



Strong Close Nursery School

Behaviour Policy

Reviewed September 2021

Approved by governors November 2021

Strong Close Vision

At Strong Close, we believe that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and when there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

“...whenever the child behaves in a way that does not please us we are ready to act. We do so out of our own good or bad humour at the moment, out of a habit of doing so, out of our principles, but rarely out of a full knowledge of what in the child’s mind has led him to do the thing we don’t like. Yet without that knowledge we cannot be sure we are dealing with him in the way most likely to help him”

Susan Isaacs 1929

Rationale

We believe that our behaviour policy is a key strategy in supporting children’s learning and development, raising achievement and working with families. It is an important part of our curriculum for Personal, Social and Emotional development which is a core area of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and is closely linked to successful learning in all areas. It also forms a key part of citizenship and children learning about their role in society.

We know that children respond best where there is mutual, courtesy, kindness and respect.

We wish to promote strategies which encourage and support children’s self-esteem, empathy for others and a respect for the world in which they live. We wish to avoid strategies which may lead to fear, humiliation, guilt or rejection.

Aims

1. To promote an environment where children and adults feel safe, accepted, valued and respected and that their individual rights are upheld.
2. To develop an inclusive ethos where children and adults are happy and grow in confidence, care for each other and contribute to a sense of community.
3. To use developmentally appropriate strategies for children’s behaviour management, which encourage and support children’s self- regulation.

Key Principles

- We are positive whenever possible e.g. not “don’t run” but “remember to walk”.

- We give praise for genuine reasons.
- We will be specific in what we are praising e.g. “Thank you for telling me that X had fallen down – that was very thoughtful” helps children to understand what being thoughtful means.
- We acknowledge spontaneous kindness.
- We recognise that children need guidance on unacceptable behaviours i.e. the reasons why and support with following rules and routines.
- We encourage self-discipline e.g. “I like the way X is sitting” encourages children to please the teacher but “who can show me the right way to sit?” moves the responsibility to the child. In this way children know what is expected and can build up useful habits of behaviour.
- We have high expectations of children.
- We give children choice within limits.
- We incorporate into the nursery curriculum activities to promote children’s self-esteem e.g.
 - co-operative and circle games
 - children telling others about their work
 - Records of achievement (both on their own and sharing with others)
 - celebrating individual differences and identities as well as recognising what we have in common

We need to remember that children respond positively to adults who relate to them with empathy and affection.

Embedding the principles for self-regulation

- Self-regulation is the ability to manage your own emotions and behaviour in accordance with the demands of the situation.
- Self-regulation skills are supported through warm and caring relationships with practitioners within the setting.
- We take a non-judgmental, curious and empathic attitude towards behaviour. We encourage all adults in schools to respond in a way that focuses on the feelings and emotions that might drive certain behaviour, rather than the behaviour itself.
- Children with behavioural difficulties need to be regarded as vulnerable rather than troublesome, and we all have a duty to explore this vulnerability and provide appropriate support.

Guidelines

A non-judgemental and positive approach

There are many reasons why children’s behaviour may be a cause for concern and where possible we need to understand the underlying reasons i.e. difficulty in managing feelings, inappropriate role models outside nursery.

“Growing up with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as abuse, neglect, community violence, homelessness or growing up in a household where adults are experiencing mental health issues or harmful alcohol or drug use, can have a long-lasting effect on people's lives.”

(<https://www.gov.scot/publications/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/>)

Understanding and acknowledging children’s potential ACEs or barriers to learning can ensure that practitioners provide an appropriate and supportive approach to children’s behaviour.

When children enrol in our setting practitioners and parents support the child to settle through a series of visits. Once the child has settled through observation, practitioners take into account each child's Well-being and Involvement (Leuven Scale) and any additional barriers to learning that could impact children's personal development and behaviour.

The following strategies should be used to raise children's self-esteem and promote good behaviour:

- Show appreciation of and value children's behaviours giving immediate feedback to raise self-esteem where possible individually - verbal (I like/don't like), non-verbal (smile, clap, thumbs up), taking photo, crouching down to child level, eye to eye contact, physical contact(cuddles, "loves") as appropriate
- Develop good relationships with children through acknowledging and extending their interests and individuality.
- Lots of positive feedback from adults - "I like it when you....." , "That makes me feel sad/happy")
- Take children to visit other rooms/staff to share successes/work
- Plan activities/projects/themes or use stories to promote self-esteem
- Give children opportunities for responsibility and to help other people
- Encourage collaborative games and communal sharing time which enable young children to take more responsibility for their actions.
- Plan opportunities for children to explore emotional boundaries safely through experience and talk (e.g. puppets, stories, pictures, songs. "Has Teddy hurt himself? What can we do to make him feel better?")
- Break down activities into achievable steps to support all children, including those with disabilities, to promote achievement and avoid frustration
- Provide materials, resources and activities to value children's race, cultural identity and gender
- Provide accessible resources so that babies can choose what they need to begin an activity independently
- Encourage children to participate in making any rules
- Encourage children to praise each other
- Ensure consistency of staff and routines as far as possible
- Give parents, carers positive feedback whenever possible
- Liaise with parents to share strategies
- Liaise with parents to ensure that children who need comfort objects, have them readily available.

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour and bullying

Behaviour problems will be handled in a developmentally appropriate way which respects individual children's level of understanding and maturity. Practitioners use a range of developmentally appropriate assessment tools and liaise with parents/carers and other professionals with regards to individual children's development and behaviours. These include the EYFS and the Early Support Developmental Journal. This information is used to gain a whole picture of a child's Personal, Social Development and behaviour.

- We criticise the behaviour not the person e.g. not "You've hit someone again you naughty boy" but "Hitting hurts our friends. They may not want to play with you."

- We talk through conflicts with children and help them find solutions;
- We help children to understand the consequences of their actions e.g. “If you do X, then Y will happen, or you can choose to do A, which will result in B”;
- We show them that we care about the feelings of the victim of any aggression;
- We acknowledge children’s intense feelings even when they are inappropriate e.g. “I know you are feeling angry, but you made X cry”;
- We look out for and discourage labelling or scapegoating of “naughty children”.
- Matching strategies to individual children
- Avoid raising voices across a distance to or at a child behaving unacceptable – walk over and speak quietly but firmly to them.
- Use eye contact and non-verbal communication – they can be more effective than words. Try to bend down to their level so you can establish eye contact.
- Always treat the child with respect – show that you are not happy about something she/he has done, but that you are not rejecting or ‘rubbishing’ her/him as a person.
- If you can see a conflict likely to develop, try to divert one or more of the children involved before it happens. That way you are giving children attention but not for inappropriate behaviour.
- Usually it is better for one member of staff to deal with an incident, although colleagues are always ready to back each other up. Sometimes two adults are needed, one to comfort the victim, the other to talk to the child behaving unacceptably.
- In a large nursery, staff need to be aware of children playing one adult off against another e.g. going the rounds asking for something that has already been refused. It is good for children to hear staff checking this out with each other. That way children see that the staff work together on being fair and consistent.
- Talk calmly and quietly to children – try not to get them over-excited. But also show that you enjoy their company and are interested in what they do and say.

Persistent problems/unacceptable behaviour

Persistent problems should always be discussed with a member of the SLT and further strategies should be developed in consultation with the SENDco. This may lead to an individual behaviour plan. If a child is exhibiting extreme behaviour the Governors will make every effort to ensure reasonable adjustments are made for the safety and well-being of staff and children. In the event that every effort has been made to make reasonable adjustments and the safety and well-being of the staff and children is compromised a decision may be made to reduce the hours the child is in nursery.

Working as a Team

As a staff team we have a consistent approach.

- We can talk about children's behaviour in an informal, everyday way – pass on information, discuss problems, raise queries with colleagues.
- We can work on challenging behaviour together – give each other praise and support – don't give up!
- We will talk to parents about persistent worrying behaviour at an early stage – but also about children's good behaviour. We will allocate more time to meet with parents in these situations. We try to put difficult behaviour in context.
- If a child has said 'You're hurting me' when we have guided them physically, explain to parents what you have done to keep them safe.
- We need to be aware that some kinds of behaviour may arise from a child's special needs.
- Every child on an Enhanced Specialist Provision placement will have a 'Pen portrait' which details a child's needs and how to help them and a risk assessment which details any behaviours that cause concern and how we mitigate them.
- We use a consistent approach supported by Makaton signs and symbols where appropriate to ensure understanding.
- We can use Assertive Behaviours which clearly show children what is expected of them e.g. 'I need everyone to be quiet now' 'Thank you'
- Or 'When you have picked up the toy then we can have snack' 'thank you'
- In some cases children may have additional needs which affect behaviour and therefore an Individual Education/Behaviour Plan should be considered.

When a child becomes very distressed (Crisis) additional adults and children should leave the area and the child's key person, where possible, should sit with the child until they have calmed and support their recovery through calm discussion and offer physical comfort if requested by the child. In extreme circumstances a child may need to be guided to safety by the arm or supported to prevent injury to themselves or others.

Racist and Bullying Incidents

Racism and bullying are learned behaviours. Sometimes young children will repeat something they have heard an adult or older sibling say or copy a behaviour they have seen. If a member of staff hears or sees a child saying or doing something to another child which could be interpreted as using racist language or bullying behaviour they will deal with it sensitively using the guidance set out in this policy.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up".

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012)

Bullying behaviour has four key aspects:

- It's hurtful
- It's intentional
- It's repetitive
- It involves a power imbalance

Children have the right to learn and play in a safe and supportive environment. It is very important to understand the definition of bullying when assessing the difference between 'relational conflict' – where there is a 'falling out' between individuals – and when it tips the balance to bullying. Bullying is not a 'rite of passage'. It is well researched that bullying causes long term damage to both the person on the receiving end, and those who bully. Challenging bullying behaviour in the early years gives you a great opportunity to 'nip it in the bud'. It is not a child's fault if they are bullied. Children should never be told to just ignore it, or to change who they are. It is the children doing the bullying that need to change their behaviour and their attitude.

Any incidents involving children will be followed up sensitively with parents/carers

Reasonable Force

This is where a child may need to be guided to safety by the arm or restrained to prevent injury to themselves or others.

Sexism and sexual harassment

We want everyone to feel included, respected and safe in our school. We will not tolerate verbal abuse, which includes name-calling and sexist comments.

Sexist comments are those which discriminate based on sex, particularly against women.

Sexism also includes behaviour or attitudes that create stereotypes of social roles based on sex.

All staff and pupils are encouraged to call out and/or report this behaviour. If pupils make these comments, we will:

- Ask them to apologise to anyone the comment was directed at
- Support and educate them to improve their behaviour
- Monitor their behaviour for any recurrence
- Escalate the sanction to [insert as appropriate, e.g. a letter or phone call to parents]

Our curriculum will cover what healthy and respectful behaviour towards one another looks like.

The following documents support the **implementation** of this policy and ensure we monitor **impact**

Health & Safety Policy

Restraint Policy

Curriculum Policies

Safeguarding Policy