A RELATIONAL APPROACH TO BEHAVIOUR

How Schools and Families Can Work Together to Support Children

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Thank you for downloading this guide.

Whether you're a parent or an educator, one thing is certain — **behaviour is communication.**

When children struggle, we often feel stuck between frustration, worry, and exhaustion. But there is a better way — and it begins with connection over control.

This guide introduces key principles of relational practice, an inclusive and restorative approach to behaviour that centres trust, communication, and partnership between home and school.

These strategies are designed to prevent escalation, reduce conflict, and most importantly, help children feel seen, safe, and supported.

Let's create change — together.

What is Relational Practice?

Relational practice is about prioritising relationships as the foundation for behaviour, learning, and wellbeing.

It means responding to challenges with curiosity, empathy, and accountability, not blame or punishment.

Key principles:

- Connection before correction
- Behaviour is communication
- All behaviour makes sense in context
- Accountability without shame
- Repair matters more than punishment
- Relational approaches support inclusion, reduce exclusions, and promote mental health and long-term success.

How Parents Can Use Relational Strategies at Home

Even small shifts in communication can have a big impact.

Try this:

- "I can see you're upset — I'm here when you're ready to talk."
- "You're not in trouble, I want to understand what's going on."
- "Let's work this out together — how can we make it right?"

Tips for Home:

- Avoid threats or ultimatums
- Use calm, curious questions
- Focus on repair (not punishment) after a tough moment
- Model emotional regulation — *even when it's hard*

How Schools Can Embed Relational Practice

Relational practice is more than a technique
It's a culture.

In schools, this looks like:

- Consistent adult relationships with pupils
- Restorative conversations after incidents
- Teaching emotional regulation, not just enforcing behaviour
- A shared language of respect, curiosity and care
- Inclusion policies that support neurodivergent and SEMH pupils

What can school staff always be thinking?

- "What might this child be needing right now?"
- "Have we ruled out unmet needs, trauma, or communication difficulties?"

How could school staff be communicating (as the norm)

As they would with each other, "Morning Charlie, how did your dog get on at the vets"

Working Together Home & School Collaboration

When parents and school staff feel like a **team**, children feel safer and more supported.

Ways to build stronger partnerships:

- Meet early, don't wait for a crisis. You notice a child that restless, playing with pen, struggling to sit still – meet parents and build a relationship early

- Ask "What's working at home?" and "What's working at school?"

- Use a shared, non-blaming language

- Focus meetings on understanding, not just fixing

- Value parent voice, lived experience and **LISTEN** - **they know their child better than anyone**

The child benefits most when adults are united.

Want more support?

At Bright Path, I work with both families and schools to:

- Offer 1:1 parent support for behaviour, school challenges or SEMH
- Provide restorative mediation between home and school
- Deliver training and workshops on relational and inclusive practice

If you have a child facing **exclusion, a breakdown in communication or ongoing behaviour issues** — I can help

Bright Path is founded from lived experience and I'm here to reduce exclusions, build trust, and support children through **connection — not control.**

Founded on values of relationship, early intervention and inclusion, Bright Path bridges the gap between families and schools with practical tools and compassionate support.

Let's change the story for our children — together.

Visit my Website
Email me at brightpathmediation@outlook.com
Or book a free call here