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Policy Lead: Director of Education

Approved By: Proprietor Body

Relational Behaviour Policy

1. Introduction and Rationale

At First Steps Together, we believe that positive, trusting relationships form the foundation of a thriving learning environment. This Relational Behaviour Policy outlines our commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive and nurturing school culture where connection, regulation and restoration are prioritised alongside high expectations. Our approach is rooted in empathy, understanding and respect, and aligns with statutory duties under the Children Act, Equality Act and SEND Code of Practice. We balance compassion with accountability, recognising both individual needs and the right of everyone to learn, feel safe and work within a respectful environment.

Whilst we seek first to understand behaviour before responding, this does not remove responsibility for behaviour or the need to maintain a safe, respectful and purposeful learning environment. We maintain high expectations for conduct, safety and learning, supporting pupils to recognise the impact of their actions, repair relationships where appropriate, and develop the confidence, skills and resilience needed to make positive choices in the future.

Our ACTIVE values underpin this approach, ensuring that every member of our community is encouraged to be respectful, responsible, inclusive and aspirational.

‘We respect each other, include everyone, support one another and encourage everyone to succeed.’

This policy is closely aligned with our First Steps Together ‘ACTIVE’ Values.

- AUTHENTIC – We act and communicate with authenticity and encourage everyone to be true to themselves.
- CREATIVE – We develop creative ways of working and inspire others to spark new ideas.
- TOGETHER – We work together and teach the value of collaboration and community
- INCLUSIVE – We embrace diversity and champion acceptance and respect
- VOCAL – We advocate and support people in finding and using their authentic voice
- EMPOWERING – We empower people to grow in confidence and take control of their own lives and choices.

Relational policies draw on:

- Attachment theory (Bowlby): Secure relationships foster emotional regulation and resilience.
- Trauma-informed practice: Recognises behaviour as communication of unmet needs.
- Restorative justice: Focuses on repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than punishment.

What does the research tell us?

- The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF, 2019) found that behaviourist approaches, when used in isolation, are limited in effectiveness. Relational and restorative models offer a more holistic and sustainable framework for behaviour support.
- Large-scale surveys and case studies showed that relational approaches improved academic outcomes, reduced bullying, and enhanced wellbeing in disadvantaged communities. (Relational Schools Foundation, validated by NfER.)
- Emotion Coaching and relational support improved attendance and emotional regulation. Staff reported stronger relationships and deeper understanding of barriers to learning. (McCluskey, G., & Smith, M. 2025).
- Emotions and relationships drive learning and are a fundamental part of how our brains develop

2. Policy Aims and Objectives

- Maintain high expectations for behaviour, conduct, attendance and engagement, ensuring a safe, respectful and purposeful learning environment for all.
- Recognise that every child matters by understanding individual strengths, needs and circumstances, whilst supporting pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and its impact on others.
- Provide personalised support that promotes positive behaviour, emotional wellbeing and self-regulation, enabling every pupil to engage successfully in learning.
- Build strong relationships and work in partnership with families, staff and external agencies to create a connected and supportive school community.
- Foster a culture of respect, kindness and inclusion where every member of the school community feels valued, safe and able to thrive.
- Support pupils to develop resilience, confidence and independence, equipping them with the skills to make positive choices, repair relationships where appropriate and learn from their experiences.
- Prepare pupils for the future by developing the social, emotional and behavioural skills needed to succeed in education, employment and life.

3. Core Values and Principles

Our relational approach is guided by values of empathy, respect, inclusion, and kindness. These principles are not confined to the classroom, they are consistently modelled and reinforced throughout the school day by all staff.

We adopt a whole-school approach that is trauma-informed and attachment-aware, recognising that every child's experience is unique. We hold high expectations for behaviour and personal development, and we support children in meeting these expectations through emotionally attuned relationships, co-regulation with trusted adults, consistent routines and guidance, reflection opportunities and the gradual development of independence and responsibility, upskilling their ability to self-regulate.

4. Understanding Behaviour

We understand behaviour as a form of communication. Challenging behaviour often reflects unmet needs, emotional distress, or developmental differences.

Staff are trained to respond with curiosity and compassion, recognising the impact of trauma, neurodiversity and individual circumstances. This understanding helps us support pupils in building resilience, expressing their emotions safely, develop alternative strategies and take responsibility for their actions where appropriate and empowering pupils to positive change.

5. Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour

Behaviour is strongest when based on respectful relationships. Positive behaviour is explicitly taught during PSHE and Citizenship, modelled through relational routines, emotional literacy interventions and reinforced through everyday interactions, routines and consistent expectations. Our Intervention team assess and support children's social and emotional development, ensuring that interventions are developmentally appropriate and tailored to individual needs. Staff support pupils to develop self-regulation skills through structured classrooms, promoting calmness and predictability, safety and trust for pupils, applying these relational practices consistently. We celebrate prosocial behaviour and encourage collaboration, peer support, and kindness.

These practices reinforce our ACTIVE values by helping children become respectful, responsible and emotionally healthy individuals, who contribute positively to their school and wider community.

Celebrating Success

We believe that recognising and celebrating positive behaviour, effort and achievement is essential to building a thriving school culture. Our celebration systems are designed to reinforce our ACTIVE values - to motivate pupils to contribute positively to school life.

We recognise and celebrate success in all its forms, including academic progress, effort, resilience, self-regulation, kindness, responsibility, attendance, positive relationships and contributions to the school and wider community. Celebrating these achievements helps pupils develop confidence, belonging and a positive sense of identity and purpose, as we also understand that progress looks different for every child and young person.

- **Points:** Students may earn points throughout the school day for demonstrating the school's ACTIVE values and expectations: positive behaviours such as kindness, responsibility, and cooperation, attendance, engagement in learning and contributions to the school and wider community. These points will go towards earning reward time on a Wednesday and or Friday each week. At the end of each term, the pupil with the highest number of Points in each class receives a certificate to acknowledge their consistent efforts.
- **Friday Celebrations:** Each week, pupils are nominated for Friday celebrations based on their embodiment of one or more ACTIVE values. These are celebrated in Friday assemblies, where pupils receive verbal recognition and a certificate.
- **Half termly attendance certificates** - Attendance and punctuality are recognised and celebrated as important achievements and indicators of engagement, belonging and success, not only for excellent attendance but also for significant improvements in attendance, punctuality and engagement, ensuring that individual progress and effort are valued and celebrated.
- **ACTIVE Display Boards:** Every classroom features an ACTIVE display board showcasing examples of excellent work and behaviour linked to the ACTIVE Drivers. These boards are updated regularly and serve as visual reminders of the values we promote.
- **Termly assemblies-** Providing opportunities to recognise pupils who have consistently demonstrated the ACTIVE values through their behaviour, learning and contributions to the school community.
- **End of Year Awards Ceremony:** At the end of the academic year, we host a special ceremony to celebrate exceptional achievements across all areas of school life. Awards are presented for academic excellence, personal growth, creativity, leadership, and consistent demonstration of ACTIVE values. Families are invited to attend, making it a joyful and affirming event for our whole community.

These celebration systems help foster a sense of pride, belonging, and motivation among pupils, reinforcing the importance of effort, kindness, and personal development in everyday school life.

6. Relational Practices in Action

All staff are expected to apply these relational practices consistently and proportionately across the school, to provide predictability, safety and trust for pupils. Staff will actively model and teach emotional literacy, problem-solving, conflict resolution and self-regulation skills through daily interactions and planned learning opportunities. The needs of an individual pupil will be balanced alongside the safety, wellbeing and learning of others within the school community.

Staff greet pupils warmly at the start of the day, use emotional check-ins and check-outs to build connection, maintaining predictable routines and responding to behaviour with curiosity, empathy and consistency, modelling calm and respectful communication, using low-arousal and de-escalation approaches, noticing and recognising success, facilitate restorative circles to strengthen community bonds.

The First Steps together approach informs our daily interactions, helping staff tune into children's emotional states and respond with attuned, supportive strategies. ***Connection before correction, curiosity before judgement, regulation before reasoning.***

Natural and logical consequences alongside positive reinforcement are used to guide behaviour, strengthen self-regulation, promote accountability and support the development of positive relationships and decision-making skills. Natural and logical consequences of behaviour are proportionate, educational and restorative responses which seek to maintain dignity, preserve relationships and support future success rather than punish or shame.

These routines help children feel safe, valued, and connected, supporting their development across all ACTIVE values.

7. Response to Dysregulated Behaviour

Staff will proactively identify and respond to early signs of dysregulation in order to prevent escalation and support successful regulation and reduce distress. When pupils become dysregulated, staff will respond in a calm, consistent and relational manner, supporting regulation whilst maintaining the safety, wellbeing and learning of all members of the school community. We use de-escalation strategies (emotional coaching, co regulation, access to a trusted adult, movement breaks, sensory strategies) and provide access to safe spaces and reflection rooms where appropriate and sensory tools to help children regulate emotions and return successfully to learning.

Staff are trained in trauma informed practice and the values of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural considerations.

Individualised behaviour support plans are co-created with pupils and families, ensuring that responses are tailored and respectful. These approaches promote resilience, encourage

expression, and support emotional recovery, while maintaining dignity and reinforcing community values.

8. Sanctions and Logical Consequences

While our primary focus is on promoting positive behaviour through connection, regulation, and repair, we recognise that clear boundaries and consistent responses are essential for maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment. Sanctions within our relational framework are not punitive, but rather restorative and educational in nature. They are designed to help pupils understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility, and make amends.

We categorise behaviours into two broad levels to guide our responses:

Amber Behaviours (Minor)

Amber behaviours are low-level disruptions or relational missteps that may interfere with learning or social harmony. These include:

- Calling out or interrupting learning
- Not following instructions
- Mild disrespect or unkindness, inappropriate language directed at others
- Disrupting others' learning
- Refusal to engage in learning tasks
- Minor playground disagreements

These behaviours are typically addressed through relational strategies such as gentle reminders of expectations, redirection and support, emotional coaching, seating adjustment, and restorative conversations. Logical consequences may include:

- Time to reflect in a calm space
- Reparation tasks (e.g. helping tidy up after disruption)
- Completion of missed learning or work at a later opportunity (During reward time on a Wednesday or Friday)
- Restorative dialogue with affected peers or adults
- Support with emotional regulation

Red Behaviours (Significant)

Red behaviours are more serious incidents that may cause harm, distress, or significant disruption. These may result in immediate actions to maintain safety and protect learning, followed by logical consequences aimed at restoring relationships, repairing harm and supporting positive future choices.

These behaviours include:

- Physical aggression or threatening behaviour

- Throwing objects or deliberate damage to property
- Bullying or targeted unkindness
- Persistent defiance or refusal to follow adult direction
- Serious disruption to learning
- Misuse of technology and equipment
- Unsafe behaviour that endangers self or others
- Repeated red incidents

These behaviours require a more structured response, often involving senior staff and parents/carers.

Logical consequences are applied with empathy and consistency, and may include:

- Restorative meetings with staff and peers
- Temporary removal from a situation to regulate and reflect in a calm room or the RESET room
- Reparation activities that promote accountability
- Review or update of individual support plans, multi-agency support where appropriate
- Completion of missed learning and restorative discussion regarding impact on others
- In rare cases, internal or fixed-term exclusion, in line with statutory guidance

All sanctions are framed within our relational and restorative ethos. We avoid shaming or punitive measures and instead focus on helping children learn from their mistakes, rebuild trust, and re-engage with the school community. Staff use the trauma informed approach to guide their responses, ensuring that even in moments of challenge, pupils feel safe, understood, and supported.

9. Repair and Restoration

We prioritise repair over punishment. Restorative conversations provide opportunities for reflection, accountability, and reconnection. Pupils are supported in making amends and rebuilding trust with peers and adults. These moments are framed as opportunities for growth, helping children learn from their experiences and strengthen their emotional wellbeing. Through this process, we reinforce the values of respect.

Relate–Rupture–Repair: Building Strong Relationships in Our School

At our school, we believe that strong relationships are the foundation of a happy, safe, and successful learning environment. The *Relate–Rupture–Repair* approach helps children and adults understand how to build, maintain, and mend relationships when things go wrong.

Relate: Connecting with Care

- We take time to build trust and connection with each other.
- Adults model kindness, respect, and empathy in every interaction.
- We listen carefully, speak kindly, and show interest in each other's thoughts and feelings.

- Relationships are nurtured through play/positive interactions, shared experiences, and positive communication.

Rupture: When Things Go Wrong

- Sometimes, relationships are disrupted this might be through a disagreement, hurt feelings, or misunderstanding.
- Ruptures are a normal part of human interaction and not something to fear.
- We help children recognise when a rupture has happened and understand how it affects others.

Everyone makes mistakes, and we recognise that behaviour is often a form of communication. When expectations are not met, we work together to understand what has happened, repair relationships, and make positive choices for the future.

Repair: Making Things Right

- Repairing a rupture means taking responsibility, showing empathy, and working to rebuild trust.
- Adults guide children through reflection, apology, and reconciliation.
- We encourage children to express their feelings, listen to others, and find ways to move forward together.
- Repair is not about punishment, it's about learning, healing, and growing stronger together.

This approach supports emotional development, resilience, and a culture of respect. It helps children learn that relationships can be repaired and that everyone deserves a chance to make things right.

Following significant incidents, pupils will be supported to successfully reintegrate into learning, relationships and the wider school community.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

At First Steps Together, we believe that everyone has a role to play in creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. All members of the school community are expected to contribute to a safe, respectful and inclusive environment and uphold the values and expectations.

Student Code of conduct

Authentic - We are honest, respectful and true to ourselves by:

- Being honest about our actions and taking responsibility for our behaviour.
- Treating others with kindness, dignity and respect.

- Expressing our thoughts and feelings appropriately and respectfully.
- Learning from our mistakes and recognising that everyone is continually learning and growing.
- Being proud of who we are while respecting the individuality of others.

Creative - We approach learning and challenges with curiosity by:

- Trying new ideas and approaches to solve problems.
- Engaging positively in learning and making the most of opportunities.
- Showing resilience when things are difficult and persevering through challenges.
- Celebrating effort, progress and achievement in ourselves and others.
- Using our strengths and talents to contribute positively to school life.

Together - We build strong relationships by:

- Working cooperatively with others in lessons and throughout the school day.
- Helping others to feel welcomed, valued and included.
- Supporting our classmates and celebrating each other's successes.
- Following adult guidance and contributing positively to our classroom and school community.
- Working with staff, families and peers to repair relationships and move forward positively when difficulties arise.

Inclusive - We value and respect everyone by:

- Treating all people fairly, regardless of their background, identity, ability or beliefs.
- Listening to and respecting the views, experiences and perspectives of others.
- Challenging bullying, discrimination and unkind behaviour by seeking support from a trusted adult.
- Helping to create an environment where everyone feels safe, respected and able to participate.
- Recognising that every child matters and that everyone has something valuable to contribute.

Vocal - We use our voices positively by:

- Speaking respectfully and listening carefully to others.

- Asking for help when we need it.
- Sharing our ideas, opinions and concerns appropriately.
- Speaking up if we are worried about ourselves or someone else.
- Participating positively in restorative conversations and finding solutions that help repair relationships.

Empowering - We make positive choices that help ourselves and others by:

- Taking responsibility for our learning and behaviour.
- Developing the confidence, resilience and independence needed for the future.
- Making choices that keep ourselves and others safe.
- Supporting others to succeed and encouraging them to reach their potential.
- Reflecting on our actions, learning from our experiences and striving to be the best version of ourselves every day.

Taking Responsibility - When things go wrong, we are expected to:

- Be honest about what has happened.
- Listen respectfully to the perspectives of others.
- Reflect on the impact of our actions.
- Take responsibility where appropriate.
- Engage positively in restorative conversations and agreed actions.
- Work with staff, families and peers to repair relationships, rebuild trust and make positive choices in the future.

By living our ACTIVE values every day, we help create a school community where everyone feels safe, respected, included, empowered and ready to achieve their full potential.

By following this Code of Conduct, pupils help create a school community where everyone feels safe, valued, respected, and empowered to succeed.

Governors and proprietors: Responsible for ensuring appropriate oversight of behaviour, safeguarding and statutory compliance, monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the relational policy through regular reviews and reporting, uphold accountability for inclusive and emotionally informed practice, and advocate for relational values in governance decisions.

School Leaders: Responsible for promoting and maintaining a positive relational culture, supportive staff in the consistent implementation of this policy and ensuring that behaviour systems remain effective, equitable and aligned with the school's values and statutory responsibilities. Champion the First Steps Together Active values and ethos through their leadership, decision-making and daily interactions, and provide strategic oversight and support for staff development and wellbeing.

Staff: Model, promote and reinforce the ACTIVE values through their daily interactions, teaching and relationships with pupils, creating a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment, respond with empathy, and uphold consistency.

Pupils: Uphold the ACTIVE values, engage positively in learning, treat others with kindness and respect, contribute positively to the school community.

Parents/Carers: Collaborate with staff, reinforce relational values at home, contribute to support plans and maintain open and constructive communication to promote positive outcomes for their child.

11. Training and Professional Development

Staff will be supported through ongoing professional development, reflective practice and supervision to ensure confidence, consistency and wellbeing when responding to behaviour and supporting pupils with complex needs, ensuring staff are equipped to implement relational practices effectively.

All new staff will receive induction and onboarding training in the school's relational behaviour approach, safeguarding procedures and implementation of this policy prior to working independently with pupils. Training includes trauma-informed approaches, SEND and neurodiversity, emotional literacy, restorative communication, and inclusive strategies. Staff are supported through supervision and reflective practice, and external expertise is sought when needed. This commitment to growth reflects our aspiration to be a learning community that prioritises wellbeing and inclusion.

Staff will receive training in TeamTeach positive handling and restrictive physical intervention approaches in line with school policy and statutory guidance. Additional training and refresher sessions may be provided following significant incidents, changes in legislation or the identification of emerging training needs, to ensure consistency and confidence across the group, in line with changes in our pupils' needs. Further details available In the Physical Intervention Policy

12. Inclusion and Equity

We are committed to equity and inclusion for all pupils.

Our schools are committed to creating an inclusive, equitable environment where every child and young person feels safe, valued, respected and able to succeed. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and that every pupil brings unique strengths, experiences, needs and barriers to learning. We understand that children may require different levels or types of support to achieve the same outcomes, and therefore we do not believe that treating everyone identically is always fair. Instead, we adopt an equitable approach by making reasonable adjustments, providing personalised support and responding to individual needs in a way that promotes dignity, belonging and success. Our relational approach is underpinned by high expectations, unconditional positive regard and a commitment to understanding the reasons behind behaviour. Through strong relationships, restorative practice and trauma-informed principles, we aim to remove barriers to participation, celebrate diversity and ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, SEMH needs and other vulnerabilities, can thrive within our school community.

Our practices are culturally competent and anti-discriminatory, ensuring that every pupil feels safe, valued, respected -seen, heard- and able to contribute positively to the school and wider community.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness and implementation of this policy will be monitored by school leaders to ensure consistency, impact and alignment with the school's values and statutory responsibilities. The impact of this policy is regularly reviewed through wellbeing indicators, behaviour data, and feedback from pupils, staff, and families. We monitor progress in emotional regulation, relational development, and community cohesion.

Pupil voice is central to our evaluation process, and we use these insights to refine our approach and ensure it continues to meet the needs of our school community.

Termly reporting to governors and proprietors will include analysis of behaviour trends, attendance, suspensions if applicable, safeguarding themes, use of restrictive practices, the effectiveness of interventions and support strategies.

14. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Attendance Policy

Anti-bullying Policy

SEND Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

Restrictive Physical Intervention

Exclusions Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Accessibility Plan