



MANAGING DIFFICULT BEHAVIOUR – including RESTRAINING AND INTERVENTION (working with children)

Staff at St. Joseph's Nursery aims to help children to understand that there are acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. This is achieved via the adults in the centre who work with the children role modelling and promoting positive behaviours and having consistent boundaries. These boundaries are learned via their everyday learning and play.

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 their behaviour. We aim to teach children to behave in socially acceptable ways and to understand the needs and rights of others. The principles guiding management of behaviour exist within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development.

We aim to promote positive behaviours through the following procedures:

- Key persons will have responsibility for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning 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 members of the setting.
- 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.
- We familiarise new staff and volunteers with our behaviour management 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 parent/carers – Parent/carers are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their key person; we work with parent/carers to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately. Any serious or racially abusive incidents will be recorded in the child's registration folder and parent/carers will be informed accordingly
- We will put in place a behaviour plan to ensure all staff uses the same approach

We aim to use **positive pro-active strategies** to promote positive behaviour in children, and set these strategies within our programme for personal, social and emotional development.

These **include**:

- Supporting each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- Supporting each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they 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.
- Providing activities and games that encourage co-operation and working together.
- Support children in finding a solution to a problem.
- Ensure a child has a turn, after it has been said that they are next.
- Avoiding creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.

It is not acceptable for staff to:

- Use any form of corporal punishment
 - Cause a child humiliation or ridicule a child
 - Shout in anger at a child (this does not refer to the use of a raised voice for safety awareness when it is the only means of preventing a child from harming themselves)
 - Promote 'Time Out' techniques for children under five but may, on occasions, have to separate children from the main group, to allow time to talk to that child on a 1-2-1 basis, to aid them thinking about why they demonstrated negative behaviours and how they can rectify the situation
- 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.

Kinds of behaviours that require positive intervention

We make a distinction between three kinds of behaviours 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:

- **Inconsiderate behaviour** – This includes behaviours such as taking toys from another child, not waiting for a turn, pushing, being uncooperative, disrupting a game, 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 to social rules. These behaviours are seen as mistakes 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.
- **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' even if the behaviour is worryingly aggressive. For most children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person whom 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 at the receiving end which is significant and this is also taken into consideration when responding to incidents of hurtful behaviour.
- **Bullying** - We take bullying very seriously and as such have developed a separate policy for bullying. However, bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. 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 plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress to another. This is rarely the case for children under five and in general, children under three years are unable to

regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them learn to do this. Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviours of young children include tantrums, biting or fighting.

Good practice:

- Staff should remain 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.
- 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.
- Staff offer comfort to both children in a dispute and encourage them to find a solution to their problem.
- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- We praise children for their efforts and achievements in resolving a dispute or learning a social skill such as waiting for their turn.
- Staff 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 - Staff will help children manage these feelings as the biological and cognitive means to do this for themselves is still underdeveloped in very young children.
- Staff 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 - 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.
- Our Staff do not engage in punitive responses to a young child's rage as that will have the opposite effect, as such our way of responding to pre-verbal children is to calm them through holding and cuddling. However, 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.

- Our Staff recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings experienced and so the staff will help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling.
- Our staff help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings, thereby supporting young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy.

We are aware that some problems may reoccur 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, role-play and stories. We aim to 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 and encourage them to apologise, when they are able to understand what they have done and show regret.

When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, the nursery works with parent/carers to identify the cause and find a solution together, whilst also discussing their views and expectations of their child's behaviour. In addition, parent/carers will be kept informed of daily events, methods and procedures, creating a consistent approach for the child. However, whilst our staff recognise that children need to express emotion and so will talk to the child about their feelings and demonstrate other ways of communicating their feelings and needs, staff are aware that poor behaviours can also be a means of communicating that something is wrong. As such, practitioners need to demonstrate understanding and take the time to listen and observe what the child is trying to say and avoid 'judgemental' attitudes. Furthermore, all of our staff are aware that certain poor and aggressive behaviours can also reflect 'learned behaviours' from home and as such they need to remain vigilant to possible home environment safeguarding issues.

Ultimately, staff should remind children that boundaries of behaviour exist to keep individuals and the whole group safe and that it is a means of demonstrating 'care' for the children –

children who have clear boundaries set are more secure and learn that they are loved and thrive as a result, in all areas of development. Whereas, children without boundaries tend to suffer from neglect, which negatively impacts on their self-esteem and self-confidence

Further good practice includes:

- Staff should be at child level when communicating with them
- Staff should be aware of their tone, body language and how they communicate with children.
- Staff should be clear and remember the child's age and level of understanding in talking to them and when they are setting limits and goals – as these also need to be age appropriate to their ability and identified stage of development
- When another child is being physically or emotionally threatened by a child, staff must firstly deploy another staff member to that child to ensure they can feel safe and supported, and preferably draw that child away from the area. A second member of staff then sits with the child who has demonstrated the threatening behaviour and encourages them to talk about why they were behaving in that manner. It is imperative that they demonstrate strong, non-judgemental, listening skills and help the child to analyse their own behaviour and try to help them to recognise a better way to vent their frustrations.
- Staff should support children to understand that poor behaviours are negative and that they hurt others and can hurt themselves.
- All staff should always model good relationships with the children and their staff team members in front of the children

Restraining and intervention (safety aspects)

- If a situation arises where a child has to be removed away from the group, then they should remain within close view/contact of an adult member of staff and ideally should not be left alone, as this is a 'punishing' behaviour that negates any learning benefit for the future
- If a child is demonstrating highly aggressive behaviour, then a staff member, preferably the key person, should primarily try to calm the child down through communicating to them and encourage them to talk away from the other children. However, other staff members should be deployed to remove any furniture and equipment that may cause injury to that child or another whom the child may be frustrated/angry at. An additional staff member may also be deployed to move the rest of the children out of range of the child demonstrating aggressive behaviours.

All staff MUST remain calm and understand that the child concerned is communicating a message and they should try to find out what that is, which cannot be achieved through raised voices or reprimanding types of talk.

- No staff member should forcefully restrain a child. Rather, the staff member should place the child in a safe area, and sit with them, away from the other children, ensuring that they are unable to cause injury to themselves, or others, and begin communicating with them, encouraging and aiding the calming down process.
- All staff MUST remember that they are responsible for the safety of all the children and should always intervene if there is a risk to a child's safety or well-being, but must always do so with self-restraint and in a calm manner.

At St. Joseph' Nursery Behaviour Management Person is Alicia Stroud.

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