



ROOTS 4 LEARNING CIC

Relational Behaviour Policy

Policy for 2026–2027

Date policy last reviewed	18 August 2026
Effective from	1 September 2026
Next review	August 2027
Review cycle	Annually, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes

Approved by: Co-Headteachers and Chair of Trustees

This policy should be read alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child-on-Child Abuse Policy, SEND Policy, Complaints Procedures Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Physical Intervention/Restrictive Interventions Policy.

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Statement of Intent

At Roots, relationships are the foundation of learning, safety and recovery. We provide a relational, trauma-informed and nurture-led environment in which children and young people are supported to understand themselves, regulate their emotions, repair relationships and make increasingly safe and responsible choices.

We understand behaviour as communication. This does not mean that harmful or unsafe behaviour is ignored; it means that our response seeks to understand what is driving the behaviour while maintaining clear boundaries and protecting the dignity and safety of everyone. We do not use approaches that shame, humiliate, threaten or demean children and young people.

Our aim is not simply compliance. We want pupils to develop self-awareness, emotional literacy, resilience, empathy, self-control and the skills to repair relationships when things go wrong.

1. Policy Aims

- Create a calm, safe, inclusive and relational culture in which pupils and staff can learn and work effectively.
- Set clear expectations for behaviour while recognising individual needs, developmental stage, SEND, trauma, mental health and other relevant circumstances.
- Teach and model regulation, communication, problem-solving, empathy, accountability and repair rather than relying on punishment.
- Prevent bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, violence and other harmful behaviour, including online behaviour.
- Use restorative and relational approaches to resolve conflict and repair harm wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals.
- Use behaviour information as a potential indicator of unmet need, safeguarding concerns or changes in wellbeing, and respond accordingly.
- Ensure decisions about behaviour are lawful, proportionate, consistent and compatible with the Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments where applicable.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors at Roots and to behaviour that affects the school community, including behaviour online where it has a connection to the school or impacts on pupils or staff.

The policy provides a shared framework for understanding behaviour, preventing harm and responding when expectations are not met. It should be applied with professional judgement and in conjunction with individual support plans, safeguarding procedures and any agreed reasonable adjustments.

Consistency does not mean treating every pupil identically. Equity means providing the support, boundaries and adjustments each pupil needs to participate safely and successfully.

3. Our Core Approach

Our practice is built around three complementary principles:

Regulate - Relate - Reason

When a pupil is dysregulated, staff prioritise safety and co-regulation before expecting discussion, reflection or problem-solving. We recognise that a stressed child may have reduced access to language, reasoning and self-control. Staff therefore use calm tone, space, rhythm, movement and other appropriate regulation strategies.

Relate – We reconnect with the pupil through warmth, empathy, curiosity and acceptance. Staff remain emotionally available while maintaining appropriate boundaries.

Reason – Once the pupil is sufficiently regulated, we support them to understand what happened, consider impact, identify needs and develop a safer plan for next time.

PACE

Staff use PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) as an interactional approach where appropriate. PACE is not used to minimise harmful behaviour; it helps staff remain curious and connected while holding clear boundaries.

Restorative Practice

Where safe and appropriate, staff use restorative conversations to explore what happened, who was affected, what needs to happen next and how relationships can be repaired. Participation should be proportionate to the pupil's developmental level and emotional state.

4. Behaviour Expectations

At Roots, pupils are expected to:

- Treat others with respect and dignity.
- Follow reasonable instructions and agreed boundaries.
- Use language and communication that does not threaten, intimidate, harass or discriminate against others.
- Respect the safety, privacy and property of others.
- Take increasing responsibility for their choices and their impact on others.
- Seek help when they are distressed or unable to manage a situation safely.

- Contribute to an inclusive community in which difference is respected.

These expectations are taught, modelled and revisited. Staff will consider the pupil's individual circumstances when deciding how best to support them to meet expectations.

5. Staff Expectations

- Model the behaviour, communication and emotional regulation we expect from pupils.
- Seek to understand the function and context of behaviour before deciding how to respond.
- Use the Regulate–Relate–Reason sequence and PACE where appropriate.
- Maintain clear, predictable and respectful boundaries.
- Provide fresh starts and avoid shame-based responses.
- Use trauma-informed language and avoid unnecessary confrontation or public correction.
- Accept responsibility and apologise when we have mis-attuned or contributed to a difficult interaction.
- Record safeguarding or behaviour concerns accurately and promptly on the school's recording system.
- Reflect on practice, seek supervision and participate in relevant training.

6. Graduated Response and Individual Support

Roots uses a graduated response. Behaviour that is frequent, escalating or particularly concerning may indicate that the current level of support is no longer sufficient.

Wave 1 – Universal support: predictable routines, relational practice, PACE, Regulate–Relate–Reason, teaching of emotional and social skills, restorative conversations and a calm environment.

Wave 2 – Targeted support: individual regulation plans, TEAM PUPIL, nurture or targeted interventions, increased adult support, structured co-regulation and closer monitoring.

Wave 3 – Specialist support: assessment and intervention involving relevant external professionals and services, with multi-agency planning where appropriate.

The level of support is reviewed with the pupil, parents/carers and relevant professionals as appropriate. Behaviour that may indicate a safeguarding concern is referred immediately through safeguarding procedures rather than managed solely as behaviour.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board

- Ensure the policy is lawful, non-discriminatory and appropriately implemented.
- Provide oversight of behaviour, safeguarding and wellbeing arrangements.
- Consider complaints in accordance with the Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Ensure the policy is published and reviewed appropriately.

Co-Headteachers

- Lead implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Set clear expectations for behaviour and ensure the environment supports pupils' needs.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate induction, training and support.
- Ensure behaviour and safeguarding information is monitored and acted upon.
- Report to the Trust Board on implementation and effectiveness.
- Ensure appropriate individual and team-based support is established where required.

SENCO / SEND Lead

- Coordinate information about pupils' strengths, needs and support.
- Advise staff on reasonable adjustments and appropriate provision.
- Support assessment and review of individual needs.
- Work with families and external professionals where appropriate.

All staff and volunteers

- Apply this policy consistently, fairly and professionally.
- Build supportive relationships and identify key adults for pupils who need them.
- Set high expectations while making appropriate adjustments.
- Use agreed support plans and record concerns promptly.
- Follow safeguarding procedures whenever behaviour may indicate risk of harm.

Pupils

- Take increasing responsibility for their behaviour and choices.
- Treat others with respect and contribute to a safe community.
- Seek help when they are struggling.
- Participate, where appropriate, in reflection and repair following incidents.

Parents/carers

- Work collaboratively with Roots to support their child.
- Share information that may help staff understand changes in behaviour or wellbeing.
- Engage with meetings, support planning and relevant workshops where appropriate.

8. Staff Induction, Development and Support

All new staff receive induction into Roots' relational, trauma-informed and nurture-led approach. Training includes the principles underpinning this policy and relevant safeguarding responsibilities.

Training and supervision needs are reviewed regularly. Staff who lead behaviour or pupil wellbeing are supported to maintain appropriate knowledge and skills. Staff involved in challenging incidents should have access to debriefing and support.

9. Environmental Consistency

- Routines and expectations are clear and predictable.
- Staff understand individual pupils' agreed support and regulation strategies.
- Learning and social spaces are organised to promote safety, regulation and engagement.
- Staff have appropriate opportunities for supervision, reflection and debrief.
- Communication between staff is timely and proportionate so that pupils receive consistent support.

10. Responding to Behaviour that Challenges

The first priority is safety. Staff should use the least restrictive and least confrontational response that is appropriate to the circumstances.

1. Regulate the environment and reduce immediate triggers where possible.
2. Relate: maintain connection, calm and dignity while setting a clear boundary.
3. Reason: when the pupil is ready, explore what happened, the impact and what is needed next.
4. Repair: use restorative practice where appropriate.
5. Review: consider whether additional support, reasonable adjustments, safeguarding action or a revised plan is required.

Sanctions are not the foundation of Roots' approach. Where a consequence is necessary, it must be lawful, proportionate, reasonable, educationally purposeful and compatible with the pupil's individual circumstances and legal rights.

11. Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment

Roots does not tolerate bullying, cyberbullying, prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying, harassment, violence or sexual harassment. Concerns are taken seriously, investigated proportionately and addressed in line with safeguarding and anti-bullying procedures.

Staff will consider whether behaviour may be linked to a protected characteristic, SEND, vulnerability, exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse or another safeguarding concern. The pupil who has been harmed and the pupil whose behaviour has caused harm should both receive appropriate support.

Restorative approaches will not be used where they would be unsafe, inappropriate or likely to place a victim at further risk.

12. Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

All reports or concerns about sexual violence, sexual harassment, sexualised behaviour or gender-based bullying are dealt with as safeguarding matters. Staff must follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy without delay.

Responses will be proportionate to the circumstances and will take account of the ages, development, needs and vulnerability of those involved. Roots will consider support for all pupils involved, including safeguarding, pastoral and external support where appropriate.

13. Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Searching is a safeguarding and behaviour intervention and must be carried out lawfully, proportionately and with regard to the pupil's dignity, SEND and individual circumstances. Headteachers, or staff authorised by them, may search pupils or their possessions where the legal threshold is met. Staff must follow Roots' Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy and current DfE guidance.

Prohibited items include weapons and knives, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images and any item that may be used to commit an offence, cause injury or damage property. Roots may also identify additional items that may be searched for under its school rules, such as vapes/e-cigarettes, lighters, aerosols, psychoactive substances, energy drinks and mobile phones.

Any use of reasonable force in a search must comply with current law, Roots' restrictive interventions policy and DfE guidance. Searches must never be used as a punitive or humiliating measure. See our Safeguarding Policy for further details.

14. Mobile Phones and Smart Technology

From 1 September 2026, Roots will operate a mobile-phone-free approach during the school day, in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance. Mobile phones and similar smart technology capable of sending/receiving notifications or recording audio/video must not be used during the school day except where an agreed exception applies.

Any exception will be based on a pupil's individual circumstances, including where access is required as a reasonable adjustment or to support a medical need. Arrangements should specify when, where and for what purpose a device may be used. We appreciate and understand that for some of our students having access to their mobile phone is a way of regulating and supporting their mental health. Access to devices will be discussed on a case-by-case basis. Roots will work towards a "Not to be Seen" policy.

Staff should model the policy and avoid personal mobile-phone use in front of pupils except where necessary for legitimate work purposes.

15. Smoking, Vaping, Alcohol and Controlled Substances

Roots is a smoke-free environment. Smoking is prohibited on the premises and grounds in accordance with the Health Act 2006. Vaping is also prohibited on Roots premises and grounds.

Alcohol, illegal drugs and other unauthorised psychoactive substances are prohibited. Concerns about possession, supply, use or suspected exploitation will be managed through safeguarding procedures and, where appropriate, external agencies.

16. Energy Drinks

Energy drinks are not permitted at Roots. Pupils may bring water, squash or other approved soft drinks in accordance with centre arrangements. Where a pupil's individual circumstances require an exception, this will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

17. Allegations and Concerns About Staff

Any allegation or concern about a member of staff is treated as a safeguarding matter and managed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and relevant local safeguarding procedures.

Roots will not label an allegation as 'malicious' before appropriate safeguarding processes have been followed. Where an allegation is found to be deliberately false or malicious, any response will be proportionate, individualised and informed by the circumstances, including whether the behaviour indicates an unmet need or safeguarding concern.

Advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be sought where required.

18. Physical Intervention, Restrictive Interventions and Seclusion

Roots seeks to prevent the need for restrictive interventions through relational practice, environmental adjustments, co-regulation and de-escalation. Physical intervention must only be used where lawful, necessary and proportionate, and in

accordance with Roots' Physical Intervention/Restrictive Interventions Policy and current DfE guidance.

Since 1 April 2026, updated DfE guidance applies to restrictive interventions, including new requirements concerning the recording and reporting of significant incidents and seclusion. Staff must follow the current procedures for recording, reporting, parental notification, review and learning following any relevant incident.

Seclusion must never be used as a punishment. Any use must meet the legal and procedural requirements and be recorded and reviewed.

19. Exclusion and Alternative Provision

Roots is committed to avoiding permanent exclusion wherever it is lawful and safe to do so. We recognise the potential impact of exclusion and will seek to understand and address unmet need before considering exclusion.

Where behaviour presents serious or persistent concerns, Roots will consider whether additional assessment, reasonable adjustments, specialist support or an alternative education arrangement is required.

If exclusion or suspension becomes necessary, the centre will follow the legal requirements that apply to Roots' setting and the current DfE statutory guidance. The pupil's welfare, education and voice will remain central to planning next steps.

Where a pupil moves to another setting, Roots will seek to support a safe and planned transition and share relevant information lawfully and appropriately.

20. Safeguarding and Recording

Behaviour can be an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health difficulties, unmet SEND, peer-on-peer abuse or other vulnerability. Staff must not assume that behaviour is simply a disciplinary issue.

Concerns and significant incidents must be recorded promptly and accurately on the centre's safeguarding/behaviour recording system CPOMS. The DSL will consider whether further action, early help, assessment, referral or information-sharing is required.

Records should distinguish observation from interpretation and include relevant actions taken. See our Safeguarding Policy for further details.

21. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy has due regard to applicable legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education Act 1996.
- Education Act 2002.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Equality Act 2010.

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, where applicable.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, where applicable to Roots' registration/status.
- Health Act 2006.
- Education and Skills Act 2008, where applicable.
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019.
- Special educational needs and disability: Code of Practice 0 to 25 years (2015).
- Keeping children safe in education 2026 (effective 1 September 2026).
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, updated 19 February 2024).
- Searching, screening and confiscation: guidance for schools (DfE, updated 19 July 2023).
- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, effective 1 April 2026).
- Mobile phones in schools (DfE statutory guidance, to be followed from 1 September 2026).
- Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance, where applicable to Roots' setting.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, including the revised guidance for teaching from 1 September 2026, where applicable.

Where legislation or statutory guidance applies only to particular types of education setting, Roots will follow the provisions relevant to its legal status and registration.

22. Related Policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- SEND Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Physical Intervention / Restrictive Interventions Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy
- Attendance Policy

23. Monitoring and Review

The Co-Headteachers and Trust Board will review this policy at least annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding learning or Roots' practice changes. The review will consider behaviour data, safeguarding information, pupil and parent/carer feedback, staff feedback, incidents involving restrictive interventions and equality considerations.

Next scheduled review: August 2027.

Appendix 1 - Regulate, Relate, Reason

Roots uses the Regulate–Relate–Reason sequence to help staff respond to pupils who are distressed or dysregulated. Regulation comes first: a pupil who is overwhelmed may have reduced access to language, reasoning and self-control. Once the pupil is calmer, staff reconnect through attuned and supportive interaction. Only then do we expect the pupil to reflect, problem-solve and reason about what happened.

The model supports a trauma-informed approach but does not replace safeguarding procedures, professional assessment or individual plans.

Appendix 2 - PACE

PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) supports warm, respectful and non-shaming interactions. Staff remain curious about the meaning of behaviour while maintaining appropriate boundaries and expectations.

Appendix 3 - TEAM PUPIL / Graduated Support

Wave 1: universal relational strategies, including Regulate–Relate–Reason, PACE, predictable routines and restorative approaches.

Wave 2: targeted support such as TEAM PUPIL, nurture provision, individual regulation plans and responsive co-regulation.

Wave 3: specialist support and intervention involving relevant external professionals and multi-agency planning where appropriate.