



BENSHAM MANOR *School*

Relationships Policy

Last reviewed: September 2026



Date	Review Date	Behaviour Lead	Nominated Governor
September 2026	September 2027	Robin Barwick	Sheila Batchelor

Our school is invested in supporting the very best possible relational health between

- Child and school staff
- Child and child
- School staff
- School staff and Senior Leads
- School staff and external agencies
- Parent and child
- Parent and school staff

1. Protect

- Bensham Manor has increased 'safety cues' in all aspects of the school day, being greeted at the gate in the morning and meet and greet at the start of each lesson.
- Bensham Manor staff have been trained in 'PACE' modes of interaction: being warm, empathic, playful and curious (this has been proven to shift children out of flight / fight / freeze positions).
- Bensham Manor staff ensure that interactions with children are socially engaging not socially defensive, in order to decrease chances of children relating defensively (fight / flight freeze).
- Bensham Manor is a calm environment for our children, we have a commitment to cease using harsh voices, shouting, put-downs, criticisms and shaming (proven to be damaging psychologically and neurologically).
- Bensham Manor staff will 'interactively repair' the occasions when they themselves move into defensiveness.
- At Bensham Manor, we have implemented the use of pedagogic interventions that help staff to get to know children better on an individual basis such as "I wish my teacher knew". This is key to enabling children to feel safe enough to want to talk, if they so wish, about painful life experiences, which are interfering with their ability to learn and the quality of life.
- All vulnerable children have easy access on a daily basis to at least one named emotionally available adult, and these children know when and where to find that adult. If the child does not wish to connect with this adult, an alternative person is found.
- Bensham Manor staff adjust expectations around vulnerable children to correspond with their developmental capabilities and experience traumatic stress. This will include removing vulnerable and traumatised children in a kind and non-judgmental way from situations they are not managing well (such as the use of quieter, calmer playgrounds such as the table tennis area and the outdoor gym and areas such as the blue booths in the lower hall).
- Provision for children of a clear, confidential and non-shaming system of self-referral for help / talk time.
- The staff of Bensham Manor will be nurtured in such a way that they feel truly valued and emotionally regulated enough to be able to interact throughout the school day with social engagement rather than defensiveness.

2. Relate

- All of Bensham Manor staff have been trained in emotional coaching and in relating to children in terms of the four key relational needs for secure attachment: affect attunement, empathy, soothing and containment.
- There is a whole school commitment to enabling children to see themselves, their relationships and the world more positively, rather through a lens of threat, danger or self-blame.
- There are relational opportunities for vulnerable children with emotionally available adults at Bensham

Manor school to enable them to make the shift from 'blocked trust' (not feeling psychologically safe with anyone) to trust, and from self-help to 'help seeking'.

3. Regulate

- The implementation of interventions designed to bring down stress hormone levels (from toxic to tolerable) in vulnerable children, enabling them to feel calm, soothed and safe. This is to support learning, quality of life and protect against stress-induced physical and mental illness, now and in later life.
- Bensham Manor provides evidence-based nurturing and regulatory interventions that aim to repair psychological damage and brain damage caused by traumatic life experiences, through emotionally regulating and playful, enriched adult-child interactions.
- The emotional well being and regulating of staff is treated as high priority in order to prevent burn-out, stress-related absence or leaving the profession, through stress-related illness, secondary trauma and / or feeling undervalued, blamed or shamed.
- Designated staff only spaces, such as the staff wellbeing room and the staff rooms, are specifically designed to support the release of natural anti-stress, pro-social neurochemicals (opioids and oxytocin)

4. Reflect

- Bensham Manor staff have been educated in the art of good listening, dialogue, empathy and understanding (instead of asking lots of questions / giving lectures).
- At Bensham Manor there is the provision of skills and resources to support parents and staff to have meaningful empathic conversations with vulnerable children who want to talk about their lives in order to empower children to better manage their home situations and life in general.
- Within the context of an established and trusted relationship with a member of staff, children are to be provided with the means to symbolise painful life experiences through images rather than solely everyday words, should they wish to do so, as a key part of 'working through' and memory reconsolidation. To this end, there is provision of different modes of expression for children, such as - music, art, sand-play, emotion worksheets.
- The Bensham Manor PSHCE and RSE curricula are informed by current research on mental health, mental ill-health and relationship health. Family, parenting, intimate relationships and tools are discussed for how to do life well. Curriculum content to enable children to make informed choices about how they relate to others and how they choose to treat their brains, bodies and minds now and in the future.
- Bensham Manor staff are trained to help children move from 'behaving' their trauma / painful life experiences to reflecting on those experiences through empathic conversation in order to address negative self-referencing and help them to develop coherent narratives about their lives.
- Bensham Manor has a behaviour policy which is not based on punishment, sanctions and isolation, but one that models enquiry, resolution and interactive repair (e.g. restorative conversations).