

## **Equality of opportunity**

### **1.11 Achieving positive behaviour**

Our setting believes 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.

Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. This is a developmental task that requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the correct example. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the curriculum for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

#### **Procedures**

Our role is to support personal, social and emotional development of the children, including issues concerning behaviour.

- We keep up-to-date with current research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support;
- We access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within the curriculum for supporting personal, social and emotional development ; and ensure that staff have relevant training on promoting positive behaviour.
- 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, whilst adhering to British Values.

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
- We familiarise new 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 keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.
- We work in partnership with children's parents. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

#### *Strategies with children who engage in inconsiderate behaviour*

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include, for example, acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what behaviour and /or language was not acceptable and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response. It is important to recognize that saying 'sorry' may not be developmentally appropriate for the child and we promote alternative strategies as detailed below.
- We ensure that there are enough toys and resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied.
- Strategies such as employing the use of sand-timers will encourage children to develop conflict resolution skills independently.
- We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to turn take.
- We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome.

- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- We never send children out of the room by themselves, nor do we use a 'naughty chair' strategy.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- We use physical contact to direct a child or young person e.g holding hands, hand on shoulder etc. Physical restraint, such as holding, is only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property. Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of our setting leader and are recorded in the incident book. The child's parent is informed on the same day.
- In all situations where physical contact between staff and children takes place, staff consider the following:
  - the child's age and level of understanding
  - the child individual characteristics and history
  - the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present). If a child requires physical support on a regular basis this information will be documented on an individual support plan.
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
- We do not shout in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.

#### *Children under three years*

- When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older children.
- 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 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 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 the child forms a strong attachment to an adult in the setting, ideally their Key Person, thus providing a sense of security for 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 recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic themes such as blowing up, shooting etc., and that such 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 tactics 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 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 an awareness 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 help children to manage their feelings by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour such as:- naming their feelings and helping children to express them and making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. "Adam took your car, didn't he, and you were enjoying playing with it. I can see that made you feel angry." 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 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 happier 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 turn-taking and sharing develop. In order for both this learning and 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 such as drama, stories, puppets and Persona doll. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together.
- Where this does not work, we use the The Surrey Graduated Response document to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals where necessary.

### *Bullying*

It is unusual for bullying to occur in a child under the age of 5, however, we take any incidence of 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 in 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 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; 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.

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