



7.1 Achieving positive behaviour

Policy statement

Woodlands 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 underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within our programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

Procedures

Woodlands Pre-school staff have responsibility for our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour.

- All Staff:
 - 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 our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development; and
 - check that they have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour. We keep a record of staff attendance at 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 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 this policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
- We expect all members of Woodlands 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 problematic behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

Strategies with children when they display problematic behaviour

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children to find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. ***Young children will simply be gently helped to observe each other's facial expression and the adult who is supporting them will use key words such as 'sad', 'hurt' or 'scared'. Older children will be encouraged to speak to each other and the adult may suggest words or sentences for them to use eg. 'You scared me when you shouted!' After this, the adult will help the children to solve the conflict or make amends eg. Take both children to the fridge to find the cold pack and help the child who has hurt the other to make the injury better and to say 'sorry'. The adult may also spend some time supporting both children to play together and point out that when they are kind to each other, they both feel happy.***
- We notice considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share and praise children. We point out how happy it makes us when we are kind to others.
- 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.
- ***We never separate children who are in conflict, but support them to come together to solve it. We never exclude children from the group as a punishment. If children need time to calm down, with adult support, we may use a sand timer or a song, or take the child outside where they may feel less stressed. When the child is calm enough to come back to think about what happened, we use the strategies above for conflict resolution.***
- We never use physical or corporal punishment, such as smacking or shaking. 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. Staff are shown how to hold children safely. 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 Manager and are recorded in the child's personal file. The child's parents/carers are informed on the same day.
- ***We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way, instead we use a firm, clear voice and speak slowly to enable understanding. We do not talk over children when they are shouting or crying, we wait until they are calm.***

Children under three years and older children with developmental delay

- When children under three years, or children whose development is delayed, display behaviour that hurts or upsets others, we recognise that the strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older/normal children.
- We recognise that very young children, and children who have a developmental delay, are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress and require sensitive adults to help them do this.
- Common problem behaviours of these children include tantrums, biting or fighting. Staff are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings.
- We focus on ensuring that each child's key person is building a strong relationship to provide security.

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 problematic 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 usually as problematic or aggressive.
- We may mark out an area for this play and agree this with the children. We aim to create rules or behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
- We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, e.g. blowing up and shooting, 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

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 caring support, creating the opportunity for the angry child to calm down, 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 this would have a negative effect.
- ***Our way of responding to pre-verbal children is to calm them through holding and cuddling, or if the child does not want physical contact, we remain close by and encourage other children to give them space until they are calm. 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. In this conversation we always include the child who has been hurt, supporting them to express how they feel.***
- ***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. 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. We do this by encouraging children to look at each other's facial expression and using key words.***
- ***We support young children to develop pro-social behaviour, such as working out how to take turns using a sand timer, or asking for an object using 'please' and 'thank you'.***
- We are aware that the same problem may happen over and over before skills such as sharing and turn-taking arise spontaneously. 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 and through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together. Some of the reasons why children engage in excessive hurtful behaviour are:
 - they do not feel secure/safe
 - their parent, or pre-school staff, do not have skills to respond appropriately to the child's behaviour and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is the only way they express feelings of anger;
 - the child has insufficient language to express themselves and may feel frustrated;
 - the child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home, or may be experiencing child abuse;
 - the child has a developmental delay.

- 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.

Further guidance

- Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES 2001)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Woodlands Pre-School	<i>(name of provider)</i>
Held on	_____	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	_____	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider	_____	
Name of signatory	_____	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Chairperson	
Reviewed by Committee	_____	

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- The Social Child (2007)
- Reflecting on Behaviour (2010)