

# Sunbeams Play

Registered Charity No. 1152188

## Equality of Opportunity

### 19. Achieving Positive Behaviour.

#### Policy statement

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

Children and young people 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 developmental 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 named people who have overall responsibility for our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour. The centre Manager is licenced to facilitate 123 Magic and Cygnet programmes and we have our own SENCO.

- We require the named people 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;
  - 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-service training on promoting positive behaviour ie:- the 123 Magic Behaviour Management Programme. 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, students, visitors and service users to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, young people, parents/carers 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, young people, parents, carers, staff, volunteers, visitors, students and service users - to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.
- We work in partnership with parents/carers, other settings including children/social services and schools to share strategies for positive behaviour. Parents/carers are regularly informed about their children's/young people's behaviour by their key person. We work with parents/carers to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

#### **Strategies with children and young people who engage in inconsiderate behaviour**

- Sunbeams Play uses strategies from the 123 Magic Behaviour Management Programme and Step On (de-escalation techniques) for all children and young people.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children/young people and vulnerable adults find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's/young people'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/young people and vulnerable adults to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
- We ensure that there are enough popular toys and resources and sufficient activities available so that children/young people and vulnerable adults 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 with a reward system including charts and recognition.
- We support each child/young person and vulnerable adult in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- We support each child/young person and vulnerable adult in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We avoid creating situations in which children/young people and vulnerable adults receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.

- When children/young people and vulnerable adults behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- We never send children/young people and vulnerable adults out of the room by themselves, we may use time out, where the child/young person and vulnerable adult will sit for a few minutes to reflect on their behaviour.
- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children/young people and vulnerable adults are never threatened with these.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children/young people and vulnerable adults.
- We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children, young people or adults and/or serious damage to property, any time this has to happen only staff trained in Step Up will use the agreed and taught holds. This will be followed up by an incident form which is shared with and signed by parent/carer detailing reasons and holds used.
- 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/young person and vulnerable adult's personal file. The child/ young person's parent/carer is informed on the same day.
- Where an injury has been caused a detailed accident form is written (as above), shared with and signed by the parent/carer.
- 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 or young people's inconsiderate behaviour but If any child or young person is continually unkind and their behaviour is deemed as such that they are a danger not only to themselves but to other children, young people and staff, after doing an individual risk assessment, working with the parent/carer and using strategies that might help the child/young person or vulnerable adult and the behaviour continues then the manager of Sunbeams will have the right to exclude the child/young person or vulnerable adult from the setting.

### **Children and young people with special educational or additional needs**

- When children/young people and vulnerable adults with special educational or additional needs behave in inconsiderate ways we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from child/young person and vulnerable adult to child/young person and vulnerable adult.

- We recognise that sometimes children/young people and vulnerable adults are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them do this.
- Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviours of children/young people and vulnerable adults can include tantrums, biting or fighting. Staff are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children/young people and vulnerable adults 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/young person and vulnerable adult 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 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 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 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 in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of '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. Many younger children, especially those with neurodevelopmental disorders, 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'. Often, 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
- (with a sideways hug where possible), if this is appropriate for the child and if parental/carer's permission was given at registration. If not, an alternative way such as giving a favourite toy or other distraction method. 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 the event and the 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 learn 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 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.

- 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 interpret and meet their needs – this may be in the home and it may also be in the setting;
  - their parent/carer, or carer in the setting, does not have 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 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.
- 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/young person and vulnerable adult or children/young people and vulnerable adults. It is characterised by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behaviour.

A child/young person and vulnerable adult who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress in another.

Bullying can occur in children five years old and over and may well be an issue in after school clubs and holiday schemes catering for slightly older children/young people and vulnerable adults. If a child/young person and vulnerable adult bullies another child/young person and vulnerable adult or children/young people and vulnerable adults:

- we show the children/young people and vulnerable adults who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them;

- we intervene to stop the child/young person and vulnerable adult who is bullying from harming the other child/young person and vulnerable adult or children/young people and vulnerable adults;
- we explain to the child/young person and vulnerable adult doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable;
- we give reassurance to the child/young person and vulnerable adult or children/young people and vulnerable adults who have been bullied;
  - we help the child/young person and vulnerable adult who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions;
  - we make sure that children/young people and vulnerable adults who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour;
  - we do not label children/young people and vulnerable adults who bully as 'bullies';
  - we recognise that children/young people and vulnerable adults who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves, or be subject to abuse or other circumstance causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others;
- we recognise that children/young people and vulnerable adults 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/young person and vulnerable adult as the original behaviour;
- bullying will be recorded within the accident, incident procedure.
- we discuss what has happened with the parents/carers of the child/young person and vulnerable adult who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the child's/young person's behaviour; and
- we share what has happened with the parents of the child/young person and vulnerable adult who has been bullied, explaining that the child/young person and vulnerable adult who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

This policy was adopted on

20<sup>th</sup> April 2015

Policy updated

May 2023

Date to be reviewed

April 2024

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of Signatory

Role of Signatory

Reviewed By	Date