

## **Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Managing behaviour**

Providers must have and implement a behaviour management policy and procedures.



## **Achieving positive behaviour**

### **Policy statement**

At Southmoor Pre-School we believe that children flourish when they know how they are expected to behave. Children gain respect through interaction with caring adults who show them respect and value their individual personalities. Positive, caring, and polite behaviour will be encouraged and praised at all times in an environment where children learn to respect themselves, other people, and their surroundings.

Children need to have set boundaries of behaviour for their own safety and the safety of their peers. Within the pre-school we aim to set these boundaries in a way which helps the child to develop a sense of the significance of their behaviour, both on their environment and on those around him.

### **Procedures**

We aim to:

- Recognise the individuality of all of our children and that some behaviours are normal stages in child development e.g. biting.
- Encourage self-discipline and consideration for each other, our surroundings and property.
- Encourage children to participate in a wide range of group activities to enable them to develop their social skills.
- Ensure that all staff act as positive role models for children.
- Work in partnership with parents by communicating openly.
- Praise children and acknowledge their positive actions and attitudes, therefore ensuring that children see that we value and respect them.
- Encourage all staff working with children to accept their responsibility for implementing the aims in this policy and are consistent.

- Promote non-violence and encourage children to deal with conflict peacefully.
- Provide a key person system enabling staff to build a strong and positive relationship with children and their families.
- Have a named person who has overall responsibility for issues concerning behaviour.

The named person for managing behaviour (**Megan Broughton**) will advise other staff on behaviour issues and will keep up to date with legislation and research and support changes to policies and procedures within the pre-school, access relevant sources of expertise where required and act as a central information source for all involved, attend relevant training for behaviour management.

We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and staff are required to be aware of this and respect those used by members of the pre-school.

Pre-school rules are concerned with the safety, care, and respect for each other. Children who behave inappropriately by physically abusing another child or adult e.g. biting, or through inappropriate verbal communication, will be required to talk through these actions and apologise where appropriate. The child who has been upset will be comforted and the adult will confirm that the other child's behaviour is not acceptable. It is important to acknowledge that it is the behaviour that we are rejecting, not the child.

#### *Dealing with unacceptable behaviour*

- Physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking, will neither be used or threatened. However, it may be necessary to use restraining action to prevent personal injury and protect the safety of other children or staff.
- Children will not be singled out or humiliated in any way. Staff will redirect children towards other activities. Discussions with children will take place respecting their level of understanding and maturity.
- Staff will not raise their voice in a threatening way.
- It will always be made clear to the child that it is their behaviour that is unwelcome (and not the child themselves).
- How a particular type of behaviour is handled will depend on the child's age, level of development and the circumstances surrounding the behaviour. It may involve the child being asked to talk about their actions. It may also include asking the child to apologise for their actions.
- Parents will be informed if their child has been unkind to others or if their child has been upset. In all cases inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with in pre-school at the time of the incident. Parents may be asked to meet with staff to discuss their child's behaviour, so that we can work together to ensure consistency between home and pre-school. In some cases, we may request additional support from other professionals or outside agencies.
- Children need to develop non-aggressive strategies to enable them to stand up for themselves so that adults and children listen to them. They need to be given opportunities to release their feelings in more acceptable ways.

- Confidential records will be kept on any negative behaviour that has taken place. Parents will be informed and asked to read and sign any entries concerning their child.
- If a child requires help to develop positive behaviour, every effort will be made to provide for their needs.
- Through partnership with parents and formal observations, staff will make every effort to identify any behavioural concerns and the causes of that behaviour.
- In the event where a child's behaviour involves aggression towards other children or staff, e.g. hitting, kicking etc. the manager will complete a risk assessment identifying any potential triggers or warning signs ensuring the safety of other children and adults. In these circumstances it may be necessary to remove the child from that area until they have calmed down and/or for staff to use restraining techniques.
- The manager is responsible for the safety of all children, staff, and visitors. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for the manager/deputy to contact a child's parents and ask for them to be collected immediately. Should this be the case, parents will be asked to meet with staff to discuss possible causes of the behaviour and any measures/strategies that need to be implemented before the child's return to pre-school.

#### *Children under three years*

- When children under three years old behave in inconsiderate ways we recognise that the 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.
- 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 a 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, 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 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 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 such as sharing and turn-taking 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 and 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 Special Educational Needs 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 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 circumstances 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.

### **Further guidance**

- Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES 2001)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ *(name of provider)*

Held 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) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications**

- The Social Child (2007)
- Reflecting on Behaviour (2010)