

**Behaviour Policy**

Ashdene preschool believes that children learn and flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

Over time children are expected to learn how to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on other people, places and objects. To achieve this, children require support, encouragement, teaching and being shown the correct example.

Children have not got the words to be able to explain and tell us what they are feeling. There are lots of reasons why a child’s behaviour may change. It is part of our role as practitioners to understand what these reasons may be, to be curious and to investigate further in order to plan appropriately rather than just dealing with the behaviour at the time, giving nothing but consequences that are harmful to children’s development and causes the child/parent shame.

At Ashdene Preschool we consider how well we know are families. What the needs and interests are, what is going on in their lives and consider what can’t we see.

It’s important for practitioners to think that all children have different experiences, to be aware that some children may have learnt to get attention in the wrong ways or have no attachments to their familiar adults. Having relationships with our families is key to finding out what is going on at home.

We need to discover the cause of the distressed / attention needing behaviour and then put strategies in place to enable the children to develop their skills of self-regulation and to support the parents and carers knowledge of how they can support their child or where they can get further support for themselves. It is not just the child's feelings and emotions that need to be considered it is also the adults that are dealing with the behaviour inside and outside of the Preschool.

**What is self regulation?**

Self regulation is the ability to be able to manage your own feelings and emotions, make attachments and know how to interact with others.

Here are a couple of examples of why a child may be showing distressed / hurtful behaviour.

I'm feeling tired

I'm hungry

I don’t feel very well

I can’t make it work

I feel anxious, stressed or worried - Somethings new / changes at home sending child into fight or flight scenario.

I want that toy

I don’t want to wait

I want to carry on playing

Thats too many instructions to understand,

Its crowded, Too close to my personal space

Trying to make contact not knowing how / wanting to join in

Reacting to someone taking something

I need attention from you.

It’s so noisy.

I'm overwhelmed.

We have two named people, **Gemma and Sarah M** who have overall responsibility for supporting personal, social, and emotional development, including issues involving behaviour, early help or SEND.

* The named person must keep up to date on current legislation, research and thinking on promoting self regulation in the early years including the development of the brain and update practises accordingly.
* It is important that staff look after themselves and their own mental health is supported by management. If an adult who is working with a child is struggling and overwhelmed, then this will impact their ability to deal with another person or child’s distressed behaviour. Regular supervisions and check in’s are essential.
* Access relevant sources of expertise on promoting self-regulation and provide in house training.
* Look for all the opportunities to develop physical confidence. It’s important to understand the physical and emotions link. To understand that our expectations, routines may be making it more difficult for the child. We need to consider adapting routines, be inclusive and change our expectations when needed.
* We respect cultural differences when interacting with other people and we ensure that staff are aware of each child’s needs.
* We work in partnership with parents. Parents are given daily updates especially about any changes in their child’s behaviour by the key person/ management. We work together with parents to discover the reason and address any distressed or attention needing behaviours.
* The use of observations and STAR analysis charts are used to investigate the possible triggers for the behaviour. Looking for possible patterns in the day so that an effective plan can be made to support the child. We need to find the driving force behind the behaviour to be able to change it.

Building better behaviour in the early years is not just about having rules and getting children to stick to them, it is about understanding the ‘why’ behind the behaviours that you need. All the staff at Ashdene Independent Preschool work together as a team to get the best outcomes for every child. An important part of everyday practice is to gather key information about the Child and family – What has changed for me today? This will then help us to Consider and think about what may have caused the distressed behaviour and then we can plan what we can do to support the child and the family.

If we could bottle the most effective method to enable self regulation, it would be a hearty dose of Co regulation. M Conkbayir 23

**Emotion coaching strategy**

Label model

Validate

Emphasise

Limit

Problem solve

**What emotion coaching means in practice**

(How coregulation works)

Step 1 recognising, emphasising, soothing to calm I understand how you feel, your not alone,

Step 2 Validating the feelings and labelling this is what’s happening, this is what your feeling

Step 3 Setting limits on behaviour frame in a positive way – need to keep people safe – I can see you want to throw – what can we do???

Step 4 Problem solving with the child/ young person (We can sort this out).

**Strategies for a Consistent approach** **is built into our curriculum to support the children and to let them know what is going to happen throughout each day:**

* We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence, and feelings of competence.
* The children build secure and warm attachments with the key person and buddy system. Each child feels valued and welcomed in the group.
* They learn how to interact with others and how to resolve conflicts through adult modelling and problem solving together.
* We teach strategies to help the children manage their emotions such as breathing techniques.
* Tambourines are used to get the children’s attention before staff communicate what is happening next.
* We use large sand timers to show the children a visual of how long they have left to play. Small sand timers are used to encourage sharing of toys inside and out.
* Daily Visual timetables are used to show the children the routine for the morning and then the Afternoon. Now and Next boards and individual photo visual routines are put in place to support children who need a more 1-1 approach.
* We use ‘traffic light’ symbols as a tool, to show the children what is expected in that moment. Each member of staff has these symbols on their lanyard for use throughout the day. Focus on what I can do (connect and redirect).
* Photos of the children are up in the areas to encourage the children to take ownership of an area at tidy up time alongside family photos to help children feel that they belong and promote family discussions.
* The key person will do regular 'check ins' with each child throughout the day (even if the child does not seek the attention). Unfortunately, some children have not learnt that an adult is safe or that their needs will be met by an adult, so it is important for that bond to be established and trust gained.
* Keep your ‘nos’ low (engage don’t enrage). Stop! What’s happening – distract, divert, reward instead. Give them what they can do / problem solve together. – looks like a really exciting game – let’s take it outside.
* We notice when things are going well – share with children / give them the attention before they find other ways to get it.
* We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share. We have a ‘Kind Box’ in each room, into which staff put short written notes telling of acts of kindness that they have witnessed throughout the day, including the names of the children involved, and these are read out to all the children at the end of each day, when all sat together as a group.
* We encourage children to do special jobs such as being special helpers helping to count the children, help with registers, hand out cups etc or be special friends to help other children settle / join in.
* Remind me of successful strategies at every opportunity – Do you remember when we did this / build a den / know they feel valued – the use of Floor books are a great way to remind them things have gone well.
  + Staff use simple positive language to inform children what they want them to do and then give them a safe way of doing it where appropriate.

For example - Feet on floor (if they are climbing inappropriately,) let’s get the slide out / or make an obstacle course.

Kind hands / Feet – Kicking, hitting – Lets get the football and nets out / something physical to redirect that energy.

Wash Hands – For time to wash hands.

* We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children’s behaviour. We never use physical punishment.
* Give them the tool kit – breathing / what are they trying to do and enable them to do it. Ability to Choose to do differently. Give me choices (Shared control) – do you want me to carry the box or you?
* Get down to children’s level or lower, Think about your body language.
* We talk with the children about why they need to follow rules during group times, and why it’s important to use “kind hands”etc. explaining What impact it has on others if they don’t? What are the benefits for the group as a whole of following this rule? This helps to build their sense of empathy, which in turn supports them in developing self-regulation.
* We name how the child is feeling, reassuring them that it is ok to feel this way, using phrases such as “I can see you are upset” or “I can tell that you are angry”. By acknowledging the child’s emotions, we help them understand that it is okay to feel this way and that it is possible to bring our emotional responses under control by regulating them ourselves. Some may need to calm down first before you can then revisit.
* **Keep your cool toolbox - the handy brain model. -** When children have flipped their lid – emotional part of the brain cannot engage. Children need to calm down before you can move forward. We create a calming area for the children to go if they need a safe space. Children are encouraged to go and read a story, or they can access a sensory/calming basket that has sensory items in that will help focus the child and calm them down. They can choose an adult to go with them if they wish. It is explained to the child that they need a minute to help calm down and we are there for them to support them as needed.

A place I can go

Stay with me

Safe space

Sit close by until I’m ready.

Tune into me – hand on shoulder

Respecting children’s feelings

Give me time, wait until I’m ready.

* Fidget toys to support them to sit at group times or for if children become overwhelmed in different situations are available. These toys/objects are linked to the individual’s interests / needs.
* The children help create the preschool rules with the staff that are short and simple and are displayed so that they can be referred to it regularly. Explanations are given to why we have these rules, and we encourage the children to work together to maintain them.
* We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and /or serious damage to property.
  + We understand that for a child who has a sensory processing disorder something as simple as a member of staff wearing a strong perfume, or a buzz from a radiator might trigger a certain behaviour. Or another trigger might be to do with particular peer group relationships.

**How to resolve conflict without taking over** (R Swailes 23)

I can see were having a bit of trouble here.

I wonder what me might do.

I’m not sure how we can sort this out, what do you think?

Yesterday when you found ….

What can I do when I feel ……

Deep breathing – I can see your really upset, let’s just take a deep breath.

Asking for help – notice when they have come and told you how they are feeling … mention it.

Resources to slow down the pace / snuggle with a book / be with me together spaces inside and out.

**Rough and tumble play and fantasy aggression**

* Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes- such as superhero and weapon play: some children may appear pre-occupied by these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying, although it may be inconsiderate at times and may need addressing at times.
* We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits.
* We will develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure that children are not hurt.
* We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, blowing up; shooting etc. and that themes often refer to “goodies and baddies” and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right or wrong.
* We aim to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of ‘teachable moments’ to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.
* We support exploration and understanding of feelings, and development of social skills through modelling behaviour, using activities with resources such as ‘Monkey Bob’, drama and stories such as ‘Not Now Bernard’ and ‘The Colour Monster’.

**Bullying**

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.

A child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan to carry out premeditated intent to cause distress in another.

A child is the age of 7 before they can understand the cause and effect of their actions. There is no prevention rather than dealing with route cause of why the child has done it. Remembering not all children know how to behave and need guidance.

Stickers / rewards and bribing schemes don’t work because it is not fixing the problem and has a shaming effect. Research shows that children then learn to do things for a reward and then need incentive for motivation for the rest of their lives. External rewards / punishments – guided by person of authority then struggle when that person isn’t there.