

**Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Supporting and Understanding Children's Behaviour**

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

## **Supporting and Understanding Children's Behaviour Policy**

### **Statement of intent**

Little Greys believes that children flourish best when their personal, social, and emotional needs are fully supported, and when there are clear, consistent, and developmentally appropriate expectations for behaviour. We are committed to creating a nurturing environment where children feel safe, valued, and confident, enabling them to develop positive relationships and a strong sense of wellbeing.

### **Our aim is to**

We aim to provide a caring and supportive environment where children can learn to behave in a socially appropriate manner, developing respect for themselves, others, and their surroundings. We work closely with parents to identify and support children who may experience behavioural difficulties, helping them to develop positive strategies to manage their behaviour.

We place a strong emphasis on recognising and promoting positive behaviour across the whole setting. All adults model respectful, consistent, and positive behaviours, ensuring that both staff and children contribute to a calm, nurturing, and inclusive environment.

### **Procedures**

#### **Staff**

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

Named person is ... Sarah Wilkes ... who also works alongside our SENDCO.

All other staff will have relevant training on promoting positive behaviour.

- 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 with our behaviour management 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 identify children's behavioural difficulties using a variety of observations, assessments and monitoring procedures, according to the child's needs.

#### **Parents**

- We work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour. 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.
- There are times though when we acknowledge that we need help meeting the child's needs and discuss with parents to request support from outside professionals.

These could be health visitors, CAMHS, EY Inclusion and SEND team, educational psychology service.

- We work together with outside professionals and parents to complete an Individual Behaviour Support plan to support the child and review these regularly.

## Children

- We use 'Building Blocks for Positive Behaviour' by Anne-Marie Jones, including the 'OK Rules'
- We teach children to identify their feelings through the scheme Protective Behaviours which is delivered by two trained members of staff.
- 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 acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We acknowledge children's considerate behaviour towards another who is hurt or upset.
- We help older children set the group's guidelines for considerate behaviour.
- We provide activities and games that encourage co-operation and working together.
- We will 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.
- We will avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- We teach the children British Values learning right from wrong through persona dolls.

## Environment

We provide a supportive environment with designated areas to help children understand and manage their emotions and behaviour effectively.

- **Quiet area-** The quiet area is used in a positive and proactive way to help children recognise and manage their feelings. Children are supported in understanding that they can choose to use this space when they begin to feel upset, overwhelmed, or tired. Visual prompts are displayed to guide and reinforce its purpose.
- **Angry mat –** The angry mat offers children a safe and appropriate way to express and release feelings of anger. Children are taught how to use the mat effectively, with visual aids in place to support their understanding and encourage self-regulation.
- **Nurture group –** Children who would benefit from additional support have the opportunity to take part in a small nurture group. This provides a calm, focused environment where they can develop social, emotional, and communication skills.

## Kinds of behaviours that require positive intervention

We make a distinction between kinds of behaviours that require support or intervention in order to achieve the considerate and socially acceptable behaviour that we expect of children according to their developmental maturity or whether they have any special educational need. These behaviours are:

- **Inconsiderate behaviour** – This includes behaviours such as taking toys from another child, not waiting for a turn, pushing, being un-cooperative, 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 mistakes that the child is making on the way to developing 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.
- **Hurtful behaviour** – We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the ages 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 cognisance 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 which is significant, and this is also taken into consideration when responding to incidents of hurtful behaviour.

### **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 children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children’s ages and stages of development.
- Such solutions might include, for example, acknowledgment 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.
- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, the staff member attracts the child’s attention gains eye contact and says the child’s name.
- We praise children for their efforts and achievements in resolving a dispute or learning a social skill such as waiting their turn.
- We have a quiet area where children can go by choice to calm down and stamping mat to stamp out their anger.

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

- 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 the biological and cognitive means to do this for themselves is still underdeveloped in very young children by using feeling charts, persona dolls etc.
- We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings experienced. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express themselves, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling.

- We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings.
- We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, songs, drama, and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close 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.
- We may use 'Time Out' were a child is sat slightly apart from the other children for a short time, under supervision, to give them time to calm down. (Usually the same amount of time as their age e.g. two minutes for a two-year-old).
- 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, 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 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.
- Details (What happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) of hurtful behaviour incidents that give cause for concern are brought to the attention of our setting leader and are recorded in the child's personal file. The child's parent is informed on the same day.
- We use the Code of Practice in cases where the above does not work to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to a Behaviour Support team where necessary.

### **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 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 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 and alternatives to blowing up or shooting.
- 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.