



Behaviour Policy

At Rachel McMillan Nursery, our aim is to help children to develop a positive disposition to learning and positive behaviour towards others.

We really value children's increasing capacity to show self-control and to take responsibility for their own actions.

We protect and value the unique nature of each child. The child's individual spirit, their drive to learn and develop, must be cherished.

We want the nursery to be a purposeful, interesting learning environment.

Rachel McMillan Nursery works with a diverse group of children. Many children are brought up in flats and in disadvantaged circumstances. Often the nursery is the first experience they have of being in a large space and around large numbers of children. It is often their first experience of needing to communicate, negotiate and share with others. Many children need the help of respectful, caring and sometimes firm, adults to learn how to behave appropriately in a group.

In the nursery the children have considerable scope to make choices and move around from area to area, from inside to outside. There are not many times the nursery needs to say "no" to a child, but we must be sure that when we say "no", we understand why and we really mean it.

Positive strategies

1. *Emotional security.* Are there adults in the nursery who provide consistent care and attention to the child, who the child goes to when upset and seeks out on arrival?
2. *The curriculum.* Are there first-hand or play experiences that interest the child?

3. *A purposeful atmosphere.* Are transitions managed for the child - from the session, into tidying up time; from group time to lunchtime? Does the child need extra help at these times?

4. *The child's age and stage of development.* Is the child able to share equipment, or does the child need protected time to play, without the pressure and competition of other children? Some children may need help with shy and withdrawn behaviour.

Please remember to raise issues like this in the fortnightly Children's Meeting.

Behaviour which is dangerous, or causing harm

It is important that we clearly signal the unacceptability of dangerous behaviour, and behaviour which harms others. If a child is in immediate danger you may need to raise your voice to be heard. This should be very exceptional, and it is important to be clear, not aggressive, when you do this. If necessary call for support when you need it.

Hurting other children

Where possible, put your first focus on the child who has been hurt. Show the child positive care and attention. Comfort the child. If possible, get all involved to sit down. When the child is feeling calmer, you might turn to the child who has done the hurting:

"Can you see, that hurt her? She is very sad/angry."

Encourage the child who has been hurt to say, assertively "No hitting. I don't like it".

"When you hit people, it hurts them. Remember, there is no hitting in nursery."

Do not demand that the child says sorry - they may not mean it and, if they

don't say it, you are just creating a conflict situation that you cannot control. Then you need to make a judgement - is the child ready to return positively to play or is some time needed to calm down? When appropriate, end your intervention with: "Remember, no hitting in nursery. Are you ready to play nicely now?"

Sometimes both children have contributed to the problem. You may want to try an approach like: "Is there a problem here?" "What's the matter?"

You may be able to model good ways to manage a conflict, e.g. "You look very sad about that, but it's not your turn. You need to say, "Can I have a turn next?".

Repeated patterns of behaviour

If a child is consistently repeating the same difficult behaviour, or targeting a particular child, then you must bring the issue to a Children's Meeting as soon as possible.

Issues like this may be approached by:

1. Raising staff awareness and vigilance.
2. Looking at "triggers" (e.g. is it always at tidying up time?) and acting to prevent the challenging behaviour occurring (e.g. giving child positive attention at that time.)
3. Evaluating the curriculum and expectations on the child and making adjustments.
4. Meeting with the parents, in order to gain an understanding of the child's behaviour and develop agreed joint strategies to manage the difficulties
5. Meeting with Rachel, Christine or Theresa or CAMHS to talk through strategies

Please remember that in rare cases where restraint is used, it must be recorded and the mum, dad or carer must be informed.

Involving mums, dads and carers

Mums, dads and carers should be involved as partners, not people to be blamed or told off. They should not receive unprepared feedback on their child's behaviour in nursery.

Where a child's behaviour is challenging, the joint-work of the mums, dads, carers and the nursery is critical:

- Think first - exactly what will you say? Talk it over first before meeting the mum, dad or carer, if possible.
- Meet the mum, dad or carer in a confidential space.
- Explain the difficulty in nursery and ask if the mum, dad or carer has any particular understanding or clarification of the situation.

Mums, dads and carers are experts on their own children.

- Take a problem-solving approach, we need to work together to help your child with this...
- Ask for the mum's, dad's or carer's support - can they take time to talk to the child about the difficulty? Can we all use the same strategies?
- Arrange to review progress a week later.
- Feed back information to the staff team.
- When behaviour continues to be challenging, you will need to discuss with the Inclusion Leader.

Some children's behaviour is more challenging than others. When the nursery staff and the mums, dads and carers work closely together, then children's behaviour almost always improves. It is important to help children whose behaviour is challenging whilst they are still young - things get much more difficult when they are bigger and older, and have started primary school.

Modelling the behaviour, which we hope to promote

- Treat each other and the children with respect and kindness.
- Use sensitive methods of control to achieve order.
- Focus on the positive, remembering that a child may only have ever been told what not to do.
- Acknowledge children's feelings - "I can see you are very angry about that" ... "You look really sad".
- **Don't say** - "don't be sad" ... "it will be alright" ... "don't cry".
- Support each other!
 - *Practically* e.g. enabling a colleague to have a few minutes time away if she or he is becoming stressed by a difficult behaviour!
 - *Emotionally* e.g. recognising that a colleague may be upset or angry after an incident has occurred, and enabling a colleague to recognise this and talk about it rather than "take those feelings out" later on a child, family or member of staff!
 - *Professionally* e.g. sharing approaches or strategies which you have found effective, reminding each other when necessary about our policy, challenging each other when it seems that our ethos or policy is being breached.

Useful strategies to use when you are finding a child's behaviour challenging:

- Get down to the child's level where possible.
- Show concern for the child.
- Make eye-contact where possible. If eye contact is not possible, then ensure you are speaking so that the child can hear you.
- Keep what you say focused and to-the-point.
- Speak calmly and don't raise your voice.
- State positively what you want or need e.g.: "I need you to move around safely indoors." - "I need you to come down from there, it's dangerous." Try to say what you need positively, wherever possible.
- Before you say anything - make sure you have the child's attention. Instead of calling out instructions or telling the child off, start off by getting eye contact with the child and/or getting down to the child's level. Then you won't have to repeat yourself and you can be sure the child is paying attention.
- Be firm and clear but avoid a direct power struggle. For example: "I can wait one minute for you to give that to me" will give the child some time and space to adjust to what you are saying.
- Don't keep talking or repeating. Try: "I need you to come away now. I can wait one minute. But then I will have to hold your hand and bring you away." If the child does not respond: "I need to hold your hand and bring you away now."

Talking things through can really help children to find other ways of dealing with problems.

For example: "You both want that car. What shall we do? Could you have it first, and then Bradley have it next?"

Or - "When you want something you need to say, don't just grab it. Let's try saying "can I have it next please Serena?"

Try to say what you want to happen, not, what you don't want to happen. Try saying "I need you to pick up all those toys now" rather than "stop being so silly". Sometimes the more we say, the less children listen, and just "switch off". So instead of saying over and over what you want, say what you want and set a limit: "I need you to pick up those toys. If you don't pick them up, then

you won't be able to next."

If you do set a limit like this remember that you need to stick to it (otherwise next time you might be ignored) and it should be something immediate and short.

Remind children of what is allowed, and what isn't. Instead of just saying, "don't be naughty," tell the child exactly what isn't allowed: "no throwing toys inside".

Some strategies for dealing with dangerous and harmful behaviour

"I need you to put the stick down now. It's sharp and that could hurt someone."

"I need you to come down now. You could hurt yourself."

If there is no response you could follow through with:

"I need you to come down now. If you don't come down now, then your playing will be finished for two minutes."

It is important that this is followed through and you call for help if necessary. To follow through this strategy, you might sit quietly with the child for the two minutes, or hold the child's hand and keep the child with you.

Before the child returns to play, ensure that the boundaries are clear. For example: "Are you ready to play nicely now? Remember, in nursery there is no hitting." Settle the child into an activity before leaving her or him.

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