students who have experienced trauma. The following template provides some guidance on how a 'responsive co-regulation plan' can be used within a classroom setting. It recognises that at different stages of regulation, children will benefit from different responses from those around them. A class setting is considered to be 'trauma informed' when staff have consistent, clear and planned steps to respond to students at different stages of regulation. Please find the blank responsive co-regulation plan within the appendix section.
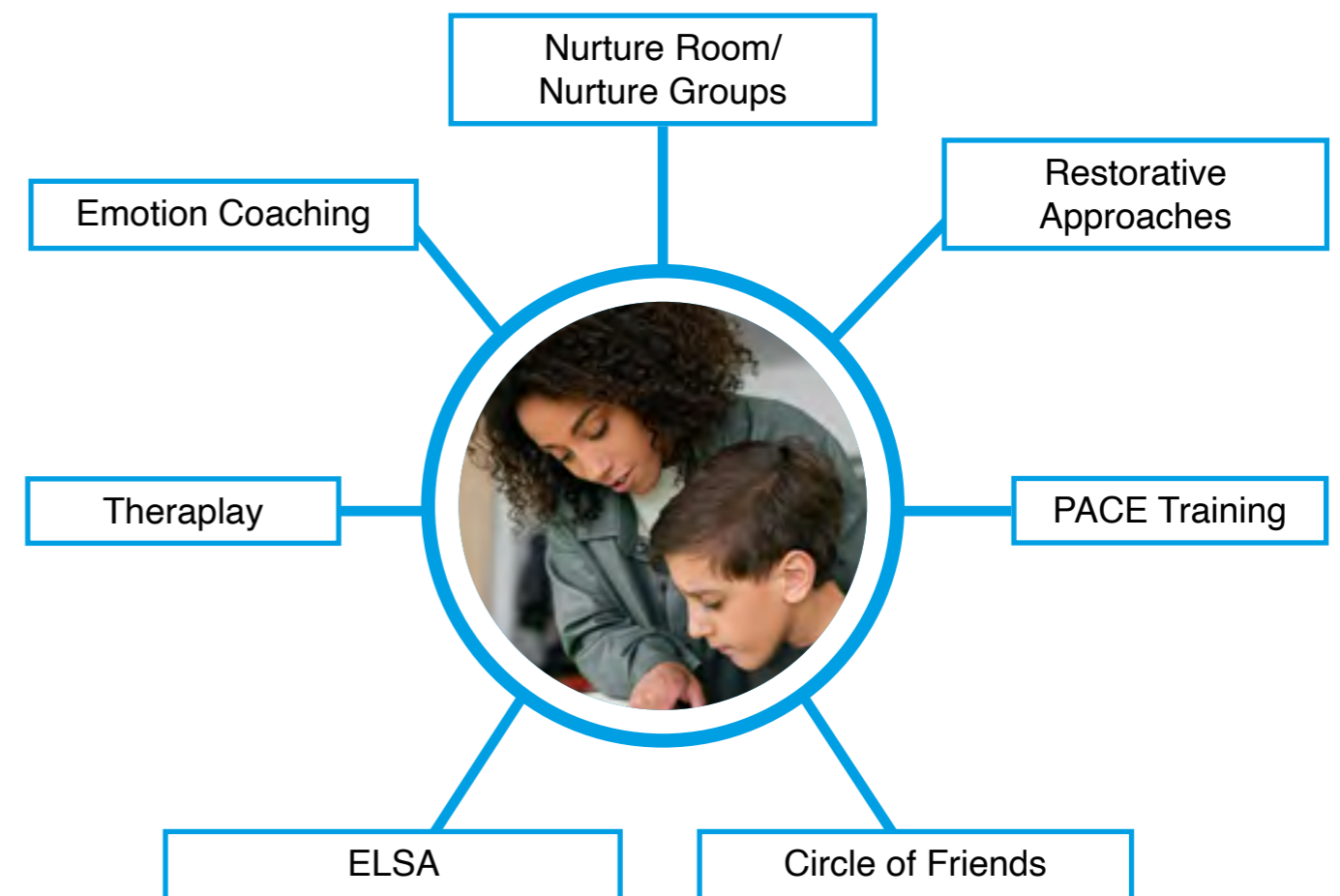
Responsive Co-Regulation Plan

State of Regulation	Potential Displayed Behaviours	Responsive Co-regulation
CALM	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.	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.
MILD STRESS	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.	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.
DYSREGULATED (MOBILISED)	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.	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.

DYSREGULATED (IMMOBILISED)	Lowered heart/breathing rate. Reduced energy. Shuts off from surroundings/dissociates. Depressed state. Immobile/frozen. May feel faint.	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.
CRISIS	The child's behaviour means that they or other people are not safe.	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, Adults need to provide high levels of containment through their way of being – having a plan can help.

8. Trauma Informed Whole School Interventions

In addition to developing a trauma informed behaviour policy, this diagram identifies some examples of whole school interventions that support a trauma informed approach. It must be noted that nurture rooms (when used effectively rather than as a form of 'exclusion' or 'isolation') should be used to support teaching learning behaviours, at the start of the day as a 'check-in' and breakfast time provision, but also as a 'safe' space for students who can become dysregulated. If you are interested in any of the interventions outlined below, please enquire about these further through the Virtual School team or BANES Educational Psychology Service.

Nurture Room/Nurture Groups

Restorative Approaches

Emotion Coaching

PACE Training

Theraplay

ELSA

Circle of Friends

9. Assessment Tools

It is imperative that schools use reliable, valid and standardised measures to assess children's emotional wellbeing, particularly those who have experienced trauma. It is important for school staff to request information about a tool's standardisation before using it to assess emotional wellbeing. Without this, assessment measures can have inaccurate and ill-founded results which can have a detrimental impact not only on the students but also on the parents/carers and staff members working with the student. The following assessment tools are recommended for use:

• Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (3-16 year olds)

• Boxall Profile (Primary & Secondary School Students)

10. Staff Self-Care

When supporting children and young people who may have experienced trauma, it is important to manage our own personal and professional stress:

✔ Recognise that change can happen slowly

✔ Trust that our simple compassionate gestures are important elements of helping young people in healing and surviving

✔ Knowing your limits & taking a time out when required

✔ Improving your understanding of trauma and secondary trauma

✔ Seeking support from co-workers, family, friends or professional therapeutic services

11. Trauma Informed Settings Audit

At the point of drafting or reviewing your trauma informed behaviour policy, it is recommended that you complete the BANES 'Trauma Informed Settings Audit' to assess the capacity of your educational setting in supporting children/ young people with attachment and developmental trauma. It can provide clear areas for improvement (red), areas that are in development (amber) and areas that are now consolidated and considered good practice (green).

BANES Trauma Informed Settings Audit				
An audit of the capacity of the school or setting to support young people with attachment and developmental trauma difficulties				
Name of School: Person carrying out audit: Date:				
Advice: The audit is simply a starting point to identify the support and outcomes that you would like. It is best completed by the SLT or a member of the SLT and then shared at senior leadership level. Once the audit is complete the Virtual School and supporting teams will meet with you to develop an action plan and to offer training and support to meet your outcomes.	Red	Amber	Green	Notes / Evidence
Staff development and knowledge within the school				
1. Do all staff understand the effect of trauma on the development on the brain?				
2. Can all staff recognise the effects of trauma?				
3. Do all staff understand what is meant by attachment difficulty and can they recognise individuals that display it?				
4. Do new members of staff and NQT's have opportunities to access this training?				
5. Are there opportunities for members of staff to become 'experts' in this area and to support others within the school?				
The importance of relationships in supporting behaviour				
1. Do all staff understand the importance of relationships and interactions in promoting positive outcomes?				

2. Do all staff understand that behaviour is a communication of need?				
3. Are all staff confident in using a range of strategies that promote children's self-regulation such as emotion coaching or PACE? Are staff confident to differentiate between these strategies to suit the individual situation?				
4. Do all staff understand the pathways of support for children who are struggling and how to access this support?				
5. Are all staff confident that they can manage their own response to a child under stress in a way that makes the child self-regulate?				
Direct Support for Young people and staff				
1. Does every child have a 'key adult' and where needed a team around that child?				
2. Are there readily accessible safe spaces that allow children to self-regulate safely? Do all staff know who can access these spaces and how they can access these spaces?				
3. Is there regular supervision for staff who support our most vulnerable children?				
4. Are team around the child/family meetings effective and are key outcomes from these meetings clearly communicated to staff?				
5. Do you have effective and responsive support from partner agencies?				
6. Are discussions about trauma and the impact of trauma included in the curriculum to ensure pupils can recognise it in themselves and in their peers?				
Senior leadership and policy level				
1. Do all senior leaders, including Governors, understand, promote, and support a trauma informed approach to practice?				
2. How well does the school differentiate for children with attachment and trauma needs? Is this clearly stated in school policies such as the behaviour policy?				
3. Are attachment and trauma informed approaches evident in everyday practice? Are there opportunities to share this practice across the school?				
4. How are parents and carers supported in their understanding of children who have experience trauma or who have attachment difficulties?				

12. Requirements of Behaviour Policies

The requirements of behaviour policies are outlined by the departmental advice 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff' (Department for Education, 2024).

This advice states that: 'Maintained schools: The headteacher must set out measures in the behaviour policy which aim to: promote good behaviour, self-discipline and respect; prevent bullying, ensure that pupils complete assigned work and which regulate the conduct of pupils.'

The advice also states that in developing the behaviour policy, the headteacher should reflect on the following ten key aspects of school practice that, when effective, contribute to improving the quality of pupil behaviour:

✔ A consistent approach to behaviour management

✔ Strong school leadership

✔ Classroom management

✔ Rewards and sanctions

✔ Behaviour strategies and the teaching of good behaviour

✔ Staff development and support

✔ Pupil support systems

✔ Liaison with parents and other agencies

✔ Managing pupil transition; and

✔ Organisation and facilities.

The behaviour policy should acknowledge the school's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, in respect of safeguarding and in respect of pupils with special educational needs (SEN)." p. 5-6

13. Suggested Amendment to Behaviour Policies

Policy Statement:

XXXX School strives to create a school community which is trauma informed. This trauma informed approach is embodied by our aspiration to build a nurturing and caring ethos which permeates our school environment. We have developed a behaviour policy which places relationships as the cornerstone for children/young people to thrive, both academically and in relation to their wellbeing.

Policy Aims:

✔ To ensure that all members of the school community feel safe

✔ To encourage relationships between all members of the school community that facilitate effective learning

✔ To allow children/young people to develop a strong sense of morality that allows them to take on board the thoughts and feelings of others

✔ To teach children/young people how to communicate their thoughts and feelings in a way that would be beneficial in their adulthood.

Purpose of the behaviour policy:

To provide guidance to staff and learners that can be:

✔ Accessible and applicable at all levels within the educational setting

✔ Used to create and embed a nurturing, inclusive whole school ethos that reflects the aims of the policy

✔ Monitored and evaluated as part of a plan-do-review cycle, with input from children/young people, parents/carers and governors.

Pupil Expectations:

• We are empathic and kind

• We keep ourselves and others safe

• We are ready to engage in all aspects of school life

Staff Expectations:

• We value our relationships with children/young people and their families

• We strive to understand the function behind a child/young person's behaviour

• We consistently model the behaviour we wish to see

• We always give children/young people a fresh start as required

• We ensure that we support and implement the agreed trauma informed approaches (e.g. emotion coaching/responsive co-regulation plans)

• We use trauma informed language in our daily routine

Environmental Consistency:

At XXXX School, we recognise that consistency and routines help children and young people to feel safe. We aim to ensure that:

• All school staff have read the school's behaviour policy and feel confident in applying the policy

• We refer to the school expectations every time we provide feedback or discipline, in which we explain how a behaviour has/has not embodied these expectations

• All school staff are aware of the strategies being used to support individual children/young people with additional needs (including acknowledgement and awareness of the responsive co-regulation plans)

• All school staff are trained in and able to use Emotion Coaching to support children/young people's emotional needs and provide consequences/problem solving opportunities when required.

Differentiation:

• We will differentiate our behaviour policy as appropriate to the needs of all children/young people within our school setting, in line with the Equality Act (2010). For some students this approach will require an individualised emotional regulation approach which will include xxxxx (e.g. emotion coaching/responsive co-regulation plan). It is our aim to inform parents/carers at the beginning of each year about this differentiated approach in order for them to understand that "being 'fair' is not about everyone getting the same (equality) but about everyone getting what they need (equity)" (Brighton and Hove Council, 2018).

• Children/young people have a wide range of individual needs which change over time. As such, children/young people require a flexible approach within an overall structure of consistency. Whilst we envisage that our Wave One behavioural approach (please see below) will be effective for the majority of children/young people at XXXX School, some children/young people will require extra support in order for us to ensure an equitable school environment.

• A graduated response to behaviour allows staff to support children/young people according to their current level of need. The pyramid below provides some examples of support offered at each wave of our graduated response. Children/young people will be provided with support based on their level of need. Given that XXXX School views behaviour as a communication of need, frequent behaviour will be seen as an indication that level of support may need to be increased (e.g. a child receiving support at Wave One would begin to receive assessment and support at Wave Two). Decisions about the level of support required will always be made in consultation with the child or young person, their parents/carers and external professionals as appropriate.

Wave Three: Specialist support and interventions supported by external professionals, such as… {add details of specific group interventions/resources here - e.g. theraplay, trauma focused counselling}.

Wave Two: Interventions aimed at supporting specific identified needs, for example… {add details of specific group interventions/resources here - e.g. nurture groups, responsive co-regulation plans)

Wave One: Whole school strategies as outlined in the main body of this behaviour policy (e.g. emotion coaching, PACE, restorative approaches)

Use of exclusion:

XXXX School recognises the potentially detrimental impact of exclusion and consequently avoids using any form of exclusion to respond to behaviour that challenges us. In order to avoid exclusions, we:

- Identify and meet the need being communicated through a behaviour at the earliest opportunity (rather than using sanctions to reduce the behaviour). This will include informing services (e.g. the BANES virtual school social worker) of the risk of a suspension or permanent exclusion as soon as possible.

- Use restorative conversations alongside the child or young person to reflect on triggers, thoughts, feelings and what might help in the future

- Use a relational approach to behaviour management

- Use Emotion Coaching to provide co-regulation and to support a child or young person to understand their emotions.

On the rare occasions that exclusion is used, we will:

- Maintain contact with the child or young person and their family throughout the process (e.g. telephoning the child or young person at the beginning and end of each day, to check how they are doing and how the work they have been set is going)

- Use Restorative Practice to structure reintegration meetings and reduce blame

- Hold a restorative group for staff involved in supporting the child or young person

- Place the child or young person's (and parent's/carer's) voice at the heart of each step of the process.

Engagement with parents/Carers:

XXXX School values parents/carers as experts in their own child/young person's life. We will provide feedback on your child's emotional wellbeing at parent/carer meetings but will also contact you immediately if we have any concerns about your child's wellbeing. We also place great value on feedback from parents/carers about the wellbeing of your child. If you have any concerns or would like to provide feedback on our behaviour policy, please do not hesitate to contact {insert name/contact details here}.

*****END OF POLICY STATEMENT*****

Appendix

Template 1: Responsive Co-Regulation Plan Template

Responsive Co-Regulation Plan Template

State of Regulation	Potential Displayed Behaviours	Responsive Co-regulation
CALM		
MILD STRESS		
DYSREGULATED (MOBILISED)		
CRISIS		

EPS and Virtual School Support

A range of supports are on offer from the Virtual School Team & the Educational Psychology Service at Bath & North East Somerset in relation to supporting trauma informed approaches. For additional information, please email the virtual school team on Virtual_School@BATHNES.GOV.UK.

Acknowledgements

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We have used evidence and guidance from a number of publications, with particular reference to:

- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DfE, 2018)
- Timpson Exclusion Review (2019)
- Improving Behaviour in Schools (EEF, 2019)
- Trauma Informed Behaviour Policies and Approaches: A guide for Schools and Settings (City of York Educational Psychology Service)
- Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton & Hove Schools (Brighton & Hove Educational Psychology Service)
- Guidance for Developing Relational Practice & Policy (Babcock International)

We have also drawn on the expertise and work of other colleagues working in this area. We would like to thank Sarah Ahmed (Assistant Principal Educational Psychologist, Brighton & Hove EPS), Claire Elsdon, (Senior Educational Psychologist, City of York EPS) for their influence in this work. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the work of Babcock International which we have referenced in this policy. There are a number of colleagues that have also provided support, guidance and input, for which we would like to provide thanks.

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> **Students don't care how much we know until they know we care**
>
> (Anonymous)

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