Equality of opportunity
Achieving positive behaviour

Policy statement

At Tywardreath Preschool Playgroup we believe that children and adults flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

Children need to learn 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 task that requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the correct example. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

Procedures

We have a named person who has overall responsibility for our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour. This is Alison Coles. She can be contacted at the pre-school in person or by telephoning 01726 813 356 or tywsendco@yahoo.com

We require the named person to:

- keep themselves up-to-date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support;
- access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development; and
- check that all staff have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour. We keep a record of staff attendance at this training.

We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of - and respect - those used by members of the setting.
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 familiarise new staff and volunteers with the setting's behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
We regularly involve the children in discussions on the theme of behaviour, feelings and

social skills.
We allow the children to set the settings 'rules', several of which reflect on the desired behaviour.
These rules are displayed and promoted by praising the desired behaviour.
We expect all members of our setting - children, parents, staff, volunteers and students – to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.
We work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their key person. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

Strategies with children who display behaviour issues
We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any behaviour issues, 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 (Emotional Literacy), explanation as to what was not acceptable, and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
We ensure that there are enough popular toys and resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns.
We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, 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 undesirable ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
We never send children out of the room by themselves, nor do we use a 'naughty chair' or a 'time out' strategy that excludes children from the group.
We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property.
Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the

names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of our setting manager and are recorded in the child's personal file on an incident form. The child's parent is informed on the same day. 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 do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's behaviour.

Children under three years
When children under three display behaviour issues, we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for 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 behaviours of young children include agitation, biting or fighting. Staff are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.
If agitation, 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 the setting, their key person, is building a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

Rough and tumble play, hurtful behaviour and bullying
Our procedure has been updated to provide additional focus on these kinds of behaviours.

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 normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage their own feelings.

Our way of responding to pre-verbal children is to calm them through holding and cuddling, if they respond well to physical contact.

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?” 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, 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. 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 themself 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.