



# Learning Centre CIC

## RELATIONSHIPS AND BEHAVIOUR REGULATION POLICY

*Adapted from Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton and Hove Schools (2018)*

### **Strengths-based working: A relationship-based behaviour regulation policy**

**“It was a place where children and teenagers could rediscover the potential of their humanity.”**  
(Quoted by Steve Silberman in ‘Neurotribes’)

### **Rainbow Horses vision statement**

#### ***Our Vision:***

- To create a horse- and animal-focussed centre of excellence that leads the way in showing how valuing children and young people just as they are, validating their experiences and sharing joy in their passions can transform their lives.

#### ***Our Mission***

- To create a space where autistic and traumatised children and young people feel safe to heal, learn and thrive on their own terms and are enabled to move forwards into fulfilling and happy lives.
- To model our values in the way we work with horses, and other animals: allowing choice and respecting diversity.
- To support families in accessing appropriate support for their children and to work with schools and other educational provision to provide the best learning environment for each child’s individual needs.

#### ***Our Values:***

Child-led, love, radical compassion, playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy, safety in relationships and the environment, being mindful, mistakes as learning opportunities, trauma-informed, attachment aware, evidence-based approach informed by latest research in neuroscience and child development.

Additional core values suggested by the staff

Connection  
Celebration of uniqueness  
Compassionate  
Empowering people to be individuals  
Kindness  
Respect

Freedom  
Integrity  
Empathy  
Playfulness  
Partnership  
Authenticity  
Striving for excellence

As well as having an in-depth knowledge and wide experience of **autism**, especially the **demand avoidant** profile, we use a range of relationship-based approaches including **P.A.C.E** (Dan Hughes <http://www.danielhughes.org/p.a.c.e..html>), **trauma-informed** practices(<https://www.traumainformedschools.co.uk/home/what-is-a-trauma-informed-school>), an awareness of **attachment issues** and how they impact on children and young people, a **person-centred** approach that has the core conditions of **empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard** (Carl Rogers <https://www.the-pca.org.uk/about/what-is-it.html>) and active listening (<https://www.educationcorner.com/active-listening-skills-education.html>)

This policy reflects our ethos which sees behaviour as communication, whether from children or animals. We work to create safety and to connect with each child as an individual wherever they are and however they are presenting. We try to understand what need the child (or animal) is communicating through their behaviour, and to meet that need wherever possible, or to communicate why we are not able to meet the need.

We do not view difficult behaviour as deliberate, something to be punished (or rewarded) and we are aware that behaviourist approaches do not work in the long term and can be traumatising for some, especially neurodivergent children and young people. We use psychoeducation, observation of horse behaviour, sensory integration, mindfulness techniques and the zones of regulation to help children and young people learn to understand and regulate their behaviour.

Our values incorporate these three key ideas of the relationship-based approach to inclusion philosophy:

1. **Unmet Need:** Behaviour communicates an unmet need. Therefore, to change behaviour, we must respond to the unmet need.
2. **Individual Influences:** Children's behaviour cannot be fully understood in isolation, without considering their individual influences.
3. **Relationship-based, restorative approaches** offer an evidence-based alternative to zero-tolerance behaviour management systems.

Recognising the unmet need, naming it and meeting it where possible through 1 to 1 working strong relationships are built between staff and learners – *seen, safe, secure, soothed*.

Rainbow Horses seeks to create an environment in which individuals can feel safe, accepted and understood. Our child led approach allows learners to follow their interests and be supported to understand, recognise and name their emotions. Staff develop close relationships with learners and seek to help them understand their behaviour and responses by naming them and supporting them to develop an understanding of the link between thoughts and feelings and behaviour.

Through really knowing our learners, we can help them to understand themselves and their responses to a range of situations.

When dysregulation begins to occur, staff seek to de-escalate the situation through a range of research based strategies, including PACE, use of the zones of regulation and, as a last resort, holding or restraining as approved by BILD in order to maintain safety for all involved.

After any occasion where a child or young person has been dysregulated we work to repair the relationship using restorative practices

**'Restoring relationships and community is central to restoring well-being.'**

*Bessel Van der Kolk M. D.*

### **1) Policy Statement**

This policy was based on guidance provided by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) Local Authority and has included input from all members of staff. It will be shared with learners, commissioners, parents and carers and directors for further development.

### **2) Policy Scope**

This policy is for all staff, learners, parents and carers, directors, visitors and partner agencies working within the setting and provides guidelines and procedures as to how our provision supports and responds to behaviour and emotional distress.

### **3) Policy Aims and Objectives**

Our setting is committed to supporting the physical and mental well-being of all staff, learners, parents/carers and our animal partners

We work towards this in everything we do: by supporting staff through regular supervision and mindfulness practices so that they are able to remain regulated during moments that can challenge; by modelling relationships that respect all people and animals, and by maintaining a positive attitude to each young person however complex their needs.

Through this we aim to provide an ethos, environment and curriculum that supports the social, emotional and mental health of the whole community.

We work therapeutically with young people and animals to help them learn to understand themselves and how they work best. We believe this is done most effectively by building strong relationships with individual learners and supporting them to interact positively with the animals. We see all behaviour as unmet need and the first response to any dysregulation would be an attempt to discover what this might be.

We provide unconditional positive regard and respect for the people, animals and environment in which we work.

It is acknowledged that members of the community may have very different parenting experiences and views on behaviour. However, the aim of our Behaviour Regulation Policy is to bring us all together to adhere to some basic key principles and practices that reflect our ethos.

### **Policy Aims**

- To create an environment where children and young people feel safe to explore their thoughts and emotions
- To demonstrate that each individual is accepted exactly as they are and that their behaviour is not seen as a reflection of their character
- To maintain an attitude that reflects the inherent goodness of each individual
- To use a relational approach to discipline as opposed to a behaviourist approach.

*'Too often we forget that discipline really means to teach, not to punish.*

*A disciple is a student, not a recipient of behavioural consequences.'*

*Dr. Dan J. Siegel*

### **4) Policy Links**

This Behaviour Regulation Policy links to the following other policies we hold:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Physical Intervention/Coping with Risky Behaviour Policy
- Online e-safety and cyber-bullying policy
- Child running-off policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff handbook

### **5) Roles and Responsibilities**

We have a **shared responsibility** to promote a relationship-based approach which applies to all relationships that occur in our setting.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>All Staff</b>	<i>Staff work on a one to one basis with each learner. Staff build strong positive relationships with students which act as the foundation for any interaction. This strong relationship makes the adult working with a learner at any time the best person to recognise unmet need.</i>
<b>Team working</b>	<i>Other adults within the setting may be able to make a positive contribution to recognising unmet need, and staff work as a team to facilitate this.</i>
<b>Management</b>	<i>Sue Coombes, as centre manager, may become involved in making decisions about the best way forward to help a learner who is struggling. Individual learners need individual strategies, and we recognise that no one approach will suit all children. We use a range of research-based options, including restraint, in line with BILD guidelines when none of the strategies have worked and to keep everyone safe from harm.</i>
<b>The Community around each child/young person</b>	<i>Parents and carers, wider families and teachers as well as local authority workers and health professionals may be part of the journey to meet unmet needs, and Rainbow Horses works with them in whatever way is most appropriate to support the learner.</i>

## 6) The role of Nottinghamshire County Council

All teams within the Education Learning and Skills division of NCC have been involved in developing and adopting the Understanding Behaviour in Schools Toolkit – A Relationship-Based Approach to Inclusion.

### 7) Details of Our Approach

Please refer to 'Understanding Behaviour in Schools: A relationship-based approach to inclusion'. We use a strengths-based approach including relationship-based practice.

This is not really about what we do but *how* we do it, everything we do starts with relationships – building, maintaining and repairing relationships.

Key models and approaches include:

- Responding in the Moment (Notts EPS 2020)
- Emotion Coaching  
[www.emotioncoachinguk.com](http://www.emotioncoachinguk.com)
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Need (1954)
- The whole school approach to behaviour regulation is in line with the Education Endowment Foundation recommendations on Improving Behaviour in Schools (2019).
- P.A.C.E.
- Trauma-informed practice

We acknowledge that our learners will often find it difficult to recognise or name their emotions, and we have created a supportive culture where learners are encouraged to examine their behaviour, their responses and their thoughts and feelings.

This may be through observation and reflection on animal behaviour to allow exploration of feelings and behaviour without the potential of creating shame in the individual. We also teach our learners how the brain and body work together to create feelings when they feel under threat.

We will always try to find a way forward so that a learner may safely attend Rainbow Horses. This may mean shorter sessions for a period of time, but the aim will always be for inclusion and full attendance.

We understand **the link** between emotions and learning ([EEF](#)) and our aim is always to provide the psychoeducation that helps our learners to understand how their brain and body work together to create thoughts and feelings that can lead to unwanted behaviour and how to find ways to change their behaviour in response to situations they find stressful.



### **How the school supports staff well-being and reflection**

Rainbow Horses acknowledges that providing emotional and professional support for staff is vital to their wellbeing, as well as to help manage stress and secondary trauma, and to reduce the likelihood of staff burnout.

Each day begins with a staff mindfulness session and ample time is provided at the start and end of each day to discuss events, strategies and specific learners.

Staff supervision is provided which supports the development of reflective practice, a key protective factor for staff wellbeing. This takes place each half term with a two hour session led by a specialist clinical psychologist specifically for staff wellbeing.

Weekly staff meetings also allow time for reflection and learning to take place.

<b>Date policy reviewed:</b>	<b>September 2023</b>
<b>Date of next review:</b>	September 2024
<b>Managing Director's signature:</b>	

