

Achieving Positive Behaviour Policy

Policy statement

We will encourage children to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights of others and themselves and the impact their behaviour has on other people, places and objects. This is a developmental task that requires support, encouragement, teaching, praise and through setting positive examples. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the approach that we have for promoting personal, social and emotional development and through positive relationships between families and nursery staff members.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that each nursery is:

- A safe, friendly and secure environment
- A place where all have a sense of responsibility
- A place where everyone has a clear understanding of the nurseries expectations
- An environment that fosters mutual respect
- An environment in which no child is hindered in any way from achieving his/her full potential

Procedures

The Nursery Manager has overall responsibility for achieving positive behaviour. We require the manager to:

- Stay informed about legislation, research, and best practices on promoting positive behaviour and supporting children in managing their behaviour when additional guidance is needed.
- Access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that all staff have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour- as per the mandatory training requirements for the setting.

Ethos

- We believe children benefit most where adults adopt a consistent and positive approach to the management of their behaviour.
- We aim to ensure that all staff are trained to create a positive environment that's calm and consistent where children feel secure.
- We aim to establish clear boundaries according to the child's level of understanding, encouraging children to be aware of the settings routines and procedures and ensure they know what is expected of them.

We promote this behaviour policy with staff, parents and with the children in our nurseries to ensure all know the expectations of them in the partnership.

Our Approach

We believe children benefit most where adults adopt a consistent and positive approach to managing behaviour and endeavour to achieve the following in partnership with children and their families;

- We work in an approach which is based on mutual and respectful relationship.
- We do not raise our voices or shout in a threatening way when responding to children's behaviour.
- Treating others, the environment and all things living or otherwise appropriately and with care.
- Helping children to understand that discriminatory, hurtful, rough and bullying behaviours and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable creating a mutual respect for each other.
- We aim to establish clear, consistent boundaries, routines and expectations according to the child's level of understanding, encouraging children to be aware of what is expected of them and helping children to use strategies for managing their own behaviour.
- We will ensure the child knows what is expected of them and work with them, challenging any undesired action and not the child.
- We will establish an environment that promotes positive behaviour by offering praise and positive reinforcement for behaving well, removing temptation, and diverting attention.
- We will not discuss the child's behaviour in front of them or their peers.

Strategies with children who engage in hurtful or unwanted behaviour

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any hurtful or unwanted behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include, for example, acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what was not acceptable, and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
- We ensure that there are enough popular toys and resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns.
- We acknowledge and celebrate considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for hurtful or unwanted behaviour.
- When children behave in hurtful or unwanted ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- We never send children out of the room by themselves, nor do we use a 'naughty chair' or a 'time-out' strategy that excludes children from the group, unless changing the environment- such as moving to a less busy or quieter classroom-is better for the child's wellbeing.

- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- We use physical intervention, such as gentle holding, only as a last resort and solely to ensure the safety of children or adults, or to prevent serious damage to property. This approach is always carried out with care, respect, and the child's wellbeing as the highest priority.
- Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of our Nursery Manager and are recorded in the child's personal file and on a physical intervention record form. The child's parent is informed on the same day.
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
- We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's challenging behaviour.

Children under three years

- When children under three behave in challenging ways we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older children.
- We recognise that babies and very young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them do this.
- Potential triggering situations of young children may include tantrums, biting or fighting. Staff are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.
- If tantrums, biting or fighting are frequent, we try to find out the underlying cause - such as a change or upheaval at home, or frequent change of carers. Sometimes a child has not settled in well and the behaviour may be the result of 'separation anxiety'.
- We focus on ensuring a child's attachment figure in the setting, their key person, is building a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

We may use strategies that are approved by relevant authorities. These include supporting older children to develop their own 'rules'. An example of these are 'The Golden Values'. These are five simple and positive rules which encourage a positive approach and are adopted by staff, children and their families alike. These are:

- We are gentle
- We are kind and helpful
- We listen to each other
- We are honest
- We look after things

Rough and tumble play, fantasy play

Young children often engage in play that includes themes like superheroes or pretend weapons. Some children may show a strong interest in these themes, but this behaviour is not necessarily an indication of future hurtful actions or bullying. However, it may

occasionally be unkind or inappropriate and might require guidance using the strategies mentioned above.

- We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or aggressive.
- We will develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
- We recognise that fantasy play often includes dramatic themes, such as pretend actions like blowing up or shooting, and commonly revolves around 'goodies and baddies.' These scenarios provide valuable opportunities to explore concepts of right and wrong, with practitioners supporting children's understanding based on the Golden Values, mutual respect, and prioritising the child's wellbeing.
- We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

Hurtful behaviour

We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying'. For children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.

- We recognise that young children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them.
- We will help them manage these feelings as they have neither the biological means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.
- We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological processes that take place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear.
- Therefore we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child to return to a natural state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage his or her own feelings.
- We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child's rage as that will have the opposite effect.
- Our way of responding to pre-verbal children is to calm them through holding and cuddling. Verbal children will also respond to cuddling to calm them down, but we offer them an explanation and discuss the incident with them to their level of understanding.
- We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. 'Adam took your car, didn't he, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn't like it when he took it, did you? Did it make you feel angry? Is that why you hit him?' Older children might be able to verbalise

their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behaviour.

- We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings. 'When you hit Adam, it hurt him and he didn't like that and it made him cry'.
- We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy. 'I can see you are feeling better now and Adam isn't crying any more. Let's find another car, so you can both play with one.'
- We are aware that some children might need more time and support with sharing and turn-taking skills to develop. In order for both the biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.
- We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- We help children understand the impact their hurtful behaviour has had on others. While we do not force children to say 'sorry,' we encourage it when they genuinely feel remorse and wish to express it. This can be done verbally, through gentle gestures like a hug or a pat on the shoulder, or by asking, 'How can we make [...] feel better?'
- When hurtful behaviour escalates, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together. The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour might be that:
 - a) they do not feel securely attached to someone who can interpret and meet their needs – this may be in the home and it may also be in the setting;
 - b) their parent, or carer in the setting, does not have skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is the only response the child has to express feelings of anger;
 - c) the child may have insufficient language, or mastery of English, to express him or herself and may feel frustrated;
 - d) the child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse;
 - e) the child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave.

Where this does not work, we use the SENDco Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to the local authority behaviour support team where necessary.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Model of Managing Behaviour
- Appendix 2 - Six Steps to Conflict Resolution – Highscope Approach
- Appendix 3 - ABC Chart

Policy Date	14/01/2025	Approved by	Sinead Johnson CEO	Date of next review	14/01/2026
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