

# Therapeutic Support Statement



**Approved by:** Governing Body

**Last reviewed on:** September 2024

**Next review due by:** September 2025

# **Therapeutic Support Statement**

## **Intention**

The school has based its approach to progress, assessment and teaching and learning on the premise that pupils will engage best in the learning process if they are supported by a professional staff group who genuinely welcome, care for and understand them as individuals every day and who also promote a sense of community belonging so that pupils too, can mutually support each other over time.

Our pupil group have co-morbid presentations across SEMH, ASD, SLCN and learning needs which due to their experiences in education to date have left them often feeling vulnerable, anxious and lacking confidence in their own strengths. We believe developing resiliency skills is key to unlocking their potential. Mastering resilience must be founded upon developing trust and depth in relationships with the adults supporting them on their pathway at Belle Vue School.

We therefore acknowledge the importance of personal and interpersonal aspects of how staff build relationships with pupils in order to create the right environment for positive outcomes. We also recognise that positive relations and outcomes are most likely within an establishment that is prepared to adjust its environment, structure and culture to match prevailing needs. With a range of academic and vocational facilities, we believe that the School offers this capability.

## **Implementation**

Pupils may often begin their time at our school with a high level of anxiety, low self-esteem, reduced learning and communication difficulties. It is our job to provide them with a stable environment in which they may flourish, both in terms of their learning and personal development. Many children we support struggle with emotional self-regulation when faced with the everyday challenges that life presents. Sound therapeutic relationships between staff and pupil are complex yet critical in enabling them to come to terms with and take responsibility for their behaviour and also be receptive to learning new skills in self-management and independency. The relationship requires respect (for individual preferences and opinions), warmth (a genuine interest in the pupil's feelings and thoughts) and unconditional positive regard (acceptance of the individual despite adverse behaviour). This relationship is developed through using an identified learning mentor system whereby staff meet regularly with key pupils to discuss progress, aspirations, welfare needs and allowing a forum to share anxiety or concerns.

## Practical Application

Within Belle Vue we have a range of strategies to ensure successful implementation of therapeutic support.

Pupils have support from a team to develop their abilities to communicate and interact successfully, such as:

- through Lego based therapy
- play therapy/ music therapy
- Drama
- speech and language therapy
- appointments with the Educational Psychologist at least annually
- Pupil voice- School council with pupil leads as Head Boy and Girl
- regular internal and external presentations including CEOP and cyber bullying
- a culture where bullying of any kind is not tolerated, and inclusion is promoted

Enshrined in this process of a therapeutic approach is the notion that you cannot support and educate pupils effectively without developing trusting, healthy and sustained relationships. We provide a range of training opportunities for staff to ensure they are confident in enabling the pupils to feel emotionally safe and feel more able to focus successfully in the learning process. Many of our pupils arrive at school without any strategies to self-regulate and find themselves in frustrating, anxious or stressful situations without any means of dealing effectively with them. We use a range of verbal responses to help teach children better coping skills when faced with challenges in or outside the classroom, whether work or people related. Staff are expected to model appropriate responses and to use social stories to demonstrate how to interpret communications from and to others for everyone to be and feel safe. All staff are trained to offer support of this kind which we believe is critical to ensuring pupils making progress and develop knowledge, skills and understanding.

Inspiration, motivation, engagement, enjoyment and inclusion are all important characteristics of our therapeutic approach to education. These overall aims provide a rationale and context for work with pupils who, for whatever reasons, may not have yet developed the above characteristics. We believe we can respond to this in an informed and positive way, such as being more creative and flexible in planning and delivery of our curriculum using alternative programmes and approaches to learn which rely on a graduated approach to build on each foundation block achieved.

## Impact

How do we know that this approach has impact?

- Our pupils tell us (in person, through weekly class meetings and questionnaires)
- Our parents/carers tell us (at progress days, coffee mornings, drop ins and questionnaires)
- Our staff see it and tell us
- We see it in the progress in pupil books
- We see it in the school environment
- We feel it in the calm and orderly school environment
- We see it in the improvements in pupil socially and emotional skills
- Improving attendance from pupil baseline positions
- Improving behaviour data from pupil baseline positions
- Pupil mentoring feedback
- Educational psychologist reports
- Visitors feedback
- Pupil outcomes