



## Behaviour Policy

### Rationale

We believe that all members of our early-years settings are entitled to a calm, purposeful, happy and inviting atmosphere, where learning can take place and staff and children feel safe, secure and motivated. It is important that children feel valued, independent, respected, included, engaged and are able to form relationships with both adults and children. We also believe that children should be free from humiliation and encouraged to learn from their mistakes. We believe that children should be polite, caring towards each other, able to respect resources and the play of others, able to engage in the rules and routines of the setting and to show the ability to listen and respond to adults.

We believe adults should feel included in a whole team approach to behaviour where they are able to share responsibilities, knowledge and concerns. It is important that adults can communicate with each other and children, can feel safe in the work place and are confident to deal with a variety of situations and behaviour issues. It is essential that all staff members' opinions and ideas are taken into account and that they are valued and respected. We believe adults should be good role models, who are sensitive to individual children and are able to respect children's mistakes and ensure that children learn from them. We think that adults should be understanding, caring, patient and willing to listen to children. We believe that all children from all backgrounds should be included, respected and valued and that behaviour is a means of communication. We aim to never humiliate, label, make fun of, or talk negatively about children under any circumstance.

### Purposes and Outcomes

We want:

- a safe and secure environment where all children and adults are valued;
- positive behaviour management techniques and specific praise to underpin all our strategies in the early years;
- rewards and sanctions to maintain positive behaviour patterns and safe routines;
- all individuals to feel respected and included, regardless of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, background, family or social circumstances;
- children to be free from judgements – whether based on previous behaviour or the behaviour of other family members;
- an effective learning environment that stimulates, motivates and engages all children;
- team members to be confident in pre-empting potential triggers that could lead to the occurrence of undesirable behaviour;
- positive interactions with children and close monitoring of situations that could cause conflict;



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- good management and support from team leaders to ensure practitioners are able to manage situations to the best of their ability;
- adults to be effective role models – being kind, empathetic, tolerant, gentle, patient, supportive and understanding.

## Broad Guidelines

To achieve these outcomes we will introduce, reinforce and consistently follow our three rules; **ready, respectful** and **safe**, in order to:

- give children positive, clear, consistent instructions with visual supports;
- reach the eye level of the child and maintain eye contact when giving instruction or addressing behaviour;
- set clear and consistent boundaries and use a firm but fair tone when necessary;
- praise children – making praise explicit “praise in public”, ensuring children who are behaving appropriately receive the attention they deserve, using praise of others to motivate those less eager to respond. Verbally acknowledge when individual children go “above and beyond” our expectations;
- understand that these are the first steps in very young children’s learning, and respond appropriately to their mistakes – allowing them a safe place to make mistakes without humiliation;
- avoid labelling children;
- be discreet and limit children and adults overhearing any interactions addressing behaviour – “reprimand in private”;
- use cue cards, photographs, etc., that continually refer back to the nursery rules so children are clearly aware of expectations;
- children are actively involved in the discussion of and application of Nursery rules so they have ownership of them;
- engage and involve children positively in activities that they will readily enjoy to avoid confrontation and boredom;
- provide a stimulating environment where children can make their own decisions and choices;
- set small achievable challenges that enable children to feel intrinsically proud of their own achievements, thus encouraging positive behaviour;
- employ the use of our behaviour script “I noticed that...it’s the rule about being ready/respectful/safe...what could you do now/instead?...thank you for listening”;
- discuss concerns about any persistent behaviour problems discretely with team members (as appropriate) but never openly discuss concerns in front of the child or other children. Observe for underlying causes of undesirable behaviour – are there any triggers, patterns, sensory needs, etc.;
- inform parents of any issues, arrange a meeting to discuss positive behaviour strategies (use judgement about what is important to discuss with parents – avoid bombarding parents with a daily list of bad behaviour, remember to chat to parents about all the positive aspects of the child’s day too);
- employ positive behaviour strategies first (engaging child, giving praise for appropriate behaviour, setting clear boundaries, ignoring inappropriate behaviour but not the child). **When these fail to work use sanctions:**



- Sanctions – two warnings, time 1:1 with an adult (minimum attention, no eye contact) in a quiet neutral zone, identify inappropriate behaviour, take any item causing issue from the child, hold child’s hand or sit them on a chair next to you for a short period of time (no more than 2–4 minutes dependent on age), redirect and settle child at an appropriate activity. If possible the practitioner will try to talk to the child about what has happened and reflect together before redirecting. If child continues to display aggressive/disruptive or inappropriate behaviours then a higher sanction would be a visit to the Co-Headteacher or designated person for behaviour management (accompanied by key person).

#### Designated Persons for Behaviour Management:

- Cookham Nursery School – Assistant Headteacher;
- Maidenhead Nursery School – Assistant Headteacher;
- The Lawns Nursery School – Assistant Headteacher.

#### **Boisterous Play and Superhero Play**

As a result of staff discussion, the following was decided upon:

- a) We prefer that no child brings in a toy weapon from home. Any such toy will be kept in a safe place until the child goes home or the parent/carer will be asked to take it home.
- b) Any representational weapon that is made by a child during the nursery session will be talked about in such a way as to extend the child’s thinking and imagination beyond the actual weapon.
- c) Only children involved in a game can be targeted and the games should remain non-contact if involving pretend weapons. Children who do not wish to take part in such games will be taught to say and gesture “Stop.”
- d) Rough and tumble games are allowed to continue as long as everyone involved has consented to being a part of it and as long as the play is still safe. Adults will check that all children are “happy” with the game.
- e) The children will be reminded frequently of the boundaries of rough and tumble and superhero play.

#### **The Use of Reasonable Force**

Two members of staff from each Nursery have been trained in Positive Handling. This section of the policy has been adapted from “The Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies” (DFE July 2013).



### Key points

- a) Federation staff have a power to use reasonable force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.
- b) Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.
- c) Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power.

### What is reasonable force?

- a) The term *reasonable force* covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with children.
- b) Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- c) *Reasonable in the circumstances* means using no more force than is needed.
- d) As mentioned above, schools generally use reasonable force to control children and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between children or blocking a child's path, or active physical contact such as leading a child by the arm away from a situation.
- e) *Restraint* means to hold back physically or to bring a child under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example if two children were fighting and could not be separated without physical intervention.

### Who can use reasonable force?

- a) All members of Federation staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This power applies to any member of staff in the Federation.
- b) It can also apply to people whom the Co-Headteacher(s) has temporarily put in charge of children such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

### When can reasonable force be used?

- a) Reasonable force can be used to prevent children from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- b) In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control children or to restrain them.
- c) The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.
- d) The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

### Schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from situations where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a child behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;



- prevent a child leaving the Nursery where allowing the child to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a child from hurting a member of staff or another child;
- restrain a child at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot:

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

## Planning for Incidents

Where the particular Nursery School is aware that a child is likely to behave in a way that may require physical control or restraint, the staff will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- understanding potential triggers that may cause undesirable behaviours and plan to reduce the triggers to a minimum;
- managing the child, e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used;
- involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about what specific action the school might need to take;
- briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance);
- we use the Team Teach approach to the use of reasonable force;
- ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate;
- in some cases, particularly involving children with SEND, the school may also need to take medical advice about the safest way to hold children with specific health needs.

## Practical Considerations

Before intervening physically a staff member should, wherever practicable, tell the child who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if he or she does not. The adult should continue attempting to communicate with the child throughout the incident, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish the child. Sometimes staff should not intervene in an incident without help (unless it is an emergency). For example, if the adult believes he or she may be at risk of injury. In those circumstances the adult should remove other children who might be at risk, and summon assistance from a colleague. The adult should inform the child that he or she has sent for help. Until assistance arrives the adult should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally, and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a child in a way that might be considered indecent.



Where the risk is not so urgent staff should consider carefully whether, and if so when, physical intervention is right. Staff should always try to deal with a situation through other strategies before using force. All staff need developed strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult children and situations which they should use to defuse and calm a situation. In a non-urgent situation restraint should only be used when other methods have failed.

That consideration is particularly appropriate in situations where the aim is to maintain good order and discipline, and there is no direct risk to people or property. As the key issue is establishing good order, any action which could exacerbate the situation needs to be avoided. The possible consequences of intervening physically, including the risk of increasing the disruption or actually provoking an attack, need to be carefully evaluated.

*Physical intervention should never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management.*

### **Staff Training**

- Staff have been trained in the principles of Team Teach but will only use such methods of restraint when necessary (see above – When can reasonable force be used?)
- Staff have been trained in the implementation of Paul Dix’s three school rules; ready, respectful, safe.

### **Recording Incidents**

It is important that there is a detailed written report of any occasion (except minor or trivial incidents) where reasonable force is used. It may help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident, and it will be helpful should there be a complaint.

Each school will keep an up-to-date record of all such incidents, preferably in an incident book. Immediately following any such incident the member of staff concerned should tell the Co-Headteacher(s) and provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. This should include:

- the name(s) of the child involved, and when and where the incident took place;
- the names of any other staff or children who witnessed the incident;
- the reason that force was necessary (e.g. to prevent injury to the child, another child or member of staff);
- how the incident began and progressed, including details of the child’s behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, the steps taken to defuse or calm the situation, the degree of force used, how that was applied, and for how long;
- the child’s response, and the outcome of the incident;
- details of any injury suffered by the child, another child, or a member of staff and of any damage to property.

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a colleague or representative of their professional association when compiling a report. They should also keep a copy of the report.



Incidents involving the use of reasonable force can cause the parents of the child involved great concern. Parents/carers should be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable **of an incident involving their child**. The Co-Headteacher(s) will consider whether that should be done straight away or at the end of the school day, and whether parents should be told orally or in writing.

### Complaints

Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, plus a clear policy about physical contact with children that staff adhere to, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It may not prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and social services department under child protection procedures. The Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Board’s Child Protection Procedures – available on line at <http://berks.proceduresonline.com> – provide guidance about procedures for dealing with allegations against teachers.

The possibility that a complaint might result in a disciplinary hearing or a criminal prosecution, or in a civil action brought by a parent, cannot be ruled out. In those circumstances it would be for the disciplinary panel or the court to decide whether the use and degree of force was reasonable in all the circumstances. In that event, however, the panel, or court, would have regard to the provisions of section 550A (Education Act 1996). It would also be likely to take account of the school's policy on reasonable force, whether that had been followed, and the need to prevent injury, damage, or disruption, in considering all the circumstances of the case.

### Physical Contact with Children in Other Circumstances

There are occasions when physical contact with a child may be proper or necessary other than those covered by Section 550A of the 1996 Education Act. Some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques on climbing equipment, or technology, or if a member of staff has to give first aid. Children, including those with special educational needs, may need staff to provide physical prompts or help. Touching may also be appropriate where a child is in distress and needs comforting. Staff will use their own professional judgement when they feel a child needs this kind of support or reassurance.

There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some children may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background, or because they have been abused. It is important that all staff receive information on these children. In addition, the school uses clear common practice towards particular groups of children and events. A common approach is used where staff and children are of different sexes.



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**Related Policies**

This statement should be read in conjunction with the following Federation policies:

- Child Protection Policy and Statement
- Whistleblowing

**Approved by:** Teaching and Learning Committee

**Signed by Chair of Governors:** .....

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