

## Behaviour Policy - Early Years

### Introduction

At Riverside School, we recognise and act to instil principles which will ensure that each student is valued and respected, each is unique, and each is cared for in a protective, secure, family oriented environment.

Riverside is committed to providing a consistent and fair approach to behaviour management. We uphold the principles of the UK Equality Act 2010, ensuring that expectations and consequences are applied without discrimination based on protected characteristics, and that our school remains an inclusive environment for all.

### Aims and Objectives

The aim of Riverside's Early Years Behaviour Policy is:

- 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.

### Legislation and Guidance

EYFS Framework, Keeping Children Safe in Education, NSPCC Guidance

### Roles and responsibilities

**Principal:** Connie Falk, (Reviewing and consulting)

**Teachers:** Rebekah Jenkins and Hannah Millar (Research and writing the policy)

### Strong network of relationships

It is a core responsibility of the staff at Early Years 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.

We work consistently to ensure each child has a strong relationship with their key person (class teacher or designated staff member as needed). 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 positive climate for children's social and emotional development and help to promote good behaviour. Positive behaviour is encouraged through verbal encouragement and feedback, using phrases specific to the action when possible, for example, "You did a great job playing the game with your friend, I saw you waiting and taking turns." Individual rewards such as high fives, stickers, showing the class or another teacher your work, or having a choice in the classroom, for example, picking the story to read.

### Class Teacher Roles

- Work closely with each child, supporting them as they settle in and 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 child every day.
- Support children's social and emotional development through planned lessons and natural interactions.
- Make time to listen to and take an interest in each child every day.
- Communicate promptly with parents about any behaviour concerns.

## All Staff Roles

- Treat all children equally, irrespective of gender, race, or religion.
- Be positive role models; promote good behaviour, self- discipline and respect.
- 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 choices.
- Praise good efforts.
- Show disapproval of the behaviour, not the child e.g. “That was a rude thing to do” not “You rude child”.
- Using positive phrasing e.g. walk slowly to be safe .... when you’re calm we can talk about this ..... you need to ....
- 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?”

## Key boundaries that all staff manage consistently

This is an overview of some key behaviour boundaries, and not a complete list. We do not allow:

- Physical hurting – hitting, biting, scratching, pushing
- Emotional hurting – using unkind words against another child, swearing, racist or any other prejudiced comments, mocking another person’s appearance, clothing, home, family, or (dis)ability
- Spitting

Where a child crosses one of these boundaries, staff respond by taking the child away from the incident and saying clearly, “Stop. (*Hitting*) others is not okay.” Further actions and responses will depend on the professional judgement of the member of staff depending on the circumstances and individual knowledge of the children involved. If you are concerned or not sure what to do, please liaise urgently with the class teacher or senior member of staff in the Early Years School.

## Parents as Partners

We give high priority to clear communication within the school and to a positive partnership with parents since these are crucial in promoting and maintaining high standards of behaviour. Parents have the right to know their children are safe, to be sure their children are treated fairly and with respect, and to be able to raise concerns with staff and be informed with regard to their child’s progress.

It is important that all those working with the child in school are aware of issues that are relevant and may affect the child. If there are issues at home e.g. birth of a sibling, parents separating/divorcing, family discord or the loss of a family member or pet, it is helpful for the class teacher to be made aware of this so that they can support any behaviours or issues arising from this in school.

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, please 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.
- Working with parents to support their child’s positive behaviour is an ongoing and collaborative process that depends on regular and open communication over time.

We offer a range of services to support parents, including an open door policy with teachers and the Head of Early Years, parent seminars throughout the year, we have a counsellor who can offer advice and suggest helpful resources and individual conferences. All parents are encouraged to join in with these.

## Classroom Behavioural Expectations

Behavioural expectations create a culture that benefits all children. We want to give the children ownership and responsibility for their actions and learning. To support this, at the beginning of the year, we work

together with the children to create a set of expectations (rules) for the classroom and school environment.

These expectations are based on the Riverside Qualities that are encouraged at all campuses of the school.

These expectations are:

- Punctuality
- Politeness/Courtesy
- Respect for others
- Kindness
- Responsibility
- Self-control
- Excellence
- Honesty
- Faithfulness

There are 4 main areas that we encourage the children to think of when we are discussing our class expectations. Using age-appropriate language we base our class rules on the following statements:

- We are kind
- We are gentle
- We listen
- We try our best

Once the class rules have been completed, they are displayed within the classroom and referred to throughout the year. Parents are also made aware of the classroom expectations.

### **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.

We support children in this by:

- Encouraging 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 appropriately in words and actions, it is not usually necessary for an adult to get involved.
- Thinking 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 around; model language/approaches like “me next”; “can I have a turn”; “you can have it next when I’ve finished”.
- Modeling, sharing and learning. We show children that we actively listen to the ideas, needs, and wants of others.
- Showing 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.

Bilingual staff play a key role in helping with incidents where children are at early stages of learning English.

### **Tantrums**

A tantrum is the expression of a young child's frustration with his or her limitations or anger about not being able to get what they want, need, or feel they deserve. Children who are having a tantrum are upset and vulnerable. The first approach is to try to comfort the child. Only if the child refuses the comforting, give them some space but stay present.

The adult should reassure other children within hearing of the distraught child that we understand the child is upset but an adult is there to help them.

The child should be given responsibility for saying when he or she is feeling better and comfort and reassurance given. Sometimes it may be necessary to remove the angry child to a quieter place to help the child calm down and avoid distressing other children.

### **Children fighting over a piece of equipment**

Many disagreements over toys will be minor, and it can actually be helpful to give the children space to work these situations out themselves, for example, suggesting taking turns. However, some instances can involve escalating tension, and it is necessary for an adult to intervene. This is best done if the adult holds the disputed object. This will allow the children to discuss with the adult how the solution can best be resolved, such as using a timer to help decide when to swap turns.

### **Sexualised play**

The [NSPCC](#) advises that from infancy to 4 years:

Even at this stage, sexual behaviour is beginning to emerge through actions like:

- kissing and hugging
- showing curiosity about private body parts
- talking about private body parts and using words like poo, willy and bum
- playing "house" or "doctors and nurses" type games with other children
- touching, rubbing or showing off their genitals

This type of play should not in itself raise undue concerns. However, children do need to learn that this type of play is not appropriate, without being made to feel they have done something bad, wrong or shameful. It is also important that children are empowered to feel confident in saying "no" when they do not like someone else's actions or play.

Staff should respond to sexualised play in a low-key and matter-of-fact way, following the general guidance in this policy. Of course, this won't be easy for everyone, especially if the child's behaviour seems shocking or morally wrong to a member of staff. But staff should try to keep calm. Body language and tone can make a difference.

If it is important to describe a body part, we use the correct term like a doctor would, not another term. So for example, "penis" rather than "willy".

It is important to respond to children's direct questions but not to offer information that the child might not yet be ready to understand.

If a member of staff feels any concerns about the play, then they should talk over those concerns – however small – with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

### **Controversial and challenging play**

All sorts of play can pose a dilemma in terms of whether it is children's natural exploratory play or something more concerning. Staff often have to make judgments about the nature of the play and whether they should be supporting and scaffolding it, whether to intervene or whether to observe and report concerns.

### **Weapon play**

It is understood that however we respond to weapon play, we will always ensure that every child feels safe and protected. Children are not allowed to use forms of play to intimidate other children in any way. We are tolerant of weapon play and believe that children should be able to extend their imaginative play in this direction. Staff will join in to support and extend the play, however, we will not actively help them to make weapons as props. We will support them to understand that, while this type of play is harmless, real weapons are not.

Any member of staff who does not feel comfortable with weapon play should feel able to express this to children and decline to enter into such play. However, they should make their position clear to their class teacher.

## Bullying

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time.

Children in Early Years 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, 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. Please refer to the Riverside [Anti-Bullying Policy](#) for further guidance.

## Positive handling

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, or runs to the gate during an unsettled episode whilst settling-in.

We judge that an incident is “physical restraint” if the child has to be fully restrained from movement for more than a few seconds because the child wants to hurt another or to hurt her or himself, or damage an item which could result in harm. Restraint is then needed in order to keep the child or other children safe.

If a child’s behaviour results in a need for restraint, parents will be informed.

## Stages of consequences

Any ‘consequence’ needs to be an opportunity for a child to further their understanding of emotions. It is the shared responsibility of every staff member to understand how best to support a child in understanding their emotions and feelings and in helping them forge a path towards recognising what makes them feel a certain way and when to ask for help. ‘Consequences’ are private between adult and child and not an opportunity to create shame in front of children’s peers.

Additionally some children need bespoke aspects to support their individual needs and develop their understanding of action and consequence.

All children need	Some children need	A few children need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● High-quality teaching and learning environment</li><li>● Explicit teaching to name feelings and emotions and how these emotions make them feel</li><li>● Clear agreements and boundaries</li><li>● Adults who listen and respond in a predictable way</li><li>● A chance to move on from an incident/ having a fresh start</li><li>● An outlet to talk about their feelings and emotions</li></ul>	+ short term limited support around a particular area in order for them to understand their emotions about something in particular e.g support around a bereavement or transition to a new class or school	+ Individualised intervention that specifically targets the child’s feelings and emotions. This is ongoing and develops with the child.

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. Deal with the behaviour of the other child next.
- If necessary, state a clear boundary. “Remember, no hitting at school.”
- 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.”

Questions all staff use when talking about the incident:

1. What happened?
2. How were you feeling when it happened?
3. Who else has been involved?
4. What do you need to do to make it better?
5. What will you do next time?

Staff may need to wait for a child to be calmer before talking about what has happened. Depending upon the child’s level of understanding and ability to articulate their feelings, will depend upon how much co-regulation happens during the restorative period after an incident has occurred. Some children will need the adult to model answering questions, such “I’m sorry (child) hurt you, hitting others is not okay,” and supporting them through the restorative process for example giving ideas how to help the other child feel better or what they could do next time, while others will be able to go through this process with a fuller understanding.

The following points should be considered to help a child process their emotions:

Step 1: Recognising, empathising, soothing to calm (‘I understand how you feel, you’re not alone’)

Step 2: Validating the feelings and labelling (‘This is what is happening, this is what you’re feeling’)

Step 3 (if needed): Setting limits on behaviour (‘We can’t always get what we want’)

Step 4: Problem-solving with the child/young person (‘We can sort this out’)

### **Student Support**

Sometimes children may present with unexpected behaviours and Student Support will become involved to work with the Early Years staff to meet the individual needs of each student, possibly including a wider range of services. We are an inclusive school, and we will work positively with every child and every family.

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