



# Achieving positive behaviour

## Policy statement

At Nettlestead and Wateringbury Pre-school we believe that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

As children develop, they learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and to consider the views and feelings, and needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. The development of these skills requires adult guidance to help encourage and model appropriate behaviours and to offer intervention and support when children struggle with conflict and emotional situations. In these types of situations key staff can help identify and address triggers for the behaviour and help children reflect, regulate and manage their actions. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting personal, social, and emotional development.

## Procedures

In small settings like ours, the responsibility for our programme for supporting personal, social, and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour is shared between staff, including a child's key person, with overall responsibility of the managers, Nisha Reed & Kay Severn.

To manage children's behaviour in an appropriate way we require staff to:

- keep themselves up to date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support.
- access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development.
- receive relevant training on promoting positive behaviour; we keep a record of all staff training.
- implement the setting's behaviour procedures.
- provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care, and courtesy.

- be knowledgeable with and apply the setting's procedures on Promoting Positive Behaviour.
- ensure that all staff are supported to address issues relating to behaviour.

We work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their key person. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

### **Procedures for managing children's behaviour**

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways that are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include, for example, acknowledgement of feelings, explanations as to what was not acceptable and supporting the children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
- Behaviours that result in concern for the child and/or others will be discussed between the key person, the behaviour coordinator, and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or/and managers. We follow the ABC method which uses key observations to identify a) an event or activity (antecedent) that occurred immediately before a particular behaviour, b) what behaviour was observed and recorded at the time of the incident, and c) what the consequences were following the behaviour. During the meeting, the key person will use their knowledge and assessments of the child to share any known influencing factors (new baby, additional needs, illness etc.) in order to place the behaviour into context. If relevant and appropriate, the views of the child relating to their behaviour should be sought and considered to help identify a cause. Appropriate adjustments to practice will be agreed and if successful normal monitoring resumed.
- If the behaviour continues to occur and/or is of significant concern, then the behaviour coordinator and SENCO will invite the parents to a meeting to discuss external referral and next steps for supporting the child in the setting.
- It may be agreed that Early Help process should begin, and that specialist help be sought for the child; this support may address either developmental or welfare needs. If the child's behaviour is part of a range of welfare concerns that also include a concern that the child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, follow the Safeguarding and Children and Child Protection Policy. It may also be agreed that the child should be referred for an Education, Health and Care assessment.
- Advice provided by external agencies should be incorporated into the child's action plan and regular multi-disciplinary meetings held to review the child's progress.

## **Intervention**

We use an initial problem-solving intervention for all situations in which a child or children are distressed or in conflict. All staff use this intervention consistently.

- This type of approach involves an adult approaching the situation calmly, stopping any hurtful actions, acknowledging the feelings of those involved, gathering information, restating the issue to help children reflect, regain control of the situation, and resolve the situation themselves.
- We ensure that there are enough popular toys, 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 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 inconsiderate behaviour.
- 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. However, we may remove children from a difficult situation, to allow them time to 'reflect' with support from an adult.
- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these. Nor do we shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- 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. Details of such events (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of our setting leaders and are recorded in the child's personal file. The child's parent/guardian is informed on the same day.

## **Use of physical intervention**

- The term physical intervention is used to describe any forceful physical contact by an adult to a child such as grabbing, pulling, dragging, or any form of restraint of a child such as holding down. Where a

child is upset or angry, staff will speak to them calmly, encouraging them to vent their frustration in other ways by diverting the child's attention.

- Staff do not use physical intervention to manage a child's behaviour unless it is necessary to use 'reasonable force, in order to prevent children from injuring themselves or others or damage property'-(EYFS).' Details of such events (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of our setting leaders and are recorded and filed in the accident/incident folder. The child's parent/guardian is informed on the same day and are asked to sign the record.
- We may support a child visually and physically when encouraging them to follow instructions, for example, guiding a child with an arm round them, or holding their hand, sitting them on our lap for younger children, for example at 'wake up, shake up' or 'story time'.
- In more difficult circumstances a child may be lifted to remove them from a situation that is causing themselves or others distress. This will also allow staff to take them to a quiet area where they can talk to the child and give the child time to process what is being said, respond and where necessary, calm down.

### **Children under three years**

- When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older children.
- We recognise 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.
- Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviours of young children 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.

### **Rough and tumble play and fantasy aggression**

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes – such as superhero and weapon play; some children appear pre-occupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor

to hurtful behaviour or bullying, although it may be inconsiderate at times and may need addressing using strategies as 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 also contains many violently dramatic strategies, blowing up, shooting etc., and that themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies' and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
- 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 awareness 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 help children 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 normal 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. Older children will be able to verbalise their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behaviour.

- 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 a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; we do not force children to say sorry but encourage this where it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt.
- When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together. Where this does not work, we will support the family making the appropriate referrals to the local behaviour support team if necessary.

## **Bullying**

We take bullying very seriously. Bullying is a behaviour that both parents and practitioners worry about. Bullying is a deliberate, aggressive, and repeated action, which is carried out with intent to cause harm or distress to others. It requires the child to have 'theory of mind' and a higher level of reasoning and thinking, all of which are complex skills that most three-year-olds have not yet developed (usually after the age of four along with empathy). Therefore, an outburst by a three-year-old is more likely to be a reflection of the child's emotional well-being, their stage of development or a behaviour that they have copied from someone else.

Young children are keen observers and more likely to copy behaviours, which mimic the actions of others, especially the actions of people they have established a relationship with. These are learnt behaviours rather than premeditated behaviours because children this young, do not have sufficiently sophisticated cognition to carry out the type of bullying an older child can do. Unless addressed early, this type of pre-bullying behaviour in young children can lead on to bullying behaviour later in childhood. The fear is that by labelling a child as a bully so early in life we risk influencing negative perceptions and expectations of the child which will impact on their self-image, self-esteem and may adversely affect their long-term behaviour. This label can stick with the child for the rest of their life.

A child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress in another. Bullying can occur in children five years old

and over and may well be an issue in after school clubs and holiday schemes catering for slightly older children.

If a child bullies another child or children:

- we give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied and show the children who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them;
- we intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children;
- we explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable and help the child recognise the impact of their actions;
- we make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour;
- we recognise that children who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves, or be subject to abuse or other circumstance causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others;
- we recognise that children who bully are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we do not insist that they say sorry unless it is clear that they feel genuine remorse for what they have done, empty apologies are just as hurtful to the bullied child as the original behaviour;
- we discuss what has happened with the parents of the child who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behaviour; and
- we share what has happened with the parents of the child who has been bullied, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

### **Challenging Behaviour/Aggression by children towards other children**

- Any aggressive behaviour by children towards other children will result in a staff member intervening immediately to challenge and prevent escalation.
- If the behaviour has been significant or may potentially have a detrimental effect on the child, the parents of the child who has been the victim of behaviour and the parents of the child who has been the perpetrator should be informed.
- The designated person will contact children's social services if appropriate i.e., if a child has been seriously injured, or if there is reason to believe that a child's challenging behaviour is an indication that they themselves are being abused and will consider whether notifying the police if appropriate.
- The designated person will make a written record of the incident, which is kept in the child's file;
- The designated person should complete a risk assessment related to the child's challenging behaviour to avoid any further instances.

- The designated person should meet with the parents of the child who has been affected by the behaviour to advise them of the incident and the setting's response to the incident.
- Ofsted should be notified if appropriate, i.e., if a child has been seriously injured.
- Relevant health and safety procedures and procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints should be followed.
- Parents should also be asked to sign risk assessments where the risk assessment relates to managing the behaviour of a specific child.

### **Challenging unwanted behaviour from adults in the setting**

- Settings will not tolerate behaviour from an adult which demonstrates a dislike, prejudice and/or discriminatory attitude or action towards any individual or group. This includes negativity towards groups and individuals living outside the UK (xenophobia). This also applies to the same behaviour if directed towards specific groups of people and individuals who are British Citizens residing in the UK.
- Allegations of discriminatory remarks or behaviour including xenophobia made in the setting by any adult will be taken seriously. The perpetrator will be asked to stop the behaviour and failure to do so may result in the adult being asked to leave the premises and in the case of a staff member, disciplinary measures being taken.
- Where a parent makes discriminatory or prejudiced remarks to staff at any time, or other people while on the premises, this is recorded on the child's file and is reported to the setting managers. The procedure is explained, and the parent asked to comply while on the premises. An 'escalatory' approach will be taken with those who continue to exhibit this behaviour. The second stage comprises a letter to the parent requesting them to sign a written agreement not to make discriminatory remarks or behave in a discriminatory or prejudiced manner; the third stage may be considering withdrawing the child's place.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	NWPS
Held on	
Date to be reviewed	April 2024
Signed on behalf of the provider	
Name of signatory	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Chairperson