



BERKHAMPSTEAD DAY NURSERY

BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Policy statement

Our Nursery believes that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for 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 and setting the correct example. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting Personal, Social and Emotional Development (see also Curriculum Policy).

This policy aims:

- To promote positive behaviour and encourage children to develop their own emotional and moral thinking.
- To support children in considering the feelings and views of others.
- To support children in making good choices in behaviour through praise and encouragement and to support children to understand that bad choices may have consequences.
- To promote a culture which reflects the Nursery values of Perseverance, Honesty, Kindness, Trust and Politeness.

Procedures

We have two named persons responsible for the programme for supporting Personal, Social and Emotional Development, including issues concerning behaviour. These named persons are: Maria Acedo and Rebecca Harper.

We require the named persons to:

- Keep themselves up-to-date with legislation, research and current thinking on promoting positive behaviour and managing children's behaviour where it may require additional support;
- Advise and support staff to enable and empower them to manage children's behaviour where it may require additional support;
- Access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within the programme for supporting Personal, Social and Emotional Development; and
- Ensure that all staff have relevant training and knowledge 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 all members of the Nursery.

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with respect, 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. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their Key Person/Buddy. We work with parents to address inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

Strategies for promoting positive behaviour:

- We have clearly defined, age-appropriate expectations for positive behaviour and these are reinforced through the Day Nursery Values and Berky Bear Class Rules.
- 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 materials 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 and praise 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 their group, 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 of their actions and support them in learning how to express themselves more appropriately.
- We never send children out of the room by themselves; however, we do operate a 'thinking time' strategy where a child will be asked to sit down and think about their actions, with adult support.
- We never use corporal punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out or humiliate individual children.
- We only use physical restraint, such as holding, to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property.
- We never shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's behaviour.

- When recurring problem behaviour requires additional support, we work out a plan of action with parents using our 'Positive Plan' approach.

Positive Plans

Here at Berkhamstead Day Nursery, we recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication. A key role of the adult is to try and identify what the behaviour might be communicating and offering more positive methods for communicating those needs. For example, a pre-verbal child may start hitting and pushing around lunch time. What the child is trying to communicate is that they are hungry; however they do not have the language skills to communicate that need.

Our Positive Plan uses the ABC approach to behaviour management. The aim of this is to identify the root cause of the behaviour (i.e. what the child is trying to communicate), to enable us to modify our approach and support the child in making positive changes in their behaviour. The Positive Plan is very much a two way process between Nursery and home. Parents will be kept informed throughout the process and will be encouraged to contribute and work towards the plan in conjunction with Nursery.

If behaviour continues to be a problem and all internal measures to support the child have been exhausted, the Nursery, with parental permission, will work with the relevant outside agencies to support the child.

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 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, pushing, hitting and biting (see separate Biting Policy). Staff will be 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 in circumstances in the child's life, e.g. a new sibling. We then work with the child to support them in finding more positive ways to express their feelings.
- We focus on ensuring a child's attachment figure in the setting, 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 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 different strategies.

- 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.
- In order to contain play, we will develop strategies that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
- We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, blowing up, shooting etc., and that 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 strategies 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.
- Use of certain language during this type of play will not be tolerated – for example, "You're dead" or "I am going to kill you".

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 consciousness 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 or fear.
- We help this process, therefore, 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. 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 others have feelings too and that their actions impact on their feelings.
- We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy.
- 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 problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together.

Policy reviewed – January 2019

Policy to be next reviewed – January 2020 /Day Nursery Manager

