

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE · ALL GRADES

# Daily Safety Routines

Build felt safety in

## What 'felt safety' is

Felt safety isn't the same as actual safety. A child can be in an objectively safe environment and still feel unsafe. For children with trauma backgrounds, the body's threat-detection system stays active even in safe places — it has to be retrained. Felt safety is built through small, consistent, daily acts that signal to the nervous system: 'this place is reliable, you don't need to be scanning for danger right now.' These acts don't take long. They do need to be CONSISTENT.

## Morning entry

| Routine   | Doing it? |
|---|-----------|
| I greet every child by name at the door                     | _____     |
| I make eye contact and smile                                | _____     |
| The classroom looks the same most days                      | _____     |
| Children know where to put their things                     | _____     |
| The first task is consistent (e.g. soft start morning work) | _____     |
| Music or other sensory cues are predictable                 | _____     |
| Vulnerable children are checked in with quietly             | _____     |

## Transitions



| Routine  | Doing it? |
|--|-----------|
| I give 5-minute warnings before transitions            | _____     |
| I use the same signal each time (chime, phrase, music) | _____     |
| Visual timetable shows what's coming next              | _____     |
| Vulnerable children get personal warnings              | _____     |
| Changes to routine are flagged in advance              | _____     |
| Supply teachers know our routines                      | _____     |

## During lessons

| Routine   | Doing it? |
|---|-----------|
| My voice is calm even when behavior is tricky     | _____     |
| I avoid public corrections / shaming              | _____     |
| Movement breaks are built in                      | _____     |
| Children have a quiet alternative if overwhelmed  | _____     |
| I check in 1:1 with vulnerable children regularly | _____     |
| Children know how to ask for help                 | _____     |

## Endings — break, lunch, end of day

| Routine  | Doing it? |
|--|-----------|
| The end of every session has a clear marker        | _____     |
| Children leave the room calmly                     | _____     |
| End-of-day routine is consistent                   | _____     |
| I say goodbye to each child individually           | _____     |
| Vulnerable children get a clear 'see you tomorrow' | _____     |
| Long weekends/holidays are flagged in advance      | _____     |



## What 'consistency' means in practice

It doesn't mean perfect. Children don't need a rigid robot teacher. They need an adult who's predictably WARM, predictably calm under pressure, predictably available when they need help. What throws traumatised children most is INCONSISTENCY of warmth — being warm one day and cold the next, especially after THEIR mistake. They learn relational reliability is real when warmth survives ruptures. One of the most regulating things a teacher can do is be warmly the same after a child has misbehaved. Not pretending it didn't happen — but signalling that the relationship survived.

## When you can't be consistent

We're human. We get tired, distracted, dysregulated ourselves. When you've been short with a vulnerable child, repair quickly: • 'Sorry I was sharp with you earlier.' • 'I was tired — that wasn't fair.' • 'We're OK.' For children whose families have not modelled repair, witnessing a teacher repair a rupture may be the first time they've seen it. It's profoundly regulating. Not 'soft' — actively therapeutic.

