



Achieving Positive Behaviour

Policy statement:

At Little Laura's we believe that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional need are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations of their behaviour.

We support children in learning how to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights of others and how their behaviour impacts on those around them. At Little Laura's we encourage our older children to role model positive behaviour as our youngest children learn from and look up to them. By working in partnership with parents we can support each at home and at nursery with their development and understanding.

Procedures:

SENDCO and Behavioural Lead Professional

Natasha Young

Whilst it is the responsibility of all practitioners to support the personal, social and emotional development, including behaviour of all children Natasha and the nursery Management team have overall responsibility.

The named person and Management team will keep themselves up-to-date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and where children's behaviour may require additional support. There will be suitable in-house training for practitioners on promoting positive behaviour which will be updated regularly through staff meetings and external workshops.

- We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of and respect those used by families attending the setting.
- All practitioners, volunteers and students are required to be a positive role model by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
- We expect everyone involved the care of children at Little Laura's- children, parents, practitioners, volunteers and students to keep to the guidelines, with these being applied consistently.

- We work in partnership with parents to celebrate positive behaviour and address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to then decide a joint approach on the appropriate response.

Strategies to promote positive 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, acknowledgement of feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.

- Positive reinforcement- We praise and acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- Enabling environment- we provide an enabling environment where there are sufficient resources and activities so children can be meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns.
- We support children in developing a sense of belonging in the Little Laura's family group, so that feel valued and welcome whilst helping to develop self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities.
- Manners- we role model good manners encouraging the children to say please and thank you and support them in understanding the importance of turn taking and patience.
- Relationships with others- we help children develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others.

Strategies to prevent and minimise unwanted behaviour

- Ignoring unwanted behaviour- If there is no significant risk to themselves or others then we will ignore unwanted behaviour including tantrums. We will avoid situations where children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour and instead rewarding positive behaviour.
- Understanding- we help children to understand the outcomes of their actions and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- Prompting- by offering reminders to the children of the expected behaviour and explaining why we ask children to not behave in a certain way or offering an alternative for example "If you would like to throw something, perhaps we could find the beanbags."
- Interpretation- by explaining to the child what has just happened in words, and then discussing if there was another way it could have been handled. If the child is of an age and stage of development that is appropriate, we would encourage the child to

apologise, however helping them understand their actions is far more important than the word, “sorry”.

- Proximity- by heading over towards the children or making a short sound for example ‘uh’ usually interrupts their behaviour encouraging them do something else and think about the way they are behaving.
- Redirection or distraction- encouraging the children to choose an alternative activity or resource.
- Positive language- when asking children to behave in an appropriate way give examples of behaviour you like to see; “Please use your walking feet.” Instead of “Stop running!”
- Reflection time- we do not use ‘naughty chair’ or ask children to leave the room by themselves however, we do offer children the opportunity to calm down in a quieter area. This does not need to be in a specific place, it can be holding the hand of an adult or sitting with an adult.
- Physical intervention- we only use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and or serious damage to property. All acts of physical intervention are recorded and shared with parents on the same day. We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- Recurring behaviour- if a child’s recurring behaviour is having a negative impact on your children’s experience at nursery, we will work closely with everyone part of the child’s care to reduce and eliminate these issues.
- 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 never use strategies intended to single out or humiliate children.

Children under three years

- When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those older children.
- We recognise that babies and very young children 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 young children include tantrums, biting or fighting. Practitioners are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help 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 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 setting, their key person, is building a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

Rough and tumble play, hurtful behaviour and bullying

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 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. 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 active 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. 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, 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 or children. It is characterised by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behaviour.

A child 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.

If a child bullies another child or children:

- we show the children who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them;
- we intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children;
- we explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable;
- we give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied;
- we help the child who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions;
- we make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour;
- we do not label children who bully as 'bullies';
- we recognise that children 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 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 as the original behaviour;

- we discuss what has happened with the parents of the child who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behaviour; and
- we share what has happened with the parents of the child who has been bullied, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

Biting

- Most children at some point in their childhood go through a 'biting' stage. Little Laura's understands that this is a difficult situation whether the child has been bitten or is biting others.
- Children may bite for several reasons, for example, teething, exploration, attention, frustration etc. Being able to understand why biting is happening can be helpful in controlling and dealing with the situation.
- At Little Laura's we help work closely with the child, the parent and the staff team to discover why the child is biting. By documenting the biting incident on our 'Incident Form' we will be able to identify any triggers that happened before the incident. If a trigger has been identified then actions will be taken to reduce or remove the cause, the child will then be encouraged to get involved in another activity away from the child they had bitten.
- If your child has been bitten or has bitten, you will be notified with an accident or incident form, this can be distressing, and we encourage you to speak to a member of the Little Laura's team. However, please remember that the member of staff cannot disclose any information about any of the children at nursery and will not disclose who has bitten your child, or who your child had bitten.
- If your child has been bitten practitioners will ensure their needs are met:
 - Your child will be comforted and reassured
 - The bite wound will be treated with any appropriate first aid, if needed
 - If the bite wound had broken the skin, you will be notified so you are aware of what has happened.
 - An accident form will be available when you collect your child with all the information about the biting and any medical treatment given.
- At Little Laura's we believe the key to stopping any challenging behaviour is partnerships between parents and nursery practitioners specifically your child's key person. Working with the nursery team and support any behaviour management techniques at nursery as well as at home.
- If all procedures are exhausted, then we may have no choice but to re-evaluate if the nursery is able to meet this child's needs.

Linked Policies and Forms

Behaviour Management – Parent advice sheet

Legal Framework

Further Guidance

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