

Behaviour Policy

(incorporating Use of Force and Positive Handling guidance)

This policy has been agreed and adopted by the Governors:

Date: 29th March 2023

Signed by the Chair of Governors: Siobhan Turner

Policy review period 3 years:

Reviewed: Spring 2023

Next review: Spring 2026

Documents consulted:

- Behaviour and discipline in schools (Dfe Jan 2016)
- Equality Act 2010
- Education and Inspections Act 2006: Section 93
- Use of reasonable force in schools (Dfe July 2013)

Aims

Our aim is to promote a safe, happy environment where children can flourish, and play, learn and develop with confidence. We recognise that the promotion of positive behaviour is an integral element in this.

Key outcomes:

- all children and adults show respect for themselves, others and our environment.
- everyone learns to take responsibility for their own actions.
- staff parents, carers and visitors understand and adhere to the behaviour strategies used across the Federation.

Key actions:

- staff will immediately deal with, and record any serious issues that arise.
- strategies used with children are shared with parents/carers. These are continuously reviewed to ensure they remain effective.

We recognise that all children experience a range of feelings day-to-day, as well as during difficult times in their lives. These can give rise to a range of emotions. We believe that all children can learn to recognise and manage their emotions and communicate their feelings appropriately, thereby avoiding any negative behaviours. Various factors will support children with this including:

- time, love, acceptance, respect and encouragement
- role models to set appropriate examples
- freedom to experiment and make mistakes within clearly understood expectations and boundaries
- opportunities to begin to understand the consequences of their own actions.

Promoting Positive Behaviour:

1. The emphasis is placed on praising good behaviour which is task specific praise e.g. "well done for hanging up your coat..." etc. All children should receive positive attention every day. Research has shown that a gentle touch on the shoulder, for example, reinforces these messages.
2. There is a positive climate of celebrating success and achievement, where every child's different learning styles, strengths and talents are acknowledged and valued.

3. Emotional intelligence is encouraged, by involving children in dispute resolution and decision-making. Staff are offered training and guidance in order to facilitate this.
4. Parents/carers are supported along with the children through workshops, the settling-in process and the key person system, which enables closer more familiar relationships to evolve. The child and parents will often share particular concerns with the key person initially. A range of activities and procedures such as group time, Support Plans, Education, Health and Care Plans, Home/School books, visual and auditory cues, puppets, props, role models, and grouping the children, are used to enable all to understand the expectations and consequences of their behaviour. Staff will endeavour to focus on the primary behaviour, ignoring secondary behaviour as far as possible, continuing to articulate to the child what they have done which is unacceptable. All staff will be alerted to specific strategies that relate to individual children and have been discussed with the parents/carers. Strategies are continuously reviewed.
5. There are clear objectives and incentives, and everyone is clear about where and who to go to if they experience difficulties and problems. Tensions and disputes will be handled promptly and sensitively.
6. Staff will use active listening techniques, remaining open, approachable and accessible. The tone of voice should convey understanding and acceptance. Children are given time, love, acceptance, respect and encouragement to express themselves. There is an underlying belief that all can behave appropriately when given the right support. The child's feelings are acknowledged as valid and reflected back e.g. "it sounds like you are feeling sad, angry etc.", enabling the child to name their feelings and to problem-solve. A child may be encouraged to express their anger in an appropriate way such as tearing up paper or punching a cushion.
7. Children are given the freedom in a safe environment to experiment and to make mistakes.
8. We have high expectations and set clear boundaries. This gives a sense of security, and the behaviour needing to change is stated in a neutral and non-judgemental way e.g. "you are sitting on the table..."
9. Therapeutic experiences such as music therapy and the sensory rooms are used where available. The child may be offered a quiet time for reflection, small group work or one-to-one support. Advice may be sought from a professional such as the Educational Psychologist or Music Therapist.
10. We support the victim of any incident by empowering them to tell the other child or person what they don't like and to say "Stop!" More serious incidents are recorded and monitored (see below for details). Children are encouraged "to make things right" after a dispute and are supported to negotiate an acceptable outcome.
11. Underpinning our practice are a set of principles based on behaviour that we wish to see across the Federation, by children and adults alike including; respect for property; not to hurt anyone physically - no kicking, pushing, hitting; not to hurt anyone emotionally; respecting each other's feelings - no name calling; being polite - respond to the person who is talking to you and call them by their name; to follow instructions and to walk inside school.
12. Children will become aware of these principles through day-to-day life in school and supported to understand why this behaviour is important. Expectations of behaviour will be consistent across the Federation.
13. In the event that unacceptable behaviour persists, then parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting with the Key person or member of the Senior Leadership Team to agree strategies and sanctions. In no circumstances will corporal punishment or any threat of corporal punishment be tolerated. (It is a legal requirement that this is stated clearly in our policy.)

Bullying

The DfE document "Preventing and tackling bullying" states: Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. For very young children other types of bullying including

cyberbullying via text message, social media and gaming are less relevant.

Nursery aged children may direct inappropriate behaviour to one specific child. However this is more likely to be because:

- they have a fixation with a toy that the other child likes to play with
- there is something about the other child that they like or want e.g. coat, shoes
- they wish to establish a relationship with that child but don't have the skills to do this in a friendly way.

The motivation behind their behaviour is not to intentionally hurt the child but to achieve something else and may be related to a child's special educational need. This behaviour will be addressed in a way that supports both children.

Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils - Positive Handling

The objectives for using force to control or restrain children are to maintain safety, and to prevent serious damage.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent children (including visiting children) from causing injury to themselves or others, damage to property, or prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at school or on a school visit.

"Reasonable force" depends on the circumstances of individual cases, and the degree should be the minimum required to achieve the desired result, and not for trivial misbehaviour.

Note that the power to act embedded in Section 93 is **in addition to common law power to use reasonable force in self defence, or to prevent another from being injured or committing a criminal offence.**

Steps are taken to avoid situations which might trigger challenging behaviour, (therefore minimising the need to use force), and there are behaviour strategy plans drawn up in conjunction with parents/carers for some individual children. These would include positive handling and de-escalation techniques, which are shared with the staff. Children are also encouraged to communicate their feelings using their own communication styles e.g. non-verbally. Preventative measures, such as creating a calm, orderly, supportive atmosphere, minimises the risk and threat of aggression, and there is a whole school/centre approach along with training in a social and emotional focus to positive behaviour. Staff are enabled to effectively manage individual incidents in a calm and non-threatening way.

Physical restraint could consist of merely blocking, or leading a child in a supportive way, one hand guiding them by holding their elbow (not by the wrist), the other around their trunk or shoulders. You may also consider ushering a child away by a hand gently but firmly in the centre of the back. If a child is lashing out it may be preferable to move others away from the situation rather than move the child. Staff will not act out of anger or frustration, but to speak calmly to the child at all times with fore-warnings of consequences.

Any significant incidents will be recorded on the 'Complaint / incident record and log of action' form' and stored in the folder of the same name. Where a Concerns form and HISTORY form in the Children's Confidential Folder. Both forms need to record clearly that the other exists and links set up in each document to refer to the other. Parents will be informed, they sign and date the entry on a paper copy which is scanned into the child's folder. Emotional support should be given both to the child and to the staff involved. Parents should be involved in strategies for support (Behaviour Strategy Plan). Referrals can be made to outside agencies such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).