

## Achieving Positive Behaviour

### **Policy Statement**

At Pathways 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.

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 right example. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within our programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

We have Ann Myatt who is our SENCO and she:

- Helps us to identify children's behavioural difficulties;
- Helps us with planning approaches to working with and supporting children with behavioural difficulties; and
- Updates children's parents with their progress, makes sure children's progress is regularly reviewed and involves the parents with the planning.

The named person to assist Ann and help achieve positive behaviour and deal with any issues or concerns is Linzee Carr.

### **Procedures**

- We require the named persons to:
  - Keep up-to-date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support;
  - Access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development; and
  - Check that all staff have relevant in-service 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 nursery.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive role model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, courtesy and care.
- We familiarise new staff, volunteers and students with the Achieving Positive Behaviour policy and its guidelines.
- We work in partnership with parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their key person. 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 to find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include, acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what was not acceptable, and supporting children to gain control of their feelings, so they can learn a more appropriate response.
- We ensure that there are enough popular toys and resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting turns.
- We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in the nursery, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes for their actions and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- We never use physical or corporal punishment, such as smacking or shaking, nor are they ever threatened with these.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to the child, children or adults and/or serious damage to property.
- Details of such events are brought to the attention of the manager and are recorded in the child's personal file. The parent/s is/are informed on the same day.
- 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.
- Staff will not shout or raise their voices in a threatening way, unless there is a safeguarding concern.

## **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 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 nursery, 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 seems aggressive, 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 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 children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
- We recognise that fantasy play also contains violent strategies, such as shooting, and that themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies' and such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
- We are able to tune in to the content of play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and 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 and 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 anymore. 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 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 and encourage them to say sorry where it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and understand this.
- 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 nursery;
  - Their parent or carer in the nursery, 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 SEN Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals with permission of the parent/s

### **Challenging unwanted behaviour from adults in the setting**

- Settings will not tolerate behaviour from an adult which demonstrates a dislike, prejudice and/or discriminatory attitude or action towards any individual or group. This includes negativity towards groups and individuals living outside the UK (xenophobia). This also applies to the same behaviour if directed towards specific groups of people and individuals who are British Citizens residing in the UK.
- Allegations of discriminatory remarks or behaviour including xenophobia made in the setting by any adult will be taken seriously. The perpetrator will be asked to stop the behaviour and failure to do so may result in the adult being asked to leave the premises and in the case of a staff member, disciplinary measures being taken.
- Where a parent makes discriminatory or prejudiced remarks to staff at any time, or other people while on the premises, this is recorded on the child's file and is reported to the setting manager. The procedure is explained and the parent asked to comply while on the premises. An 'escalatory' approach will be taken with those who continue to exhibit this behaviour. The second stage comprises a letter to the parent requesting them to sign a written agreement not to make discriminatory remarks or behave in a discriminatory or prejudiced manner; the third stage may be considering withdrawing the child's place.