



Summerhouse Behaviour Policy

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OVERVIEW

Summerhouse is a preventative provision working with pupils at risk of exclusion from their mainstream school because of their behaviour. Children come to us with a range of negative experiences including insecure attachments to caregivers, traumas such as domestic abuse and often an underlying need that has not been identified.

With this in mind our policy needs to be flexible, effective and centred on rewarding positive behaviour. A variety of strategies are used to support positive behaviour for learning and these may be adapted to suit the individual child depending on their level of need. Most important is our consistent ability to 'pick up the good behaviours', to praise children when they 'get it right', to treat every lesson and every day as a fresh start.

Summerhouse uses an approach that understands children's behaviour in the context of the many negative and complex factors outlined above and helps them realise their full potential by using strategies that work with their difficulties.

These include:

- A nurturing approach that involves caring, consistent, empathic, non-retaliatory relationships between staff and children
- Recognising that children may have early-year's needs (e.g. play) that are un-met and need to be provided before they can progress. This may mean providing support which is appropriate to their emotional/social age rather than their calendar age
- Having clearly-communicated expectations of children's behaviour
- Developing children's abilities to understand and communicate about their emotions
- A positive approach with a focus on praising and rewarding good behaviour, recognising and developing strengths and abilities and helping children to develop an improved perception of themselves
- Ensuring that children always feel wanted and supported despite their behaviour – firm expectations around behaviour without shaming or further damaging self-esteem
- Acting as appropriate role-models for our children. Being aware of our verbal and body language as well as our emotional reactions to the children and how we respond to them. Being responsible about seeking support when needed
- Providing good attachments for our children whilst being sensitive to and supporting relationships between parents/carers and their children
- Providing a specialist therapeutic programme tailored to individual children
- Providing opportunities for children to demonstrate maturity and responsibility as they progress through the school

It is important that as a staff body we work consistently and in a joined-up way with our children and that a shared approach is used throughout the school.

OUR CHILDREN'S NEEDS

It is important that we understand the meaning behind our children's behaviour if we are going to be able to support their difficulties. Our children's behavioural difficulties are caused by a range of factors, including lack of development sometimes due to attachment difficulties with parents/carers and also by them developing protective behaviours that have helped them cope with their varying situations.

Typical behaviours include:

- Insecure attachment behaviours – clinginess, defiant independence, mistrust of adults, ambivalence (clinginess combined with rejecting behaviours)
- Lack of awareness or tolerance of external boundaries and lack of development of internal boundaries – risk-taking behaviours, impulsivity, inability to manage emotions, inability to think ahead and predict consequences, oppositional defiance
- Inability to understand or communicate about their feelings
- Inability to tolerate difficult feelings – projects them onto others through challenging behaviour to achieve temporary relief
- Lack of empathy for others
- Intense envy of their peers
- Feelings of low self-esteem, critical of self, unable to recognise achievements
- Intense fear of failure, inability to take healthy risks (e.g. in learning)
- A rigid need to control born out of anxiety of the unknown (often in children from chaotic backgrounds)
- Hyper-vigilance – always on the lookout for threat, hypersensitivity to insult or perceived threat
- Inability to tolerate “good” and “bad” in the same person – splits people into “good” and “bad” people and changes often who is perceived as “good” and who is perceived as “bad”

These behaviours can be frustrating and distressing when we are exposed to them daily but it is important that we see them in the context of our children's backgrounds and that we do not retaliate against them, i.e. we separate the child from the behaviour.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

A secure attachment to a caregiver is essential for children's psychological development. Many of our children have not experienced this at home. If they develop secure attachments to staff members at school, this can help them catch up on the development they have missed out on. This cannot and should not replace attachments to parents/carers but can be a vital support in helping the child's development.

Summerhouse staff support relationship-building with children by:

- Being consistent, patient and dependable

- Tuning into their needs – noticing when they are hungry, upset, tired etc. and demonstrating care through our responses
- Empathising with and understanding their feelings
- Containing their distress/rage – trying to understand the reasons for challenging behaviour and figure out solutions for the child, not retaliating through our reactions, managing our own behavioural responses to challenging behaviour
- Demonstrating unconditional acceptance of the child – disapproving of behaviours, never the child as a person (e.g. “what you said was rude”, not “you are rude”). Accepting that our relationships with children are often one-way to start with – not expecting much back from them

Knowledge of the child’s background is critical in building good attachments them. When we understand what they’ve been through, this can help us put their behaviours into context. When a new child joins the school, all staff will read their statement of SEN and child profile (all on our shared drive) and will also be briefed by the head of school or deputy head who will have interviewed the child and family.

PROMOTING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIOURAL DEVELOPMENTS

Social and emotional development is absolutely central to our curriculum and ethos. Breakfast, morning exercise, circle time, assemblies, break time, lunch and PSHE are all focal points for this development to be facilitated but it is acutely important that social and emotional learning is embedded throughout the whole day.

Embedded daily activities at Summerhouse focused on developing social skills and learning about emotions:

- Story-reading and storytelling
- Circle time
- Drama / role-play
- Group musical workshop
- Sport and games
- Group art activities
- Speaking and listening activities
- Mediation, time for conflict resolution and facilitating apologies after incidents

PLAY

Play is vital in children’s development and teaches them about their emotional and social world. We ensure that children have the opportunity for directed and spontaneous play as part of their personal and social development during every school day. Boundaries and rules are important in play and are made explicit. All children have access to weekly play therapy sessions with the school’s play therapist.

COMMUNICATING ABOUT FEELINGS

Children need to be encouraged to communicate appropriately about their feelings instead of acting out their feelings through challenging behaviour. We support them in this in a number of ways:

- Modelling – talking about our own feelings and emotional reactions
- Praising children whenever they manage to tell you about their feelings
- Verbalising our thoughts about a child's emotional state (this is communicating their feelings for them before they're able to do this themselves) – wondering aloud (“I’m wondering if you’re upset because....”)
- Providing opportunities for emotional communication – ask about their weekend etc.
- Make it safe for children to talk about their feelings – normalise their feelings by letting them know that we all have these feelings (“I’m not surprised you’re upset, most children get upset when....”)
- Empathise with their feelings – this helps them feel understood and when we feel understood it encourages further communication

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

Summerhouse focusses on prevention rather than reaction. This is about knowing our children, spotting their triggers, intervening quickly, praising whenever possible. All the elements of our practice should be contributing towards prevention of challenging behaviour arising. When challenging behaviour does arise, the emphasis is on de-escalation, for example:

- We speak quietly and privately if possible to the child. We pick up on the positives, e.g. a time when they have successfully changed a response, or we remind them of their strengths or personalised target
- Offer alternative strategies such as reflection time, relocation
- We repeat that we’re here to support them
- We never shout and ensure our body language is positive and that the child has personal space
- Use diversion, e.g. change the activity or topic of conversation to remove pressure
- Ask for help from a colleague if we feel the child might be better helped by someone else
- Use of sanctions only when all other strategies have been used

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION (Including de-escalation)

Physical intervention (known as positive handling or restraint) should only be used after de-escalation strategies have been tried and not worked.

De-escalation recognises changes early on where troublesome behaviour begins to become evident and it focuses on strategies to redirect behaviour. Strategies include creative ways out for the child, giving the child space, use of appropriate body language and effective listening skills can all help. Early signs of agitation are balled fists, fidgeting, shaking, and eye balling another child, changes in voice tone. Telling the child what you want them to do rather than what you do using language like:

I wonder if...let's try...it seems like....maybe we can...

Give the child some time out/take up time following any direction.

POSITIVE HANDLING

The use of positive handling must be **reasonable, proportionate and necessary**. The objective is to promote the least intrusive handling strategy and a continuum of gradual and graded technique. All staff are trained half termly, any incidents are recorded on the appropriate reporting sheet which is given to a senior member of staff and recorded in the positive handling book. Parents are informed that day.

BULLYING

This policy must be considered alongside our anti-bullying policy. All types of bullying, including outside of school and all forms of electronic bullying, must be followed up with the same rigour and using the same processes outlined above.

E-SAFETY

This policy must be considered alongside our e-safety policy as many e-safety incidents will be considered behavioural incidents (many may alternatively/also be safeguarding concerns and should therefore be considered as part of our Child Protection/Safeguarding strategy.

REWARDS & SANCTIONS

Clear consequences and sanctions are essential for our children but the emphasis should always be on rewarding positive behaviour.

Rewards available are praise, stickers, certificates, daily and weekly assembly awards, golden leaves, lunchtime rewards, and class trips. As a behaviour unit with the children that we have, a 'one size fits all' approach to behaviour sanctions is inappropriate. Sanctions at the disposal of teachers include withdrawal of reward time, withdrawal of specific activities. A senior leader will ask parents/carers to collect their child if it is necessary. In extreme cases a child may be excluded up to the discretion of the head teacher.

ENDLESSLY POSITIVE

To help boost self-esteem and change how our children view themselves, we need to constantly be on the lookout for small successes and to recognise and praise/reward these successes: **catching the children being good**. It is important to remember that we need to notice behaviours that might seem ordinary but are significant for our children. It could be something as simple as a child saying hello back to you when you say hello to them. We always keep language as positive and solution-focused as possible e.g. we focus on the behaviours we want, not the behaviours we don't want.

DIFFERENTIATING LESSONS

The importance of differentiation cannot be underestimated - if lessons are not differentiated appropriately, children may struggle to understand or engage with what is being taught which can lead to challenging behaviour. Please see our curriculum, teaching, learning & assessment policy.

WORKING AS A TEAM

It is essential that children see us working together as a team. This means that children see a unified front and cannot play one adult off against the other. They also see adults as positive role models.

RECORDING AND COMMUNICATING BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT EVENTS

All physical restraints are logged on handwritten forms and have to be read senior leaders on the same day. All physical restraints and all serious incidents are always brought to the attention of the senior leadership team and are always also communicated to the parents/carers. Serious misdemeanours resulting in any form of exclusion are logged in our handwritten log, kept in the school offices.

POLICY REVIEW CYCLE

This policy and all policies at Summerhouse will be reviewed and updated as necessary by the senior leadership team on an annual basis.