



## **POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

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### **Lead Named Persons for Positive Behaviour:**

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### **Statement of Intent**

Our nursery believes that children flourish when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

### **Aim**

Having a policy in place helps us to ensure the smooth running of Harmony. By focusing on positive behaviour, it encourages caring attitudes for everybody towards each other and our environment. We hope that children will learn through the example we set. Very young children need constant and consistent visual and verbal reminders of positive behaviour to support their personal, social and emotional development.

### **Restorative Approach**

A restorative approach helps develop a healthier learning environment, where children take responsibility over their own behaviour and learning. Restorative approaches enable those who have been harmed to convey the impact of the harm to those responsible, and for those responsible to acknowledge this impact and take steps to put it right.

Restorative approaches focus on strengthening and repairing relationships, listening with empathy, valuing young people's opinions and being curious about what has happened. In avoiding attributing blame but encouraging insight and taking responsibility for their actions, children are supported to develop pro-social behaviour to repair harm and develop positive relationships.

Restorative approaches aim to:

- develop emotional literacy, responsibility and empathy
- create a more positive learning environment with better attendance, and fewer behaviour incidents
- raise children and young people's awareness of the impact of their choices on others

## **What is a restorative response to harm or conflict?**

Those affected are invited to share:

1. What has happened.
2. What the impact has been on those involved: i.e. who has been affected and in what ways they have been affected.
3. What needs to happen to put things right or to make things better in the future.

This framework is based on sound learning theory regarding how people relate to each other and how best to meet the different needs that can arise from conflict or harm.

To facilitate such a process requires the ability to:

- establish a respectful rapport with people.
- listen and respond calmly, empathically and without interruption or judgment to all sides of an issue.
- inspire a sense of safety and trust.
- encourage people to express their thoughts, feelings and needs appropriately.
- appreciate the impact of people's thoughts, feelings, beliefs and unmet needs on the behaviours.
- encourage those involved in the problem to find their own solutions.

This learning framework can be used in a wide range of contexts:

- A one-way conversation, with one person listening and asking questions and the other talking.
- A two-way conversation, with both people taking turns to ask and answer questions.
- A small meeting when one impartial person - a facilitator - poses questions to two people who have had a difficulty, or where harm has been done, and who want to repair the relationship.
- A larger, facilitated meeting involving children, parents/carers, colleagues or others who have an important role to play (sometimes called a 'Restorative Conference').
- A facilitated circle involving part or all a class and/ or staff team

## **What is being restored?**

This depends on the context and on the needs of those involved.

What is being restored is often something between the people involved such as:

- Effective communication.
- Relationship, and even friendship.
- Empathy and understanding for the other's perspective.
- Respect.
- Understanding the impact of one's own behaviour on others.
- Reparation for material loss or damage. However, something may also be restored within an individual – for example:
  - A sense of security.
  - Self-confidence.
  - Self-respect.
- Dignity. Overall, the process often results in the restoration of someone's sense of belonging to a community (e.g. class, nursery, peers or family)

## Expectations

- The above-named persons have overall responsibility for issues concerning behaviour.
- We require the named persons to:
  - keep 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 nursery for supporting personal, social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) development
- Check that all staff have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour. staff attendances are recorded for these training.
- Provide support to staff through observation, training and assistance in developing behaviour plans and finding effective strategies.
- We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of and respect those used by families using the setting.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with respect, friendliness, care and courtesy.
- We familiarise new families, staff and volunteers with the setting's behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
- We expect all members of our setting – children, parents, staff, volunteers and students to adhere to the guidelines and require these to be applied consistently.
- 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 challenging behaviour, using our observations to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately both in the nursery and in the home environment.

## **Expectations for promoting positive behaviour**

We expect staff to:

- Handle disputes fairly and support all those involved by helping children to find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development.
- Provide opportunities for all children to learn how to interpret feelings, by listening to them and offering the necessary support that will enable them to verbalise their own frustrations and gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
- Encourage children to approach an adult to express their feeling verbally or by using the emotional cards.
- Descriptive praise and recognition of positive behaviour, kindness and consideration should be constantly used. A willingness to share and take turns will be encouraged. Praise is the best motivator there is. Children will grow in confidence if given praise as a reward'
- 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.
- Support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence so they feel valued and welcome.
- Explain the effect of unacceptable behaviour to the child concerned, by helping children understand the outcome of their actions and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- To never say 'NO' to a child without offering a reason or an alternative

### **Guidelines for unacceptable behaviour:**

The nursery staff will ensure that:

- a restorative approach is used.
- Physical acts of aggression or verbal abuse are neither used nor threatened.
- Use of physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and /or serious damage to property.
- Details of events (what happened, what action was taken by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of the Manager/Deputy and are recorded in the child's personal file. The child's parent is informed on the same day.
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
- A child is never smacked; shaken or treated roughly. Children are never threatened with these actions.
- Raised voices in a threatening way; shouting, swearing; making personal remarks; racist remarks or labelling will not occur. Any racial remarks will be recorded, and action will be taken accordingly.
- Individual children will not be singled out or humiliated by means of a naughty chair or sending them out of the room by themselves.

**The parents/carers are also asked to adhere to this policy whilst on the nursery premises.**

### **Guidelines regarding biting, tantrums and fighting:**

#### *Biting:*

The biting of one child by another is a most emotional situation for all adults concerned. Parents are understandably upset, as are nursery staff. There is no easy answer to the problem, particularly if very young children are involved. It usually stops as abruptly as it started for no reason, but in cases where a child is known to be likely to bite another following strategy will be used:

- The extra vigilance of staff will be developed to help spot a situation before it develops.

- 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.
- We recognise that very young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them to do this.
- Staff will take turns monitoring a child and remove the child quietly from a situation if they anticipate it could cause a problem.
- On no account will the child who is biting be “punished”. Parents of course need to be informed. Care and understanding will be the primary consideration when talking to the parents as the parents of a child who bites can be upset at their child’s actions.
- We will comfort and reassure the child that has been bitten and provide appropriate first aid.

### **Rough and tumble play, hurtful behaviour and bullying**

Our procedure has been updated to provide additional focus on these kinds of behaviours:

#### 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 hurtful 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 can 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 children are often unaware that they are hurting the other person’s feelings.

- We recognise that young children can 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 normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child to be able to manage his/her own feelings.
- 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 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 experienced. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping them 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? It made you feel angry, didn’t it, and you hit him’.
- 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 is not crying anymore. Let’s see if we can be friends and find another car, so you can both play with one.’
- We are aware that the same problem may happen repeatedly before skills such as sharing and turn-taking develop. 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 including drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising the 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 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. The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour are that:
  - 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 nursery.
  - their parent, or carer in the nursery, 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.
  - the child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse; and
  - the child has a developmental condition that affect how they behave.
- Where this does not work, we use the Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to behaviour support services where necessary.

## **Bullying**

The London Safeguarding Children Partnership defines bullying as *"behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally"*.

We take bullying very seriously. Bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. It is characterised by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behaviour.

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 to another.

If a child bullies another child or children:

- we 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.
- we explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable.
- we give reassurance to the child who have been bullied.
- we help the child who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions.
- we make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practice and reflect on considerate behaviour.
- we do not label children who bully as ‘bullies.
- we recognise that children who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves or may be subject to abuse or other circumstances causing them to express the anger in negative ways towards others.
- we recognise children who bully are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we do not insist that they say sorry unless 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.