

Promoting Positive Behaviour

Category: Early Years

Risk Management and Legal Implications

Failure to manage risk may impact on the delivery of Service objectives and the outcomes achieved by Service users. Education and Children’s Services aim to mitigate the implications by ongoing management and review of risk in all elements of work activity.

The production of this document is one way in which we aim to reduce our exposure to risk. By providing staff with information on good practice, making reference to other guidance that is available across the Council and providing clarity on how we should do things, we can ensure that the management of risk is intrinsic to what we do.

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Positive Behaviour Management

'.....when children are expressing themselves in ways that we do not expect, or which may cause problems for themselves or others, it is important to step back and reflect on whether they understand what to do, whether they are sufficiently able and practised to do it, and whether strong feelings - driven by needs we can't see - are influencing their emotions.

In any of these situations, children need us to be responsive. A mind-minded response from practitioners, reflecting from the child's point of view, means that the child can use the practitioner's capacity to manage emotions, or to do what is needed, or to understand what is happening (Siegel, 2015). The more we can do this, the more children will be able to use everyday situations to learn how to do it for themselves'.

(Realising the Ambition: Being Me)

Realising the Ambition: Being Me, recognises and endorses the need for our young learners to enjoy:

Experiences which:

- Encourage an understanding of others' emotions; e.g. talking about why a child is upset.
- Help young children become independent and manage conflict.
- Highlight a growing awareness of the need for some rules and why this is important.
- Allow opportunities to play and learn together, to share ideas and interests, to reconcile differences and to begin to develop a sense of fairness.

With adults who:

- Involve children in making sensible choices about their own learning.
- Encourage children to see another's point of view through cooperation in play.

In an environment which:

- Is thoughtfully arranged to give access which enables the young child to make choices and share in other people's choices.
- Is easily accessible to the practitioner to observe the young child and support them to express their feelings.
- Creates opportunities to be with others and empathising with them, encouraging opportunities for new friendships.

It is central to the philosophy of our nursery that all staff should be always positive towards the children, towards each other and towards the nursery. Any issues or problems arising with children, other members or staff or parents should be discussed with the senior staff/management/ a member of the senior leadership team.



The passing of negative comments about parents, other staff or children is not acceptable in any forum.

We recognise that children will pick up speech habits from their parents and may use speech which is inappropriate without realising this to be the case. If this happens the keyworker should discuss the incident with the parent. If the difficulty continues a meeting should be arranged. The concerns of nursery staff will be discussed with the parent/carer, and everyone should work together with the family to help the child. The outcomes will be reviewed at regular intervals.

Where the parent refuses to accept that the child has made these comments, or seeks to justify the comments on the grounds that they are valid, or just "child talk", and that the child "doesn't really mean it" the nursery must stress that such behaviour/language is not acceptable in the nursery environment and that the justifications or excuses are not acceptable.

The incident must be written down on an incident sheet.

Unacceptable physical behaviour will be dealt with in the same way.

The child will be supported in whatever ways are appropriate to help moderate his/her behaviour.

The nursery team will plan appropriate strategies and share goals with parents/carers. Support plans will be kept within the child's Personal Learning Journal and reviewed regularly.

We believe that children and adults flourish best in an ordered environment in which everyone knows what is expected of them and children are free to develop their play and learning without fear of being hurt or hindered by anyone else. We aim to work towards a situation in which children can develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.

In order to achieve this:

- Children, parents, newcomers and carers will be aware of the standards of behaviour expected.
- All staff will ensure that accepted standards of behaviour are applied consistently, so that children have the security of knowing what to expect.
- All nursery staff will try to provide a positive role model for the children regarding friendliness, care & courtesy.
- Nursery staff members will praise and endorse desirable behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- The nursery will take positive steps to avoid a situation in which children receive adult attention only in return for undesirable behaviour.
- Staff should discourage children from bringing their own toys into the nursery.



Our behaviour management guidelines are:

- Be firm, fair & consistent – we will aim to be aware of any child’s behaviour problem and all try to be consistent in the approach that we use to deal with it.
- Set good examples – we all know that children learn by example, so we as adults will try to be aware of our actions and strive to behave in the way we would expect children in our care to behave.
- Develop a positive image for each individual child – by encouraging every child, regardless of age, gender or disability to take part in nursery activities. We will ensure that all toys & equipment are equally accessible to all children, always striving to promote all cultures within the nursery by way of books, displays, toys, discussion.
- Criticise actions rather than the child – by explaining to the child that it is their behaviour that is unacceptable and needs to change, always reassuring them & praising positive behaviour.
- Give appropriate outlets for self-expression – by providing opportunities for physical activities such as physical play, music and movement etc. and by encouraging children to talk about their feelings.
- Praise and encouragement – by offering praise and encouragement, children will gain confidence and a feeling of self-importance.

When children behave in unacceptable ways:

- Physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking, will neither be used nor threatened.
- Children will never be sent out of the room by themselves.
- Techniques intended to single out & humiliate individual children such as the “naughty chair” will not be used.
- Children who behave inappropriately will be given one-to-one support by a nursery staff member to help strive for more positive behaviour.
- Where appropriate this might be achieved by having a designated ‘quiet area’ where the child can go with a member of staff.
- In cases of more challenging behaviours to support, such as racial or other abuse, the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes will be made clear immediately, but by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
- In any case, it will always be made clear to the child or children in question that it is the behaviour, not the child, which is unwelcome.
- Nursery staff will not shout or raise their voices in a threatening way.
- Any challenges will be handled in a developmentally appropriate fashion, respecting individual children’s levels of understanding & maturity.
- Recurring problems will be tackled by the whole nursery, in partnership with the child’s parents, using observation records to establish an understanding of the possible cause.
- Nursery staff will be aware that some kinds of behaviour may arise from a child’s additional support needs.



We have to set boundaries in order to:

- Provide guidance & general rules
- Prevent chaos
- Ensure health & safety
- Learn acceptable & unacceptable behaviour
- Promote moral & spiritual well-being
- Provide security for children
- Prepare children for life in society
- Promote caring
- Ensure good practice for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Good practice for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

- Consider the child's age, stage of development, understanding and individual needs.
- Minor behaviour problems can and should be ignored
- Praising appropriate & positive attention may be sufficient to change the unacceptable behaviour
- Change your tone of voice to illustrate your disapproval of behaviour, adopting a firm tone.
- To gain attention of a child/children raise your voice but do not shout, talk to them at their own level and gain eye contact where possible.
- Let the child know that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable, not the child.
- Never humiliate or ridicule the child/children in front of others, take them aside and talk to them about their behaviour quietly.
- If the child is involved in a dispute with another child and they need intervention to avoid injury, ask the children how it happened and allow them to give ideas on how to solve the dispute.
- Use positively phrased comments. Explain to the child by using examples, if possible, e.g. 'If you throw the sand, it could go in Susie's eyes and hurt her. How do you think Suzie feels? Please don't do it. I saw you make a beautiful sandcastle this morning, I'd like to see another.'
- If the child persists in presenting unacceptable behaviour tell them what the consequences will be if they continue, e.g., they will not be able to play with the activity or stay in that area. Follow this through by supporting the child to choose another activity of their choice.
- If the behaviour is dangerous or disruptive, staff will intervene and use the appropriate strategies to enable the child to calm down and give staff/parents/carers the opportunity to talk to the child at their level of understanding, and comfort them as appropriate. Reward the child for good behaviour on return.

Children's behaviour can be affected by many external factors, such as:

- Family problems (new baby, new house, change in routine, family relationship difficulties)
- Neglect (lack of care, personal or emotional, lack of attention)
- Inconsistent boundaries (between parents/carers at home or staff/parents at nursery)



- Lack of play space
- Insufficient positive attention
- Inability to express feelings
- Not enough stimulation/boredom
- Staff shortages/conflict/unfamiliar staff.
- Staff/parent stress/poor attitudes.
- Too high expectations
- No freedom of choice
- Not enough time to complete activities/bad time management
- Other factors
- Lack of sleep/tiredness
- Illness, feeling unwell
- Medical conditions e.g. hyperactivity
- First time at Nursery (settling into routines, expectations)
- Minor or major change in general routines.

It is of vital importance that staff, and parents/carers work closely together to ensure that children have consistency in the management of their behaviour by means of regular discussion and the sharing of methods & information.

- Staff should be mindful of background noise within the room
- Staff should be mindful of the importance of using a quiet voice and model a calm environment.

Working as a team to reinforce all the above is crucial.