



## Achieving positive behaviour

At Desmond Anderson Nursery, 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, feelings, needs and rights of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. This is a developmental stage that requires support, encouragement and teaching through modelling expectations. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

The designated member of staff, who has overall responsibility for our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour is: Ann Agg, Nursery Leader, in the absence of the Nursery Leader the responsibility will fall to the next senior member of staff in charge.

The designated member of staff will:

- Keep themselves 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 the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development.
- Check that all staff have relevant training on promoting positive behaviour. A record will be kept of staff attendance at this training.

We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of, and respect, those used by children, parents, staff and volunteers as members of the setting.

- The code of conduct for all staff, volunteers and students is to provide a positive role 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 understand the cause and to decide, jointly, how to respond appropriately.
- Individual home/nursery contact books and/or STAR forms may be used to help identify patterns of behaviour. (STAR - Situation, Trigger, Actual, Result)

### **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, acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what was not acceptable and why.
- Supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response. Any support will be linked to the ages and stages of development and appropriate to the needs of the child and situation.
- We ensure that there are resources and sufficient activities so that children are meaningfully occupied.
- We endeavour to arrange the environment and resources so that children can explore and play on their own or in small/large groups without impacting negatively on others play or exploration.
- 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 our 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 of their actions 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' or a 'time out' strategy that excludes children from the group. However, if staff feel that the child's behaviour is likely to endanger themselves or others they will be moved to another part of the nursery so that they can regain their composure and begin the process of understanding their emotions and response to the event. All support is tailored to the needs of the child and is age appropriate. The child will remain with a member of staff and within view of other staff at all times.

- Physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking is never used. Children are never 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 children or adults and/or serious damage to property. Senior staff have attended training for restraining children.
- Where physical restraint has been employed, details such as what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses are brought to the attention of the Nursery Leader/staff in charge and are recorded in the child's personal file. The child's parent is 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 attitude, by means of explanations rather than personal blame, and within the constraints of the age and stage of the child's development.
- Where the behaviour of racial or other abuse continues, external support may be sought. Such incidents will be brought to the attention of the parent and/or carer. (*British Values - tolerance of other cultures, race and beliefs.*)
- Staff do not raise their voices in a threatening way or shout to respond to a child's inconsiderate behaviour, unless they feel there is no other alternative and that the child's behaviour at that moment in time is likely endanger themselves or others.
- Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviours of young children include tantrums, biting or fighting and are part of normal development. 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.

Where children regularly display negative behaviour such as tantrums, *biting\** or fighting, staff will 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'.

- \*Children *bite* for a number of reasons:
  - **They are in pain.** When babies bite, typically it is because they are teething.
  - **They are exploring their world.** Very young children use their mouths to explore, just as they use their hands.
  - **They are looking for a reaction.** They will bite down on a friend or sibling to hear the surprised exclamation, not realising how painful the experience is for that person.
  - **They are craving attention.** In older children, biting is just one of several undesired behaviours used to get attention.

- **They are frustrated.** Biting, like hitting, is a way for some children to assert themselves when they are still too young to express feelings effectively through words.

To a child, biting is a way to get back a favourite toy, tell you that they are unhappy, or let another child know that they want to be left alone.

The nursery has further information about biting to support parents, if required.

- 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.
- Where children, for whatever reason, do not make attachments to an allocated key person, alternatives will be offered after consultation with the family. Such events may arise due to long term absence of a child's key person or the change of a key person's work pattern.

### **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 (see section on bullying) 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 will develop strategies to contain play 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 may contain violent dramatic strategies e.g. blowing up, shooting etc. and that themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies'. We allow this type of fantasy play to take place, within set boundaries, as it offers opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
- We accept that for some children weapon-play maybe an expression of a child's everyday experience e.g. a family member is part of the armed forces, armed police or airport security. We also recognise the influence from various media that children are exposed to, such as comics, television, films and interactive games that depict heroes and villains.
- 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.

## 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 empathy 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.

- 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;
  - 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;
  - not engaging in punitive responses to a young child's rage as that will have the opposite effect.
- 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. We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' 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 by recognising their emotional needs.

- 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. Children need to learn why they are saying sorry and it should be meant, not just said to be able to leave the situation.

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 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.

When staff have used all known strategies at their disposal and there has been no improvement of a child's behaviour a referral will be made for additional support from outside agencies.

## **Bullying**

**A child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan and carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress in another.**

We take bullying very seriously. Bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. It is characterised by *intent* to hurt, is often *planned*, and accompanied by an *awareness* of the impact of the bullying behaviour.

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.
- we complete an incident form for both parental parties to sign.

<b>This policy was written by:</b>	Ann Agg – Nursery Leader
<b>And implemented by:</b>	Desmond Anderson Nursery Desmond Anderson Primary Academy
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<b>Role of signatory</b>	Chair of Local Board