Positive Relationships and Engagement Support Local Procedures

Aurora Cedars School

Please refer to Main Policy A4 Positive Relationships and Engagement Support Policy

1. Introduction

At Aurora Cedars School, our approach to behaviour, relationships and engagement is relational, restorative and trauma informed. We align our practice with the Aurora Positive Relationships and Engagement Support Policy and embed the PBS framework through:

- Thrive – to understand and support social–emotional development
- Elklan – to support communication and interaction
- The PACE approach – Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy
- PRICE training – to ensure any physical intervention is safe, lawful, and a last resort

Our staff are trained to protect the rights, dignity and wellbeing of children in a caring environment. Every interaction between adults and pupils has the potential to build trust, repair rupture and restore readiness to learn.

We understand behaviour as communication, often shaped by a pupil's life experiences and nervous system (fight, flight, freeze, fawn). For many of our pupils, safety has not always been reliably available. Protective strategies such as withdrawal, control, defiance, humour, charm or avoidance are understood as adaptive survival strategies, not "bad behaviour".

Our role is to understand and respond to the need beneath the behaviour, not simply to remove the behaviour. When pupils feel consistently safe, seen and understood, they can take the risks needed for learning and relationships.

We therefore:

- Prioritise felt safety before challenge
- Seek connection before correction
- Balance high structure with high nurture
- Aim for consistency without rigidity, using professional judgement

We recognise that meaningful behaviour change happens at four interconnected levels:

- Practice – what adults do in the moment to co-regulate and repair
- Process – how school systems respond, contain and follow up
- Relationship – how trust is rebuilt over time
- Culture – how our shared values are lived and felt across the community

These local procedures describe what this looks like in day-to-day practice at Cedars

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Culture / Model of Practice

At Cedars, our culture is the soil from which all practice grows. Staff are expected to embody the following principles in all interactions:

Relational and restorative stance

- See behaviour through a trauma- and attachment-informed lens.
- Prioritise relationship and co-regulation over control.
- Use restorative questions and conversations to repair harm and restore connection.

Every adult as a co-regulator

- Use calm tone, body language and predictable routines to support regulation.
- Offer scaffolds (visuals, prompts, choices) rather than relying on verbal instruction alone.
- Notice early signs of dysregulation and intervene at the lowest level necessary.

Consistency without rigidity

- Uphold the Cedars Core Expectations (see below) in every space.
- Adjust expectations to need, not to mood or preference.
- Use professional curiosity rather than personalisation ("What's happened?" not "What's wrong with you?").

Balancing structure and nurture

- Provide clear boundaries, routines and consequences that are logical and explained, not punitive.
- Actively build warm, attuned, dependable relationships with pupils and families.
- Engage in reflective practice (debriefs, supervision, team discussion) to learn from incidents and refine support

2. Local expectations/routines/rules

Our rules are expressed through the **Cedars Core Expectations**. These are explicitly taught, modelled and revisited with pupils.

The Cedars Core Expectations

1. **We are safe**
    a. We look after ourselves, each other and our environment.
    b. We use safe hands, safe feet and safe language.
    c. We follow instructions designed to keep people safe.
2. **We are ready**
    a. We arrive on time and go to our agreed learning space.
    b. We bring what we need for learning (with support as required).

   c. We listen, follow routines and engage with learning at the level we can manage that day.

3. **We are kind**
   a. We treat others with respect in what we say and do.
   b. We notice and name kindness and effort in ourselves and others.
   c. We challenge unkind behaviour and language safely and with adult support.
4. **We repair**
   a. When things go wrong, we **own our part**, with adult support where needed.
   b. We use restorative processes to repair relationships and, where possible, any damage.
   c. We learn from what happened and agree what we'll do differently next time.

2a. Mobile Phones

Principle: Mobile phones and wearable tech must not be kept with stduents, compromise safeguarding, or interfere with relationships and engagement.

Core approach

- Pupils do not use mobile phones or smart devices during the school day.
- Where pupils bring devices to school, they must be handed in on arrival and stored securely.
- Devices are returned at the end of the school day (or at agreed times for transport needs).

Procedures

- On arrival, a member of staff, either reception/form tutor/TA:
  - Greets the pupil and reminds them to hand in their device.
  - Places the device in a clearly labelled, secure storage system.
- If a pupil is seen using a device during the day:
  - Staff calmly remind them of the agreement and request the device.
  - If the pupil cannot hand it over, staff follow de-escalation steps and seek support from a senior leader if needed. This will be a call home to parents to ask for their support in the safe handing over of phone
  - If this is not acknowledged by the student, we request that the parents come to school to collect the device so we can ensure the safeguarding of themselves and other students.

3. Reward/Celebration system

At Cedars we understand that for many pupils, relationships can feel frightening as well as rewarding, especially where there is a history of disorganised attachment or trauma. Our reward system therefore focuses on:

- Connection, not control
- Intrinsic motivation, not transactional compliance
- Belonging and recognition, not competition

We aim for pupils to experience their relationship with school, with themselves and with others as rewarding in its own right.

Day-to-day recognition

- Ongoing verbal praise that is specific ("You kept going even though that was hard") rather than vague.
- Non-verbal affirmation – smiles, thumbs up, positive notes home.
- In-class recognition – displaying work, "shout-outs", jobs of responsibility.

Structured recognition

- Star of the Week (or equivalent) in each class/tutor group, linked to:
    - Effort and perseverance
    - Kindness and contribution
    - Progress towards personal goals (not just academic outcomes)
- Celebration boards/displays showing learning, acts of kindness and personal achievements.
- Pupil's Choice activities, where classes earn shared time for a chosen relational/learning activity (e.g. games session, creative project, outdoor learning).

End of term celebration trips and special events

- Carefully planned celebrations, trips and special activities are used to:
    - Celebrate sustained engagement and progress over time
    - Strengthen relationships and shared memories
    - Provide experiences some pupils may not otherwise access
- Criteria for participation are clear, fair and communicated in advance, with reasonable adjustments for pupils with high needs. Where required, some students may require on-site activites in line with their PBSP

Routes to reward are always explained in terms of Cedars Core Expectations and relational engagement, not as simple "if you do X, you get Y" transactions.

4. Consequences

Cedars operates in line with the Aurora Positive Relationships and Engagement Support Policy, using natural and logical consequences rather than punitive sanctions.

Please refer to:
Positive Relationships and Engagement Support Policy – Sections 6.2 to 6.2.1 (Rewards and Consequences).

Locally, this means:

- Consequences are:
    - Linked to the behaviour (e.g. repairing damage, apologising, re-doing work)
    - Explained in relational terms ("We need to put this right so people can feel safe again")

- Delivered calmly, without shaming or humiliation
- We avoid consequences that:
  - Are arbitrary or purely punitive
  - Undermine relationships or a pupil's sense of safety
  - Remove access to key regulation or support (e.g. taking away all break times as standard)

A typical response sequence might include:

1. In-the-moment co-regulation and limit setting by the class team.
2. Short, supported time out or change of space, as agreed in the pupil's plan.
3. Restorative conversation supported by a key adult.
4. Natural repair – e.g. tidying, writing a note, repairing relationships, re-learning missed work.
5. Increased support or review of plan (Thrive action plan, risk assessment, individual support plan).
6. Family contact and review meeting where patterns persist or risk is higher.

Where behaviour poses significant risk, we follow the Aurora policy on risk assessment, restrictive practices (PRICE) and safeguarding, and convene MDT support as required.

And where the group dynamic itself is a key factor in the ongoing dysregulation, the whole team around the child will consider internal group changes/1:1 support/clinical intervention and - as a last resort - placement change will be considered.

5. Relationships and Engagement Support

At Cedars we are proud to have onsite support from:

- Clinical Psychologist
- Assistant Psychologists
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Therapy Assistants
- EKLAN trained staff
- Qualified THRIVE practitioners
- Level 3 Teaching Assistants for Inclusion

This team supports the SENDCo to offer a clinically rich delivery to meet the needs of our students with an EHCP and support the best interests of student welfare.

Cedars provides a layered system of support to help pupils build and sustain positive relationships and engagement with learning.

Key adults and class teams

- Every pupil has an identified key adult/form tutor who:
  - Oversees day-to-day wellbeing and engagement
  - Is a consistent point of contact for the family

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    - Coordinates information from other professionals
- Class teams use the Thrive, Elklan and PACE frameworks to build safe, trusting relationships.

Pastoral and inclusion support

- Pastoral leaders and inclusion staff (e.g. SENDCo, Assistant Heads for each phase) provide:
    - Additional check-ins and mentoring
    - Small-group or 1:1 intervention for emotional regulation and social skills
    - Support around attendance, punctuality and reintegration after absence or exclusion elsewhere

Clinical and MDT input

In line with Aurora's model, pupils may have access to:

- Clinical/therapy input (e.g. psychology, counselling, OT, SALT) according to assessed need
- Multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings to coordinate plans around complex pupils
- Support in developing bespoke regulation plans, behaviour support plans and risk assessments

Family Engagement

- Staff work in partnership with families through:
    - Regular contact (phone, email, meetings)
    - Joint problem-solving and review of plans
    - Support to access other services where needed (e.g. Early Help, CAMHS, social care, community support)

The aim of all support is to increase the pupil's sense of safety, connection and competence, and gradually build independence and self-advocacy.

6. Behaviour Curriculum/Lifelong Learning

We treat behaviour, relationships and regulation as a curriculum in their own right, not just as something to manage.

This is delivered through:

- PSHE / RSE / Thrive:
    - Relationships, boundaries and consent
    - Managing feelings, stress and change
    - Online safety and digital citizenship
- Preparation for Adulthood (PfA):
    - Self-advocacy and understanding your needs
    - Working with others, conflict resolution and teamwork
    - Managing transitions to college, work or training
- Embedded social-emotional learning:

- Use of Thrive action plans and targets within daily lessons
- Teaching of regulation strategies (breathing, movement, sensory tools)
- Modelling and practising restorative conversations and problem-solving

- Communication support (Elklan):
  - Explicit teaching of how to express needs, worries and preferences safely
  - Visual supports and scaffolded language for feelings and choices

Pupils are given multiple, repeated opportunities to rehearse and generalise these skills across different contexts and phases.

7. Quiet spaces

Cedars maintains a range of quiet and low-stimulus spaces for pupils who need time to regulate or reflect, in line with the main Aurora policy.

Locally, this includes:

- Calm/quiet spaces available in school used for supported regulation, not as isolation.
- Low-stimulus areas and “calm corners” within classrooms or shared spaces.
- Access to outdoor or sensory spaces where appropriate and risk-assessed.

Use of quiet spaces is:

- Planned and personalised in pupils’ support plans and risk assessments.
- Supervised or monitored to ensure safety and connection (pupils are not simply “sent away”).
- Framed as a supportive offer (“Let’s take a break”) rather than a punishment.

8. Transition

We recognise that transitions are high-risk times for many pupils and need careful planning.

New pupils and admissions

- Staged induction which may include:
  - Pre-visits and tours at quieter times
  - “Meet the key adults” sessions
  - Pupil-friendly materials explaining Cedars Core Expectations and routines
- Gradual build-up of time in school where needed, with a clear reintegration plan.

Within-school transitions

- Clear routines for moving between lessons, spaces and staff.

- Visual timetables, countdowns and advance warning of changes.
- Key adults support known high-risk transitions (e.g. start of day, after lunch).

Phase transitions (e.g. into KS3/KS4)

- Structured transition programmes for moving between phases, including:
    - Visits to new areas and staff
    - Joint meetings with current and future staff and families
    - Review and updating of EHCP and plans to reflect new expectations

Year 11 and Beyond

- Explicit Preparations for Adulthood curriculum (Pathways)
- Supported visits to colleges or placements.
- Shared information and coordinated planning with new providers, with pupil and family involvement

9. Communication

We see families and carers as **partners** in supporting behaviour and relationships.

Regular positive contact

- Key adults aim to provide regular positive feedback (e.g. weekly), tailored to family preference (phone, email, written note, online system).
- Positive achievements and engagement are shared, not just concerns.

Incident-related contact

- Where there has been a significant incident (e.g. injury, use of PRICE, serious distress, high-level damage, safeguarding concern), a member of staff will:
    - Contact parents/carers on the same day,
    - Share a factual account of what happened,
    - Explain any immediate consequences and next steps,
    - Agree how the incident and any follow-up will be fed back to the pupil at an appropriate time.

Ongoing concerns

- Where there are emerging patterns (attendance, engagement, peer conflict, repeated dysregulation), staff arrange a review meeting with families to jointly problem-solve.
- Involvement of MDT or external agencies is discussed and agreed where appropriate.

Formal reporting

- Families receive regular updates through reports, review meetings and EHCP reviews, which include information on social-emotional development, regulation and relationships, not just academic progress.

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10. Additional training

In addition to the training outlined in the main Aurora Positive Relationships and Engagement Support Policy, Cedars prioritises further CPD to sustain our relational, trauma-informed approach.

This may include (according to role and need):

- Thrive practitioner training and refreshers.
- Elklan communication training for staff working with pupils with SLCN.
- Training in PACE and related attachment-informed approaches.
- Advanced PRICE modules (e.g. for key staff) and regular refreshers.
- Autism and sensory processing training tailored to our cohort.
- Training on disorganised attachment, developmental trauma and dissociation.
- Restorative practice training for staff leading restorative meetings.
- Training on equality, diversity and inclusion, including anti-racism and LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- Reflective practice and supervision skills for leaders and key staff.

Participation in training is recorded, and learning is brought back into daily practice through briefings, debriefs, coaching and supervision.

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