

## ACHIEVING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

### Safeguarding & Welfare Requirement: Managing Behaviour

Providers must have and implement policies and procedures for achieving positive behaviour in the setting.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Our aim at St Eval Pre-school is to support and encourage the children to respect themselves and each other, to express their emotions through play and discussion, and to provide their own solutions when in conflict situations. We enhance individual self-esteem by making the children aware that they have needs and rights, and so do others. We encourage children to reflect on the impact their behaviour may have on people, places and objects. We encourage the children to take responsibility. We ensure that all adults within the setting provide positive role modelling for the children. The principles guiding management of behaviour exist within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development.

## Aims

We aim to promote positive behaviour by:

- supporting each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and autonomy
- supporting each child in developing a sense of belonging in order for them to feel valued and welcome
- acknowledging considerate behaviour, such as kindness and willingness to share
- acknowledging children's considerate behaviour towards another who is hurt or upset
- helping older children set the Pre-school's guidelines for considerate behaviour
- providing activities and games to encourage co-operation and working together
- ensuring resources are readily accessible and plentiful in order to ensure the children are meaningfully occupied, and to minimise unnecessary conflict
- avoiding creating situations in which children attract attention only in return for undesirable behaviour

## Method

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 setting. We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive role model by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy. Children at the setting will be made aware that they all have equal rights and that those rights will be upheld and protected. New staff and volunteers are asked to familiarise themselves with our Achieving Positive Behaviour Policy and its guidelines for behaviour. All members of the setting are expected to keep to the guidelines and apply them consistently. We work in partnership with parents, with their child's key person regularly informing them about their child's behaviour. If unacceptable behaviour consistently occurs, we will use our observation records to help us to monitor and understand the cause of the behaviour, and to decide jointly with the parent how to respond appropriately.

To ensure situations are dealt with consistently, all staff will:

- Use the positive in all interactions with the children
- Find out the reason for certain behaviour
- Explain emotions Move quietly across the room to interact with the children

We will not:

- Send children out of the room or promote 'time-out' techniques
- Use or threaten to use physical punishment
- Use techniques intended to single out or humiliate individual children, such as ridicule or sarcasm
- Remove toys or activities that are the focus of a conflict as a 'punishment' or means of 'teaching children to share'
- Use physical restraint, such as holding, unless to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property
- Shout or raise our voices in a threatening way
- Force a child to say "sorry" - an apology is meaningless unless it is internally motivated

## Positive Intervention

We make a distinction between three kinds of behaviour that require support or intervention in order to achieve the considerate and socially acceptable behaviour that we expect of children according to their age and developmental maturity or whether they have any special educational need. These behaviours are:

## Children Under 3 Years

Strategies that are developmentally appropriate, which differ from those for older children, will be used for children under three who display inconsiderate behaviour. We acknowledge that babies and young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger, frustration or distress, and require sensitive adults to support them to do so. Staff will offer comfort to children who are experiencing intense emotions, thus encouraging them to talk about their feelings in order to understand stand them and deal with them in an acceptable manner. Frustration or anxiousness can often result in the biting, fighting or tantrums. In such cases, we will look for contributing factors which may explain the behaviour, such as upheaval at home, communication difficulties, or 'separation anxiety', which may occur if the child is encountering difficulty in settling-in at the Pre-school. In the case of 'separation anxiety', the child's key person will focus on ensuring they are building a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

## Hurtful behaviour

Within the Pre-school 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. It is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying', even if the behaviour is worryingly aggressive. For most children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without considering the feelings of the person they have hurt. Some children may engage in hurtful behaviour because they are deeply unhappy and they require support and care. However, hurtful behaviour has an impact for the child on the receiving end which is significant and this is also taken into consideration when responding to incidents of hurtful behaviour.

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 for themselves, as the biological and cognitive means to do this is still underdeveloped in very young children.



We understand that self-management of these 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. Consequently, 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 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 to respond 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 explanation and discuss the incident with them to their level of understanding. We recognise that children require help in understanding the range of feelings experienced. 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 to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions have an impact on other's feelings.

At Pre-school 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 again before skills such as 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, role-play and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.

We endeavour to 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. 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 meet their needs – this may be in the home but also in the setting
- Their parent, or key person in the setting, does not have the 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 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 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to a Behaviour Support team where necessary.

In cases of hurtful behaviour, 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. Details of such an incident; what happened, what action was taken and by whom, names of witnesses, are brought to the attention of the Pre-school Manager and are recorded in the Incident Book. The parent/carer, who is informed the same day, signs and dates the Incident book to indicate having been informed. A copy is placed in the child's personal file.

## Inconsiderate Behaviour



The includes behaviours such as taking toys from another child, not waiting for a turn, pushing, being uncooperative, disrupting a game, and hitting out against another. They are characterised by developmental immaturity whereby children are not at the stage where they can manage frustration or anger themselves, they may not have the language to express themselves, or may not understand and be able to keep social rules. These behaviours are seen as mistake that the child is making on the way to developing socially acceptable ways, particularly of dealing with conflict. We regard the child to be a learner of what is acceptable and in need of support, explanation, encouragement, positive modelling and guidance – just as in learning any other skill. We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children find solution 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 what was not acceptable, and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response. We praise children for their efforts and achievements in resolving a dispute or learning a social skill such as waiting for their turn.

## Bullying

We take bullying very seriously. Bullying involves the persistent physical, verbal, emotional or psychological abuse of another child, children or adult. It is characterised by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behaviour. A child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress to another. This is rarely the case for children under five.

### If a Child Bullies another Child

- Show the children who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them.
- Intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children
- Explain to the child doing the bullying why his/her behaviour is not acceptable
- Give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied
- Help the child who has done the bullying to realise the impact of their actions
- Make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour
- Do not label children who bully as 'bullies'
- Recognise that children who bully are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we not insist they say sorry unless it is clear that they feel genuine remorse for what they have done
- 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
- Share, without disclosing names, what has happened with the parents of the child who has been bullied
- Use the Code of Practice in cases where the above does not work to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to a Behaviour Support team where necessary

In cases of bullying behaviour that is racially motivated or focussed towards a child's disability or gender, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanation rather than personal blame.

Details; what happened, what action was taken and by whom, names of witnesses, are brought to the attention of the Pre-school Manager and are recorded in the Incident Book. The parent/carer, who is informed the same day, signs and dates the Incident book to indicate having been informed. A copy is placed in the child's personal file.

## If an Adult Bullies another Person:

If a parent/carer, volunteer or visitor behaves in an inappropriate manner towards any child then we will follow the guidelines in our Safeguarding Children Policy. If a member of staff behaves negatively towards any child or adult we will adhere to our policies: Employment, Staffing & Training Policy, Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers Policy & Complaints Policy & Procedure.

If a parent/carer, volunteer or visitor behaves in an inappropriate manner towards any adult in the first instance the Manager or Deputy Manager will be informed, they will speak to parties involved & a meeting will be arranged between all parties to discuss and try and resolve the matter. In the event that the matter cannot be resolved then a formal meeting with all parties and the Chairperson will take place. If the matter cannot be resolved the Pre-school would then follow the Complaints Procedure. A record will be held of all communication and all parties requested to sign.

## Biting

Biting is not acceptable behaviour. Young children who bit others cause great alarm and incite emotionally intense reactions among families. Biting can also be a frightening experience for the child who is doing the biting. We strongly advise against biting your own child to 'teach them a lesson' if they have bitten another child as this sends the child a very confused message.

Young children bite for a variety of reasons, most of which are categorised into three broad areas:

- Developmental issues (including teething pain, sensory exploration of the surroundings, learning about cause and effect, learning through imitating others etc.)
- Expressions of feelings (including frustration, anger, tension, excitement etc.)
- Environment or activity that needs to be modified for the child

Staff need to be sensitive to the circumstances in which biting occurs and use preventive measures to stop biting behaviour. Staff members need to understand development of young children, be vigilant observers and exercise proactive measures to prevent as well as intervene appropriately when biting occurs.

## When a Child is Bitten

For the Biter:

- The biter is immediately removed with no emotion - the caring attention is focused on the victim
- The biter is talked to on a developmentally appropriate level for the child to understand
- Redirect the child to other play
- Write an incident report for the parent/carer to sign and date

For the Victim:

- Separate the victim from the biter
- Comfort the child
- Administer first aid if necessary
- Write an accident report for the parent/carer to sign and date
- If the bite resulted in breaking the skin, inform the child's parent/carer and advise them to seek medical help to prevent the occurrence of a more serious wound

Staff members are required to document and report any biting attempts as well as actual contact with skin. They must discuss the incident with the Manager and the Achieving Positive Behaviour co-ordinator as soon as possible.

Following a child's first incident, typical preventive measures will be taken. These include:

- Checking adult-child ratios
- Evaluating classroom environment and selection of resources
- Examining daily routine
- Using language and actions responsive to children's attempts to communicate what they want, how they feel, and when they need help
- Teaching acceptable ways for children to gain attention or access toys they desire
- Providing appropriate materials to explore cause and effect
- Tracking child interactions by way of observation

When biting reoccurs (child who has bitten the same child or another child within a short space of time), staff will

- Assign a person, normally the child's key person, to shadow the child in order to monitor and redirect behaviour
- Record triggers, warning signs, frequency of attempts, time of event in relation to daily routine when biting occurs
- Confer with parent/carer and devise a plan of action, seeking outside support and guidance from a Behaviour Support team if necessary

## Fantasy Aggression / Rough and Tumble Play/Gun Play

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes, this behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to bullying, although it may be inconsiderate or even hurtful at times and may need addressing using strategies as above. 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 a changing society we acknowledge that many images portraying war, guns and fighting are portrayed in the media, computer video games, and in the world of books and toys. Some children will have more gun-user related experiences than others. We are aware that children living in a rural community, such as St Eval and the surrounding areas, are likely to see shooting parties accompanied by a brace of pheasants or a rabbit. They will hear sounds replicating gunshots as bird scarers are set to guard the crops, and this will be part of their cultural heritage, a feature of their world. Similarly, others may have relatives or family friends in the armed services.

Although some practitioners and parents may feel unhappy about this, it is an inescapable fact that children know about guns and weapons. In their playing, children give signals to adults about what they know, how much they know, and what they need to know in order to make sense of their world and their place in it. Children use play as a necessary tool for thinking, and some children will want to think much more about gun-related issues than others. Gun-related play appears to have an irresistible lure to children, most often boys. Arguably this is because making guns is an achievable task, weapon play related to early communication skills, major themes of children's play are represented in weapon-related playing, running in big spaces outside is a preferred play style, and it is a universal language. Children can play together at weapon related themes with little or no common language and often no verbal communication at all, except perhaps the occasional explosive sound effect which is understood by all children. This universal theme can be a starting point for playing together, because no-one is excluded. It can be the place for establishing friendships and getting to know each other.

We 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 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 and alternatives to blowing up or shooting. We are able to tune into 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.

## Responsibilities

The Pre-school has appointed Achieving Positive Behaviour Co-ordinator to liaise with parents, colleagues and other professionals to ensure children's behaviour is managed effectively so that they are making progress in their development to their full potential.

The roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinator are to:

- Keep up to date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour
- Access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour
- Liaise with parents, practitioners and other professionals where necessary
- Set up and hold meetings when necessary to ensure that all staff members receive relevant in-house training on promoting positive behaviour. Records of staff training attendance are kept in the Professional Development files
- Ensure practitioners are accessing further training
- Ensure new appointees are provided with training as part of their induction
- Ensure that practitioners are supported in managing children's behaviour through implementing the settings Achieving Positive Behaviour Policy and procedure
- To offer advice and guidance to staff members and parents
- Ensure that strategies for tackling problematic behaviour are developmentally appropriate
- To monitor the effectiveness of the policy on a regular basis

Designated Achieving Positive Behaviour Co-ordinator: **Tracy Barry**



This policy is reviewed annually, next review date: November

APPROVAL

Signature:

Name & Position: Rachael Richards -  
Manager

Date:

AGREED

Signature:

Name & Position: On behalf of the committee

Date:

