



Behaviour Management And Achieving Positive Behaviour Policy

Statement of intent

At Playhouse Pre-School, we believe that children and adults flourish best in a safe, calm and supportive environment in which everyone knows what is expected of them and children are free to develop their play and learning without fear of being hurt or intimidated by anyone else.

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 requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the correct example. These principles underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour within the Pre-School, so that children can develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.

We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and may be influenced by a child's age, stage of development, communication skills, emotional wellbeing, relationships, additional needs and experiences. Staff will consider the underlying reasons for behaviour and provide appropriate support in a way that is suitable for each child.

Procedures

- 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.
- Staff use a therapeutic and restorative approach to behaviour, including strategies from Hertfordshire Steps Training where appropriate.
- 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 recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of - and respect - those used by other cultures.
- We work in partnership with children's 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.
- All staff are consistent and follow routines/timelines
- Staff recognise that expectations and responses to behaviour must be appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. Particular consideration will be given to the needs of babies and younger children, who may communicate their needs through their behaviour before they have the language to express themselves.

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 was not acceptable, and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that 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 for turns.
- We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.

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- We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging to the Pre-School, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- All staff should focus on de-escalation and preventative strategies rather than focusing solely on reactive strategies.
- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the impact of their actions and support them to repair the situation where appropriate. For example, if a child throws sand, they may be supported to help tidy it away.
- We never send children out of the room by themselves, nor do we use a “naughty chair”.
- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- We do not label children, such as ‘naughty’.
- Staff use positive phrasing. Such as ‘good walking’ instead of ‘no running’.
- Physical intervention is only used when necessary and proportionate to prevent a child or another person from being injured, or to prevent serious damage to property. Staff will use the least restrictive approach appropriate to the circumstances and will prioritise de-escalation and preventative strategies. Any physical intervention will be recorded and reported to the setting leader, and parents/carers will be informed on the same day.
- Staff may use appropriate and proportionate safe touch to comfort, reassure, guide or support a child, taking into account the child's age, developmental stage, individual needs and circumstances. Any physical contact will be appropriate, respectful and necessary. Staff will follow the setting's procedures for safe touch and physical intervention.
- All staff use appropriate body language and body space. Eg. eye contact, getting down to the child's height, keeping an arm distance away from the child, leaving an ‘open door’
- 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 or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.
- When the child is calm and ready, staff support them to recognise the impact of their actions and, where appropriate, repair the situation in a way that is meaningful and suitable for their age and stage of development. Children are not forced to apologise.

Continued inconsiderate behaviour

Where a child continues to experience difficulties with behaviour, staff will work with parents/carers and relevant professionals to identify possible underlying causes and agree appropriate support.

This may include:

- observations and behaviour tracking;
- discussion with the child's key person and parents/carers;
- an individual support or behaviour plan;
- an individual risk assessment where appropriate;
- consideration of the child's communication, developmental, sensory and emotional needs;
- advice and support from relevant professionals or Hertfordshire services where appropriate; and
- regular review of the strategies being used.

Children under three years

- When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways, we recognise that strategies for supporting them need to be developmentally appropriate and will differ from those used with older children.

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- Babies and very young children are still developing the ability to regulate their emotions and rely on responsive, supportive adults to help them manage feelings such as fear, anger and distress.
- 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. Behaviour may also be linked to separation, changes in routine, transitions or difficulties settling into the setting. Staff will work closely with parents/carers and the child's key person to provide consistent support and reassurance.
- We focus on ensuring a child's attachment figure in the setting, their keyperson, is building a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

Rough and tumble play and imaginative play

Staff recognise that physical, energetic and imaginative play can be a normal part of children's development. Staff will support children to explore these types of play safely and will intervene when play becomes unsafe, causes distress or is likely to result in injury.

Where imaginative play includes themes involving weapons, fighting or aggression, staff will consider the context and developmental stage of the children involved and use appropriate opportunities to support empathy, problem-solving and understanding of boundaries.

Clear and consistent boundaries will be maintained to ensure that all children remain safe.

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.
- Young children are still developing their ability to understand and manage strong emotions. Staff provide calm, consistent support to help children recognise their feelings, develop language for emotions and learn appropriate ways to express themselves.
- We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child's rage as that will have the opposite effect.
- Pre-verbal children may need physical reassurance and comfort from a familiar adult. Where appropriate, staff may comfort, hold or cuddle a child in accordance with the child's needs, their individual care arrangements and the setting's safe-touch procedures.
- 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

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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, 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 frequent or persistent, staff will consider possible underlying factors, which may include:
 - difficulties with communication or language;
 - frustration or difficulty expressing emotions;
 - changes in the child's home or setting circumstances;
 - difficulties with relationships, transitions or settling;
 - sensory or developmental needs;
 - additional needs or disabilities; or
 - other factors affecting the child's emotional wellbeing.

Where staff have safeguarding concerns, these will be dealt with in accordance with the setting's Safeguarding Policy.

Where appropriate, we will work with parents/carers and relevant professionals to identify additional support for the child and family, including following relevant SEND procedures and seeking advice from appropriate Hertfordshire services.

Bullying

We take bullying very seriously. Bullying may involve repeated physical, verbal or emotional behaviour that causes harm, distress or intimidation. Staff will consider the age and developmental stage of the children involved when responding to concerns about bullying or repeated hurtful behaviour.

If a child displays bullying behaviour towards another child or children:

- We show the child or children who have been affected that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them.
- We intervene to stop the behaviour and prevent the child or children from being harmed.
- We explain to the child displaying the behaviour why their behaviour is not acceptable.
- We give reassurance and support to the child or children who have been affected.
- We help the child displaying the behaviour to recognise the impact of their actions.
- We make sure that the child displaying the behaviour receives positive feedback for considerate behaviour and is given opportunities to practise and reflect on appropriate ways of behaving.
- We do not label children who display bullying behaviour as "bullies".
- We consider whether the child displaying the behaviour may themselves be experiencing difficulties, bullying or other circumstances that may be contributing to their behaviour. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.
- We do not force children to say sorry. Instead, we support them to understand the impact of their actions and, where appropriate, repair the situation in a way that is suitable for their age and stage of development.

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- We discuss what has happened with the parents/carers of the child displaying the behaviour and work together to agree appropriate strategies for supporting the child.
- We also communicate with the parents/carers of the child who has been affected, explaining that the concern has been addressed and that appropriate support is being provided, while respecting the confidentiality of the other child.

This policy was agreed by the staff of Playhouse Pre-School Broadwater.

Adapted on 29th March 2016 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 22nd September 2026 by Z. Munford