



POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND ETHOS POLICY

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1. Introduction to the Policy

This policy sets out the framework, principles, and ethos that **Byram House** follows to build positive relationships with children and young people in our care, to create a nurturing, therapeutic environment, and to promote a culture of respect, trust, and inclusion. The policy applies to all staff, agency workers, volunteers, and contractors working at Byram House, whether at 62 Deighton Road, 66 Deighton Road, or elsewhere.

The Home is Byram House, which comprises the two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road. This policy applies equally across both residences.

Children placed in Byram House will be loved, nurtured, happy, healthy, safe from harm, and able to develop, thrive, and fulfil their potential. Each child is valued as an individual with talents, strengths, and capabilities that can develop over time. Adults will be attentive to children's needs, supporting emotional, mental, and physical health, repairing earlier damage to self-esteem, and encouraging friendships.

This policy is based on the **Positive Relationships Standard** (Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, Regulation 11) and is informed by **Attachment and Trauma Informed Care (ATIC)**, the **Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) 2026**, and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure children develop relationships based on mutual respect, trust, and understanding of acceptable behaviour.
- Help children understand personal, sexual, and social relationships, and recognise harmful or exploitative relationships.
- Equip staff with the skills to interpret behaviour as communication, de-escalate conflict, and build trusting relationships.
- Create a sense of belonging, safety, and predictability for every child.
- Promote the child's voice in all aspects of care planning and daily life.
- Encourage contact with families and communities (where safe and in the child's best interests).
- Prohibit play fighting and ensure rough-and-tumble play is managed safely.

2. How this Policy Benefits the Home

This Positive Relationships and Ethos Policy benefits Byram House in the following ways:

- **Legal Compliance** – It ensures the home meets the **Positive Relationships Standard** (Regulation 11 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015) and aligns with **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, the **SCCIF 2026**, and the **Equality Act 2010**.
- **Therapeutic Environment** – It embeds **Attachment and Trauma Informed Care** (ATIC) principles, enabling staff to understand how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), attachment patterns, and trauma affect children's behaviour and relationships.
- **Child-Centred** – It places the child's voice at the centre, through house meetings, key working, Regulation 44/45 consultations, and regular feedback.
- **Clear Boundaries** – It distinguishes between acceptable physical contact (e.g., hugs, handshakes) and prohibited behaviour (e.g., play fighting, any physical play that is non-consensual or could trigger trauma). It provides guidance on rough-and-tumble play versus play fighting.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** – It commits to anti-discriminatory practice, challenging racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, disablism, and other forms of discrimination, and respecting cultural and religious identities.
- **Promoting Independence and Education** – It supports children to become active members of their community, maintain cultural links, and achieve educational potential (PEPs).
- **Risk Management** – It requires individual ISPs to assess children's responses to play and physical contact, and to specify supervision levels.
- **Inspection Readiness** – The SCCIF 2026 places strong emphasis on children's lived experience, positive relationships, and staff's ability to create a nurturing environment. This policy provides clear evidence.
- **Training Framework** – It sets out annual training for staff on ATIC, de-escalation, positive behaviour support, and safe touch.

3. Definitions & Legislation

3.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
Home	Byram House, the children's home registered with Ofsted, comprising two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.
Company	IMS Care LTD, the registered provider and legal entity responsible for operating Byram House.
Byram House	The name used throughout this policy to refer to the home and its staff.
Positive Relationships Standard	Regulation 11 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 – children are helped to develop relationships based on mutual respect, trust, understanding of acceptable behaviour, and positive responses to others.
Attachment and Trauma Informed Care (ATIC)	A therapeutic framework that recognises the impact of early adverse experiences and attachment disruptions, and uses empathy, curiosity, and consistency to help children heal.
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	Traumatic events in childhood (e.g., abuse, neglect, domestic violence, parental separation) that increase the risk of poor outcomes.
Rough and Tumble Play	Voluntary, friendly, non-aggressive physical play (e.g., chasing, spinning, tumbling, dancing) that helps develop social and physical skills.
Play Fighting	Play that imitates fighting and involves direct physical contact (e.g., hitting, kicking, head locks) that may not be consensual and can trigger trauma responses. Prohibited.

De-escalation	Techniques used to reduce conflict, calm emotions, and prevent escalation to violence.
Post-Crisis Support	Debriefing and reflection after an incident, focusing on the child's feelings, what worked, and learning for the future.

3.2 Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance

Legislation / Guidance	Key Provisions	Relevance to this Policy
Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015	Regulation 11 – Positive Relationships Standard. Regulation 23 – Health and Wellbeing. Quality Standards – Relationships, behaviour management, safeguarding.	This policy operationalises Regulation 11, setting out how the home builds positive relationships.
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	Emphasises the importance of safe, stable, nurturing relationships for looked-after children.	The home's focus on ATIC and attachment contributes to safeguarding.
Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026	Effective 1 April 2026. Inspects children's lived experience, quality of relationships, and whether children feel safe and valued.	Inspectors will evaluate the home's ethos, staff-child relationships, and how the home promotes positive behaviour.
Equality Act 2010	Protects children from discrimination on grounds of race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, etc.	The home must proactively challenge discrimination and promote inclusion.

Human Rights Act 1998	Article 8 – right to private and family life; Article 14 – prohibition of discrimination.	The home must respect children's family relationships and cultural identity.
Children Act 1989	Section 22 – duty to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. Section 33 – parental responsibility for looked-after children.	The home must act in the child's best interests, promoting contact with families where appropriate.
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026	Royal Assent 29 April 2026. Strengthens provisions for looked-after children's health and educational outcomes.	Supports the home's commitment to health and education (PEPs).

4. The Policy

4.1 Our Ethos and Core Values

At Byram House, we believe that every child deserves to feel loved, valued, and safe. Our ethos is built on:

- **Unconditional positive regard** – accepting each child as they are, regardless of their past or behaviour.
- **Consistency and emotional predictability** – staff model calm, reliable behaviour so children feel secure.
- **Curiosity, acceptance, and empathy (PACE)** – we use playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, and empathy in all interactions.
- **Child-centred practice** – the child's voice is central to all decisions.
- **Strength-based approach** – we recognise each child's talents, strengths, and capacity to grow.

4.2 Positive Relationships Standard (Regulation 11)

The Positive Relationships Standard requires that children are helped to develop, and benefit from, relationships based on:

- Mutual respect and trust.
- An understanding about acceptable behaviour.
- Positive responses to other children and adults.

The Registered Manager must ensure that staff:

- Meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs as set out in their ISP and care plan.
- Help each child develop socially aware behaviour.
- Encourage each child to take responsibility for their behaviour (according to age and understanding).
- Help each child develop skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm.
- Communicate expectations clearly and ensure the child understands.

- Help children understand personal, sexual, and social relationships – how they can be supportive or harmful, and how to recognise and withdraw from exploitative relationships.
- Strive to gain each child's respect and trust.
- Understand that children's previous experiences and emotions are communicated through behaviour, and develop skills to interpret this.
- Receive supervision and support to manage their own feelings and responses.
- De-escalate confrontations or potentially violent behaviour.
- Understand and communicate that bullying is unacceptable, and have skills to recognise and deal with it.

4.3 Attachment and Trauma Informed Care (ATIC)

All staff receive training on **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**, attachment theory, and the impact of trauma on child development. This enables staff to:

- Recognise that challenging behaviour is often a symptom of distress, not deliberate defiance.
- Respond with empathy and curiosity, not punishment.
- Support children to regulate their emotions and gradually develop self-control.
- Avoid re-traumatising children through harsh or punitive responses.

The home uses a **relationship-based, therapeutic approach** that integrates ATIC into daily practice: key working, community gatherings, post-crisis support, and one-to-one reflective conversations.

4.4 Enhancing Self-Perception and Belonging

We aim to replace memories of rejection and loss with experiences of acceptance and belonging by:

- Creating a **warm family environment** where children's opinions are central. Changes are democratically agreed where possible.
- **Regular consultation** – daily community “get-togethers”, key work, Regulation 44 visits, and Regulation 45 reviews.
- **Avoiding institutional jargon** – we call the home “Byram House”, not “the unit”. Bedrooms are personalised.
- **Applying a parental perspective** – staff act as “good enough parents”.
- **Encouraging community participation** – links with local clubs, sports, leisure, and faith groups.
- **Supporting cultural and religious affiliation** – celebrating festivals, providing dietary and dress options.

4.5 Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships

Behaviour management strategies include:

- **Primary prevention** – building strong relationships, predictable routines, and meeting needs before crisis.
- **Reinforcing positive behaviour** – praise, rewards, and recognition.
- **De-escalation** – calm, low-key responses to prevent escalation (see Behaviour Support Policy).
- **Post-crisis support** – debrief with the child (using PACE) and with staff, focusing on learning and relationship repair.
- **Consequences** – fair, reasonable, and understood by all (never punitive or humiliating).

Sanctions (where used) are proportionate, time-limited, and recorded in the ISP. They never include:

- Deprivation of food, drink, or warmth.
- Physical punishment (illegal).
- Locking in a room.

Staff are trained to **manage their own feelings** through supervision, reflective practice, and team support.

4.6 Play, Leisure and Recreation (including Rough and Tumble vs Play Fighting)

Play is fundamental to children's development. Staff will support a range of play types (independent, parallel, associative, cooperative, competitive, constructive, dramatic, physical) appropriate to the child's needs and ISP.

Rough and Tumble Play (voluntary, friendly, non-aggressive physical play such as chasing, tumbling, dancing) may be permitted if:

- The child's ISP includes a positive assessment of their ability to engage safely.
- All participants consent and can stop when asked.
- It does not escalate into aggression or cause harm.
- It does not trigger trauma responses (staff to assess each child's history).

Play Fighting is strictly prohibited. Play fighting is defined as:

- Imitating fighting with direct physical contact (e.g., hitting, kicking, head locks, wrestling).
- Non-consensual contact or contact that may not be reciprocal.
- Any play that could be interpreted as violent or exploitative.

Because many of our children have experienced trauma, play fighting can trigger fight-or-flight responses and cause re-traumatisation. It will not be allowed between children, or between adults and children.

Assessment and supervision:

- Each child's ISP will assess their response to physical play and specify supervision levels.
- If a child reports being an unwilling participant, the activity will be reviewed.
- If bruising or injury occurs that suggests an unacceptable level of force, play will be suspended while a risk and safety assessment takes place.
- Staff will challenge any play fighting observed and separate children if necessary.

Leisure and recreation: Children are supported to participate in a range of activities (sports, arts, community events). Birthdays, name days, and religious/cultural festivals are celebrated. There is a balance between free and structured time.

4.7 Physical Contact and Safe Touch

Physical contact is part of building warm, trusting relationships. Staff will:

- Use **appropriate physical contact** – hugs (side-on, with consent), hand on shoulder, handshake, guiding arm.
- **Consult each child** – during the first weeks, discuss their feelings about touch, and document consent in the ISP.
- **Avoid any contact that could be misinterpreted** – no intimate touching, no lingering touch, no touch in private without purpose.
- **Never engage in play fighting** with children.

Prohibited contact: Any contact that is sexualised, patronising, intrusive, or likely to cause distress. Any accidental intimate contact (e.g., when assisting with intimate care) must be reported and recorded.

4.8 Children's Wishes and Feelings (Voice of the Child)

We actively seek children's views in:

- Keyworker sessions.
- Statutory reviews (Care Plan reviews).
- House meetings / community gatherings.
- Regulation 44 independent visitor conversations.
- Complaints and compliments processes.

Children are provided with information about how to contact the **Children's Rights Director**, the **Children's Rights Officer** (within the placing authority), or an **Independent Advocate**. No child is assumed unable to communicate; staff use appropriate methods (e.g., communication aids, drawings, play).

4.9 Promoting Contact and Family Relationships

Where it is in the child's best interests (and consistent with the care plan), the home will:

- Encourage and facilitate meaningful contact with birth parents, wider family, and friends.
- Provide suitable spaces for family contact (private room comfortable for visits).
- Work with parents and those with parental responsibility to involve them in the child's daily life (e.g., school events, healthcare decisions).
- Maintain links with the child's community of origin (e.g., place of worship, cultural groups).

If contact is not permitted (e.g., by court order), the home will support the child to understand why, and seek alternative ways to maintain identity and heritage.

4.10 Diversity, Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion

Byram House actively challenges all forms of discrimination, injustice, or inequality. We are committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination on grounds of race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, religion, belief, sexual orientation, age, or social class.
- Respecting the child's language, culture, and religious practices (e.g., arranging meals that meet dietary requirements, celebrating festivals).
- Training staff to recognise discriminatory practice and intervene confidently.

- Zero tolerance for racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, disablism, or any form of hate speech – recorded as incidents and responded to as safeguarding concerns where necessary.

4.11 Health, Education and Independence

Health: We promote children's healthcare, including physical, emotional, and psychological health. Individual Health Care Plans are used for specific known needs (e.g., diabetes, epilepsy). Children receive guidance on sexual health, smoking, drugs, solvents, and personal care.

Education: We support educational achievement by:

- Ensuring each child has a **Personal Education Plan (PEP)** reviewed regularly.
- Supporting homework and coursework.
- Working with teachers, social workers, and virtual school heads.
- Promoting a positive learning environment within the home.

Independence: We encourage independence appropriate to age and understanding, including life skills (cooking, budgeting, washing) and preparation for leaving care. Pathway Plans are developed in partnership with the leaving care team.

4.12 Monitoring and Accountability

- **Social worker visits** – children receive regular visits from their social worker to monitor placement suitability.
- **Regulation 44 independent visitor** – visits monthly, unannounced, and reports on relationships and ethos.
- **Regulation 45 report** – the Registered Manager evaluates the quality of care, including relationships and children's views.
- **Team meetings and supervision** – regular reflection on relationship-building and any challenges.

The home's effectiveness in promoting positive relationships is measured through:

- Feedback from children (via surveys, house meetings).
- Reduction in incidents of violence, bullying, and self-harm.
- Positive Ofsted inspection outcomes.
- Stable placements and improved educational/health outcomes.

5. How the Home Trains its Staff About this Policy

Byram House provides structured training to ensure all staff understand and can implement this Positive Relationships and Ethos Policy effectively.

Training Element	Frequency	Method / Content
Induction	Upon appointment	Face-to-face training covering: the Positive Relationships Standard (Regulation 11), Attachment and Trauma Informed Care (ATIC), PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy), de-escalation, physical contact guidelines, prohibition of play fighting, voice of the child, diversity and anti-discrimination, and the dual-site operation (62 & 66 Deighton Road).
Annual refresher	Every 12 months	Classroom or virtual session covering updates to legislation (SCCIF 2026, Working Together 2026), case studies on trauma-informed responses, and refresher on play boundaries.

ATIC / trauma-informed practice	At induction and biennially	Training on ACEs, attachment theory, and responding to behaviour as communication.
De-escalation and conflict resolution	Annually	Practical training on verbal de-escalation, calm approaches, and avoiding power struggles.
Play and physical boundaries	At induction and biennially	Training on distinguishing rough-and-tumble from play fighting, assessing children's capacity for physical play, and recording in ISPs.
Anti-discrimination and diversity	Annually	Training on challenging discrimination, cultural competence, and promoting inclusion.
Record keeping (ISP, care plan)	At induction and refresh	Training on documenting children's views, consent for touch, and play supervision levels.

Staff are required to:

- Read and sign this policy annually.
- Complete all mandatory training.
- Never engage in play fighting with children.
- Use PACE in all interactions.
- Report any discriminatory behaviour or unsafe play immediately.

6. Related Policies and Guidance

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy
- Personal and Intimate Care Policy
- Sexual Health and Relationships Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026

7. Policy Approval and Review Details



Home	Byram House	
Reviewed by	Danyaal Iqbal / Mustafa Amin	Deputy Manager / Registered Manager
Approved by	Stacey Wagstaffe	Responsible Individual
Date	May 2026	