

Relational Approach Policy

Approval date: 4th May 2021

Next review due: Summer 2022

Signed by:

Headteacher

Chair of Governors

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Document control Title: Relational Approach Policy Author: Ella Hughes (Headteacher) in partnership with Child in Mind Ltd. **Resources used in the development of this policy:** Child in Mind Ltd: https://childinmind.co.uk/ Beacon House: https://beaconhouse.org.uk/resources/ • Barrowford Primary School – Behaviour in School (Relationship Management Policy): • http://barrowford.lancs.sch.uk/relatoinshipsnurture/ Chignecto Central Regional Centre for Education: <u>https://youtu.be/BkRul8fWcrE</u> Making sense of trauma: https://makingsenseoftrauma.com/course/making-sense-of-trauma/ DDP Network – What is meant by PACE? https://ddpnetwork.org/about-ddp/meant-pace/ • Anna Freud Centre – Mentally Healthy Schools: https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/risksand-protective-factors/school-based-risk-factors/relationships-and-belonging/ Supersedes: Previous Behaviour policy. Written: March 2021 Date adopted by governing body: April 2021

Review: Annually

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Related policies

- Behaviour principles written statement
- Behaviour policy (relational approach)
- Anti-bullying and harassment
- Positive handling
- Exclusions
- PSHE and SRE
- Staff wellbeing
- Staff Code of conduct

Vision

- Trusting relationships where everyone can thrive.
- Curriculum worth coming to school for.
- Learning worth working hard for.

Mission

Respect everyone; Grow together.

School values

- Respect
- Inclusion
- Growth

At Chapel Street Community Primary School we talk about the 'Chapel Street Way' – a relational approach to all that we do and how we do it. This policy intends to set out what this means and our expectations for all members of the school community in relation to it. We are proud to be:

- Trauma informed
- Attachment aware

The following videos will help you understand why this is so important for all our pupils and staff:

<u>Trauma informed schools by Science Animated</u> – The importance of trauma-informed schools.

<u>Stress, trauma and the brain by Dr. Bruce Perry</u> – The Neurosequential Model in Education and its impact for how we interact with pupils and each other.

<u>Window of tolerance by Beacon House</u> – How our relationships with children can help them to be at their personal best.

Aims

- To create an environment that embodies our school's vision and values and promotes positive wellbeing for all.
- To support all in our school community including pupils, staff, parents / carers and wider stakeholders with exemplifying our values at all times.
- To provide a safe, happy and nurturing environment where all individuals have a sense of belonging, are valued and thrive.
- To facilitate all pupils and staff in working towards excellence through high quality challenge and support.
- To assist all pupils and staff in consistently meeting the school's high standards and expectations for their attitude, behaviour and communication.
- To maintain a calm, purposeful and nurturing atmosphere where all pupils and staff are ready to learn, develop and grow.
- To foster, nurture and value healthy, trusting relationships.
- To develop resilience, through positive relationships, for all pupils and staff.

Underlying Principles

- Positive relationships between all members of our school community are imperative to our practice, buffer stress and build resilience.
- Children and adults have a sense of belonging, feel safe, secure and valued at our school.
- People learn to cope with all aspects of their lives with support from others.
- The importance of fostering social relationships and mutual engagement in a school community.
- Responsibility for one's own attitude and actions and their impact on others.
- Respect for other people, their views, feelings and circumstances.
- Empathy with the feelings of others including where they are affected by one's own actions.
- Fairness and equality.
- Active involvement of everyone in school with decisions about their own lives.
- A willingness to create opportunities for reflective change in pupils and staff.
- Commitment to not engage in behaviours and actions that can bring feelings of shame for others.
- Understanding that 'all behaviour is communication' for both children and adults.

What is a relational approach?

"A relational approach is when we put relationships at the core of our work. So we know that when we work together with people relationships just are. If we pay attention to building positive relationships, then everything else that we do, should be done better. A relational approach is about creating community – within our classrooms and our school." *Glenn Thompson – Climate and Relational Approach Consultant*

"Being relational means living in relation to others in recognition of our interconnectedness with others. It means, in our interactions with others, being engaged, centered, grounded, clear, generous, humble and kind. A relational way of living involves taking an open, positive attitude into our interactions with everyone." *Louise Phipps Senft*

A relational approach doesn't mean that everyone is always happy or always get what they want. Clear, firm and consistent boundaries, rules and limits are integral to a relational approach – as are consequences. However, within our relational approach consequences are natural rather than punitive – where possible they have a relational and educational element and have the intention to repair any damage to relationships or property. Difficult decisions still have to be made but this is done in a fair, and compassionate way; listening and responding to others before moving forward together as a community.

Key elements of our relational approach are:

- **Self-awareness** including knowing our own sources of reactivity, needs, strengths and barriers.
- Self-regulation recognising our own emotions and waiting until we are calm before responding to a situation or voicing a concern. Being mindful of our own energy and mood and how these can impact on those around us.
- Empathy understanding and sharing the feelings of others, even if we may not agree with them.
- **Kindness** acting with compassion and consideration, being positive and not presuming motive in others.
- **Trust** built through consistency, integrity, predictability and reliability. We do what we say we will, when we say we will and how we say we will.
- **Boundaries** that are clear, consistent, firm and fair.
- **Responsive** proactive and thoughtful actions that adapt to circumstances and context, rather than being reactive.
- Vulnerability and courage asking for help where needed.
- Love we care deeply and show this through our actions, words and behaviours.
- Inclusive equal rights, value and worth for all individuals regardless of age, gender, race, background, role or other demographics and protected characteristics.

As adults, we model these at all times whilst supporting our pupils to develop and learn for themselves.

Why is a relational approach important?

Our relational approach enables us to work together and:

- Meet the individual and collective needs of pupils and staff.
- Make sure that everyone feels valued, safe and secure.
- Create a sense of belonging for our whole community.
- Get the best out of ourselves and each other.
- Build the spirit of our community.
- Create an environment where all individuals can learn, develop and grow to be the best they can be.

Who does our relational approach apply to?

At Chapel Street Community Primary School our relational approach applies to all in our school community. It is applicable to all communication and interactions including:

The adults within these interactions could be staff, parents / carers, outside agency professionals, governors or wider community members and stakeholders. As well as the positive relationships between staff and each other and staff and pupils, our team facilitate classrooms in a way that pupils feel in positive relationship with each other. These positive relationships extend outside of Chapel Street, so that our community members feel welcome and like they belong within our school too.

Whilst the focus of this policy is the behaviour of adults, we all work together to teach our children the 'Chapel Street Way' so they leave us with the skills, qualities and values to develop healthy, meaningful and positive relationships throughout their lives.

How do we follow a relational approach at Chapel Street?

The following are some examples of how we follow a relational approach at Chapel Street. This is not a complete list but intended as a guide for what our relational approach looks like in practice.

Environment and spaces

- Our environment and spaces (both indoor and outdoor) reflect our values and diversity. It is important to us that our children, staff and wider community see themselves reflected in our school environment.
- Our spaces are carefully designed and cared for to support development of positive relationships for example our community and wellbeing rooms alongside classrooms and outdoor areas.
- We make purposeful and creative use of space to maximize the potential of both our indoor and outdoor environments.
- How we treat our environment is a reflection of how we care for ourselves and each other. We
 therefore make sure that our spaces, environment and resources are well looked after they are
 tidy, organized and uncluttered. We take responsibility for our own belongings and care for those of
 others.
- Our spaces are inclusive and accessible for all.

Curriculum

- Our community and especially our children are reflected in our curriculum and the choices we make about what and how to teach.
- We teach a rich, broad and balanced curriculum that has been sequenced and designed for our pupils and supports their holistic as well as academic development.
- We enjoy and celebrate the Arts as a means of expressing ourselves and our emotions and learn about healthy relationships through our PSHCE and SRE curriculums.
- See our 'Curriculum intent statements' for further information.

Communication

- Communication is an integral part of relationships and is a two-way process. We are each active participants in communication across school and take responsibility for both how we send and receive information. This extends to care in how we talk about each other, as well as to each other.
- We develop our 'active listening' skills and aspire to use 'empathic listening' as much as possible this means 'listening with your whole being ears, eyes and heart'. We recognize that sometimes

the most important information we receive from another person is not through what they say – but how they say it and what they don't say.

- For all communication we carefully consider who, where, when and how. Where possible we speak in person or over the phone but, as a large school, will use written methods where needed. We also make use of translation where language may be a barrier.
- When communicating with others (whether adults or children) we are mindful of our verbal and non-verbal messages including tone, volume, body language, facial expressions and personal space (for example speaking side on rather than face-to-face where preferred). We do not insist on eye contact from others, as we understand looking away can be a sign of respect for some and in others can indicate great discomfort or be related to a specific need.
- We choose our language and actions carefully considering the potential impact for others of our words, gestures and movements.
- When writing or sending emails and messages we apply the same thought and care as verbal communication and are especially considerate of the potential for misunderstanding due to an absence of non-verbal cues. We respect the different working patterns that may suit individual circumstances and so, whilst there is flexibility for when staff may write and send emails, we do not expect anyone to check, read, write or respond to emails outside of their usual working hours.
- As a general rule, we 'praise in public and reprimand in private'. See the section below re difficult conversations for more information.
- We recognize the importance of routine and wherever possible communicate changes to planned routine in a timely manner. We appreciate that change can be difficult for many but is an inevitable part of life. We therefore celebrate positive endings and carefully plan known transitions.

Throughout the day

- We greet each other with smiles and gestures of welcome.
- If we ask someone how they are, we stop to listen to their answer and give them our attention.
- We make time to talk to each other and take an interest in each other's lives and interests both in and out of school, as people and professionals.
- We are proactive and look for ways to problem solve, support and help each other.
- We use manners and demonstrate gratitude and appreciation with each other.
- At all times we look to include others and are collaborative in our approaches.
- We are mindful of cultural differences and how our own unconscious bias may affect our behaviour.
- We have a positive attitude, develop our growth mindsets and practice gratitude.
- We try our best and value discretionary effort continually looking for ways to develop and improve through challenge and support. We ask how we can be more inclusive or impactful.
- Collectively, and individually, we notice, share and celebrate effort, progress, learning, successes and achievements.
- On the rare occasions that we see or hear behaviour, actions and words that are not in line with our values and relational approach we 'call this out' sensitively, respectfully and privately.
- We regularly seek, listen and respond to the views, opinions and feedback of others. Our pupils and staff have a voice.
- We are considerate of others, and value their time and contributions as much as our own. We demonstrate this by being punctual and meeting deadlines. We are present with others and avoid distraction and multi-tasking.
- We use Dan Hughes' PACE which is a 'way of being' that helps children feel safe and stands for Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy see our Behaviour Policy or read more <u>here</u>.

When raising or addressing a concern or where there is conflict

- We follow the principle of 'Connect before correct' this means we engage with others and empathise before starting difficult conversations or addressing concerns.
- At all times we make sure we are speaking to the right person / people and not discussing things with those who do not need to know. We maintain confidentiality.
- Difficult conversations (with adults and children) are done privately and away from an audience to avoid feelings of shame or humiliation. Similarly, we don't penalize a group for the actions or behaviours of an individual.
- We self-regulate so that we can remain calm, present and responsive showing attunement and empathy with the other person.
- When others act in ways that threaten, frighten, intimidate or trigger us we respond calmly and safely using de-escalation including grounding and distraction techniques.
- When we make mistakes, we recognize this is an opportunity to learn and grow. We are honest, take responsibility for our actions and their impact on others.

When responding to behaviour

Our Behaviour Policy (Relational approach) outlines how we apply a relational approach to positive behaviour management across the school.

Performance management and appraisal

We are working towards a coaching culture and instructional coaching model for performance management. This will be outlined in the relevant staff policies and procedures once in place.

In order to maintain our relational approach we do not...

- Shout or raise our voices unless it is an emergency.
- Use words, actions or behaviours that can invoke feelings of shame in others for example traffic lights for behaviour management, writing children's names on the board in relation to poor behaviour, belittling or making fun of someone, using sarcasm, public comparison to others in a negative way or publicly criticizing or addressing a concern.
- Use language that may be considered derogatory, offensive or discriminatory.
- Seek to blame others, make excuses or avoid the impact of our own behaviours, actions and words.
- Speak about others in an unkind or disrespectful way.
- Leave others out or exclude them.
- Use 'humour' or 'jokes' as a justification for behaving in an unkind, rude or unacceptable way. We don't make jokes at the expense of others, whether individuals or groups.
- Shush others or use disrespectful language such as 'shut up' when requesting quiet.
- Touch someone else without their consent or move into their personal space in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

The above behaviours all have the potential to cause harm for anyone but especially from adults towards children. They are therefore unacceptable at our school. We want Chapel Street to be a place where everyone feels safe, secure, valued and happy.

The following quote from a pupil encapsulates a key element of our relational approach that makes Chapel Street such a special place to learn and work; "Love runs through our school."

Appendices

The following appendices are intended to be supportive resources for staff in following our relational approach. We recommend printing and displaying these where they will be a prompt for key messages and a reminder of strategies you can use. Whilst these may refer to adults and children they are included in this policy, rather than the Positive Behavior Policy, as they are applicable to all interactions we have with each other – adult/child, adult/adult and child/child.

- 1. 'Hidden needs' adapted from 'Bringing hidden needs to the surface' https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Hidden-Needs.pdf
- 2. What if we are curious about behaviour?' <u>https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/What-if...-1.jpg</u>
- 3. 'Connect before correct' adapted from 'The three R's: Reaching the learning brain' <u>https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-Three-Rs.pdf</u>
- 'Window of tolerance' adapted from the following sources
 <u>https://formedfamiliesforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Developmental-Trauma-Close-Up-Beacon-House.pdf</u>
 <u>https://www.complextrauma.uk/uploads/2/3/9/4/23949705/tolerance_window_short_wot_hando_ut.pdf</u>
- 5. Noticing and grounding 'freeze, flight, fight, submit' responses in others adapted from 'Developmental Trauma Close Up' and 'Survival in Primary School' <u>https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Developmental-Trauma-Close-Up-Revised-Jan-2020.pdf</u> <u>http://www.innerworldwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Survival-In-Primary-School-2019.pdf</u>

The appendices are followed by a list of recommended reading and links to further strategies, resources and training that you may find helpful.

Hidden needs

The behaviours we see in others are often expressed in place of more vulnerable emotions. This is because it can feel safer. It is our job to look for the unseen feelings.

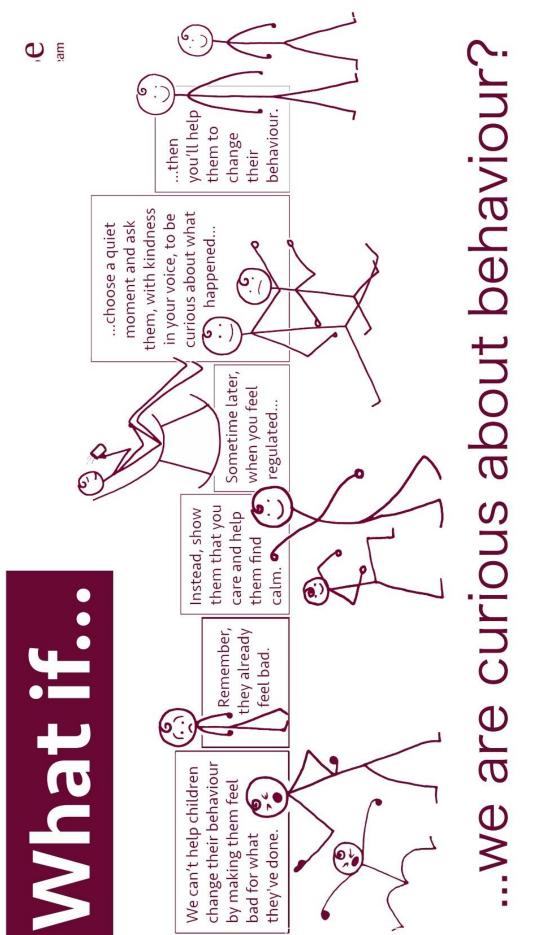
Respond to hidden needs rather than behaviours we see.

Behaviours

aggressive	controlling		overly	y happy	distant
oppositional	manipulative	$\mathbf{\Lambda}$	day dr	reaming	withdrawn
rude					tearful
angry					distracted
				$\mathbf{\mathcal{I}}$	
	unloved	panicked	frightened		
	worried	numb	vulnerable		
	judged	confused	alone		
		unsafe	/		
		worthless			
	N N	scared	\wedge		
			V		
		\mathbf{V}		ine	eds
Respond with:		▼			

- Empathy
- Acceptance
- Understanding
- Kindness

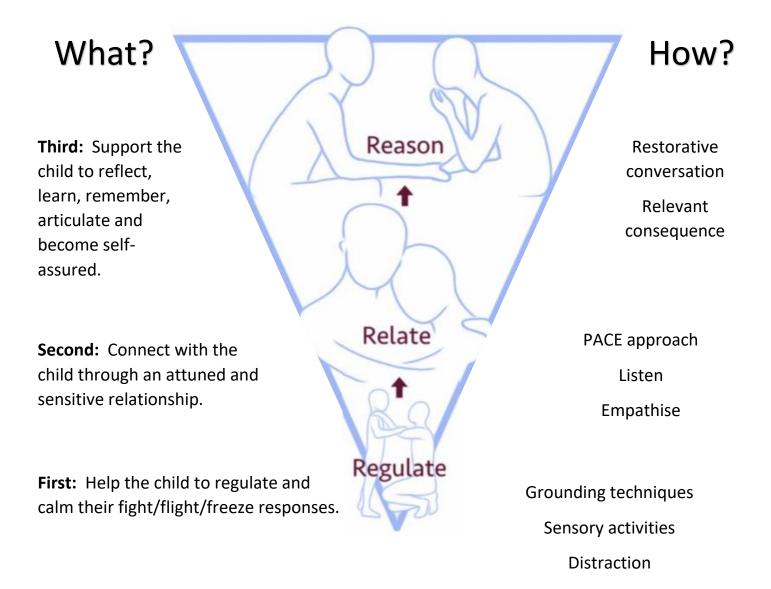
Be there **with** and **for** them.



From beaconhouse.org.uk

Connect before Correct

When we are in survival mode our body responds with fight, flight or freeze responses to any perceived danger or threat. Someone who is in their survival response cannot take in nurture or information. They need co-regulation to learn self-regulation.



Self-regulation

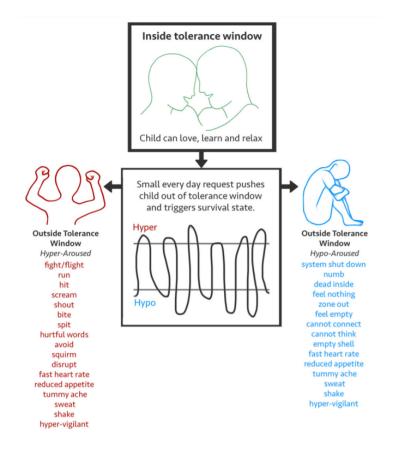


Remember to check-in with how you are feeling and find calm before connecting with someone who is in their survival mode.

Put on your own oxygen mask first, before helping others.

Window of tolerance

Adapted from Dr B. Perry at beaconhouse.org.uk



Living Within The Window of Tolerance: The Different Zones of Arousal

HYPERAROUSAL ZONE	SIGNS YOU ARE HERE:		
Sympathetic "Fight or Flight Response" (Too much arousal)	Tension, shaking Emotional reactivity	Intrusive imagery Emotional overwhelm	Hypervigilance Impulsivity

Defensiveness

Racing thoughts

- •Anger/ Rage
- · Feeling unsafe Obsessive/ cyclical cognitive processing

OPTIMAL AROUSAL ZONE

Ventral Vagal "Window of Tolerance"

SIGNS YOU ARE HERE:

- · Feel and think simultaneously · Experience empathy
- · Feelings are tolerable

· Feeling 'dead'

· Can't defend oneself

No energy

"Not there"

- · Present moment awareness "Right here, right now"
- · Feel open and curious versus judgmental and defensive

HYPOAROUSAL ZONE

Parasympathetic "Immobilization Response" (Too little arousal)

Disabled cognitive processing/ "can't think"

SIGNS YOU ARE HERE:

- Relative absence of sensation
 Numbing of emotions
 Reduced physical movement No feelings
 - Disconnected

Flat affect

- Ashamed
- Shut down · Can't say no

· Passive

· Awareness of boundaries (yours & others)

· Reactions adapt to fit the situation

· Feel safe

Adapted from beaconhouse.org.uk and complextrauma.co.uk

How to respond...

Freeze

Spotting Freeze	Grounding Freeze	Spotting Flight	Grounding Flight
Bored, not interested. Distracted, not listening, day dreaming, staring into space Confused, forgetful Clumsy Subject change, talking about something else Not moving to where they've been asked Scanning the room Wide eyed, dilated pupils	Stay with me, don't leave. Wonder where I've gone and invite me back. Tell me I'm safe. Watching TV Deep breathing Spinning on a swing, climbing, hanging, rolling or cycling down a hill, jumping on a trampoline Digging in mud or sand Hot chocolate and toast Warm bath and warm towel Soft blanket/teddy	Hyperactive, manic, chaotic, silly, baby talk, silly voices, loud, disruptive, clumsy, bumping into people Aggressive, threatening, stiffening up, clenching fists Running away escaping, disappearing, hiding Can't cope with free play or follow house rules Keeps super busy Needing to get to car, home, school, park first	Keep me close by Deep breathing Tell me I'm safe Hanging Lap/Shoulder Pads Give me a familiar and easy chore Crunchy foods e.g. carrot sticks Happily and patiently find me Create a safe space for me to hide in Tug of war Warm milk or hot chocolate Hot water bottle and soft blanket/teddy

Flight



Fight

Submit / Collapse



Adapted from beaconhouse.org.uk and innerworldwork.co.uk

Signposting for more information

Additional resources and strategies

- Whole Class Happy pack: <u>https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Whole-Class-Happy-Pack-High-Res.pdf</u>
- What we say: https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/What-We-Say-Comic-1.pdf
- What survival looks like in Primary School: <u>http://www.innerworldwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Survival-In-Primary-School-2019.pdf</u>
- Have you seen me? Pre-occupied and avoidant attachment patterns: <u>https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Have-you-seen-me-1.pdf</u>
- Supporting transitions: <u>https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Supporting-Transitions-2.pdf</u>
- Calming strategies for children: <u>https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Brainstem-</u> <u>Calmer-Activities.pdf</u>

- Connect before correct:
 - Regulate: <u>https://www.epinsight.com/post/the-constellation-of-regulation-part-1-of-the-3-rs</u>
 - o Relate: <u>https://www.epinsight.com/post/relational-routes-part-2-of-the-3-rs</u>
 - o Reason: <u>https://www.epinsight.com/post/the-high-rise-to-reason-part-3-of-the-3-rs</u>
- Becoming a trauma sensitive school Resource bank: <u>https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Schools-Resources-List-2.pdf</u>
- PACE, attachment and trauma informed resources: <u>https://www.epinsight.com/attachment-trauma</u>
- Nurture and wellbeing resources: https://www.epinsight.com/nurture-wellbeing
- Stress and self-care resources: <u>https://www.epinsight.com/stress-self-care</u>
- Developmental trauma and attachment resources: <u>https://beaconhouse.org.uk/resources/</u>
- Resources from Dr Dan Siegel: <u>https://drdansiegel.com/resources/</u>
- Resource to support adults in identifying some of their potential coping strategies when in 'survival mode' from Dr Karen Treisman and Emma Metcalfe: <u>http://www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk/wp-</u> <u>content/uploads/2018/09/organisational-defences-final-bled.pdf</u>

Further reading and training

- Why are these kids different? <u>https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Why-are-these-kids-different.pdf</u>
- Supporting the education of adverse childhood experiences and the need for resilience: https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Building-Resilience-Training-Aid-compressed.pdf
- Developmental trauma: <u>https://formedfamiliesforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Developmental-</u> <u>Trauma-Close-Up-Beacon-House.pdf</u>
- Making Sense of Trauma This free webinar includes links to many helpful and informative resources. You will need to register for the free training and we have permission from the provider for staff to click they are 'in the United States' in order to access: <u>https://makingsenseoftrauma.com/</u>
- Polyvagal theory: <u>https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-Polyvagal-Theory.pdf</u>
- Hyper and Hypo arousal: <u>https://www.traumathrivers.com/2020/05/18/more-on-hyper-and-hypo-arousal/</u>
- Blog for supporting children who have additional needs: https://www.epinsight.com/
- Anna Freud Centre: Mentally healthy schools: <u>https://www.annafreud.org/</u>
- MindEd free e-learning to support healthy minds: <u>https://www.minded.org.uk/</u>
- Blogs and podcasts from Dr Karen Treisman: <u>http://www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk/links-websites-and-podcasts/</u>