



SEVENOAKS DAY NURSERY

Behaviour management policy

Sevenoaks Day Nursery believes that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

Aim

Sevenoaks Day Nursery aims to teach children to behave in socially acceptable ways and to develop self-discipline, respect and care for others.

Methods

The Designated Person responsible for Behaviour Management works with the Manager who has overall responsibility for personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour. Our Designated Person is [Olivia Contreras](#).

- We require each of the Designated Person and the Manager to
 - keep themselves up to date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support.
 - access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour; and to
 - check that all staff have relevant training on promoting positive behaviour. We keep a record of staff attendance at this training.
- 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 Nursery.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
- We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the Nursery's behaviour policy.
- We require all members of our Nursery - children, parents, guardians, staff, volunteers and students - to keep to these guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.
- We work in partnership with children's parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are regularly informed about their children's behaviour. We work with parents/guardians to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.
- If an unhappy, negative or inconsiderate behaviour becomes consistent we use an ABC form (Antecedents, Behaviour, Consequences) in order to try and recognise a pattern or the reasons for this behaviour and to assist in helping the child.

Strategies with children who behave inconsiderately

- 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.

- We ensure that there are enough popular toys and resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns.
- We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We support each child in developing self esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- 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 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.
- A child may be removed from the group for a short time to defuse the situation. If this becomes necessary, the staff will always
 - Explain what they are doing and why
 - Sit them where they can be seen
 - Support the child to understand the reason why they were taken out of the group, in a pedagogic manner.
- We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property.
- Where physical restraint is used, a record will be made in the child's record and the parents will be told verbally what happened.
- A physical intervention of a minor nature (such as moving a child to defuse a situation) will not usually be recorded unless the Manager considers that it forms part of a pattern of behaviour that should be recorded and discussed with parents.
- We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's behaviour.
- If confrontation or personality conflicts occur between a member of staff and a child, another member of staff will be asked to assist or take over. It is important that staff recognise the problem, discuss it and deal with it.
- 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 explanation rather than personal blame.

Children under five years

- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we use strategies to support the child according to their age and development. We recognise that children develop at different stages, therefore we do not have a 'one size fits all' approach and instead respond

according to the individual needs of the child. We recognise that some 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.
- If tantrums, biting or fighting are frequent, we try to find out the underlying cause – such as a change or upheaval at home, or a frequent change of carers. Sometimes a child has not settled in well and the behaviour may be the result of “separation anxiety”.
- We focus on ensuring a child's attachment figure in the Nursery, their key person, is building a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

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.

- 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.
- 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 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 help children manage intense emotions, especially anger, 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 pre-verbal children may be to calm them through holding and cuddling, or, if the child rejects that approach to stay close by until the child has calmed down. Verbal children may 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.
- We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings.
- We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy.
- 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, play 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.
- 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 Nursery.
 - their parent, or carer in the Nursery, 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 may have insufficient language, or mastery of English, to express him or herself and may feel frustrated.
 - the child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk of emotional abuse or any other form of abuse.
 - the child has a developmental condition or delay that affects how they behave.
- Where this does not work, we use the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to a Behaviour Support Team where necessary.

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.

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.
- we intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children.
- we explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable.
- we give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied.
- we help the child who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions.
- we make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour.
- we do not label children who bully as 'bullies'.
- we 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.
- we 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 they feel genuine remorse for what they have done. Empty apologies are just as hurtful to the bullied child as the original behaviour.
- we discuss what has happened with the parents/guardians of the child who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behaviour; and
- we share what has happened with the parents/guardians 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.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Trustees of Sevenoaks Day Nursery in June 2013 and last amended in April 2025.



Stephanie Jenkinson
Chair