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[www.pelican-childcare.co.uk](http://www.pelican-childcare.co.uk)

# Equal opportunity

Achieving positive behaviour

## Policy Statement

Our setting believes that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and development appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places, and objects. This is a development task that requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the correct example. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

## Procedures

We have a named person who has overall responsibility for our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour.

We require the named person to;

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

- We 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.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
- We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the setting's behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
- We expect all members of our setting – children, parents, staff, volunteers and students – to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.
- 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 reoccurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately. All physical interventions are recorded and shared with parents.

#### *Strategies with children who engage in inconsiderate behaviour*

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping 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.
- We ensure that there are enough popular toys, resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns.
- We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.

- When children behave in considerate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- We use physical restraint, such as holding, only 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 our setting leader and are recorded in the child's personal file. The child's parents are informed on the same day.
- 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 in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.

#### *Children under three years*

- When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older children.
- We recognise that babies and very young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them to do this.
- Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviours of young children include tantrums, biting or fighting. Staff are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.
- If tantrums, biting or fighting are frequent, we try to find out the underlying cause – such as a change or upheaval at home, or frequent change of carers. Sometimes a child has not settled in well and the behaviour may be the result of “separation anxiety”.

- We focus on ensuring a child's attachment figure in the setting, their key person, is building a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

### *Rough and tumble play, hurtful behaviour and bullying*

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

### *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 using strategies as above.

- We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard this kind 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 strategies, blowing up, shooting etc., and that themes often refer to “goodies and baddies” and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
- We are able to tune into the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most “teachable moments” to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

### *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”. For children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance 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 means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.
- We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological processes that take place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear.
- Therefore we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child to return to a normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage his or her own feelings.
- We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child's rage as that will have the opposite effect.
- 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.
- We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between event and 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? 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.
- We help young children 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."
- We help young children develop pro-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. Let's see if we can be friends and find another car, so you can both play with one.
- We are aware that the same problem may happen over and over before skills such as sharing and turn taking develops. 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.

- 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 a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child, we do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this 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, we work with parents 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 interest and meet their needs – this may be in the home and it may also in the setting.

Their parents, or carer in the setting, does not have the skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is the only response the child has to express feelings of anger;

The child may have insufficient language or mastery of English, to express him or herself and may feel frustrated;

The child is exposed to levels of aggression 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, we use the Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to a Behaviour Support Team where necessary.

## **Bullying**

We take 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.

If a child bullies another child or children;

- We show the children who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them;
- We intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children;
- We explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable;
- We give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied;
- We help the child who has the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions;
- We make sure that children who bully/ receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour;
- We do not label children who bully as “bullies”;
- We recognise that children who bully may be experiencing themselves, or be subject to abuse or other circumstance causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others;
- We recognise that children who bully are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we do not insist that they say sorry unless it is clear that they feel genuine remorse for what they have done. Empty apologies are just as hurtful to the bullied child as the original behaviour.
- We 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; and;
- We 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,

- **Procedures for Dealing with Inappropriate or Challenging Behaviour.**  
**Types of behaviour that are deemed inappropriate are as follows:**

- Physical incidents: fighting and conflict, biting, kicking, hitting, pinching, hair pulling, scratching, tantrums, destructiveness

Verbal incidents: swearing, racist or derogatory comments

PSED incidents: unwillingness to share, uncooperative child, withdrawn or distressed child, superhero and gun play. Bullying.

Physical Incidents

- Staff should always interrupt and stop any inappropriate physical behaviour calmly and firmly saying, 'No thank-you! We are kind to each other.' Deal with any injuries first. Use the six steps of conflict resolution to support the children involved.
- 1. Approach Calmly –This will help to reassure children that things are under control and can be worked out to everybody's satisfaction. Breathe. Place yourself between the children on their physical level. Use a calm voice and gentle touch. If an object is involved in the conflict say something like, 'I'm going to hold this while we talk about the problem.'
- 2. Acknowledge Feelings–Children need to express their feelings before they can let go of them and think about possible solutions to the problem. Give recognition to the feelings children are expressing by using simple Descriptive words. For example, 'You look upset.'
- 3. Gather information–Staff should be careful not to make assumptions or takes sides. Ask the children open ended questions that will help you find out what exactly the problem is. Questions like: 'What's happened?' or 'What's the problem?' or 'What's going on?' are useful at this stage. Repeat children's words back to them to help them clarify their thoughts.
- 4. Restate the problem, Say exactly what the problem is. Use words like 'so the problem is....'Use the needs and information the children have described.
- 5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together Say something like, 'What do you think we can do to solve this problem?' Listen and let the children come up with their own ideas. Respect and explore all of the ideas even if some of them seem unrealistic. Reinforce that everyone has a voice that should be heard. If children suggest that they can 'share,' explore this idea further so that everyone is clear how the sharing will happen. Staff may need to model how to make the situation better.
- 6. Be prepared to give follow-up support as needed When children have reached a solution check that they are both OK with it. Summarise what is going to happen by saying something like, 'So you're going to .....and you're going to.....'Staff should help children begin to carry out their solution, making sure that no one remains upset. If necessary, repeat one or more steps until all the children return to their play. Acknowledge the children have solved their problem by saying words to the effect of 'You did it! You solved the problem!' This helps to build children's confidence in their capabilities as problem solvers. Early Years staff should record the incident using the ABC record sheet and class teachers should inform parents.

Staff should also monitor for any reoccurrence of this behaviour.

Repeated incidents of physical harm. If a child continues to cause physical harm to other, the Lead Person responsible for Behaviour Management will work with the class teacher and the Early Years SENCo. Together with parents, they will decide the best course of action to take which may involve contacting outside agencies.

Using the details from the completed incident record sheets, a Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be written to support the child's specific needs.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Board of Trustees at Pelican Children's Centre

Held  
on.....

Date to be  
reviewed.....

Signed on behalf of the board of  
trustees.....

Name of  
signatory.....

Role within the  
centre.....