Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Managing behaviour

Providers are responsible for managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way.

5.1 Promoting positive behaviour

Policy statement

We believe 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.

As children develop, they learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and to consider the views, feelings, needs and rights of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. This policy is written in line with the current Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers in England, including the safeguarding and welfare requirements on supporting and understanding children's behaviour, child safety, staff practice, record keeping and working with parents and external agencies. We appoint a member of staff as behaviour coordinator to oversee and advise on the team's responses to behaviour that causes concern, working alongside the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), designated safeguarding lead and manager where appropriate.

Procedures

In order to manage children's behaviour in an appropriate, safe and legally compliant way we will:

- attend relevant training to help understand and guide appropriate models of behaviour;
- implement the setting's behaviour procedures including the stepped approach;
- have the necessary skills to support other staff with behaviour issues and to access expert advice, if necessary;
- ensure all staff complete the Promoting Positive Behaviour programme, on Educare.
- ensure all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities, including when concerns about behaviour may indicate a welfare or child protection concern, and know how to follow the setting's safeguarding, child protection, whistleblowing and attendance procedures;
- make reasonable adjustments and seek specialist advice where a child's needs may be linked to disability, special educational needs, communication needs, trauma, health or other welfare factors.

Stepped approach

Step 1

- We will ensure that current EYFS statutory framework guidance relating to safeguarding, welfare and supporting children's behaviour is incorporated into relevant policy and procedures;
- We will be knowledgeable with, and apply the setting's procedures on Promoting Positive Behaviour;
- We will undertake an annual audit of the provision to ensure the environment and practices support healthy social and emotional development, inclusion, safeguarding and welfare. Findings from the audit are considered by management and relevant adjustments applied.
- We ensure that all staff are supported to address issues relating to behaviour including applying initial and focused intervention approaches (see below).

Step 2

- We address unwanted behaviours using the agreed and consistently applied initial intervention approach. If the unwanted behaviour does not reoccur or cause concern, then normal monitoring will resume.
- Behaviours that result in concern for the child and/or others will be discussed between the key person, the behaviour coordinator and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or/and manager. During the meeting, the key person will use their knowledge and assessments of the child to share any known influencing factors (new baby, additional needs, illness etc.) in order to place the behaviour into context. Appropriate adjustments to practice will be agreed and if successful normal monitoring resumed.
- If the behaviour continues to reoccur and remains a concern, then the key person and SENCO should liaise with parents to discuss possible reasons for the behaviour and to agree next steps. If relevant and appropriate, the views of the child relating to their behaviour should be sought and considered to help identify a cause. If a cause for the behaviour is not known or only occurs whilst in the setting, then the behaviour coordinator will suggest using a focused intervention approach to identify a trigger for the behaviour.
- If a trigger is identified, then the SENCO and key person will meet with the parents to plan support for the child through developing an action plan. If relevant, recommended actions for dealing with the behaviour at home should be agreed with the parent/s and incorporated into the plan. Other members of the staff team should be informed of the agreed actions in the action plan and help implement the actions. The plan should be monitored and reviewed regularly by the key person and SENCO until improvement is noticed.

All incidents, interventions, parental communications, agreed actions and reviews relating to unwanted or challenging behaviour by children will be clearly and appropriately recorded. Records will be factual, dated, stored securely and shared only with those who need to know in line with safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection requirements.

Step 3

- If, despite applying the initial intervention and focused intervention approaches, the behaviour continues to occur and/or is of significant concern, then the behaviour coordinator and SENCO will invite the parents to a meeting to discuss external referral and next steps for supporting the child in the setting.

- It may be agreed that Early Help should begin and that specialist help be sought for the child. This support may address developmental, communication, health, welfare or safeguarding needs. If the child's behaviour is part of a range of welfare concerns, including concerns that the child may be suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (1.2) without delay. It may also be agreed that the child should be referred for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment. (See Supporting Children with SEN policy 9.2)
- Advice provided by external agencies should be incorporated into the child's action plan and regular multi-disciplinary meetings held to review the child's progress.

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.
- Where we have considered all possible reasons, then a focused intervention approach should then be applied.
- This approach allows the key person and behaviour coordinator 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 ABC method which uses key observations to identify a) an event or activity (antecedent) that occurred immediately before a particular behaviour, b) what behaviour was observed and recorded at the time of the incident, and c) what the consequences were following the behaviour. 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 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's own 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.

Use of physical intervention

- 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 not use physical intervention, or the threat of physical intervention, to manage a child’s behaviour unless it is necessary, proportionate and reasonable to prevent a child from injuring themselves or others, to prevent serious damage to property, or to maintain safety in an immediate situation.
- If reasonable force or physical intervention has been used, parents will be informed on the same day, unless doing so would place a child at further risk of harm. The intervention will be recorded as soon as possible within the child’s file, including the circumstances, the action taken, who was present, any injury or follow-up action, and when and how parents were informed.
- Where physical intervention is used, the manager, behaviour coordinator, SENCO and designated safeguarding lead will review the incident and update any support plan or risk assessment to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.
- Corporal (physical) punishment of any kind should never be used or threatened.

Challenging Behaviour/Aggression by children towards other children

- Any aggressive behaviour by children towards other children will result in a staff member intervening immediately to challenge and prevent escalation.
- If the behaviour has been significant or may potentially have a detrimental effect on the child, 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 safeguarding lead will contact local children’s social care services if appropriate, including where a child has been seriously injured, where there is reason to believe that a child’s behaviour may indicate abuse, neglect or exploitation, or where patterns of behaviour, absence or welfare concerns indicate that additional safeguarding action is needed.
- The designated safeguarding lead will make a written record of the incident, which is kept in the child’s file in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, confidentiality and data protection requirements.
- 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 and any other relevant agency will be notified where required by statutory guidance or regulation, including where a child has been seriously injured or where there is a significant safeguarding concern.
- 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.

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 as young as this, 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.

Challenging unwanted behaviour from adults in the setting

- Settings will not tolerate behaviour from an adult which demonstrates a dislike, prejudice and/or discriminatory attitude or action towards any individual or group. This includes negativity towards groups and individuals living outside the UK (xenophobia). This also applies to the same behaviour if directed towards specific groups of people and individuals who are British Citizens residing in the UK.
- Allegations of discriminatory remarks or behaviour including xenophobia 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 and in the case of a staff member, disciplinary measures being taken.
- Where a parent makes discriminatory or prejudiced remarks to staff at any time, or other people while on the premises, this is recorded on the child's file and is reported to the setting manager. The procedure is explained and the parent 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 requesting them to sign a written agreement not to make discriminatory remarks or behave in a discriminatory or prejudiced manner; the third stage may be considering withdrawing the child's place.

Further guidance

- Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, Department for Education, effective from 1 September 2025 and subsequent updates
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government, current edition
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, Department for Education, current edition where applicable

This policy was adopted by	Stowey Bears Preschool	*(name of provider)*
On		*(date)*
Date to be reviewed	Reviewed annually and whenever statutory guidance changes	*(date)*
Signed on behalf of the provider	*Rachel Penny*	
Name of signatory	Julia Jameson	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Chairperson	

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Behaviour Matters (2016)
- CIF Summary Record (2016)

Compliance note: this policy should be checked against the latest EYFS statutory framework in force for the provider type before adoption and after any Department for Education update.