

**St. Thomas a Becket Nursery School**  
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# Managing Behaviour Positively for Children's Wellbeing

**Responsibility:** Nursery Manager

**Review Cycle:** Every one - two years or sooner if needed

Date of adoption / last review:	Signed / Role	Date of next review:
April 2015		April 2017
Autumn 2016		Autumn 2018
December 2018		December 2019
November 2021		November 2022
May 2022		May 2024
January 2024		January 2026

## St Thomas a Becket Nursery

### Managing Behaviour Positively for Children's Wellbeing

**Supporting and understanding children's behaviour** (EYFS Statutory Framework, effective 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024)

3.58 Providers are responsible for supporting, understanding, and managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way.

3.59 Providers must not give or threaten corporal punishment or any punishment which could negatively affect a child's well-being. Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure that corporal punishment is not given by anyone who is caring for or is in regular contact with a child, or by anyone living or working in the premises where care is provided. Any early years provider who does not meet these requirements commits an offence. A person will not be considered to have used corporal punishment (and therefore will not have committed an offence), if physical intervention was taken to avert immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child) or to manage a child's behavior if absolutely necessary.

3.60 Providers must keep a record of any occasion where physical intervention is used, and parents and/or carers must be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

#### **Policy Statement:**

**The EYFS framework describes 'positive behavior' to consist of:**

Emotional Intelligence: Managing feelings and behavior (self-regulation), being able to express your emotions effectively, and being empathic towards others.

Social Skills: Being able to form positive, respectful relationships.

At St Thomas a Becket Nursery, we recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being is in just the same way as physical health. Mental health and wellbeing influences children's cognitive development and learning, and therefore, overall achievement, as well as their social and emotional health. We recognise our responsibilities to understand the behaviours of children in our care and we support children, and work with their families and carers, to understand children's emotions and how these impact on children's behaviours. In this way, we work as one community to enable the children to understand and manage their feelings at all times, especially those of change or upset, and how to express them in an appropriate manner towards their peers and others, enabling children to become resilient and flourish as they understand acceptable behaviours.

Children are guided through interactions with adults, who act as good role model; show them respect and value their individual personalities. The nursery actively promotes British values and encourages and praises positive, caring and kind behaviours at all times, providing an

environment where children learn to respect and care for themselves, other people and their surroundings.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a safe place where:

- all children feel, and are, valued
- children have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their feelings
- positive mental health is promoted and valued
- bullying is not tolerated

In addition to children's well-being, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and well-being.

As children develop, they learn about boundaries, the difference between good and unwelcome behaviour; to consider the views and feelings, and needs and rights, of others; and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects.

### **Encouraging positive behaviour in our nursery;**

Staff support the children to understand expectations of them by putting simple boundaries in place for them to work towards. The development of these skills requires patience, gentle guidance and encouragement; sometimes intervening when children are struggling with conflict and emotional situations and need help to understand why some behaviours are unwanted. In these types of situations, staff can help identify and address triggers for the behaviour and help children reflect, regulate and manage their actions. We encourage children to participate in a wide range of group activities to enable them to develop their social skills in many differing situations.

### **Tried and tested positive practice:**

- **Praise the positive behaviour**

We focus on positive behaviours and praise children, acknowledging their positive actions and attitudes so that children feel valued and respected. This is easy and very effective; for example, a compliment like, 'it is good to see you playing so nicely' is far more effective than only giving attention when something goes wrong: 'put that down'; 'be quiet'; 'stop fighting you two'. This can be done for the individual as well as for the group.

- **Be a good role model**

We ensure that all staff act as a positive role models and that a consistent approach is delivered by all staff. People learn through modelling, or copying, other people, which is why rewarding positive child behaviour is so powerful. In early years and childcare settings, children learn from the models provided by both other children and staff. One often finds, for example, that staff who tend to speak in a calm, quiet tone have quiet children. It is, therefore, important to bear in mind that the staff's own behaviour serves as a model for children.

- **Expressing rules and boundaries clearly**

As well as staff being clear and positive in their teaching, it is important to have clear rules and boundaries, which are expressed in positive terms. Examples might be:

**Negative**

Don't talk  
Stop running  
No fighting

**Positive**

Shh (finger on lip)  
Walk  
Good playing

- **Refocus and distraction**

If it is appropriate we may encourage a child to focus on something else, move away from the situation or provide them with a distraction.

- **Encourage children to resolve conflict**

We ask children for their ideas and opinions and support them in making good choices

It is also useful to reflect back to children when things are going well so that the children can recognize how good it feels when they are experiencing success. Some children will find this difficult and will need quiet, private feedback as public recognition is too uncomfortable for them.

Children who have difficulties with accepting praise respond well to a gradual process, starting with non-verbal recognition such as a smile, thumbs-up, a wink, a gentle touch on the shoulder and a quiet 'well done', moving on to verbal praise, individually, then in a small group and then in the whole group.

**Positive starts**

A positive start is very important for young children. Staff can encourage this by greeting the child and parent when they come into the setting. The parent may then be encouraged to settle the child before leaving.

When children first arrive for sessions, they may find responding to adult greetings difficult and need to learn to say 'hello'.

They often need to be shown ways of playing which are constructive. A member of staff may sit alongside or opposite them and set up some equipment. For example, they may set up the small world equipment whilst giving a commentary of what they are doing and how they are going to play. 'Ben (using quiet voice), where shall we put the people in the house?' They would keep their statements specific and as brief as possible so that the child can develop the play as they wish.

Staff may invite children to play with equipment displayed, drawing their attention to what is out in the room and reinforcing rules, quiet voice, sharing e.g. 'some for you and some for a friend' etc.

It is important to use very clear and direct instructions when using this positive teaching approach.

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Stop running  
No fighting

#### **Positive**

Shh (finger on lip)  
Walk  
Good playing

Note: Some children will only hear the last word and may think you are giving them permission to behave in a certain way if only negative commands are used.

### **Remind the children of the setting rules**

Take time to talk together about what it means to be kind and to help.

You can use the rules to remind the child whose behaviour is causing concern without being too negative. This ensures that the rules are relevant and useful.

When Jenny is snatching the puzzle off Jamal

'Jenny... (pause to get her attention), Jenny, what is our rule about sharing?'

### **Acknowledge the child's feelings**

It is important to help children express their feelings. This can be done through small group activities in discussion or non-verbally with the help of pictures, puppets, adult facial expressions, stories and music. The ideas, materials and responses can then be used on an individual basis as children show these emotions.

'You feel angry because we haven't got any biscuits. I will let you have an apple or a banana. Which do you want?'

'I know that you are angry with Carlton because he is playing in the sand. Let's play in the water tray.'

'Writing your name is difficult, I am here to help you/you have tried hard let's leave it for today and make this puzzle.'

### **Unacceptable behaviour**

#### **Avoid situations that are likely to cause problems**

If a child cannot sit still during a story, avoid that situation for the time being while you concentrate on teaching them to look and listen with one adult in the book corner.

## **Give a warning of changes of activity**

Children can get engrossed in what they are doing and may not have learned to attend to more than one thing at a time. Give a warning when you plan to change an activity. Remember that some children will find it hard to understand a change linked to a time and you may need to give a visual aid e.g. an egg timer or traffic light system

‘Rosie, in five minutes it will be time to listen to our story.’ Or show a colour card to let them know what happens next

If it is necessary to ask a child to change activities from a particularly pleasant one, giving an early warning can often prevent a heated reaction to the request.

‘After we have finished doing cooking, it will be time to get ready to go home’, not ‘do the cooking now, or you won’t be ready to go home.’

Use of a picture prompt may be appropriate, or you may need to show the children the objects associated with the new activity e.g. show a ball for outside play if they have language difficulties.

Some acts of unacceptable behaviour **may** be recorded in the incident book:

- Deliberate acts of violence towards other children or adults.
- The use of offensive bad language or swearing.
- Unkind remarks about another’s race, gender, features, abilities, etc.
- Deliberate withholding of resources from others (allowing for stage of development).
- Risky behaviour that may cause harm to self or others.
- Deliberate damaging of property or resources.

Staff will manage any such situation arising by using visuals, hand signals and language that that child is able to respond to, to enable the child to understand that the behaviour is unacceptable and why so.

## **Strategies agreed for behaviours causing concern**

### **1) Ignore**

Many behaviours causing concern can be effectively dealt with through a combination of rewarding desired behaviours and ignoring undesired behaviour.

The child needs to learn that unwanted behaviour is worth nothing at all, whereas good behaviour is rewarding. Note, ignoring really **means** ignoring. If the child thinks that you are watching him out of the corner of your eye in case he misbehaves, he is still receiving attention which he finds rewarding.

Clearly, though, there are certain types of behaviours that staff cannot ignore. Amongst these are behaviours that are harmful to self or to others. When it is impossible to ignore undesired

behaviours, it is important that the intervention is as private as possible and is carried out with the minimum of disruption.

**Consistency** is important when staff choose to ignore behaviour. A child who finally gets a reaction from staff after calling out/screaming for five minutes has not learned that calling out/screaming is a waste of time, but that calling out longer and louder gets results. Staff will have taught the child to be longer and louder at calling out/screaming.

### **When you decide to intervene and stop the behaviour**

If you decide to intervene and stop a child from continuing with behaviour that is causing concern, using positive language and remaining calm is likely to give better results. Positive interventions can help to teach children how to socialise, and can promote emotional development leading to better relationships in the future.

#### **1). Promoting self-esteem**

Show that you recognise and accept the reason the child is doing the unacceptable behaviour.

'**You want** to play with the train set **but** it is story time now.'

'**You want** me to stay with you **but** I need to get the paint ready.'

'**You want** to play with the train set **but** Wayne is playing with it now.'

This values the child's choice and shows that you are listening and understanding. The adult is the person in charge and sometimes has other priorities.

#### **2). Offer a solution**

The children need to learn and to understand that they have to wait sometimes. Obviously, not following through will lead to frustration and possible anger.

'**When** Wayne has finished playing with the train **then** you can play with it.'

'Wayne, **I'll tell you** when it is your turn to play in the shop.'

#### **3) Show confidence in the child**

'When you are a bit older or /when you are used to our rules, **I know that you will be able to** tie your own shoelaces.

Next time, **you will be able to** share the puzzle nicely with Kayleigh.'

#### **4) Model the behaviour you want to see**

In some situations, after firmly stating what is not to be done, you can demonstrate how to do it in a better way. This sets firm limits and builds relationship.

'We don't hit, it hurts. Pat my arm gently.' (gently stroke)

'Hass, Lego bricks are not for throwing. Let's build a really high tower together.'

#### **5) Distract and divert**

Children are not always easy to distract but can be redirected to a similar alternative. This acknowledges the child's choice and begins to teach that others have rights too.

Lead the child by the hand and say:

'That's **my** pen. Here is **your** pencil.'

'Yoko **needs** that book. Here is a really great book **for you.**'

### **6) Separate the behaviour from the child**

Keep the focus on the behaviour or rule and avoid attacking the child. Putting thanks at the end is powerful as it assumes compliance.

'Jason, Amy, leave the paintbrushes alone and face this way. Well done, thank you.'

### **7) Use three positives before you use a negative**

Again, this is focusing on the positive. It avoids overusing a child's name in a negative corrective context.

'Jane, well done you are sitting quietly and ready for the story,  
Rina, you are sitting up very nicely,  
Luke good waiting, how nicely you are sitting and looking at me.  
Graham... look at me and sit still.'

### **8) Use the least intrusive method of intervention**

This ensures the smoother running of the group. Develop privately understood signals. Follow up with thumbs up or some such signal to acknowledge the desired behaviour.

If you need to speak to the child, move to be nearer so that you speak quietly and personally to the child and avoid disrupting the group and embarrassing the child.

### **9) Give take-up time**

This avoids being confrontational and allows the child time to process the information and follow the instruction without losing face.

'Jake, I need you to tidy up the bricks.'

Turn away and give Jake the opportunity to start on the task.

'Thank you Jake, let me help you.'

Standing, making eye contact with a child, waiting for them to carry out your instruction is confrontational and may be frightening to the child. They may sensibly decide that it is not in their best interest to go with you, or do as you ask. Their already poor behaviour may become more challenging or withdrawn.



## **10) Remind children of consequences**

This encourages children to make the right choice. Obviously, you need to be consistent and fair so that the child doesn't feel aggrieved. Offer a very limited choice.

'Ben, if you continue to kick Alex you are choosing to sit by me/separately/on another table.'

'Ali, either you put those toys in the basket or they go away for the morning/day.'

All members of staff need to have a clear idea of what the consequences of positive and unwanted behaviour are.

N.B. If there are agreed consequences they must be consistent and the children must understand that they are choosing them. This may be difficult for young children or those with learning difficulties/English as a second language etc.

## **11) Using 'I' statements**

There are times when a child needs to know that you are angry/hurt/annoyed due to something they have done. Be angry at their behaviour not the child.

'I feel worried when you leave the toys on the floor because someone might trip up and hurt themselves.'

'I am sad that you hurt Jake, he is upset.'

'I feel upset that you can't share with Charlie.'

N.B. This would only be used with children with sufficiently good skills in understanding spoken English.

## **12) Offer a challenge**

This offers a quick motivator to get the job done quickly.

'I wonder if you can clear this table before I count to five.'

By the time I get to the home corner I know it will be tidy.'

N.B. Do not set challenges between children as children who fail rarely find it easy to deal with.

## **13) Use the six step approach to resolving conflicts**

1. Approach quickly and calmly, stopping any hurtful behaviour
2. Acknowledge feelings
3. Gather information
4. Restate the problem
5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together
6. Be prepared to give follow up support

e.g. Practitioner separates children fighting over toy car by sitting between them. She says:

"I know you are feeling cross because you both want the car".

“Who was playing with the car?”, and “What happened?”.

“So the problem is Sam wants the car and Kelly wants the car”.

”What should we do?” “How can we make everyone feel better?”

They find a similar car for Sam who is happy because it is his favourite colour.

“Well done Sam and Kelly you are both playing with your cars very nicely”.

Staff will intervene immediately in cases of disruptive behavior. Staff will enter the area of conflict and not shout across the room, usually the incident will be sorted amicably, as above. Staff will listen to all parties concerned and not make assumptions. If appropriate, the children may be helped to solve the problem themselves, and asked what they should have done.

If the incident is serious or a child is injured or very upset, 2 members of staff will be needed – one to handle each child. The child who is injured should be comforted initially. The child who has hurt the other child should be removed and given time to work out how the behaviour was wrong. He/she should be allowed to see how the hurt child is coping. They will be encouraged to say sorry but cannot be forced.

Children who behave in a disruptive way will be removed from the area in which they are playing. Their behaviour will be explained calmly. They will then be moved to another activity under close supervision and helped to integrate with other children. Praise will be given as they behave in an acceptable way. Visuals should be used if and where appropriate, the emotion cards can often help the children to see and explain how they may be feeling, especially if English is their additional language.

Incidents that need to be recorded will be discussed with the parent/carer in confidence.

The following format will be used for recording:

- Incident
- Reason for behaviour (if known)
- Action taken by staff (what was done/said)
- Child’s response/reaction
- Subsequent action
- Child’s behavior later

If the mis-behavior continues and becomes an issue a behaviour plan may be implemented. This must be discussed with the parents. This may lead to consultation with other professionals.

## **Anti – Bullying**

We are committed to providing a safe environment for all children including keeping them free from bullying.

### **What is bullying?**

Being deliberately unkind, shunning or excluding another child from a group or tormenting them, For example, forcing another child to be 'left out' of a game or activity or making fun of another person.

Persistently intimidating or threatening others

There are many forms of bullying, these include;

- Racist
- Emotional
- Verbal
- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual or cyber

### **What we do**

- Intervene when any bullying behaviour is observed
- Report to nursery manager
- Reassure the child who is being bullied, listen to their concerns
- Record any incidents
- Speak to all the children involved including the alleged bully
- Explain why this behaviour is unacceptable and encourage understanding of the implications of their behaviour
- Inform parents of all children involved

**As a last resort, the Nursery reserves the right to exclude a child from a session, should the behavior put others at risk.**