

**North Islington
Nursery School &
Children's Centre**



Behaviour Policy

Signed on behalf of Governing Body:

Date: April 2024

Review Date: April 2026

Introduction

At North Islington Nursery School we aim to provide an environment in which all children and adults respect, value and care for each other. We accept that children are born with unique personalities, yet learn their behaviour from their surroundings and experiences. It is acknowledged that young children are learning to deal with a complex range of emotions and at times require adult help and support. We believe that in order to implement any steps to achieve or maintain positive behaviour in children, effective communication and cooperation with parents is vital.

The development of social and emotional skills are paramount to teaching positive behaviour with young children. The Personal, Social and Emotional (PSED) area of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage outlines the following aims for practitioners to support children working towards:

- **Self-Regulation** - Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly; - Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate; Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.
- **Managing Self** - Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge; explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly; manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.
- **Building Relationships** - Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others; Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers; Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs

The Significance of self-regulation in young children

Self-regulation comprises an individual's ability to be aware of and to deliberately control their mental processes, including cognitive strategies, emotions, social skills and motivations. These abilities develop most rapidly in young children. Achieving a good level of self-regulation in the early years has been shown to ensure that children:

- Are able to cope with school and make a good start in learning
- Are better able to make friends and maintain friendships
- Become effective learners and enjoy a good level of academic achievement in the short and long term
- Develop a belief in their own abilities and a high level of self-efficacy i.e. a belief that that they can learn, understand, solve a problem, or develop an ability if they work hard and persevere
- Develop a good level of emotional well being

Research shows that children's early development of self-regulation is highly dependent on the quality of their social interactions, on their oral language development and on the opportunities that they have to play with other children, their parents or other care givers. At North Islington Nursery School we know that it is the environment, the quality of provision and the quality of social interactions that contribute most directly to an effective pedagogy for self-regulation.

Staff at North Islington Nursery School have worked closely with partnership agencies to explore how we as early educators can ensure that we are providing the best environment to support children in developing self-regulation. Alongside our curriculum offer and our commitment to ensuring that children develop effective characteristics of learning in all areas of the EYFS, we have developed a range of strategies that we believe will support young children when managing their feelings and behaviour.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour

We believe that staff, parents and the entire school community must work together to set a good example of behaviour whilst allowing children to experiment and explore. Staff can aid this learning process by being consistent in supporting agreed boundaries and applying agreed procedures.

We believe that even our very youngest children appreciate explanations and suggestions of other ways to act so we will always offer a reason for saying 'no' and offer an alternative.

We believe that children need their energies for trying out new behaviour, not for worrying about past inappropriate behaviour so we will deal with difficult situations as they arise, and not postpone the problem to a later time.

From experience we know that children will begin to realise that adults mean what they say when problems are addressed in a consistent way

Staff are encouraged to use a problem solving approach to behaviour management. This approach is explained to staff during the induction process and to parents when staff conduct home visits.

The ways in which we encourage positive behaviour include:

- Involving children in setting the boundaries of acceptable behaviour
- Praising and reinforcing good behaviour
- Treating everyone in the school community with respect
- Valuing individual beliefs, contributions, opinions
- Encouraging children and adults to help each other and accept help from others
- Helping children to recognise, understand and accept their feelings
- Supporting children in finding appropriate ways of dealing with their emotions

Responsibilities of staff

- To create a calm, caring environment where children are treated with respect
- To create an environment where children are appropriately challenged and stimulated
- To ensure that children are supported to develop effective characteristics of learning
- Ensure that our expectations of children's behaviour are consistent with their level of understanding
- Help children to understand their feelings and find acceptable ways of dealing with them (see self-regulation techniques below)
- Help children learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour
- Help children to develop sensitivity to the needs of others and understand the consequences their behaviour may have on others
- Encourage collective and individual responsibility in our care for the nursery environment and everyone in it
- Be consistent in our expectations, taking into account any additional needs
- Where appropriate, use distraction or re-direction to avoid the start of, or escalation of a conflict situation
- Encourage children to take turns, cooperate with each other and share resources as appropriate
- Take time to explain to children why certain types of behaviour are unacceptable or dangerous
- Help children develop the skills and confidence to sort out difficulties or disagreements amongst themselves
- Be prepared to help children to find solutions to disagreements and conflict through negotiation and cooperation but recognise when to "sit back" rather than intervene too quickly
- Discuss with the children any routines or routine changes which may affect their behaviour i.e. 3 mins warning for nappy change
- Make it clear to all that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable NOT the child

Effective self-regulation strategies that staff may use with children (these are ALWAYS dependent on the individual child).

- **Breathing** – supporting a child to take deep breaths and to exhale slowly
- **Massage** – supporting a child to calm and regulate by gently rubbing shoulders then arms

- **Tapping** – Encouraging a child to gently tap ones eyebrows, cheeks, chin etc. moving down the body
- **Rocking** – supporting a child to gently squeeze in their knees and gently rock back and forth. Using the hammock in the garden to slowly swing from side to side
- **Blowing** – blowing bubbles or feathers
- **Fidget toys** – using a fidget toy to squeeze, roll, shake, press etc.
- **Use of puppets** – to recognise and role play the emotions that the child is experiencing
- **Quiet space** – to provide a quiet space or enclosure
- **Music** – to provide quiet instrumental music or sounds of nature

There are many ways in which we can try to avoid conflict between children, and staff will implement these strategies, such as:

- Resources, spaces and activities will be organised in a manner that avoids conflict
- Assuming time allows, staff should explain to children that to take part in certain activities they need to wait their turn (use Makaton symbol for “wait” where appropriate). In other cases we try to have multiples of popular equipment and staff will help a child find “another one”.
- Staff should be ready to intervene, if necessary, to role model behaviour that either avoids conflict or finds a peaceful resolution
- Establishing a consistent balanced routine
- Supporting children’s interests and choices
- Planning for transitions
- Keeping waiting periods short and active
- Accepting behavioural differences
- Using observation and planning the moment

What is unacceptable behaviour?

A child’s age and stage of development will always be taken into account when deciding what unacceptable behaviour is. A 2 year old will respond very differently in social situations to a child who is almost 5. Very young children are ‘egocentric’ which means that they put their own feelings before others, and even the most considerate child will have the occasional outburst due to frustrations or anger. We acknowledge that this is a developmental area that needs to be nurtured and supported and that very young children do not intentionally wish to cause hurt.

1) Behaviour that hurts others:

Physical: Hitting, biting, shaking, kicking, scratching, pushing, pinching, tripping, poking, slapping, throwing things at people

Verbal: Name calling, racist remarks, shouting, swearing, and argumentative answering back, squabbling

Emotional: Emotional threat such as ‘I won’t be your friend’, manipulation or putting down

2) Disrespect for others property:

- Invasion of a child’s space or privacy such as when using the toilet
- Not waiting for a turn and taking items from others during a game
- Taking items from others which prevent shared use
- Deliberate damage to equipment and books

3) Bullying

Although the term bullying cannot apply to all unacceptable behaviour from young children, it can develop from a young age. Bullying is a stage beyond not knowing, understanding or being able to carry out acceptable behaviour. **Bullying is deliberately setting out to hurt or undermine another person in a systematic way over a period of time.** It is not the result of a one off quarrel or conflict over a toy.

Bullying and discriminative behaviour will NOT be tolerated at North Islington Nursery School.

Should instances of unacceptable behaviour arise staff will:

- Approach calmly
- Consider using the self-regulation techniques as described above if the child needs time to calm and regulate their feelings and emotions before moving on to any other steps

Or.....

- Stop the behaviour using a calm but firm voice – using Makaton sign for stop
- Acknowledge the feelings of child/children “I can see that you are upset....”
- Gather information – we won’t assume that we ‘know’ what happened
- Try to gain eye contact and explain that it is important that the child listens
- If necessary, make gentle, physical contact such as holding hands as this may help the child concentrate on what you are saying
- Restate the problem – for example, “Your friend is hurt“, “You have thrown the toy”
- In clear, simple phrases, remind the child of what behaviour is acceptable
- If age appropriate decide upon a solution together or offer a solution. “Perhaps we could find another train” “Perhaps we could move to a quiet space and calm down”
- Be sure to support and comfort the victim if a child is hurt by another child as this supports the development of empathy
- Be prepared to give follow up support – engaging a child in a new activity, distracting for a short period, modelling acceptable play
- Be quick to praise ‘good’ behaviour such as, “I like the way that you shared that car”

Positive behaviour strategies are taught in more general ways too and not always after a conflict or incident. Such ways are:

- Reading stories that highlight feelings, being caring and consequences
- Supporting children to have the confidence to say ‘no’ and say what they ‘do’ want, how to walk away, how to listen to others, how to negotiate and also, how to seek support from an adult
- Provide children with alternative language
- Using group times to discuss examples of unacceptable behaviour and discussing rules which keep us safe
- Talking about differences in people by using stories and puppets – knowing that it is ok to be different and to celebrate this
- Being honest with children in an age appropriate way

Children under the age of three years

- When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways, we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older children
- We recognise that very young children are unable to regulate their own emotions and require sensitive adults to help them do this
- Common behaviours may include: biting, hitting and tantrums. During these ‘episodes’ staff will remain calm and will comfort the child as much as possible, acknowledging feelings and talking about them to promote understanding
- If tantrums or biting are frequent types of behaviour observed, we try to find out the underlying cause – such as change or upheaval at home, change of carers etc.
- We focus on ensuring that a child’s key person is building a strong relationship which provides security and reassurance

“Corporal punishment (smacking, slapping or shaking) is illegal in maintained schools and should not be used.....It is permissible to take necessary physical action on an emergency to prevent personal injury either to the child, other children or an adult or serious damage to property.” The Children Act 1989/2004.

Such physical action that we may use would be:

- Physically removing a child by carrying them away from the incident
- Gently restraining by holding a child from behind whilst sitting
- Resting hands gently on a child's knees to keep them still
- Pulling a child back from a dangerous situation such as running into the road

Parents will always be informed at the end of the session when physical restraint has been used.

Persistent inappropriate behaviour which is often linked to a child with additional needs will be recorded on a separate incident sheet and shared with the parent.

Some children may have a Behaviour Plan which is drawn up between the key person, SENCO and parents.

If the behaviour of a particular child is causing concern, staff will:

- Discuss the behaviour at a Child Focus Meeting and agree a strategy
- Inform all members of staff about what has been agreed
- As appropriate, discuss with the child's parent/carer, explain agreed strategies and ask for support
- Avoid discussing the child's behaviour in front of him/her or other adults unless this is a strategy agreed in advance with the parent e.g. giving the parent a daily update in front of the child
- If after a reasonable period of time there is no improvement in the behaviour, discuss with the SENCO and decide whether a referral to other professionals might be appropriate (note: referrals may only be made with parental consent unless it is deemed to be a safeguarding concern)

Where staff are concerned that a child is displaying inappropriate behaviour resulting from abuse or neglect, they may seek advice from other professionals or make a referral to Children's Social Care. Staff will always inform parents of this decision and will try to obtain consent. However, where staff believe a child is at risk of significant harm, consent is not required to make a referral to Children's Social Care.

Parents are expected to:

- Familiarise themselves with and support our behaviour policy
- Arrive on time at the beginning and end of your child's day as to do otherwise may cause children to be distressed and create emotional worry
- Be open to discussing with staff any difficulties that arise concerning their child's behaviour
- When taking part in outings/educational visits or helping out in the school, agree to abide by the expected conduct as outlined by the outing leader
- Refrain from using physical punishment or threatening language when disciplining their children (Note: Under no circumstances may parents use such chastisement on the school premises)
- ALWAYS speak to a staff member regarding any incidents that may occur between children. Please refrain from approaching other children or their parents
- Treat staff, visitors to the school, other parents & children with respect (We will not accept any form of aggressive or threatening behaviour towards any member of staff)
- Never use school or individual members of staff as a threat to get your child to do what you want

Our **Behaviour Policy and Procedures** have been written in consultation with parents, staff and governors.