

Behaviour Policy

Approved by:

Full Governing
Body

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**Next review due
by:**

February 2027

Aims of the Policy

- To promote positive behaviour, helping children's social development and emotional wellbeing.
- To ensure that all children feel safe and secure in the nursery school.
- For all staff to have consistent expectations and approaches to children's behaviour.
- To enable staff to support children to behave appropriately.
- To help children develop an awareness of our expectations and know/learn how to behave appropriately.
- For parents to know there is a consistent and fair approach.

A strong network of relationships

'Children need to learn how to interact with other people in ways that build and maintain positive relationships. This includes learning how to cooperate, collaborate, negotiate and build rapport. Studies have found that emotionally supportive environments help children interact positively with each other and learn appropriate behaviour'. (Ofsted- Best Start in life part 2: the 3 prime areas of learning December 2023)

We work consistently to ensure that each child has a strong relationship with their key person. In turn the key person can help the child develop a wider network of relationships with other children and the wider staff team. Warm, caring, emotionally-attuned relationships set a very positive climate for children's social and emotional development and help to promote good behaviour.

Key people will:

- Work closely with each key child, starting with the home visit and settling-in procedure, to help each child feel safe, secure, valued and feel that someone knows about them as a unique child.
- Be aware of and seek out children who don't approach them.
- Relate positively to each key child every day.
- Make time to listen to and take an interest in each child every day.

All staff will:

- Strive to be "emotionally attuned" to children, valuing and accepting their emotions e.g. "I can see you're sad about that, shall I help you for a moment" rather than "don't cry, you're a big girl now".
- Praise good behaviour
- Praise good efforts
- Show disapproval of the behaviour, not the child e.g. "That was a rude thing to do" not "You rude child".
- Model how to deal with and sort out difficult situations
- Show empathy towards children and each other e.g. "I understand you feel..... but" ... "Are you feeling?"

Executive Function

Children need to develop 'inhibitory control' before they can foster positive relationships for example, learning not to take a toy that someone else is playing with. Executive function is a set of cognitive processes that are necessary for controlling behaviour. Playing games and activities can help children to practise exercising behavioural inhibition, such as not interrupting, taking turns or responding to the rules in a game like 'musical statues'.

Supporting children's emotional regulation

We have a curricular goal that focusses on developing children's emotional regulation – form good relationships , be a confident learner and manage behaviour.

Key people will:

- Establish a warm, nurturing and responsive relationship with their key children.
- Provide a safe environment and consistent routine for each key child. All staff will:
- Be calm and reassuring when helping children manage their emotions.
- Acknowledge and respond to children's feelings, using the words 'comfortable' and 'uncomfortable' to describe emotions rather than 'good' or 'bad'.
- Label feelings and explain why children may be feeling these emotions.
- Model the use of emotion cards with children which can help them to understand and express what they are feeling.

Key boundaries which all staff manage consistently

This is an overview of some key behaviour boundaries, and not a complete list. We do not allow:

- Physical hurting – hitting, biting, scratching, pushing
- Emotional hurting – using unkind words against another child, swearing, racist or any other prejudiced comments, mocking another person's appearance, clothing, home, family, or (dis)ability
- Spitting

Where a child crosses one of these boundaries, staff respond by taking the child away from the incident and saying clearly "there is no [hitting...spitting,,,swearing...] in the nursery. You can't go back to playing unless you can keep to that rule." Further actions and responses will depend on the professional judgement of the member of staff. If you are concerned or not sure what to do, please liaise urgently with the deputy headteacher or senior member of staff in the nursery school.



How Staff Deal with Conflict

Experiencing and managing conflict is an important part of growing up and early education. Our aim is to help children to learn the skills they need to manage conflicts, through guidance and modelling.

- Encourage children to be assertive and to say/sign “no” clearly, say “I don’t like that”, etc. Where a child appropriately asserts “no” and the other child responds, it is not usually necessary for an adult to get involved.
- Think developmentally: if a child is at an early stage of development, then sharing resources will be very challenging. Ways to support include making sure that we have enough resources for everyone; setting up experiences for 2 or 3 children, to avoid large groups crowding round; model language/approaches like “me next”; “can I have a turn”; “you can have it next, when I’ve finished”.
- Model sharing and learning. Show children that we actively listen to the ideas, needs and wants of others. Show simple approaches to sharing like “I’ll do one, you do the next.” Support and promote open-ended experiences that promote collaboration, e.g. blockplay.

If a conflict needs adult intervention to be resolved, our approach is:

- Listen to both children.
- Encourage children to say how they feel (“it hurt” ... “I’m sad” etc)
- Ask the children how they could solve the problem and try to find a solution based on their ideas. If necessary, impose a solution and explain why.
- If a child has hurt another, ask them to find a way to help the other child feel better. This could involve saying sorry, comforting the other child or agreeing to be friends. Avoid a situation where a child expresses a grudging “sorry”.
- If a child has been hurt or is distressed, then initially focus attention on that child rather. Deal with the behaviour of the other child next.
- If necessary, state a clear boundary. “Remember, no hitting in nursery.”
- If necessary move one child away from the other’s play.
- It is important to spend time settling the children back into positive play – don’t deal with an incident and walk away too soon.
- Where possible, notice positive behaviour shortly afterwards and praise it. “I can see you are playing nicely now, that’s good to see you sharing.”
- Bilingual staff play a key role in helping with incidents where children are at early stages of learning English.



Involving parents It is important to involve parents because:

- They know their own children best. They may be able to help us to understand why their child is finding a particular situation difficult, and help us to manage it.
- Parents need a clear picture of how their child is managing in school. It is important to talk to parents about difficulties their child might have. But, please be clear that the reason is to share information, and not because we want them to tell their child off again, or because we are blaming them.
- Working with parents to support their child's positive behaviour is an ongoing and collaborative process that depends on regular and open communication over time.
- We offer a range of Early Help services to support parents, including our popular workshops and the Triple P Parenting programme. All parents are encouraged to join in with these.

Sexualised play

The NSPCC advise that from infancy to 4 years:

Even at this stage, sexual behaviour is beginning to emerge through actions like:

- kissing and hugging
- showing curiosity about private body parts
- talking about private body parts and using words like poo, willy and bum
- playing "house" or "doctors and nurses" type games with other children
- touching, rubbing or showing off their genitals or masturbating as a comforting habit.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/healthy-sexual-behaviour-children-young-people/>

So this type of play should not in itself raise undue concerns. However children do need to learn that this type of play is not appropriate, without being made to feel they have done something bad, wrong or shameful. It is also important that children are empowered to feel confident in saying "no" when they do not like someone else's actions or play. Staff should respond to sexualised play in a low-key and matter-of-fact way, following the general guidance in this policy. Of course, this won't be easy for everyone, especially if the child's behaviour seems shocking or morally wrong to a member of staff. But staff should try to keep calm. Body language and tone can make a difference.

If it is important to describe a body part, we use the correct term like a doctor would, not another term. So for example, "penis" rather than "willy".

It is important to respond to children's direct questions but not to offer information which the child might not yet be ready to understand.

If a member of staff feels any concerns about the play, then they should talk over those concerns – however small – with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Controversial and challenging play

All sorts of play can pose a dilemma in terms of whether it is children's natural exploratory play or something more concerning. Staff often have to make judgements about the nature of the play and whether they should be supporting and scaffolding it, whether to intervene or whether to observe and report concerns.

Weapon play

It is understood that however we respond to weapon play, we will always ensure that every child feels safe and protected. Children are not allowed to use forms of play to intimidate other children in any way.

We are tolerant of weapon play and believe that children should be able to extend their imaginative play in this direction. Staff will join in to support and extend the play, however, we will not actively help them to make weapons as props. We will support them to understand that, while this type of play is harmless, real weapons are not.

Any member of staff that does not feel comfortable with weapon play should feel able to express this to children and decline to enter into such play. However, they should make their position clear to their room leader.

Keeping children safe

It is a core responsibility of the nursery school to ensure that children are safe and secure. Challenging behaviour and difficulties with social situations are an ordinary part of child development – our job is to help children work some of these problems through in a supportive atmosphere, where there are clear boundaries, so that they develop positive attitudes to each other and to learning.

The majority of our work is around helping children's social development and supporting their emotional wellbeing. We want children to be strong, connected to other children and to adults, and to be self-motivated and self-regulating.

Sometimes children may present with severely challenging behaviour and may seek to hurt other children regularly. It is very important that steps are taken quickly, with the involvement of the SENCO and wider services, to help children with this level of difficulty, and to ensure that other children are kept safe. We are an inclusive school and we will work positively with every child and every family.

Positive handling

With a very young age-group of children, physical holding and guidance are often needed, e.g. when a small child is very angry and about to hit out at other children, or runs to the gate during an unsettled episode whilst settling-in.

Staff are trained to use safe techniques, which are called 'positive handling'. We judge that an incident is "physical restraint" if the child has to be fully restrained from movement for more than a few seconds because the child wants to hurt another or to hurt her or himself. Restraint is then needed in order to keep the child or other children safe.

If a child's behaviour results in a need for restraint, as defined above, then there will be a specific plan to manage behaviour and set clear boundaries. This plan will be drawn up by the SENCO working with wider services, and with the involvement of the child's parents. This plan will outline when restraint is needed and how it is to be implemented. All instances of restraint will be recorded by the SENCO and the information will be shared with the parents.

We have a system for planning this type of behaviour support via our provision map and recording all instances, and sharing the information with parents.

