



Personal, social and emotional policy

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.” (EYFS 2021)

Policy statement

We know that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are understood, supported and met. We believe the most important aspect in children feeling valued, safe and secure is through their connection and trust with members of staff. For most children this can be achieved by simple acknowledgement of the child and the child having the knowledge that we have them in your mind, care about them as a person and care about how they are feeling and what they are doing. Strong relationships between staff and children are vital.

Children’s personal, social and emotional development it’s crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and also fundamental to their cognitive development. Children will be supported in managing their emotions and develop a positive sense of themselves with the support of adult modelling and guidance. We understand that children develop in their own way and as they develop, they learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and to consider the views and feelings, and needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects.

We aim to support children in understanding their feelings and behaviours, learning what triggers and stressors can make things more difficult. We understand the importance of self-regulation and that we have the ability to support children in their development of self-regulation.

What is Personal, Social and Emotional Development in the Foundation Stage?

The EYFS 2021 states that: Children’s personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development.

Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others.

Personal, social and emotional development is a 'Prime area' within the EYFS, in recognition of the need to promote an awareness of the fundamental importance of children being able to self-regulate, manage self and build relationships. All of these areas are crucial in supporting children's behaviour and giving them the tools to manage their own feelings and emotions that impact on their behaviour.

The 3 prime areas are the main focus for younger children as these are the foundations on which learning and development is built on. If children's progress in any prime area is a cause for concern we as a setting will discuss with parents the support we can give.

Personal, social and emotional support strategies

Preschool staff will support children's behaviour with clear, consistent and positive strategies.

Parents/carers are encouraged to contribute to these strategies, raising any concerns or suggestions.

In order to support children's personal, social and emotional development:

- Staff will attend training and keep up to date with relevant information regarding PSED and children's behaviour.
- Staff and children will work together to establish clear ground rules and these will be periodically reviewed and updated as needed.
- Ground rules will apply equally to both children and staff.
- Positive behaviour will be reinforced with praise and encouragement.
- Dysregulated behaviour will be challenged in a clear, calm and positive manner.
- Staff will support children in dealing with their dysregulated behaviour by helping children find solutions in a way which is age and developmentally appropriate.
- Staff will make every effort to set a positive example to children by behaving in a friendly and tolerant manner themselves, promoting an atmosphere where children and adults respect and value one another.
- Staff will support children in self-regulating, knowing the stressors and aiding children to calm in their own way.
- Staff will avoid shouting at work.

- Staff will facilitate regular and open discussions with children about their behaviour. This will help support children in understanding the negative aspects of their behaviour and developing strategies.
- Staff will work as a team by discussing incidents and reoccurring stressors, resolving to act collectively and consistently.
- Staff will try to discuss concerns with parents/ carers at the earliest possible opportunity in an attempt to help identify the cause of dysregulated behaviour and develop ways to support the child.
- Children who experience bullying, racism or other unacceptable behaviour will be given the confidence to speak out.
- Activities will be varied and well planned so that children are not easily bored or distracted.
- Staff will regularly audit the setting to ensure that stressors that can be eliminated are done so to reduce the added pressure on the children.

What is self-regulation?

Dr Stuart Shanker (2019) defines SR as:

“The ability to manage stress and the neural processes that control the energy expended to deal with a stressor and then recover. When an individual’s stress levels are too high various systems for thinking and metabolic recovery are compromised. The signs of dysregulation show up in the behaviour, or mood, or attention, and physical well-being.”

As a setting we will regularly reflect on the provision and be aware of the various stressors that can impact on a child’s behaviour. By reflecting we will be able to understand more the children’s behaviour and where we can support self-regulation.

The five domains of self-regulation and their stressors which will be used to stop or lessen dysregulated behaviour:

Biological	• Excessive visual stimulation, noise, insufficient exercise, having to be too still, cluttered classroom
Emotional	• Intense emotions - both positive (over-excitement) and negative (fear and anger), anxiety, change in routines
Cognitive	• Difficulty in processing certain kinds of information (organising thoughts, time constraint, interruptions)
Social	• Difficulty in understanding the effect of their behaviour on others and in understanding social cues, bullying
Prosocial	• Difficulty in coping with others' stress, feelings of injustice, being late, empathy/sympathy

To ensure staff respond to a behaviour correctly they will take a moment to pause and think about the child's needs using Dr Shanker's five steps of SR:

1. Reframe the behaviour
2. Recognise stressors
3. Reduce stressors
4. Reflect
5. Respond

Supporting dysregulated behaviour

- Staff should never use any form of physical punishment, restraint, or humiliation when dealing with dysregulated behaviour.
- Staff have to ensure that the children are aware of the impact their behaviour can have on their friends and people around them. Children are supported in understanding that hurting those around them is not acceptable.
- Staff should use a gentle, calm tone, and child friendly and age appropriate language when dealing with dysregulated behaviour. Always keep calm; never show that behaviour has had any impact on you.
- Always make sure that when discussing behaviour that you go down to the child's level. An explanation of why the behaviour was inappropriate should always be given in clear, age appropriate manner.
- Please be discreet and if other children are trying to listen to the conversation, gently encourage them to do something else or ask a member of staff to distract them. Ensure that you remember that the behaviour is to blame and not the child.
- On occasion it may be necessary to separate children from one another or if there is a situation where there is a risk of them causing the other/each other harm. If this has been necessary we will inform the parent/carer at pick up.
- In situations where the children are causing each other distress i.e. over a particular toy, they may be encouraged to use a sand timer to share and take turns or be distracted with another activity or toy.
- No child in the room should be forced to say "sorry", if they wish to on their own accord that is acceptable. It may be suggested that they give the other child a hug to comfort them or to draw them a picture, or ask the other child 'what could I do to cheer you up?'

- No child/children should be sent to another area of the room for punishment.
- Pudding or other treats must not be withheld or exchanged for something else, in order to alter a child's behaviour.
- The preschool has a no time out policy.
- Where possible we allow the children to sort out disagreements themselves and reach a solution by talking and compromising.
- Staff will not use physical intervention – or the threat of physical intervention, to manage a child's behaviour unless it is necessary to use “reasonable force in order to prevent children from injuring themselves or others or damage property”
- If “reasonable force” has been used for any of the reasons, we will inform parents on the same day that it occurs. The intervention will be recorded as soon as possible within the child's file, which states clearly when and how parents were informed.

Resolution steps

1. Approach calmly and with an open mind
Walk over and get down to their level
2. Acknowledge feelings
Say “I can see you're feeling hurt/ cross/ angry/ upset”
3. Gather information
Say “what's the problem?” “What were you thinking?” “How are you feeling?”
4. Restate the problem
Say “so the problem is?”
5. Ask for solutions
Say “I wonder what we can do to help you feel better?” “What might that look like?”
6. Be prepared to give follow up support
Keep an eye out for what happens next and give further support if needed

This policy was reviewed February 2024.

This policy is to be reviewed annually unless legislation requires before.