

Relationships and Behaviour Engagement Policy

Our aims and expectations:

Our mission is for all children to feel valued and have a sense of belonging. Each child is an individual with their own identity, views, and perspective of the world, and it is our role to celebrate their unique spirit, giving them opportunities to grow and shine. We want all children to feel safe and secure within their own individual rights.

This policy is designed to promote a whole-setting approach and explicitly teach good behaviour, rather than simply deterring challenging behaviour. We allow our children to be curious, active, and engaged in their surroundings, while supporting them to understand and express their feelings appropriately, resulting in high levels of engagement and wellbeing.

In addition, we have the following steps in place to ensure that all staff understands the settings approach to managing behaviour and relationships:

- Policies relating to relationships and behaviour are regularly reviewed/shared with staff, and this process forms part of a six-week induction period for staff who are new to the team.
- We have a separate code of conduct policy outlining behaviour expectations for all who use the setting. This is shared with parents and staff on enrolment.
- **Regular staff meetings in-house to be held on the last Thursday of each month, Positive Behaviour Engagement will be part of each meeting.**
- Interview questions relating to behaviour are asked during screening to ensure suitability.
- Observations/ supervisions are carried out on staff routinely, to discuss best practise and explore any possible areas for development such as tailored support/training.
- Regular parent meetings/partnerships to discuss children's learning and development, including behaviour and attitudes.
- We mandate staff to undertake training and have a behaviour management coordinator responsible for supporting others at the setting.

Our behaviour management coordinator is **Georgia Sunnucks**

Rationale:

Our setting has adopted a whole-setting approach to behaviour, which is understood as a communication of unmet needs or as an adapted defensive response. The understanding that children learn best within positive, trusting relationships informs our approach to managing and changing behaviour. We expect staff to work hard as 'stress Identifiers' to discover the need and provide developmentally appropriate support, removing barriers to learning and promoting engagement.

Setting Ethos:

Our setting ethos promotes 'Seeds of kindness', which has three main principles that are interwoven through everyday practice and routines.

Our Affirmations:

- Being kind to ourselves
- Being kind to others
- Being kind to nature

Our setting prides itself on providing a homely welcoming environment to all. We work hard to promote positive inclusive relationships and wellbeing among staff, which is mirrored in relationships among children and their families.

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As part of promoting positive behaviour engagement, we promote British values in our everyday practice:

When thinking about and supporting behaviour and relationships, we take into account the following British values:

Democracy

Learning about and taking an active role in making decisions together. Fairness and equality. We encourage children to see their role in the bigger picture, helping children to know their views count, and showing consideration for other's opinions and values. We capitalise on opportunities for talking about feelings, e.g., when children do and do not need help and to develop inquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued.

We demonstrate democracy in action whenever we can e.g., children sharing views on what song to sing next with a show of hands, turn taking, or toddler pointing. Staff support the decisions that children make and provide a wide range of activities that involve participation, sharing, and collaboration as part of a group, to enable them to develop social skills. As part of positive behaviour management, we promote non-violence and encourage children to deal with conflict peacefully, including opportunities for children to contribute to decisions about accepted behaviour where age/stage appropriate.

Individual liberty – We have the right to believe, act, and express ourselves freely and the freedom to make our own choices. We encourage children to develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, and self-esteem and increase their confidence in their abilities. Staff encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences, and understand we are free to have different opinions.

Mutual respect and tolerance

We should treat others how we want to be treated, we should respect each other, and different opinions: We recognise that codes for interacting with people vary between cultures and require all children and practitioners to respect themselves, other people in the community including those of different faiths and backgrounds, and the setting environment. Practitioners' and children's relationships are built on mutual respect and trust, strengthened through staff acting as positive role models who offer guidance and support when children struggle with conflict and emotional situations.

Rule of law

We are all expected to follow the law, and other rules: We aim to promote the development of a sense of right and wrong. As children develop, they learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and consider the views and feelings, needs, and rights of others. Sometimes it is necessary to help children understand their boundaries in certain situations, explaining why we do not accept certain behaviour. Boundaries are set in a way that helps the child to develop a sense of the significance of their own behaviour which encourages self-discipline. We keep rules to a minimum and ensure that these are age and stage appropriate.

Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP)

An understanding of trauma and childhood adversity underpins our approach to all relationships within our setting community. We are committed to ensuring that our setting develops a trauma and mental health informed approach, and that all children and practitioners develop positive mental health and resilience which enables them to fully engage in life and learning. All staff will have Trauma informed training added to their annual training plan as we build our knowledge and skills in this area.

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The (TPP) values are:

- Compassion and Kindness (instead of blame and shame),
- Hope (instead of hopelessness),
- Connection and belonging (instead of disconnection).

Our setting uses these pillars of practice to outline our approach for positively supporting behaviour:

1. Consistent calm adult behaviour
2. Consistency in routines and boundaries
3. Restorative practice
4. Supporting challenging behaviour with dignity
5. Working together with Parents and partners
6. 'Stress' detecting

At our setting, we believe in the power of positive and frequent praise for good and caring behaviour as a more effective way of improving standards and relationships between individuals than constant criticism.

Key person approach

Relationships are an extremely important part of behaviour engagement. Non-verbal and extremely young children require the support of an adult who they trust, and who knows and understands them well to interpret behaviour. Our focus on strong Key person relationships enables practitioners in our setting to understand each child's behaviour and emotional needs in a much deeper way.

We believe in equality. Our differentiated response to behaviour recognises that our children are unique and individual and that some will require additional support to achieve the high expectation. we have for behaviour for all children. We aim to actively promote high self-esteem, and high aspirations for all children, through a culture and ethos that values every child (connection and belonging).

Parents as partners

We are committed to working with parents and carers in supporting children's development in all areas, including behaviour. We recognise that there may be different expectations for children's behaviour at home and at the setting. With a good level of communication, we can provide consistency for the children, and this will help alleviate frustrations and misunderstandings that can lead to behaviours that are unacceptable or unknown. Where behavioural difficulties continue, parent/carers will be further invited into the setting to talk with relevant practitioners. By working together, parent/carer and the setting will explore possible underlying causes and share positive strategies to ensure a consistent approach between setting and home, and an action plan will be agreed, shared, and reviewed to monitor outcomes.

Our setting shares our behaviour and relationships policy, and other related policies with parents on enrolment at the setting, and parents are given information about the setting's approach to behaviour on the registration documentation. Key adults have daily discussions with parents about children's well-being, relationships, and activities, sharing any behaviour concerns at the earliest opportunity. In addition to this, parents are invited to meet with the key person at least twice annually at parent consultations, where the child's progress and any concerns can be discussed/reviewed in greater detail. We invite parents to come and speak to us with any concerns they have and will arrange additional discussions as required.

Preserving dignity

Positive language is used when supporting children who are struggling to cope with a situation, and a differentiated, personalized response will always be required to support the individual emotional needs of children. Behaviour management begins with a positive and proactive approach (hope). Our practitioners will use the following strategies when they identify that a child is feeling unregulated:

- Redirection- (reminder - what should the child be doing?)
- Distraction- (what else can we find to do instead?)
- Non-verbal strategies- (hand out palm facing up-stop, finger to lips-sh)
- Rule reminder- (what's is the Mother Hen Way? * Walking feet * gentle hands * Caring is Sharing)
- Gentle encouragement- (calm voice, I prefer it when you, I know you can...)

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- 'Time in' with the key person or a practitioner- (cuddle, story, opportunity to be listened to)
- Encouragement to a 'safe space' within the room – we use our calming area as a safe space.
- Peer-led approaches (encouraging positive pairings with other friends).

Our practitioners help children to learn by ensuring a consistent, calm, and fair approach to supporting children through stressful moments.

Age-appropriate strategies (stepped approach) used by practitioners (ages are a rough guide and responses must be differentiated for the individual child):

1. **Be a stress detective!** Observing children's behaviours support them to feel regulated. Are they in their comfort zone?

2. Always praise positive behaviour – hope instead of hopelessness (All Age).

3. Direct encouragement:

- 0-2 years - Directly encouraging and modelling good/kind behaviour. 'I know you can.'
- 2-3 years - Directly encouraging and modelling good behaviour. 'Gentle hands/ feet/ words' prompt. 'I prefer it when you.'
- 3-5 years - Directly encouraging and modelling good behaviour. Use 'look' and other non-verbal symbols. 'Gentle hands/ feet/ words' prompt etc. explain what you want to see.

4. Rule Reminder:

- 0-2 years - Rule reminder – simple, positive language. Use 'look' and other non-verbal symbols. Stop sign – clear hand signal, along with verbal 'stop'.
- 2-3 years - Rule reminder – simple positive language. Use 'look' and other non-verbal symbols. Stop sign – clear hand signal, along with verbal 'stop'. Explain what you want to see.
- 3-5 years - Rule reminder - ask children if they 'remember the rule about', and can they explain why we have this rule. Always use positive language. Stop sign – clear hand signal, along with verbal 'stop'.

5. Redirection:

- 0-2 years – redirection, distraction, and inclusion
- 2-5 years – redirection, distraction, and inclusion. Directional choices, when/ then.
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6. Approach situation calmly, stopping any hurtful actions (co- regulate using regulate, relate, reason) (All Age):

- **REGULATE:** Adult is calm and regulated. Rhythmical breathing pattern. Hurdle help: Aid the child getting over the first hurdle. There is always a way back, keep the problem small. Use Movement – Patterned, repetitive, rhythmic, hand on arm with gentle pressure, mindful breathing. Singing, dancing music, walking, running, swinging.
- **RELATE:** Help the child to the shore. Connect – empathy: let the child know that we understand how they feel, and it matters to us. Use words the adult would like the child to use at some point in the future during these occasions. Self-talk, self- direction.

Scripts: 'I notice this seems to be a problem', 'this is kind of scary', 'I am wondering whether this might be hard for you'. 'I imagine you are angry/disappointed/frustrated and now you don't know what to do with yourself', 'its scary/hard/big deal because...', 'we can...that should help'.

- **REASON:** Invite the child to problem solve with you. It lets the child know that solving the problem is something to being worked out with them rather than to them. Only when the child has returned to their window of tolerance can any consequences be discussed. Having a think about potential solutions to the problem. Remind children that the goal is for a solution that works for both, and it will help them get to what they want.

7. Restorative 5 (All Age).

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Summary of Regulate, Relate, Reason:

- Noticing and acknowledging by name, affirm and validate
- Sitting alongside, not opposite
- Communicating and open body language, not crossing arms or legs
- Keeping a calm tone
- Initiating contact rather than waiting for a child to approach
- Actively listen with your whole body, not just your ears
- Smiling and laughing whenever possible
- Seeing distractions as attempts to self sooth (self-regulate) because a child is feeling stressed
- Commentating rather than interrogating/translating as much as possible.

Restorative Conversations

- We use the restorative conversations to support children experiencing difficulties. Five key reflections are used to ensure that the conversation is reflective yet is not detrimental to a child's view of themselves.
 - What happened?
 - How were you feeling/ what did you need?
 - Who else was affected, how could they be feeling?
 - What could you do next time?
 - What might make things better?
- Acting as a 'stress detectives', adults can consider these questions when identifying how to best support and meet the child's needs.

Our Practice

Staff training:

- To engage with children's behaviour in an appropriate way, we will attend relevant training such as local authority Positive touch training to help understand and guide appropriate models of behaviour
- Implement the setting's behaviour procedures.
- Have the necessary skills to support other staff with behaviour issues.
- We keep a record of staff attendance at this training.
- We regularly assess the environment to ensure that it is not having a negative impact on behaviour, and that all children's needs are being met.

We help children to look after themselves by:

- Praising them – focusing on the positive things they do
- Helping them to recognise their feelings and acceptably express themselves.
- Encouraging those to ask for help from peers as well as adults.
- Encouraging their attempts and identifying to plan for their interests
- Building their independence through self-help skills
- Encouraging them to see the good in others.
- Encouraging them to learn from each other.

We help children to look out for others by:

- Using conflict resolution and keeping calm
- Modelling appropriate behaviour
- Working on and reinforcing the understanding of feelings, e.g. in circle time
- Naming and making feelings clear, including the consequences of their actions: reflecting to children.
- Being aware of the power of language, i.e. not being confrontational or negative
- Boosting self esteem
- Giving time to listen and help acknowledging their responses sensitively.

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We help children to be polite by:

- Saying good morning and where appropriate, please and thank-you (We model behaviours we want them to copy). (age appropriate)
- Encouraging children to wait their turn
- Talking one at a time – listening to each other without interrupting when someone is already speaking. (using the talking spoon)
- Giving children clear messages and setting an example.

We ask children to look after equipment by.

- Encouraging children to use equipment appropriately.
- Teaching them about health and safety (risk assessments and staying healthy)
- Encouraging them to help mend broken toys and equipment.
- Playing games e.g., in circle time and considering – ‘how do we look after this?’
- Washing the bikes and toys etc
- Reminding children to tell us about breakages.
- Looking after the equipment ourselves and therefore modelling it.
- Complete children risk assessments.
- Use ‘Horsey Harry’ the Safeguarding horse in the Garden and indoors.

We help children to care about the environment by:

- Making it as homely as possible
- Cleaning tables
- Tidying up together (with use of transition songs)
- Displaying children’s work & photos
- Picking up rubbish
- Looking after indoor and outdoor plants
- Explaining proper care and use of areas (painting area, home corner, sand pit etc)
- Noticing, acknowledging, and praising ‘careful handling’ and modelling it
- Sharing responsibility
- Have helpers for setting up lunch tables or activities.

Children with SEND

We understand that a minority of children may need additional or alternative support, beyond that of other children of the same age. Support for these children in collaboration with parents/carers may involve implementation of a SSP with specific targets related to behaviour. Where appropriate, this stage may include referral to external agencies for additional support/ assessments with parents/carers consent. For these children, it is important that (parents, carers, key practitioners, and SENCO) meet regularly to ensure good communication and continued consistency.