

Blue Windmill Nursery

Behaviour and Emotional Regulation Policy

Policy statement

At Blue Windmill Nursery, we recognise that young children are still developing their ability to understand, communicate and manage their emotions. Behaviour is a form of communication and may reflect a child's developmental stage, feelings, experiences, communication skills, sensory needs or additional needs.

We aim to provide a calm, caring and consistent environment in which children feel safe, valued and supported. We help children to develop emotional regulation, positive relationships, consideration for others and an understanding of appropriate boundaries.

Clear boundaries are necessary for children's safety and wellbeing. These will be applied in a way that is appropriate to each child's age, stage of development, level of understanding and individual needs. We will always make clear that it is the behaviour or action that is being addressed, rather than rejecting or negatively labelling the child.

Our aims

We aim to:

- build secure, trusting relationships between children and adults;
- support children to recognise and communicate their feelings;
- help children develop the skills needed to regulate their emotions and behaviour;
- promote kindness, empathy, cooperation and respect;
- provide clear, consistent and developmentally appropriate boundaries;
- help children learn safe and respectful ways to express themselves;
- identify and respond to underlying needs or difficulties;
- work in partnership with parents and carers;
- ensure that responses to behaviour are fair, proportionate and respectful;
- protect children from humiliation, punishment, discrimination and harm.

Supporting positive behaviour

Staff will model calm, respectful and considerate behaviour in their interactions with children and with one another.

Children will be supported through:

- warm, responsive relationships with familiar adults;
- clear and consistent expectations;
- praise, encouragement and acknowledgement of positive choices;
- simple language suited to the child's level of understanding;
- predictable routines and appropriate preparation for changes and transitions;
- opportunities to make choices and develop independence;
- support to name and understand feelings;
- help to recognise how their actions may affect others;
- opportunities to practise sharing, turn-taking, negotiation and problem-solving;
- activities and spaces that support movement, sensory needs, rest and emotional regulation;
- adult support to resolve conflicts safely.

Staff will recognise that it is not always developmentally appropriate to expect a young child to share immediately. Children may need support to wait, take turns, find an alternative resource or communicate that they need time and space.

Understanding behaviour

Behaviour such as biting, hitting, kicking, pushing, throwing objects, damaging resources, shouting or using hurtful language will be taken seriously. However, staff will consider what the child may be communicating through the behaviour.

Possible factors may include:

- the child's age and stage of development;
- limited communication or language skills;
- frustration, anxiety, tiredness, hunger or overstimulation;
- difficulty managing strong emotions;
- changes at home or within the nursery;
- sensory processing differences;

- special educational needs or disabilities;
- difficulties with routines, transitions or relationships;
- aspects of the environment or activity;
- behaviour that the child has observed elsewhere.

Staff will observe patterns and consider what happens before, during and after an incident. The environment, routines and adult responses will be reviewed to identify whether changes could reduce the likelihood of the behaviour recurring.

Responding to unsafe or hurtful behaviour

When behaviour is unsafe or hurtful, staff will respond promptly, calmly and consistently.

The immediate priority will be to:

1. protect the child and anyone else involved;
2. provide comfort, reassurance and any necessary first aid;
3. help the child who has displayed the behaviour to become calm and regulated;
4. use clear, age-appropriate language to explain the boundary;
5. support the children involved to reconnect or repair the situation when they are ready and able to do so.

Staff may use phrases such as:

- “I won’t let you hurt someone.”
- “Hitting hurts.”
- “You are angry. I am here to help you.”
- “Sand stays low so that everyone is safe.”
- “Let’s find another way to tell them.”

A child may be supported away from the immediate situation when this is necessary to keep people safe, reduce stimulation or help the child regulate. An adult will remain with or close to the child and provide calm reassurance and support.

This will not be used as isolation, humiliation or punishment. Children will not be placed on a “naughty chair” or required to sit alone as a punitive form of “time out”.

Once the child is calm, an adult may help them understand what happened and consider another way to respond in future. The level of discussion will reflect the child’s age, understanding and ability to engage.

Children will not be required to apologise before they are calm or where they do not understand the meaning of an apology. Staff may instead model appropriate words and support meaningful acts of repair, such as checking whether another child is all right, helping to rebuild something or returning a resource.

Consequences

Any consequence used will be immediate, proportionate, relevant to the behaviour and appropriate to the child's development and understanding.

For example, a child who is throwing sand may need to leave the sand area temporarily while an adult helps them regulate and reminds them how the sand can be used safely.

Children will not lose access to unrelated activities as a punishment. Rewards, sanctions or consequences will not be used in a way that humiliates, frightens or excludes a child.

Practices that are not permitted

Staff must never:

- use corporal punishment, including smacking, slapping, shaking or hitting;
- threaten physical punishment;
- shout at, intimidate, ridicule or humiliate a child;
- label a child as “naughty”, “bad”, “difficult” or similar;
- use sarcasm or deliberately shame a child;
- isolate a child as a punishment;
- make an example of a child in front of others;
- withhold food, drink, rest, comfort, toileting or other basic needs;
- use physical activity as a punishment;
- force a child to apologise, share or show affection;
- use restraint as a routine behaviour-management strategy;
- discuss a child's behaviour inappropriately in front of other children, parents or visitors.

Physical intervention

Physical intervention will only be used when necessary and reasonable to prevent a child from:

- injuring themselves;

- injuring another child or adult;
- causing serious damage to property.

Any intervention must be proportionate to the situation, use the minimum force necessary and stop as soon as the immediate risk has passed. It must never be used as a punishment or to secure compliance simply because a child is refusing an instruction.

Where physical intervention has been used, the nursery will record:

- the date, time and location;
- the circumstances leading to the intervention;
- who was present;
- the nature of the risk;
- the action taken;
- how long the intervention lasted;
- any injury or first aid provided;
- what happened afterwards;
- any further action or review required.

Parents or carers will be informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Repeated or foreseeable use of physical intervention will lead to a review of the child's support arrangements and/or environment. A risk assessment may be needed. Specialist advice or additional training may be sought where appropriate.

Persistent or significant behaviour

Where behaviour is persistent, increasing in frequency or intensity, or significantly affecting the child or others, staff will work with parents or carers to understand the possible causes and agree appropriate support.

This may include:

- observations and recording patterns or triggers;
- reviewing routines and the environment;
- agreeing consistent strategies between home and nursery;
- making reasonable adjustments;

- preparing an individual support or behaviour plan;
- involving the SENDCo;
- seeking advice from outside professionals, where appropriate.

Behaviour will not automatically be viewed as deliberate misconduct. Staff will consider whether it may indicate an unmet developmental, communication, sensory, emotional or additional need.

Special educational needs and disabilities

Children with SEND may communicate distress, discomfort or unmet needs through their behaviour. Staff will ensure that children are not disadvantaged or punished because of behaviour arising from a disability, developmental difference or additional need.

The nursery will make reasonable adjustments and provide appropriate support in accordance with its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy.

The SENDCo may support staff and parents to develop individual strategies and, where appropriate, seek advice from outside agencies.

Discriminatory language or behaviour

Discriminatory language or behaviour relating to race, religion or belief, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, family background or any other personal characteristic will be addressed promptly and sensitively.

Staff will:

- stop the behaviour or language;
- support and reassure the child who has been affected;
- make clear that the words or actions are not acceptable;
- consider the child's age, understanding and where the language or behaviour may have originated;
- help the child learn respectful and appropriate alternatives;
- record and monitor significant or repeated incidents;
- involve parents and senior staff where appropriate.

The focus will be on protecting children, challenging prejudice and helping children develop respect for others rather than shaming the child displaying the behaviour.

Bullying

Young children may display repeated hurtful behaviour, but they may not yet have the understanding or intention usually associated with bullying.

Any repeated, targeted or harmful behaviour will nevertheless be taken seriously. Staff will support the child affected, intervene consistently and investigate the reasons for the behaviour.

Patterns will be recorded and monitored, and parents will be involved where appropriate. Additional support will be arranged for both the child experiencing the behaviour and the child displaying it.

Safeguarding

A sudden, significant or unexplained change in a child's behaviour or emotional wellbeing may indicate that the child is experiencing distress, harm or changes in their circumstances.

Staff must remain professionally curious and share any safeguarding concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Concerns will be managed in accordance with the nursery's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.

Behaviour that raises a safeguarding concern will not be treated solely as a behaviour-management matter.

Partnership with parents and carers

We will work openly and respectfully with parents and carers.

Parents will be informed about:

- significant incidents;
- recurring or escalating concerns;
- injuries or first aid;
- physical intervention;
- agreed support strategies;
- professional involvement where appropriate.

The nursery will maintain confidentiality and will not disclose another child's name, circumstances or personal information when discussing an incident.

Recording and responsibilities

Routine minor incidents do not always require a formal record. A record will be made where behaviour:

- causes injury;
- requires physical intervention;
- is serious, persistent or recurring;
- appears discriminatory;
- presents a significant safety concern;
- may indicate a safeguarding or SEND concern.

Records will be factual and objective.

The nursery manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented, understood and reviewed. Room supervisors are responsible for supporting consistent practice. The SENDCo will advise on additional needs, reasonable adjustments and individual support plans.

All staff are responsible for modelling respectful behaviour and responding to children calmly, safely and consistently.