muddy boots
DAY NURSERY

Behaviour Management policy

General Policy Statements

We aim to create a friendly and caring atmosphere where each child and their family are treated as unique and valued. We aim to create positive relationships between adults and children. Children are encouraged to treat others as they themselves wish to be treated. All are expected to treat other people and their property with respect.
We encourage children to find their own solutions to conflict, with the offer of support when it is needed.
Children take part in discussions about what is acceptable behaviour and are involved in setting ground rules. All adults will ensure that the rules are applied consistently so the children feel the security of knowing the boundaries. Adults will be positive role models showing friendliness and courtesy towards others. Adults will not shout or raise their voices in a threatening way. Adults will gain an awareness of and respect a range of cultural expectations regarding interactions between people. Any correction of a child's behaviour is done in such a way that personal integrity is maintained without humiliation, with age-appropriate explanations given. Our aim is to show the child that it is their behaviour that is unacceptable and not him or her personally.
We will not threaten corporal punishment and will not use or threaten any punishment which could adversely affect a child's well-being.
Physical intervention will only be used to prevent physical injury to the child, other children or an adult, to prevent serious damage to property or in what would reasonably be regarded as exceptional circumstances. If intervention is needed it will be recorded and parents/carers will be informed.

A positive approach to all behaviour is the best approach. We should affirm good behaviour in children at all times and not only when preceded by challenging behaviour. Children need to know that they are conducting themselves in an acceptable manner and need constant approval and praise. A positive attitude by adults may help to prevent some of the challenging behaviour that is presented to us.

Children in the nursery should know that the agreed boundaries are to be respected. We do though wish to avoid words like 'naughty' and 'bad' and aim to adopt a positive approach to managing difficult behaviour by clearly describing what we would like the child to do. Further, difficult behaviour is best managed by avoiding situations where it might occur. This can be achieved through observing and offering support where early signs of frustration are noticed and providing distraction when difficult behaviour first happens.

Behaviour we wish to encourage

- Kindness
- Friendship
- Helpfulness to everyone
- Sharing and turn taking
- Politeness
- Respect for self, others and the environment
- Co-operation

Volunteers have a role to play in helping children engage positively in activities through encouragement and praise of good behaviour. However, as outlined in the volunteer guidelines, volunteers are asked to defer to staff when difficult behaviour cannot be simply resolved. This is because staff will be aware of particular circumstances and strategies appropriate for children within their unit.

If a child continues to display difficult or anti-social behaviour, parents will be informed. Staff will use positive language; discouraging the use of labels and making it clear that it is the behaviour of the child that is unacceptable, not the child personally. When feeding back to parents whose child has been involved in the incident staff should be positive letting them know it was dealt with at the time. Potential solutions will be discussed in partnership with the parents and strategies for managing and moving the child on from this particular behaviour pattern agreed.

Behaviour management will be discussed regularly as a whole staff team.
All staff, volunteers, students, agency staff etc will be made aware of our behaviour policy as part of the induction plan.

Partnership with parents

Working in partnership with parents is key to setting acceptable boundaries for behaviour at home and nursery.
We will work closely with parents, discuss their experiences and the strategies they use at home.
With parents agreement we will decide how to manage their child' s behaviour (use of consistency plan). This may involve the child 's key person and/or Jenna Carroll (nursery manager/ Senco) who takes the lead for behaviour management.
The parents and nursery staff will keep each other up to date as to how things are going.
Nursery staff are there to support the parents, to help them with this by understanding the behaviour/emotions the child and themselves are experiencing - identifying triggers. Choose your battlefields - some behaviour will fade away if they are ignored. Consider what's important.
If the nursery needs to seek help from other professional agencies i.e. the inclusion team, speech and language team, parents will be fully informed and asked for their consent to take further.
Any actions agreed will be worked on consistently together.
We will encourage the child to make amends in some way - do some kind to the other child, maybe find the other child's comforter. We will not insist that they say "sorry", unless the child genuinely means it, as this may cause further confrontation.
Nursery staff will take opportunities to talk about how we can say sorry to each other - circle time.
Staff will model good behaviour towards others by being respectful, caring and kind.

Guidelines for dealing with problem solving

1. Always remain patient and calm
2. Always use the child's name and acknowledge feelings
3. Gain eye contact with the child and get on their physical level
4. Gather information – ask open ended questions i.e. "what's the problem? Repeat their words back to them to clarify
5. Ask for solutions "what do you think we can do to solve this problem?" allow time for the child to come up with ideas. Follow through making sure everyone clearing understands challenging behaviour
6. Give simple instructions – this could be to complete a task or a request to change behaviour (see appendix to this policy on useful statements)
7. If the child does not follow the instruction through, ask them again, using their name and gaining eye contact again.
8. If the child still does not follow the instruction then give him/her the choice of completing the task or changing the behaviour by themselves then offer help in completing the task or changing the behaviour.
9. If the situation does not improve, then a warning should be given that they will be moved to an alternative situation in order to think about their behaviour.
10. If the child is removed from the situation, then after 1 minute he/she should be given the chance to do as they had been asked and return to the situation.
11. The chance should be given at regular intervals (after 1 minute allow 3 minutes) until the situation is resolved. When the child is calm then approach them and talk to them about their behaviour. If they are not ready then leave them a little longer, then go back again. Do this until they are ready to talk, remembering to praise positive responses. There maybe situations when the issues are not resolved – it is up to the adult to make a judgement call on how to proceed.
12. **In a situation where aggressive behaviour is endangering the safety of them, other children, adults or the property the child can be removed without warning, or other children who are in the immediate area moved (See physical intervention below).**
13. Always acknowledge when the instruction is followed through.
14. If the adult feels unable to deal with the situation call another for support – this is perfectly ok to do.
15. All adults to work together using the same boundaries and to support each other

Guidelines for physical intervention

In the event where physical intervention is deemed necessary

1. Picking up or carrying the child away from the point of danger is acceptable to prevent harm to self and others or serious damage to property.
    a. The child should be moved to a safe space and if possible allowed to calm down without further physical restraint.
    b. The guidelines for resolving difficult behaviour above should then be followed
2. Continual restraint is exceptional, but may be employed where the child continues to demonstrate behaviour that puts themselves or others at risk of injury, or where serious damage to property is likely.
    a. Restraint should be firm, holding the child round the trunk and arms, keeping legs away from the adult.
    b. This action should be undertaken with re-assurance, talking to the child and encouraging them to calm down.

c. Staff may need to re-assure other children in the nursery and should communicate that the child has been removed so that they can calm down. Normal activities for other children should be continued.
d. As soon as possible the child who has been restrained should be allowed to continue to calm down without restraint.
e. The nursery manager (or deputy) will contact the child's parents and asked them to come to the nursery in the highly unlikely event that the child is not able to alter the behaviour and further instances of restraint are required

3. Any instances or physical removal or restraint will be communicated to parents and discussed. This needs to be recorded and signed by staff and parents in an incident report.

Bullying and anti-social behaviour

Definition of bullying

Bullying is not the same as isolated incidences of conflict or disagreement between children but where a child is frequently picked on by another child or group. Such behaviour may include nasty or unpleasant language; threats of or actual physical harm and intimidation of other forms (such as being locked in a room, repeatedly being excluded from groups and games). Children who are bullied often feel helpless and may not disclose or seek help to remedy this. Bullying is highly unusual in an early year's context, but we recognise that it may occur.

Definition of anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour, for the purpose of this policy, is behaviour which mirrors that of bullying, but which is not directed specifically at other children. It is frequent and repeated incidences of unpleasant language; threats of or actual physical harm and intimidation of other forms directed at adults and children. It also includes frequent and deliberate damage to property.

Guidelines for dealing with bullying and anti-social behaviour

Prevention of bullying, by seeking to alter negative patterns of behaviour before these become issue of bullying is a key aim of our general behaviour management. In addition, all children in the nursery should be encouraged to respond appropriately to conflict.

1. Children should be encouraged to learn to appropriately assert their desires and frustrations to each other, to share items or resources and to apologise for poor choices in actions.
2. Children should not be discouraged in asking for assistance or in bringing problems to the attention of adult helpers.
3. Adult helpers will respond by helping children to resolve conflict themselves where possible or by helping to provide for resolution my provision of alternative activities and intervening to manage unacceptable behaviour as previously described.

Where patterns of behaviour indicate that bullying or anti-social behaviour may be occurring or developing

1. The key worker will discuss their concerns with the nursery manager and agree to implement and monitor specific strategies to help children to not form persistent behaviours of this type.
2. In the event that such strategies are not deemed to be effective, the nursery manager or key worker will approach the parents to discuss their concerns. These concerns should be related to specific incidents not to a general concern that a child is seen to be a 'bully' or 'anti-social'.

3. In rare cases where ongoing behaviour is deemed by the manager to be of significant detriment to the welfare of children or staff, the disciplinary procedure below will be followed.

Children who experience bullying may also require additional support:

1. Isolated incidents of conflict may result in children feeling distressed or result in reduced confidence in particular activities. Workers will encourage children to re-engage in relationships and activities, listening and responding to their concerns.
2. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have about their child's experience of nursery with their child's key worker or the nursery manager.
    a. Specific concerns over children's behaviour will be listened and responded to as appropriate.
3. In the event where a child is perceived to be on the receiving end of behaviour which might be defined as bullying, key workers will discuss concerns with the nursery manager. If agreed, this matter will be discussed with parents relating to the particular incidents which have occurred. Only in exceptional circumstances would this be addressed as being as a result of a bullying relationship.
    a. Parents will be encouraged to discuss any ongoing concerns and will be informed of what actions are being taken with the other parties concerned

Disciplinary procedure for children attending nursery

The positive management of behaviour is an ongoing activity which may require both informal conversation and agreement on formal strategies with parents. However, in the event that continued difficult behaviour is experienced this disciplinary procedure will be followed.

1. All reasonable measures will have been taken, by staff and parents/carers, to agree and implement a strategy to alter the child's behaviour. This strategy may include a temporary removal of the child.
2. In the event of continued behaviour which has required repeated physical intervention to prevent harm to self and others or damage to property or that which is deemed by the manager to be of significant detriment to the welfare of children or staff
    a. Written notification will be given to parents that continued behaviour of this type will result in a request that the child be removed from the nursery and addition support (internally or from other agencies) will be sought to appropriately re-introduce the child.
    b. Parents will be asked to withdraw their child from nursery in accordance with the notification given where such additional support has not facilitated a change in behaviour
    c. Temporary exclusion without prior warning may be required in what would reasonably be regarded as exceptional circumstances. The reasons for such exclusion will be communicated in writing, which may include notification of potential permanent exclusion.
3. Appeal against a request to withdraw or permanent exclusion may be made to the nursery manager (in writing) and will be considered on a case by case basis in consultation with appropriate external agencies. The decision of the nursery manager in these matters is final.

Appendix 1: 'I statements' – helpful phrases for behaviour management

1. **Communicate feelings or concern and give a reason why**

I feel (name feeling, concern worry)….**because** (describe the behaviour or object of concern rather than address the child)

Examples

Nathan, I am worried that you are going to hurt someone waving those scissors.

Susie, please don't run down the slide, you might fall over and hurt yourself

Ezra, I don't want you to push Ivan. It's not fair; he was playing with the train set first.

2. **State what you want the child to do and give appropriate choices**

Different issues require different solutions, but these need to be clearly communicated.

- State clearly what is expected or required (please do this, please stop that)
- Give limited choices (you can either….or…….)
- Ask the child how they might solve this problem

Examples

Nathan, I am worried that you are going to hurt someone waving those scissors, please put them on the table.

Susie, please don't run down the slide, you might fall over and hurt yourself. You can either use the stairs or play on something else

Ezra, I don't want you to push Ivan. It's not fair; he was playing with the train set first. Do you think you can ask him if you could share?

3. **Follow up positive behaviour with positive statements in similar language**

Nathan, I'm really pleased you put the scissors down. What do you want to start making next?

Ezra, thank you for asking Ivan: Ivan, well done and thank you for sharing.

Reviewed by:	Date of review:	Next Review:
Silviya Velikova (Deputy Manager)	November 2025	November 2026