

MATLOCK PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP

BEHAVIOUR POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

We believe 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

Our Playgroup aims to teach children to behave in socially acceptable ways and to understand the needs and rights of others. The principles guiding management of behaviour exist within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development.

The Playgroup ensures that children's behaviour is managed effectively in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs.

METHODS

The Playgroup has a named person, at each setting, who has overall responsibility for its programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour.

Playgroup require the named person to:

1. Keep up to date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where additional support may be required
2. Access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development
3. Check that all staff have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour. We keep a record of staff attendance at this training

Playgroup 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 setting.

Playgroup requires all staff, volunteers and students to be a positive role model by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.

- Playgroup ensures that adults looking after children, or having unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so having appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge.
- Playgroup familiarise new staff and volunteers with the setting's behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
- Playgroup expects all members of our setting, children, parents, staff, volunteers and students to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.
- Playgroup works in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their key person. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

Strategies with children who engage in normal challenging behaviour

- Playgroup 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.
- Staff 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.
- Staff acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- Staff support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- Staff support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- Playgroup avoids creating situation in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, the Playgroup helps them to understand the outcome of their actions and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- Children are never sent out of the room by themselves.
- **PLAYGROUP NEVER USE PHYSICAL PUNISHMENTS, SUCH AS SMACKING. CHILDREN ARE NEVER THREATENED WITH THESE.**

- A person will not be taken to have used corporal punishment (and therefore will not have committed an offence) where physical intervention was taken for the purposes of averting immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child) or to manage a child's behaviour if absolutely necessary. Providers must keep a record of any occasion where physical intervention is used, and parents/carers must be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.
- As far as it is reasonably practicable Playgroup ensure that corporal punishment is not given to any such child by:
 - a) any person who cares for, or is in regular contact with children
 - b) any person living or working on the premises
- Playgroup do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- Playgroup use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property, or what would be reasonably regarded as exceptional circumstances.
- Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of the child's key person and are recorded in the incident and/or accident book. The child's parent is informed on the same day.
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make it clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
- Playgroup staff do not shout or raise their voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.

- When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways Playgroup recognises that strategies for supporting them will need to be developed and be mentally appropriate and differ from those for older children.
- The Playgroup recognises that very young 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 behaviour of young children include tantrums, biting or fighting. Staff are calm and patient, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.

Severe clause.

The steps so far are those which will be adopted under normal circumstances when continuous inappropriate behaviour is shown. In extreme cases, other measures will come into immediate effect.

- Where a child: deliberately harms another child or adult.
- persistently refuses to obey an instruction from an adult.
- destroys property.
- uses offensive/aggressive language or behaviour to another child.
- behaves in such a way as to prevent others from learning.

Sanctions will come into immediate force and parents will be contacted by telephone.

If this behaviour continues the child may be excluded from school for a set period and ultimately may be permanently excluded. These final stages are at the discretion of the Head Teacher and the Governors.

Rough and tumble play. Hurtful behaviour and bullying.

The Playgroup procedure has been updated to provide additional focus on these kinds of inconsiderate behaviours.

1. 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.

- The Playgroup recognises that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. These kinds of play are regarded as pre-social and not as problematic or ‘aggressive’.
- The Playgroup 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.
- It is recognised 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 the concepts of right and wrong.
- The content of the play can be tuned, 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.

2. Hurtful Behaviour

The Playgroup takes 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.

- Staff 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.
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- Staff will help them manage these feelings as they have neither the biological means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.
- It is understood that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological process that takes place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear.
- The process is therefore helped by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour.
- Punitive responses to a young child's rage will not be engaged in as that will have the opposite effect.
- The method of responding to pre-verbal children is to calm them through holding and cuddling. Verbal children will also respond to cuddling to calm them down but an explanation is offered and the incident is discussed with them to a level of understanding.
- It is recognised that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings experienced. Children are helped to recognise their feelings by naming them and helping to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. 'Adam took your car, didn't he, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn't like it when he took it, did you? It made you feel angry, didn't it and you hit him.'
- Young children are helped to learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings. 'When you hit Adam, it hurt him and he didn't like that and it made him cry.'
- Young children are helped to develop pre-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy. 'I can see you are feeling better now and Adam isn't crying any more. Lets

see if we can be friends and find another car, so you can both play with one.'

- The Playgroup 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.
- Social skills are supported through modelling behaviour, through activities, dram and stories. Self esteem and confidence are built by the children recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- Children are helped to understand the effect that hurtful behaviour has had on another child; children are not forced to say sorry, but this is encouraged 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, the staff will work with parents and other professionals 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 may also be in the setting
 - the child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse
 - the child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave

Where this does not work, the Code of Practice is used to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to a Behaviour Support Team where necessary.

3. Anti-Bullying

Playgroup takes 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:

- The children who have been bullied are shown that their concerns are listened to and acted upon
- Staff will intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children.
- Staff will explain to the child doing the bullying why his/her behaviour is not acceptable.
- The child or children who have been bullied are given reassurance.
- The child who has done the bullying is helped to recognise the impact of his/her actions.
- Staff make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practice and reflect on considerate behaviour.
- Children who bully are not labelled as 'bullies'.
- It is recognised that children who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves, or be subject to abuse or other circumstances causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others.

- Staff discuss what has happened with the parents of the child who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behaviour.
- Staff share what has happened with the parents 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.

4. Biting

Biting is fairly common amongst young children. The reasons why children bite differ from child to child. Please refer to the behaviour procedure for further information.

- Our aim at Matlock Pre-school Playgroup is to ensure that every child is safe whilst in our care. We provide an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others and non-aggressive problem solving between children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition which stops after the age of three.
- For safety and health reasons we take biting seriously. When it happens it is stressful for children, parents and staff. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, teething, imitation, power, stress, frustration, crowding, attention seeking or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behaviour that is often hard to break because it does achieve results. Knowing that the effect of biting will hurt another person is not yet part of a child under threes' mindset.
- Our staff react to a biting incident in a calm manner and ensure that the situation is under control. They use the situation to teach the child that biting is an inappropriate behaviour and must not be done. If possible the biter will be asked to help treat the victim and gently instructed that biting hurts and it should not continue.

- Staff **NEVER** use 'biting back' as a technique to control biting.
- Staff look intensively at the context of each biting incident for pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behaviour.
- Staff work with each child that bites and their parents on resolving conflict and frustration.
- Staff make special efforts to protect potential victims, which may include employing extra staff.
- The incident will be recorded in Playgroups Incident Book and both the biter's parent and victim's parent will be informed and asked to sign the book. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no purpose and can make an already difficult situation worse.
- In the event of skin being broken during a biting incident then staff will advise the parents/ guardians to seek further medical attention for their child.
- We try to make every effort to curtail the behaviour quickly and to balance our commitment to the family of the biting child to that of other families. Only after we feel we have made every effort to make the programme work for the biting child do we consider asking the family to withdraw the child.
- Please refer to the booklet Biting a guide for Practitioners in the Operational Plan.

DESIGNATED MEMBER OF STAFF

The named person who has overall responsibility for issues concerning behaviour is Liz Neil.

Behaviour Policy Summary

Light control responses

Use positive strategies – praise the children who are behaving as they should use social rewards – smile, praise, clapping hugs. NO material or token rewards e.g. sticker charts.

Stronger control responses

The adult's words and manner must be firm and leave no doubt as to what will follow. Be fair, be clear, be consistent.

1. Gain attention
2. Say what the unwanted behaviour is
3. Say why the behaviour is unacceptable
4. State the action warranted by the behaviour
5. Give the instruction which implements the sanction.(
agreed sanctions are time out chair, informing parents, removal from area)

Deal immediately with it

Avoid getting into a battle with the child

Use the child's name but do not give the child a label

Forgive and forget.

Adults must

Have clear rules

Praise

Model correct behaviour

Be consistent

Reinforce good behaviour.

Please refer to Special Educational Needs in Practice book for further advice and examples of behaviour management page 30

