

## MANAGING BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Clocktower Childcare believes that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear, consistent and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour. Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact their behaviour has on other people, places and objects. This is a development task that requires good teaching; through encouragement, consistency, support and role modelling, as well as working closely with parents / carers (such as providing them with support and advice, e.g. our Behaviour Booklet). Throughout staff practice and our environment, we thread the fundamental British Values – Democracy (making decisions together), Rule of Law (understanding rules matter), Individual Liberty (freedom for all) and Mutual Respect and Tolerance (treat others as you would want to be treated).

### **SENCO – Tayla Williams, provides support for managing behaviour (supported by Sally Wingham, Setting Manager)**

We require her to:

- Keep herself up-to-date with legislation, research and thinking on managing behaviour
- Access relevant resources via links with the Specialist Teachers from the Local Authority, our local Children’s Centre, or by making an Early Help referral (alongside DSL)
- Ensure that all staff have an understanding of our procedures for managing behaviour to adopt a consistent approach

### **STRATEGIES OF MANAGING BEHAVIOUR**

We NEVER shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children’s inconsiderate behaviour, nor use or threaten corporal or any other physical punishment, such as smacking, or any emotional punishment, such as isolation or exclusion, or threaten any other punishment which could adversely affect a child’s well-being. We take all reasonable steps to ensure this, by providing thorough staff training – both during the induction period and ongoing refreshers, shadow training / peer on peer observations to practice techniques, having a robust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Allegations Against Staff Policy, and good supervision systems in place.

<b>At Clocktower, we train our team to...</b>
Use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children’s ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include; acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what was not acceptable and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so they can learn a more appropriate response.
Be good communicators, e.g. giving a child time to think / respond, and regularly re-enforce the ‘I CAN Top 10 Tips’.
Focus on ensuring a child’s Keyperson and team buddies build strong attachments to provide security to the child.
Ensure that there is a sufficient amount of varied and interesting resources and activities available, so that children are engaged.
Acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share with specific praise.
Discuss and role model feelings and emotions throughout everyday practice.
Support each child in developing self esteem, confidence and independence.
Support each child in developing a sense of belonging, so that they feel valued and welcome.
Help children to understand the outcomes of their actions through explanation and role modelling.
Support children in managing feelings e.g. breathing and mindfulness techniques such as our ‘Tucker Turtle’ and the ‘Starfish’ hand technique for calming down.
Recognise that young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger, or distress and require sensitive adults to help them to do so. We use appropriate age related strategies as listed here to support them.
Promote the Sensory Area as a positive place to have some relaxing, calming time when needed.
Carefully manage their responses by turning negatives into positives, which also reinforces the behaviour the adult wants, for example “Remember your walking legs indoors” as opposed to “Stop running!”
Foster children’s awareness of their own actions, for example instead of saying ‘be careful’, use “Notice how... that slab is slippery”, “Do you see... that beetle near your foot”, “Try using / moving your... arms slowly”, “Do you feel... safe on that branch”
Believe that common behaviours of young children can include tantrums, biting or fighting etc. Staff remain calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions. They help children to manage their feelings by talking about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.
Try to find any trigger pattern or underlying cause (if applicable) – such as a change to daily routine, upheaval at home, frequent change of care, tiredness, separation anxiety, medical need e.g. hearing, development delay, need to be heard, upcoming event etc. However we also appreciate every child as an individual and understand that some behavioural traits are unique to our personalities.
Only use physical restraint, such as holding, for the purpose of averting immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child), to manage a child’s behaviour if absolutely necessary and/or serious damage to property. In this case, a Physical Intervention form would be completed and signed off by the parent and countersigned by a Senior member of staff. The parent would also be telephoned before collection of the child where possible.
Immediately make clear the complete unacceptability of any serious misbehaviour or attitude, such as racial or other abuse, by means of explanation, and work closely with parents / carers to help the child develop a sense of mutual respect.

**CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOURAL, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (BESD)**

- Children with these difficulties will be identified in the first instance by their Keyperson through regular observation or talking to the child's parent. They may or may not have a diagnosed special need.
- Concerns would be referred to the SENCO who would continue to assess with the Keyperson. They would refer to the Best Practice Guidance and may set up a contact book to go between setting and home.
- After discussion with parents, the SENCO may decide to refer the child to the Specialist Teacher to gain more advice.
- Referral could be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if appropriate, which could lead to a referral for Early Help.

**TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR WE MAY ENCOUNTER**'Rough and tumble' / fantasy aggression play

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes – such as super hero and weapon play. Some children may appear pre-occupied with these themes but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour, so adults should be interested and curious rather than concerned.

- Where possible, an adult will join in the play enabling them to direct it in a positive way e.g. the children are focusing on a capture / imprisoning, so the adult can gently extend into the rescue element.
- We do not have an issue with 'gun' play presuming it is in an appropriate context e.g. pirates, police, cowboys etc, as we do not believe children's imaginations should be limited by adult's fears or judgements. It is perfectly acceptable that children would see guns in child based story books and on age appropriate TV, so any adult insecurities should not affect the children's re-creation of what they see as 'normal' role play.
- If fantasy play becomes inappropriate or overly aggressive, it would need to be addressed using strategies described above.

Risk taking and facing challenges

We understand the positive impact risky play can have on a child's development and self esteem, therefore we actively promote children's exposure to taking risks and facing challenges, but in a controlled and safe environment. Through play, children are able to learn about risks and become confident to explore and take part in new activities. This will lead to children learning how to judge risks and manage them for themselves, which is a crucial 'school readiness' skill. Some examples of these risks are:

- Using the climbing frame and trim trail
- Playing with loose parts e.g. buttons, stones, containers, tubes, guttering, pegs, string, wheels, dried food and much more
- Playing with natural materials e.g. wood, mud, sand, water, shells etc.
- Exploring the natural world e.g. holding bugs, touching plants etc
- Outdoor activities such as building with tyres, planks and pallets
- Using real life objects throughout the setting e.g. scissors, cutlery, china objects, tools, nuts and bolts, tweezers and more
- Balancing, climbing, jumping, running, rolling

This is in no way an exhaustive list but some examples of activities we offer and resources that are available on an everyday basis.

Biting

Children biting other children is one of the most common and most difficult behaviours in Early Years. It can occur without warning, is difficult to defend against, and provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the bitten child, the parents and the staff involved. For many children, the biting stage is just a passing phase. They may bite for a variety of reasons: teething, frustration, boredom, lack of language skills, stress or change in the environment, feeling threatened, or to feel a sense of power.

Children who bite:

- Children who have a tendency to bite will be alerted to staff on joining the setting so they are all aware, but are never treated indifferently
- Each incident will be logged on an Incident Form
- We will work together with the parents of children who are biting
- We have a Biting Advice Sheet that is issued to all parents involved, reassuring them of typical age/stage child development

Child who has been bitten:

- We will engage them away from the child who has bitten them if they are distressed
- The staff will administer appropriate first aid and give appropriate comfort. If an injury has been sustained, the parent will be telephoned in line with our 'accident' procedure
- Each incident will be logged on an Incident Form
- We have a Biting Advice Sheet that is issued to all parents involved, reassuring them of typical age/stage child development

Confidentiality will be observed at all times. If a child or member of staff sustains a bite wound where the skin has been severely broken, we would arrange for urgent medical attention after the initial first aid has been carried out. In cases where a child may repeatedly bite, Management will carry out a risk assessment and may recommend immunisation with hepatitis B vaccine for all staff and children. Incidents are monitored to highlight any recurring patterns.

Turn taking / sharing

Sharing is an action intended to help another person. It requires empathy, selflessness, social conscience, consideration, and most importantly, it must be volunteered in order to genuinely be considered as sharing. It takes a level of cognitive ability and understanding of the concept of fairness, which most young children are still in the process of developing. This means that sharing is a developmental process, and it takes time.

- Occasionally we may see children sharing as these behaviours begin to emerge as empathy develops e.g. they may offer a bite of their food, or a hug when somebody is sad. These moments may not be consistent or timely, but as they grow, they will happen more and more.
- 'Making' children share beforehand does not reflect the natural development of the skill, nor does it make them more likely to share in the future.

- In fact, it would become associated with having their belongings taken away and given to someone else, which is likely to lead to defensive and angry feelings and put a focus on possessiveness.
- First and foremost, we expect staff to be role models of sharing e.g. offering a colleague some of their lunch, or offering a child to share their seat. The more we build sharing into our everyday environment, the more likely children are to learn about it.
- Where appropriate, we promote the phrase 'turn taking' as opposed to 'sharing', as it is a clearer, more measurable task for children to understand.
- We only intervene with negotiations between children if they ask, when the situation warrants it e.g. to prevent harm or distress, or to role model as a teaching opportunity (particularly for younger children).
- We know that young children are unable to empathise or rationalise as their brains are still developing, so we believe it is unfair to judge or punish a child for that. Therefore instead of focusing on the 'morality' of sharing, we acknowledge their feelings and are honest with them about how painful, annoying, sad or scary it is to give something away for a little time.
- Older children's brains are a little more developed, so it is important to support and coach them through negotiations and problem-solving so that they can begin to experiment with these experiences.
- We readily explain to older children that the younger ones have not learnt all of our grown up skills yet, so together we can all help them.
- We try to offer a choice to the older child e.g. "Oh no, little X is so sad, I think she was really hoping to play with that telephone; would you like to give her a turn with it and we can try to find another one together?" Whilst this does not yield the response we'd like every time, it goes a long way in making children feel heard, valued and respected.
- If it resolves the situation, we specifically praise the child, and draw their attention to the positive impact on the other child – "Look how happy you've made X!" By demonstrating how proud and happy we feel, we really embed the sharing process as a positive experience which hopefully may be repeated in the future.
- Sometimes children simply do not want to share, and that's OK because we know it will come with time. It's important to help them with language (or role modelling if needed) to express this e.g. "No thank you, I do not want to share at the moment". That child may have strong reasons for not wanting to share at that time, and those feelings are legitimate, just as adults don't always choose to share either.
- Where possible, adults may also introduce other resources to extend the play, which may eliminate the need to share 1 item.
- We often encourage children to use sand timers to give a visible time scale / deadline.

#### Apologising

Children naturally mature into having empathy for others as they get older, if they have developed warm, loving, secure attachments to others. Young children want what they want, and have no thought of how others feel – that is normal because their brains have not developed that skill yet. Forcing a child to feel sorrow or guilt would confuse them, and possibly spark the opposite emotion.

- We never 'force' children to apologise as we believe this could lead to children automatically 'saying sorry' without any understanding or sincerity.
- Instead, we role model meaningful ways of feeling sorry for upsetting others, by role modelling and/or explaining e.g. "I'm sorry that X hurt you", whilst giving a hug and using appropriate body language, facial expressions and tone of voice.

#### 'Tidy up' time

We do not use the phrase 'tidy up time' as it can be associated with a chore. Tidy up time becomes a time based mission where children hastily throw things into a gap they spot. Some children will avoid it completely. Instead we want to teach our children to respect and care for our environment and the world around them.

- We do this by encouraging children "to put our things back where they belong" or "return things to their homes" so that it gives a sense of value and belonging.
- This should be done continually as and when children are finished with a resource, not at a specific time of day.

#### Conflict

We have a busy, complex social environment with inevitable clashes of interests and desires between children.

- Conflicts provide important learning opportunities for children, such as gaining an understanding of how to respect the needs of others whilst meeting their own needs, so where possible we allow children to negotiate conflict themselves in a real-life experience
- Practitioners who routinely step in to minimise or avoid conflicts between children run the risk of overlooking these opportunities for social learning.
- This experience belongs to the children involved, so we focus on supporting their skills rather than taking control.
- We firstly observe the situation without intervening, to see if the children already have the necessary skills to resolve the situation themselves. We allow a reasonable time for this to happen, dependant on the age/stage development of the children involved, as we understand it is not something that will happen instantly. It is also a skill that takes much practice to master.
- We only intervene with negotiations between children if; 1) they ask, 2) when the situation warrants it e.g. to prevent harm or distress, or 3) to role model as a teaching opportunity (particularly for younger children).
- If this is needed, the adult would slowly and calmly introduce themselves into the situation and act in a mediatory role to help the children reach an outcome that they are all happy with.
- We are equally respectful to all children and avoid blaming or labelling behaviour. This encourages co-operation and participation in the problem-solving.
- A neutral approach may be "Do you need some help?" This signals to the children that they are liked and valued by the adult and makes it more likely that they would seek help in the future if they needed it without fear of being judged or punished.
- We establish simple rules at the start such as "We will listen to you X, then we will listen to Z, and then we can all think together about what can happen next".
- We try to explore the children's feelings – "You look sad, is that how you are feeling?"
- Where possible, we encourage them to talk to each other e.g. "Have you spoken to X about it?"
- Instead of saying "How would you feel if someone took your toy?", staff are encouraged to hand this conversation back to the children so could say "X, could you tell Z how you felt when she took your toy?"

- It's important for adults to ask open-ended questions and invite problem solving, for example "OK so you have both said you'd like to get in the car and there isn't enough space, what do you think we could do about it?"
- Where possible, adults recall previous experiences relevant to the child, which provides an opportunity to evaluate and reflect.

#### Breakages / caring for our environment

We believe in giving children responsibility to handle and play with breakable items. Children feel a huge sense of self-belief when they are trusted with special things. They learn to respect and value their environment, and often remind each other to 'be careful' with anything breakable, as they are learning that their actions have consequences.

- We talk about our resources being precious and how we can think about taking care of them.
- Adults discuss with children about what to do if something got broken – stand back, keep hands safe and tell a grown up.
- When a child damages a resource accidentally, we comfort and reassure them, explaining that we understand they did not mean to do so. We would offer help in clearing up any mess because we feel it's important for the child to learn that whilst a consequence does not necessarily mean a 'punishment', there may still be consequences for accidental mistakes too. We would discuss how we could take a little more care next time e.g. using two hands for carrying, using our walking legs.
- If a child deliberately damages a resource, we would follow the same procedure but instead focusing on discussing our feelings such as "I feel sad that we can not play with this next time" to again embed the idea of consequences.

#### Nervous, anxious or withdrawn children

Many of the strategies listed above (such as breathing techniques) are suitable for over-stimulated children. However, we may encounter children who may be appearing anxious, withdrawn, shy or nervous, or who do not communicate e.g. reluctant speakers / selective mutism.

- Our staff are trained in 'careful questioning' anyway, meaning they turn questions into comments using terms like "I wonder..." to avoid children feeling tested, and use open-ended questions to promote sustained shared thinking.
- Staff are aware of the ECAT top tips, so often use other communication skills such as running commentaries (describing what they're doing rather than focusing on the child), providing a narrative of what the child is doing, giving lots of time for children to respond, recalling memories, demonstrating and showing, using simple language, keeping conversation pace slow, imitate the child's speech and add to it, and using expression to communicate – voice tones, facial expressions, body language, gestures etc to give clues to what is being said.
- It is crucial that these children's interests are planned for constantly so they feel safe and can start to build a level of well-being and involvement.
- Working with parents/carers is key, to identify any patterns or underlying causes, e.g. do they behave the same at home?

#### Frustrated energy

When difficult emotions and feelings build up, children can get a sudden burst of energy.

- We find an outlet for this energy by offering a safe way to express it, such as through exercise or making some noise.
- This could be simple star jumps or even clapping, or it could result in a visit to the trim trail to let loose.
- We encourage children to vent by shouting, singing loudly, or making any noise which can help release frustration, anger or worry.

#### Inappropriate comments

Young children are experts in noticing and being outspoken about what is 'not the same' or stands out as different. They may stare or comment. We understand that this is not necessarily done with any intent to upset or cause offence, but is far more likely to be a typical element of children's curiosity and awareness of differences – a quality that we would never discourage.

- We acknowledge their comments, then explore their thoughts with them, as we feel strongly that this is the way to step away from the prejudice of denying our differences.
- It is crucial that our children grow to value, respect and tolerate similarities and differences.

#### Settling in / separation anxiety / attachment

The human infant brain has a strong instinct for survival. To a child dependant on the proximity of their primary carer for their survival, separation poses the very serious threat of abandonment. The brain triggers a distress response and the child cries as this is the most effective way an infant has of communicating, because in most cases, that triggers an automatic response in an adult brain as we are programmed to be unable to ignore it. This is a fundamental aspect of attachment theory that has been borne out by more recent developments in neuroscience, allowing us to understand exactly what is going on in our brains at times like this. However, over time, the child's frontal lobes (or 'rational' higher brain) will develop and allow the inhibition of the separation distress system so that it can become less sensitive.

- Starting pre-school can be a daunting experience for young children, and we understand that being upset about separating from a parent/carers is a perfectly reasonable reaction. For some children, the pain of separation is like a physical pain.
- We have procedures in place to try and ease the emotional stress of the transition period:
- We offer home visits to all children prior to starting so that children can meet their Keyperson and establish them as a 'safe' person who has been in their home and can create that link when they see them next in setting.
- We leave them a little leaflet at home with photos of staff and the building so they can become familiar with us.
- We do not offer 'settling in' sessions due to being oversubscribed every year, however we make it clear to parents/carers that they are welcome to stay with the child if they so wish.
- Some parents prefer to leave them which is also fine – we work closely with the family and follow their lead as we trust that they know their child best.
- We offer comfort, reassurance and sensitivity if a child is upset at being left, discussing their emotions where possible and acknowledging their feelings.
- We do not tell children they shouldn't be sad or unhappy or use distraction to 'fix' their distress, because by acknowledging and accepting their feelings and fears, we are demonstrating how valued and respected they are which is valuable for long term emotional well-being.
- We are happy for children to bring 'transitional' items from home such as a comforter.

- Staff are trained to be warm, welcoming, caring and professionally affectionate to our children. They are sensitive to children's physical and emotional needs. We encourage them to express the warmth of their body language, expressions and gestures, alongside a soothing and reassuring voice, to demonstrate their calmness and openness.
- We display family photos around the setting, promote the sharing of parent/carer observations on Tapestry so that the child can share them in setting, and encourage parents/carers to 'phone us as many times as they need to to check how the child is settling.
- We do not force children to participate in any activities (whether they are new or not!), and are careful with any distractions offered. Too many distraction techniques could make the child feel that their feelings are not understood, but a few specifically aimed at their interests could be enough to provoke their curiosity.
- Staff stay close to the child, being responsive when needed.
- If a child is severely distressed and can not be settled, we may offer the option of collecting early, and suggest easing them in gradually e.g. 2 hour sessions instead of 3. However we fully understand and appreciate different family's circumstances e.g. work commitments, so will work closely with them to find a solution that will suit them.
- We make it clear that we are not stressed or inconvenienced in any way by this settling in period, and that we will support the family for as long as needed.

### Crying

Crying children are looking for empathy and understanding, so staff are trained to not dismiss or minimise that child's feelings. Crying is OK as it's a healthy and necessary way for children to express their feelings and we don't need to make them stop. By telling them to 'stop crying', we send the message that their feelings are not important and it is also disrespectful.

- Distraction and repeating "It's OK" are not recommended techniques because this can make a child feel shut down, unloved and unimportant.
- In order for children to learn how to regulate their emotions, and to trust us with their problems and feelings, we should accept and explore these with empathy and understanding, not try to silence them.
- Sometimes no words are needed as physical comfort or presence is enough, but we encourage adults to acknowledge the child's emotion by showing understanding e.g. "It's OK to be sad", "This is a really tough time", "I'm here with you", "Tell me about it", "That was really scary / sad etc, can I help you work it out?", "I'll stay close to you". Even a simple "I'm listening" can make the child feel safe and valued.
- Empathy is NOT a technique to ultimately stop the crying – the aim is to help the child feel heard, understood, validated and supported.

### 'BULLYING'

- We refrain from using the term 'bullying' because a child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress to another, which may occur in children five years old and over.

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This policy was adopted at a meeting of Clocktower Childcare Ltd held on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019. Latest date to be reviewed: 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

Signed on behalf of Clocktower Childcare Ltd:

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