Behaviour Management Policy

Current version approved by Manager	**April 2026**
Review of policy	**As and when required, this policy will be reviewed and updated**

1. Policy Statement

At the Pavilion Day Nursery (the 'Nursery'), 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.

The Nursery's behaviour lead is **Sonia David** and **Bethany Swift**

We require the named person to:

- To have attended the appropriate training to help them with this role.
- keep up-to-date with legislation, research and thinking on behaviour management and handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support;
- Check that all staff have relevant in-service training on behaviour management. We keep a record of all staff attendance at this training

2. Aim

We aim to provide an environment where children learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights of others and the impact of their behaviour. Our staff will model appropriate behaviour and offer intervention and support when children struggle with conflict and emotional situations.

The Nursery requires all staff to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parent/carers and one another with respect, care and courtesy. All staff will use positive strategies for handling any conflict. This will be achieved by helping children to find solutions appropriate for their age and stage of development for example, distraction, praise, reward and lead by positive example.

We expect all members of staff, children and parents/carers to engage in a consistent manner and keep to our code of behaviour.

- We use positive praise to endorse desirable behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for undesirable behaviour.
- When children behave in unacceptable ways, we help them to see what was wrong and how to cope more appropriately.
- We never send children out of the room by themselves.
- We never use threats or physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- We only use physical restraint, such as holding, to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property. 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 Manager and are recorded in our Incident Form.
- A parent/carer is informed on the same day and signs the Incident Form to indicate that they have been informed.
- 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 explanations rather than personal blame.
- We do not shout or raise our voices to respond to children's behaviour.
- We handle children's unacceptable behaviour in ways which are appropriate to their ages and stages of development – for example by distraction, discussion or by withdrawing the child from the situation.
- We work in partnership with the children's parents/carers. The parent/carer are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by the child's key person. We work with the parent/carer to address recurring problematic behaviour in the home and can offer objective strategies to help support parents.
- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate.
- We recognise 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. Solutions might include, an acknowledgement of feelings and an explanation as to what was not acceptable, and supporting them gain control of their feelings, so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
- We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging so they feel valued and welcome.
- Staff are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings, resolve issues and promote understanding.
- If biting or fighting are frequent, we try to find out the underlying triggers or cause and identify strategies to use at home. Communication between the Nursery and parent/carers is crucial to maintain a consistent approach for the child.

- We follow a key person approach and all staff are committed to building relationships with all children as well as their own key children.

3. Rough and tumble play and fantasy aggression

Young children often engage in play which 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 using strategies as above.

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 interactions such as blowing up and shooting. These themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies' and offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.

We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps suggesting alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, encouraging topics and subject matter which is age appropriate and making the most of 'teachable moments' to support empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

4. 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. It is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying' as hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without consideration 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 nor cognitive means to do this for themselves.
- self-manage their intense emotions, especially those of anger or fear by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. In addition, we will help them return to a relaxed state able to manage their own feelings.

Our way 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 we offer them an explanation and discuss the incident with them to their level of understanding.

At the Nursery 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. “Adam took your stick, didn’t he, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn’t like it when he took it, did you? Did it make you feel angry? Is that why you hit him?” Older children will be able to verbalise their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behaviour.
- help children to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others’ feelings. “When you hit Adam, it hurts him and he didn’t like that and it made him cry.”
- are aware that the same problem may happen frequently 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.
- support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- model breathing techniques - we practice yoga and mindfulness to support children to self-calm
- help a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child, and
- encourage children to say they are sorry to the injured child/adult.

When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents/carers to identify the cause and find a solution together. The main reasons children 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 or setting;
- the child may have insufficient language, or mastery of English, to express themselves and may feel frustrated;
- 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.

If there is a repeated incident, in the first instance we will complete a behaviour log to identify and whether there are any triggers to the behaviour. Where this does not work, we use the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015) to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to Graduated Response Early Years (SEND Team).

5. Biting

Whilst biting is more common at nursery, a biting incident is not a negative reflection on the biter, the staff or the Nursery. We have very clear behavioural expectations at the Nursery and children are expected and encouraged to share, wait their turn, be respectful and play happily together. However, children often do not have the coping mechanisms, nor the self-regulation skills which help them to

defuse and express their emotions in socially acceptable ways. Young children may resort to hair pulling, hitting and biting which is upsetting for us, but at the same time, developmentally normal. The most common reasons for biting are:

- teething and painful gums, which can be relieved by biting or chewing.
- physical exploration – babies and young children explore the world around them using their senses and young children do not always know the difference between gnawing on a toy and biting someone.
- seeking attention – when children are in situations where they feel they are not receiving enough attention, biting is a quick way of becoming the centre of attention.
- expressions of frustration – children can be frustrated by a number of things, such as wanting to be independent and doing things for themselves. Unfortunately, they do not have the vocabulary to express themselves clearly and this can sometimes lead to biting as a way of dealing with the frustration.

First and foremost, the key person will work with the parent/carer, the children and the staff team to discover why a child is biting and to comfort and reassure the child who has been bitten. This may have been an isolated incident, but we will always record the details to establish triggers and circumstances to identify behavioural trends.

Once we have identified the possible trigger for the biting incident, we will then make changes to reduce or remove the cause. For example, in exceptional circumstances and for a brief period a member of staff may be appointed to provide one to one support for the child concerned to encourage them to find different ways to express themselves.

We may encourage a biting child to take part in activities which help release frustration such as outdoor play or other physical activities. This is very much a last resort and will only be considered if evidence suggests a positive outcome for both children.

Our procedure in the event of a biting incident is as follows:

- The child who has been bitten will be examined, comforted and reassured and where needed, first aid will be administered.
- The bite wound will be washed thoroughly before a waterproof dressing is applied, if appropriate
- If the bite has broken or bruised the skin, the parent/carer will be contacted so that appropriate action can be taken e.g. visit GP.
- We will ensure that the biting child understands that such action (the behaviour and not the child) is unkind, and makes staff and the child who has been bitten upset. The child will be reminded we are kind to our friends and ensure all attention is given to the child who has been hurt.
- Incident and accident forms are completed on the parent App for both children. The parent/carer will receive a call for of the child who received the bite to give a detail. When the

parent/carer has seen/read the accident form they must show that they have acknowledged it on the Parent App.

- Incident and accident records will be reviewed by the key person, SENCo and the Manager to determine if there is a pattern of consistent biting. When biting has become a pattern of behaviour, we will shadow and observe the individual child, looking for triggers.
- In certain cases, we may seek professional advice from local special needs co-ordinator. This will always be in partnership with the parent/carer.

6. Bullying

We take bullying very seriously. It may involve 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.

If a child bullies another child or children, we:

- engage with the children who have been bullied in a manner that confirms to them that we listen to their concerns and act upon them;
- intervene to stop bullying and harmful actions;
- explain why bullying behaviour is acceptable and help the child recognise the impact of their actions;
- give reassurance to the recipient of the bullying;
- give positive feedback to children who bully when they show considerate behaviour and give them opportunities to practice and reflect on considerate behaviour;
- recognise that those who bully may experience bullying themselves, be subject to abuse or other circumstances that cause them to express their anger towards others;
- recognise that those who bully might be unable to empathise with others and being remorseful is challenging, therefore we do not force false apologies;
- discuss the situation surrounding the bullying incident with the parent/carer of the child who did the bullying, making a plan of how we will handle the behaviour in the future; and discuss what has happened with the parent/carer of the child who has been bullied, identifying a plan for the future.