



BALHAM NURSERY SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIP AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY 2025-26

Draft

Review Date: Summer Term 2026

At Balham we respect the rights of the child.

We are proud to be a UNICEF Rights Respecting School, and we aim to uphold the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We have identified Articles from the U.N. Convention which link to this Relationship and Behaviour Policy.

Related Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Article 3

- “The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children”.
- “States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform to the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.”

Article 19

- “Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence.....and mistreatment byanyonewho looks after them.”
- “There are ways to discipline children that are effective in helping children learn about family and social expectations for their behaviour-ones that are non-violent, are appropriate to the child’s level of development and take the best interests of the child into consideration.”

Article 28

- “Discipline in schools must respect children’s human dignity”

Article 29

- “Education.... must encourage the child’s respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment”.

Article 37

- “No one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way”.

(Quotations taken from summaries of the Articles)

We believe that:

Children’s behaviour is an expression and reflection of their experience, including their encounters with adults and other children. We believe that children learn good behaviour and respect through positive role models and need to be guided in that learning by sensitive supportive adults.

Children should be allowed to develop in an environment which is safe but stimulating, and gives freedom to experiment and take risks. **(Article 3)**

It is our responsibility as adults working with young children to be aware of children’s behaviour, to ensure their safety, and to use all our resources to understand the processes that result in that behaviour.

Where behaviour is particularly challenging, e.g. when others, or the child him/herself, are at risk of harm, or a lack of respect is consistently shown, we need to consider how we can intervene in a way which supports the child's social and emotional development. We need to offer a considered, consistent approach, working with parents or carers to provide a united, supportive, rewarding strategy. **(Article 29)**

Observation is the key to understanding and it is our policy to carefully observe and record children's behaviour and learning. In this way we can learn about the factors that can affect behaviour, such as tiredness, hunger, emotional distress, fear, interruption of deeply involving play.

We need to recognise that we may need to change our own behaviour, e.g. by changing the physical environment to remove obstacles, to give warning before it is time to clear away an activity, by phrasing requests so that the child understands the reasons for them.

As adults working with young children we need to understand how developmental phases can affect behaviour, and ensure that our expectations are appropriate. We seek to help children to change their own behaviour, in order to improve their quality of life and learning rather than to make life easier for ourselves.

We are committed to creating a clear framework that develops a working practice that promotes positive behaviour; where children's well-being and their ability to manage their emotions and respect for others is supported, irrespective of ethnicity, disability, gender or background. Being 'fair' is not about children getting the same (equality) but about children getting what they need (equity).

Safeguarding the children in our care is central to our work.

Relationships and Attachment

At Balham Nursery, we value the strong relationships we have with children and their families. A child's Key Person will endeavour to have a secure attachment with each of their key children. Children have the right to feel safe and secure in order to learn. Strong adult-child relationships are built through emotion coaching (co-regulation in practice) in order to help children to develop the skills they need to be able to self-regulate.

'Self-regulation depends on and grows out of co-regulation, where practitioners and children work together toward a common purpose, including finding ways to resolve upsets from stress in any domain, and return to balance.' Birth to 5 Matters 2021.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) – Adverse childhood experiences and trauma can have a significant impact on children and families. Staff have had training to ensure they have a good understanding of how to identify the signs and symptoms of trauma. We understand our important role in creating positive, caring relationships with children and families that have experienced trauma and recognise how these may have a positive impact on a child/family's healing and recovery from stressful life events.

Emotion Coaching

Emotion Coaching is an approach that supports the emotional regulation, social skills and physical health of our children through supportive relationships. Through this approach, practitioners recognise the power and purpose of emotions and practice active listening techniques. This approach recognises the triggers that may cause behaviours to occur and any underlying factors that may influence a child's behaviour. The two key elements of Emotion Coaching are:

Emotional empathy - recognising, labelling and validating a child's emotions, regardless of behaviour to help them calm, "I understand how you feel, you are not alone."

Guidance – Practitioners remain calm and are not anxious about a child's emotions and role model positive emotional states. Practitioners engage with the child in problem solving in order to support the child's ability to self-regulate (the practitioner and the child works together).

Behaviour that Causes Concern

We make it clear that the behaviour is causing concern and not the child.

Unacceptable behaviour includes (but is not limited to):

- Behaviour that hurts others, which may be physical, verbal or emotional.
- Damage or disruption to equipment or the environment.
- Bullying

Bullying

The term bullying cannot be applied to all unacceptable behaviour from young children. "Bullying" describes any behaviour which is **deliberately** intended to hurt, intimidate, frighten, harm or exclude others, carried out in a systematic way. As such, 'bullying' action requires the child to have a higher level of reasoning and thinking than most children under five years olds have. An outburst by a young child is therefore more likely to be a reflection of their emotional wellbeing, stage of development or behaviour that they have copied from someone else. Bullying at this age is often a learnt action rather than deliberate behaviour. We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying'. For most children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated at Balham Nursery School.

Biting

Biting is a behaviour that some young children display. This is a normal part of the developmental process and can be due to a number of reasons. Staff should be reflecting on repetitive behaviour and trying to understand why this is happening, this could be linked to

development in speech, as when they do not have the words to communicate anger, frustration or needs or due to teething.

Inappropriate Language

Practitioners should not over-react if a child swears or uses inappropriate language. They may be unaware of the impact of their words, or be looking for a reaction. The practitioner is to explain, "We don't use those words here." Praise a child's appropriate use of language. If swearing continues, it may need to be discussed with the family.

Intervention

If a child's behaviour is causing concern:

- We will gather together all the information that we have including observations, records and information from parents/carers to try to understand the causes of the behaviour.
- We will meet with parents/carers to exchange ideas and discuss possible interventions.
- We will consider the possibility of unidentified special needs which need to be addressed (e.g. checking for health problems, developmental checks).
- We will observe carefully to try to identify triggers resulting in the unwanted behaviour.
- We will develop a plan of action with the parents/carers which will reinforce positive behaviour, provide strong models of positive behaviour, and provide a consistent approach to behaviour.
- If circumstances at home seem to be resulting in behaviour that challenges us we will discuss with parents/carers how things can be improved and offer routes for support if possible, e.g. a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.
- We will consider ways of avoiding triggers, and try to intervene by distracting the child before the unwanted behaviour is triggered (e.g. making suggestions for cooperative play with bricks before the child resents intrusion from other children, giving plenty of warning before a change of activity).
- In the case when a child causes 'harm' to another child, we will help them recognise the impact of their behaviour by exploring causative factors behind the incident for both children.
- We will intervene to prevent a child being harmed by another child's behaviour. **(Article 19)**
- We will give reassurance to any child who is distressed or hurt by another child's behaviour.
- We will support the child to begin to self-regulate and BE MOTIVATED THEMSELVES to behave with consideration. Encouraging this by recognizing and describing the good behaviour and its consequence.

Physical Intervention

We will only intervene physically to manage a child's behaviour if it is necessary to prevent injury or damage. We act in accordance with the Authority's "Guidelines for Positive Behavioural and Physical Intervention".

Before any physical intervention to restrain a child we will:

- Attempt to calm the child using a calm, quiet, slow voice
- Offer choices and time for the problem to be resolved
- Attempt to distract the child in potentially dangerous situations
- Use clear verbal instructions and warnings of consequences

We will never:

- Deliberately cause pain, injury or humiliation
- Use physical force to punish
- Isolate a child in a room alone
- Use prolonged physical restraint
- Deprive a child of normal food or drink
- Threaten a child with harm
- Use any sanction that could degrade a child, such as on cultural gender or racial grounds

Care must be taken at all times to ensure that any physical contact is welcome, and does not give cultural offence or apprehension of harm.

Physical intervention that we might use:

- Physically interposing between two children
- Blocking a child's path
- Holding
- Leading a child by the hand
- Guide a child by placing a hand in the small of the back
- (in exceptional circumstances) Using a more restrictive hold, for a brief time only. For example if a child is trying to attack another child.

Staff at Balham work as a team and will support each other in management of challenging behaviour. Staff experiencing difficulties should discuss them with their line manager. Any incident involving physical intervention by staff must be recorded (see Wandsworth Guidelines)

Rewards

'Intrinsic' (Of itself- by or in itself, rather than because of its associations or consequences) rewards through learning and the child's experience are promoted. Teachers are therefore encouraged to use 'descriptive' praise rather than 'evaluative' praise, i.e. describe and clarify rather than examine and judge, e.g. when a child creates a painting an instinctive response by an adult could be "I like your painting, it is wonderful". While this could be a genuine response, nevertheless it could lead to the child doing things to please the adult.

We want children to be proud of their achievements, not because it pleases the adult, but because it pleases them.

We will consider using rewards, as a tool to reinforce learning. When used it will be as part of an IEP. They will be appropriate (not all children respond to the same rewards), consistent (given every time the appropriate behaviour is demonstrated, immediately), and must be very clear to the child. A poorly managed reward system can be counter-productive. A tangible reward should always be paired with 'descriptive' praise, so the child builds an understanding of the desired learning.

Punishment

Punishment can have a damaging effect on our relationship with a child. Teaching about behaviour should be positive, aimed at helping the child to learn, and not about our own responses to a behaviour. Sometimes a child may need to be removed from a situation in order to keep them, or the other children safe. We do not use physical punishment, or threaten any punishment which could harm the child's well-being. **(Article 19, 28, 37)**

Support for Children and Families

If staff or parents/carers have serious concerns relating to a child's behaviour or a high level of disruptive or harmful behaviour continues despite a range of strategies, meetings with parents/carers will be arranged. This meeting involves the Key Person, SENCO, and any other relevant practitioners. The meeting should result in a behaviour plan setting out the agreed actions for school and home. This will be reviewed regularly with the Key Person, Team Leader and SENCO. If necessary, the SENCO will make a referral to outside agencies for further support if appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with staff and the Governing Body.