



**Stockingford
Nursery School**

Behaviour Regulation Policy

Passed and adopted by Governing Body:

Signed: *CP Phillips*

Dated: 01.01.2025

Next Review: January 2027

STOCKINGFORD NURSERY SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR REGULATION POLICY

Philosophy and Approach

We believe that children and adults flourish best in a calm and ordered environment, in which everyone knows what is expected of them and children are free to develop their play and learning without fear of being hurt or hindered by anyone else.

We recognise behaviour is a form of communication. It is everyone's responsibility to support children's social, emotional and mental health needs by creating an inclusive and positive School ethos.

We have consistently high expectations of behaviour which include:

- We look after ourselves.
- We look after each other.
- We look after our toys, resources and belongings.
- We keep our Nursery tidy.

We aim to:

- Provide all children with a secure base. A secure space is described as one or more adults who respond sensitively to children's needs. (Bowlby, 1988). The secure base model demonstrates that children's positive interactions with adults provides a secure base in which children can explore, learn and develop (Beek and Schofield 2004 &2005). See appendix C.
- Develop children's skills to enable them to co-regulate and self-regulate at times of emotional instability.
- Develop close liaisons between home and Nursery to discuss how to support children's emotional wellbeing.
- Use personalised targets with regard to behaviour expectations as required.
- Reinforce behaviour expectations in Nursery, whilst at the same time recognising when these may not be achievable for a child, due to emotional trauma, lived experience or developmental disability. In this case the parent-keyworker relationship is key to ensuring effective communication.
- Encourage intrinsically motivated and appropriate behaviours, using a range of strategies to develop children's self-esteem.
- Work towards a situation in which children and adults can develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.

Brain Development and Self-Regulation

- The period between birth and five years old is a sensitive period for children's developing brains; this period represents a window within which the effects of environmental stimulation on brain structure and function are maximised.
- It's a crucial time for acquiring motor skills, language and forming all-important attachments.
- During this time children begin to become more aware of their emotions and develop the strategies to deal with these feelings as appropriate, but we must not expect this to happen overnight.
- The reason children go through what we might refer to as 'Terrible Twos' or 'Toddler Tantrums' is perfectly natural as they are experiencing more and more that challenges their emotions but have not yet developed the parts of their brain that help to regulate them ('Self-Regulation') effectively.
- It is important to remember that young children have little control over their body and sometimes their bodily functions when they are going through this process, so asking them to stop, arguing or debating with them will only make matters worse. Releasing these feelings and frustrations through a 'tantrum' helps restore the physiology of the brain in order that the child can return to a calm state.
- Going through this period is vital and the nurturing adult response will act as a learning experience that should help them develop these skills for the future; this is called 'Co-regulation'. If we fail to bring children down to a calm state, children remain in a heightened state of stress, which can lead to proven mental or physical long-term health implications.
- Self-regulation means that skills such as resilience, problem solving, social skills and patience have been acquired, all of which will be good foundations for learning as they become ready for School.
- There may be varying factors that mean children will not have acquired these skills fully and so we will endeavour to support children in developing these skills through nurturing responses and consistent practice.

To support children's developing self-regulation skills we will:

- Gather as much information as possible about the child before they are inducted into Nursery in order that we can be ready to support them as soon as they start. A poorly planned settling-in process can impact children's wellbeing and progress and will take them much longer to settle.
- Be positive role models and ensure that we demonstrate our own self-regulation skills at all times.
- Acknowledge children's feelings and understand that their experience of a situation may be very different to others'.
- Never shout at children, belittle or undermine them. We will never use strategies that name and shame children such as red cards or sunshine and clouds.
- Provide low arousal spaces and activities that allow children to be calm, as well as be active as needed.
- Ensure physical activity and active learning is a primary focus within the Nursery day.

- Adopt small, rather than large group times to give children an opportunity to interact with each other and share their feelings as well as allow adults to become more attuned to children's needs and interests.
- Ensure the provision reflects the individual children, through the activities we choose and the environments we provide.
- Be aware of and prepare for those times that may make children feel more vulnerable, i.e. transitions, changes in routine, changes in home life.
- Be aware of and prepare for those times that may make children frustrated i.e. at times of transition. We will consider how children can continue the activity at a later date, such as ensuring resources are still available later and there is a dedicated space to keep unfinished creations etc.
- Adopt an effective key worker system that allows practitioners to get to know their key children well and be attuned to their changing needs and feelings.
- Build strong relationships with children's families to ensure an effective two-way flow of information regarding individual children.
- Ensure that quieter children are not overlooked with regard to self-regulation. Quiet conformity does not necessarily mean a child is able to understand or regulate their feelings, it just means they have learnt to act in a specific way to elicit a desired response from an adult.
- Whilst we will celebrate children's achievement through praise and discussion, we will not use physical reward systems as this encourages children to do the right thing for the wrong reason and may also lead some children to feel they need to 'perform' for adults to receive gratification. Ensure we set clear boundaries that children understand are there to keep them safe. Structure and consistent routines help children understand what is expected of them as they move through the setting.
- Acknowledge that embedding routines and helping children to understand Nursery boundaries and expectations may take time and we will never sanction children who require extra support to do this.
- Ensure regular assessment identifies any gaps in development that may be leading to children's frustrations and provide timely interventions to support this.
- Ensure all practitioners have access information about Self-Regulation through induction or training.

Co-regulation strategies we will use:

- Name it to tame it – acknowledge children's feelings "I can see that makes you feel angry" rather than "Don't be silly, there's nothing to cry about".
- Age-appropriate rules and expectations that do not set children up to fail. For example, ensuring children are clear about boundaries and know what is expected of them through a consistent routine as well as consistent communication from all practitioners, this can be through daily discussions, visual timetables, stories and songs.
- Use positive language to help children understand expectations and boundaries, including the reasons, such as; 'We use our quieter voices inside so everyone can hear each other' or

'We use our walking feet inside, but we can use our running feet outside because there is more space'. Adults must also role model this.

- Work closely with parents so they also know the Nursery 'expectations' and the reasons why they are in place so they can reinforce them with children as needed, regular communication is key to this.
- Provide spaces and resources for children to use that help bring them to a calm level once they have reached a heightened state or where children can acknowledge they may reach that state and so can access the resources to help them manage the situation.
- Being available for a hug if a child needs it. We will never withhold affection as a punishment for behaviour. We will also not force physical affection on children that do not want it, whilst being mindful of reasons this might be the case.
- Breathing techniques that will be encouraged throughout the day at the start of group times or following physically active play to allow children to be aware of their own body and bring themselves to a calm state.
- Using visual timetables within our practice to help children understand the routine, particularly for those with English as an additional language.
- Use ABC charts to help identify children's triggers, so that we can pre-empt any reoccurrence of challenging behaviours and act accordingly (See ABC chart for explanation of how this will be used).
- Talk to children about what is happening in their brains, helping them to recognize their feelings and begin to adopt strategies to manage them.
- Providing activities that focus on developing children's physical development, self-awareness, pro-social and communication skills.

(see appendix A – agile approach, appendix B – effective ways to co-regulate)

Environments to promote Self-regulation

Children's natural desire to move and explore their own ideas and concepts is vital to learning, development and wellbeing; promoting this is highly effective in reducing children's frustrations. Therefore, practitioners support and encourage exploration through providing interesting environments, spaces, and activities within the safe boundaries of their playroom and outdoor space. Whilst environments must be exciting and interesting in order that they encourage exploration and challenge, we must be mindful that they are not over-stimulating; over stimulation can cause sensory overload causing children to feel unsettled or overwhelmed which might inhibit their abilities to concentrate, socialise and learn.

Areas of the environment must be purposeful and organised, so children know where to access specific resources as children do not respond well to chaos. Most resources will be open-ended allowing children to use them in any way they wish, to lead their own learning experiences. Children can move resources around and use them as they wish (unless doing so would create a risk that outweighs the benefit), as this is necessary for children to follow their exploratory and creative impulses. However, it is vital that children know where items can be returned to when they are finished with.

Appropriate staff deployment ensures practitioners are on hand to support, reassure and keep children safe, as well as making the best of those 'teachable moments' that occur when children are free to explore and discover. This all requires staff to be tuned into the children in their care and be prepared, where needed, to be flexible with routines to make the best of those learning experiences.

Responding to “challenging” behaviours

Children who struggle to regulate their emotions often respond to a situation with anti-social behaviours; this may include screaming, biting, throwing objects, hitting etc. In some older children, this may also include bullying through hurtful or discriminatory words or behaviour toward other children. Through the process of co-regulation, we must help children to understand that hurtful and discriminatory actions or words are not acceptable behaviours; we want children to recognise that certain actions are right and that others are wrong – while emphasising that all emotions are ok and normal.

In responding to “challenging” behaviour, we will:

- Re-direct children towards alternative activities. Discussions with children will take place respecting their level of understanding and maturity.
- Not raise our voices to children, unless it is necessary to keep them safe.
- Make it clear to children that is the behaviour that is unwanted, not them.
- Recognise that children are individuals and that some behaviours are normal in young children e.g. biting, being possessive of toys, not wanting to conform to routines etc.
- Work in partnership with parents by communicating openly about behavioural issues and advise ways in which we can work consistently in addressing them.
- Understand that how a particular type of behaviour should be handled will depend on the child’s age, level of development and the circumstances surrounding the behaviour.
- Help children to identify non-aggressive strategies to help them stand up for themselves if it is age-appropriate to do so.
- Help practitioners to reflect on their own responses toward challenging behaviours to ensure that their reactions are appropriate.
- Praise children and acknowledge their positive actions and attitudes when they occur, ensuring that children see that we value and respect them, and attention is gained through positive behaviours.
- Ensure all practitioners are consistent in their approach to responding to unwanted behaviour.
- Promote non-violence and encourage children to deal with conflict amicably Support children in developing empathy and children will only be encouraged to apologise if they have developed strong empathy skills and have a good understanding of why saying sorry is appropriate. Children should never be forced to say “sorry” or threats made if they refuse to.
- Parents will be informed if their child’s behaviour has caused harm or distress to another child. In all cases inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with in Nursery at the time and it will

be explained to parents that no further sanctions will be appropriate due to the time scale and that simply talking to their child about the incident and positive behaviour is sufficient.

- Where challenging behaviour is becoming a regular concern, the key person will begin a PIP chart to help to identify triggers and possible reasons for the behaviour, parents will be informed that behaviour is being monitored in order to identify appropriate support required.
- If this challenging behaviour continues, parents may be asked to meet with staff to discuss their child's behaviour, to ensure consistency between home and Nursery; this will include completing a 'Positive Intervention Plan. Staff, with parents, will make every effort to identify any concerns and the causes of that behaviour in order to put appropriate, supportive plans in place. Where necessary further advice from other professionals may be sought.
- Respect and confidentiality are maintained with regard to dealing with challenging behaviour.
- Have a named person who has overall responsibility for promoting self-regulation within the setting.

The named Self-Regulation Advocate

Our named self-regulation advocate is **Sally Phillips**.

They will advise staff on issues regarding children's wellbeing and behaviours and will keep up-to-date with legislation and research supporting changes to policies and procedures. They will access relevant sources of expertise where required and act as a central information source for all involved. Any relevant training will be cascaded to the staff team.

Protective Behaviours

Protective Behaviours is a safety and life skills programme which builds confidence and resilience by exploring everyone's right to feel safe. It is based on two key factors:

- ***We all have the right to feel safe all of the time.***
- ***We can talk with someone about anything even if it feels overwhelming or small.***

At Stockingford Nursery School we follow these two themes along with the language of safety to ensure all children feel safe in Nursery. We value how children feel and ensure that children have a right to talk about their feelings. We also support children to begin to recognise their early warning signs, as an indication that they are beginning to not feel safe. We provide skills, strategies and tools to enable individuals to reflect on their emotional wellbeing, so that they can begin to feel safe and secure again.

Positive handling and restraint

All staff have a contractual duty of care to maintain discipline and to keep children safe. This duty of care may require them to physically intervene in certain circumstances

- The aim will always be **not** to use a 'hands on' approach unless absolutely necessary.
- Staff are trained in the Team-Teach method of positive behaviour management.
- Any physical intervention will be appropriate and for the safety and wellbeing of all.

For further guidance please see our Positive Handling and Restraint Policy.

Hurtful behaviour

Most children at an early stage of learning appropriate social and group behaviours will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child. This hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without awareness of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.

- We recognise that young children may behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them.
- We will help them manage these feelings as they not have the biological means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.
- We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological processes that take place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear. For some children, the emotional brain takes over from the thinking brain, causing them to react in a certain way – ‘fight or flight.’
- Therefore we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour.
- We do not engage in ‘punishing’ responses to a young child’s rage as that will have the opposite effect.
- Our way of responding to pre-verbal children is to calm them through offering verbal or physical containment, if this is what the child indicates they need, or if the child requests this. Verbal children may also respond to physical containment to calm them down, but we offer them an explanation and discuss the incident with them matched to their level of understanding.
- We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. “Anna took your car, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn’t like it when she took it? Did it make you feel angry? Is that why you hit her?” Older children will be able to verbalise their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behaviour. Nursery School staff use key words, depending on stage of development of child.
- We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others’ feelings. “When you hit Anna, it hurt her and she didn’t like that, it made her cry.”
- We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy. “I can see you are feeling better now and Anna isn’t crying any more. Let’s see if we can be friends and find another car, so you can both play with one.”
- We are aware that the same problem may happen over and over before skills such as sharing and turn-taking develop. In order for both the biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.

- We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- We help a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; we do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this where it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt. Sometimes a child may be encouraged to ask if the hurt child is ok, and support them to make them better – get a wet paper towel, take them to the first aid chairs etc. Adults will also model this strategy.
- When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together. The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour are:
 - They do not feel securely attached to someone who can interpret and meet their needs – this may be in the home and it may also be in the setting.
 - The child may have insufficient language or mastery of English, to express him or herself and may feel frustrated.
 - The child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk.
 - The child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave.

A PIP (Positive Intervention Plan) may then be put in place, recognising the behaviours exhibited when an individual child's behaviour escalates or de-escalates, and how best the role of the adult can support this.

Bullying

We believe 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 in another.

Bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. It is characterised by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behaviour.

As a School we are aware that our children are developmentally at an early stage of learning appropriate social and group behaviours and may engage in unacceptable behaviour from time to time that is unintentional and without deliberate intent. Staff recognise that some incidents of angry/aggressive, persistent or unacceptable behaviour may occur and these will need to be addressed quickly and supportively.

If a child bullies another child, staff are aware that we would:

- Show the children who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them.
- Intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children.
- Explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable.
- Give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied.

- Help the child who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions.
- Make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour.
- Not label children who bully as 'bullies'.
- Recognise that children who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves, or be subject to abuse or other circumstance causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others.
- Recognise that children who bully are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we do not insist that they say sorry unless it is clear that they feel genuine remorse for what they have done. Empty apologies can be just as hurtful to the bullied child as the original behaviour.
- Discuss what has happened with the parents of the child who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behaviour.
- Share what has happened with the parents of the child who has been bullied, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

**Bullying will not be tolerated in any form, from adults or children.
It will be dealt with using the strategies above.**

COVID-19 – Reset and Recovery

Within the process of recovery, we will have a clear focus on **relationships**. We recognise that children will have lost or forgotten some skills and our recovery curriculum begins with teaching from children's starting points, which also is at the heart of our vision, values and early year pedagogy.

'Schools should make decisions based on the needs of the individual child...Some children have lost a lot of time.'

(Amanda Spielman, Chief Inspector for Ofsted)

Our recovery curriculum will support and extend learning by looking through the eyes of the child – their interests, fears and relationships. Our pedagogy of the role of the adult supporting the child in child-led learning is embedded in our planning in the moment process, enabling practitioners to build creative stimulating links in learning. Offering provocation to children supports and extends the engagement process through exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence and initiation (**Engagement Profile 2020 Rochford Version**) and the characteristics of effective learning: play and exploration, active learning and thinking critically. (**EYFS 2017**).

We recognise that our children may be exhibiting behaviours that highlight their inability to yet understand the changes to the world around them: These may be mood swings, tantrums, sleep deprivation or bed wetting.

Barnardo's: The number of children needing foster care has risen by 44% during the coronavirus pandemic while the number of people looking to become foster parents plummeted by nearly half compared to the same period last year.

Our recovery curriculum will therefore:

- *Be a construct* – built, made and created to support the needs of our learners through continuous provision, provocation and adult led-learning experiences.
- *Be built on compassionate leadership* – understanding and responding to the needs of our learners through effective positive relationships.
- *Be aims and values led* – reflecting our vision, values and pedagogy.
- *Use best informed judgements* – based on the interventions of observations of our learners responses.
- *Use a personalised response* – to respond effectively to individual need.

We recognise that children may have experienced loss:

Loss of routine, Loss of structure, Loss of friendship, Loss of opportunity, Loss of freedom
and that this in turn can generate consequences:

Bereavement, Attachment, Anxiety, Trauma

'Anxiety is a key block to learning. It can prevent the imprint on the brain.' McCulloch,A. (2008)

We recognise that the anxious child is not a learning child, and that the environment we created before the Pandemic is not the same environment we have created now.

Building relationships:

Through imitation:

- Responding to interactions is vital, as relationships are complex multi-layer constructs.
- Imitation is a key way to nurture and develop relationships. It will stimulate new neural pathways in the brain. Modelling activities and learning is essential to the role of the adult in learning.
- Consistently reach out to greet children. Tell them it's good to see them. Keep telling them.
- Re-engage with the School community. Engage, listen, understand and grow together.
- Metacognition – explicitly scaffold teaching to grow children's confidence as a learner.
- Co-construct the curriculum/learning experiences with children so that they can see how you addressing the gaps.
- Make sure children have space – space to be, to rediscover self-image, self-concept, self-esteem, confidence and self-efficacy.
- Co-regulation and self-regulation.

Other Policies to consider

Other policies, procedures or documents that may need review to include information related to self-regulation or co-regulation are:

- Staff induction.
- Inclusion and Equality Policy.
- Key Worker policy.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)/Additional Support Needs (ASN) Policy.
- Planning/Curriculum Processes.
- Staff Code of Conduct.

[Appendix A](#)

The AGILE Approach to Co-regulating Responses advises adults to pay close attention to their...

A - Affect: how your tone and expressions convey your emotions. In times of stress, is your affect loving, supportive, and soothing?

G - Gesture: Facial expressions, hand gestures, body moment and pacing all reflect your emotions and are felt by a child during your interactions

I - Intonation: Modifying the tone of your voice helps convey affect and social/emotional meaning. This is “felt” and “understood” long before words. Even after language develops, affect, gestures and intonation convey the genuine meaning of the interpersonal exchange. This communication is stronger than words

L - Latency (Wait): Wait and give the child time to take in your gestures and intonations. Co-regulation requires patience

E - Engagement: Before you continue, be sure you have engaged the child. Their facial expressions, sounds and body language will tell you if they are engaged.

[Appendix B](#)

Effective ways to...

Communicate - Think about your words and body language when trying to soothe the child. Make sure you are at the child's level and that you are speaking calmly and slowly

Observe - Look out for any triggers in the environment or during interactions, so that you are better able to prevent these from presenting issues in the first instance

Reason - Once you have helped the child to calm down, talk about alternative ways they could respond the next time they become dysregulated and why this is important to do

Empathise - By listening, showing understanding and validating their feelings. You can do this by reflecting back what they tell you: “I understand that you're feeling angry”

Guide - Talk the child through in-the-moment strategies that they can use to calm down. This might include breathing exercises, grounding techniques, or sitting in a quiet space

We co-regulate a child's thoughts, feelings and behaviour in order to nurture their ability to self-regulate, so that they can move from dependency to independence.

Dr Mine Conkbayir

[Appendix C](#)

The Secure Base Model (Beek and Schofield, 2004 & 2005)

