UNLOCKING POTENTIAL
LEVELLING THE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC ARENA

RELATIONAL POLICY

The Levels School exists to provide a nurturing environment in which students with specific learning difficulties and co-occurring diagnoses can develop their self-esteem and aspire to be independent young adults who value the rights, responsibilities and rules that exist to promote and support their future welfare. Our approach toward establishing this ideology is predicated through trauma-informed practice and an obligation to develop the social skills required to build their future aspirational communities. We exist to help them find their level.

This policy covers all premises known as The Levels School.

The Board of Governors acknowledge their responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective and follows regulatory requirements. Governors undertake a review to satisfy themselves that the implementation of this policy is effective.

The Board of Governors ensures the establishment of familiarity with and the effective operation through monitoring, of school policies, approving those requiring GB sign-off in line with a regular cycle of school policy reviews. This occurs through a cycle of governor committee meetings and full board meetings.

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Date of policy	September 2026
Next review date	September 2027
Frequency of policy review (annually, every two years)	Annually
Policy owner	Caroline Cook / Simon Scarborough
Published policy	Yes ☒ No ☐
List of connected policies	Safeguarding Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Exclusion Policy, SEND Policy, Positive Touch addendum, Positive Handling Addendum, Children looked after and previously looked after Policy, Equality and Dignity at Work Policy, Staff Code of Conduct
Approved / Date	Governing Body

Key Legislation and Guidance

- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Equality Act 2010
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Behaviour in Schools (DfE, 2022)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018, updated 2023)

Vision and Ethos –

The focus of this policy and its practice is to embed a whole school ethos that promotes and celebrates positive relationships and behaviours and reduces the need to consider exclusion. Students are supported with clear boundaries, predictable routines, clear expectations (Ready, Respectful, Safe) and regulated responses to behaviour.

As a community at The Levels School, we strive to build strong, trusting relationships with all our students, recognising that these connections are the foundation for their holistic development and essential to meaningful engagement in learning. We are committed to fostering a relational, inclusive and neuro affirming environment where all students are safe, valued, and understood.

We recognise first and foremost that behaviour is a form of communication and as such we work to recognise the underlying needs and try to meet them to support students to be able to re-regulate and re-engage. We are also aware that secondary behaviour often results from a speech, language and communication need and work hard to address the primary difficulty and not sanction the secondary behaviour, preferring instead to work with the student restoratively. This often requires a period of regulation and the student given time before the student and teacher can revisit and repair together.

We understand that children achieve well and enjoy their learning when relationships are at the centre. Research has demonstrated that investing time and resources into improving relationships in schools leads to positive outcomes around inclusion, engagement, attainment and achievement in the short term and community safety and cohesion in the longer term. Positive staff student relationships have been shown to be central to the well-being of both students and teachers. *(Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research BISSR)*

Core Theoretical Frameworks and Approaches – This Relational policy sets to outline the behaviour management practices that exist within The Levels School. It aims to align with current research and theory linked to attachment and trauma, behaviour management and provide effective support for the

personal development of our students. The premise of all interactions is the principle that all behaviour is a form of communication.

Attachment Theory - We understand that children develop in the context of secure relationships. Students with disrupted or insecure attachment histories may display dysregulated and/or avoidant behaviours. Staff are trained to respond with attuned, consistent and responsive care, not punishment.

Trauma-Informed Practice - We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication, especially for children with Speech and Language communication difficulties and/or trauma histories. We aim to provide predictable routines, emotionally safe environments, and supportive adult relationships.

Neuro-Affirming Practice - We do not aim to 'fix' or 'normalise' children. Instead, we celebrate neurodivergence and support self-advocacy, autonomy, and communication preferences. Adjustments are made based on student needs and preferences. We aim to support students to be their own authentic selves.

Resources and Practical Frameworks in Use

The Zones of Regulation – This is used throughout the school to support students in understanding and expressing their emotions and states of alertness. Staff model and scaffold the Zones language, supporting students in identifying and communicating their needs visually or verbally. Students use regulation strategies and have access to their own sensory boxes and have identified spaces to support a return to the Green Zone (ready to learn). We recognise that Green is the optimal zone for learning and that being in other zones is not bad; it presents an opportunity for co-regulation and supporting an understanding of identifying triggers and exploring strategies.

Integrated Therapy Team – At The Levels School we have an integrated therapy team of SaLTs and OTs. There is a Creative Arts Practitioner who sees students who are either privately funded, funded through the LA or through the adoption support fund.

Natural Consequences – Natural consequences are not punishments but real-world outcomes of actions, supported by adults. They help children make links between behaviour and impact. We focus on relational repair and learning from incidents. These are made clear and remove the need to enforce punitive sanctions that can bring feelings of shame.

Personalised Responses – Students require personalised responses in line with SEND to support their personal development and wellbeing. Staff aim to respond in manner that is consistent to the ethos, values and beliefs of the school as outlined above. A consistent approach is fundamental to supporting all within the school and embedding a relational approach. Consistency is about ensuring fairness. This is not about everyone getting the same. It is about everyone getting what they need.

Key Strategies - Visual Zones of Regulation posters are displayed in classrooms and corridors.
Personalised regulation toolkits are explored with strategies outlined in student passports: fidget tools, ear defenders, noise-cancelling headphones, listening to music, weighted blankets, emotion cards.
Daily check-ins: Staff and students check their zones together at key transition points.
Zones language embedded in routine: "I can see you're in the Yellow Zone. Let's find a quiet space to help you feel safe again."

Relational Approach in Action - Daily Practice: Relational greetings at the start of the day. Regular check-ins to build connection and safety.
Adult availability: Designated "safe adults" for students identified as requiring this, visible and responsive. Safe spaces identified with students individually for regulation. Conversations to support understanding of social rules/expectations and repair after incidents.

The staff member identifies/highlights the behavior that is causing a concern to the student. The member of staff will suggest actions to allow the student to adjust their behavior. The student is given an opportunity to respond. In many cases this `will result in a positive outcome.

Where further intervention is required, the steps below are followed using restorative approaches. The focus is on relational repair and learning from incidents.

Restorative Process Steps:

1. **Regulate:** Provide an opportunity for student to calm. Staff member requests additional support if required.

2. **Reflect** (with scaffolding):
   - What happened?
   - What were you feeling?
   - What were you trying to communicate or get?
   - Who was affected?

3. **Repair:**
   - What can be done to make things better?
   - Natural consequence (if applicable).
   - Reaffirm the relationship ("We care about you and want to help.")

Staff Support and Consistency – Daily briefings (3 x Face 2 Face, 2 x remote), weekly relational practice debriefs for staff to reflect on incidents and emotional load. Training in trauma-informed care, restorative conversations, and Zones of Regulation.

Student support meetings run by SENDCo to review approaches regularly.

Staff Responsibilities

- Model calm and respectful interactions
- Use restorative questions (adapted for communication level)
- Follow up consistently with relational repair
- Use positive language and give 1:1 support where needed
- Maintain communication with tutor / Keyworker, therapist/s and parent/carer contact
- Reflect on the situation

General Reflection	Consider physical presentation	Consider emotional presentation	Outcome	Next steps

Record Keeping

In line with the school's Relational policy all incidents and subsequent actions must be logged by the actioning staff member as soon as possible on the school Management Information System (MIS). The date should be noted if different to the time recorded. Any reflection and repair should be actioned within the same day where possible, or within the next working day.

This will allow a formal record of incidents to be seen should there be an accumulative effect leading up to the need to move to further consequences for the persistent inability to respond to efforts made to support the student.

The tutors will review the behaviour and wellbeing logs for each student regularly with any concerns passed to a relevant member the Senior Leadership team. The Leadership team works closely to support the students as a team with students considered as at risk of inclusion and/or suspension (Temporary exclusion) having increased support in place. This will help to quickly identify students that may be at increased risk of further suspensions and possible permanent exclusion. The Senior Leadership team will then work together with parents/carers and the staff team to put in an intervention for that student.

Monitoring and Review

Use of emotion tracking systems to identify patterns in regulation needs. Restorative outcome intervention logs to track repair conversations and reduce repeat incidents.

Student voice feedback termly

Summary

This relational practice:
Prioritises relationships and emotional safety
Integrates communication support and regulation strategies
Promotes ownership, empathy, and natural repair
Creates a predictable, responsive, and inclusive school culture

Appendix 1

Natural Consequences - Natural consequences are not punishments but real-world outcomes of actions, supported by adults. They help children make links between behaviour and impact. We focus on relational repair and learning from incidents. The table below provides some examples to illustrate.

Behaviour	**Natural Consequence**	**Adult Role**
Breaking something	Help to fix it, tidy up, or choose an alternative tool next time.	Support emotional regulation and repair
Shouting in an inappropriate space/environment/ situation	Time in a quieter space to calm and rejoin when ready.	Offer alternative tools for expression; Reflect and co regulate
Refusing a task/instruction	Offered a break, task returned to when regulated, possibly with scaffolded support. Explore why felt unable to complete task/instructions Misses the opportunity to finish with class,	Arrange a time for the child to catch the work up. Validate feelings, scaffold, return to task

	may need to catch up later	
Pushing in line	Wait until end of the line next time, with adult coaching	Teach waiting using visual prompts and praise
Hurting someone (verbally or physically)	Using a calming strategy. Recognising that action was not OK Restorative conversation, Learning a new/different calming strategy.	Facilitate a Restorative conversation, Reviewing calming strategies. Further consequence – Inclusion/Exclusion
Abusive Language	Using a calming strategy. Learning a new/different calming strategy. Moving away from the situation	Recommendation of alternative expressions (square breathing, 10 counts, de-escalation techniques)
Stealing	Return or reparation of stolen item. Potential search of personal possessions. Rebuild of trust required: Recognising that action was not OK, signed agreement, appropriate reparation to affected party	Support child with their shame. Review actions or intent leading to theft. Support child in reparation exercise. Further consequence – Inclusion/Exclusion
Substance misuse	Potential search of personal possessions.	Review of understanding behind child's action.

	Rebuild of trust required: EG Recognising that action was not OK, signed agreement, appropriate reparation to affected party Possible conversation with the Police	Support child with their shame. Support child in reparation. Further consequence – Inclusion/Exclusion
Sexualised language and behaviours	Higher supervised monitoring in social times and classes. Greater expectation of a changed and responsible use of language. Possible conversation with the Police.	Awareness of Brooks Traffic Light System to gauge responsibility of language and actions. Support child with their shame Be a trusted adult to witness, be objective and support in cases of high-tariff interventions. Further consequence – Inclusion/Exclusion

Restorative Questions
Use visuals or simplified language if needed:

What happened?
What were you feeling?
Who was affected?
What can we do to make it right?
What will help next time?

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Addendum – Image taken from Guidance for developing relational practice and policy, Devon County Council



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