Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

Statement of intent

At South Milford Preschool we are committed to providing a learning environment that promotes positive behaviour and relationships, where children and adults treat each other with care and respect. We believe strongly in the importance of nurturing each child’s personal, social and emotional development in a safe, secure and happy environment.

### Aim

We aim to teach children to behave in socially acceptable ways and to understand the needs and rights of others. We aim to provide clear and consistent expectations for behaviour that are developmentally appropriate depending upon the age of the child. The principles guiding management of behaviour exist within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development

### Objectives and Procedures

1. Staff work together to promote positive behaviour at South Milford Preschool.

* Mel Riches & Trudy Saunders has overall responsibility for our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour.
* They are required to:
* Keep up to date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support.

(Understanding and Addressing Behaviour – EduCare Aug 2019)

* Access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development.
* Ensure that all staff have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour.
* It is recognised that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and staff are required to be aware of, and respect, those used by other staff, volunteers, parents and children in the setting.
* All staff, volunteers and students are expected to provide a positive role model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
* All staff and volunteers will be familiar with the promoting positive behaviour policy and be able to implement the policy with consistency and to follow the guidelines for behaviour.
* We work 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.

2.At South Milford Preschool we believe strongly in the importance of valuing children

* We provide an environment whereby children are valued as individuals and we support each child in developing their sense of belonging within the group.
* Children are listened to and are given opportunities to talk about their feelings and viewpoints. Children are supported in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
* Expectations for behaviour are made clear to the children and staff work together to develop consistency across expectations.
* Strategies used to support behaviour will be developmentally appropriate and staff will be fully aware of techniques used to support behaviour management.

3. We aim to use positive proactive strategies to promote positive behaviour in children, and set these strategies within our programme for personal, social and emotional development. These include:

* Praising good behaviour such as kindness, willingness to share, helpfulness and cooperation.
* We 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.
* We help the older children set the group’s guidelines for considerate behaviour and give the older children greater responsibility within the group.
* We demonstrate our expectations of behaviour through visual aids, drama activities and role modelling.
* 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
* At weekly staff meetings, we discuss any concerns about children’s behaviour, and identify triggers, actions and how we can best support individual children.

4. We aim to be consistent in our approach to inappropriate behaviour and employ a set of clear strategies in order to achieve the considerate and socially acceptable behaviour that we expect of children according to their age and developmental maturity or whether they have any special educational needs.

Inconsiderate behaviour: This includes behaviours such as taking toys from another child, not waiting for a turn, pushing, being unco-operative, disrupting a game, hitting out against another. They are characterised by developmental immaturity whereby children are not at the stage where they can manage frustration or anger themselves, they may not have the language to express themselves, or may not understand and be able to keep to social rules. These behaviours are seen as a learning opportunity to develop socially acceptable ways, particularly of dealing with conflict. We regard the child to be a learner of what is acceptable and in need of support, explanation, encouragement, positive modelling and guidance – just as in learning any other skill.

* We use positive strategies in handling inconsiderate behaviour.
* We help children find solutions in ways that are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development.
* We help them to understand the outcomes of their actions, encourage them to talk about their feelings and emotions and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
* We give comfort to all children in a dispute and praise children for their efforts and achievements in resolving a dispute or learning a social skill such as waiting for their turn.

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' even if the behaviour is worryingly aggressive. For most children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without conscience of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt. Some children may engage in hurtful behaviour because they are deeply unhappy and they require support and care. However, hurtful behaviour has an impact for the child at the receiving end that is significant and this is also taken into consideration when responding to incidents of hurtful behaviour.

* We help children to manage their feelings by offering support and calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt. Depending on the maturity of the child, calming them down may involve holding, cuddling, explaining and talking them through the incident.
* We help children to express their feelings and to talk about how the other child felt when hurt.
* We talk about the solutions to the problem in order to develop prosocial behaviour.
* We encourage children to say sorry but do not force them to do so.
* We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama and stories.
* In cases of hurtful behaviour, 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

If the behaviour has been significant or may potentially have a detrimental effect on the child then:

* the parents of the child who has been the victim of behaviour and the parents of the child who has been the perpetrator should be informed.
* The designated person will contact children’s social services if appropriate, i.e., if a child has been seriously injured, or if there is reason to believe that a child’s challenging behaviour is an indication that they themselves are being abused.
* The designated person will make a written record of the incident, which is kept in the child’s file;
* The designated person should complete a risk assessment related to the child’s challenging behaviour to avoid any further instances.
* The designated person should meet with the parents of the child who has been affected by the behaviour to advise them of the incident and the setting’s response to the incident.
* Ofsted should be notified if appropriate, i.e., if a child has been seriously injured.
* Relevant health and safety procedures and procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints should be followed.
* Parents should also be asked to sign risk assessments where the risk assessment relates to managing the behaviour of a specific child.
* When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with the parents to identify the cause and solution together. Where this does not work, we use the Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to the Behaviour Support Team where necessary.

We do not:

* Send children out of the room by themselves or promote ‘Time Out’ techniques.
* Use or threaten to use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking.
* Use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children, such as ridicule or sarcasm.
* Remove toys or activities that are the focus of a conflict as a ‘punishment’ or means of ‘teaching children to share’.
* Use physical restraint, such as holding, unless to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property.
* Shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to children.

Bullying

Bullying is a behaviour that both parents and practitioners worry about. Bullying is a deliberate, aggressive and repeated action, which is carried out with intent to cause harm or distress to others. It requires the child to have ‘theory of mind’ and a higher level of reasoning and thinking, all of which are complex skills that most three-year-olds have not yet developed (usually after the age of four along with empathy). Therefore, an outburst by a three-year-old is more likely to be a reflection of the child’s emotional well-being, their stage of development or a behaviour that they have copied from someone else.

Young children are keen observers and more likely to copy behaviours, which mimic the actions of others, especially the actions of people they have established a relationship with. These are learnt behaviours rather than premeditated behaviours because children this young do not have sufficiently sophisticated cognition to carry out the type of bullying an older child can do. Unless addressed early, this type of pre-bullying behaviour in young children can lead on to bullying behaviour later in childhood. The fear is that by labelling a child as a bully so early in life we risk influencing negative perceptions and expectations of the child which will impact on their self-image, self-esteem and may adversely affect their long term behaviour. This label can stick with the child for the rest of their life.

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 preoccupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to bullying, although it may be inconsiderate, or even hurtful, 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 make children aware of the limits of this kind of play and develop acceptable behavioural boundaries with the children to ensure no-one is hurt.
* Often fantasy play contains violently dramatic strategies e.g. blowing up, shooting etc. We will tune in to the content of the play in order to explore concepts of right and wrong. We will make the most of “teachable moments” to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios for conflict resolution.

M Riches - July 2023