



Relational (Behaviour) Policy

“We change other people's behaviour by changing our own...Visible consistency with visible kindness allows exceptional behaviour to flourish.”

(Paul Dix:When the Adult Changes Everything Changes)

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1. The EMLM Compass Approach

At Education My Life Matters (EMLM), our work with learners is underpinned by the EMLM Compass Approach. This provides a consistent, trauma-informed and relational framework for responding to safeguarding concerns, behaviour, attendance, wellbeing, bullying, medical needs and all matters relating to the safety, welfare and inclusion of our learners.

-  **NOTICE** – Identify concerns early through professional curiosity
-  **LISTEN** – Respond to disclosures in a safe, respectful and trauma-informed way
-  **PROTECT** – Take immediate safeguarding action where needed
-  **RESPOND** – Investigate, intervene and restore harm appropriately
-  **RECORD** – Record concerns accurately on CPOMS within 24 hours
-  **REVIEW** – Monitor outcomes and learn from incidents to improve practice

The Compass Approach applies to all forms of concern including bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence and wider safeguarding concerns.

It ensures consistency, professional accountability and a clear safeguarding pathway across the organisation.

2. Introduction

At Education My Life Matters (EMLM) respectful relationships and positive learning experiences are at the heart of everything we do. We recognise that wellbeing, relationships and behaviour are closely interconnected. Research in child development, neuroscience, attachment theory and trauma-informed practice demonstrates that children learn best when they feel safe, connected and understood. When learners experience positive relationships and strong emotional wellbeing, they are better able to engage in learning, develop resilience and achieve their potential.

Our approach is underpinned by a whole-school relational ethos. Relationships are central to our culture and provide the foundation for learning, belonging and personal growth. We seek to understand each learner as an individual, recognising their unique strengths, experiences and needs. This understanding enables us to provide the support, guidance and appropriate challenge that helps learners develop emotional regulation, communicate effectively and become ready to learn.

At EMLM, we recognise that behaviour is a form of communication. Rather than simply responding to behaviour itself, we seek to understand the underlying need or experience that may be influencing it. We respond with curiosity, empathy and consistency, while maintaining clear expectations and appropriate boundaries. By understanding what a learner may be communicating through their behaviour, we are better able to provide support that promotes regulation, reflection and positive change.

Trust is fundamental to strong relationships. We keep our promises wherever possible and, when circumstances prevent us from doing so, we communicate openly, honestly and respectfully. In doing so, we model the values of integrity, accountability and mutual respect that we seek to develop in our learners.

We recognise that fairness is not about everyone receiving the same support, but about everyone receiving the support they need to succeed. This equitable approach acknowledges that learners have different starting points, strengths and barriers, and that some will require additional support or reasonable adjustments to achieve positive outcomes.

A whole-school relational approach means that every interaction matters. All staff share responsibility for creating an environment where learners feel safe, valued, respected and understood. Through consistent, compassionate and predictable relationships, we foster a culture where learners can develop confidence, resilience, self-regulation and a genuine sense of belonging.

As Paul Dix states in *When the Adults Change, Everything Changes*, **"Visible consistency with visible kindness allows exceptional behaviour to flourish."** This principle underpins our daily practice, ensuring that high expectations are always delivered alongside empathy, respect and unwavering belief in every learner's potential.

3. Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote positive relationships, emotional wellbeing, engagement and successful learning for all learners;
- Provide clear guidance for all stakeholders on how to support learners to understand, express and regulate their feelings and emotions safely, enabling them to participate successfully in learning;
- Promote a holistic, inclusive and strengths-based approach to understanding behaviour, self-regulation and individual needs;
- Ensure our practice is informed by current research and evidence-based approaches, including relational, attachment-aware and trauma-informed practice;
- Create and maintain a positive, safe and inclusive environment where all learners feel valued, respected and able to thrive socially, emotionally and academically;
- Foster a culture of high expectations, belonging and mutual respect, while promoting independence, resilience, responsibility and self-regulation;
- Ensure behaviour is supported consistently, fairly and proportionately through equitable responses that recognise individual needs and circumstances.

Our relational approach recognises that:

- Behaviour provides valuable information about a learner's needs, feelings or experiences and offers adults an opportunity to understand and respond appropriately;
- Emotional development and self-regulation are fundamental to positive behaviour, wellbeing and learning;
- Learners develop self-regulation through repeated experiences of co-regulation with trusted, emotionally available adults;
- Consistent routines, high expectations, clear boundaries and positive relationships help learners feel safe, develop trust and achieve success;
- Every interaction provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships, promote learning and support positive outcomes.

We achieve these aims by developing high-quality relationships with our learners through evidence-informed practice, including the **Relate, Regulate, Reason and Repair model (Appendix 1)**. This approach recognises that connection and emotional safety provide the foundation for learning, enabling adults to support learners before teaching, problem-solving or applying consequences where appropriate.

We adopt a holistic, whole-person approach that recognizes the complexity of each learner's experience's, strengths and individual needs. Our planning and practice are informed by a thorough understanding of each learner, particularly those with additional, complex or layered needs.

When behaviours challenge, we seek to understand the underlying factors that may be influencing the learner's response. We recognise that, at times, behaviour may represent the most effective means a learner has of communicating distress, unmet needs or difficulty with regulation. Our response is therefore centred on understanding, support and skill development, alongside consistent expectations and appropriate accountability.

Where required, learners will receive graduated support through personalised strategies, targeted interventions and collaborative planning with families and other professionals to promote positive outcomes, emotional wellbeing and sustained engagement in learning.

4. Our Provision

At EMLM, we promote a culture of continual reflection and professional curiosity. All staff are encouraged to consider the underlying factors that may influence or trigger a learner's behaviour, recognising that behaviour is often shaped by individual experiences, unmet needs, developmental differences or environmental factors.

Daily staff briefings, held before and after the school day, provide opportunities to share information, reflect on individual learners and plan consistent, relational responses. These discussions encourage staff to respond to behaviours that challenge

with empathy, professionalism and curiosity rather than judgement, ensuring that support is proactive, consistent and responsive to each learner's needs.

When a learner is experiencing dysregulation or distress, staff use proactive, evidence-informed de-escalation strategies to reduce distress, maintain safety and prevent situations from escalating wherever possible. Responses are tailored to the individual learner and may include reducing environmental demands, offering appropriate choices, allowing time and space for regulation, using calm and reassuring communication, and drawing upon personalised strategies identified within the learner's support plans. Throughout any incident, staff seek to preserve the dignity of the learner, maintain positive relationships and minimise disruption to learning.

Learning is personalised to meet each learner at their individual stage of development, enabling them to experience success and make meaningful progress. We explicitly teach emotional literacy, self-awareness and self-regulation strategies, equipping learners with the skills to recognise, express and manage their emotions appropriately and communicate their needs effectively.

Where appropriate, we work collaboratively with families and a range of external professionals to deepen our understanding of a learner's needs and to develop personalised strategies and interventions. This multi-agency approach ensures that support is coordinated, evidence-informed and responsive, enabling learners to achieve the best possible outcomes across all aspects of their development.

5. Relational Approach (appendix 2)

Positive relationships are the foundation of everything we do at EMLM. Every member of staff has a role in creating an environment where learners feel safe, valued, respected and able to learn. We recognise that trusting relationships are developed over time through consistent, predictable and compassionate interactions. Trust cannot be assumed; it is built through everyday experiences and positive connections.

We maintain high expectations for all learners and communicate our belief in their potential. Our relational approach does not lower expectations. Rather, it enables staff to understand the support each learner requires to successfully meet consistently high expectations for behaviour, attendance, engagement and learning. High expectations and high levels of support work together to promote independence, responsibility and long-term success.

Building Positive Relationships

Staff foster positive relationships by:

- Communicating clearly, calmly and respectfully
- Greeting learners positively at the start of each day and throughout transitions
- Maintaining a visible, approachable and supportive presence across the school

- Being prepared, punctual, consistent and attentive
- Demonstrating reliability, honesty and trustworthiness
- Regulating and modelling their own emotions and behaviour
- Recognising that some learners may perceive situations as threatening and responding with curiosity, empathy and reassurance
- Listening actively to learners, colleagues and families
- Creating well-organised, predictable learning environments with consistent routines
- Providing clear expectations, boundaries and structure
- Recognising and celebrating success through meaningful praise and regular positive communication with families, including weekly celebration postcards that acknowledge positive actions, effort and progress
- Investing time in building authentic relationships with every learner
- Modelling accountability by acknowledging and apologising when mistakes are made
- Seeking support from colleagues and leaders when additional guidance or reflection is needed.

Working in Partnership

Respect underpins every interaction within our school community. We speak to learners with dignity and never discuss them in ways that undermine their privacy or self-esteem.

We recognise that strong partnerships with parents, carers and external professionals are essential to achieving the best outcomes for learners. Open communication, shared understanding and collaborative planning help to ensure consistency between home and school and enable personalised support that reflects each learner's strengths and needs

We also recognise the importance of staff wellbeing. Supporting learners to regulate their emotions requires adults to remain emotionally available and regulated themselves. We therefore encourage reflective practice, peer support and professional supervision where appropriate.

Consistency in Practice

Consistency is fundamental to creating the safe, predictable and nurturing environment that enables learners to flourish. At EMLM, consistency does not mean that every learner receives the same response; rather, it means that every member of staff applies the same relational principles, values and high expectations while making reasonable adjustments to meet individual needs. Through consistent routines, language, boundaries and responses, we help learners develop trust, emotional security and confidence, enabling them to engage positively in learning and relationships.

Understanding Behaviour Through a Relational Lens

Our practice is informed by evidence from child development, attachment theory, neuroscience and trauma-informed approaches. We understand that emotional

regulation develops through secure relationships and repeated experiences of co-regulation with trusted adults.

This means that our role is not simply to respond to behaviour, but to understand and address the underlying needs that may be influencing it. We aim to provide relationships and experiences that promote safety, connection, resilience and learning.

We recognise that:

- Learners engage most successfully in learning and relationships when they feel physically and emotionally safe
- Adults play a crucial role in creating this sense of safety through calm, predictable and attuned responses
- Emotional regulation develops over time through consistent co-regulation, supportive relationships and explicitly taught self-regulation skills
- Learners experiencing distress or dysregulation require connection before correction. Attempts to reason, problem-solve or apply consequences are most effective once the learner has regained emotional regulation
- Following incidents, staff engage learners in restorative conversations at an appropriate time to repair relationships, promote reflection and support future success
- Every interaction provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships, reinforce positive behaviour and develop social and emotional skills.

As Bruce D. Perry reminds us, "**A dysregulated child cannot access the reasoning part of the brain.**" This underpins our commitment to prioritising connection, co-regulation and emotional safety before engaging learners in reflection, problem-solving and restorative learning.

6. Relate, Regulate, Reason and Repair in Practice

Regulate in practice

All staff members will support our learners to regulate their feelings with skilled relational approaches:

- Attunement – demonstrating an understanding of how they are feeling by matching their emotional energy
- Accepting and validating – demonstrating that their feelings are real and justified
- Containment of feelings – demonstrating you can catch their feelings and help make them a survivable experience
- Soothing and calming – demonstrating emotional regulation by repeatedly soothing and calming

Reason in practice

All staff will help the learners create a narrative/timeline in manageable steps with frequent recapping.

- What did you hear?
- What did you see?
- What did you sense? Adults pay attention to the learner's perspective, acknowledging their thoughts, feelings and viewpoint. Staff can then articulate other possible motives/intentions using 'What if...?'

Repair in practice

Using the restorative justice method following conflict or incidents where harm has been caused, allows the learner to consider:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking?
- How are you feeling?
- Who else has been affected by this?
- What do you need, and what needs to happen now, so that the harm can be repaired?

In order to repair harm there needs to be a restorative encounter between those involved. Time needs to be spent sharing understanding and coming to an outcome which helps to repair relationships. See 'Restorative Conversations' and 'How to say sorry' – See Appendix 6 The restorative framework is embedded in everyday interactions and classroom practice, from making time to talk, PSHE Jigsaw curriculum, regular circle times and school council meetings.

7. Recognition and Restorative Responses

At EMLM, we are committed to creating a culture where positive behaviour, effort and personal growth are recognised and celebrated. In line with current Department for Education (DfE) Behaviour in Schools guidance, we maintain high expectations for all learners through consistent relationships, clear routines, positive reinforcement and proportionate responses that support learning and inclusion.

We believe that intrinsic motivation is the most sustainable driver of positive behaviour. Our aim is to help learners develop a sense of pride, responsibility and achievement by recognising the positive impact of their choices and contributions to the school community.

To promote this, staff will:

- Provide specific, genuine and timely verbal praise that acknowledges effort, progress and demonstration of our school values

- Share successes regularly with parents and carers through postcards, telephone calls and other positive communication
- Celebrate learners' achievements with external professionals and partner agencies where appropriate
- Present Achievement Certificates that are displayed within learning environments to celebrate success
- Celebrate learner achievements through the school's monthly newsletter
- Use the school's recognition and points system to acknowledge positive contributions, kindness, resilience, attendance and engagement.

Restorative Responses and Consequences

In accordance with DfE Behaviour in Schools guidance, EMLM promotes a consistent approach to behaviour that combines high expectations with appropriate support. Consequences are used to teach, restore and encourage positive behaviour rather than to punish or shame.

We recognise that some learners may, at times, experience difficulties with emotional regulation. Our responses are therefore proportionate, equitable and responsive to each learner's developmental stage, individual needs and circumstances (see Appendix 4).

Our approach is guided by the following principles:

- Consequences are logical, proportionate and directly related to the behaviour, providing opportunities for learning, reflection and restoration
- We avoid practices that remove previously earned rewards, therapeutic interventions or opportunities that support learners' emotional wellbeing and progress
- We never use language or approaches that shame, humiliate or intentionally embarrass learners, recognising that these responses are likely to damage relationships and increase distress
- We recognise that a consistent approach does not always mean an identical response. Reasonable adjustments will be made, where appropriate, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, to reflect learners' developmental stage, additional needs and individual circumstances while maintaining high expectations for all.
- We use a graduated *Plan-Do-Review* approach to ensure responses support future success and do not create unnecessary barriers to learning.
- Incidents are managed calmly, respectfully and without judgement
- Learners are supported to understand the impact of their behaviour, take responsibility where appropriate and repair relationships with those affected.
- Staff use restorative conversations (Appendix 3) to promote reflection, rebuild relationships and develop strategies that reduce the likelihood of future incidents
- Where a learner's behaviour gives rise to safeguarding concerns or may indicate that they are experiencing harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation or significant emotional distress, staff will respond in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Appropriate action will be taken without delay to ensure the learner's safety and wellbeing.

We recognise that repairing relationships will look different for every learner. The support required will depend on their developmental stage, communication profile, emotional regulation and individual needs. Staff make reasonable adjustments to ensure all learners can participate meaningfully in restorative processes and experience success.

We avoid making assumptions about the reasons for a learner's behaviour or how they may be feeling. Instead, we seek to understand the factors influencing the behaviour through observation, professional curiosity and collaborative discussion with families and other professionals where appropriate. By addressing underlying needs alongside maintaining clear expectations, we support learners to develop self-awareness, strengthen relationships and make positive behavioural choices over time.

8. Monitoring and Review

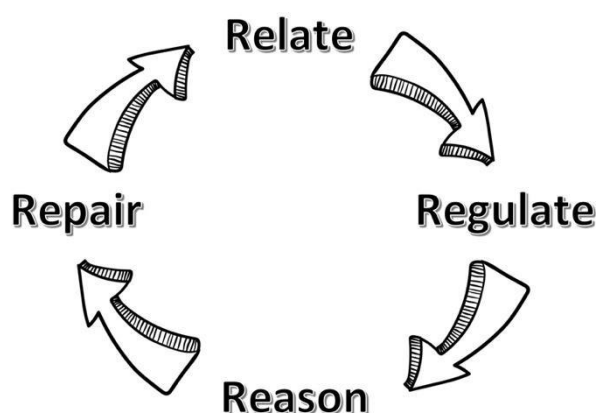
This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, research and best practice, or in response to the needs of the school community.

The review will take account of:

- Current Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance, including *Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff*
- Relevant legislation relating to behaviour, safeguarding, equality and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Current evidence and research relating to relational, restorative, attachment-aware and trauma-informed practice
- Feedback from learners, families, staff, governors and partner agencies where appropriate
- Analysis of behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and wellbeing data to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and identify areas for continuous improvement.

At Education My Life Matters, we believe that every learner deserves to feel safe, valued, respected and understood. Through strong relationships, consistent practice and evidence-informed approaches, we create an environment where learners can develop the confidence, resilience and self-regulation needed to thrive. By combining compassion with high expectations, we seek not simply to manage behaviour, but to empower every learner to succeed, flourish and realise their full potential.

Appendix 1: Relate, Regulate, Reason and Repair



Relate	Positive relationships are the foundation of learning, wellbeing and personal development. For learners to engage successfully in school, they need to feel safe, valued, respected and a sense of belonging. At EMLM, relationships are at the heart of school life. We aim to promote positive relationships, active engagement and emotional wellbeing through consistent, compassionate and trusting interactions. Protection, connection, understanding and care underpin all interactions at a whole-school, classroom and individual level.
Regulate	All learners experience challenges and, at times, strong emotions that can affect their ability to learn, communicate and engage positively with others. During these times, learners may require support from a calm, emotionally available adult to help them regulate their emotions. Through repeated experiences of co-regulation, learners gradually develop the skills, confidence and resilience needed to become increasingly self-regulated.
Reason	Once a learner has regained a state of calm and emotional regulation, they are better able to think, reflect, problem-solve and learn from their experiences. In an environment where learners feel safe, secure and supported, they are more able to develop higher-order thinking skills, including reasoning, understanding cause and effect, planning, organisation, flexible thinking, working memory and decision-making.
Repair	Repairing relationships is an essential part of learning and personal development. Through restorative approaches, learners are supported to understand the impact of their actions, rebuild trust, strengthen relationships and develop empathy, accountability and responsibility. Effective repair helps learners move forward

	positively, reinforces their sense of belonging and demonstrates that mistakes provide opportunities for learning, growth and stronger relationships.
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Appendix 2: Relational Practice: Protection, Connection, Understanding and Care

Adults provide PROTECTION by:	- Being predictable, reliable and trustworthy - Remaining calm and regulating their own emotions - Providing consistent routines, clear expectations and appropriate boundaries - Recognising that some learners may perceive situations as threatening and responding with reassurance, sensitivity and consistency - Creating emotionally and physically safe learning environments.
Adults provide CONNECTION by:	- Being physically and emotionally available - Attuning to the learner's emotions, communication and individual needs - Responding warmly, consistently and authentically - Using appropriate humour, playfulness and positive interactions to strengthen relationships - Showing genuine interest in the learner's experiences, strengths and achievements - Valuing and promoting learner voice and meaningful participation.
Adults demonstrate UNDERSTANDING by:	- Being curious about the learner's feelings, thoughts and behaviour - Acknowledging and validating emotions while maintaining appropriate boundaries - Supporting learners to think through situations and solve problems collaboratively - Demonstrating empathy and compassion - Helping learners make sense of their experiences and develop emotional understanding.
Adults demonstrate CARE by:	- Showing warmth, kindness and compassion - Holding the learner in mind throughout the day and responding consistently to their needs - Using familiar routines, comfort strategies or transitional objects where appropriate - Providing reassurance, co-regulation and emotional support during times of distress - Helping learners restore a sense of safety, belonging and readiness to learn.

Appendix 3: Restorative Scripted conversations

These scripted conversations are intended as guidance rather than a prescribed script. Staff should adapt their language to reflect each learner's age, developmental stage, communication needs, level of emotional regulation and individual support plan.

Positive Reminder (Relate)	Positive caution (Relate and Regulate)
• I need you to... • I would like to see you... • Our expectation is... • I know you can... • Thank you for... • We can work through this together.	• I can see something has happened - Let's pause for a moment. • Can you tell me what is happening? • Remember our expectation about... • How can I help you get back on track? • Thank you for listening and working with me.
Environment Change (Regulate/Reason)	Time to Think Together (Reason)
• Let's move to a quieter space where we can talk. • I think you'll be more successful if we work somewhere with fewer distractions. • Would it help to take a few minutes to regulate before we continue? • Let's go and speak with [named adult], who can help you feel ready to learn. • Use agreed personalised regulation strategies where appropriate.	(Used once the learner is calm and ready to reflect.) • Can you tell me what happened? • What were you thinking or feeling at the time? • How are you feeling now? • Who has been affected by what happened? • What do you think they might be feeling?
Repair	
Staff support learners to repair relationships in a way that is appropriate to their age, developmental stage and communication needs. Repair may include: • Offering a genuine apology where appropriate. • Acknowledging the impact of their actions. • Taking positive action to put things right. • Agreeing a strategy for next time. • Rebuilding trust through positive actions and restored relationships.	
Example • "I'm sorry • "I understand that this affected..." "Next time I • "What can I do now to help put things right?"	
prompts: for..." will..."	

Appendix 4: Understanding Behaviours: Possible Underlying Needs and Supportive Responses

This guidance is intended to support professional reflection and should not be used as a definitive explanation for a learner's behaviour. Behaviour is influenced by a range of individual, developmental, environmental and contextual factors, and no single explanation will apply to every learner or situation.

Decoding and responding to behaviours		
Behaviour the learner might present	Possible underlying need or experience	Strategies that may help
Fidgeting, turning around, difficulty concentrating	The learner may be feeling anxious or hypervigilant, may need movement to support attention, or may be experiencing sensory regulation needs.	• Seat the learner where they feel comfortable and can easily orientate themselves within the room. • Provide access to sensory resources (e.g. fiddle toy, wobble cushion) where appropriate. • Build regular movement breaks into the day. • Be flexible about sitting still for extended periods.
Talking continuously, calling out, dominating discussions or asking frequent questions	The learner may be seeking reassurance, connection or predictability, may experience anxiety when not actively engaged, or may have difficulty with social communication and turn-taking.	• Provide planned opportunities for the learner to contribute appropriately. • Acknowledge their contribution and explain when they will have the opportunity to speak. • Use non-verbal reassurance and regular check-ins. • Explicitly teach and model conversational turn-taking.
Becoming angry, upset or disruptive	The learner may be feeling overwhelmed by the environment, struggling with uncertainty or finding the demands of the situation difficult to manage.	• Offer calm reassurance and support from a trusted adult. • Reduce environmental demands where possible. • Provide access to a safe, calm regulation space.

		• Use co-regulation strategies before attempting to resolve the situation.
Ignoring instructions	The learner may be overwhelmed, anxious or unable to process multiple pieces of information at once. They may not yet be ready to respond.	• Gain the learner's attention before giving instructions. • Use short, simple instructions delivered one step at a time. • Check understanding. • Support with visual prompts, visual timetables or either/or choices. • Position the learner close to a trusted adult where appropriate.
Becoming hostile or defensive when frustrated or asked to complete difficult work	The learner may fear failure, embarrassment or making mistakes in front of others. They may lack confidence or feel overwhelmed by the task.	• Acknowledge the learner's feelings without judgement. • Break tasks into manageable steps. • Offer support alongside the learner rather than expecting independent completion immediately. • Recognise effort and small successes through specific praise
Attempting to create disruption or chaos	The learner may be experiencing internal anxiety or emotional dysregulation and may be attempting to regain a sense of control over their environment.	• Maintain calm, predictable routines. • Use visual timetables and prepare learners for changes. • Reduce uncertainty wherever possible. • Provide agreed regulation activities and calming resources. • Focus on reducing anxiety rather than controlling behaviour.
Hitting out or becoming distressed when queuing	The learner may feel overwhelmed by crowds, close proximity to others or waiting without knowing what will happen next.	• Reduce or avoid queuing where possible. • Offer alternative arrangements. • Clearly explain expectations and waiting times. • Allow the learner to wait with a trusted adult if appropriate.
Withdrawing from activities or finding it difficult to make friends	The learner may lack confidence, feel socially anxious or find it difficult to trust others or initiate interactions.	• Provide regular opportunities to connect with a trusted adult. • Use peer buddies or mentoring where appropriate. • Facilitate structured small-group activities that develop

		social communication skills. • Celebrate positive social interactions.
Being aggressive towards peers or attempting to control others	The learner may be experiencing heightened anxiety, difficulties with emotional regulation or uncertainty in social situations. They may be attempting to create a sense of safety or control.	• Respond calmly and maintain clear boundaries. • Wonder aloud with empathy rather than making assumptions (e.g. "I wonder if something has happened that's making today feel difficult?"). • Teach emotional literacy and problem-solving skills. • Where appropriate, use logical consequences alongside restorative conversations to repair relationships.
Losing or damaging property	The learner may be experiencing frustration, emotional distress, low self-worth or difficulty managing strong emotions safely.	• Teach and practise safe regulation strategies. • Provide opportunities for physical movement, sensory activities or calming resources. • Identify patterns and possible triggers. • Build self-esteem through encouragement, responsibility and opportunities for success.
Becoming distressed during celebrations such as birthdays, Mother's Day or Father's Day	Significant events may trigger feelings of grief, loss, uncertainty or difficult memories for some learners.	• Plan ahead with families where appropriate. • Prepare the learner for the event. • Offer additional emotional support and access to a quiet space if required. • Acknowledge feelings sensitively and without assumption.
Becoming unsettled during transitions, changes or at the end of term	The learner may find change difficult, experience anxiety about uncertainty or require additional time to prepare for transitions.	• Prepare learners well in advance for changes. • Use visual timetables, calendars or social stories. • Allow time to ask questions and process information. • Increase support where needed and work collaboratively with families and external professionals to plan successful transitions

Appendix 5: Self-Regulation at EMLM

At EMLM, we recognise that there is no single strategy that supports the self-regulation needs of every learner. We therefore use a range of evidence-informed approaches, tailored to each learner's individual strengths, needs and stage of development. These approaches are embedded within our whole-school relational practice and are used alongside personalised support, reasonable adjustments and restorative approaches.

The two principal self-regulation approaches used consistently across the school are **The Zones of Regulation** and **Co-Regulation**. Together, these provide a shared language, consistent practice and practical strategies that help learners develop emotional awareness, build self-regulation skills and engage successfully in learning and relationships.

The Zones of Regulation provides learners with a shared language for recognising, understanding and managing their emotions, energy levels and states of alertness. Through explicit teaching and everyday opportunities for practice, learners develop greater awareness of how they are feeling and learn a range of personalised strategies to help them regulate their emotions and engage successfully in learning.

The four coloured Zones are used throughout the school to support learners in identifying their current emotional state. Staff use the Zones consistently to facilitate supportive conversations, promote emotional literacy and encourage learners to select appropriate regulation strategies.

We teach learners that all emotions are valid and that everyone experiences a range of emotional states throughout the day. Rather than labelling emotions as "good" or "bad", we focus on helping learners recognise how they are feeling, understand the impact this may have on themselves and others, and choose safe, appropriate strategies that enable them to regulate and participate positively in school life.

Learners are encouraged to develop a personalised "toolbox" of regulation strategies, which may include movement, sensory activities, breathing techniques, mindfulness, access to a calm space, talking to a trusted adult or other individualised supports. Staff work collaboratively with learners to identify the strategies that are most effective for them.

The Zones of Regulation forms one part of our wider relational and trauma-informed approach to supporting emotional regulation. It complements, rather than replaces, the strong relationships, co-regulation, restorative practice and personalised support that underpin behaviour and wellbeing at EMLM.

Co-regulation:

At EMLM, we recognise that self-regulation develops through repeated experiences of **co-regulation**. Co-regulation is the process by which a calm, emotionally available adult supports a learner to understand, manage and regulate their emotions before expecting them to regulate independently.

We recognise that some learners, particularly those who have experienced adversity, trauma or additional developmental needs, may require ongoing co-regulation to develop the skills needed for emotional regulation, problem-solving and positive behaviour. Our role is to provide safety, connection and support, enabling learners to gradually build confidence and independence in managing their emotions.

When a learner is experiencing distress or dysregulation, staff prioritise connection before correction. Adults respond in a calm, consistent and predictable manner, helping the learner to feel safe before engaging in reflection, problem-solving or restorative conversations. This may include reducing environmental demands, using supportive communication, providing reassurance, modelling regulation strategies or offering access to agreed personalised regulation tools.

Through consistent co-regulation, learners develop greater emotional awareness, resilience and self-regulation over time. As learners become increasingly able to recognise and manage their own emotions, adults gradually reduce the level of support provided, encouraging independence while remaining available when needed.

Co-regulation is embedded throughout daily practice at EMLM and is reflected in our relationships, teaching approaches, routines and restorative practice. It is a key component of our relational approach and complements the use of the Zones of Regulation helping learners to understand their emotions and select appropriate strategies to remain ready for learning.