

EMMANUEL CHURCH NURSERY SCHOOL

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Statement of intent

Our pre-school believes that children flourish best when they know how they are expected to behave and should be free to play and learn without fear of being hurt or unfairly restricted by anyone else.

Aim

We aim to provide an environment in which there is acceptable behaviour and where children learn to respect themselves, other people and their environment.

Methods

- We have a named person who has overall responsibility for issues concerning behaviour.
- We require the named person to:
 - Keep her/himself updated with legislation, research and thinking on the handling of children's behaviour.
 - Access relevant sources of expertise on handling children's behaviour; and
 - Check that all staff have relevant in-service training on handling children's 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.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any conflict by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development - for example, distraction, praise and reward. (See suggested techniques at the end of policy)
- We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the pre-school's behaviour policy and its rules for behaviour.
- We expect all members of the pre-school - children, parents, staff, volunteers and students - to keep to the rules, requiring these to be applied consistently.
- We praise and endorse desirable behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for undesirable behaviour.
- 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.

- When children behave in unacceptable ways we help them to see what was wrong and how to cope more appropriately.
- We never send children out of the room by themselves.
- We never use physical 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 only use physical restraint, such as holding, 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 recorded in our Incident Book. A parent is informed on the same day and signs the Incident Book to indicate that he/she has been informed.
- 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 behaviour.
- We handle children's unacceptable behaviour in ways which are appropriate to their ages and stages of development - for example by distraction, discussion or by withdrawing the child from the situation.
- We work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their child's behaviour. We work with parents to address recurring unacceptable behaviour, using objective observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

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 of 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.

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 or 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 may 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 to be able to manage their 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 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 experienced. 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? It made you feel angry, didn't it and you hit him.'

- 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 such skills 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 to 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 setting;
 - Their parent, or care 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 is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse; and
 - 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

Bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. We take bullying very seriously.

If a child bullies another child or children:

- We intervene to stop the the child harming the other child or children;
- We explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is inappropriate;
- We give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied;
- We help the child who has done the bullying to say sorry for his/her actions;
- We make sure that the children who bully receive praise when they display acceptable behaviour;
- We do not label children who bully;
- When children bully, we discuss what has happened with their parents and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behaviour; and
- When children have bullied, we share what has happened with their parents, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

Intervention techniques

Structuring the environment

Whether you sit or stand and where you choose to speak to a child can communicate the nature of the discussion you are about to have and this may help the child to change their own behaviour.

Planned ignoring

Minor, harmless and attention-seeking behaviours are likely to stop if you don't pay any attention to them. Remember, it is equally important to praise good behaviour.

Prompting

By giving gentle reminders to a child of what they need to stop doing or prepare for can help the child adjust to a change. This can be verbal or sensory prompting. Be careful to avoid nagging.

Active listening

Sometimes listening to what a child has to say and exploring and acknowledging their feelings through the use of reflective responses can help a child to feel that:

- someone else acknowledges the reality of their feelings
- they are not alone
- someone cares.

Sometimes this can be enough for a child to stay in control.

Interpretation and interference

Put what has happened into words and ask the child if there was another way that they could have acted. For example, "It looked like you were really upset before you hit Gemma - was there another way you could have let her know how upset you were?"

Backing away

This is not the same as backing down. You are not giving in, simply giving the child time to calm down before you discuss the situation with them. Staying and continuing to challenge a child who is already angry is likely to make the situation worse. Alternatively, allow the child to back away through offering them a verbal or physical way out.

Affection

If a child's behaviour is motivated by fear, anxiety or uncertainty, a big injection of affection, verbal or physical, can help to stop inappropriate behaviour. Children do not always appreciate the care that is provided for them on a daily basis and need additional affection to understand how much the adults really care for them.

Hurdle help

By providing assistance when a child is stuck, you can help them to overcome feelings of failure or inadequacy.

Proximity

Sometimes an adult quietly heading in the general direction of what is going on can be enough to encourage children to do something else.

Involvement and interest

Adults becoming involved in a situation can diffuse things.

Redirecting or distraction

Try to refocus the child away from what they are doing now and on to something else as a way of avoiding trouble.

Directive statement or direct appeal

This is a clear instruction to a child to stop certain behaviours or start something else.

Time out

Ask the child to move away to a quieter area to calm down. This should only be used if you use the time to talk to the child about their behaviour. It is not a helpful method to encourage positive behaviour and it should not be used for isolation purposes only.

(Intervention techniques suggested by Surrey County Council, EYCS)

See appendix in file regarding Physical Intervention and Positive Handling)