

Kenilworth Nursery School & Whitnash Nursery School



Behaviour and Well Being Policy

Including Bullying Policy

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| Updated | Headteacher | Chair of Governors |
| September 2019 | | |
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Written by Staff and Governors
As a result of current School practice.

BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Kenilworth & Whitnash Nursery Schools celebrate and recognise the uniqueness of every child and are careful to observe behaviour and consider the meaning behind it. We are aware that children communicate worries and anxieties through behaviour and that it is important to consider not just the behaviour we are seeing but why a child maybe displaying this behaviour. We do not seek to judge but to teach and promote acceptable behaviour so everyone can feel safe and secure and ready to learn in our environment.

“Above all, good practice requires a consistent and ideally shared understanding of behavioural expectations, codes of conduct and values for all (adults and children alike) in the home or group setting”

Start Right Report by Sir Christopher Ball 1994.

AIMS

Our primary aim is to provide a happy secure learning environment for everyone, which necessitates children learning self-regulation, group discipline, the difference between right and wrong and social rules for learning that includes using acceptable behaviour. We always explain why certain types of behaviour are unacceptable, talking through the situation with care and at a level appropriate to each child's level of understanding. We aim to make the Schools a place where children, families and staff will share the same philosophy and work together to help the children become respectful and caring individuals. Promoting the child's self-image and self-esteem and enabling them to develop strategies to deal with situations such as physical and verbal confrontations, are vital and have highest priority. Our Schools actively promotes and supports the development of positive relationships at all levels. We aim to work in partnership with parents supporting them to set boundaries that are appropriate developmentally and in turn support children to feel safe and secure both in the school environment and at home. Exploring choice is vital and a key aspect of learning but we will ensure that some decisions remain adult decisions to protect children, keep them safe and ensure they are able to access experiences that are new to them so they may develop learning skills that will best support them throughout life.

Our policy and aims fully support the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance and statutory requirements 2017 and the Children's Act 2004. [In addition it also reflects guidance within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 and the Child Protection Policy 2018.](#)

OBJECTIVES

Through the following provision, we hope to fulfil our aims by:-

- providing experiences to encourage the child to have a positive self-image through games, turn taking, stories, contributing to small group times and valuing the child's contribution at all levels while recognising and respecting the uniqueness of each child.
- being positive and consistent at all times and frequently using the phrases '[...good sitting..](#)'; '[...good listening..](#)'; '[...good walking...](#)' etc. Praise will be specific and informative.
- giving positive instructions e.g. '[Please walk in school because](#)' instead of 'don't run'. Through the provision of clear and consistently held boundaries we ensure children feel safe in the environment.
- encouraging social skills – 'please', 'thank you', consideration for all and turn-taking. We ensure children experience turn taking and sharing at the earliest opportunity and incorporate some element of turn taking into all of our groups. We encourage children to ask for a turn themselves, with support from staff if needed. We help children to negotiate and explain why they need to negotiate. Supporting children to understand the social relationships that support learning.
- supporting children in developing positive relationships by developing emotional literacy so that thoughts and feelings can be openly discussed and explained and so that children can verbally assert their rights.
- using the Building Learning Power(BLP) approach to enable and empower children to raise self esteem and motivate them to participate fully in their learning and development.
- recognising that each child is an individual, but there are certain times when a child has to conform to nursery procedure, e.g. small group, tidying up, fire drill and accepting the discipline of noise levels.
- adults being good role models and encouraging the children to work within acceptable busy noise levels to ensure a calm working atmosphere. Staff use a quiet approach with the children at all times - staff voices are never raised (with the exception of the prevention of an accident through voicing awareness)
- always reprimanding a child, in a positive, quiet way to emphasise that it is the action which is unacceptable and not the child.
- encouraging children to vocalise to one another that they do not like being hurt and to express their feelings, developing an emotional literacy and empowering them to keep safe.

- helping the children to realise how other children feel and so encourage empathy. If possible, help them to recognise the impact of their behaviour, although this may not always be a realistic expectation.
- ensuring if a dangerous situation requires immediate action e.g. throwing bricks, sand, or any other anti-social behaviour, reasons are given as to why it is dangerous. If the behaviour persists, the child will be removed from the activity, for a specified time, with additional explanations and a reinforcing of boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- enabling parents to feel comfortable in approaching staff about any problem that is worrying their child e.g. concerns expressed at home or any changes in circumstances which may be affecting the child's behaviour patterns at school
- informing and involving parents in the school's approach to discipline and the use of 'time out' strategies from the outset and asking for their support and co-operation in dealing with any behavioural issues.
- by praising and highlighting acts of self discipline and thoughtfulness.
- by listening to children's concerns and acting upon them.
- where appropriate, after consultation with parents, involve other agencies e.g. child psychotherapist, educational psychologist, clinical psychologist, health visitor
- through our research project working jointly with a child psychotherapist to listening to parents concerns and providing advice and support on early behaviour/development difficulties such as sleeping, toileting and eating issues.
- providing appropriate reference books in the adult library covering the many aspects of: child behaviour; child development; and positive guidance and strategies for dealing with phases e.g. tantrums, bed-wetting, biting etc.

“SETTLING IN”

When children first come to Nursery School they will find it is very different to any other previous experiences. For some children it will be the first time they have attend a learning environment without their parents. By visiting children in their homes prior to them beginning school we support children to make an initial relationship with the adult who will be their keyworker.

We always ask that the first session in the setting is accompanied, by a parent or significant adult, so the children have the security of begin to explore. The settling in process is very carefully considered and is individual to each child. Some children may need adults to stay for a number of sessions or may need to only attend for quite short periods during the early stages of the process.

Settling in is very important and if it happens successfully then it is likely that the next 'brand new experience' will be better received and children will become more confident when separating from parents in the future.

We ask parents to support this process and to work in partnership with us at this point. We ask that whenever possible children are supported with quiet calm voices and that the parent adopts a pattern that supports the child to become comfortable on arrival, staff will work closely with parents at this point. All parents are asked to say goodbye very clearly so children do not suddenly look up and realise they have been left!

For some children 'separation' from a Parent can be very distressing and we approach each 'settling difficulty' differently, we will gather information about the child about routines and home, we may suggest very short separations. In some cases we may suggest that additional advice is offered by our Child Psychotherapist who works with the schools in an integrated way one day per week.

SETTLED, HAPPY CHILDREN EXPERIMENTING WITH CONTROL

We understand that young children can exhibit very demonstrative and emotional behaviour and are not always able to self regulate. In moments of extreme emotional behaviour staff will aim to de-escalate, to comfort or distract and to offer a calm approach but we also understand that young children may escalate into unsafe behaviours quickly and follow the 'use of reasonable force guidance' for any physical intervention in which we may hold hands, shoulders or physical guide a child to another quieter space.

In the event of a situation where an otherwise settled, confident child is angry at being left at school by the parent - and exhibits extreme emotional behaviour, e.g. sobbing, shouting, hitting out, the member of staff dealing with the situation will calmly and firmly carry the child into a quiet, safe space to:

- a) calm and reassure the child
- b) ensure physical safety of the child
- c) prevent other children from becoming upset

This will only occur when:

1. the parent and school together feel it is appropriate to adopt this strategy.
2. the parent understands the school's good practice procedure when a child is extremely upset and why it is good practice.

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

Children within the Nursery developmental stages will often experiment and use behaviours that 'push boundaries' and expectations. For example; they may want to go up the slide when the rule is you must only come down sitting down, they may want to throw items as they explore trajectory which maybe unsafe, they may play with water in the bathrooms or respond negatively or not at all to adult requests. In all of these cases staff 'hold the boundary' and explain the shared rule, usually based on safety or well-being. They will intervene in an unsafe or 'unacceptable' behaviour using the word STOP. Staff will then explain why the child must STOP clearly, at times it may be necessary to explain after the event but usually it happens immediately.

The child is seen as a learner in this process and the staff quickly move to a positive outcome for the child, for example; “stop! It is not safe to flick the sand, it might go into your eyes or another child’s eyes. Why don’t we add *** to the sand and see what happens then”. Occasionally a child may need to move to another space and staff will use the phrase “It’s your turn now to work”. If a child is still struggling they may be asked to work beside an adult for a period of time or move to a quiet space.

In some cases children can continue to ‘push against boundaries’ and expectations and it is then important to work in partnership with Parents and decide a course of action and agreement on how those boundaries will be held and respected. Shared phrases or explanations for the child maybe developed, sometimes Parents may change an expectation at home to better support the child to be able to manage that expectation at school, consistency is very important. In some instances where a behaviour might be embedded within the child that is unsafe a ‘strong and clear boundary’ maybe held but this will be decided with Parents and is seen as a supportive process for the child and all involved. In these instances additional advice from a Child Psychotherapist who works in an integrated way with the School one day per week is sought so that all better understand the behaviour and a unique and tailored approach can be developed.

For many children the skills of ‘self regulation’ begin at around the age of two years old but as all children are unique we recognise that some children may still be learning how to manage their feelings and behaviour and will need support. Children can seem upset and at times very cross when boundaries are held but invariably it allows them to participate in the learning more successfully and to feel ‘safe’ in the setting. We often find children are drawn to work with adults who successfully hold boundaries because they know what is going to happen and that they are safely held in the adults mind. Holding boundaries and supporting children to understand the agreed school community rules for learning is a key element of the learning process and the work of the School and the first aspect of keeping children safe.

Peer to Peer Interactions:

At Nursery School we recognise the importance and value of developing the skills to learn with peers. However, we also recognise that this can present conflict between children who may be asked to share resources for the first time and challenge for those who will experience, perhaps, new boundaries and expectations for building effective learning relationships within a School environment. To support this learning the Schools ensure children begin to develop ‘respectful’ relationships, listening to each other and valuing the ideas and interests of others. From the first settling in process we also teach children ‘consent’ encouraging them to respect another child’s instruction if they have said ‘stop’. The use and action for the word ‘stop’ also raises the awareness of adults who are beside the children.

Sometimes a child may hurt another child, accidentally, within social play, eg. by swinging a block when building or knocking down a tower very close to another child, the children are spoken to about what happened, why this may have happened and how to avoid it happening again. Both sets of Parents would be informed about what happened and when and the actions of the School. A clear record is made to ensure that ‘accidents’ are not cumulative. If the action of one child appears intentional and is driven by frustration or an inability to manage their own feelings then this is also handled in the same way but the child who is ‘struggling’ to manage will be supported to develop those skills and safely monitored through out the period required for this to happen. All of this will be very openly and clearly shared with Parents.

The School also recognises that sometimes peer to peer relationships can ‘interrupt’ learning or become a barrier to developing wider relationships. At times ‘friendships’ may be unbalanced and one child may be dominant in ideas or play, unsettling the other. Staff are mindful to ensure that play is balanced and supportive of all involved. Staff will support children to broaden relationships that are ‘exclusive’ and act as a barrier rather than comfortable places from which to build learning relationships with others.

The School recognises that all children must feel safe in the environment and access learning in spaces they feel confident and comfortable, this includes ensuring children are not disturbed in their learning by the actions of others. Where play is becoming less purposeful or volume in a space is increasing teachers will invite children to have a ‘turn’ in a different space or try a new activity, using phrases such as ‘it’s time to...’ and ‘it’s your turn now to...’. All of this work is in line with the responsibilities detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018.

BULLYING

Bullying will not be tolerated at Nursery School. Whilst we recognise at this young age children are not fully engaged in ‘bullying’ we also acknowledge incidents of angry/aggressive, persistent or unacceptable behaviour may occur and these need to be addressed quickly and supportively. Staff work with specialist support to understand the meaning behind such behaviours and to appropriately support the child and family. Children and staff are encouraged to adopt safe behaviours to promote safety and well being at all times for children and their families.

INTRODUCTION

Nursery Schools are in ideal positions to observe changes in a child’s behaviour. We understand that behaviour is meaningful and that children can use behaviour to communicate anxiety and distress non-verbally. Some changes may indicate that they are being subjected to aggressive or persistent behaviours, and it is vital that both the child exhibiting any unacceptable behaviour as well as the recipient of the behaviour are fully supported.

Definition of Bullying:

“It is the wilful, **conscious** desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone”

Tattum and Herbert (1990)

“Bullying is the behaviour arising from the **deliberate intent** to cause physical or psychological distress to others or to extort something from them”

Maccoby (1980)

The significant factors in all these definitions are the effect on the person being bullied and the intention to hurt. (Though this hurt may be far greater than intended). As a School we are aware that the children we work with are developmentally at an early stage of learning appropriate social and group behaviours and may engage in unacceptable behaviour from time to time that is unintentional and without deliberate intent. We work to carefully support at these points and to share this understanding with children and parents alike.

AIMS

We aim to:-

- a. develop a shared understanding of what bullying is and age and stages at which this term may become appropriate, developing ways of both identifying and working to prevent the development of unacceptable behaviours that may become bullying.
- b. act promptly and liaise to support children and the parents of children involved in bullying and likewise the victim.
- c. promote to parents, governors and children that bullying is not a normal part of growing up and is a totally unacceptable form of behaviour.
- d. promote the positive self-image of each individual to help counteract the negative feelings which bullying can trigger.

DEVELOPING A SCHOOL APPROACH

Through an agreed understanding of what unacceptable behaviours that may lead to bullying are and strategies to use in response, we are able to:

- a. recognise unacceptable behaviours when we see them - possible signs of bullying
- b. immediately defuse the situations and act to pre-empt difficulties between young children
- c. empower children to understand their right to feel and be safe and help them to develop verbal strategies to explain their feelings to others who may not be aware of them
- d. support young children to develop an understanding of the impact of their behaviour upon others

Bullying is distinct from other inappropriate behaviour in both its intent and intensity.

Bullying behaviour may:

- be a one-off activity
- be generally persistent
- be deliberately hostile - intention to hurt
- involve an imbalance of power
- cause distress to one or more child(ren) or adults
- be aggressive
- be verbal
- take a written form through use of social media

Our responses always stem from our positive ethos which:-

- ✓ acknowledges that everyone in School has a responsibility to deal with unacceptable/bullying behaviours;
- ✓ encourages children and families to talk openly about concerns;
- ✓ develops trust between children and adults;
- ✓ inspires the confidence of parents in the School's ability to support all children and families.

On witnessing an incident of 'bullying', as with other incidents, we:

- ✓ stay calm, don't make snap decisions or attach blame;
- ✓ state briefly and firmly why the behaviour is unacceptable;
- ✓ refer the incident as soon as possible to the Headteacher/Head of Centre, to share with the team and discuss the child and best ways of working with the individuals.

On being told of 'bullying' by a 'bullied' child we:

- are sensitive to what the child is saying;
- reassure the child that he/she is right to tell. Everyone has the right to be safe;
- assure the child that the other child will be spoken to and that all the teachers are there to help them and look after them.

BULLYING OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Children with a marked physical "difference" may need extra support in practising responses to comments, and with developing and maintaining their self-esteem. Frequently, children with physical difficulties find it helpful to have an opportunity to explain to their peers what their difficulty is, what their physiotherapy or exercise routine is etc. If teachers can reinforce these children's strengths and determination to live their lives, this can be a powerful aid to raising their status in the eyes of their peers.

Children with learning difficulties may be frustrated by an inability to articulate their feelings, and may be driven to a physical response, we are aware that at times this behaviour may be interpreted as 'bullying' or unacceptable and we strive to support children with strategies to adopt at points of frustration. They may deal with unacceptable behaviour towards them in a way which escalates rather than defuses the situation. If this is happening, the child needs time to practice responses. Much reinforcement of appropriate behaviour may be needed. Staff awareness is key in defusing situations quickly and effectively for all parties involved.

Although incidents should, as far as possible, be dealt with in line with the general bullying policy, there is a need to support some children in a more individualised way:

- ✓ developing their vocal assertive skills: 'I don't like that..' or 'stop that..';
- ✓ helping them make and maintain relationships;
- ✓ empowering them to resist teasing, temptations, or whatever form the unacceptable 'bullying' behaviour may take.

This policy has been written giving due consideration to the European Convention on Human Rights (particularly Articles 3 and 5). Any actions taken will always adhere to the Principles of proportionality and subsidiarity i.e. proportionate to the incident/behaviour and the less intrusive/forceful.