

LANGLEY MOOR NURSERY SCHOOL

Respectful Relationships Policy



Policy statement

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

At this age, children are learning 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 milestone that requires support, encouragement, teaching and most importantly, setting the correct example.

The principles that underpin how we promote and teach positive and considerate behaviour exist within our programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development, as well as within the whole ethos of our nursery.

How we put this into action.

All staff have responsibility for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including developing respectful relationships.

- Staff are kept up-to-date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting respectful relationships and on using conflict resolution to support children's disagreements.
- 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 have a staff code of conduct.
- We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the setting's respectful relationships policy and its staff code of conduct, and give peer to peer support to promote staff well-being.
- If a child is having persistent difficulties in their relationships with others we look for possible reasons and support strategies. It is often the case that the child might need some smaller group work developing the social communication skills necessary to socialise with their peers.
- We give parents/carers advice and information about this policy through newsletters, the website, meetings and discussions.
- Our governors are actively involved in the development and review of this policy, including having access to relevant training.

The Restorative Approach

- When disagreements/upsets have happened between children, they are supported to work through the problem by working through the following steps
 1. What has happened?
 2. How were you feeling?
 3. Clarification of both children's feelings
 4. What do you think needs to happen now to make things better?
 5. Support the solution.

Promoting Respectful Relationships and Behaviour

- We promote respectfulness, politeness and kindness through our group times, particularly through using the Box of Feelings Programme.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in their keyworker group from their first session, 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 inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- If a child is behaving unsafely to others, we will intervene and show them how to use toys and resources appropriately and or take them to a different area of the nursery to play. If the child is unwillingly/unable to move from the area, then we will move other children away if the child is making the area unsafe for them.
- We recognise that behaviour does not instantly improve, and in some cases becomes worse before it improves. Sometimes a behaviour log is used so any triggers can be detected to enable us to support and encourage more positive behaviour.
- We would only shout or raise our voices if we need to react quickly when a child's behaviour is likely to cause injury to themselves or another child.
- We remain calm and non-judgemental, keeping an open mind, with an aim of helping all children return to a place of good emotional well-being.

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 not unusual for young children and are acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or aggressive however if we feel any child is uncomfortable with the play we will intervene.
- 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. 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 calm 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 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. Older children will be able to verbalise their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behaviour.
- We help children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that actions impact on others' feelings. We use scenario cards from the Box of Feelings Programme to do this.
- We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy through using the conflict resolution steps outlined previously.
- 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 encourage them to say sorry only if it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and they wish to show this to the person they have hurt.