

Policy Statement

Chestnut Playgroup believes that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are understood, supported and met and where there are clear, fair and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour. We operate a positive behaviour management approach. Behaviour management procedures cover how staff should respond to all aspects of behaviour, including children who exhibit challenging behaviour towards other children. These procedures build around the Cambridgeshire Early Years Childcare and School Readiness Service, Understanding Children's Interactions and Behaviour training seven key principles and the Early Years Alliance's approach to learning based on three key statements.

Understanding Children's Behaviour And Interactions Seven Key Principles:

1. Policies and planning are key
2. Prioritise positive and valued feelings and experiences
3. Think equity not equality
4. Behaviour is a communication – find out why
5. Use therapeutic language and de-escalation
6. Develop positive connections
7. Use consequences as opportunities to learn

Early Years Alliance's Three Key Statements:

- Learning is a lifelong process, which enables children and adults to contribute to and shape their world.
- We want the curriculum we provide to help children to learn to be confident and independent, be aware of and responsive to their feelings, make caring and thoughtful relationships with other people, become increasingly excited by, interested in, and knowledgeable and questioning about the world around them.
- We provide a wide range of interesting child-chosen and adult-initiated activities which give children opportunities to use all their senses, help children of different ages and stages to play together, help children be the directors of their own learning, help children develop an inquiring and questioning attitude to the world around them.

As children develop, they learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and to consider the views and feelings, and needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. The development of these skills requires adult guidance to help encourage and model appropriate behaviours and to offer intervention and support when children struggle with conflict and emotional situations. In these types of situations key staff can help identify and address triggers for the behaviour and help children reflect, regulate and manage their actions. Skills such as turn taking and sharing often instigate minor conflicts between children as they struggle to deal with powerful emotions and feelings. During minor disputes, Key Persons help children to reflect and regulate their actions and, in most instances, children learn how to resolve minor disputes themselves. However, some incidents are influenced by factors, requiring a strategic approach especially if the behaviour causes harm or distress to the child or others. These situations are managed by staff following the Strategies to Support Positive Interactions from the Understanding Children's Behaviours and Interactions training.

This can be an unsettling time for young children. Staff are alert to the emotional well-being of children who may be affected by the disruption to their normal routine. Where a child's behaviour gives cause for concern, staff take into consideration the many factors that may be affecting them. This is done in partnership with the child's parents/carers and the principles of this procedure are adhered to.

Procedures

In order to manage children's behaviour in an appropriate way we will:

- attend relevant training to help understand and guide appropriate models of behaviour;
- implement the setting's Positive Behaviour Procedures including the Strategies to support Positive Interactions;
- have the necessary skills to support other staff with behaviour issues and to access expert advice, if necessary;
- ensure all staff complete the Understanding Children's Behaviour and Interactions training through Cambridgeshire County Council, and annual review training.

Strategies To Support Positive Interactions

- **Are the children's interests met** - Staff support the Key Person to ensure that the children are interested and engaged in what they are doing and noticing when children are losing interest, changing activities/resources when needed.
- **Distract and Divert** – staff will aim to distract a child and divert their attention to another activity that is as engaging and of the child's interest, or that is totally different from what the child was engaged with, but will provide the child the necessary time to calm down while still engaged in something positively. Staff are to consider their approach, being enthusiastic and excited about the new activity they are distracting the child with.
- **Planned Ignoring (of the behaviours)** – staff are to be in agreement of what behaviour they will not respond to and ignore them, while praising other children for carrying out the desired behaviour. Planned ignoring behaviours **is not** ignoring a child, interaction should still be given.
- **Offering limited/clear choices** – staff are to offer two choices of what they want the child to do, this allows the child to have some control over the situation while doing what the member of staff has asked. Staff are to be patient and remember to give the children time to make that choice. Staff should never rush a child to make a choice.
- **Clear and positive instructions** – staff should be thoughtful of each child's communication and language levels, when giving instructions. Key Person/SENCo should support staff to understand the level of children's communication and language. Staff should think about the type of instruction they are giving to the child; do they need a very simple one - or two-word instruction that is positive. Staff can repeat the instruction if necessary, using the child's name first if needed.
- **Acknowledging children's feelings** – staff are to value the child and validate their feelings, for example, 'I can see you're angry, I would be too.' This teaches respect and names the feeling so that children understand why they are reacting the way they are.

- **Use an agreed script** – all staff are to agree on a script to which they will all follow to create a consistency to their approach to managing and responding to behaviours that causes concern. This can be helpful for children to hear consistent messages from staff. As well as contributing to a supportive team.
- **Consequences not punishment** – punishment is a negative experience, which leads to negative feelings which leads to anti-social behaviours. Staff will use consequences to help develop the children's learning of their behaviours having an effect on the world around them. Staff are to consider the consequences, making sure to choose the best one that is the least restrictive and gives the child the greatest opportunity to learn from the situation. Staff are to talk through the consequence and why it's being imposed.

Reflect, Repair and Restore – staff will consider doing a 'debrief' with a child, depending on the child's developmental stage, after any incidents such as hitting, biting, ect, so the child can retell and explore what happened with a changed set of feelings. The debrief may look like:

- Explore what happened, staff may retell what they saw and ask the child to retell.
- Explore what the child was thinking and feeling at the time. Staff may ask how it made the child feel and may ask the child what they thought the other child may be feeling.
- Explore who has been affected and how.
- Explore how the child can repair the relationship, staff may ask what the child thinks may help make things right.
- Summarise what has been learnt so they are able to respond differently next time. Staff may ask the child what they will do next time.

All questions asked by staff are open ended, and staff will give children time to process their question and respond.

Using Therapeutic Language

Staff are to use a therapeutic language approach when addressing children's behaviours. Staff are to promote pro-social feelings to reflect on valued behaviours which all staff aim to demonstrate. Staff will avoid language that is attention seeking and manipulative, using words such as bad behaviour/misbehaving/naughty and good behaviour, referring that the child chose to, that their behaviour is deliberate or they are deliberately doing something. Staff will avoid saying a child is kicking off/having a meltdown/tantrum. Staff will never give punishment/discipline or sanction a child for their behaviour. Instead, staff will aim to make a connection with all children to understand their needs, will use words like unsafe behaviour, general behaviour and valued behaviour. Staff are to use consequences when appropriate. Staff are to show an understanding of the three stages of brain development which impacts behaviour, and the children's understanding of their behaviour. Staff will refer as unable to or unwilling to, due to being overwhelmed or dysregulated due to the brain development stage. Staff are to understand all behaviour is communication of an unmet need.

Role of the Key Person on understanding their Key Children's behaviours

The Key Person is key to understanding their Key Children's behaviours, understanding what is their 'normal' developmental behaviour and what is out of character for their Key Children - see Settling In And Key Person policy for further information on Key Person. Any concerns that a Key Person or any member of staff has about a child's behaviour should be raised. Concerns should be raised to the SENCo and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). It is then the responsibility of the SENCo and/or DSL to assess the concerns raised and follow the procedure to achieve the best possible support for the child.

Initial Intervention Approach

- We use an initial problem solving intervention for all situations in which a child or children are distressed or in conflict. All staff use this intervention consistently.
- This type of approach involves an adult approaching the situation calmly, stopping any hurtful actions, acknowledging the feelings of those involved, gathering information, restating the issue to help children reflect, regain control of the situation and resolve the situation themselves.
- High Scope's Conflict Resolution process provides this type of approach but equally any other similar method would be suitable. Periodically the effectiveness of the approach will be checked.

Focused Intervention Approach

- The reasons for some types of behaviour are not always apparent, despite the knowledge and input from key staff and parents/carers.
- Where we have considered all possible reasons, then a focused intervention approach should then be applied.
- This approach allows the Key Person to observe, reflect, and identify causes and functions of unwanted behaviour in the wider context of other known influences on the child.
- We follow the STARC method which uses key observations to identify S) Setting - what the environment was like at the time and the people present, T) Trigger - what may be the cause of the action/behaviour, A) Action - recording the child's behaviour, R) Response - how did the child, adults and other children respond, C) Communication - what could the child be communicating. Once analysed, the focused intervention should help determine the cause (e.g. ownership of a toy or fear of a situation) and function of the behaviour (to obtain the toy or avoid a situation) and suitable support will be applied.

Use of Rewards and Sanctions

- All children need consistent messages, clear boundaries and guidance to intrinsically manage their behaviour through self-reflection and control.
- Rewards such as excessive praise and/or stickers may provide an immediate change in the behaviour but will not teach children how to act when a 'prize' is not being given or provide the child with the skills to manage situations and their emotions. Instead, a child is taught how to be 'compliant' and respond to meet adult expectations in order to obtain a reward (or for fear of a sanction). If used then the type of rewards and their functions must be carefully considered before applying.

- Children should never be labelled, criticised, humiliated, punished, shouted at or isolated by removing them from the group and left alone in 'time out' or on a 'naughty chair'. However, if necessary children can be accompanied and removed from the group in order to calm down and, if appropriate, helped to reflect on what has happened - please refer to Distract and Divert under Strategies to Support Positive Behaviour at the beginning of this policy.

Use of Physical Intervention

Staff will already use different elements of physical contact with a child as part of their interaction in the setting especially when they are comforting a child or giving first aid. However, physical intervention to keep a child or other children safe is different and should only be applied in exceptional circumstances.

The EYFS states that if physical intervention from a staff member towards a child may be used for the purposes of "averting immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child) or to manage a child's behaviour if it is absolutely necessary".

- The term physical intervention is used to describe any forceful physical contact by an adult to a child such as grabbing, pulling, dragging, or any form of restraint of a child such as holding down. Where a child is upset or angry, staff will speak to them calmly, encouraging them to vent their frustration in other ways by diverting the child's attention.
- Staff must do all they can to avoid using a physical intervention or the threat of physical intervention, to manage a child's behaviour because this is not the preferred way of addressing children's behaviour, unless it is necessary to use "reasonable force in order to prevent children from injuring themselves or others or damage property" (EYFS). To physically intervene, an educator may use "reasonable force" to protect a child from injuring themselves or others. Legally an educator may also use reasonable force to prevent a child from damaging property. However, we would expect that in instances of damaging physical property a child would only experience a physical intervention if the broken property presented a risk or is high value.
- To offer protection to children a range of appropriate graded interventions may be needed before physical intervention is applied. Most single incidents usually only require a verbal intervention from a member of staff. In other situations, an intervention can be applied through mechanical and environmental means such as locking doors and stair gates, to stop a situation escalating. However, there will be some situations where a child places themselves or others in danger which requires an immediate need for the use of both verbal and physical intervention. If a single or persistent incident requires a physical intervention such as physical handling from a staff member towards a child, then this is used intentionally to restrict a child's movement against their will. In most cases this can be applied through the use of the adult's body gently and safely blocking the child from access to danger or to prevent danger.
- If "reasonable force" has been used for any of the reasons shown above, parents/carers are to be informed on the same day that it occurs. The intervention will be recorded as soon as possible within the child's file, which states clearly when and how parents/carers were informed.
- Corporal (physical) punishment of any kind should never be used or threatened. If staff become aware that another person has given corporal punishment to a child, they follow our Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedures. Physical intervention to safeguard a child/children must be carried out as per the guidance in this procedure.

Physical Handling

We use the principle of applying reasonable minimal force and handling in proportion to the situation. Staff use as little force as necessary to maintain safety. This intervention should only be used for as short a period as possible to keep the child safe and maintain well-being by aiming for:

- keeping the child's safety and well-being paramount
- a calm, gentle but firm approach and application of the intervention
- never restricting the child's ability to breathe
- side-by-side contact with the child
- no gap between theirs or the child's body
- keeping the adults back as straight as possible
- avoiding close head-to-head positioning to avoid injury to the child and themselves (head butting)
- only holding a child by their 'long' bones to avoid grasping at the child's joints where pain and damage are most likely to occur
- avoiding lifting the child unless necessary
- reassuring the child and talking about what has happened
- only applying a physical intervention on a disabled child if training or preferred method is provided from a reputable external source e.g. British Institute of Learning Disabilities www.bild.org.uk/

Risks

There are risks associated with any physical intervention and handling of a child. The younger and more vulnerable a child may be, the greater risk to the child of using physical intervention towards them. However, there are also risks to children associated with not intervening physically; for instance, if an educator did not take hold of a child by the wrist, they may have run into the path of a fast-moving car.

Before intervening physically to protect a child from immediate harm an educator needs to decision make in a split second, considering the following factors. This is described as dynamic risk assessment.

- What is the immediate risk to this child if I do not intervene now?
- What might the risks be if I do intervene? If this was my child, what would I want someone looking after them to do in this situation?
- What is the minimum level of intervention that will be effective here? How can I do this as gently as possible for as short a time as possible and how am I going to manage myself to stay calm?

Recording

Any instance of physical intervention is fully recorded immediately and reported to the designated person as soon as possible on the appropriate form, ensuring that it is clearly stated when and how parents/carers were informed. Parents/carers are asked to sign a copy of the form which is then kept on the child's file. The designated person decides who will notify the parent/carer and when, ensuring that the parent/carer signs to say they have been notified. An individual risk assessment may need to be completed after any physical intervention with a child which considers the risks and likelihood of such behaviour re-occurring and how this will be managed. The risk assessment should be agreed and signed by parents/carers.

Temporary Suspension (Fixed Term)

Any decision to temporarily suspend a child must be carefully considered lawful, reasonable and fair. If despite following the stepped approach for behaviour it is necessary to temporarily suspend a child, for no more than five days, on the grounds of health and safety, the following steps are followed.

- The Preschool Leader provides a written request to suspend a child to their line manager; the request must detail the reason why the child must be suspended and the length of time of the proposed suspension.
- If the line manager approves, the parents/carers must be invited to a meeting to discuss next steps. Parents/carers are invited to bring a representative along. Notes must be taken at the meeting and shared later with the parents/ carers. The meeting must aim for a positive outcome for the child and not to suspend.
- If no acceptable alternative to suspension is found then the Preschool Leader must give both verbal and written notice of time related suspension to the parent/carer, meanwhile the Preschool Leader must ensure that continued resolution is sought and suitable adjustments are in place for the child's return.

Suspension of a Disabled Child

We have a statutory duty not to discriminate against a child on the basis of a protected characteristic. This includes suspending a child based on a disability. Ignorance of the law or claiming it was unknown that a child was disabled is no defence. However, if the child's behaviour places themselves or others at risk then the setting must take actions to avoid further harm. Time limited suspension may be applied to keep the child and/or others safe whilst finding a solution. Suspension is only used if reasonable steps and planned adjustments are first used to help resolve the situation. Without this action, suspension of a child with SEND may constitute disability discrimination (Equality Act 2010). A decision to suspend a disabled child must be clearly evidenced, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted. Plans and intervention must be recorded on the child's file and SEN Support - Action plan. If little or no progress is made during the suspension period, the following steps are taken.

- The Preschool Leader sends a written/electronic invite to the parents/carers, a Local Authority representative and any relevant external agencies to attend a review meeting. Each attendee must be made aware that the meeting is to avoid the situation escalating further and to find a positive solution.
- After the meeting the Preschool Leader continues to maintain contact with the parents/carers and Local Authority to seek a solution.
- Suitable arrangements offer the parent/carer continued support and advice during the suspension. The Preschool Leader reviews the situation regularly and provides their line manager with an appropriate regular update.

Expulsion

In some exceptional circumstances a child may be expelled due to:

- A termination of their childcare and early education agreement as explained in Childcare and Early Education terms and conditions.
- If despite applying a range of interventions (including reasonable adjustments), the setting has been unable to adequately meet the child's needs or cannot protect the health, safety and well-being of the child and/or others.

Challenging Unwanted Behaviour from Adults in the Setting

We do not tolerate behaviour demonstrating dislike, prejudice, discriminatory attitudes or action towards any individual/group. This includes those living outside the UK (xenophobia). This also applies to behaviour towards specific groups of people and individuals who are British Citizens residing in the UK.

Allegations of discriminatory remarks or behaviour made in the setting by any adult will be taken seriously. The perpetrator will be asked to stop the behaviour and failure to do so may result in the adult being asked to leave the premises. Where a parent/carer makes discriminatory or prejudiced remarks to staff at any time, or other persons while on the premises, this is recorded on the child's file and is reported to the Preschool Leader. The procedure is explained and the parent/carer is asked to comply while on the premises. An 'escalatory' approach will be taken with those who continue to exhibit this behaviour. The second stage comprises a letter to the parent/carer requesting them to sign a written agreement not to make discriminatory remarks or behave in discriminatory or prejudice ways; the third stage may be considering withdrawing the child's place.

Further Guidance

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DfE 2014)
- Behaviour Matters (Alliance 2016)
- Understanding Children's Behaviours and Interactions training (Cambridgeshire County Council Early Years Childcare and School Readiness Services)

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Signed:

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Position: Chair