

## EARLY YEARS BEHAVIOUR POLICY

*Please also refer to the Whole School Behaviour Policy; Whole School Anti-Bullying Policy including Anti-Cyber Bullying*

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Achieving Positive Behaviour

Our setting 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 the programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

Corporal Punishment is never used or threatened at New Hall School.

### 2. Procedures

The Head of Pre-Preparatory Division and the Nursery Manager are responsible for monitoring how behaviour is managed. All staff are responsible for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour.

All Early Years staff are expected to:

- Keep up-to-date with legislation 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.
- Attend training on promoting positive behaviour and cascade information to practitioners.
- 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.
- Provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
- Keep to the guidelines in the Code of Conduct, requiring these to be applied consistently.
- Work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed verbally about their children's behaviour. 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.

### 3 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.

- In the Nursery, staff will use distraction and positive praise to encourage positive behaviour. Age-appropriate language and reasoning will be modelled and encouraged to develop self-regulation and emotional control. Boundaries and consistency in routine enable children to understand what is acceptable behaviour in the Nursery.
- We use our classroom behaviour charts to reward positive behaviour and to encourage children to think about their inconsiderate behaviour. These charts are used in the Nursery and throughout the Pre-Prep Division..
- If a child demonstrates a poor choice, the Code of Conduct will be followed which may include a 'Time Out', where the child will have the opportunity to reflect with an adult and think about how they could have made a better choice.
- 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.
- We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share using verbal praise, stickers, house points, the Yellow Zone, and Green cards.
- 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.
- 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.
- Physical intervention is only used to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property.
- Details of such an event are recorded on MyConcern Pastoral. The child's parents/carers are 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.
- 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 setting, their Key Person or Class Teacher, is building a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

### **3.1 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.

### 3.2 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 young children, 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.
- In the Nursery Division, 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 to learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings. "When you hit ... 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 repeatedly 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 by modelling behaviour, 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.
- 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 setting;
  - their parent, or carer in the setting, 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. We can enlist the support of the SENDCO.