



# Early Childhood Behaviour Policy

Policy Owner:	Early Childhood Manager
Formally Endorsed By:	Council of Trustees
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Human connection in all we do

## **Early Childhood Behaviour Ethos**

We strongly believe in giving children the free space to develop their creativity, fostering a lifelong love of learning, which in turn lays the foundation for a healthy adult life. In our Early Childhoods, we aim to create an environment which encourages cooperation, sociability, reverence, and respect for life and nature. We aim to create a warm, home-like atmosphere and an opportunity for children to learn through imitation, rhythm and repetition, and child-led creative play.

We recognise the importance of positive and effective behaviour management strategies in promoting children's welfare, learning and enjoyment.

We endeavor to help children to:

- Develop a sense of caring and respect for one another
- Build caring and cooperative relationships with other children and adults
- Develop a range of social skills and help them learn what constitutes acceptable behaviour
- Develop confidence, self-discipline, and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.

## **1. Aims**

This policy aims to:

- Give guidelines to support positive behaviour by the children in our Early Childhood settings
- Provide a consistent approach to behaviour management, including bullying
- Summarise the roles and responsibilities of different people in the school community with regards to behaviour management
- Apply positive policies which create a caring environment in which young children can grow both as an individual and in the wider context of social integration and assimilation at all levels

## **2. Legislation and statutory requirements**

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- Behaviour in schools 2024
- Use of reasonable force in schools 2013
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school 2015
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017

It is also based on the DfE's special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice 2015.

In addition, this policy is based on Schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014; paragraph 7 outlines a school's duty to

safeguard and promote the welfare of children, paragraph 9 requires the school to have a written behaviour policy and paragraph 10 requires the school to have an anti-bullying strategy.

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools are under a legal duty to prevent all forms of bullying and harassment related to race, gender, sexuality, and disability.

Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' (DfE, Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017)). Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) states that 'all staff should be aware that children can abuse other children and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online.'

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees is responsible for monitoring this Behaviour Policy's effectiveness and holding the SLT to account for its implementation.

The Head of Early Childhood is responsible for monitoring how staff implement this policy. In addition, the Head of Early Childhood will ensure that this policy is reviewed annually.

Early Childhood Staff are responsible for:

- Creating a positive home-like atmosphere in which children can learn through imitation, free play, rhythm, and repetition
- Implementing this Behaviour Policy consistently
- Modelling positive behaviour
- Providing a personalised approach to the specific behavioural needs of particular children
- Recording in the Incident Book and on CPOMS
- Where necessary, seeking support from SLT in responding to behaviour incidents.

Parents must be in close partnership with the school in order to allow each child to fully engage with the education we offer. As a school we require parents to:

- Discuss any behavioural concerns with the Early Childhood teacher or the Head of Early Childhood
- Inform the school of any changes in circumstances that may affect the child's behaviour
- Attend Parents' evenings and any requested meetings.

### **4. Positive Behaviour Management**

The structure and rhythm of activities within the Early Childhood settings provide security and comfort for the children, who quickly learn what to expect. Daily, weekly, and annual rhythms encourage behaviour within each child that is positive, collaborative, and constructive. As children generally spend four years within Early Childhood, this understanding of what to expect grows and deepens over time and is

passed on by older children to the younger members of the group. This further helps to provide a foundation of positive behaviour.

During their early years, children learn naturally through imitation. In Early Childhood, teachers therefore work with social behaviour by endeavoring to be role models worthy of imitation. At all times adults show loving respect for the children, thereby setting a good example for the children to experience and imitate. It is our aim that, over time, children will develop a genuine orientation towards positive behaviour rather than simply learn to modify their actions in order to gain the approval of key adults around them.

Within Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood settings, storytelling and repetition is regarded as important for the development of the child's moral nature. Stories are wide and varied and are chosen or created to support the children. Some stories may be carefully chosen for the deep moral messages within them, or to help the child to develop a sense of trust in the goodness of the world. It is intended that these inner pictures, together with the ordered, rhythmical, and predictable life of the settings, will help sow seeds of resilience within young children so that they do not feel overwhelmed by their feelings amidst the many challenges and unexpected changes that life can bring.

Early Childhood staff aim to develop an in-depth knowledge of each child. This enables staff to anticipate and pre-empt potential problems and trigger points through early intervention, redirecting the children in a non-confrontational way as considered appropriate. Teachers treat the children in an age-appropriate way and also have behaviour expectations which are in accordance with their age and stage of development. Wherever possible, we use creative discipline to help children overcome difficulties, thereby equipping them with strategies for regulating their own behaviour.

Through the positive methods of guidance outlined above, the children will be encouraged and expected to work towards achieving the following shared understandings or 'golden rules':

- Everyone is welcome
- We use kind words, and our voices are listened to
- We look after our friends
- We listen to our teachers and friends, and our teachers and friends listen to us
- We take care of our Early Childhood spaces
- We do not hurt anyone or anything
- Our hands are for work and play

Hitting, kicking, spitting, and swearing are considered anti-social behaviours within Early Childhood. The child's parents will be informed by the Early Childhood teacher when appropriate if these behaviours occur. Early Childhood teachers will record behaviour incidents on CPOMS and if patterns are forming, they will arrange a meeting with the Head of Early Childhood.

Where problems arise that are ongoing or do not respond to our approaches, the Early Childhood teacher will arrange to discuss these with parents (and the Head of Early Childhood if requested), so that they can work together in deciding upon and reinforcing the most appropriate direction for the child.

## **5. Challenging Behaviour - strategies**

If there is ever a concern that the challenging behaviour may be due to the child suffering some harm, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately, and Child Protection procedures followed.

When confronted with challenging behaviour, staff will be clear to distinguish between disengaged, disruptive, and unacceptable behaviour. Staff will listen to the child/ren carrying out the negative behaviour, hearing their perceived reasons for their actions.

Disengaged behaviour may indicate that a child is bored, unsettled, or unhappy. With sensitive interventions staff will often be able to re-engage a child in purposeful activity.

Disruptive behaviour describes that which prevents other children from enjoying themselves or feeling safe. Early Childhood Staff will collectively discuss incidents and agree on the best way to deal with them.

Unacceptable behaviour refers to non-negotiable actions and may include:

- Discriminatory remarks
- Violence e.g., hitting, kicking, spitting
- Bullying
- Destruction of equipment
- Biting (see annex 1)

Most children experience social difficulties at some time in their development. There are a number of ways teachers can help children who are presenting challenging behaviour:

- Redirect the child to a new focus or activity.
- Gain the child's attention with a look, gesture, or word to make him/her aware of our observations.
- Explain to the child/ren what was negative about their behaviour and that such actions have consequences for themselves and others.
- Remove the child from the situation and engage him/her with an adult-led task. This stops inappropriate behaviour, refocuses the child's attention, and enables him/her to calm down

When appropriate the child returns to the activity of the group.

- Staff will encourage and facilitate mediation between children to try to resolve conflicts by discussion.
- Staff will work as a team by discussing incidents and resolving to act collectively and consistently.
- We will work in partnership with the children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their child's behaviour by the early childhood teacher, who is informed 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 decide jointly how to respond appropriately.
- Parents will be reminded of their responsibilities as outlined in section.
- Staff will try to discuss concerns with parents/carers at the earliest possible opportunity in an attempt to help identify the causes of negative behaviour, and share strategies for early intervention.

## **6. Exclusion**

If a child's behaviour continues to be disruptive and unmanageable, and/or is likely to be a danger to his/herself or others, we may have to take immediate action to exclude that child. The parents or carers will be contacted and asked to collect them. This will be recorded and shared with the Head of Early Childhood and a meeting will be arranged with the parents at the earliest convenience.

Such action would only be taken after staff have exercised their best endeavor to make all reasonable adjustments to manage the child's behaviour prior to the exclusion. The Head of Early Childhood will be notified and will be required to approve a request to send a child home prior to the natural end of the child's session.

The return to Early Childhood will be assessed and implemented on a case-by-case basis, during staff meetings and parent-teacher meetings.

## **7. Use of Physical Intervention**

There may be occasions, despite the calm creative atmosphere in the Early Childhood setting, when it is necessary to hold or restrain a child, either to prevent an incident, or to control behaviour that is already occurring. Physical restraint is defined as the 'positive application of force with the intention of overpowering the child.' It will only be used when absolutely necessary to manage a child's behaviour if it is necessary to prevent personal injury to the child, other children, or an adult; also, to prevent serious damage to property.

Physical intervention will only be used as an act of care, never of punishment. Physical intervention will only be used if the child is causing serious disruption, injuring themselves or others, or a child is damaging property, or about to do so, or to manage a child's behaviour if necessary.

Ideally the member of staff who knows the child best will be the one to use physical

intervention or restraint. However, in an emergency, anyone can as long as the policy is followed.

If the Early Childhood setting has a child whose behaviour is likely to require physical intervention, the teacher will work with the parents and the Head of Early Childhood to create an appropriate individual support plan.

## **8. Procedure:**

Staff will first give verbal signs that are repetitive and familiar and generally hold the group. Examples: “hands are for work and play;” “kind hands in early childhood;” “running feet are for outside;” “only donkeys kick” etc. Staff will use all possible non-physical action, including that physical intervention will be used if they do not stop.

Whenever a staff member is in a situation where they need to consider holding a child, they must have a second staff member present. There is an exception, in the situation where delaying action may result in a child or member of staff being hurt.

A dialogue will be maintained with the child at all times, so that the member of staff can explain what they are doing and why.

Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied. The force will always be appropriate for the age, size and strength of the child involved.

- Divert a child by leading them away by a hand, or by an arm around their shoulders
- Hold children by ‘long bones;’ avoid joints
- Beware of head positioning to avoid ‘head butts’
- Ensure there is no restriction of breathing
- Avoid lifting children

## **9. Force cannot be used as punishment.**

This would be defined as corporal punishment and is illegal.

Any occasion where physical intervention is used must be recorded on CPOMS within 24hrs, and parents must be informed on the same day. In addition, it must be discussed the same day with the Head of Early Childhood.

If there is the possibility a staff member has committed any act of violence or abuse toward a child, please refer to the school’s Safeguarding Policy.

## **10. Anti-Bullying Strategy**

We are committed to ensuring that every child is free to develop naturally in a safe and secure environment. When there is a concern regarding bullying, it is absolutely essential to respond appropriately and effectively in order to ensure a safe environment for both victim and perpetrator.

Help will be given to both the initiator child and parents, and the affected child and parents, within Early Childhood.

Bullying is usually defined as the **repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group** by another person or group, often where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

In bullying, there is:

- An intention to harm
- A harmful outcome (physically or emotionally)
- Persistent and repeated (an isolated attack e.g., a fight, is not bullying)
- Direct or indirect (e.g., hitting someone, or spreading rumours)
- Unequal power (or perceived, often due to age, physical strength, psychological resilience)
- Bullying can be emotional, physical, direct, or indirect verbal.

## **11. Bullying Incident Reporting Procedure**

Incidents are reported and recorded in the CPOMS. Appropriate action will be considered, agreed and actions set (see below) through consultations with parents, teachers, assistants, and the Head of Early Childhood. A time or length of time which would be appropriate for the situation to be resolved would also be agreed.

We recognise the personhood of those engaging in bullying behaviour as much as we recognise the personhood of all our early childhood pupils. In order to create a bullying-free environment, both the bullied and those who bully need help to challenge and transcend the damaging and invariably unproductive dynamics harmful behaviours in an age-appropriate way.

Early Childhood ensures:

- The child feels safe and secure in Early Childhood
- Provide physical and emotional support
- Encourages the child to relay feelings
- Carefully monitors and assess the child
- Maintains frequent communications with the parents or carers

## **12. Special Educational Needs**

The Early Childhood department recognizes its legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent pupils with a protected characteristic from being at a disadvantage. Consequently, our approach to challenging behaviour may be differentiated to cater to the needs of the pupil.

The Early Childhood teacher will, when necessary, consult with the Early Childhood special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) who will evaluate a pupil exhibiting



challenging behaviour to determine whether they have any underlying needs that are not currently being met.

Where necessary, support and advice will also be sought from others, to identify or support specific needs. When acute needs are identified in a pupil, we will liaise with parents and external agencies and plan support programmes for that child. We will work with parents to create the plan and review it on a regular basis.

### **13. Training**

Our staff are provided with training in managing behaviour, including advice on proper use of restraint. Assistants are given guidance by the Early Childhood teachers. Behaviour Management also forms part of continuing professional development. One member of the Early Childhood staff is a deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and receives safeguarding training every two years.

### **14. Monitoring Arrangements**

Board of Trustees annually. The School Leadership Team is responsible for monitoring how staff implement this policy.

#### **Links with other policies**

- Behaviour Policy (Main School)
- Anti-bullying Policy (Main School)
- Exclusion Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Allegations against staff procedures

## **Annex 1: Repeated Biting Protocol**

### **Introduction**

Biting is a developmentally common behaviour in young children, particularly under three years of age. It may occur for a variety of reasons, including teething, frustration, lack of language, sensory needs, or social-emotional challenges. At Michael Hall Steiner Waldorf School, we approach repeated biting with understanding, consistency, and a strong partnership with parents, while maintaining a safe and respectful environment for all children.

### **Immediate Response to a Biting Incident**

Comfort and attend to the child who has been bitten, administering first aid if necessary.

Speak calmly and firmly to the child who bit, with age-appropriate language (e.g., “Biting hurts. I can’t let you bite.”).

Remove the child who bit from the situation in a non-shaming way and redirect to a calming or purposeful activity.

Complete an incident record to go home with the child.

Log incident on internal safeguarding platform detailing the context, location, and children involved.

Inform both sets of parents and Head of Early Childhood on the same day without naming the other child involved.

### **Monitoring and Observation**

Staff will begin or continue a daily observation log to identify patterns or triggers (e.g., time of day, hunger, proximity to particular children, environmental stress).

Staff will track potential triggers on a behaviour monitoring chart called an EABC:

- What happened just before the incident (Antecedent)
- The incident itself (Behaviour)
- What happened immediately after (Consequence)

### **Parental Involvement**

After two or more biting incidents within a short period (e.g., one week), the Lead teacher and Head of Early Childhood will arrange a meeting with the child's parents or carers.

A support plan will be created together, which may include:

- Adjustments to routines or environment
- Extra adult supervision during transitions
- Use of oral sensory tools (e.g., teething rings)
- Emotion coaching and simple language cues

### **Behaviour Support Plan**

Where biting persists, a personalised plan will be put in place. This will be:

- Non-punitive, developmentally appropriate, and reflective of the child's needs
- Reviewed weekly by the Early Childhood Teacher and the Head of Early Childhood
- Shared with parents regularly

### **Safeguarding and Additional Needs**

If biting is frequent, severe, or not responsive to strategies, the ECSENCo will be consulted.

If there is any concern that biting may be linked to abuse, neglect, or unmet emotional needs, safeguarding procedures will be followed.

If needed, referrals will be made to outside agencies such as the child's GP, health visitor, or early intervention services.

## **Exclusion**

Temporary exclusion is a last resort. It will only be considered if the biting poses an ongoing serious risk to others and after all other avenues of support and intervention have been exhausted.

Any decision about exclusion will be made by the Head of Early Childhood and the Principal in consultation with parents and safeguarding staff.

## **Review and Reflection**

All repeated biting incidents will be reviewed in the weekly Early Childhood staff meeting.

The aim is always to support the child's development, minimize harm to others, and create a secure, respectful learning environment.