



## **BEHAVIOUR POLICY**



# **GREENFIELD PRE-SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

## **Our aims**

Greenfield Pre-school recognises the importance of positive and effective behaviour management strategies in promoting children's welfare, learning and enjoyment.

The aims of our Behaviour Policy are to help children to:

1. Develop a sense of caring and respect for one another.
2. Build caring and co-operative relationships with other children and adults.
3. Develop a range of social skills and learn what constitutes acceptable behaviour.
4. Develop confidence, self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.

We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents/carers and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.

We familiarise new staff and volunteers and parents/carers with our behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour.

## **Management of behaviour**

Pre-school staff will manage behaviour according to clear, consistent and positive strategies. Parents/carers are encouraged to contribute to these strategies, raising any concerns or suggestions. Behaviour management in the pre-school will be structured around the following principles:

- Defined 'ground rules' will apply to all children. These will be reviewed annually alongside this policy and clearly displayed in the pre-school (Appendix A)
- Positive behaviour will be reinforced with praise and encouragement.
- Unwanted or undesirable behaviour will be challenged in a calm but assertive manner. In the first instance, staff will try to re-direct children's energies by offering them alternative and positive options. Staff will be open in stating and explaining non-negotiable issues.
- When dealing with behaviour, staff will always communicate in a clear, calm and positive manner.
- Staff will make every effort to set a positive example to children by behaving in a friendly and tolerant manner themselves, promoting an atmosphere where children and adults respect and value one another.
- Staff will facilitate regular and open discussions with children about their behaviour. This will help them to understand all aspects of their

behaviour and enable them to have their say and be helped to think through the causes and effects of their actions.

- Staff will work as a team by discussing incidents and resolving to act collectively and consistently.
- Staff will discuss concerns with parents/carers at the earliest possible opportunity in an attempt to help identify the causes of problematic behaviour and share strategies for dealing with it.
- Staff will encourage and facilitate mediation between children to try to resolve conflicts by discussion and negotiation.

### **Dealing with Behaviour**

We require all staff to use positive strategies for handling any negative behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development.

#### **We do not:**

- Use or threaten to use physical punishment.
- Use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children, such as ridicule or sarcasm.
- Remove toys or activities that are the focus of a conflict as a 'punishment' or means of 'teaching children to share'.
- Use physical restraint, such as holding, unless to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property.
- Shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to children.

### **Kinds of behaviours that require positive intervention**

We make a distinction between three kinds of behaviours that require support or intervention in order to achieve the considerate and socially acceptable behaviour that we expect of children according to their age and developmental maturity or whether they have any special educational need. These behaviours are:

**Inconsiderate behaviour** – This includes behaviours such as taking toys from another child, not waiting for a turn, pushing, being uncooperative, disrupting a game, hitting out against another. They are characterised by developmental immaturity whereby children are not at the stage where they can manage frustration or anger themselves, they may not have the language to express themselves and may not understand and be able to keep to social rules. These behaviours are seen as mistakes that the child is making on the way to developing socially acceptable ways, particularly of dealing with conflict. We regard the child to be a learner of what is acceptable and in need of support, explanation, encouragement, positive modelling and guidance – just as with learning any other skill.

**Hurtful behaviour** – Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child. For most children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance of the

feelings of the person whom they have hurt. Some children may engage in hurtful behaviour because they are unhappy and they require support and care. However, hurtful behaviour has an impact for the child at the receiving end which is significant and this is also taken into consideration when responding to incidents of hurtful behaviour.

**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 to another. This is rarely the case for children under five.

### **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.
- Providing a script/verbal model to minimise incidents. For example, "Can I have a turn next?"
- Building in structures to make explicit the expected positive and cooperative behaviours within an activity. For example, "we are taking turns on the bikes. Child A and B are first and then after 5 minutes it will be child C and D's turn. We don't need to push to get the bikes because we are all going to get a turn".
- Staff will offer comfort to both children in a dispute and encourage them to find a solution to their problem.
- 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 praise children for their efforts and achievements in resolving a dispute or learning a social skill such as waiting for their turn.

### **Hurtful behaviour**

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 the biological and cognitive means to do this independently is still underdeveloped in very young children.

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 toddlers with less defined verbal skills is to calm them through holding and cuddling. Older children with more established verbal skills 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 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 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 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.

The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour are that:

- Established patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is a response, the child has to express feelings of anger or gain attention.
- The child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse
- The child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave.

When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents/carers to identify the cause and find a solution together.

In cases of hurtful behaviour, 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.

Details of hurtful behaviour incidents that give cause for concern are brought to the attention of the Lead teacher and are recorded in the child's personal file. The behaviour is then discussed with the child's parent/carer as soon as is appropriate.

## **Bullying**

If a child bullies another child or children, we:

- Show the children who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them and give reassurance.
- 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 and help them 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.
- Do 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.

- We 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.
- 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
- In cases of bullying behaviour, that is racially motivated or focused towards a child's disability, or gender, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
- Details of bullying behaviour incidents that give cause for concern are brought to the attention of the Lead teacher and are recorded in the child's personal file. The behaviour is discussed with the child's parent/carer on the same day.

### **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 bullying, although it may be inconsiderate, or even hurtful, at times and may need addressing using a range of the strategies 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 and alternatives to blowing up or shooting.
- 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.

This policy relates to Greenfield Pre-school. For Greenfield Primary School, please see the separate behaviour policy document.



## Appendix A

### Greenfield Pre-school Ground Rules

1. We are kind
2. We listen
3. We help
4. We do not hurt each other
5. We take turns
6. We take care of the toys

Version	Date	Comment
V2	Date created: 25/4/2022 Review date: April 2025	A Gordon