



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. Through participating in the Attachment Aware Schools Award we understand that children's behaviour is a means of communication and can be a product of their early experiences. We believe that if a child feels right they will behave appropriately so if a child's behaviour shows distress we will try and find out why.

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 workplace 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 (see Appendix – Positive Behaviour Principles);
- rewards and sanctions to maintain positive behaviour patterns and safe, consistent 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;
- 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.
- well trained adults who are empathetic to the children’s needs and are able to apply their knowledge and understanding of Attachment theory; Early Childhood trauma; PACE approach (playful, accepting, curiosity and empathy); 3 R’s – Regulate, Relate, Reason and emotion coaching – Connect; Acknowledge; Set limits; Make a plan.

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;
- Connect; Acknowledge; Set limits; Make a plan (CALM) – emotion coaching;
- 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);
- discuss zones of regulation with the children.
- **When these fail to work use sanctions:**
 - Sanctions – 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 and walk around in a safe space 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 time outside away from other children with their key person or another member of staff if their key person is not present.

Designated Persons for Behaviour Management:

- Cookham Nursery School – Deputy Headteacher;
- Maidenhead Nursery School – Deputy Headteacher;
- The Lawns Nursery School – Deputy 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 and Restrictive Interventions

At least two members of staff from each Nursery have been trained in Positive Handling.

This policy has been adapted in line with the guidance – Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026).

Key points

All members of Federation staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances, to prevent or stop a child from:

1. causing injury to themselves or others.
2. committing a criminal offence.
3. damaging property.
4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Terminology

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses ‘restrictive interventions’ as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Use of restrictive interventions

There will be times when Federation staff may need to use restrictive interventions, and they should know this option may be available to them. The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, the member of staff should consider the following:

- Is it necessary?
- Is it proportionate?
- Have you considered the pupil’s welfare?
- Consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Schools cannot:

- use force as a punishment – it is always illegal 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 restrictive interventions or reasonable force, the staff will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will include the following:



- use of the STAR chart to understand potential triggers that may cause undesirable behaviours and plan to reduce the triggers to a minimum; what worked well in de-escalation;
- managing the child, e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict;
- 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);
- application of our training in the use of reasonable force/restrictive interventions;
- 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;
- consider creating a self regulation plan.

Practical Considerations/Strategies:

- removing stimuli that may be causing distress;
- changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice;
- supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed;
- engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety;
- distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention;
- giving pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates.

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.

A risk assessment will be carried out for staff who work alongside children where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required so that they can do so as safely as possible.



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

Staff Training

- At least two members of staff in each Nursery have been trained in the principles of Restrictive Intervention but will only use such methods of restraint when necessary.
- Staff have been trained in the implementation of Paul Dix’s three school rules: ready, respectful, safe.
- Staff have been trained in Zones of Regulation.

Recording Incidents

It is important that there is a detailed written report of any occasion (except minor or trivial incidents) where reasonable force/restrictive interventions are 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 in the file on restrictive interventions. Immediately following any such incident, the member of staff concerned should tell the Deputy Headteacher/Executive Headteacher and provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. This should include:

- names of child and staff directly involved;
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the child, including whether the child involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code;
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention;
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained;
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance;
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts;
- witness accounts.

Incidents involving the use of reasonable force/restrictive interventions 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**. This should be in writing/via email.

Parents will be invited to attend a follow up discussion about the incident. This will cover:

- any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident;
- whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed;
- what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were;
- what might be done differently in the future.



Cookham, Maidenhead and The Lawns
Nursery School Federation



Related Policies

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

- Child Protection Policy and Statements
- Whistleblowing

Approved by: Teaching and Learning Committee

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Date: 1st April 2026

Review Date: March 2027



Cookham, Maidenhead and The Lawns
Nursery School Federation



Appendix 1

Positive Behaviour Principles



Cookham, Maidenhead and The Lawns Nursery School Federation

Positive Behaviour Principles

All behaviour is communication

When children feel right they will behave right. If a child's behaviour shows distress we aim to find out why.

Staff are trained in attachment and developmental trauma.

Trusting relationships and a safe, secure, and consistent environment are key.

PACE approach - playful, accepting, curious & empathetic.

Language Patterns

Tell children what we want them to do - avoid reinforcing negative behaviour

Notice good behaviour; praise in public; praise going over and above and be specific.

Focus praise on characteristics of effective learning - problem solving, trying again, concentrating.

Teach language of emotions.

At least 5 positive comments to one negative comment.

Gaining attention

Follow the children's interests in play.

Use motivating objects to gain the children's attention.

Use songs and actions to gain attention.

Use visual supports to help understanding at the start of group sessions.

Initial focus on gaining attention, building attention and shifting attention group times.



Positive Behaviour Principles

Discover, Grow, Learn



Running Commentaries

Greet children by name and show genuine interest.

Stand back and observe first.

Join children in play and commenting on what they do.

Bridge interactions with peers.

4 comments to every question.

Be curious and wonder.

Adults model engagement.

Our Rules

READY - to listen; to play; to go outside, for lunch; to go home etc.

RESPECTFUL - help tidy up; share and take turns; look after resources; look after the environment.

SAFE - use resources safely; walking feet indoors; be kind.

Consistent routines - warnings for transitions and changes in routines.

When support is needed

Regular sensory input/circuits.

Quiet areas to retreat to.

Calming baskets.

Remind in private (RIP) referring to the rules.

Emotion coaching— **Connect**; **Acknowledge**; **(Set) Limits**; **Make a plan. CALM**

30 second scripts.

Time with an adult.