



## Promoting positive behaviour

### Policy statement

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.

We aim to teach children to behave in socially acceptable ways and to understand the needs of others. We create a positive environment where adults consistently manage and encourage positive behaviour that promotes children's welfare and development. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

### Procedures

We ensure all staff through regular training have a clear understanding of:

- Child development and what is appropriate behaviour for the age and stage of that individual child.
- Factors that may impact on behaviour e.g. tiredness, hunger, frustration.
- Behaviour being a way of communicating needs and feelings.
- Children's emotional needs.
- Changes in behaviour that may be linked to safeguarding concerns.
- We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of and respect those used by members of the setting.
- We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the settings behaviour policy.
- We expect all members of staff to display a consistent approach.
- Good behaviour is always rewarded. Praise and positive reinforcement. Non- verbal feedback e.g. smiles, hugs, thumbs up.

### Why do children display challenging behaviour?

Children misbehave because they have not yet learnt how to react to feeling and needs in an acceptable way.

Remember:

- Behaviour is learnt.
- Behaviour can change
- Rewards work better than punishment.
- Practice makes perfect.
- Consistency is the key.
- Never assume a child misbehaves intentionally.

### Boundaries

Children need to understand the rules and have clear boundaries set for them.

- We are kind to each other.

- We play at playgroup.
- We walk around at playgroup.
- We share our toys.
- We listen to each other.
- We keep our playgroup tidy.

### **Talk appropriately to children**

- Make sure it is a short clear message
- You are specific
- You are positive
- You are close to the child
- Try to make eye contact
- Use a firm yet calm voice
- Avoid comparison

### **Managing Behaviour**

- We ensure corporal punishment is not given or threatened by any person who cares for or is in regular contact with the children. Failure to do this is a criminal offence.
- We never send children out of the room by themselves
- We do not use techniques intended to single out or humiliate individual children.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- We ignore unwanted behaviour where possible.
- We allow children to move away to a quieter area to calm down.
- Help the child to understand the consequences of their behaviour
- Listen to the child and acknowledge their feelings.
- Reassure the child they are valued even if their behaviour may be unacceptable sometimes
- We work in partnership with parents, through the child's keyworker, parents will be regularly informed of their child's behaviour and any recurring inconsiderate behaviour will be addressed through observations and liaising with parents to understand the cause and decide jointly how to respond appropriately

If physical intervention is used, we record all incidents and inform the parents within 24 hours.

We record:

- Name of child
- Name of staff who used physical intervention
- Date/time/place of incident
- Circumstances of incident and factors leading up to incident.
- Nature of physical intervention
- Name of witnesses
- Any injuries occurred
- Any further action taken and parent's signature

### **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, e.g. blowing up and shooting, 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 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 by 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 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 will 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 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 over and over before skills are developed such as sharing and turn taking. 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 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.

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 setting;
- 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;
- the child may have insufficient language, or mastery of English, to express him or herself and may feel frustrated;

- the child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse;
- The child has a developmental condition that affects 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 a Behaviour Support Team where necessary.

## Bullying

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. 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 take the following steps:

- 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 or children.
- We explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable.
- We give reassurance to the child or children 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 practise 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 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.
- 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.

The settings designated practitioner is Dannika Ineson and Joanne Hallam, they will advise other staff on behaviour issues and to access expert advice if necessary.

Useful websites:

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

[www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk](http://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk)

This policy was adopted by Carlton Playgroup Ltd *(name of provider)*

On \_\_\_\_\_ *(date)*

Date to be reviewed \_\_\_\_\_ *(date)*

Signed on behalf of the provider \_\_\_\_\_

Name of signatory \_\_\_\_\_

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

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