PODCAST series
Leadership in Focus

Episode 1 – Relational Trust
Discussion guide

The School Leadership Institute's Leadership in Focus podcast series shines a spotlight on school leaders and explores the key issues and challenges they face. This episode focuses on relational trust: what it is and why it matters for school leaders.

Episode 1 – Relational Trust 16:20 mins

Speakers

- **Joanne Jarvis**: SLI Director and host of the series

- **Dr Kylie Lipscombe**: senior lecturer and researcher in the School of Education at the University of Wollongong

- **Karen Maraga**: SLI Principal

Discussion points

For individuals

- What is relational trust?

- Why is relational trust important in schools?

- What does it look like in practice in your context?

- Describe a recent example at your school that has involved relational trust: 'respecting, caring for and believing in the honesty and competency of our colleagues and our leaders'.

- Dr Kylie Lipscombe refers to the complexity of relational trust. Outline some of the responsibilities and obligations that are 'both personally and professionally beneficial' that are part of a typical school day.

For teams

- Role play situations where relational trust is shown between a principal and:
  – a teacher
  – a parent
  – a student.

- Brainstorm a list of team norms that demonstrate attention to working well together. Two mentioned in the podcast are: being on time to meetings and not accessing emails during meetings. What else would you add?

- How can you create and maintain the conditions that enable relational trust to be sustained in your school community? Consider the points raised in the podcast about the structures, processes, and procedures you can put in place around decision making, collaborative practices, a respectful feedback culture and being intentional with the ways you connect with staff.

For your reference

Byrk, Anthony S & Schneider, Barbara: Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Reform Educational Leadership, March 2003
Full article is available online.

Edwards-Groves, Christine et al, Facilitating a culture of relational trust in school-based action research: recognising the role of middle leaders
Abstract is available online.