

THE ORCHARD COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL

Registered as Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales
Registered Office: 17a Elmside, Milford, Godalming, Surrey, GU8 5EG
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12. Achieving positive behaviour

Policy statement

Our pre-school 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.

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, teaching and setting the correct example. The principles that under-pin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

Procedures

We have a named person who has overall responsibility for our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour. In our pre-school the named person is:

Sam Talman

- We require the named person to:
 - keep herself 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 in-service training on promoting positive behaviour
 - we keep a record 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 members of the pre-school.
- 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 the pre-school's behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
- We expect all members of our pre-school - 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. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

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, 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 toys and resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting

for turns. Where this is not possible (e.g. there is only one computer) we use a timer to ensure that all children learn to take turns and to ensure that all get a turn.

- 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 group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour and we do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- When a child's behaviour requires specific adult intervention we will use a supervised 'time out' technique which means that the child receives no adult attention for his/her poor behaviour and that s/he has time to reflect. See below for details of how to implement the 'time out' technique.
- 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 never send children out of the room by themselves, nor do we use a 'naughty chair' or any other techniques that single out or humiliate children.
- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property.
- Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of our pre-school leader 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 attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
- We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.

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 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, biting or fighting. 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.
- If tantrums, biting or fighting are frequent, we 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'.
- We focus on ensuring a child's attachment figure in the pre-school, 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 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.
- 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 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.

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 cognisance 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. 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. "Adam took your car, didn't he, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn't like it when he took it, did you? Did it make you feel angry? Is that why you hit him?" 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 they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings. "When you hit Adam, it hurt him and he didn't like that and it made him cry."
- We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy. "I can see you are feeling better now and Adam isn't crying any more. Let's see if we can be friends and find another car, so you can both play with one."
- 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. 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 pre-school;
 - their parent, or carer in the pre-school, 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
- Where this does not work, we use the Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to a Behaviour Support Team where necessary.

Bullying

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, 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 in another. It can occur in children of five years old and over, but this would normally be when they have left our pre-school.

If a child was found to be bullying another child or children, we would:

- 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 her/his behaviour is not acceptable;
- give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied;
- help the child who has done the bullying to recognise 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;
- not label children who bully as 'bullies';
- 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;
- 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;
- 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
- 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

Biting

Some parents and carers find the biting phase difficult to deal with. It upsets and may even embarrass them, especially when other adults become involved. To be able to control and deal with biting it is helpful to understand why it is happening.

These are some of the reasons that children bite:

- **Sensory exploration**-young children learn about the world around them through their senses: touching, smelling, hearing, seeing and tasting. If you give a young child a toy, the chances are the first thing they will do is put it into their mouth, Mouthing or tasting objects is natural for children to do and, sometimes, young children do not understand the difference between mouthing a toy and biting another child or adult.
- **Curiosity**-young children are naturally curious and will often experiment to see what will happen. This is known as cause and effect, namely 'what will happen if I do this?' For example, a young child can bang something on the floor and discover how to make a noise and perhaps get the added bonus of a positive response from an adult. In the same way, they bite someone and discover how to make a noise – usually a cry of protest, and also get a response from an adult.

- **Attention**-young children may have discovered different ways to get attention from adults and biting can be one such way. The attention is better to an attention-seeking child than no attention at all.
- **Imitation**-watching and copying the actions of others is one important way that children learn. Sometimes children see another child biting and copy him/her in exactly the same way they may see a child shaking their head to indicate 'no' and so copy this form of communication. When an adult bites a child back as a form of punishment it usually does not stop the biting but can teach the child that biting is okay.
- **Independence**-some children experience a strong need for autonomy and control and biting another child can be an effective and quick way of getting what they want. As soon as they see the response they get from biting, the behaviour is strongly reinforced.
- **Frustration**-some young children can become frustrated as they try to express their needs, feelings and emotions. They have not yet developed full control of their bodies and biting can be one way of lashing out. This can happen when two children want the same toy, for example, or when they are not getting their own way.
- **Teething**-when a baby or young child is teething they can suffer discomfort and find relief by chewing on something that is near to hand. Sometimes the object that they chew on is another child or adult. Children of this age do not understand the difference between chewing on a toy or person.
- **Hunger**-young children are not very patient; they are not skilled at waiting, especially if they are hungry. A hungry child can become upset and may resort to biting as they try to express their needs.
- **Feeling threatened**-Some children, feeling they are endangered, bite in self-defence. They may be overwhelmed by their surroundings, and bite as a means of regaining control.

How to help a child who bites

- Help the child to understand that biting is not acceptable. When a child bites, firmly say – 'No biting' or 'stop biting-that hurts', avoid lengthy explanations as this may reward the behaviour by giving extra attention.
- Make sure the child does not think that biting is a game. Never laugh – even if the biting is playful.
- If one child bites another, separate them and say, 'no biting'. Do not be aggressive to the child and never bite them back. You can show your disapproval in your voice and facial expressions.
- Give the child who is hurt your attention first, reassure them and tend to the bite if necessary.
- Teach the child who is biting more appropriate ways of communicating what they want. For instance, if another child has something that he wants, you could teach him to point to it and ask nicely or ask the adult for help.
- When you see the child using these strategies that you have taught him, give praise and encouragement.
- Be a good role model. If children see adults using aggressive behaviour they will copy this.
- It may be an idea to involve the child who has bitten, in caring for the child who is hurt, by putting on the ice pack, for example.

How to deal with biting

- Stay calm
- Try to find out why the child has bitten
- Focus on the biting
- Be consistent
- Remember biting can be a developmental stage for the child.

Ensure you have a plan to follow when biting may occur and make sure all staff are consistent.

Ask yourself a series of questions:

- Who was involved? Is it the same child or adult or does the child bite, apparently, randomly?
- What happened before and after? Were the children fighting or arguing over space or toys? What were the reactions and responses of other children and adults?
- When did the biting happen? Can you pinpoint a specific time of the day?
- Where did it happen? Was the immediate environment part of the reason? Perhaps there was not enough space or it was too hot and stuffy?
- How was the situation handled? What was the response of other people? Did you stay calm?

Asking these questions will help you to decide a possible reason for the biting and take preventative action.

Preventative action

If you can identify the kind of situation that the child bites in you can take steps to stop it happening. You can intervene and distract the child before they bite, or you can watch and supervise the child more closely in situations when you know they have bitten before.

If a child seems to bite when they are hungry or tired, you may need to think about your daily routine to make sure that the child is getting enough rest, sleep and opportunities to eat.

If the biting happens when two children are fighting or arguing over a toy, you could think about getting more of the same toy. Young children find it difficult to share. They have difficulty in negotiating and understanding another child's needs, which are all normal within development.

If the biting is a form of attention seeking, try to spend time with the child when they are doing things that you want to encourage. Offer lots of verbal praise and smiles.

If the biting is a result of a stressful situation you will need to be as supportive as possible. Keep to a routine to provide stability and security for the child.

If the biting has happened when the child is angry and lashing out at others, give them a chance to calm down. This may mean that you have to remove them or other children from the situation. Wait a couple of minutes to allow the child to quieten and regain control.

Story books on Biting and feeling angry

Teeth are not for Biting by Elizabeth Verdick

No Biting by Karen Katz

I feel angry by Brian Moses

The Gotcha smile by Rita Philips Mitchell

Advice taken from Sheila Riddall-Leech, Educational consultant and trainer/Karen Sullivan, Psychologist

Physical handling - Guidance

It is our aim to keep the physical handling of children to a minimum, but we recognise that in safeguarding children's welfare it is sometimes helpful and on other occasions essential to resort to physical handling.

There are three main types of physical handling:

1. Positive Handling

- Giving guidance to children (such as how to hold a paintbrush or when climbing)
- Providing emotional support (such as placing an arm around a distressed child)
- Physical care (such as 1st aid or toileting)

2. Physical Intervention

Physical intervention can include mechanical and environmental means such as high chairs, stair gates or locked doors. These may be appropriate ways of ensuring a child's safety.

3. Restrictive Physical Intervention

This is when a member of staff uses physical force intentionally to restrict a child's movement against his or her will. In most cases this will be through the use of the adult's body rather than mechanical or environmental methods.

When can restrictive physical intervention be used?

Physical intervention can be justified when:

- Someone is injuring themselves or others
- Someone is damaging property
- There is a suspicion that, although injury, damage or crime has not yet happened, it is about to happen

What type of restrictive physical intervention can and cannot be used?

Any use of physical intervention in our pre-school should be carried out with reasonable minimal force.

Where it is judged that restrictive physical intervention is necessary, staff should:

- Aim for side-by-side contact with the child. Avoid positioning themselves in front (to reduce the risk of being kicked) or behind (to reduce the risk of allegations of sexual misconduct)
- Aim for no gap between the adult's body and child's body, where they are side-by-side. This minimises the risk of impact and damage
- Aim to keep the adult's back as straight as possible
- Be aware in particular, of head positioning, to avoid head butts from the child
- Hold children by 'long' bones, i.e. avoid grasping at joints where pain and damage are most likely
- Ensure that there is no restriction to the child's ability to breathe. In particular, this means avoiding holding a child around the chest cavity or stomach.
- Avoid lifting children

Time out technique

1. The adult instigating the 'time out' places the child in a suitable space within a room where there is adequate supporting adult supervision.
2. S/he gets down to the child's level and explains to the child, in a firm tone, why s/he has been placed in 'time out' and then turns away from him or her to carry on working with the other children, ignoring the child who has misbehaved, but keeping him/her within sight.
3. The child in 'time out' must remain there for a maximum of 1 minute for every year of his/her age (i.e. 2, 3, or 4 minutes) but may be placed there for a shorter time if this is more appropriate for the child concerned. In either case, the calculation of the time starts from the point at which the child remains in the chosen spot. Please note: s/he does have to be in the right place, but there is no requirement for him/her to be silent or to be absolutely immobile during that time. If s/he moves from the place, however, s/he must be placed back there without any comment from the supervising adult until s/he remains for the allotted time.
4. At the end of the allotted time, the adult must get down to the child's level, tell the child again why s/he was put into 'time out' and ask the child to say 'sorry'. E.g. "I put you here because youNow you need to say 'sorry' to me (and to)"

5. If the apology is given, the adult thanks him/her for it, instantly changes voice tone back to a gentle tone and involves the child in play again (*if this is appropriate – see number 7 below*).
6. If the apology is not forthcoming, the adult should express disappointment that it is not before returning the child to the activity.
7. If the 'time out' was given because the child refused to do something, s/he must **be asked once more** before being able to do anything else.
8. The adult who instigated the 'time out' must carry it through to conclusion and **not** hand it over to another person.

Recording and reporting

It is important that any use of restrictive physical intervention is recorded. (See Record Form 12a.) This should be done as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. According to the nature of the incident, the incident should be noted in other records such as the incident/accident book or child tracking sheets.

After using restrictive physical intervention, a setting should inform the parents in person, by phone (or by letter or note home with the child if this is not possible). Parents should also be given a copy of the record form.

Monitoring

After the use of restrictive physical intervention, information recorded should be used to review the individual behaviour plan so that the risk of needing to use restrictive physical intervention again is reduced. Monitoring of this information will also help identify trends and therefore help develop the setting's ability to meet the needs of children without using restrictive physical intervention.