SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S WELLBEING AND BEHAVIOUR (POLICY AND PROCEDURES)

Approved by: SLT

Approved date: May 2026

Review date: May 2027

Accessibility: Available on the website and on request - shared with parents and pupils

Related policies: Physical Restraint, Exclusion, Safeguarding and Child Protection

Scope: Ashbridge Independent School and Nursery, Ashbridge on Ribble, Ashbridge Nursery at Maxy Farm, The Fledglings Nursery

Empowering Young Minds Through Respect and Nurture

Children have physical needs such as a need for food, sleep and warmth, as well as emotional needs such as security, affection, and connection. When trusted and responsive adults meet these needs, they support the child's social and emotional development and help them feel secure and validated.

Many young children are still learning to communicate their wants and needs clearly and instead may communicate these through unwanted behaviours (e.g. when they are tired, hungry or frightened). It is helpful to view all behaviour as a form of communication. Young children are also still learning to manage overwhelming emotions and may act impulsively and lose control of their actions and behaviours. Children should be supported by adults who understand their stage of development and needs.

Children should have clear expectations and boundaries of behaviour for their safety and the safety of others. This requires sensitive adult guidance 'in the moment' coaching and role-modelling to scaffold their learning. Key adults are also needed to support children to recognise and regulate their emotions and teach them strategies (such as managing conflict) to use in the future. The development of positive behaviour takes time, patience, and perseverance from all key adults in a child's life.

We aim to provide:

- **Nurturing and secure environments,** where children are supported to recognise and manage their emotions with trusted and warm relationships
- **Predictable routines with clear and appropriate age expectations**. Children sometimes display unwanted behaviours when they feel insecure. Communicating clearly and giving children time and notice of any changes can help children to know what to expect and feel more secure.
- **Consistent and calm adult behaviour**. Children need role models who model positive behaviour themselves (such as paying attention, being polite, taking turns and using positive body language).
- **Positive approach**– always praising positive behaviours and actions. Positive feedback is the best and most effective way to minimise unwanted behaviour. Children need to know when they are getting it right through positive and warm body language, tone of voice and praise.
- **Time and opportunity** for children to practice appropriate behaviour and to learn about it through stories, discussion, and role play.
- **Outdoor play and physical activity** throughout the nursery day, as this can sometimes help to reduce unwanted behaviours.
- **Restorative approaches** – supporting the development of empathy for others, and opportunity for discussion to help children understand their actions and reflect on their behaviour.

Whilst we are concerned with safety, care and respect for each other, restrictions on the child's natural desire to explore and develop their own ideas and concepts are kept to a minimum. We also keep the rules to a minimum and ensure that these are age and stage appropriate.

Four key rights

Our behaviour strategy is underpinned by the four key rights enjoyed by all the children, from young babies to pupils in school.

The right to LEARN The
right to be SAFE The
right to be HAPPY The
right to be MYSELF

As children get older, they learn to consider other people's feelings, needs and rights, and to understand the impact their behaviour has on others. They learn about boundaries and the difference between right and wrong.

These expectations are based on a professional understanding of the developmental stage of the children, and any specific learning needs, disability, or condition.

Responding to unwanted behaviours

When children display unwanted behaviours, practitioners should:

- Communicate in a clear and calm manner.
- Recognise and acknowledge when the child is feeling angry or upset, offering comfort to these strong emotions.
- Talk through the child's actions/behaviour, explaining why the behaviour is not acceptable, and how it might have impacted others.
- Suggest an apology if appropriate to the situation, and the child wishes to.
- Suggest how the child could make different choices next time (offer alternative strategies).

"You look angry" offer comfort
"I think you are angry because Adam took your car"
"Is that why you hit Adam?"
"When you hit Adam, it hurt him and it made him sad"
"It is ok to feel angry, but it is not ok to hit"

"I can see you are feeling better now, should we look for another car so that you can both play with one"
"How could we tell Adam that you are angry, without hitting him"

At all times the child should be aware that it is their behaviour that is not accepted, not him/herself.

Corporal punishment is not used or threatened, as is any punishment which may adversely affect a child's physical or emotional well-being. This includes strategies that exclude children from their peers.

Physical intervention will only be used to avoid immediate danger of personal injury, injury to another person or an immediate danger of damage to the property of any person, including that of the child themselves, in line with the Physical Restraint policy.

Biting

Biting can be common behaviour for many children as they pass through stages of their development. This can happen for several reasons, such as teething, being unable to communicate wants or needs, or being unable to regulate overwhelming emotions. It is important to recognise that it is not the child or parents' fault if a child is displaying this behaviour.

When a child bites, a practitioner should:

- First comfort and support the child that has been bitten.
- Clearly and calmy communicate to the child that has bitten that it is not acceptable through simple words such as 'No' and a clear hand signal.
- Explain that biting is not kind and hurts/upsets the other child.
- Try to identify triggers to the biting (tired, hungry, certain resources or activities etc).
- Never punish biting behaviour.
- Remain positive and praise a child for playing without biting.

Possible strategies to reduce biting incidents:

- Close supervision by consistent practitioners that know their key children and need well.
- Anticipating and intervening biting where possible, by observing situations.
- Providing resources such as teething toys if required.
- Ensuring there are enough of the most popular resources and toys to limit conflict.
- Ensuring daily routines is predictable so children feel more comfortable and secure.
- Work in partnership with families to ensure a consistent approach at home and nursery, and to offer support when needed.

Sharing

Learning to share is a complex developmental stage, because most young children do not yet have the skills to negotiate or understand another child's perspective. Asking a child to share might not be age appropriate, particularly if under the age of three. Some three- and four-year-olds may struggle to share and put other children's wants and needs before theirs.

Rather than asking children to share, practitioners can model sharing during role play and praise other examples of sharing to encourage the child's understanding. Children can be supported to take turns in their play or games, using 'my turn/your turn', and this will eventually support sharing skills. Sand timers may help older children to understand when it is their turn, and this can help reduce conflict.

Rough play/fantasy violent play

So called rough play is a natural and important part of healthy child development. Rough play helps young children to understand the limits of their strength, work out social relationships and personal boundaries, and burn off energy and tension.

Practitioners will be vigilant in observing and evaluating this type of play. When they see signs that the 'rough and tumble' has gone beyond what is acceptable and necessary, practitioners will step in at this point to bring things to a halt, allowing the children to reset or play apart for a while if needed.

Young children often engage in play that has violent themes, such as superhero and weapon play. Though this can at times be problematic, we recognise that it is normal for young children and should not be automatically seen as aggression or violence. We work with children to agree acceptable behavioral boundaries understood by the children that choose to play.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Children who have special educational needs or disabilities may show higher levels of unwanted behaviour. This may be due to levels of understanding and ability to follow rules and routines, communication difficulties resulting in being unable to express wants and needs clearly, or difficulty in regulating emotions and behaviours.

The SENCO will work with practitioners to support children and may implement targeted learning plans and positive behavioral support plans. If required, referrals can be made to external agencies for additional support and assessment with parental consent.

Parent partnerships

We aim to develop a strong partnership between parents and ourselves and to communicate openly. We involve parents if their child is consistently displaying behaviour which is inappropriate towards others, or if their child has been upset or hurt by another child's behaviour.

We may ask parents to meet with staff to discuss their child's behaviour, so that if there are any difficulties, we can work together to ensure consistency between home and nursery. Through partnership with parents, we make every effort to identify any behavioral concerns and the causes of that behaviour. A log of a child's behaviour may be entered onto CPOMS for information recording purposes, and to identify any specific triggers or patterns.

Positive Behavioral Support Plans

If a child's behaviour continues to be a concern for the child and/or others, we may implement an individual positive behavioral support plan. We might co-ordinate with outside agencies when appropriate, or signpost support services to help children and their families.

Exclusion

If, after additional support has been implemented and a sufficient period has elapsed, the behaviour of an individual child continues to pose a significant risk to the child or others, then the Senior Leadership Team reserves the right to consider excluding a child, following the procedures set out in the Exclusion Policy.

Appendix

Key questions to consider when a child is displaying unwanted behaviour

- **What is the child trying to tell me?**
- **How are they feeling right now?**
- **Are they seeking connection or attention from me?**
- **How can I support them sensitively?**

Emotion coaching steps

1. **Recognise the child's feelings and empathise**
2. **Label/name these feelings to validate them**
3. **Explore the issue and set expectations of behaviour if necessary**
4. **Problem solve with the child if appropriate**

"You look angry" offer comfort
"I think you are angry because Adam took your car"
"Is that why you hit Adam?"

"When you hit Adam, it hurt him and it made him sad"
"It is ok to feel angry, but it is not ok to hit"

"I can see you are feeling better now, should we look for another car so that you can both play with one" "How could we tell Adam that you are angry, without hitting him"

How to turn conflict into problems for children to solve:

1. Approach calmy
2. Acknowledge feelings of both
3. Gather information about what has happened
4. Restate the problem
5. Ask for ideas for solutions, and choose one together
6. Give follow up support when required