



Relationships Policy

Rationale and Aims:

This policy should be read alongside other relevant policies and documentation, including:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Home-School Agreement
- Relationships and Sex Education

St Julie's Catholic High School is invested in supporting the very best possible relational health between:

- Parent and child
- Child and child
- Child and school staff
- Child and external agencies
- Parent and school staff
- School staff and their colleagues
- School staff and external agencies
- Members of the school community and the wider community

In doing this, we are aware of the importance of recognising both the prevalence and the potential impact (socially, emotionally, psychologically and neurologically) of past traumas, especially Adverse Childhood Experiences, on members of our community.

There are many individuals who we know to have been impacted in this way and for whom it is essential that we build relationships in ways that promote healing and avoid triggering.

We also recognise that there will be others whose past experiences are not known to us. To this end our school places our Notre Dame values of faith, truth, joy, love, justice and hope at the heart of **all** of our relationship building, regardless of what we already know (or do not know) about the circumstances and experiences of those with whom we are seeking to build relationship.

These values challenge us to demonstrate a Christ-like respect and compassion for all God's people. At St Julie's we seek to encourage all members of our community to form positive, constructive and trusting working relationships. In doing this, we are mindful that we should:

- Have **faith** in the essential goodness of all members of our community
- Accept the **truth** that many members of our community face significant challenges in their past experiences or daily lives
- Commit to bringing **joy** into lives where it might otherwise be lacking, recognising that as educators we are uniquely placed to be the positive difference that another may need
- Show a **love** that means we stay by the side of those who are experiencing difficulties, demonstrating acceptance rather than judgement
- Promote a **justice** which recognises that fractures in relationships can and should be mended.

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- Instil a sense of **hope** that through our emotional availability we can provide the feeling of security and safety that enables all to flourish

These values underpin and inform a trauma-informed approach to building relationships, which recognises that:

- School staff play a front-line role in supporting the mental and emotional health and well-being of all those with whom they work, but especially young people
- School staff are uniquely well-placed to provide support and intervention with young people and their families
- It is forming positive and supportive working relationships that make the difference between someone's previous experiences manifesting as long term and unmanageable stress or tolerable stress
- The presence of one emotionally available adult in the school, community or home can make a positive impact on the emotional, physical, and psychological wellbeing of a child.

Success Criteria

I have come that you might have life and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

Our school aims state that we will endeavour to create a community which places relationships at the heart of our school. This belief in the unique dignity of the human person, made in the image and likeness of God, underpins the approach to education in a Catholic school.

We will measure our success by reflecting on the following questions:

- Are the Notre Dame values of faith, truth, joy, love, justice and hope at the heart of our school?
- Do we understand St Julie's as a diverse community where all are valued as children of God?
- Do we recognise the significant challenges and traumas faced by members of our school community?
- Do we respond to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) with compassion, empathy, positivity and without delay?
- Are we a truly 'trauma-informed' community which recognises that we should act with sensitivity towards all, regardless of what we may or may not about their circumstances?
- Are we developing and investing in a community where people come first?
- Do we provide a positive and supportive community where equality of opportunity flourishes?
- Are we building resilient and independent individuals who flourish because they understand and appreciate their own self-worth?
- Do we emphasise the importance of inclusion and social justice?
- Do we provide a safe environment where all are encouraged to talk and to listen, in a respectful manner, recognising our personal dignity?
- Do we ensure that we will not accept behaviour that falls below our Notre Dame values and standards?
- Do we make effective use of both our pastoral systems and the taught curriculum to develop, explore, explain and nurture positive relationships?

Building trauma-informed relationships

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The following information is not intended as a list of practical strategies, so much as a set of principles that should underpin and guide the interactions between different members of the school community.

In all relationship building, we will remain mindful of the fact that whilst there are many people who we will know to have been or who still are affected by traumas, there will be many others whose experiences will not be known to us but who will still be affected in similar ways.

To that end, the strategies that we use in supporting those in our community – especially our pupils, their parents/carers and our colleagues – who we know to be living with the effects of past or current traumas should equally apply to all members of our community.

Staff-Pupil relationships

We commit to:

- Recognising trauma symptoms and acknowledging the role trauma plays in a young person's life
- Communicating effectively so that staff are aware of those pupils whom we know to have been affected or who continue to be affected by ACEs
- Providing and utilising systems, both inside and outside of school, that respond quickly and effectively to the needs of all pupils, especially those who we have been affected and continue to be affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Equipping pupils with strategies and techniques so they are able to deal with the traumas they are facing
- Creating a safe school environment where all pupils feel able to approach and speak to any member of staff
- Building a culture of 'healing not harming'
- Modelling, in the way in which we treat and speak to all of our pupils, the respect that we expect from them – in our words, tone of voice, body language and other communications
- Practicing active listening to and demonstrating empathy for our pupils

Staff-parent/carer relationships

We commit to:

- Working in partnership with parents/carers to facilitate our common goal of securing the best educational experience for students and ensuring their emotional, physical, and psychological wellbeing.
- Recognising that parents/carers are experts in their own children
- Developing positive, non-judgemental working alliances with all our parents, which allow for open, honest conversations about students, their families, and previous experiences, especially Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Seeking out opportunities to communicate with parents/carers on a regular basis to ensure that all students have their emotional, physical, psychological, and academic needs met.
- Ensuring all parents/carers receive a warm, professional welcome upon contacting the school for support
- Responding to all parent/carer queries or concerns in a timely and sensitive manner, aiming to promote healing and avoid triggering.

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- Offering practical, timely and impartial advice and interventions to support the wellbeing of both our pupils and their families with the aim of avoiding further traumatic experiences
- Signposting and referring families to external agencies and organisations that can offer additional support to children and families
- Collaborating with said agencies to support parents/carers in addressing past traumas, whether their own or their child's
- Providing a forum to facilitate these conversations where appropriate

Staff-staff relationships:

We commit to:

- Demonstrating honesty and integrity at all times in our interactions with other staff members
- Showing respect for staff and their opinions regardless of their age, gender, role within school or level of experience.
- Creating a culture in which all staff feel that their contributions are valued.
- Exercising duties and responsibilities, especially in relation to leadership and management, in a respectful, inclusive and fair manner
- Adjusting expectations of one another dependant on personal situations, through an empathetic and understanding approach
- Being emotionally available for our colleagues
- Working collaboratively with our colleagues
- Mediating to mend breakdowns in staff-staff relationships
- Providing opportunities for cross curricular working to strengthen relationships around the school.
- Trusting that staff will be professional, committed and dedicated to their work
- Building within staff a sense of appreciation for the work that they do

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