

A Parent's Guide to Behaviour Management



Background

At Nursery, we actively promote positive behaviour and have systems in place to positively manage undesirable behaviour.

Behaviour is a natural expression of a child's character and over the first years of their lives children need to learn to manage their behaviour so that it is socially acceptable and conducive to the development of strong relationships with adults and peers. This in turn enables children's learning and facilitates the development of confidence and high self-esteem.

Our Strategy

Consistency, consistency, consistency – the same approach, the same message and the same boundaries from all the Nursery staff.

How do the staff manage positive behaviour?

Our staff actively promote positive behaviour so that children learn how to balance their needs in relation to the needs of other children and adults. This ability to balance needs, enables the children to be confident in themselves, their environment, and with the adults caring for them, and above all, provides them with a safe and secure environment in which to learn and develop.

We promote positive behaviour through clearly defined rules, for example, we always sit on our bottoms to come down the stairs; we wait for all our friends to be served their lunch before starting; positive reinforcement of desirable/acceptable behaviour, for example, lovely manners, well done for saying sorry, kindness in helping; and praise in front of peers, for example, clapping because we all sang the please and thank you song well, or stickers for sitting beautifully.

In summary, positive behaviour management is largely about reinforcement/reward:

- **Consistency** – always receiving the same positive responses for desirable behaviour
- **Understanding** of what constitutes desirable behaviour
- **Praise** – recognition from the staff and praise in front of their peers, for example, clapping and stickers

How do the staff manage undesirable or unwanted behaviour?

At times, children will show undesirable behaviour at Nursery and whilst this is normal and expected, we will manage all aspects of behaviour in a consistent manner. We have a four-pronged approach to undesirable or unwanted behaviour management which is as follows:

- Boundary setting i.e. what is acceptable at Nursery.
- Age specific exploration of any unwanted behaviour, for example, we don't hit our friends at Nursery. Why did you do that? How would you feel if someone did that to you?
- Encouragement of an age specific apology, for example, a stroke on the arm in Babies, a cuddle and a sorry in Toddlers and a verbal apology and cuddle in Pre-School.
- Where the unwanted behaviour has happened more than twice or a warning has not been adhered to on more than three occasions then we would implement "time out". Time out is one minute per year of age and involves the child being removed from their play and sitting with an adult. At the end of time out the child will be invited to explore their actions and apologise.

For repeated undesirable or unwanted behaviour, for example, biting, we will observe trends, analyse the unwanted behaviour and develop support strategies in conjunction with the child's parents.

In summary, unwanted behaviour management is largely about:

- Consistency, i.e., always being informed that a specific behaviour is undesirable.
- Boundaries, i.e., what is not acceptable - "We don't hurt our friends at Nursery", "We say sorry when we hurt someone."
- A specific process, for example, first warning, second warning, time out and exploration of feelings and actions.

What do I need to tell my child's Key Person?

Sometimes unwanted or undesirable behaviour can be as a result of a change in your child's life, so please inform your child's Key Person of any significant changes such as:

- moving house
- arrival of a sibling
- death of a family member or pet
- parents separating

Please also tell us if your child is exhibiting undesirable or unwanted behaviour at home or in specific situations.

How should I work with Nursery?

A consistent approach between Nursery and the home environment, and open and honest communication are the keys to successful joint behaviour management.

Typical Questions

Why do children bite?

Children at Nursery can either be bitten or bite. Biting normally arises because of frustration over a particular activity or subject matter and there is invariably a trend. The key to addressing biting is to observe and trend all incidents. This will normally reveal a pattern and enable us to put in place several strategies to address the behaviour.

Where has my lovely baby gone?

The early toddling years can be very challenging and whilst they are pleasurable, there are times when children's behaviour can be hard to manage. This is perfectly normal and whilst you may wonder where your lovely little boy/girl has gone, this is a phase and a normal part of their development. Try not to worry and take comfort from the fact that all children challenge boundaries, and exhibit unwanted behaviour at times, and there is no such thing as a 'perfect child'.

Why does children's behaviour change around the age of two and three?

At two years' old, children are still struggling to verbally express themselves as fast as their brains are thinking. They, therefore can become frustrated and this can potentially lead to adverse/undesirable behaviour. At the age of three, boys and girls both have a burst of testosterone. This can lead to girls being very organised and bossy, and boys becoming more adventurous – climbing on equipment, tables and anything at a low height.

Do you tell other parents which child hit/bit them?

No. We will tell you that your child has been bitten/hit or has bitten/hit another child. We treat these matters as confidential, however, when children reach Pre-School age they are capable of verbalising this themselves, for example, that another child has bitten them or alternatively that they have bitten another child.

Will you support me if my child is being difficult at Nursery?

Yes. We believe in open and honest communication between parents and Nursery and whilst it can be difficult to hear that your child has displayed undesirable or unwanted behaviour, it is essential that we work as a team to rectify any issues.