



## St. Mary's Playgroup Behaviour Management policy

### **Statement of Intent**

St. Mary's Playgroup believes that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour. We believe that children need to learn to consider the views, feelings and rights of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects.

The aims of our Behaviour Management Policy are to help children to:

- Develop a sense of caring and respect for one another.
- Build caring and co-operative relationships with other children and adults.
- Develop a range of social skills and help them learn what constitutes acceptable behaviour.
- Develop confidence, self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.

We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents/carers and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.

We require all staff to keep up to date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and to undergo additional training where needed.

New staff, volunteers and parents are expected to read our behaviour management policy and to adhere to its guidelines for behaviour.

### **Behaviour Management Strategies**

Playgroup staff will manage behaviour according to clear, consistent and positive strategies, structured around the following principles:

- Staff and children will work together to establish a clear set of 'ground rules' governing all behaviour in the Playgroup.
- Defined 'ground rules' will apply equally to all children and staff.
- Positive behaviour will be reinforced with praise and encouragement.
- Negative behaviour will be challenged in a calm but assertive manner. In the first instance, staff will try to re-direct children's energies by offering them alternative and positive options. Staff will be open in stating and explaining non-negotiable issues.
- When dealing with negative behaviour, staff will always communicate in a clear, calm and positive manner.
- 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 avoid shouting at work.
- Staff will facilitate regular and open discussions with children about their behaviour. This will help them to understand the negative aspects of their behaviour and enable them to have their say and be helped to think through the causes and effects of their actions.
- Staff will work as a team by discussing incidents and 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 causes of negative behaviour and share strategies for



dealing with it.

- Children who experience bullying, racism or other unacceptable behaviour will be given the confidence to speak out.
- Staff will encourage and facilitate mediation between children to try to resolve conflicts by discussion and negotiation.
- Activities will be varied and well planned so that children are not easily bored or distracted.



### Dealing with Negative Behaviour

All staff are expected to use positive strategies for handling any negative behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development.

When confronted with negative behaviour, staff will be clear to distinguish between 'disengaged', 'disruptive' and 'unacceptable' behaviour.

- **'Disengaged'** behaviour may indicate that a child is bored, unsettled or unhappy. With sensitive interventions, staff will often be able to re-engage a child in purposeful activity.
- **'Disruptive'** behaviour describes a child whose behaviour prevents other children from enjoying themselves. Staff will collectively discuss incidents and agree on the best way to deal with them.
- **'Unacceptable'** behaviour refers to non-negotiable actions and may include discriminatory remarks, violence, bullying or destruction of equipment. Staff will be clear that consequences will follow from such behaviour, including in the first instance, temporarily removing a child from the activity.

When an incidence of negative behaviour occurs:

- Staff will listen to the child or children concerned and hear their reasons for their actions.
- Staff will then explain to the child or children what was negative about their behaviour and that such actions have consequences for both themselves and for other people.
- Staff will make every attempt to ensure that children understand what is being said to them.
- Children will always be given the opportunity to make amends for their behaviour and, unless it is judged inappropriate, be able to rejoin the activity.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for negative behaviour.

In the event that unacceptable behaviour persists, more serious actions may have to be taken, for example their parent/carer may be called to collect them. At all times, children will have explained to them the potential consequences of their actions. We may also seek additional support if appropriate but this will always be with parental consent.

### The Use of Physical Interventions

- We never use physical punishment or the threat of it.
- Staff will use physical interventions only as a last resort and only then if they have reasonable grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary to prevent a child from significantly injuring themselves or others or to prevent serious damage to property. Before reaching this stage, staff will have used all possible non-physical actions, such as dialogue and diversion, to deal with the behaviour.



- The child or children concerned will be warned verbally that physical intervention will be used if they do not stop.
- A dialogue will be maintained with the child or children at all times, so that the member of staff can explain what they are doing and why they are doing it.
- Staff will make every effort to avoid the use of physical interventions if they are alone with the child or children.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied, for example, by diverting a child or children by leading them away by a hand or by an arm around their shoulders.
- Staff will use physical intervention as an act of care and control and never punishment.
- Physical interventions will not be used purely to force a child to do what they have been told and when there is no immediate risk to people or property.
- As soon as it is safe, the physical intervention should be gradually relaxed to allow the child or children to regain self-control.
- The force of the physical intervention will be always appropriate to the age, size and strength of the child or children involved.
- If staff are not confident about their ability to contain a particular situation or type of behaviour, they will ask for assistance from others.
- Where a member of staff has had to intervene physically to restrain a child, the incident will be recorded on an Incident form and the incident will be discussed with the parent/carer on the day it occurs.

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