



7.1 Behaviour Management Policy

Policy statement

Woodlands believes that children flourish best when they know how they and others are expected to behave. Children learn and gain respect through interaction with caring adults who act as good role models, show them respect and value their individual personalities. Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on others and their surroundings.

Woodlands promotes and encourages caring and polite behaviour at all times, we provide an environment where children learn to respect themselves, others and their surroundings. All children develop at different stages, as they do this they will learn about boundaries and the difference between right and wrong. Children will learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights of others and the impact their behaviour creates. Woodlands sets clear boundaries of behaviour not only for their own health and safety but also for the safety of their peers. Developing these new skills requires adult support and guidance to help encourage and model appropriate behaviours and where needed offer intervention and support to children when they struggle with conflict and emotional situations. In these types of situations staff can help identify and address any triggers that may have caused the unwanted behaviour and help the child to reflect, regulate and manage their own feelings and actions.

Woodlands recognise that there are different ways of interacting with others and that this will vary between cultures, staff are required to be aware of this and respect those different cultures used by families in the setting. In Woodlands we aim to set these boundaries in a way which helps the child to develop a sense of the significance of their own behaviour, both in their own environment and that of others around them. Restrictions on the child's natural desire to explore and develop their own ideas and concepts are kept to a minimum.

We aim to:

- We aim to promote the development of a sense of right and wrong behaviour by teaching the children the appropriate way to act and discourage unacceptable behaviour. Sometimes it is necessary to help children understand their own boundaries in certain situations, explaining why we do not accept certain behaviour.
- Recognise the individuality of all our children and that some behaviours are normal in young children e.g. biting.
- Encourage self-discipline, consideration for each other, our surroundings and property
- Encourage children to participate in a wide range of group activities to enable them to develop their social skills.

- Ensure that all staff act as positive role models for children.
- Our approach will always be talking things through, encouraging self-control & responsibility and restoring friendships. We will always involve parents and seek to work together for the benefit of the child.
- Encourage parents and other visitors to be positive role models and challenge any poor behaviour shown.
- Work in partnership with parents by communicating openly.
- Praise children and acknowledge their positive actions and attitudes, therefore ensuring that children see that we value and respect them.
- Encourage all staff working with children to accept their responsibility for implementing the goals in this policy and to be consistent.
- Promote non-violence and encourage children to deal with conflict peacefully.
- Provide a key person system enabling staff to build a strong and positive relationship with children and their families.
- Provide activities and stories to help children learn about accepted behaviours, including opportunities for children to contribute to decisions about accepted behaviour where age/stage appropriate.
- Supporting and developing self-regulation and empathy as appropriate to the stage of development.
- Have a named person who has overall responsibility for behaviour management.

Procedures

The management team has overall responsibility for our setting and also for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour. Also as the named persons for managing behaviour they are responsible for -

- Advising and supporting other staff on behaviour issues.
- Along with the playleaders, ensure they are kept up to date with legislation and research relating to behaviour.
- Support changes to policies and procedures in the setting.
- Access relevant sources of expertise where required and act as a central information source for all involved.
- Attend regular external training events, and ensure all staff attend relevant in-house or external training for behaviour management.

Woodlands rules are concerned with safety, care and respect for each other, rules are kept to a minimum and ensure that these are age and stage appropriate. We regularly involve children in the process of setting rules to encourage cooperation and participation and ensure children gain understanding of the expectations of behaviour relevant to them as a unique child.

Children who behave inappropriately, for example, by physically abusing another child or adult e.g. biting, or through verbal bullying, are helped to talk through their actions and apologise where appropriate.

We make sure that the child who has been upset is comforted and the adult will confirm that the other child's behaviour is not acceptable. We always acknowledge when a child is feeling angry or upset and that it is the behaviour that is not acceptable, not the child

All Staff:

- We familiarise new practitioners and volunteers with the nursery's behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive role model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
- 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.
- We encourage all children to have a "safe person" this is usually the child's key person.

Partnership with Parents

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers in supporting children's development in all areas, including behaviour and we take into account children's age and stage of development. We recognise that there may be different expectations for children's behaviour at home and in setting, with a good level of communication we can provide consistency for the children and this will help alleviate frustrations and misunderstandings that can lead to behaviours that are unacceptable or unknown.

Where behavioural difficulties continue, parent/carers will be further invited into the setting to talk with relevant practitioners. By working together Woodlands and home will explore possible underlying causes and share positive strategies in order to ensure a consistent approach between setting and home. An action plan to be shared in setting and home will be agreed and reviewed to monitor outcomes.

Expectations of behaviour

At Woodlands we aim to ensure the individual needs of all children are met by providing clear, consistent and developmentally appropriate expectations for behaviour through:

Respect: to encourage all children to have respect for themselves, for other people (their feeling, beliefs and values) and for the setting environment including equipment and property.

Understanding and compassion: to help children to understand other people's views and experiences and to be caring and tolerant towards others.

Responsibility: to enable children to have an increasing ability to make choices and take responsibility for their own actions. In particular we help children to develop an understanding of the consequences of their behaviour.

Fairness and equality: to give children an understanding of how to be fair to all: how to share and give everyone an equal chance (within the context of everyone having different needs). All practitioners will demonstrate this behaviour in their actions also.

Kindness: to promote acts of kindness to each other and to assist children in ways of being gentle towards each other.

Support and the use of positive reinforcement: to acknowledge considerate behaviour, reinforcing positive behaviour developing children's confidence and self-esteem.

Use of rewards and sanctions

- All children need consistent messages, clear boundaries and guidance to intrinsically manage their behaviour through self-reflection and control.
- Rewards such as excessive praise and stickers may provide an immediate change in the behaviour but will not teach children how to act when a 'prize' is not being given or provide the child with the skills to manage situations and their emotions.
- Children should never be labelled, criticised, humiliated, punished, shouted at or isolated by removing them from the group and left alone in 'time out' or on a 'naughty chair'. However, if necessary, children can be accompanied and removed from the group in order to calm down and if appropriate helped to reflect on what has happened.

We help children to care about others by:

- Using conflict resolution and keeping calm.
- Modelling appropriate behaviour.
- Working on and reinforcing the understanding of feelings, e.g. in circle time.

- Naming and making feelings clear including the consequences of their actions: i.e reflecting back to children.
- Being aware of the power of language, i.e. not being confrontational or negative.
- Boosting self-esteem.
- Giving time to listen and help acknowledging their responses sensitively
- We help children to be polite by saying “Good morning” and where appropriate “Please” and “Thank you” (we model behaviours we want them to copy)
- Encouraging children to wait their turn.
- Talking one at a time:- listening to each other without interrupting when someone is already speaking.
- Giving children clear messages and setting an example

We ask children to look after equipment by:

- Encouraging children to use equipment appropriately.
- Teaching them about health and safety
- Encouraging them to help mend broken toys and equipment
- Playing games, e.g. in circle time and considering, “How do we look after this?”
- Reminding them to tell us about breakages
- Looking after the equipment ourselves and therefore modelling it.

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. the child who has hurt the other to make the injury better, we do not force a child 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 (**see 7.3 Physical control of children policy for more details**), 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 Management team and are recorded in the child's personal file. The child's parents/carers are informed on the same day.
- ***We do not shout 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