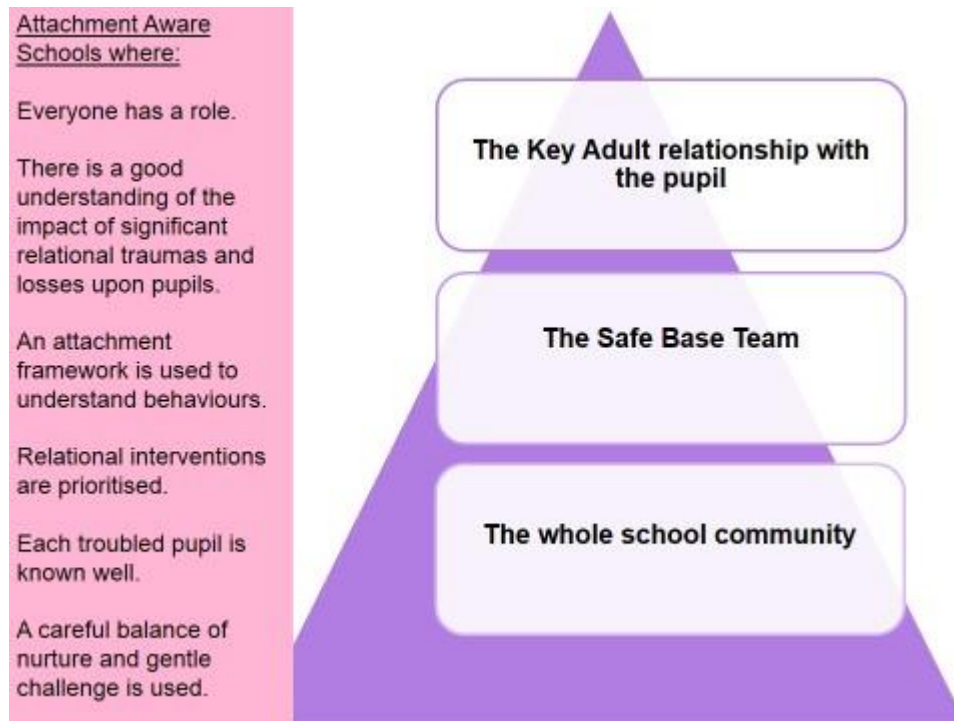


Attachment Aware Schools - <http://theyellowkite.co.uk/>

What is an Attachment Aware School?



An Attachment Aware School is one where the whole staff:

- Have a good understanding of the impact of significant relational traumas and losses upon pupils
- Have attachment principles firmly embedded within all their policies
- Use an attachment framework to understand behaviours
- Know who the troubled pupils are in their school
- Prioritise employing and supporting key adults to build special relationships with troubled pupils
- Allocate a Safe Base team (4/5) to the pupil – Key Adult, Teacher/Form tutor, INCO/SENCO, Assistant Head/Head of Year, Head teacher who ensure consistency of approach
- Engage in quality staff care to optimise care giving capacities and ensure stability and retention of staff
- Research the starting point of pupils in their care, tracing back over their lives from pregnancy onwards to reflect upon the possible impact of relational traumas and losses experienced
- Know the developmental age of the pupils in their care differentiating emotional and social tasks and expectations
- Develop individual development plans for individual pupils that run over a course of 2-3 years
- Engage in relentless care
- Direct any conflicts or difficulties with the pupil through the Safe Base team allocated rather than getting too involved themselves
- Facilitate relational proximity rather than distance at times of difficulty with the pupil
- Integrate and channel any advices from outside agencies into the IDP via the Key adult and/or Safe Base team

- Engage in a careful balance of both nurture and gentle challenge to support troubled pupils into learned security
- Work closely with the family to develop a shared understanding of the pupil reflecting on possible stressors and calmers.

And are addressing the developmental vulnerabilities of troubled pupils.

2) Developmental vulnerability

Pupils who have experienced significant relational traumas and losses in their short lives to date often have developmental vulnerabilities in the following areas – in their executive functioning, regulation and psychological development. An Attachment Aware School ensures that these three areas are attended to by the KA, Safe Base Team and whole staff

Developmental vulnerability (1) – Executive functioning:

- Provide increased structure and supervision for individual pupil
- Prepare pupils for all kinds of transitions big and small, allowing additional processing time
- Use co-modelling regularly
- Create exit plans to use together with their pupils for times of overwhelm
- Take responsibility, hold boundaries and use parts language rather than using sanctions and threats
- Use chunking, writing frames, checklists and multi sensory cues to support organisational vulnerability
- KAs facilitate reparative opportunities for when things go wrong together with their focused pupil
- Think out loud making connections on behalf of the pupil
- Model how to remember

Developmental vulnerability (2) – Regulation:

- Watch the state continuum of the pupils in their care and use appropriate state dependent interventions
- Use sensory breaks regularly throughout the school day to dampen down stress and to enable pupils to engage in the pre frontal cortex part of their brain to optimise learning.
- Activate and energise troubled pupils who are switching off
- Down regulate troubled pupils who are engaging in hyper active behaviours
- Build in pauses and down time during the school day to support pupils manage overwhelm/sensory overload
- Set up Safe Spaces for pupils to use together with their Key Adults for Time In.
- Increase sensory comfort in their classrooms and school environment to support those who have experienced relational traumas and losses
- Use co-regulation with troubled pupils to settle them
- Reflect upon stressors and calmers for individual pupils to inform practice and optimise learning opportunities

Developmental vulnerability (3) – Psychological development:

- Engage in regular check ins with individual pupils throughout the school day and week
- Engage in sensitive attuned care

- Engage in over compensatory empathy
- Prioritise relational interventions
- Are flexible and creative in their interventions
- Use parts pictures and language
- Encourage playfulness and fun in all interactions and learning
- Cultivate curiosity in staff and pupils about why we might do what we do
- Commentate rather than interrogate
- Use reflective dialoguing including wondering aloud, noticing out loud, connecting phrases
- Use specific praise
- Check back understanding of other's motives and intentions, not making any assumptions
- Facilitate over compensatory experiences for developing a pupil's sense of safety, security and stability in school
- Use transitional objects and connector phrases to support the pupil to know they can be 'kept in mind' in and out of school
- Focus on building the pupil up
- Facilitate opportunities to develop the pupil's strengths. For example creative folder for daily pictures if artistic.
- Use containing doubling, role play, social stories, comic strips and the hand of options to support social understanding.
- Facilitate opportunities for the pupil and his/her KA to build bonds of attachment. For example through Theraplay, PACE and DDP informed practices.
- Use relational influence rather than rewards

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