

Relational Practice in Schools - Team Me: Touch Base: 1 Trusted Adult

**3 approaches to support inclusion - create a safe base for vulnerable children.
Just a few minutes a day creates positive change.**



1. Team Me

What's 'Team Me'?

Team Me is an attachment-aware, 'team around the pupil' approach for pupils who have experienced adversity. Quite often schools are on the way to a **Team Me** approach, **this guide helps to formalise and strengthen good practice.**

- ✓ **Team Me** provides a greater sense of connection and belonging for pupils who have experienced instability, impermanency, and reduced safety.
- ✓ **Team Me** aims to build safety, stability, connection and a more predictable world around a pupil.
- ✓ **Team Me** is best used in conjunction with a whole school relational and trauma-informed approach and training, such as Cambridgeshire's Recovery through Relationships.
- ✓ **Team Me** can be offered at different levels of intensity depending on the needs of the pupil. It aims to achieve better outcomes for pupils through coordinated support - so everyone is working together, focusing on connection building and increasing the pupil's sense of safety and belonging.
- ✓ **Team Me** works well in Primary, Secondary and Specialist schools. Think of it as providing a **family of support** within school. Or setting up a small 'garden' in a big 'town'.
- ✓ For the adults in school, **Team Me** provides a safe space to talk, collaborate, and find professional support.

Who Needs a Team Me?

- ✓ **Team Me** is suitable for pupils who have experienced ACE's (adverse childhood experiences), loss and trauma, reduced safety; hence need more relational support.
- ✓ It's suitable for pupils who show dysregulated behaviours and are experiencing disconnection from adults and/or peers.
- ✓ **Team Me** is recommended as a proactive approach for care-experienced children, and children who are experiencing adversity. Offering more relational support increases a child's sense of safety, belonging, regulation, and increases engagement and positive outcomes.
- ✓ **Team Me** offers another option when other approaches aren't working, fitting within your graduated response



How to set- up a Team Me?

Building a Team

- ✓ School identifies at least 3 members of staff. This is the Class/Form Tutor, Key Adult(s), and a Senior Staff Member. Their primary role is to provide relational connection with their Team Me pupil.
- ✓ The staff members are most likely to have already been involved in supporting the pupil, or the pupil has identified them as trusted adults, formalising and strengthening what's often already happening in school.

Working in Partnership with Parents/ Carers

- ✓ The team also works in partnership with the parents/carers. This includes setting-up a home-school link and a clear home-school communication system, celebrating positives and resolving set-backs.
- ✓ The Senior Lead teacher will co-ordinate Team Me, make contact and discuss Team Me with parents/ carers, gather parent/carers views, ensure agreement, plan regular home-school communication method, and how Team Me will be reviewed with the parents/carers.
- ✓ Home-school communication is arranged (at a minimum this should be a weekly communication, brief comments of positive feedback about the pupil's week in school). Wider staff are encouraged to notice and feedback the positives, e.g. completing a small job in school, putting hand-up in class etc.
- ✓ School and home also decide on a separate method to communicate any sensitive information, e.g. illnesses, recent contact with birth family, and how setbacks will be communicated and resolved - in a timely and effective manner.
- ✓ A home-school review is also recommended, however, if there has been ongoing communication as above, reviews do not need to be long, the purpose of the review is to take a broader view, and plan next steps, as needed. This review could be part of ongoing wider reviews, for example where Team Me has been named as a relational approach within an education plan e.g. Personal Education Plan (PEP), or an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan).

Other Initial Steps

- ✓ The Team Me teaching staff hold an initial longer meeting to understand the young person's story, strengths and barriers; parent/carers views; clarify roles and tasks; record actions and futures dates to meet and review and other practical arrangements.

At a minimum the teaching staff Team Me reviews should be once every half-term, with Team Me senior lead, key teacher and key adult(s) all present.

- ✓ Once the team is set-up, it's a good idea to offer your pupil a personalised, visual of who is in their Team Me as well as the clear arrangement to meet the Key Adult.
- ✓ This can be recorded on an A4 sheet for the pupil to keep with a team photo; displayed on a wall board in the pastoral room, inside a locker, and at home - somewhere the child feels are safe and/or visits, as appropriate.
- ✓ Let the rest of the school staff know about the Team Me, brief purpose and how they can communicate positives or a concern with the team around the pupil.

What are the roles in Team Me?

- ✓ The 3 roles in Team Me are the **Key Teacher, Key Adult(s), and Senior Teacher**, each team member has a specific role (for more detail, see L. Bomber's Attachment-Aware School Series, books 1-3).
- ✓ In brief, the **Key Adult(s)** provides the relational 1-1 pupil support.

The Key Adult(s) has the specific role of providing relationship and connection. This is not learning support, this is relationship building time, a time for the pupil to touch-base with their key trusted adult(s). The key trusted adult acts as a 'go-to' person for the young person, who the pupil can turn to for connection and support. Key trusted adult(s) will need regular opportunity for professional support and training. Please refer to Bomber's book 1 for more information on the Key Adult role. (Note there may be 2 named key adults).

- ✓ The **Key Teacher's** (Class / Form Tutor) focus is teaching and learning arrangements needed to help the pupil engage and learn.
- ✓ The **Senior Teacher's** role is to lead and co-ordinate the team, communicate with home and wider staff, ensure resources are available, make links with the Senior Leadership Team, ensure meetings and reviews are held, as well as lead on any linked strategic, professional development and training needs.
- ✓ The adults in the team should not be the people who give the pupil significant consequences for behaviour. Instead, the adults in the team remind their young person of the boundaries that school have, and of the good choices available to them within those boundaries.
- ✓ The main task of the team is to enhance safety, belonging and connection for the pupil, to problem solve as a team, mediate with other colleagues on the pupil's behalf, to ensure that pupil is supported, settled and engaged in learning and wider school life.

Do we need to talk about the Trauma?

- ✓ Many children will not talk about their trauma, and that's OK. Remember that the most important thing we can do is to create a safe environment for our children.
- ✓ If a young person does talk about a traumatic experience, we listen and respond appropriately, ensuring they feel safe and connected.
- ✓ Often children can't tell us about their trauma, they show us through their behaviour. A strong network of relationships is a strong protective factor for vulnerable children, and Team Me helps build these networks of connection and support.
- ✓ NICE guidance recommends strong relationships around children in care as a primary intervention, if therapy is being considered NICE recommends specialist LAC CAMHS involvement.

How does Team Me fit in with Plans and Evaluation?

- ✓ Team Me is an approach which should fit in with existing systems of evaluation and recording of the pupil support plan, and so a Team Me should not create more paperwork.

In a situation where a pupil mistrusts, some relational outcomes might be

Jake will engage in playful connection, once a week, with at least one trusted adult in school.

Jake will approach at least one adult and ask for help when needed, during playtimes.

Jake will put up his hand to contribute and/or ask for help, in class, once a day.

What else can we do to encourage best outcomes?

- ✓ In brief, Team Me encourages the best outcomes by:-
- ✓ **Keeping Boundaries** - reminding the CYP of the school 'rules' expectations and the positive choices they have in a situation. But not being the ones to give consequences, consequences should be carried out by other members of staff.
- ✓ **Working in partnership to settle the pupil** - reconnecting with the pupil after an exclusion, weekend, absence, holidays, other transition points, or a when consequence has been given.
- ✓ **Resilience building**— by building a safe, strong, stable, network of adults who notice, connect, advocate and encourage the young person's strengths.
(The reason the pupil needs a Team Me is linked to reduced safety, broken trust and disrupted attachments/relationships, the pupil needs to experience the opposite of this. So, if a member of the team becomes ill or leaves, then a new member of the Team Me is identified as early as possible and transitioned into the team).
- ✓ **Understanding that Change is up and down** – adversity, loss and trauma is often ongoing, this means that change is not a smooth, straight line, and takes years not weeks or months - knowing this helps to encourage patient persistence and guards against discouragement.

How much time does Team Me take?

- ✓ Setting up a Team Me takes time. But if you look at the time already being used for a disengaged and/or dysregulated pupil, responding more proactively should mean you will be spending **less & less time on 'firefighting' and more time on the successes**. (Not every child will need a Team Me, some might be better matched with a Touch Base approach).
- ✓ **The level of intensity should match the pupil's need, and what's possible in your school.** Here is some guidance:

Times	Actions
30- 45 minutes then 20- 30 minutes / half-term	Setting up the first Team Me meeting, then 20- 30 minutes / half-termly, to review as a staff Team Me, where there is an 'even keel'.
10-15 minutes	for initial pupil + Team Me gathering (meeting).
<5 min/day	key staff greet, ensure check-in/connection with pupil, formally and informally.
Time variable - dependent on child's needs, 5 minutes building to 30 mins a week	Key Adult(s) 1-1 relationship building time with pupil, in line with child need. (Note this is relationship building time, needed to help 'settle children to learning', this is different to learning support).
10 minutes weekly	Focused feedback time with parent /carer via agreed home school communication system, when there is stability (even keel)
5-15 min every half-term	pupil + Team Me - time to connect, share a snack, play a game, check-in, celebrate success.
20 minutes termly	review with parent / carer, alongside regular home-school communication.
30 minutes monthly and as needed	Time offered by senior teacher, to support and guide Key Adult in their role.

What if the pupil doesn't want a Team Me?

- ✓ A Team Me is usually already informally happening within the school, adapt to match the child's needs and views.
- ✓ If a pupil refuses, then consider a more informal Touchbase approach.

What are the signs that it's working?

- Less consequences for disruptions
- Less withdrawn behaviours.
- More evidence of engagement and connection.
- More positive feedback from pupil, increased sense of safety and belonging.
- More positive feedback from teaching staff.
- More positive feedback from home.
- More even keel.
- Less reactive, emergency situations and urgent meetings.

What are the signs that it's not working?

- Meetings aren't being held, (time and capacity, or unclear arrangements).
- Wider staff not aware of pupil needs and how Team Me works.
- Pupil needs continue, as the need has not been met, yet.
- Offering **learning support**, when what is needed is **relational support**.
- Stopping too soon as soon as you have a 'calm week'.
- A member of the Team Me giving a consequence and causing confusion for the pupil as to how they feel about the member of the Team Me.
- The whole Team Me not being on site, or available to meet as agreed.
- Times of transition overlooked, e.g. coming into care, moving school/setting, beginning and end of day / week; term breaks, summer holidays, change of members of Team Me.

If the situation is still reactive, this suggests an unmet need still needs to be met, so more shared understanding is required.

Do we need to stick to the suggested approach (suggested by Louise Bomber, LB)

- ✓ LB approach from her Attachment Aware School Series offers a good basis for the Team Me approach; schools can then 'hang it' on their schools' systems and process of communication, policies etc.

How long does a pupil need a Team Me?

- ✓ If the pupil has experienced significant trauma, disruption and instability, where trust has been abused, and key people lost in their lives, then meeting this need will take longer than perhaps first realised.
- ✓ It may be some pupils will require a Team Me for more than a year, some pupils may respond to a term and then manage with a regular key adult touch-base level of support.
- ✓ It also depends on the level of relational approaches within your setting, the more that safety, regulation, belonging and connection is fostered in your setting, the more relational universal support will be available to your young person.
- ✓ Once you think a pupil has settled and responded you could look at trialling a fortnightly 1-1, but if things decline, then respond quickly and resume support.

2. Touch Base

- ✓ Some pupils may not need a full Team Me or may have had a Team Me and are able to manage with less intensive support.
- ✓ In these circumstances a pupil might best be supported by a Key Adult who meets them 1-1 on a regular basis offering relational connection (a once weekly touch-base minimum). This approach is flexible but should match the needs of the young person, otherwise it won't work. It can be offered daily, more than once a day, twice or more than twice a week, and weekly.
- ✓ Key adults involved in this work will need to be supported by a senior member of staff who is able to understand the challenges presented by children who are experiencing adversity, loss and trauma.

3. One Trusted Adult

- ✓ 1 Trusted Adult is a **proactive universal approach** upskilling all adults in school to be that 1 Trusted Adult. The benefit of having this universal approach is it increases relational practice and support across your school community, including transport and lunchtimes,
- ✓ It offers benefit to all children whose needs are known and emerging, or not at a level that would require a more intensive approach.
- ✓ The approach offers every pupil connection, empowerment and guidance to respect boundaries in your school.
- ✓ [OGA2025.pdf](#) [draft-one-good-adult-implementation-guidance.pdf](#) [One Trusted Adult](#)

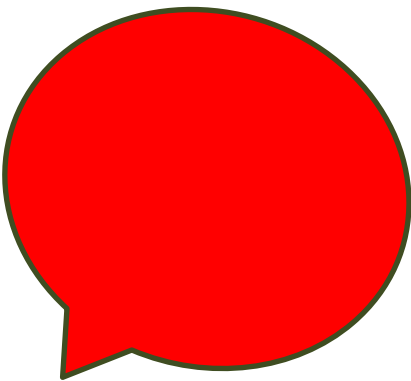
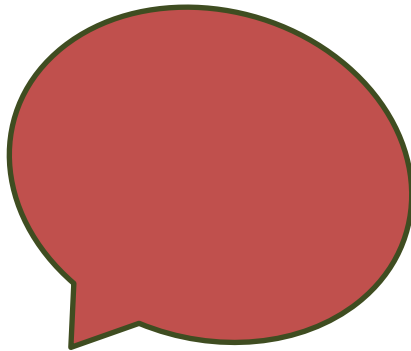
(See Following Pages for Resources)

SETTING-UP TEAM ME CHECKLIST

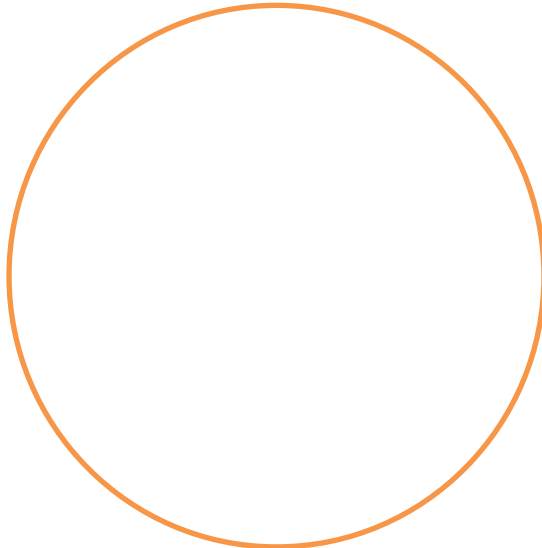
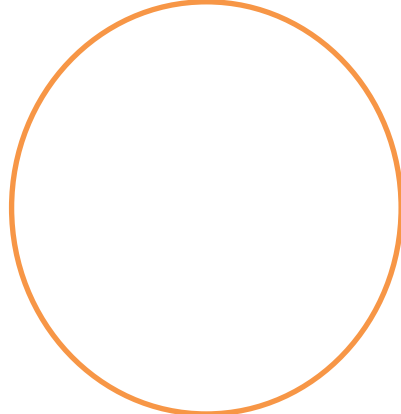
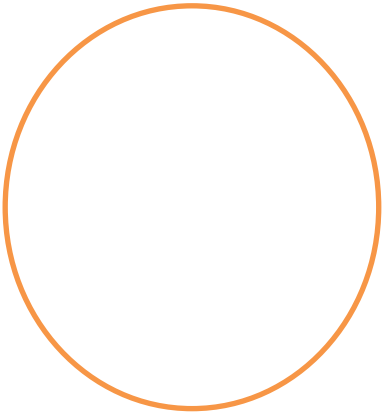


1	Pupil identified, Team Me discussed and agreed with parent/carer and pupil.	
2	Key Adult (KA), Senior Teacher, and Class/Form Teacher agreed.	
3	1st Team Me meeting held - with staff members only.	
4	Staff Team Me regular review meetings agreed and booked.	
5	1 st Team Me meeting + pupil held, following Team Me + pupil meetings booked.	
6	Pupil has named his/her team, pupil record set-up e.g. photo of team in locker/home.	
7	Home school communication system set-up.	
8	Parent/carers review arrangement set-up.	
9	Relevant staff aware of pupil's Team Me, purpose, and how to communicate with Team Me	
10	Teachers making daily brief positive connections: greeting, positive noticing etc	
11	KA is meeting regularly with pupil,	
12	KA professional support arrangements set-up	

What My Team Does For Me....



Annie's Team



Annie

