

1st Step Pre-school Ltd: Behaviour Management Policy

Our Commitment

At 1st Step Pre-school Ltd, we are dedicated to promoting a safe, nurturing environment where every child feels valued, respected, and secure. We aim to help children develop a strong sense of right and wrong by teaching appropriate behaviour and discouraging inappropriate actions in a supportive, developmentally appropriate manner.

We believe that behaviour is part of a child's developmental journey. Through consistent guidance, role modelling, and partnership with parents and carers, we strive to empower children to build confidence, self-esteem, and positive relationships.

Our Approach to Behaviour

We understand that learning to regulate emotions and behave appropriately in a group setting is a gradual process. This policy outlines our principles and strategies for supporting children as they develop socially and emotionally.

Aims

Children need to have set boundaries of behaviour for their own safety and the safety of their peers. Within the pre-school we aim to set these boundaries in a way which helps the child to develop a sense of the significance of their own behaviour, both in their own environment and that of others around them. Restrictions on the child's natural desire to explore and develop their own ideas and concepts are kept to a minimum.

The pre-school actively promotes British Values and encourages and praises positive, caring and polite behaviour at all times and provides an environment where children learn to respect themselves, other people and their surroundings.

We aim to:

- Recognise the individuality of all our children and that some behaviours are normal in young children e.g. biting
- Encourage self-discipline, consideration for each other, our surroundings and property
- Encourage children to participate in a wide range of group activities to enable them to develop their social skills
- Ensure that all staff act as positive role models for children
- Encourage parents and other visitors to be positive role models and challenge any poor behaviour shown
- Work in partnership with parents by communicating openly
- Praise children and acknowledge their positive actions and attitudes, therefore ensuring that children see that we value and respect them
- Encourage all staff working with children to accept their responsibility for implementing the goals in this policy and to be consistent
- Promote non-violence and encourage children to deal with conflict peacefully
- Provide a key person system enabling staff to build a strong and positive relationship with children and their families
- Provide activities and stories to help children learn about accepted behaviours, including opportunities for children to contribute to decisions about accepted behaviour where age/stage appropriate
- Support children in developing non-aggressive strategies to enable them to express their feelings
- Support all children to develop positive behaviour, and make every effort to provide for their individual needs
- Use language as positive reinforcement to focus on the good things happening e.g. instead of "don't run" we would say "thank you for using your walking feet to stay safe"
- Recognise when behaviours need immediate attention for safety reasons (e.g. biting)
- Recognise times when children may be able to self-regulate if praise is given to another child.
- Use visual support and cues to promote positive behaviours e.g. lining up, washing hands.

Modelling Behaviour Through Emotional Literacy: Our Colour Monster Approach

At the heart of our behaviour policy is the belief that all behaviour is a form of communication. We use “The Colour Monster” story as a consistent, child-friendly tool to help children recognise, understand, and express their emotions.

Each colour in the story represents a different feeling—such as yellow for happiness, red for anger, blue for sadness, and green for calm—which we regularly explore through circle times, reflective discussions, and visual aids throughout the setting. When responding to unwanted behaviour, staff model calm and respectful responses, supporting children to identify how they are feeling using the colour system.

This reflective approach helps children link emotions to actions, make sense of their behaviour, and develop the skills needed to self-regulate. By embedding emotional literacy into our everyday practice, we aim to nurture empathy, resilience, and positive social interactions.

Rules for children

Our pre-school rules are concerned with safety, care and respect for each other. They create an environment where children can feel safe and can help them to manage their stress levels. We keep the rules to a minimum and ensure that these are age and stage appropriate. We regularly involve children in the process of setting rules to encourage cooperation and participation and ensure children gain understanding of the expectations of behaviour relevant to them as a unique child.

Routine

A consistent daily routine helps children feel safe, secure, and confident in their environment. When they know what to expect and what is expected of them, they are more likely to engage positively, follow boundaries, and develop independence. Our routine includes a balance of active and restful periods, indoor and outdoor play, and adult-led and child-initiated activities. This supports all learning styles and encourages positive behaviour through structure and choice. Transitions are carefully managed with clear prompts and consistent language, helping children move calmly between activities. Staff regularly reflect on and adapt the routine to meet the evolving needs of the children, ensuring it remains supportive, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate.

Behaviour Intervention Strategies

When unacceptable behaviour occurs, staff will:

- **Intervene immediately** and assess the situation. (Consider the age and level of development of the children involved)
- **Engage with all children involved**, using a calm, respectful tone and age-appropriate language
- **Redirect children** using distraction or alternative activities, with support where appropriate. *In some cases, children may be accompanied to the ‘calm area’ to help regulate their emotions*
- **Discuss feelings** and support children in recognising how their actions affect others. Acknowledging that the behaviour is unwanted, not the child
- **Ask for an apology**, where developmentally acceptable, to support children in developing empathy. Alternatives may be used such as comforting gestures, drawing a picture, or Makaton signs.

*These steps may not be followed in this order depending on the behaviour displayed and the developmental stage of the child.

Staff will not:

- Raise voices unless there is immediate danger to keep children safe
- Intimidate, threaten or use corporal punishment, or any punishment which could negatively affect a child’s wellbeing.
- Use exclusion strategies such as a “naughty chair” or “time out.”
- Withhold food or treats
- Use words such as “naughty” or “bad”. Instead, we separate the behaviour from the child

We would only use physical intervention in an instance where there is risk of harm to a child or member of staff. A record will be kept of any occasion where physical intervention is used, and parents/carers will be informed the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Involving Parents and Carers

Working in partnership with families is essential. We ask parents to:

- Share relevant changes in the child's home life.
- Reinforce behaviour expectations at home.
- Collaborate with staff to agree a joint approach.

We will:

- Communicate daily about a child's behaviour and progress
- Be consistent, non-judgmental, and supportive
- Share our rules and behaviour policy with parents
- Offer guidance and external support when needed
- Maintain confidentiality of children
- Inform parents and ask them to read and sign any incidents concerning their child, keeping confidential records on any unacceptable behaviour that has taken place

Escalation and Support

If challenging behaviour persists despite consistent strategies, we will:

- Work closely with parents/carers to ensure consistency
- Seek support from outside agencies (e.g. SENCo, Health Visitor)

Anti-bullying

Bullying takes many forms. It can be physical, verbal or emotional, but it is always a repeated behaviour that makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened. We acknowledge that any form of bullying is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately while recognising that physical aggression is part of children's development in their early years.

We encourage children to recognise that bullying, fighting, hurting and discriminatory comments are not acceptable behaviour. We want children to recognise that certain actions are right and that others are wrong.

Biting

Biting is a common but distressing behaviour in early childhood. For many children, biting is a normal part of their development. Some reasons for biting include sensory exploration, teething, communication (expressing feelings when vocabulary is not developed), to gain attention, self-defence if they feel threatened, imitated behaviour, natural curiosity and/or excitement.

When biting occurs, we handle incidents calmly and with sensitivity and aim to support both the child who is bitten and the child who did the biting. We use the "Who, What, When, Where" method to understand each incident. All incidents of biting will be reported to parents of the child who bit and the child who was bitten, in these instances names of the children will be kept confidential.

Treatment for bites is carried out in line with NHS guidelines.

Our Early Years Practitioners will closely observe children's behaviour to identify when biting occurs and to understand the possible reasons behind it. They will respond to the child in a way that is appropriate for their age and developmental stage, making it clear that biting is unacceptable. Practitioners will implement positive strategies to help the child express themselves in more appropriate ways. If biting is persistent then a plan of action will be agreed with parents/carers to gain a consistent approach at home and in the pre-school and in some cases may result in a (temporary/permanent) exclusion.