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**HIGHTERS HEATH NURSERY SCHOOL**

**BEHAVIOUR POLICY – OUR POSITIVE APPROACH**

**INTRODUCTION**

Children's "behaviour" includes everything they do - their approach to work and play; the ways they relate to other people; their responses to all the experiences they encounter at school, at home and in the wider community.

Young children have to learn about appropriate behaviour in the same way as they learn other things in their lives, and as adult carers and educators it is important that we are clear about the kinds of behaviour we want our children to learn. In behaviour, as in all other areas of learning, the children's own parents are the key source of information and insight about their children, and the key to their children's development in this area in particular.

**Parents and staff together must be clear of the**

**'NURSERY'S LONG-TERM AIMS FOR OUR CHILDREN'**

**1. Purpose of Policy**

* To promote positive behaviour, helping children’s social development and emotional wellbeing.
* To ensure that all children feel safe and secure in the nursery school.
* For all staff to have consistent expectations and approaches to children’s behaviour.
* To enable staff to support children to behave appropriately.
* To help children develop an awareness of our expectations and know/learn how to behave appropriately.
* For parents to know there is a consistent and fair approach.

For many of our children, Nursery is the first step into the wider world beyond home. This unfamiliar situation offers many new **challenges** to children's behaviour skills. There may be conflicts for children between behaviour which is expected or accepted at home and that which is expected or accepted at Nursery.

The Nursery also provides **support**. The safe and stable environment of the Nursery, with adults to guide and monitor their behaviour, offers children a framework within which to build for themselves patterns of group behaviour which will serve them all well in the future, in school, at home and beyond.

**THE ORGANISATION OF THE NURSERY ENVIRONMENT MEANS THAT:**

* Children know what is expected of them.
* Each child can enjoy his/her own freedom without threatening the freedom or enjoyment of other children.
* The familiar structure and routine creates a calm, purposeful atmosphere.
* Sensitive and observant adults ensure that each child's needs are met.
* Mutual courtesy and kindness make it easy for everyone, children and adults to play and work together.
* Children may develop their own self-control and self-discipline.

**2. A strong network of relationships**

We work consistently to ensure that each child has a strong relationship with their key person. In turn the key person can help the child develop a wider network of relationships with other children and the wider staff team. Warm, caring, emotionally-attuned relationships set a very positive climate for children’s social and emotional development and help to promote good behaviour.

**Key people will:**

* Work closely with each key child, starting with the home visit and settling-in procedure, to help each child feel safe, secure, valued and feel that someone knows about them as a unique child.
* Be aware of and seek out children who don’t approach them.
* Relate positively to each key child every day.
* Make time to listen to and take an interest in each child every day.

**All staff will:**

* Strive to be “emotionally attuned” to children, valuing and accepting their emotions, e.g. “I can see you’re sad about that, shall I help you for a moment” rather than “don’t cry, you’re a big girl now”.
* Praise good behaviour
* Praise good efforts
* Show disapproval of the behaviour, not the child e.g. “That was a rude thing to do” not “You rude child”.
* Model how to deal with and sort out difficult situations
* Show empathy towards children and each other e.g. “I understand you feel.but ........ “Are you feeling?”

**How Staff Deal with Conflict**

Experiencing and managing conflict is an important part of growing up and early education. Our aim is to help children to learn the skills they need to manage conflicts, through guidance and modelling.

* Encourage children to be assertive and to say/sign “no” clearly, say “I don’t like that”, etc. Where a child appropriately asserts “no” and the other child responds, it is not usually necessary for an adult to get involved.
* Think developmentally: if a child is at an early stage of development, then sharing resources will be very challenging. Ways to support include making sure that we have enough resources for everyone; setting up experiences for 2 or 3 children, to avoid large groups crowding round; model language/approaches like “me next”; “can I have a turn”; “you can have it next, when I’ve finished”. Deal with the behaviour of the other child next.
* Model sharing and learning. Show children that we actively listen to the ideas, needs and wants of others. Show simple approaches to sharing like “I’ll do one, you do the next.” Support and promote open-ended experiences that promote collaboration, e.g. block play.

**If a conflict needs adult intervention to be resolved, our approach is:**

* Listen to both children.
* Encourage children to say how they feel (“it hurt” ... “I’m sad” etc)
* Ask the children how they could solve the problem and try to find a solution based on their ideas. If necessary, impose a solution and explain why.
* If a child has hurt another, ask them to find a way to help the other child feel better.
* This could involve saying sorry, comforting the other child or agreeing to be friends.
* Avoid a situation where a child expresses a grudging “sorry”.
* If a child has been hurt or is distressed, then initially focus attention on that child rather.
* If necessary, state a clear boundary. “Remember, no hitting in nursery.”
* If necessary move one child away from the other’s play.
* It is important to spend time settling the children back into positive play – don’t deal with an incident and walk away too soon.
* Where possible, notice positive behaviour shortly afterwards and praise it. “I can see you are playing nicely now, that’s good to see you sharing.”
* Bilingual staff play a key role in helping with incidents where children are at early stages of learning English.

**Involving parents - It is important to involve parents because:**

• They know their own children best. They may be able to help us to understand why their child is finding a particular situation difficult, and help us to manage it.

• Parents need a clear picture of how their child is managing in school. It is important to talk to parents about difficulties their child might have, but be clear that the reason is to share information, and not because we want them to tell their child off again, or because we are blaming them.

• We run successful workshops and Triple P programmes and all parents are encouraged to join in.

**Keeping children safe**

It is a core responsibility of the nursery school to ensure that children are safe and secure. Challenging behaviour and difficulties with social situations are an ordinary part of child development – our job is to help children work some of these problems through in a supportive atmosphere, where there are clear boundaries, so that they develop positive attitudes to each other and to learning.

The majority of our work is around helping children’s social development and supporting their emotional wellbeing. We want children to be strong, connected to other children and to adults, and to be self-motivated and self-regulating.

Sometimes children may present with severely challenging behaviour and may seek to hurt other children regularly. It is very important that steps are taken quickly, with the involvement of the SENCO and wider services, to help children with this level of difficulty, and to ensure that other children are kept safe. Where a child is hurting other children, there needs to be a specific plan for that child and an agreed set of strategies which are understood and acted on consistently by all nursery school staff.

We are an inclusive school and we will work positively with every child and every family.

**Restraining children**

With a very young age-group of children, physical holding and guidance are often needed, e.g. when a small child is very angry and about to hit out at other children. We judge that an incident is “physical restraint” if the child has to be fully restrained from movement for more than a few seconds in order to keep the child or other children safe.

If a child’s behaviour results in a need for restraint, as defined above, then there will be a specific plan to manage behaviour and set clear boundaries. This plan will be drawn up by the SENCO working with wider services, and with the involvement of the child’s parents. This plan will outline when restraint is needed and how it is to be implemented. All instances of restraint will be recorded by the SENCO and the information will be shared with the parents.

We have a system for planning this type of behaviour support via our provision map and recording all instances, and sharing the information with parents.

**STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE DESIRABLE BEHAVIOUR**

The most effective strategy for reinforcing desired behaviour is to **reward** it. The most successful reward is **adult attention, positive attention** - smiles, hugs, verbal approval and time.

* Name the child
* "Describe" what it is we are pleased about to the child.
* Share it with someone else or with the group.
* Tell parents about "good" things - kind, polite, helpful things as well as work.
* Spend time with a child who is working well, quietly concentrating, co-operating and being helpful.

**Limit negative attention!!**

Lots of children prefer negative attention to nothing, and this will reinforce the behaviour which triggers it and reward children for behaving in undesirable ways.

Describe to the child very clearly and simply the undesirable behaviour we do not like and will not accept, and simultaneously:

* Describe clearly and simply what we **do** want to see and hear.
* Make changes in behaviour in small steps, praising and encouraging even

slightest progress in the right direction all the time.

* Anticipate potential problem situations and eliminate or reduce practical difficulties before they arise.
* By observing what triggers difficult behaviour we can avoid it happening in the first place.
* It may be as simple as one child sitting next to another particular child.

**THE SKILLS CHILDREN NEED - The supportive Nursery environment offers children the opportunities to practise:**

**Taking Turns**

The task of waiting for "a turn", or for an adult's attention, is geared to each child's maturity. A very young or immature child may need one-to-one adult company while waiting for a turn on the slide. Board games with just 2 players, then 4, then 6, help children to gradually be able to wait longer for a turn, or passing the "music bag" around a very small, then a bigger group.

Sand timers make the passage of time visible and make waiting easier for young children to understand.

**Sharing**Children who are used to owning all **their** toys at home can find it hard to understand that resources at Nursery are to be shared and may not always be there just for them. Equipment and games which are more fun with 2 or more children, e.g. see-saw, picture lotto, domestic play, help children to appreciate the advantages as well as disadvantages of sharing.

**Politeness**

Some children already use words such as "please", "thank-you" and "excuse me", before they arrive at Nursery, but others need guidance and the example of adults to learn to use these phrases routinely and regularly as an expression of politeness and concern for other people. Children may need to learn to share food e.g. to pass pieces of apple around and not to take more than their share, but this may need an adult to help develop such social skills.

**Making Choices**

Children are supported in making choices and in living with the consequences of those choices. They are encouraged to talk through what they plan to do and how their plans have worked out.  
Becoming aware of the importance of cause and effect in our behaviour can help children to understand the ways in which their own behaviour will influence the actions and attitudes of people around them. Therefore opportunities to choose and express intentions are very important to children - they feel in control and responsible for themselves.

**The Routine of the Session**

Knowing what will happen within the Nursery and their own group helps to give children a feeling of ownership of their group.  
It creates a stable and familiar environment in which they feel secure and recognise what is expected of them.

It also helps them to develop a feeling of commitment to the well-being of the group and to be aware of their own role in this.

**Handling Conflict**

Children can learn techniques for handling conflicts. They need help to recognise the **source of the conflict** initially. It is important for adults not to make value judgements about the situation but to help both sides to see the situation from someone else's viewpoint. They may need help to recognise that there is nothing wrong with what either of them wants to do, but they have different ideas.

Once they have been helped to see the nature of the problem, children will often be willing to become involved in looking for a solution. If they cannot suggest a way out themselves, the adult may suggest alternatives, help them to make a decision and then gradually withdraw. If one child in the conflict has been hurt or upset, they adult will need to help the perpetrator to make amends - saying "sorry" is sometimes not possible and in any case meaningless, but a hug or a smile can work wonders for improved relationships. A solution to a problem which children can reach together will be much easier for them to accept than one imposed from outside by an adult. It also provides a useful message than conflicts can be resolved without quarrels and fights if they are tackled together.

**THE RULES OF THE GROUP**

There are only a few broad rules, so that the children are able to cope with them and to believe in them.  
It is vital that all adults are clear about the consistent and confident enforcement of the rules and that everyone gives clear messages in an agreed way.

The children must be confident that if a particular behaviour is unacceptable then it is never acceptable. The rules are:

* We must **always** care for other people, their feelings, their property, the nursery and **never** deliberately hurt or damage people or things.
* We must **always** be kind and polite to everyone - children and adults.
* We must **always** take care when climbing outside or using large apparatus that we **never** push anyone or crash into anyone.
* We must **never** throw sand, indoors or outdoors.
* Children are **not** allowed to be in any isolated part of the Nursery with the door closed without an adult, which includes; the entrance area the kitchen the quiet room the workshop
* Children **should not** be in the garden without an adult.

**"Do as I do..."**

The adults have a critical role to play, not only in enforcing rules, but also in providing the role models for the kind of behaviour we want to encourage among the children. Adults demonstrate by their behaviour towards each other how people within the Nursery are expected to interact. If adults are generous and thoughtful, support and help each other, they create a model for children to copy.

By the way they handle equipment and care for the Nursery, adults demonstrate how they value it. In a group where **everyone** picks up books and returns equipment to the right place, and leaves activities tidy, ready for someone else, attitudes of care and respect are encouraged.

In an environment in which kindness, politeness and sharing are the norm, children can be supported in developing the skills and attitudes which will help them behave in ways which are acceptable to other people and satisfying to themselves.

**CHANGING BEHAVIOUR**

**Immaturity and inexperience can make some "good" behaviour difficult to**

**conform to:**

* Children who do not yet have a clear grasp of number and volume find it hard to estimate and take their "fair" share of e.g. play dough, snack or dominoes.
* The language used to describe acceptable behaviour at Nursery may be different or unfamiliar in style, vocabulary, accent, tone of voice or even different language.
* A child used to hearing "no" when she behaves inappropriately, may be confused by a complicated explanation of "why" we. Don't do things in a certain way.
* A complex series of instructions is also bewildering to a child whose comprehension is at a very early stage.
* Very young or immature children **cannot** sit still and pay attention for 20 minutes.
* Or more during a story session. It is developmentally inappropriate and unproductive.
* Exploration and Investigation come naturally to young children and this is a way that they learn.
* It’s our responsibility to ensure that the organisation of the environment makes this possible.
* When they come to Nursery, children may find that activities that are not allowed at home, like playing with water, finger paint or clay are encouraged.
* At the same time other rules, like not hurting people or not standing on the furniture still do exist. It can be very confusing.

**Behaviours which cause concern**

Some kinds of behaviour may indicate that the child has a problem, in which case plenty of clear, accurate information through objective observations is needed to make considered judgements about the reasons for the behaviour.  
Several kinds of behaviour may give adults cause for concern:

* **Age inappropriate behaviour** e.g. tantrums, biting, sexual awareness.
* **Disruption or damage to other children's activities** caused repeatedly and
* deliberately.
* **Deliberate and considered damage to property**, as opposed to accidental damage as a result of excitement, carelessness, clumsiness or inquisitiveness.
* **Physical or verbal abuse** - whilst the immediate priority must be given to supporting and comforting the victim, the child who habitually displays this form of behaviour will give rise to great concern.
* **Quietness** is sometimes overlooked as a problem, but a child who is too quiet and withdrawn or passive needs to be given extra attention.
* **Attention seeking** - children who constantly seek attention are generally not getting enough of it for some reason, but adults need to find ways of giving it in response to desirable behaviour, rather than rewarding behaviour that is clearly just for attention.
* **"Aggressive" play** is often not actually aggressive, but acting out violent scenes, maybe involving weapons, which children have seen on television, and which is **about** aggression. The children may even be co-operating together in recreating a shared experience, allocating roles and agreeing the action.

**3. Supporting change**

In an atmosphere of support and encouragement, children can be helped to change their behaviour:

* It must be clear to the child who is behaving in an unacceptable way that it is the behaviour that is unwelcome, not the child.
* A child's achievements must be recognised and praised to boost self-esteem and self- confidence, before helping him to move onto the next stage and change.
* We must leave the door open for children to change and not label them, as this may create self-fulfilling assumptions.
* Children need to know that if things go wrong, an adult will always intervene - this forms part of the security of the group.
* Being positive and helpful and helping children to believe in themselves can bring out the best in them, e.g. positive "Try doing it this way" instead of a negative "Don't do that".
* If an activity is abused or deliberately spoilt e.g. water spilled or blocks scattered, children must put things right, with help. This is learning about cause and effect - if a mess is created, it has to be cleared up.
* If a child is very angry and upset, a short period away from the other children and activities, "time out" with an adult who can give space, calm and maybe a cuddle, will help the child to come to terms with the situation.

**4. Highters Heath Nursery School Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Purpose**

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will children be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at school. In order to achieve this:

* All staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy.
* Children must be encouraged to tell a trusted adult about bullying.
* A key person is often in a good position to notice a change in a child’s emotional wellbeing or confidence and to look for and ask about reasons behind this change. Sometimes that may lead to the judgement that the child is experiencing bullying, which can then be acted on.
* Parents must be informed about what is happening at school and have the opportunity to discuss it with the head teacher or deputy head teacher.
* All staff have a common approach to bullying and deal with incidents consistently.

**What is bullying?**

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The three main types of bullying are:

* Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, taking things off another child)
* Verbal (e.g. saying unkind things, name calling, racist, sexist or homophobic remarks)
* Indirect (e.g. excluding someone from play or other social groups)

**The outcomes of bullying**

Children in nursery who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as signs of low emotional wellbeing, low confidence, becoming shy and nervous, not engaging in play and becoming preoccupied in look around, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults.

The bully, or potential bully, may also be experiencing problems which are a cause of his/her anti-social behaviour. Staff must be alert for behaviour or comments which may highlight that the child needs help to deal with their concerns.

**Teaching about bullying**

It is important to raise awareness of the nature of bullying and teach children how to respond if they are involved in, or witness, an incident of bullying. It is also essential that children learn to identify what bullying is, and how it differs to normal disagreements between friends. This can be done through our play-based curriculum, using suitable stories, and using group time for discussions.

**Implementation of the policy**

**The following steps must be taken when dealing with incidents:**

* If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
* A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the head teacher.
* The head teacher/deputy head teacher will record the incident.
* Class teachers will be kept informed.
* Parents will be kept informed.
* Parents are asked to support us by encouraging their children to talk to staff and not telling their child to hit back.

**In ways which are appropriate to the child’s development:**

**Children who have been bullied will be supported by:**

* Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their key person or member of staff of their choice.
* Reassurance and continuous support.
* Encourage the child to be assertive and strong, say “no”, and say when there are things happening which they do not like or want
* Help to restore self-esteem and confidence.

**Children who have bullied will be helped by:**

* Discussing the events and their behaviour with their key person.
* Discovering why the child became involved.
* Establishing the wrong doing and need to change.
* Informing parents/guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil.

**Strategies to prevent bullying**

* Ensuring that children feel valued and respected.
* Listen to what children say about their emotional state and value it.
* Acknowledge when children are sad or shy and offer them help, without contradicting their emotional state (e.g. avoid saying “don’t cry, it’s alright”; plan to say things like “I can see your really sad, how can I help you with that” – “I can see you are very angry with her, let’s think what you could do”).
* Giving children time and encouragement to talk about and resolve any disagreements they might have.
* Where appropriate allow children to sort out disagreements themselves and to be strong and assertive, e.g. shouting “no” or saying “I don’t like that”.
* Good supervision.
* Awareness and sensitivity on the part of staff.
* Support children’s communication and their social development.
* Clear expectations of behaviour.
* Consistent and fair approach.

**5. Working with parents**

If some aspect of a child's behaviour is of serious concern to the staff, then the Head teacher will discuss it with the parents, as experts in their own child's background and behaviour. When parent's insights are added to those of the staff, the combined picture of the child's behaviour both at home and at Nursery may lead to a joint parent/Nursery strategy to help the child. Such strategies must always be carried through and regular supportive progress reviews held with parents.

**6. Additional help**

Sometimes the combined efforts of staff and parents may not be sufficient to help a child to make the necessary changes. In this case, if the parents are agreed, outside help may be necessary. The Nursery has good relationships with all support services, health visitor, school doctor and nurse, educational psychologist, social worker, who could be approached for help. We also have the benefit of the Family Centre, who can work individually with parents if required. Seeking outside help is not a failure, but a responsible approach by adults to ensure that support which is available in the community is used to benefit a child who needs it.

**CONCLUSION**

Nursery exists to help all children to develop to their full potential in all areas. This includes opportunities to build up social skills and to learn behaviour that will enable each child to go out into the wider community with confidence.  
In Nursery, children are learning what they **can** do, and are encouraged to feel that this is **their** Nursery where they are individually valued and to which they each make their own special contribution. Within this secure and nurturing framework, both children and adults are free to grow and develop happily, with high self-esteem, confident, independent and emotionally strong.